

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME ARTS PROGRAMMING:
A CRITICAL RACE THEORY APPROACH

by

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“Out-of-school Time Arts Programming: A Critical Race Theory Approach,” a thesis prepared by Lauren L. Suveges in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science degree in the Arts and Administration Program. This thesis has been approved and accepted by:

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This study explores the out-of-school time (OST) arts field through a critical race theory (CRT) lens. For the purpose of this research, OST arts programs include after-school and summer learning programs focusing on visual arts, music, theater, dance, video production, and spoken word in Chicago, Illinois for youth ages 14-21. Four main tenets of CRT guide the main research question: How are OST arts programs time addressing racism, propagating social, historical, and liberal ideologies, promoting social justice, and giving voice to people of color? By conducting eight interviews with arts professionals as well as a comprehensive literature review and document analysis, themes of race, colorblindness, social justice, and identity development in OST youth arts programs are synthesized to reflect current practices in the field. This research suggests that current methods of critical pedagogy utilized in OST arts programs could promote successful education strategies for both in-school and out-of-school education for youth.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This study explores the out-of-school time (OST) arts field through a critical race theory lens. Adapted from critical legal studies, CRT is utilized in education research to bring about awareness of racism, challenge dominant social, historical, and liberal ideologies, inspire social justice, and give voice to people of color (Chapman, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Solórzano & Yasso, 2001; Taylor, 2009). For the purpose of this research, OST arts programs include after-school and summer learning programs focusing on visual arts, music, theater, dance, video production, writing, poetry and spoken word.

Statement of the Problem

Although CRT has become a useful tool in exploring theoretical and legal inequities in traditional K-12 education, little to no research exists on the connections between CRT and the OST arts field. As illustrated in my conceptual framework (Figure 1), my thesis addresses the gap in research specifically relating CRT to OST arts programming. A preliminary survey of the field notes that after-school and OST arts programs can serve as a tool for promoting social justice and providing an outlet for “at-risk” youth of color, fostering discussion and giving voice to the silenced (Fox, 2002). OST programs are “unbound by the constraints of an emphasis on standardized testing and a deficit model [of education]” (Chappell, 2007, p. 13), and so while research on

OST programs hint at a CRT approach, they do not directly link to this methodology.

Utilizing a CRT lens, I will explain the connections between theory and praxis as evident in the current trends of OST arts programming.

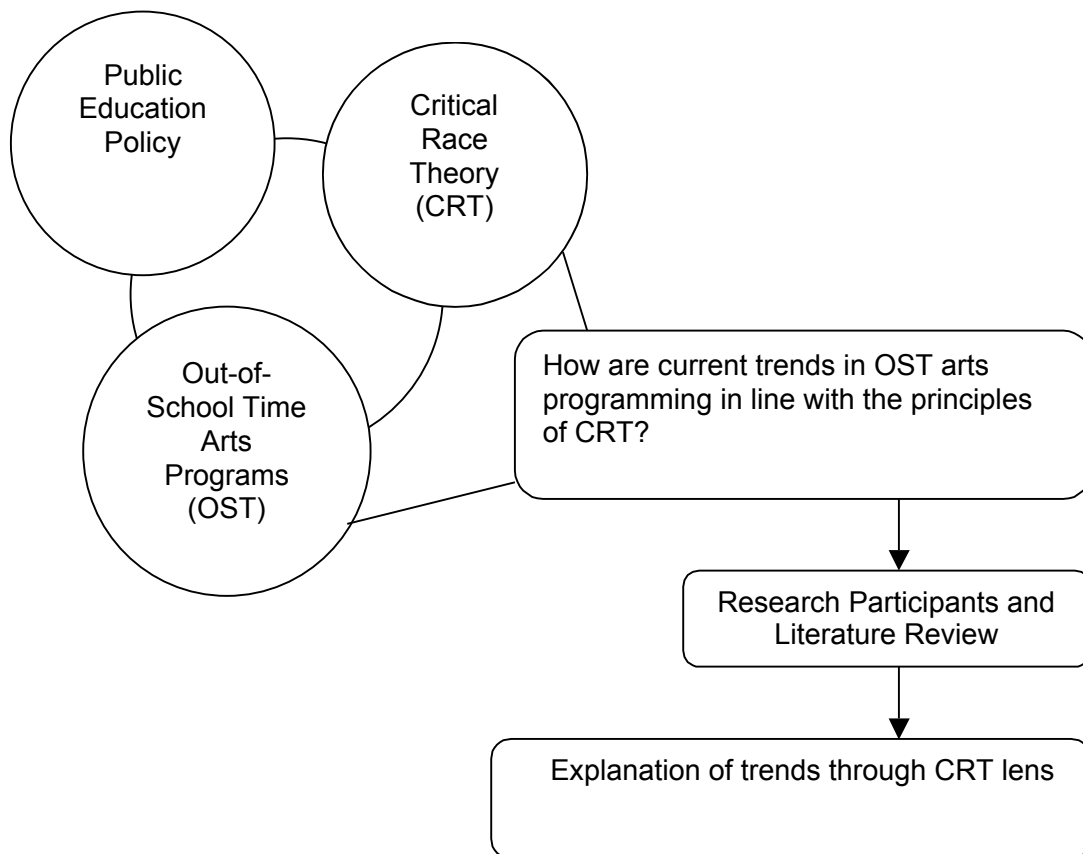


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Relevance

The purpose of this research is explanatory in nature, expanding CRT to include the OST arts field. Connections are made through the four major tenets of CRT as adapted by education researchers as applied to the OST arts field. In *The Foundations of*

Critical Race Theory in Education (2009), two key statements solidify my commitment to connecting CRT and OST arts programming. Firstly, Gloria Ladson Billings (1995) writes in reference to the incomplete nature of the CRT field; “I implore the reader to grapple with how it might advance the debate on race and education” (p. 19). Secondly, as Laurence Parker and Marvin Lynn (2002) discuss CRT’s intersectionality they state, “CRT has important implications for qualitative research, particularly in education and youth culture” (p. 152). These two statements from founding scholars of the CRT field signify the importance to push the boundaries of CRT in education and to include OST arts programming for urban youth.

In their forward to *The Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education*, Ladson-Billings and Taylor (2009) ask, “Does the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States prove that critical race theory is not true, or at least has overstated its contrarian claims that racism is permanent?” (para. 1). It is my belief that CRT remains a relevant lens to examine systems of education in society. As research in the OST field deepens, I feel that this study will contribute a new perspective to the field, highlighting both the overt and covert applications of CRT. It is my hope that scholars in the CRT field and OST arts field will benefit from the connections made, and continue their work towards creating a country in which the above question can be answered with a resounding YES!

Research Questions

My research focuses on explaining the connection between CRT and OST arts programs. More specifically I ask: How are OST arts programs addressing racism,

propagating social, historical, and liberal ideologies, promoting social justice, and giving voice to people of color? I address the following sub-questions:

- How are artist/instructors/administrators addressing issues of race in program development, delivery, and evaluation for youth in the OST setting?
- How are artists/instructors/administrators operating in the paradigm of colorblindness?
- Are OST arts programs promoting social justice, and if so, how?
- How are OST arts programs providing outlets for youth of color to find their ‘voice’?

Methodological Paradigm

This qualitative research study is situated under the critical social science paradigm because, as Neuman (2006) states, “The purpose of critical social research is not simply to study the social world but to change it” (p. 95). CRT is positioned under the emancipatory paradigm of critical inquiry (Lather, 2001) and addresses the need for research to not only investigate race in social constructs, but to shift the paradigm of racial oppression. In this paradigm of critical inquiry, my research seeks to “expose that which is oppressive and dominating and examine and explicate value systems and concepts of justice upon which inquiry is based” (Schubert, 1986). Marc Pizarro (1999) argues that, “...CRT suggests the significance of research that emphasizes social justice not simply as an objective but as a process” (p. 61). CRT also focuses on the substantiation of narrative as an outlet for voice and as a valid means of data collection.

Because of the density of CRT, both as a theory and method of inquiry, the tenets are examined in relationship to education and explained in-depth in chapter two of this research, positioning the reader to analyze the OST arts field through this lens.

Strategy of Inquiry

CRT is not only used as a guiding principle of inquiry into the OST arts field, it is also employed as a methodological tool. As Creswell (2009) notes, “qualitative researchers often use lens to view their studies, such as the concept of culture, central to ethnography, or gendered, racial or class difference from theoretical orientations...” (p. 176). CRT works to uncover the experiences of people of color through interviews that gather narratives, stories, and counter-stories (Bell, 2003; Chapman, 2005; Gladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). By employing a narrative inquiry approach, this research focuses on the stories gathered from interviews with artists, educators, and arts administrators working in the field of OST arts programming to supplement current scholarship on CRT and OST programming.

For all narrative researchers, a central question revolves around which voice or voices researchers would use as they interpret and represent the voices of those they study. And although all qualitative researchers address the question of the relationship between the relatively small “sample” they study and some larger whole, this question is particularly poignant for narrative researchers, who often present the narratives of a very small number of individuals – or even of just one individual – in their published works. (Chase, 2005, p. 652).

Both CRT and narrative research focus on voice; the voice of the researcher and the participant, paying close attention to the relationship between the two. This research adheres to the representation of stories shared by respondents.

CRT is seen as a valid approach to examining race in social institutions, such as educational programming, because “only through listening can the conviction of seeing the world one way be challenged” (Parker & Lynn, 2002, p. 10). Storytelling often emerges from interviews and case studies, providing detailed accounts of both overt and covert instances of institutional racism (Bell, 2003; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Solórzano & Yasso, 2001). The stories that evolve from CRT methods give life to the social justice component of study by empowering the participants to own their stories and voice opinions that are rarely heard or requested (Chapman, 2005). Because of this validation of storytelling in research, Chapters III through VI include a narrative, or composite story, that highlight the main findings of each chapter in relating the tenets of CRT to current OST arts programming in Chicago, Illinois.

Role of the Researcher

Just as accuracy is crucial in representing participants in narrative inquiry, it is equally important to address the role of the researcher. To honestly approach an investigation of race in OST arts programming, I feel, as a White woman, the responsibility of sharing my own “race narrative”, giving the reader an understanding of the perspective from which this research is written. The following narrative represents my interest in race relations as I discuss how my ideas on race, racism, and inequality have evolved over my lifetime.

The Coolest White Girl on Campus

My mom once told me that when I was little and we would go for walks around the neighborhood or out shopping at the mall she would often get stared at, mostly in the summer months, as my olive complexion, a product of my Italian and Hungarian paternal roots, rendered me a few shades darker than her. This was a suburb in the early eighties. She later went on to tell my father before she passed away that he should not be surprised if I marry outside of my race. This was not said in disappointment but just as matter of fact as talking about the weather. She had come a long way. When I was in high school, my mother and I took one of those quizzes in Seventeen magazine that supposedly helped mothers and daughters get to know each other better. We were very close so I didn't expect to be surprised by her answers. One question asked, "Would you rather your daughter tell you that she is A: a lesbian or that she is B: dating outside of her race?" and my mother chose A! I never saw that coming. It disturbed me. Now I would have preferred an option C: either one is fine with me! But at the time it was upsetting to know my mother felt that way. It seemed out of her character.

Also while in high school - a 90% white, middle-class, and mostly Christian public school outside of Pittsburgh, PA - I clearly remember running into a fellow classmate in the bathroom, and as we were fixing our make-up in the mirror, she asked me if I was black. And I didn't know what to say. Am I black? No. But she didn't ask in a curious way; she asked in an accusatory way.

College was next. Although I attended a 90% white, middle-class, mostly Christian liberal arts college just outside of Columbus, OH, through the community

service scholarship I had received, I found myself amid the most diverse group of classmates I had ever known; black men and women who I admired. My black friends unofficially dubbed me the ‘coolest white girl on campus’. I was flattered at the time because I felt a part of their community, but always knew that I could never identify with the struggles they faced merely based on their race because although they thought I was ‘cool’, I was still white. I now know that my interest in race issues were not so much about fitting in or being a part of a community of people, but were about learning to become an ally in a system that favors me for my whiteness.

Four years passed and I had been working with a dear friend to run a weekly after-school mentoring program for students from a middle school in Columbus. They had little money, many troubles both school and community wide, but yet so much spirit. I had almost quit several times. It was hard. To most of our black mentors who attended public schools in Columbus, the stories of our students were nothing new and not unlike their own. Once, one of the young men confessed to me that he had no bed to sleep in then in the same breath, offered me a can of Sprite from his backpack. How could I ever help to change the injustices our kids faced? As an artist, I painted portraits of my black and white friends who I felt were working toward the same social justice goals as myself. I stuck with the mentoring program I had almost quit many times.

Years later, I find I am okay with my whiteness. I still feel guilt and a passion for fighting injustice. My investigation of cultural workers in Chicago, IL who are engaging youth in arts programming was inspiring, not only for me, but for the future. The work of Steven Evans of Street-Level Youth Media, Paula Gilovich with About Face Youth

Theatre, Olivia Gude with the Spiral Workshop, Indira Johnson of the Shanti Foundation for Peace, Jim Duignan of the Stockyard Institute, J. Paul Preseault of the Tribes Project, Robbie Q. Telfer with Young Chicago Authors, and Claudia Lara with After School Matters is changing the lives of Chicago youth. And this isn't a feel good, warm and fuzzy, let's paint and write a poem kind of change. It is a creating community, social justice movement, cultural producer, and professional artist kind of change. And to this research, as the teens bring to their artistic pursuits, as the artists and educators bring to their craft, I bring my own history.

Anticipated Ethical Issues

As a White woman, I see potential for criticism from the field for my decision to utilize a CRT lens. As a framework that allows for stories to emerge that are counter to majority culture, it is a potential point of criticism that the narratives and data collected through interviews are analyzed and retold by a person of the majority culture.

Site Selection

To address OST arts programs based on the tenets of CRT, I chose to narrow my focus by interviewing professionals in the field of OST arts programs in Chicago, Illinois. By utilizing purposive sampling, I conducted research at After School Matters in Chicago, Illinois, where I interned during the summer of 2008. In addition to my familiarity with the city of Chicago due to my internship, I was also inspired by a presentation given at the University of Oregon in the spring of 2008 by Olivia Gude, artist, educator, and director of The Spiral Workshop at the University of Illinois at Chicago. I then did a comprehensive search of OST arts programs offered in the city by

searching online, gathering a list of contacts, emailing them for more information and to set up interviews, as well as soliciting them for other contacts that would be relevant for this study. In the end, I interviewed eight individuals that, although they work in various facets around the city, represented eight different OST arts programs in Chicago. They included:

- Jim Duignan, founder and director of The Stockyard Institute, an artists project focusing on Chicago communities, engaging youth and community members through electronic and visual arts, social activism, and radical pedagogy (*The Stockyard Institute*, n.d.).
- Steven Evans, programs coordinator for Street-Level Youth Media (Street-Level). Street-Level uses media arts and technology to help foster self-expression, communication, and promote social change with Chicago youth (www.street-level.org/About/history.html).
- Paula Gilovich, former education and outreach coordinator for About Face Youth Theatre (AFYT), a program of About Face Theatre that works with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and ally teens in Chicago to promote social justice initiatives focusing on issues that affect their communities (http://aboutfacetheatre.com/?pg=afyt_about).
- Olivia Gude, director of the Spiral Workshop and community public art guide editor for the Chicago Public Art Group. For both organizations, Gude works with Chicago youth and future educators to develop curriculum based on social themes that allow students to express their views of the world through

the visual arts

(http://www.uic.edu/classes/ad/ad382/sites/SpiralWorkshop/SW_index.html).

- Indira Freitas Johnson, founder and co-executive director of Shanti Foundation for Peace (Shanti). Shanti combines the practices of teaching non-violence and the arts to create both in-school and out-of-school programs in visual, literary, and performance art (http://www.shantifoundationforpeace.org/About_Shanti.html).
- Claudia Lara, artist and instructor for After School Matters (ASM). ASM works with Chicago youth to provide work skills through apprenticeship and internship opportunities with professionals in the field. Developed from their nationally recognized gallery³⁷ program, ASM continues to utilize visual, performing, media, culinary, and literary arts to help teens succeed in and after school (<http://www.afterschoolmatters.org/>).
- J. Paul Preseault is the founder and director of The Tribes Project (Tribes). Tribes provides a platform for expression and open exploration of race and culture in contemporary society. Tribes began in Seattle and continues to develop in Chicago, challenging teens to break away from their comfort zone and perform controversial plays on themes of race, ethnicity, and nationality (<http://www.tribesproject.org/>).
- Robbie Q. Telfer is a spoken word performer and performance director for Young Chicago Authors. Young Chicago Authors strives to help Chicago teens through artistic development and mentorship through creative writing,

performance and publication in efforts to remove barriers of intolerance and transform their lives and society (*Young Chicago Authors*, n.d.).

Delimitations and Limitations

To narrow the scope of my research, I have chosen to focus on data and narratives gathered from arts professionals working in Chicago, Illinois. By conducting an Internet search of after-school and summer arts programs working primarily with youth of color ages 14-21 and using key words such as “race”, “colorblindness”, “social justice”, and “youth voice”, I compiled a list of relevant organizations. I contacted staff persons from the organization that worked directly with teens to set up interviews.

Research Timeline

My research timeline (Figure 2) begins with the initial formation of my research proposal and ends with my date of defense. An extensive review of CRT literature and OST arts programs was conducted throughout the length of the research, as new scholarship emerges in each field regularly.

Spring 2008	Completed <i>Research Methods</i>
Summer 2008	Internship with After School Matters Built professional network
Fall 2008	Developed research proposal Conducted initial literature review
Winter 2009	Completed second research course requirement, <i>Folklore Fieldwork</i> Submitted Human Subject protocol Approval of Human Subject, Mar. 2009
Spring 2009	Contacted case study sites and scheduled interviews
Summer 2009	Document analysis of each site Conducted interviews at case study sites Transcribed and coded interviews
Fall 2009	Analyzed data and wrote document draft
Winter 2010	Submitted final document to the University of Oregon under Graduate School Guidelines Conducted Final Defense

Figure 2. Research Timeline

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

As illustrated in Figure 3, research was conducted in Chicago, Illinois by interviewing professionals in the OST arts field working with eight organizations in the city. With a qualitative research approach, data was collected through document analysis, participant observation, and interviews. Participant observation provided insight into youth participation with the programs while document analysis and interviews helped to uncover ways in which CRT applies to OST arts programming. Interviews were conducted with administrators and artist/instructors who either developed and/or instructed programs including dance, musical theater, vocal performance, the visual arts, and the literary arts.

By incorporating continual literature review on the broad conceptual framework areas (Figure 1) of CRT and education, as well as OST arts programming, this explanatory research supports the data collected through the interview and story gathering process. After a detailed analysis, coding, and extraction of themes, applications of CRT to the OST arts field are proposed.

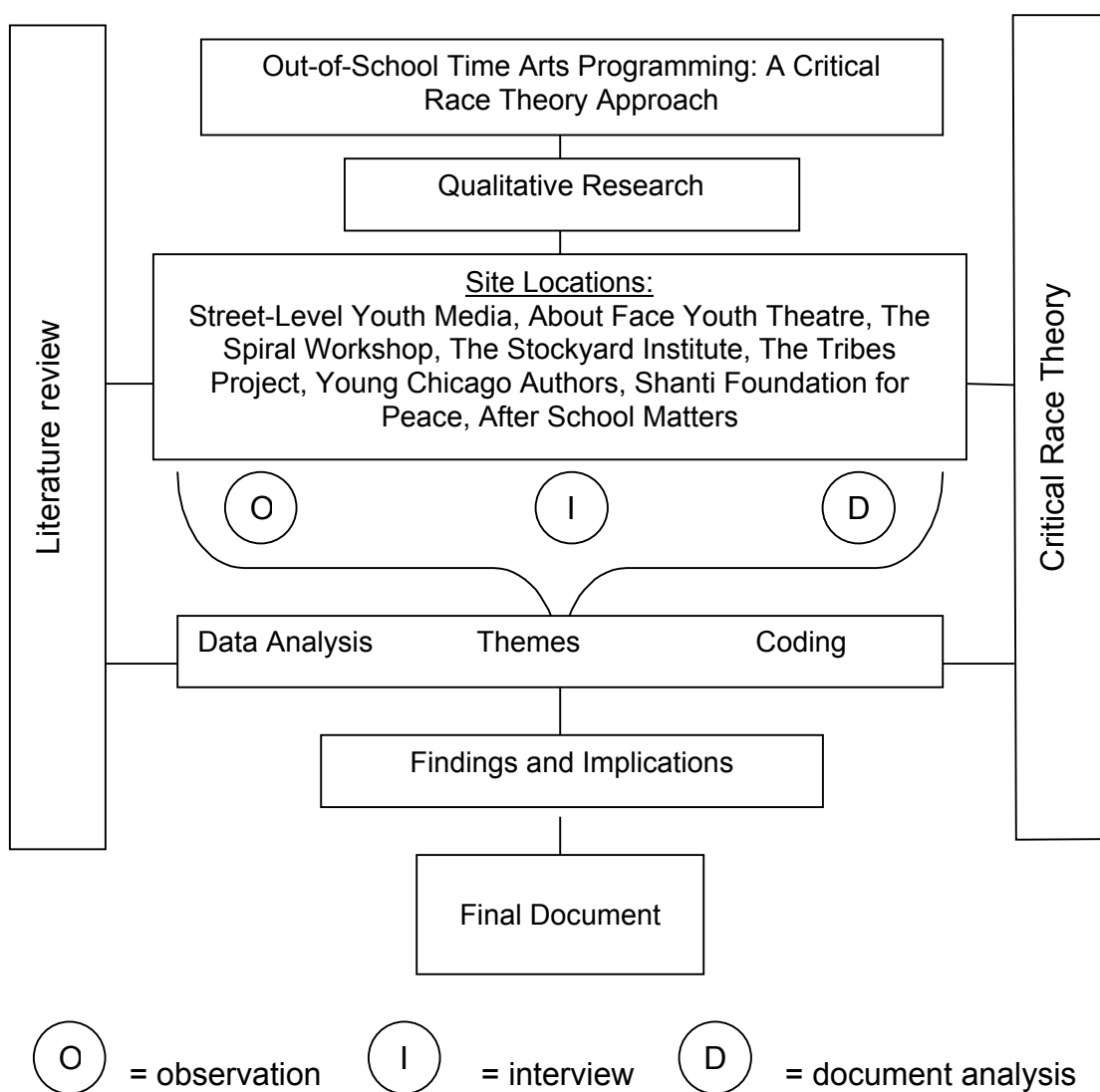


Figure 3. Data Collection Schematic

Data Collection Instruments

The data collection process included an ongoing document analysis specific to each respondent, taking notes on supplemental documents and websites of their respective organizations and extracting codes and themes to contribute to final implications and findings (Appendix A). This narrative inquiry involved interviewing arts administrator or program coordinators as well as those administering the curriculum including instructors and teaching artists (Appendix B and C). When permitted, I used a voice recorder, took extensive fieldnotes during the interviews and participant observation, and then transcribed all recorded data. Because the participants involved in this study work with vulnerable populations, i.e. minors, I utilized participant observation, rather than direct interviews with youth involved in the programming (Appendix D).

Recruitment Instruments and Consent Forms

I created recruitment letters and consent forms, which I mailed or emailed to inform potential participants of their opportunity and rights for involvement in my research (Appendix E and Appendix F). Signed consent forms will remain filed in a locked filing cabinet for three years as required by the Office for Protection of Human Subjects of the University of Oregon.

Preliminary Coding and Analysis Procedures

As shown in data schematic Figure 3, document analysis, participant observation, and interviews informed the data for analysis and coding for common themes. Coding data garnered from a variety of qualitative investigation methods, implications for

connecting the OST arts field and CRT are revealed. Themes that I anticipated to find during my coding process are related to arts education, race, colorblindness, multicultural education, white privilege, and curriculum models.

Data Collection and Disposition Procedures

To ensure accuracy during interviews, I used a digital recorder to record proceedings when permitted. I also took written field notes. The consent form clearly offers the participant the right to determine the level of confidentiality one wishes to maintain during involvement with this research. Digital documents including interview transcriptions are stored on an external hard drive accessible only to the researcher and paper documents including fieldnotes are in a lockable file cabinet. I will continue to keep paper documentation and recorded material including names and personal information of participants in a locked filing cabinet after my final defense, and may reference collected data for future publications.

Strategies for Validating Findings

Each data collection instrument (Appendices A-C) offer the participant the opportunity for a member check, which I utilized to validate my findings, giving the interviewees several weeks to review data in which they have been identified and make any corrections or clarifications.

Organization of Study

The study is organized into seven chapters. Chapter I serves as an introduction to the study. Chapter II the history of CRT and it's evolution from critical legal studies to the field of education research, as well as distills current CRT education research into

four main tenets. Chapters III through VI focus on one of the four tenets of CRT in relationship to the OST arts field and include a composite story to highlight the current climate of youth programming in Chicago, Illinois. Although each respondent and their associated organization do not contribute a full narrative to this study, the data collected through the interviews supports scholarship in the fields of CRT and OST. Chapter VII provides a summary of findings and proposes implications for the CRT and OST arts fields.

CHAPTER II

SYNTHESIZING CRITICAL RACE THEORY

In this research, I address the field of OST arts programming through a CRT lens. First, it is crucial to discuss CRT, the history, and the applications to both practices in law and education. Because of CRT's connection with education policy and practice and the OST fields' position as a partner of K-12 education, I believe that a clear connection between CRT and the OST field can be made. With a strong understanding of CRT, this chapter further explains the methodology in which the OST arts field will be analyzed and positions the reader to better understand the lens in which the OST arts field will be examined.

Definition of CRT

To understand CRT and its relationship to education policy and subsequently its application to the OST arts field, it is essential to first understand the major tenets originating the movement. Critical race theorists diverged from critical legal studies in the late 1970's when African American scholar Derrick Bell and White scholar Alan Freeman became increasingly frustrated at the progress of racial reform in the United States, feeling that critical legal studies was merely highlighting the problem and not proposing the solutions (Ladson-Billings, 1998). The following major tenets define CRT as a movement in legal studies:

1. CRT recognizes that racism is endemic to American life.

2. CRT expresses skepticism toward dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy.
3. CRT challenges ahistoricism and insists on a contextual/historical analysis of the law...Critical race theorists...adopt a stance that presumes that racism has contributed to all contemporary manifestations of group advantage and disadvantage.
4. CRT insists on recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin in analyzing law and society.
5. CRT is interdisciplinary.
6. CRT works toward the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression. (Matsuda et al., as cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2005, p. 33).

As adapted from the above list developed in critical legal studies, CRT in education began in the mid 1990's as scholars took note of the effectiveness of addressing race and racism in the legal arena through this theoretical lens. Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995) are credited with the introduction of CRT in education with their article "Towards a Critical Race Theory in Education". This seminal text for the field of education is often cited as the first publication to critically analyze race and education and is referenced in almost every subsequent article on CRT and education. Close to 15 years of research and publications have followed, most recently the collection of CRT writings in *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education* edited by Edward Taylor, David Gillborn, and Gloria Ladson-Billings (2009) noting the commitment of

CRT scholars to the cause of social justice through theoretical inquiry and practice over time. Education scholars have adapted this theory in several ways, however, for the purposes of this research, a synthesis of CRT formations in education scholarship reveals the following tenets:

1. CRT recognizes that racism is prevalent in American society.
2. CRT challenges dominant ideology by critiquing liberal principles of race-neutrality and colorblindness, introducing instead whiteness as a social marker.
3. CRT is committed to not only discussing race in relationship to society but to social justice and the eradication of all forms of oppression.
4. CRT accepts experiential knowledge through the use of storytelling, narratives, and counter-narratives, thereby providing an outlet for voice for people of color. (Bell, 2003; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lopez, 2003; Lynn & Parker, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

In the following section, context for each tenet of CRT as it applies to the education field is provided. With this context in mind, the following chapters will address how each tenet is applicable to current trends in OST arts programming.

Providing Context: The Tenets of CRT in Education

Tenet 1: CRT recognizes that racism is prevalent in American society.

In Omi and Winant (1994) groundbreaking work, *Racial Formations in the United States*, they argue that:

most racial theory fails to capture the centrality of race in American politics and American life...Most theories are marked by a tendency to *reduce* race to a mere manifestation of other supposedly more fundamental social and political relationships such as ethnicity or class. Our doubts about this literature derived from this reductionism – an inability to grasp the uniqueness of race, its historical flexibility and immediacy in everyday experience and social conflict (p. 2).

CRT does just what Omi and Winant state that most theory does not. It places race and racism central to all social, political, and educational experiences. Lopez (2003) asserts that racism is so prevalent in daily life that it has been normalized, and we fail to address it because we take it for granted. In the field of education, CRT critiques racist practices in American schools evident in financial policy and curriculum development. The following paragraphs will illustrate examples of CRT's approach to education policy and practice. This approach will inform the lens to which the OST arts field will be examined.

“No area of schooling underscores inequity and racism better than school funding” (Ladson-Billings as cited by Aleman, 2006, p. 12). The majority of funding for public schools in America is directly related to the property value of home and land in their immediate vicinity. It is also important to note, “when civil rights leaders of the

1950s and 1960s built their pleas for social justice on an appeal to civil and human rights, they were ignoring the fact that the society was based on *property rights*” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 16). Uneven distribution of state funds to school districts is a common cause of tension between schools that are under-funded and schools that have strong financial standing (Aleman, 2006; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

For example, in Aleman’s study of financial policy in a Texas district, a series of interviews with Mexican American superintendents of poor public schools led him to discover that there are many reasons these education leaders do not bring up race in fighting for education funding reform. One participant stated the reason to leave the issue of race untouched was because “he did not want to be labeled as someone taking a handout and believed a racial discourse would stigmatize the group as making excuses or ‘playing the race card’” (Aleman, 2006, p. 127). Aleman advocates for the use of CRT perspective by the superintendents of the Texas district. He felt that their disinterest in banning together to effect policy change left the students of their district at a disadvantage. “They expected increasing diversity to spark reform – and did not address the core issues of property, economic privilege, and racial hierarchy set forth by CRT researchers” (Aleman, 2006, p. 131).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) make the connection between the quantity and quality of school curriculum as the relationship between intellectual property and property value. Tate (1995) goes on to state that curriculum development must be based on more than national standards and must consider the institution, culture, economic, and policy contexts. In other words, curriculum for schools does not exist in a vacuum and

many factors contribute to a successful education policy. CRT scholars work to ‘even the playing field’ for students of color.

CRT’s impact on educational curriculum is most notable in its critique of multicultural education, noting that, “...as critical race theory scholars we unabashedly reject a paradigm that attempts to be everything to everyone and consequently becomes nothing for anyone, allowing the status quo to prevail” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 25). As an example, the celebration of diversity and multiculturalism through ethnic food festivals at public schools provides one moment for the ‘other’ to showcase what makes ‘them’ a ‘them’, but in reality trivializes race and culture to a combination of food groups doing little to affect permanent change. Rousseau and Dixson (2005) agree with Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) in that multicultural education is relegated to diversity celebrations instead of the movements original intent to examine how difference “serves to disadvantage some and advantage others” (p. 41).

One solution to addressing cultural differences in education is to employ the arts. Wright (2007) notes “arts education based on the notion of cultural democracy, is the most successful and most effective way of celebrating diverse cultures within a pluralistic society” (p. 125). For the purposes of this research, the arts are addressed in OST settings, including after-school and summer learning programs, both of which are components of *complementary learning*. Complementary learning is a systemic approach to educating youth that involves in-school, OST, and summer learning as well as a focus on family involvement in education (Weiss, et. al., 2009). By engaging in arts programs in their communities, “...young people transform the world about them by making it their

own to create, reshape and carry forward in mental and verbal images” (Heath, 1998, p. 5). Data collected from interview participants also suggests that the arts outside of school are not only a place where students develop personally, but learn to engage critically in their communities, often producing work with a social justice purpose.

Beverly Daniel Tatum (1994) posits curriculum based on an understanding of racism that is not only needed to teach in majority white classrooms, but is also essential in forming white allies, those of the majority population who engage in honest exploration of their white identities, and how this racial identification affects their social status as well as their abilities to confront racism. Tatum (1994) utilizes Janet Helm’s model of white racial identity to help “students abandon racism and define a positive white identity” (ERIC as cited in Tatum, 1994, p. 277). The model addresses white identity development in her college classroom. Students engaged in journal writing to privately come to terms with their white identity, and the status and privilege that come with it. As in CRT’s use of storytelling and narrative, Tatum (1994) found that her students made major transformations in racial understanding based on a curriculum that allowed them to accept their whiteness, its associated privilege, and take steps in promoting social justice by writing and telling their own stories. One of Tatum’s students began independent research after the course by surveying other white women who may or may not identify themselves as allies. This was not only a way to contribute to scholarship on white allies but also a way to maintain her commitment to anti-racist actions. This is an example of how a majority white classroom can come to terms with the prevalent social construct of racism and then act to affect change.

Tenet 2: CRT challenges dominant ideology by critiquing liberal principles of colorblindness, introducing instead whiteness as a social marker.

The history and evolution of the movement is addressed and situated in broader themes prevalent to the discourse of racism including *colorblindness* and *whiteness*, or white privilege. These terms continually appear within CRT and education policy literature, therefore are significant for the purposes of this research.

Critical race theorists are extremely resistant to the term colorblindness as it diminishes the experiences and struggles of people of color to something neutral and indistinct (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Lopez, 2003; Lynn & Parker, 2006). It is common to hear a phrase similar to ‘*it doesn’t matter if they’re black, white, or purple*’ to denote the acceptance of race in reference to diversity. Critical race theorists argue that *it does* matter what ‘color’ you are and this ‘color’ determines the way you are treated in society, and for the purpose of this research, in education both in and out-of-school, “the belief that colorblindness will eliminate racism is not only shortsighted but reinforces the notion that racism is a personal – as opposed to systematic – issue” (Lopez, 2003, p. 69).

Although a deeply rooted and accepted term in the liberal paradigm, being ‘colorblind’ can become a form of micro-aggression. For example, when a student of color sees value in the color of his or her skin and the broader cultural values that his or her ‘race’ represents, the theory of colorblindness implies that the student is wrong, that color does not matter, and in essence, propagates white privilege (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). By denying race, by not being able to see ‘race’, proponents of colorblindness

perpetuate the notion that racism is not a debilitating construct of society that continues to permeate social, economic, and political entities.

Several CRT scholars use the term whiteness more often than the term racism to describe the climate of privilege in society. The term refers to a broad understanding of white privilege, as what is taken for granted or understood as truth in dominant culture, and is not saved for radical and racist organizations (Gillborn, 2005, 2008; Lynn & Parker, 2006). Scholars again refer to legal scholarship where “ ‘White’ has historically stood not only for members of the White race but for a set of concepts and privileges associated with it, while Black has been defined by the legal denial of those privileges” (Lynn & Parker, 2006, p. 263). Gillborn (2008) argues that White interest is valued above Black students in all forms of education policy including decision making at a national level by a majority of White politicians, the inability and inexperience of teachers to deal with race in the classroom, the media’s selectivity of content in reporting, and the focus on class difference with racial difference as an after thought.

One of the most influential impacts of CRT in the law and education is the theory of whiteness as property. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) summarize this theory to include the “right to disposition, rights to use and enjoyment, reputation and status property, and the absolute right to exclude” (p. 22). This theory is overtly and covertly related to education policy. Some overt examples are the construction of policy as related to financial property, curriculum policy, and professional development standards.

North (2008) defines this property values in terms of “social goods”, including material goods such as housing and health care, as well as “cultural goods”, such as

whiteness, that “...normalize, and therefore privilege, middle-class, White, heterosexual, able-bodied, Christian, English-fluent males” (para. 10). In terms of educational equity and in turn financial success and stability, “ a deep seated commitment to a “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” mentality helps to conceal the ways in which, the values, perspectives and life worlds of dominant groups permeate cultural and institutional norms” (North, 2008, para. 10). The voice of the minority culture is then, in essence, the opposite of ‘the norm’, in other words, abnormal. Fox (2002) goes on to note that:

The judgmentalism of whitely people and the presumed rightness that protects them from having to justify their ability to know right from wrong shed light on what is intuitively wrong with conflating critical thinking and a particular political agenda. (p. 202).

So as education policy makers seek to combine education standards and the presumably ‘correct’ way of living and educating based on White ideals, a critical portion of the population is left out of this conversation.

Tenet 3: CRT is committed to not only discussing race in relationship to society but to social justice and the eradication of all forms of oppression.

Thirdly, CRT in education positions itself not only as an academic theory and methodology but also as a form of social activism (Chapman, 2005; Lopez, 2003; Lynn & Parker, 2002, 2006; Solórzano & Yasso, 2001; Stovall, 2006). Gillborn (2008) notes:

Fortunately, as critical social scientists and educators, we do not need to look inside the heads of policy-makers – their intentions are irrelevant. What matters is the effect that changes in policy and practice have for particular minoritized

groups. A focus on outcomes (rather than intent) is a basic tenet of any serious attempt to understand race inequality and is already well established in relevant social policy. (p. 240).

The framework is open for both theory and practice. As a research method, CRT can function as an advocate for changing education policy and in turn a broader cultural understanding of our shared society. Here also lies a potential connection with OST programming, specifically those that utilize the arts as a form of social justice and as a forum for civic engagement. As Gillborn (2008) states:

Either way, we know enough about education policy and practice to go a long way towards eradicating race injustice in education (funding urban schools to a realistic level; securing testing regimes that do not unfairly discriminate on racial lines; abandoning selective teaching grouping; broadening the curriculum; diversifying the teaching force; and genuinely acting on the results of ethnic minorities would all be a good start. (p. 499).

Others in the field of education are following suit. Stovall (2006), a K-12 educator notes, “what intrigued me most was CRT’s call to action in terms of bridging theoretical concepts to practice” (p. 232). As a participant in CORP: Using the City as a Classroom Program, Stovall (2006) worked with Chicago teens in a class entitled “Race, Class, Media and Chicago” which he based on the tenets of CRT as applied to education. They studied everything from political cartoons in the news, to the Black Panther Party, to the war in Iraq. By utilizing CRT methodology, the students had a framework to base their discussions on relevant social topics, encouraging them to explore race as a central issue.

Stovall's (2006) call to action is this, "...this engagement must include preparing others, particularly students, to become involved in social justice" (p. 238).

The Spiral Workshop, a program of the University of Illinois at Chicago Art Education Department, spearheaded by Olivia Gude, implements curriculum that shares characteristics of a CRT perspective and employs elements of social justice as central to the mission of the organization. As the mission illustrates:

Spiral Workshop is a place in which teen artists and emerging art teachers work together to envision and create new styles of art education--an education that is rooted in the stories and concerns of the students and their communities through connecting the practices of contemporary art-making with the practices of contemporary pedagogy. (<http://www.uic.edu/classes/ad/ad382/>).

One of the main goals of the Spiral Workshop is to teach teens and future teachers to think in layers of meaning, continually challenging social constructs of 'reality'. The purpose of the curriculum is to always combine culture and art making, but to "never remain complacent in routines and rules" (<http://www.uic.edu/classes/ad/ad382/>). The Spiral Workshop fulfills several tenets of CRT including giving voice to those who are often silenced, in this case, urban youth of Chicago, Illinois.

Tenet 4: CRT accepts experiential knowledge through the use of storytelling, narratives, and counter-narratives and the subsequent platform for the development of voice.

The fourth tenet of CRT in education focuses on the use of storytelling or narrative and counter-narrative (Bell, 2003; Chapman, 2005; Lopez, 2003; Lynn & Parker, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Storytelling is seen as a valid approach to

examining race in social institutions, such as educational programming, because “only through listening can the conviction of seeing the world one way is challenged” (Lynn & Parker, 2002, p. 10). Along the lines of storytelling, counter-narratives work to bring light to marginalized segments of society forcing the dominant culture to view the main characters as the ‘norm’ instead of the ‘aspiring to be’ (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

For the purposes of this research, a CRT approach to storytelling and narratives create opportunities for voice through the arts, in particular the often-silenced voices of people of color and those working with youth of color in the Chicago area. Ladson-Billings (1998) states, “the use of voice or ‘naming your reality’ is a way that CRT links form and substance to scholarship” (p. 23). In this way, CRT not only serves as a lens to address society, but a means in which to express ones’ place within a greater community.

CRT is often challenged for relying too heavily on storytelling, as the credibility of the narrator and the truthfulness of the story can come into question. Critics of CRT also take issue with positioning one person of colors’ voice as the voice of all people of color (Duncan, 2005; Litowitz, 1997). In response to these criticisms “critical race theorists argue that these stories of discrimination and cultural survival and resilience are essential for uncovering institutionalized and endemic racism” (Villenas, Deyhle, & Parker, 1999, p. 35). Dixson and Rousseau (2005) assert that “CRT scholars believe and utilize personal narratives and other stories as valid forms of “evidence” and thereby challenge a “numbers only” approach to documenting inequity or discrimination, which tends to certify discrimination from a quantitative rather than a qualitative perspective” (p. 35).

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to contextualize CRT, its inception in legal studies, and subsequent adaptation to education research, and to prepare the reader to view the following chapter outlining current trends in OST arts programming through a CRT lens. By understanding that (1) CRT recognizes that racism is prevalent in American society; (2) CRT challenges dominant ideology by critiquing liberal principles of race-neutrality and colorblindness, introducing instead whiteness as a social marker; (3) CRT is committed to not only discussing race in relationship to society but to social justice and the eradication of all forms of oppression; and (4) CRT accepts experiential knowledge through the use of storytelling, narratives, and counter-narratives (Bell, 2003; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lopez, 2003; Lynn & Parker, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001) this research is positioned to provide an explanation of each tenet as applied to the OST arts field.

The following chapters will illustrate the connections, or lack thereof, between the four tenets of CRT and current theory and practice in OST arts organizations. By combining narrative, literature review, and data collected in the field, the relationship between the four tenets of CRT and OST arts programs is explained in Chapters III through VI. For the purposes of this research, eight arts professionals representing eight different youth arts organizations provide insight into the available after-school and summer learning opportunities in Chicago, Illinois.

In the following chapter, the first tenet, *CRT recognizes that racism is prevalent in American society*, is examined in relationship to OST arts organizations including a

focus on the Stockyard Institute, founded and directed by Jim Duignan and The Spiral Workshop led by Olivia Gude. The Stockyard Institute works throughout Chicago in some of the “toughest” neighborhoods, utilizing radio, visual arts, and critical pedagogy to support youth engaging in activism that enhances their communities (J. Duignan, personal communication, July 22, 2009). The Spiral Workshop is another Chicago-based program that works with participating students to develop their ideas in conjunction with the arts. By working with the University of Illinois at Chicago’s Department of Art Education, The Spiral Workshop connects perspective teachers with youth in an exploration of artistic mediums, investigative themes, and the space to challenge social constructs including race and gender (O. Gude, personal communication, July 21, 2009).

CHAPTER III
RACE, RACISM, AND OST ARTS PROGRAMMING

Tenet 1:

CRT Recognizes that Racism is Prevalent in American Society

In CRT, racism plays a central role in analyzing all social structures. For the purposes of this research the OST arts field is analyzed in relationship to the tenets of CRT in education. Because many OST programs serve the same population of students as K-12 public education institutions, this researcher sees a clear connection between CRT as related to education scholarship and its transferability to OST programs and policy. This chapter addresses two crucial points related to the first tenet of CRT in relationship to OST programming: (1) Program and curriculum development for urban youth through the arts; and (2) the concept and application of *racial grammar* (Bonilla-Silva lecture, Apr. 2009) in the OST field by relating current examples of OST arts programs and funding policy and practice to both program development and delivery. OST programming, after-school programming, and summer learning are discussed as a complementary learning system (Weiss, et al., 2009); that is not independent of the learning taking place in schools, but a system that supplements, or compliments in-school education (Weiss, et al., 2009; <http://www.hfrp.org/>; Terzian & Moore, 2009). By analyzing relevant scholarship on race and racism as well as looking to the data collected in the field from respondents who lead complementary learning programs for urban youth

in the city of Chicago, I connect the first tenet of CRT in education, *CRT recognizes that racism is prevalent in American society*, to the policy and practice of OST arts programs.

As mentioned in Chapter II, storytelling and narrative are crucial components to CRT (Bell, 2003; Chapman, 2005; Lopez, 2003; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn & Parker, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). In the vein of CRT, each chapter begins with a composite story gathered in the field from study participants, artists, administrators, and art educators working primarily with youth of color in the city of Chicago. The purpose of the story is to highlight the main themes of each chapter and to expose actual happenings in the field that are often lost in policy publications and statistical data.

The following narrative is in reference to the creation and evolution of *The Gang-Proof Suit (2000)*, which was the first major project of The Stockyard Institute, spearheaded by founder and director Jim Duignan. The Stockyard Institute:

...is an artist project that explores Chicago communities as an underground, a viable, activated space to engage youth, community residents, and artists through a small, open interchange of projects and programs in electronic and visual arts, social activism and experimental pedagogy. (*The Stockyard Institute*, n.d.).

Stockyard was founded by Duignan in 1995 and continues to work with Chicago public schools, neighborhoods, artists, and most importantly teens, to develop and share projects that are relevant to their lives and their communities (personal communication, July 22, 2009). The Institute works to collaborate, explore, and enable exchange of stories, art and ideas.

One such story is the impetus, development, and execution of *The Gang Proof Suit*, (2000). Duignan articulates his passion and vision for working with youth in Chicago which is collaborative in nature and just as much the idea of the students as his own (personal communication, July 22, 2009).

The Evolution of the *Gang-Proof Suit* (2000)

I had pulled together a group of young people in a building next door, and I thought, “Well, we're going to start”. I was thinking about developing some kind of collective, some kind of artist project around this arts education pursuit that dealt with the public, that dealt with the young peoples’ questions. And so I was asking them about things that they were interested in. Things that they were afraid of and such and one of the kids had said that his biggest fear was to be shot in the back accidentally on his way to school. And we began to create drawings and make a design for a gang proof suit (Figure 4). It got some attention because it was designed as a fully armored plated outfit that could withstand stray gunshots, stray bullets, and really protect the child. And so it drew attention away from this kind of issue of education, or educating, to a kind of public health and personal safety and then drew our attention back on us, on how we came about to get to that place, which was through the arts.

There was no intention of wanting to make their home life or their community life more difficult for them, and I don't think they felt that way. It was so tight. The Back of

the Yards¹ was so small in a way that neighbors and family members and, in that case, one of the kid's fathers was one of the lieutenants of the gang, so there was this really big challenge. How do you get the kids to talk about it without feeling that you are exposing them to sort of tension? So the project became really important in that regard; that we could do something directly involved with the social fabric of the community and get them to feel as though they could talk about it in a sort of free, nurturing, safe space, but others in the community, teachers, parents, could look at the work and say 'there's something intelligent about it, distinctive, dynamic, about it.' I certainly didn't want to put any of them at-risk and that became a really important, a very important part of the program.

They were in sixth and seventh grade, and so they didn't see the gangs as being anything other than a part of their lives and in some ways, to some of the kids, a solution. It was an education to some of the adults I brought in too. Teachers had this understanding of these "bad neighborhoods" in Chicago without also having an understanding of what constitutes a "bad neighborhood". So as soon as they got connected up with the kids their whole sense of that was gone. It was goofy, and so that has always been an important part of the work to be able to show the kids, and what it is

¹ The Back of the Yards is a neighborhood located in the community of New City in southwestern Chicago, extending from roughly 39th Street to 51st Street and from Halsted to Western Avenues. The 2000 census report on demographics listed The Back of the Yards community as 34.5% of population living below poverty level, 50.2% are Hispanic, 35.3% are Black or African American, and 12% of households receive public assistance Income (http://bync.org/?page_id=26).

that they mean and not assume that they know anything about anything. And that applied to us as well.

There is some video; PBS came in². It's a nice short piece, but it doesn't show all of the time leading up to it. And what that was about was getting the kids really open about talking about violence, talking about [gang] management, talking about how this particular way of living wasn't the same in every community in Chicago and then what contributes to this. How does it come about? What is the origin of sort of thug life? Street life? How does the media sort of contribute to this... popular culture, music? So the fashioning of the suit was a way to think about music, internal headphones, the temperature, the four seasons of Chicago. What would you make it out of? At the beginning, it was a bit about fashion, a bit about surveillance. Who would wear it? The questions started out simply and then became more articulate and connected to actually building a suit that would be more in terms of a kind of war fare outfit, and it was, literally at the end, about that. It was about drawing attention to this primary issue in this neighborhood through the project. But it was also about getting kids to understand how they could continue to sort of be in that neighborhood and function and love their families and their friends and not really take anything away other than the accomplishment of spending a long time working on a project and finding a way to satisfy this sort of capacity for educating themselves.

² In 2000, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) filmed the students involved with the Stockyard Institute's project, the *Gang-Proof Suit (2000)* as they completed the physical structure from the concept that the group had developed.

When PBS came in, I had already told the kids we had talked openly and freely about what it means to build this thing; it was conceptual. It was about this idea that we are thinking about our neighborhood and we're thinking about building a project about protecting us in this neighborhood. And our only sort of thought was to get to school safely. It was very innocent. When a reporter was asking the kids like 'hey do you know any gang members?' The kids kept changing the subject. They really kind of went off and kept from answering those questions. And I was hoping as I was listening that they thought the questions were rather ridiculous.

But I think they were really kind of holding true to this idea that we talked about, this information being withheld from the public. That those conversations we had in the studio space were ours, and that they would stay there. And I was really glad that they listened to that and thought that this was their space and our vocabulary that we built from the ground up, and it was important for them that this person didn't pay their dues to kind of get a piece of that (J. Duignan, personal communication, July 22,2009).



Figure 4. Computer Rendered Image of the *Gang-Proof Suit (2000)*. It was created by the youth working with The Stockyard Institute.

The computer generated image of the gang proof suit (Figure 4) is strikingly influenced by armor, illustrating the students' desires to be protected as they live their lives in their community. This chapter utilizes the lens of CRT to examine the central themes presented in Duignan's narrative including concepts of race and racism to OST arts programming, curriculum, and policy.

Programming and Curriculum Development: Policy and Practice

In the beginning of his narrative Duignan states, "I was thinking about developing some kind of collective, some kind of artist project around this arts education pursuit that

dealt with the public, that dealt with the young peoples' questions...through the arts" (personal communication, July 22, 2009). From 1998 to 2000, youth from The Back of the Yards neighborhood in Chicago worked with Duignan to develop the suit. Duignan (2000) writes:

We directed our dialogue to address and, when appropriate, confine selected conditions (power, violence, poverty, abuse) situated within the young people's lives as a primary place to deliberate what the work could represent. This individual project was not a singular reflection on a neighborhood disorder cited simply through the moderate descriptions and images that stand in for them. (The Stockyard Institute, n.d.)

As described in Chapter II, complementary learning is a systemic approach to educating youth that involves in school, OST, and summer learning as well as a focus on family involvement in education (Weiss, et al., 2009). The *Gang-Proof Suit (2000)* is an example of complementary learning in that it departs from the restrictions imposed upon schools from No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) and broadens the ways in which students are educated. By requiring schools to focus on core subjects such as math and science, strictly policing schools for test scores, and causing institutions to divert funding away from the arts and to other academic areas, NCLB (2001) policies create a crucial deficit in arts education. OST arts programs such as the Stockyard Institute fill in this deficit with more experimental ways of educating. Giroux (1998b) recognized the powerful form of education that students can receive beyond traditional K-12 public education. "As I have argued elsewhere – in popular spheres that shape their identities

through forms of knowledge and desire that appear absent from what is taught in schools” (Giroux, 1998b, p. 49). Often times, these programs are the only exposure to the arts for urban youth attending high-risk schools (J. Duignan, personal communication, July 22, 2009) and yet crucial for the development of identity and knowledge (Giroux, 1998).

The majority of funding from 21stCCLC goes to Title 1, high poverty school districts comprised mainly of students of color (Afterschool Investments Project, n.d.). If the majority of funding is being presented to a higher population of students of color, why then is there still a clear “racial gap” (Gillborn, 2005, p. 486) in student performance? Shirley Brice Heath (1999) noted that, “efforts are taking place in community organizations where young people spend their time beyond the hours of their formal schooling and employment” (p. 245). Heath wrote this over ten years ago, but as evident in the work going on in Chicago, Illinois at the organizations cited in this study, OST educators continue to use after-school and summer hours to help develop teens academic, artistic and employment skills and at sites independent of schools. On the other hand, “the majority of 21st CCLC programs are school-based, but some programs are located in the community or provide services on- and off-school sites” (Afterschool Investments Project, n.d., p. 4). The Stockyard Institute is just one example of a Chicago organization taking creative measures to educate youth through the arts in partnership with schools but located in the neighborhoods where the teen participants live. Although “the purpose of 21stCCLC is to support community learning centers that provide students with a broad array of academic enrichment services, including tutoring, homework help, and community service, as well as music, arts, sports, and cultural activities”

(Afterschool Investments Project, n.d., p. 3) there is little evidence in 21st CCLC literature of radical pedagogy influencing program content and curriculum, something Duignan, and other participants in this study, have referenced as being a crucial departure from mainstream curriculum imposed by NCLB (2001) (J. Duignan, personal communication, July 22, 2009; O. Gude, personal communication, July 21, 2009; J. P. Preseault, personal communication, July 23, 2009).

So as Duignan works to challenge youth of color to explore their neighborhood, to put their hopes and dreams and fears into their world through art, complementary learning systems are working to ensure that “all children will have the range of learning opportunities they need to meet high academic standards and to succeed not only in school but in the 21st century global economy and society” (Weiss, et al., 2009, p.1). Harvard Family Research Project’s “The Federal Role in Out-of-School Learning” (2009) article points out that diminishing the inequality of complementary learning experience for disadvantaged or at-risk youth is critical, but what I am suggesting, through a CRT lens, is that one must remain aware of context. Chappell (2006) also notes the need for context for after-school program content to “construct an understanding of youths’ cultural and physical worlds as a whole to develop such programming. That involves the analysis of institutional inequities and the way policies and schools employ a normative childhood versus a multiplicity of childhoods” (p. 11). Chappell (2006) goes on to note that:

Because many high-poverty schools are also populated with children of color (37 percent of 21st CCLC participants), researchers often suggest a relationship

among race, class, and academic failure (Dynarski et al. 2003; Marx and Pennington 2003). The policy delivers “social benefits” and “positive behavioral changes” to those targeted communities who are deficient according to an externally created educational standard (DOE 203b, 34). (p.10).

Therefore, we need to ask whose “21st century global economy and society” (Weiss, et al., 2009, p. 1) are we striving for? Who is being rewarded by promoting “positive social changes” in deficient, and I’ll argue, neighborhoods of color, and based on whose standards? “The Federal Role in Out-of-School Learning (2009)” goes on to state that:

disadvantaged and minority families report receiving less outreach from schools, even though educators report equal outreach to all families (Chen, 2001; National Center for Education Statistics, 2006). The reason for this difference in perception is not clear, but it underlines the differences in how families from different backgrounds experience the education system. Disadvantaged families have more logistical and resource challenges, including transportation challenges, inflexible work schedules, and lack of money to provide educational materials and have had previous negative experiences with schools and are less likely to have the social and cultural capital that is valued by the dominant middle-class culture and reinforced by educational institutions. (p. 12).

Prominent intellectual thinker, Cornel West notes in *Race Matters (1994)* that:

...for liberals, black people are to be “included” and “integrated” into “our” society and culture, while for conservatives they are to be “well behaved” and “worthy of acceptance” by “our” way of life. Both fail to see that the presence and

predicaments of black people are neither additions to nor defections from American life, but rather constitutive elements of that life. (p. 6).

Although West's words focus very much on the racial divide between Black and White, and the task ahead for cultural workers creating and implementing programs for urban youth is much more multi-cultural, CRT scholars insist that communities of color are recognized for their riches and their contributions to the current 21st century society, not that they must be changed to fit the parameters defined by majority white culture (Bell, 2003; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lopez, 2003; Lynn & Parker, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

In reference to the guidelines of 21stCCLC (2001), Chappell (2006) recommends, "perhaps education policy and curricular reform may look to children's narrative landscapes for increased understanding" (p. 11). By initiating the 21stCCLC (2001) program, the government intended that the:

program supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during nonschool hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program intends to help students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children. (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.).

This is precisely what Duignan does with the *Gang-Proof Suit (2000)* and the Stockyard Institute. The Stockyard Institute works through the arts, with students from high poverty and low-performing schools. Although Duignan's work with The Back of the Yards youth is an example of the types of programs 21st CCLC intended to support - that is low-income and high risk - his approach to curriculum development for this after-school project suggests a much richer and more developed theory of educating outside of classroom walls. The Stockyard Institute does not just partner artists with students as mentors to at-risk youth, it engages in years of research through the Pedagogical Factory and requires students to be the developers of their own knowledge (Duignan, personal communication, July 22, 2009). The Pedagogical Factory is a project of The Stockyard Institute where artists and educators can experiment with arts curriculum in a way that is open and available to educators and adaptable to a variety of learning environments including schools and community-based organizations (The Stockyard Institute, 2007). Duignan has been influenced by scholars John Dewey, Maxine Greene, Peter McLaren, and Paolo Freire for theories on educating youth and his commitment to using place as a tool to explore the questions teens have about themselves, their homes, and the greater world around them (personal communication, July 22, 2009). Majority culture and "socially acceptable" practices are not forced upon the youth; the youth develop their own knowledge on the subject at hand by engaging in critical exploration. In the narrative at the beginning of this chapter, Duignan states:

But it was also about getting kids to understand how they could continue to sort of be in that neighborhood and function and love their families and their friends and

not really take anything away other than the accomplishment of spending a long time working on a project and finding a way to satisfy this sort of capacity for educating themselves. (personal communication, July 22, 2009).

The Harvard Family Research Project denotes positive outcomes for participation in complementary learning as an ability to function in 21st century society. The Harvard Family Research Project suggests that the need for such complementary learning systems to ‘fix’ low-income minority neighborhoods implies that these neighborhoods are perhaps dysfunctional. So as Duignan is working with his low-income, minority students to engage them in meaningful work and help them to continue to live in and love their communities, the Harvard Family Research Project suggests that they should be disconnecting from their parents, family, and friends who have only helped to propagate low expectations and socially unacceptable behaviors (Weiss, et al, 2009) that will not help them in a 21st century world.

In the OST, the deficient model of educating children is ever-present. Recently the Harvard Family Research Project restructured their website, making it easier to search for terms determined to be of interest to practitioners in the field. The first category on their list is “at-risk”, a term which will be explored later in this chapter not only as a way to highlight student deficits in comparison to their “not-at-risk” counterparts, but also as a form of raced language. In reference to the role of communities in educating youth, “that approach provides a counter construction to that of traditional at-risk intervention, which stems from a deficit view of children and clings to a single educational and school community norm” (Chappell, 2006, p. 14). This runs parallel to CRT’s view of narrative

and counter-narrative in providing a platform to voice the experiences of people of color. So here the counter-narrative becomes crucial in education reform. The Stockyard Institute provides an example of the application of the arts in constructing counter-narratives.

Tackling Race in Public Spaces

While Jim Duignan works with youth through the Stockyard Institute and trains future educators as an instructor at DePaul University in Chicago, Olivia Gude is another artist and educator working in the field with the Spiral Workshop, a program that allows future teachers studying at the University of Illinois at Chicago to experiment with pedagogy and the arts by engaging youth in a visual art practice during weekend sessions. Like Duignan, Gude takes a critical look at art education and how the arts are a place to explore cultural and social topics. Gude states:

Through the art making, through the discussion, through introducing kids to various kinds of theory, we have them start to think about how so many things that they take as “natural” and “normal” are really socially constructed. (personal communication, July 21, 2009).

The goal of Spiral is not to proscribe a new single set of curriculum that should be implemented in all classrooms, that limits the ways in which the arts are taught within the social contexts of today—Spiral is a model in which current curriculum can be enhanced by allowing teens and teachers to investigate these curriculum artifacts and contemporary contexts with openness and creativity

(http://www.uic.edu/classes/ad/ad382/sites/SpiralWorkshop/SW_index.html).

The social construct of race is among the many themes that Gude has explored through her work with youth and communities through the Chicago Public Art Group and The Spiral Workshop over the years including *Fellows & Others* (1997) (Figure 5 and 6), a mural focusing on race and racism in the Bridgeport neighborhood of Chicago.

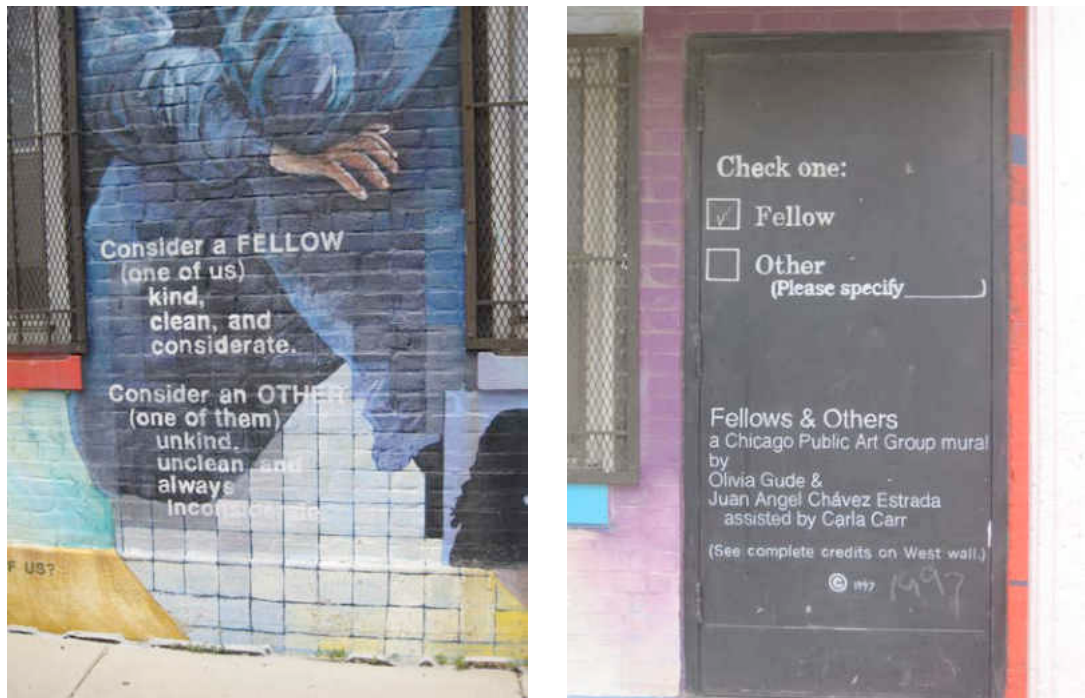


Figure 5. Detail Images of *Fellows & Others* (1997) Mural

Figure 5 includes two images taken of the *Fellows & Others* (1997) mural. By studying the images painted on the walls of the Fellowship House Youth Center in the Bridgeport neighborhood of Chicago, one would find the artists' discussion of race and racism through images of children, symbols of society like machinery, architectural

infrastructure like homes, buildings, and roads, as well as words to engage the viewer. The main theme is that of the ‘fellow’ and the ‘other’. As seen in Figure 5 a “fellow” is considered “one of us, kind, clean and considerate” whereas an “other” is considered “one of them, unkind, unclean and always inconsiderate”. Figure 5 asks the viewer to check which category they may belong, challenging the viewer to think about what it means to be a part of the group or separate. By working with community members of the Bridgeport neighborhood, including those that utilize the Fellowship House, the building on which the mural was created, Gude helped children, teens, and adults to explore issues of racism in their community, and empower them to make a public visual statement. Gude reflects on the project stating:

We worked with adults, teens, and children in the community to explore how everyday language encourages people to create dichotomies between "those people" and "us." The mural's hopeful message is that racism is socially constructed and thus can be undermined by withdrawing our human energies as far as possible from the social systems and discourses that create it. (UIC Spiral Art Education, n.d.).

The OST arts field is ripe with opportunities to investigate these social institutions through visual imagery. Content and aesthetics provide powerful artistic outlets for youth. Chappell (2006) notes:

If the guidance on the implementation of 21st CCLC policy were to take the approach of a critical aesthetic education toward positive youth development, local curriculum developers may begin to understand the relationship between

power, privilege, and inequity. We may then be more equipped to craft educational experiences on the basis of community and youth-driven processes of inquiry into memory and imagination and advocate for education as a full experience.” (p. 14).



Figure 6. Another View of the Fellows & Others (1997) Mural (image taken by author, July 22, 2009).

Gude’s art practice revolves around meaning making in art, attention to aesthetics, and empowerment of youth and future educators to tackle such large issues such as pledging to “fight against racism in our community” (personal communication, July 21, 2009) as evident in the bold statements of the *Fellows & Others (1997)* mural.

Racial Grammar in OST Policy and Practice

During a conference on Racial Formations in the Twenty-First Century³, I attended the closing remarks given by Dr. Edward Bonilla-Silva⁴. His research seems at time controversial, and has been criticized for centering too much around race, but that is exactly what CRT suggests; all social constructs in American society are influenced by race, not only in perception of individuals' ethnicity, but in policy and practice that is inherently racist. So how does this relate to OST arts programming? Bonilla-Silva introduced a new thread of his research, referring to it as *racial grammar*; the use of everyday and accepted language to insinuate or reference commonly held stereotypes of people of color. Instantly, I found the connection to this research. My graduate coursework in arts and administration that has focused on art education and community arts programming led to discussions of youth arts programming, especially those at-risk. What does "at-risk" even mean? "At-risk" of what? In relationship to CRT the stereotype of poor students of color led me to the realization that the term at-risk youth does have racial implications. It goes by many synonyms; underprivileged, underserved, disadvantaged, troubled; however, not one of the respondents used the term at-risk as an adjective to define the students that they work with, many of which exhibit the physical, emotional, and social features that comprise an at-risk youth.

³ This symposium focused on theory, politics, and practice of race in the twenty-first century, specifically current scholars who have been influenced by Omi and Winant's (1994) seminal work *Racial Formations in the United States*.

⁴ Professor of Sociology at Duke University

When Duignan is telling the story of the *Gang-Proof Suit (2000)* he states, “I certainly didn't want to put any of them at-risk and that became a really important, a very important part of the program” (personal communication, July 22, 2009). But I ask, don't we, and by we I mean American society steeped in racism, already consider them at-risk? As a White, well-educated man, is Duignan not saving these poor students of color with art in their bad neighborhood? Again, the theory of racial grammar could even suggest implications of racism for the words “bad neighborhood”. By their involvement in the *Gang-Proof Suit (2000)* project, the youth's testimonials of the way of life that they lead everyday could essentially put them *at-risk* in their own already *at-risk* lives. This is their life. As Duignan says, they can love their families and friends just the way solidly educated middle class White kids can (J. Duignan, personal communication, July 22, 2009). Using terms for youth such as at-risk is a form of racial grammar (Bonilla-Silva 2009) and is inline with the deficit model of education that has also infiltrated the scholarship on OST programming.

Racial Grammar and Program Funding

Another program operating in Chicago, Free Street Theater works to bring theatrical entertainment and training to disadvantaged populations in Chicago and in the early 90's the organization began focusing mainly on working with youth. Artistic director Ron Bieganski notes:

These are all low-income youth. They're not the high school stars – the kids who are starring in their high school musicals aren't at Free Street. But out of the eight high school seniors who went through our two-year training and left us this fall,

seven have full scholarships to college – and one of those is at Juilliard.” Still, Bieganski cautions, “You try not to be focused on where they end up. The focus is on where they start and where they’re going, on working with full commitment and integrity. We are determined to break down what George W. Bush called ‘the soft bigotry of low expectations.’ Oh my god, I can’t believe I’m quoting George Bush, but on this one thing I do agree with him. (Bieganski as cited in, Williams, Sept. 29, 2009).

George W. Bush, whether he knew it or not, was speaking in terms of racial grammar. ‘The soft bigotry of low-expectations’ is precisely what characterizing youth as at-risk is doing. For example, Olivia Gude spoke of Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, whose collaborative video installation work with youth, *Tele-Vecindario (1992-93)* developed into the youth arts organization, Street-Level Youth Media. Gude states:

I recall Iñigo explaining that in the early years of Street Level, the organization was offered a lot of money by, I think it was, the Ford Foundation. He wouldn’t accept the money when it was offered as resources for ‘at-risk’ youth. He questioned what those words meant, questioning the coded terminology applied to a diverse group of urban kids. (O. Gude, personal communication, July 21, 2009).

This is a powerful example of opposing racial language and the necessity to look to youth as assets, not deficits. If you are born into an at-risk community you begin life behind and are unlikely to ‘catch up’ to the majority, although many OST scholarship addresses the importance of participating in complementary learning to reduce this gap (Weiss, et al., 2009; Terzian & Moore, 2009; HFRP, Feb 2008;).

Beyond the racial grammar used to discuss OST programs and youth, there are inadequacies in funding of programs and uneven opportunities for involvement in such programs. Federal programs aren't in essence bad, at their core they may be instituted to help serve all of America's children and youth (Weiss et al., 2009) but making sure to utilize a lens such as CRT is crucial to maintaining equal standards and proper focus on content to ensure quality programs for all, not just those at-risk so we can assure they are more like those who are not.

The next chapter will discuss the second tenet of CRT, *CRT challenges dominant ideology by critiquing liberal principles of colorblindness, introducing instead whiteness as a social marker*, in relationship to OST arts programs, specifically focusing on J. Paul Preseault and The Tribes Project (Tribes) and Claudia Lara's work with After School Matters (ASM). Tribes was founded in Seattle, Washington by J. Paul Preseault as an artistic reaction to the racial unrest in America during the mid 1990's. Currently, Preseault is working in Chicago, Illinois as a video artist-in-residence in the public schools, and continues to work with Tribes, Tribes alums, and theater projects that investigate race and racism (personal communication, July 24, 2009). Claudia Lara is an artist and an educator for After School Matters (ASM). ASM is a model organization in the OST field for its focus on the arts as a means to train teens for employment as well as provide an artistic and creative outlet, promoting positive activities during after-school, weekend, and summer hours. As noted on their website:

After School Matters is modeled after our flagship arts programs offered through gallery37. The inspiration for gallery37 came in 1991 when Chicago's First Lady

Maggie Daley and Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Lois Weisberg collaborated to develop an arts-related jobs-training program for the city's teenagers (After School Matters, 2009).

Currently, ASM works with teens in the visual, performing, and media arts, math, science, and sports. Chapter IV will highlight Lara's work with Chicago teens to create a mural depicting the election of President Obama and the ways in which this mural helped the teens to investigate issues of race in contemporary America.

CHAPTER IV

CRT, OST ARTS PROGRAMS AND LIBERAL IDEOLOGY

Tenet 2:

CRT Challenges Dominant Ideology by Critiquing Liberal Principles of Colorblindness, Introducing Instead Whiteness as a Social Marker

In this chapter, I will discuss critical race theorists' confrontation of liberal ideologies of colorblindness in relationship to OST arts programming. As in the previous chapter, a narrative is used to emphasize the contemporary nature of such investigations and helps to put names and experiences to broad theoretical topics. CRT attacks liberal ideologies of colorblindness and identifies with white privilege to confront the minimization and justification of racism (Bell, 2003; Bell & Roberts, 2009; Carbado, 2002; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lopez, 2003; Lynn & Parker, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2003), a scholar introduced in Chapter III of this research for his developing theory on racial grammar, or words and phrases used to "race" people without necessarily being overtly racist, also writes significantly on the problems of colorblindness. He states:

Compared to Jim Crow racism, the ideology of color blindness seems like "racism lite"... Yet this new ideology has become a formidable political tool for the maintenance of the racial order. Much as Jim Crow racism served as the glue for defending a brutal and overt system of racial oppression in the pre-Civil Rights

era, color-blind racism serves today as the ideological armor for a covert and institutionalized system in the post-Civil Rights era. And the beauty of this new ideology is that it aids in the maintenance of white privilege without fanfare, without naming those who it subjects and those who it rewards. (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, pp. 3-4).

So the question becomes, is this “tool for the maintenance of racial order” appearing in OST arts programs and if so, how?

Researchers Lee Ann Bell (2009) and Rosemarie A. Roberts (2009) are investigating that very question. Bell (2009) and Roberts (2009) are contributing to scholarship on arts and CRT in education by working with a team of educators, scholars, artists, and undergraduate students, developing *The Storytelling Project Model*, a model of research that serves as a theoretical framework for studying racism through the arts. More specifically, the team is developing a method to utilize storytelling to “expose and confront colorblind racism and to suggest creative approaches for consciously and proactively tackling racial issues in diverse communities” (Bell & Roberts, 2009, para. 2).

Many of the programs I investigated for this research utilize storytelling through the arts to address issues of colorblind racism. One such organization is The Tribes Project, a youth theatre company based out of Seattle, Washington and Chicago, Illinois. J. Paul Preseault, founder and director of The Tribes Project (Tribes), has been actively working with urban youth for over 15 years. He unofficially began Tribes, as he commonly refers to it (J. Paul Preseault, personal communication, July 23, 2009), in 1993

with the production of *What's Up with That?!*, a play formed in the wake of the Rodney King beating and the subsequent race riots. “The ‘Tribes’ name came from an observation that during break times students tend to flock within their own race tribes, that self-segregation was still very prevalent after more than 30 years of integration” (<http://www.TribeProject.org/>). Tribes officially began in 1997 with their first performance, *Multiculturalism or Tribalism?*, where high school students investigated race relations in America by creating a play in response to a racially motivated shooting outside of their school.

All of the stage productions performed by Tribes revolve around challenging contemporary issues of race, or what Preseault refers to as “the swamp” (personal communication, July 23, 2009). Most poignantly, this image from the Tribes website illustrates one of the main themes from their 2000 production *We are not Color Blind*.

In Figure 7, one can see the bold typeface used to capture the title of the show as well as several hands, all shades of blue, green, pink, white, and brown, symbolically addressing that color can be seen and to be blind to color, in race terms, is impossible. During the process of our interview, Preseault shared a story with me about one of his former students. This is a synopsis of his story, told here to illustrate the second tenet of CRT, *CRT challenges dominant ideology by critiquing liberal principles of colorblindness, introducing instead whiteness as a social marker*, and the connection with OST arts programming.

We Are Not Colorblind

We definitely made people step back when we put this one out [*We Are Not Colorblind* (2000)] because it is about the idea of talking about the theater business and in particular, talking about colorblind casting. I'm repelled by the notion of being racially colorblind, I don't want a colorblind world; I want a colorful one. You know it's like, it's a denial system for me to say to you that I cast Diva, she's a Black girl, she's amazing, you know, and I am casting her very particularly and her skin color is just one of the particularities of her. And I'm honoring that by admitting it's very specific why she's here and that's what Tribes always was. And my casts were always multi-racial but no one was ever considered, like he represents all of the Philippines, she represents the entire Mixed race, half Chinese half White; and he's the White man. It's like no one is a token here. These people, I cast them based off the feeling of desire. Here's one [turns to a page in the portfolio on the floor containing posters and marketing material of Tribes] in Tribes 2001 this cast that was an incredible, an incredible show. There were eight of them and it was predominantly Asian students. Joseph is Pilipino, Seth, and Cyrus, and then Jason is Chinese and Jenna, she's Japanese [pointing to poster in portfolio]. So five out of eight obviously, the grand scheme of the statistics of America here we're really over representing the Asian population if you will. We also have post-production discussions and someone did ask me, someone asked me, "Why are you so heavily Asian?", and I said, "When we auditioned the show there were over two hundred kids that auditioned." I am not approaching this from the standpoint token; I must have a rainbow complete. I want to be rainbow-esque, but the bottom line when cuts are being made, just bring it.

Like really bringing something to the table that is unusual, that has clearly got spirit and heart and that cannot be denied. This is Diva right here, Yvette [points to poster at a young Black woman, Yvette, who prefers to go by the name Diva]. She actually saw Tribes at Renton High School. Tribes '99 performed at Renton before we were residents at Renton, and she saw us when she was a sophomore, and when she saw this show she told me I *must* be in this. I *will* be in this. I *have* to be in this [Preseault's emphasis]. So her senior year, here we are, we're arriving, we're going to be in it and as it happened, the funny thing is, over 200 people auditioned and the most people represented were actually Black females. There was this huge group of Black females who auditioned, but Diva would not be denied. She was just clearly so completely would not be denied. She didn't say that, it was in her audition. Her energy was that (J. P. Preseault, personal communication, July 23, 2009).



Figure 7. Marketing Image: *We Are Not Color Blind* (2000)

Based on the above composite story gathered from the interview with Preseault, this chapter will address theories of colorblindness in OST arts programming and will focus on the use of white privilege as a more fitting term for the climate of racism in America.

Colorblindness and OST Arts Programming

And I am repelled by things like that, colorblind...colorful is what I'm looking for! You know it's like, it's a denial system for me to say to you that I cast Diva, she's a Black girl, she's amazing, you know and I am casting her very particularly and her skin color is just one of the particularities of her. And I'm honoring that by admitting it's very specific why she's here and that's what Tribes always was. (J. P. Preseault, personal communication, July 23, 2009).

Preseault's narrative of his experience casting Diva begs for an inquiry into what is the meaning of the colorblind concept? Whether it is in reference to casting theatre productions or in a broader ideological view on race, the construct of race and racism in America is highly affected by the notion of colorblindness, or colorblind racism (Bell, 2003; Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Carbado, 2002; Parker & Lynn, 2002). And the effects of colorblind racism are not absent in the OST arts field as evident in Preseault's struggle in "honoring that [race] by admitting it's very specific why she's [Diva] here" but also not wanting to cast solely based on race. "I want to be rainbow-esque, but the bottom line when cuts are being made, just bring it" (J. P. Preseault, personal communication, July 23, 2009). His statement is contradictory in terms of casting for color, in direct opposition to colorblind casting, and casting based on performance, regardless of color,

which coincides with such practices. The complexity of colorblindness is not only seen as a part of the arts in youth program, but also highly contested in scholarly literature (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Carbado, 2002; DeCuir & Dixon, 2008; Gilborn, 2008).

At face-value, all appear to be desirable goals to pursue to the extent that in the abstract, colorblindness and neutrality allow for equal opportunity for all; however, given the history of racism in the U.S. whereby rights and opportunities were both conferred and withheld based almost exclusively on race, the idea that the law is indeed colorblind and neutral is insufficient (and many would argue disingenuous) to redress its deleterious effects (DeCuir & Dixon, 2008, pg 29).

Colorblindness seems to have become the politically correct term for Whites to prove that they are not racist. Bell (2003), who is currently involved with *The Storytelling Project*, conducted research to collect stories for her article “Telling Tales: What Stories can Teach Us about Racism” with people who identified with various racial and ethnic backgrounds including White, Black, Mixed race, Asian, and Native American. She suggests that Whites commonly use the phrase, “ ‘I don’t see color; I just see people.’ The appeal of color-blind ideology is rooted in the desire to avoid being or appearing racist” (p. 15).

Bell (2009) and Roberts (2009), the developers of *The Storytelling Project*:

view colorblindness as the problematic minimization and justification of racism (L.A. Bell, 203a; Bonilla-Silva, 2003) in ways that reinforce inequalities, hierarchies, and racial divisions...The invocation of colorblindness all to often

glosses over current inequalities in the name of a “prematurely imagined community” (Williams, 1998) where race no longer plays a role in allocating access and opportunities. Thus, our intentional and sustained focus on race and racism in *The Storytelling Project* was an effort to challenge colorblind discourse by creating stories that illustrate racisms’ differential impacts on White people and people of color. (para. 7).

Just as Preseault makes it a point to have a multi-racial, or as he calls it, “rainbow-esque”, cast to perform stories revolving around race and racism, *The Storytelling Project* is being developed to help audiences of all races and ethnic backgrounds accept the social recognition of race and educate audiences through the arts to better understand the context in which the stories have emerged (Bell & Roberts, 2009).

Preseault refers back to a student’s experience with Tribes later in the interview: She has said half jokingly, ‘sometimes I wish I could just shut Tribes off because it makes you look at the world in a very different way. And now all of a sudden you're seeing everything racially. You're seeing it. You're seeing a color thing.’ Which led to we are not colorblind also that whole philosophy, that whole idea, 'well sorry. Sorry you can't live in a naive sort of ignorant youth kind of way anymore.' Now you're living in awareness and how you deal with that is up to you.’ That's really my approach (personal communication, July 23, 2009).

The Tribes Project is a clear example of how participation in OST arts programming is changing the way students are seeing their world with a clear field of vision.

White Privilege in OST Arts Programming

“As I write, I try to remember when the word racism ceased to be the term which best expressed for me exploitation of black people and other people of color in this society and when I began to understand that the most useful term was white supremacy” (bell hooks, 1989, p. 112 as cited in Gillborn, 2005, pg. 486). In studying CRT as a tool to view social constructions, it is imperative to investigate not only the experiences of people of color, but also the ways in which Whites, knowingly or unknowingly, help to contribute to such constructions (Bell, 2003; Bell & Roberts, 2009; Carbado, 2002; DeCuir & Dixon, 2008; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lopez, 2003; Lynn & Parker, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). DeCuir and Dixon (2008) emphasize the importance of looking at these issues through a CRT lens: “These particular aspects of CRT are especially powerful because through them, researchers are able to uncover and unmask the persistent and oppressive nature of the normativity of Whiteness” (pg. 30).

In the OST arts field, artists and educators working with youth of color are dealing with such normative issues. “It is possible for white people to take a real and active role in deconstructing whiteness but such ‘race traitors’ are relatively uncommon” (Gillborn, 2005, p. 488). Both J. P. Preseault, founder and director of The Tribes Project and Jim Duignan, founder and director of The Stockyard Institute are White men, which brings another layer to their work with youth of color in Chicago. Gillborn (2005) would call Preseault and Duignan the exception. Duignan utilizes electronic media and radio broadcasting to tackle situations in which race, his own and that of his students, may help

or hinder their artistic pursuits. In reference to a group of students working on a radio project, Duignan says:

I mean they thought of themselves as producers, and it wasn't about any of the physical sort of characteristics that they imposed on themselves, that others imposed on them and sort of the questions of self-consciousness of feeling as though they were 'an other'. Regardless of where we were in a space, even though I would come in there as a White male, I think that they, that would rupture something to an all African-American group or to an all Mexican-American group, a Chicano group, whoever we were working with, but radio was welcoming. There was no visual. We were talking, and we were democratic. We were together; it was very communal. And so no one could see the struggle. Me feeling as though I belonged or them feeling as though they belonged, and I didn't have a problem. Like I said earlier, just being in Chicago, that I could just sort of work anywhere and be in all of these neighborhoods. But I was very cognizant of the fact that they had to figure everything out. And having kids I had to watch them figure everything out. About who they are, how they fit into the social dynamic of privilege and behaviors that they just naturally have to move through. (personal communication, July 22, 2009)

At the same time, Duignan is both dealing with his own White privilege, how it affects his work, and trying to create an environment in which the focus is not on color. This effect is evident in his admission that his Whiteness 'rupture(s)' something when entering a room full of youth of color, but it does not mean that there cannot be a recognition of

color, or race, and then progress toward to goal of producing artwork relevant to the youth's lives (personal communication, July 22, 2009).

On the other hand, Bonilla-Silva (2008) takes a much more radical approach. He tells his university students:

When you do good work on race, it should make whites feel uncomfortable. This reaction means your work is hitting them where it hurts. But when whites love you, your work, or your politics, you are probably doing or saying something wrong, something terribly wrong. (p. 182).

His version of progress is bold and upfront, but maybe this is exactly what is needed to affect change. Bonilla-Silva (2008) also challenges the culture of colorblind racism when discussing the Presidential election of Barack Obama stating, "symbolic diversity without progressive social movement politics gives us white supremacy in blackface" (p. 177).

Investigating Race: Artwork and the Presidency of Barack Obama

After School Matters is a non-profit organization in Chicago that works with teens to mentor, support, and prepare them with marketable job skills. In their nationally recognized gallery37 program, After School Matters utilizes the arts to develop teens' visual, performing, and literary arts skills as a means of self-expression and preparation for a career in the arts. Although all teens involved with the organization's gallery37 do not go on to become professional artists, the organization feels that the skills gained during arts projects, musical performances, or theatrical productions transfer to other work environments.

Respondent and instructor for ASM, Claudia Lara works with teens through a variety of media including printmaking and mural arts. She not only teaches them technical skills in the arts, but also challenges them to explore socially relevant subject matter as evident in Lara's mural project in honor of President Barack Obama (Figure 8 and Figure 9).

In my last mural painting class, we did a mural based on President Obama being elected, voting change, etc. I felt like they really connected to what they were doing when making this mural and it really opened up their ideas about themselves, their peers, their neighborhood and school. Many of them later on expressed how much they really enjoyed being a part of something that brought awareness and beauty to their school. They were really excited of the idea that their art and message will be hung in their schools for future students to see. (C. Lara, personal communication, July 25, 2009).



Figure 8. Left Side of Mural (image provided by Lara)



Figure 9. Right Side of Mural (image provided by Lara)

The left side of the mural (Figure 8) features a life like portrait of President Obama, what appears to be the city of Chicago resting on his head, an open set of hands, and the Spanish phrase “si se puede” or “yes we can”. Scrolling through the middle are large words of “give” and “hope”, anchored by silhouette figures. The right side of the mural (Figure 9) shows silhouettes of birds flying toward the text of Obama’s speech on race relations in the United States (2008). After dissecting the imagery of the mural, one can gather that the teens working on this project may be in direct opposition to Bonilla-Silva’s (2008) philosophy on the election.

Colorblindness and White privilege are difficult topics to address amongst scholars in the field and equally difficult to address with youth in after-school and summer learning settings, but as evident from the examples gathered through these interviews, artists are doing just that. The Tribes Project, The Stockyard Institute, and After School Matters are just three organizations in Chicago working with teens, through the arts to “make the rainbow complete” (J. P. Preseault, personal communication, July 23, 2009).

The next chapter focuses on the work of Indira Freitas Johnson and the Shanti Foundation for Peace, which is an arts-based non-profit working in Evanston, Illinois and Chicago, Illinois to provide programming both in-school, out-of-school, and during summer hours that is based on an approach of teaching the arts and non-violence. CRT and the promotion of social justice is also exemplified in the work of About Face Youth Theatre, a subset of About Face Theatre in Chicago, Illinois, that works with teens to express their views on sexuality, race, and gender through the theatre arts

(http://aboutfacetheatre.com/?pg=afyt_about). By conducting participant observation of their summer session and speaking with former education director Paula Gilovich, insight into how the teens not only learn relevant performance skills from professionals in the field, but also utilize their voices for promoting social justice.

CHAPTER V
CRT, OST ARTS PROGRAMMING, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Tenet 3

**CRT is Committed to Promoting Social Justice and Eradicating All Forms of
Oppression**

CRT is not only a lens through which to study social structures, but also a methodology for changing racially embedded structures to ensure equality for all (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). My interviews of arts professionals in the field of OST arts programming found mixed results in correlating program content to social justice causes. Many of them hesitated to call their work social justice work, but then would go on to describe projects or programs that clearly align with social justice causes including racial relations, healthcare reform, and immigration law (S. Evans, personal communication, July 21, 2009; O. Gude, personal communication, July 21, 2009; J. P. Preseault, personal communication, July 23, 2009). I will argue that the existence of such programs, working in low-income communities of Chicago, Illinois to provide complimentary learning systems to inadequate public education, is a form of social justice in and of itself, although not necessarily a criterion for organizational missions. One program that clearly aligns with social justice efforts in both mission and curriculum administration is Shanti Foundation for Peace (Shanti) in Chicago. The mission and goal statements read as follows:

To foster peace, acceptance, and understanding in the everyday interactions of people, through visual, literary, and performing arts programs in schools and communities.

Goals: To assist communities with issues of diversity and inclusiveness and to help all people succeed and contribute in a diverse society by providing experiences that develops imaginative, flexible, inclusive, collaborative thinking. (<http://www.shantifoundationforpeace.org/Home.html>).

According to founder and current co-director Indira Freitas Johnson, her inspiration to start Shanti began at a very young age. “I grew up in Bombay with my mom being a social worker and my dad an artist and this combination of art and activism has, I believe, had a very strong influence on me and my work” (I. Johnson, personal communication, July 22, 2009). The following narrative illustrates Johnson’s inspiration for founding Shanti and serves as an example of OST arts programming focusing on social justice issues in Chicago.

Getting Along Peace Bus: The Origin of the Shanti Foundation for Peace

Every year in January the government of India mandates that all organizations that work with leprosy have to do an education program. I have come home during that time and have seen what my mom’s organization has done. I’ve seen what kind of campaign they’ve run, and I have always been like, “oh my God, how can someone be attracted to that?” So then I proposed to do something where we would actually work

with people who had had leprosy and had been cured because the main message was that leprosy could be cured; that it's a curable disease.

We worked in one village just outside of Bombay where there was a large incidence of leprosy and worked with children to do drawings and words about their own feelings. I had a relationship with Western Railway, and they allowed us to paint a train with all of the words and the drawings of the kids. The most powerful one for me was this one child who said, "I took my pills, and I was cured." And it seemed like that's all you need to know.

Then in that same year I came back here [Chicago, Illinois]. We worked with the CTA [Chicago Transit Authority] and the Children's Museum [Chicago Children's Museum] and did a *Getting Along Peace Bus*. And so the evolution has been gradual, you know? So that project was very successful. And the *Getting Along Peace Bus* was an actual bus, and it went all over the place. And, I think one of our strengths is critical evaluation and feedback. So there the final product was wonderful, the *Getting Along Peace Bus*, but I didn't feel like the process was...had enough of an impact. Shanti's first project was the *Getting Along Peace Bus*. We worked with different groups that the Children's Museum brought in, for a three- hour morning workshop. The children's words and drawings were then painted on a regular CTA bus that travelled between Chicago area neighborhoods for over three years. While this end product, the bus turned out wonderful and brought a lot of attention to Shanti, I was not sure how much of an impact we had made on the students. This led to Shanti designing 10-15 week in school and after school programs that allowed us greater interaction with students.. [Later on,

Johnson explains a project that did not have such a great outcome as the *Getting Along Peace Bus*, but did teach the students an important lesson. Youth brainstormed plans for a playground at their school, and when political leaders changed office, the plans fell through.]

But at that moment the kids thought that they were able to do something. So I think that empowerment, but then the idea about social justice, I think they really learn about what it means. What justice means. You know, otherwise you only think of the court. It's sort of removed from your own life, and I think that, if we can get people to understand their own individual roles in it; I think that's what hopefully will be able to change...to change the world (I. Johnson, personal communication, July 22, 2009).

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the OST arts field for programs focusing on youth and social justice through a CRT lens. Initial research in the field suggests that OST programming focuses on pragmatic outcomes related to the social justice movement including supplemental education to level the workforce playing field, development of logical program models and evaluation tools to better understand and implement these projects to all youth, providing a safe space for youth during non school hours, lowering the levels of youth violence, and providing outlet for voice and self-expression including through the arts (<http://www.hfrp.org/>; Afterschool Alliance, 2009.; Weiss, et al, 2009). There is little to no scholarship contextualizing the OST arts field in the movement for social justice, but program goals often intersect with the quest for equal treatment of all people, including youth, in parameters of race, religion, gender, and

sexual orientation. I also draw connections between civic engagement programs for youth and how that contributes to the overall campaign for social justice.

By discussing current scholarship of CRT and social justice and taking reference from arts programs practicing in the OST field, this chapter will briefly provide context for the social justice movement, address the literature surrounding social justice youth development and civic engagement, and make connections to the role of art and social justice.

Social Justice Defined

Arguably one of the most influential social justice activists of the twentieth century, Dr. King so eloquently summarizes the just community as one of connection, acceptance, and inclusion, much like the mission and goals of the Shanti Foundation for Peace.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, 1963).

In deciding which scholars to include in the volume *Collaborations for Social Justice: Professionals, Publics, and Policy Change* Andrew Barlow (2007) outlines common

principles of social justice shared across the movement. First, and the most recognizable, a shared commitment to democracy where all people, regardless of class, race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, are recognized and included in social decisions. Second, everyone is capable of generating ideas for social justice. Third, the context of a persons' social standing influences one's feelings on social justice. Fourth, that it is vital to not only recognize intellectual power, but even more important to mobilize marginalized and excluded groups (Barlow, 2007; Burawoy, 2007; Freire, 1970). Lastly, partnerships between professionals and grassroots organizations are needed for this mobilization and "is necessary to make these ideas historically significant" (Barlow, 2007, p. vii).

Politically, the mid 1900's produced 'historically significant' strides toward social justice, including the Civil Rights Movement that Dr. King most notably catalyzed. Most recently, Barlow (2007) states:

The quest for social justice in the United States, then continues to be very active but is, as a rule, strangely deformed with a "yawning gap" between those who have access to political influence, expertise, and funding on the one hand and the community-based associations seeking to organize and mobilize people on their own behalf on the other. (p. 4).

In this context, Barlow (2007) is referring to the social justice issues raised with immigration, although a timely agenda for the current political administration; I believe that a "yawning gap" is also formed between youth culture and society, or in Barlow's (2007) argument, professional adults with political access. Ginwright and Cammarota

(2002) define this unique area of interest as *social justice youth development*, which informs social justice advocates working with youth in community-based organizations and researchers studying asset models of youth culture. Social Justice Youth Development is discussed in detail later in this chapter.

As outlined in Chapter II of this research, CRT “differs from CLS [critical legal studies] in that it has an activist aspect, the end goal of which is to bring change that will implement social justice” (Dixon & DeCuir, 2004, p. 27). Scholars Dixon (2004) and DeCuir (2004) go on to caution researchers to consider “how their scholarship aids in the project of social justice and social change” (p. 30). CRT has often been criticized for not doing more to relate theory to practice. Although much has been written in the past decade regarding the positive effects of CRT on educational curriculum, specific CRT curriculum resources are sparse (Bell & Roberts, 2009). As mentioned in Chapter II, David Stovall (2006) worked with the organization CORP: Using the City as a Classroom Program to teach a class entitled “Race, Class, Media and Chicago” which he based on the tenets of CRT as applied to education. This is one example where CRT arts curriculum is clearly defined. In studying CRT and OST arts programs, it is arguable that such programs are the manifestations of the third tenet of CRT; *CRT is committed to promoting social justice and eradicating of all forms of oppression*, in the field. The following sections illustrate how current OST arts programs operating in Chicago are also serving as agents of change.

Social Justice Youth Development and Civic Engagement

As Johnson stated in her story about the *Getting Along Peace Bus*:

We worked with different groups that the Children's Museum brought in, for a three- hour morning workshop. The children's words and drawings were then painted on a regular CTA bus that traveled between Chicago area neighborhoods for over three years. While this end product, the bus turned out wonderful and brought a lot of attention to Shanti. I was not sure how much of an impact we had made on the students. This led to Shanti designing 10-15 week in school and after school programs that allowed us greater interaction with students. (I. Johnson, personal communication, July 22, 2009).

This portion of Johnson's narrative questions the impact of short-term arts projects, in this case, the *Getting Along Peace Bus*, that take place outside of school walls. After evaluating the results of the project, Johnson began to cultivate Shanti's relationships with schools and community organizations, partnering to provide after-school and summer learning opportunities for children and youth in Chicago (personal communication, July 22, 2009). This deepening commitment advances the organization from arts provider to active participant in social change. Because Johnson felt that more investment needed to be made in the children and youths' relationship to the art project, the work of Shanti now involves months of commitment from artists and arts educators working in and out-of-schools to promote social justice awareness through the arts.

CRT not only serves as a methodology for research, but challenges researchers to take their investigations of injustice beyond published research and to direct action

(Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lynn & Parker, 2002, 2006; Solórzano & Yasso, 2001; Stovall, 2006). Shanti's *Getting Along Peace Bus* and playground project serve as an examples of how current CRT scholarship, including a focus on social justice, aligns with current theories on youth development, specifically addressed here as social justice youth development. As Johnson and her fellow teachers not only instruct students on injustices in the world, they charge the students to take action regarding such injustices through the arts. Social justice, the mobilization of people, the spaces where voices are expressed and heard, can and should be found in the arts. "In the youth development field, there has been a rising interest in framing how young people engage in social justice activities" (Ginwright & James, 2002, p. 33).

The principles guiding social justice youth development include analyzing power within social relationship, promoting systemic change, encouraging collective action, and embracing youth culture and identity (Ginwright & James, 2002). Social justice youth development "examines how urban youth contest, challenge, respond to, and negotiate the use and misuse of power in their lives" (Ginwright & James, 2002, p. 31). A strong emphasis is also placed on the youth and adult allies relationship, a noted model of success paralleling Barlow's (2007) scholarship on the need for partnerships between politically substantiated entities (adults) and grassroots community-based organizations (youth). Jarrett, Sullivan, and Watkins (2005) argue that ignoring the importance of youth/adult relationships, "societies miss an opportunity to move forward with a new generation of adults fully socialized for active community life and civic participation" (p. 42).

With the guidance of civically engaged adult allies, youth are able to develop their own identities, those that consider socially conscious citizenship important (Ginwright & James, 2002; Kirshner, Strobel, & Fernandez, 2003; Weis & Fine, 2000). Social justice youth development does not see positive youth development exclusive from creating an engaged citizenship. This formation of identity defined by working for social change, is in direct correlation to the social inequality felt by most youth of color, causing students, both mentored by adult allies and self-motivated activists, to share in a common fight for justice (Ginwright & James, 2002; Daiute, 2000).

Promoting Systemic Change through Collective Action

This common fight is often a result of self-motivation or the work of a few engaged adults because “youth have increasingly been left out of discussion about democracy, rights, justice, and compassion” (Giroux, 1998). Olivia Gude, artist and director of the Spiral Workshop through the University of Illinois at Chicago, discusses the role of educators and artists in the lives of youth. Just as Giroux (1998) cautions leaving youth out of discussions on social justice, Gude encourages her student teachers to do the same. If not, “that means that you can't work well with the students because you are looking at them with a deficit model; you're not looking at the strength” (O. Gude, personal communication, July 21, 2009). According to many of the artists and educators interviewed for this research, it is imperative that youth are included in developing political agendas for the rights of themselves and their communities, and in the case of this research, communities of color (J. Duignan, personal communication, July 22, 2009;

J. P. Preseault, personal communication, July 23, 2009; O. Gude, personal communication, July 21, 2009).

In Chapter III, the reader was introduced to Jim Duignan, founder and director of The Stockyard Institute. Duignan believes strongly in allowing youth to take ownership of their lives and their beliefs, working through the arts to support his students in creating ‘new knowledge’ (personal communication, July 23, 2009).

There is a disability of systems and societies and the machinery that we build that doesn't function up to its capacity, so there's always this subterfuge that's involved. But the majority of what we were about was action, trying to find ways in which they could use that platform to just sort of figure things out; using teaching, political activism, working through the arts and writing, and trying to draw attention. (J. Duignan, personal communication, July 22, 2009).

This is where the intersection of social justice, civic engagement, and OST arts programming lies; youth respond to social problems affecting their everyday lives and taking action to change it through the arts. As Freire (1970) writes “...one does not liberate people by alienating them. Authentic liberation – the process of humanization – is not another deposit to be made in men. Liberation is a praxis; the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (p. 65). For social justice youth development, this intersection represents a shift in the treatment of youth, from deficits to agents of social change, from theory to praxis (Freire, 1970; Ginwright & James, 2002). Youth across the country are exercising their democratic powers through rallies and protests, speaking at local level community meetings, and participating in

research where their voices are heard (Ginwright & James, 2002; Jarrett, Sullivan, & Watkins, 2005; Kirshner, Strobel, & Fernandez, 2003).

Another example of Chicago youth engaging in artistic pursuits to affect change is About Face Youth Theatre (AFYT).

The Youth Theatre is an identity-affirming environment where LGBTQA [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and allies] youth are provided: rigorous artistic training, access to professional LGBTQ artists and activists, college and artistic mentorship, and community forums, intergenerational dialogue on the most pressing issues facing queer youth.

(http://aboutfacetheatre.com/?pg=afyt_about).

In their July 2009 workshop led by former education director, Paula Gilovich, the teens studied “acting, movement, circus arts, drag performance, anti-racism and anti-violence models, self-defense, story collection and playwriting” (*Queertopia*, 2009). The scenes created based off of the actual experiences of the youth actors involved will be written into a performance entitled *Queertopia*, set to take stage in the summer of 2010. Along with the play, the stories, memories, poems, and words of the teens will be presented to Chicago government officials, showcasing About Face Youth Theatre’s commitment to action for social change on a broader policy level. This is not only seen through the teens’ artistic portrayals on stage, but also through their written words.

During that same week, youth participated in a daylong workshop on anti-racism and anti-violence. The following images (Figure 10 and Figure 11) illustrate the issues addressed and the teens’ responses to such issues.

The teens explored oppression and power in social constructions of race, sexuality, gender, and class. In Figure 11, AFYT youth offer responses to how they will affect change. Some of the responses include “I am going to challenge racist jokes”, “believe in the power of minorities”, and “stop being silent”. Paula Gilovich’s work with AFYT teens is a strong example of how adults are working with youth, not through a deficit model, but as resources to empower change through arts and politics (personal communication, July 21, 2009).

This commitment to social change is not only apparent while youth are engaging in such OST programs, but also serves as an inspiration for their work later in their lives. J. Paul Preseault, director and founder of The Tribes Project, works with his students in the same manner as Gilovich, as resources, not deficits.

I don't say 'we need to go out and shake up the people!' It's much more going through this process of getting these people, especially when it's a youth cast, to take themselves seriously, to embrace the fact that the arts are called a discipline for a reason. Because I'd rather have Tribes sort of filtering through this now lawyer or through Cynthia who is now a social worker, someone who's going to impact policy. (J. P. Preseault, personal communication, July 23, 2009).

Preseault continues to keep Tribes members who participate as teens involved in the organization whether or not it is by serving on the board, or directing projects in various cities around the world. Although he does not believe that Tribes is an ‘anti-racist’ theatre group or a propagandistic tool for social justice, he is quite proud of his Tribes

graduates who continue to work in fields that benefit the greater good (personal communication, July 23, 3009).

Art and Social Justice: Youth Identity and Culture

One of Shanti's programs focuses on social justice to help children understand what justice means beginning at a personal level and moving to community, national and international levels. This program empowers students to investigate issues of social significance in their lives and their communities and use art skills to create imaginative solutions to problems. Through the process, students increase their understanding of both their connection to the world, and their ability to effect positive world change by their individual actions. (I. Johnson, personal communication, July 22, 2009).

Johnson's hopeful words illustrate the mission of Shanti, to inspire children and youth to explore what justice means and to take an active role in pursuing just practices to change the world. Johnson utilizes the arts to explore the power of youth culture. When the students lobbied for the playground at their school and in the end did not come out successful, it did not mean that they did not learn anything from the experience. By designing the playground through visual arts mediums and using creative writing to express their desires to improve their school community, the students learned to empower themselves, through the arts, and to have their voices heard (I. Johnson, personal communication, July 22, 2009).

Maxine Greene (2000) states "artists know about spaces opening in imagination, even as they understand what it means to be situated in the world and to speak (or paint

or sing or dance) from the vantage point of their situations” (p. 293). The arts provide a unique space to find voice and speak out against social oppression. In Beverly Naidus’ (2009) book *Arts for Change: Teaching Outside the Frame* she uses her course “Activist Art in Community” at the University of Washington Tacoma to engage college students in sharing stories of times when they felt social injustice, and then requires them to create a reactionary art piece (a painting, a song, a theater performance) to put words into action. This exercise can provide students the skills to work with communities on the same efforts.

Maria X. Martinez (2007), the deputy director for community programs at the San Francisco Department of Public Health, stated:

artists not only document social change; they promote, inform, and shape it. Whether through music, plays, graphics, paintings, songs, films, media, architecture, textiles, jewelry, photography, poetry, sculpture, pottery, landscapes, written word, spoken word, dance – art is powerful (p. 4).

Her role in the Department of Public Health and as a supporter of arts illustrates the power of art as an influential medium for social justice across public sectors. She recognizes the artists she works with as integral to social development and references Adams and Goldbard’s model (1995)⁵ based on the 1930’s Works Progress Administration (WPA) as the way in which San Francisco can work with their most creative professionals to address civic issues.

⁵ Adams and Goldbard (1986, 1995) reference the need to focus on employing artists, not only to provide career opportunities, but as in the work of the WPA in the 1930’s, to

As Olivia Gude, artist and director of The Spiral Workshop noted:

We consider what it means to be an artist in a climate of change. What is your role as an artist? How do you respond to changes or how do you create change? That was the focus question for me and for my students, and that became what propelled me. (personal communication, July 21, 2009).

She hypothesizes that when the youth have something positive to identify with, such as their involvement with out-of-school programs in which they create public art or community documentaries, their image to the general public also changes.

So, they weren't just being hip hop kids. They were being kids who were being seen and received by organizations like Young Chicago Authors. So it wasn't folks saying 'Stop that, you kids!' It was people saying 'What are you about, kids?' There was a flow between the kids' cultural manifestations and then them being encouraged by adults. (O. Gude, personal communication, July 21, 2009).

In an interview with Robbie Q. Telfer, performance manager for Young Chicago Authors (YCA), he echoes Gude's example of students' artistic expression as a valid and positive form of identification in society.

That's what's interesting for us about slam and spoken word poetry that it's not just about poetry ever. It's about youth voice, it's about politics, it's about social change, and that is how we use it as a sort of wedge to get kids to basically care about their lives. In the movement, we're giving kids examples of a hopeful life

utilize artists to capture the creative capital of the United States and in turn improve communities.

and hopefully that combats a lot of other stuff (R. Telfer, personal communication, July 24, 2009).

Telfer notes that the art form may, in the end, be the product, it is in no way the only result of participation in Young Chicago Authors. To develop their skills as slam poets, writers, and performers, youth are challenged to investigate political and social issues.

Writer and activist Arlene Goldbard continues to work for social justice and promotes the manifestation of social justice principles through the arts. Goldbard (2008) compares the artists' understanding of storytelling and finding voice to be at the same level as brain science. Connecting back to Barlow's (2007) outline of common trends in social justice activism, Goldbard's words contest the acceptance of science as the only means of truth; everyone is capable of generating ideas regardless of social standing. Everyone is capable of generating art that speaks to social justice. Goldbard (2008) states "whatever else is happening in our lives and our societies, when we make art that names the world in all its pain and possibility, we offer an antidote to the epidemic fear and despair all of us can so easily catch from our daily news" (p. 1). Art provides this outlet for voice, and OST arts programs provide this outlet for youth.

This chapter addressed themes of social justice and OST arts programs. Although several of the respondents were hesitant to refer to themselves as social justice workers or their organizations as social justice organizations, the dedication and commitment to providing youth of color with opportunities to not only learn about and explore the world around them through the arts, but to also take action for or against social issues, is a way to "even the playing field". As Barlow (2007) defined social justice as the recognition of

all people in decision making regardless of class, gender, sexual orientation, or race, the ability of all people to generate ideas for social justice and the context of one's situation in the world affects this ability to make change, as well as the importance of being aware of power relationships between the oppressed and the oppressor, all of the OST arts organizations represented address one or all of these definitions.

In the next chapter, CRT's fourth tenet, *CRT accepts experiential knowledge through the use of storytelling, narratives, and counter-narratives, providing an outlet for voice for people of color*, is examined in relationship to OST arts programs, specifically focusing on interviews with Robbie Q. Telfer of Young Chicago Authors and Steven Evans of Street-Level Youth Media (Street-Level). Both organizations utilize less traditional art forms to help youth engage in critical conversations on their own development as teens in contemporary culture. Young Chicago Authors focusing on spoken word and slam poetry and Street-Level specializing in digital arts and media production, respectively.

CHAPTER VI
CRT, OST ARTS PROGRAMMING, AND YOUTH VOICE

Tenet 4

**CRT Accepts Experiential Knowledge Through the Use of Storytelling, Narratives,
and Counter-Narratives, Providing an Outlet for Voice for People of Color**

This chapter discusses the fourth tenet of CRT in relationship to OST programming with a concentration on after-school and summer arts programming for urban youth of color. Because it is seen as a valid approach to examining race in social contexts, CRT in education focuses on the use of storytelling, narrative, and counter-narrative (Bell, 2003; Chapman, 2005; Lopez, 2003; Lynn & Parker, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). Solórzano and Yosso (2002) define several ways in which counter-stories can function as a means of creating, understanding and dispersing knowledge:

(1) They can build community among those at the margins of society; (2) they can challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society's center; (3) they can open new windows into the reality of those at the margins of society by showing possibilities beyond the ones they live and to show that they are not alone in their position; (4) they can teach others that by combining elements from both the story and the current reality, one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone; and (5) they can provide a context to understand and transform established belief systems. (as cited in Carbado, 2002, p. 190).

Throughout this research, narratives have been used to highlight racism, colorblindness, White privilege, and pursuits of social justice by arts educators and practitioners in the OST field. This chapter will focus on the work of Robbie Q. Telfer, spoken word poet and performance manager for Young Chicago Authors. Young Chicago Authors works throughout Chicago and provides a safe haven for teens interested in poetry, slam, and spoken word as a means to project their voices to the world. They offer free programs during the school day, after-school, on the weekends, and during the summer. Although Young Chicago Authors works with youth of all racial and ethnic backgrounds; however, the majority of the students engaging in programming are students of color (www.youngchicagoauthors.org), which contributes to the relevance of CRT's connection to OST arts programming.

The five principles of counter-narratives defined by Solórzano and Yosso (2002) are evident in the work of Young Chicago Authors, a youth program that:

encourages self-expression and literacy through creative writing, performance and publication. YCA provides student-centered, artist-led workshops free to youth ages 13-19 in schools and communities. Our process emphasizes artistic development, mentorship, and creating safe spaces where a young person's life matters. We believe that through their words, young people can promote tolerance and remove barriers to transform their lives and society. (*Young Chicago Authors*, n.d.).

Another common use for storytelling and narratives in CRT is to create opportunities for voice, in particular the often-silenced voices of people of color (Bell, 2003; Chapman,

2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lopez, 2003; Lynn & Parker, 2002; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). While teaching students the craft of spoken word, creative writing, and performance art, Telfer and Young Chicago Authors' staff enable youth to express their own voice. Ladson-Billings (1998) states, “the use of voice or “naming your reality” is a way that CRT links form and substance to scholarship” (p. 23). In this way, CRT not only serves as a lens to address society, but a means in which to express ones’ place within a greater community.

In the following composite story narrated by Telfer, the fourth tenet of CRT; CRT accepts experiential knowledge through the use of storytelling, narratives, and counter-narratives, providing an outlet for voice for people of color, parallels the mission of Young Chicago Authors; encouraging self-expression through the arts by providing a space for youth to tell their stories and find their voices (personal communication, July 27, 2009).

Louder Than a Bomb: Young Chicago Authors Prepare to Slam

We’re going into our tenth year with Louder Than a Bomb⁶. When it started it was four teams of four to six kids each. The poetry slam is a spoken word competition,

⁶Presented annually, Louder Than A Bomb engages schools and community organizations from all over the Chicago area in workshops, showcases, panel discussions and a teen poetry slam. The poetry slam is an Olympic-style poetry contest, created in Chicago in 1985 and now an international phenomenon. Using friendly competition to gather the best and brightest young writers from the Chicago area, Louder Than a Bomb is a safe space that emphasizes community building, education, and youth empowerment. By carrying on the rich tradition of oral storytelling and the spoken word, Louder Than a Bomb will engage over 650 youth participants representing over 50 schools and community centers to share stories, break stereotypes, speak the truth, challenging themselves and their audience (Young Chicago Authors Presents, 2009).

and it was started about 25 years ago now. When it was started, it was kind of trying to take the ability to write and perform poetry away from academics who had pretty much more or less killed it, or at least made it inaccessible to everyone. I think most genres of art are accessible to everyone. Any kid can paint. You know? Any kid can dance. Any kid can write a story even. All art is accessible except for some reason poetry is sort of kept away and taken away from people. And so the poetry slam gave it back to people, and it's ok to write poems that aren't instant classics that will make you immortal. It's just another genre of expression, and in that spirit that it is for everyone, just like punk rock and hip hop sort of revolutionized music and showed you don't necessarily need to know how to play instruments or sing to be a famous and moving musician and spoken word said you don't need to know iambic pentameter to write poetry. That's not, if people think that that's what poetry's about then they're stupid jerks. Yeah, stupid jerks. Big dumb dumb heads. So as it's grown, slam sort of, slam being the fake competition, it's real you know, we crown a winner but everyone who's self-aware at all recognizes that there's just never going to be a sure and fast way to crown what the best poem is, you know? It's just another thing. It's just another narrative. And so as it's grown we've found that it's an excellent way to have youth tell their stories. To have youth express themselves and give them agency and sort of empower young leaders to have a place where they matter, have a place where their stories matter. Just like poetry, like the poetry institution kept people away from accessing poetry for years and years, the same is said of youth everyday. They are sort of kept out of larger conversations even though they have problems and identities and rights of their own. And often their rights are neglected

because they are seen as just kids. That's what's interesting for us about slam and spoken word poetry. That it's not just about poetry ever. It's about youth voice; it's about politics; it's about social change. (R. Telfer, personal communication, July 24, 2009).

Telfer's narrative illustrates the themes addressed in this chapter including the importance of storytelling in the development of youth identity, the significance of the arts as a forum for the development and sharing of stories, as well as the need for positive adult mentors in supporting youth, in this case youth of color, in their exploration of identity and development of voice.

CRT, Narrative, and OST Arts Programming for Urban Youth

It's just another narrative. And so as it's grown we've found that it's an excellent way to have youth tell their stories. To have youth express themselves and give them agency and sort of empower young leaders to have a place where they matter, have a place where their stories matter (R. Telfer, personal communication, July 25, 2009)

This quote taken from Telfer's composite story embodies the first part of the fourth tenet of CRT; *CRT accepts experiential knowledge through the use of storytelling, narratives, and counter-narratives, providing an outlet for voice for people of color.* "Counter-narrative stories 'tell-on' or bear witness to social relations that the dominant culture tends to deny or minimize. They challenge the mainstream story or master narrative that constitutes the public script" (Parker & Lynn, 2002). In the seven-part documentary

*Brave New Voices (2009)*⁷ produced by Russell Simmons⁸ there are many examples of this reconceptualization. The documentary follows groups of teens from various cities across the country as they prepare with the guidance of adult mentors to battle in the Brave New Voices (BNV) annual poetry slam in Washington, DC. From Honolulu, Hawaii to Brooklyn, New York, teens tackle subject matter such as racism, sexual abuse, self-esteem, love, loss, grief, and discrimination, using poetry to tell their stories (Simmons, 2009).

The following poem *Harlem*, written and performed by Miles Andrew Hodges, a seventeen year old from Brooklyn, New York is transcribed below from the *Brave New Voices (2009)* documentary to provide a literal example of just how powerful participation in OST arts programs, such as slam poetry, can be for students in the formation of their identities and their abilities to tell their own stories. In the final round of Brave New Voices 2008, Queen God Is, mentor to the Brooklyn, New York team, reflects that, “*Harlem* is one of the most powerful pieces of race and identity that I’ve ever heard. And you see this kid that most people just see as white or a question mark and that journey is such a big thing for him” (Simmons, 2009). Hodges expresses this as he performs *Harlem*.

⁷ *Brave New Voices (2009)* is an HBO documentary featuring teens as they prepare of a nationwide slam poetry competition.

⁸ Russell Simmons is a hip-hop mogul, credited with helping to form legendary rap group Run-DMC, co-founder of Def Jam records, and social activist supporting youth including the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN). (<http://www.hsan.org/content/main.aspx?pageid=7>).

Harlem

In Harlem they ruled the world like kings
and laughed at it like children do from history's
dearest neighborhood.

They never sang songs but
sang the innocence that their age bore all so foolishly with every
sugary step down Lenox Avenue.

Singing in tune with the sun
As it traveled over their heads,
Peeking in and out of the project high rises, and
It was summer.

So the sun would shine down from its conceited-as-fuck spot in the universe
And fill up 135th street like an ocean.
That color and they have reserved half of my body to call its own.
Like half of me is
like my father was, like my grandfather is, like my great grandma Anna Bell was.

She'd cook for you too, yes you!
You with the basketball hoop and foul line for a father.
Back pocket journal for a mother
And summer day to compare the rest of your life against.
This poem is for you to play a trust game with.

Use it.
Use it as a shield when the inner city or the White man tries to shoot you down.
Tell them to load their handguns with rose petals
And aim at your feet
So when they shoot you enough you can dance
On those blood colored clouds.

Tell them to! Tell them to, tell them!
Tell them to load their shotguns with slugs made of me
And I'll prove to you that bullets do know what color your skin is.

When I pierce your chest and tip toe vicariously around your lungs
And light your heart on fire so it bursts into three parts.

You, me, and a rainbow. Us. Just us.

No race. Just us and
Like our chained ancestors from Africa before us.
We will always sing, sing, singing strains of hope before
They caught us.

Black skin symphonies with every note before they brought us face-to-face
 With the son of man and that poet,
 Holy ghost who sinner and said her only plan was to bathe in the endless water
 Which still breaks from all those wombs,
 All those raped slave daughters,
 The raped slave mothers and sisters and fathers and brothers and lovers
 Who'd cover their own children from their own screams and whiplashes if they
 could.

Like Harlem does.

The typed poem does not do justice to the performance given by Hodges documented in *Brave New Voices (2009)*, as mentors work with youth to not only write poetry but to find the most powerful way in which to perform their poetry. The commitment the teens show to preparing for events like Louder than a Bomb or Brave New Voices demonstrates the power of after-school and summer arts programming for urban youth.

Telling Stories Through the Arts

Throughout this research, stories and examples given by participants working in the OST arts field showcase just how powerful the arts are as a forum for open discussion on race and social justice. In the form of spoken word and slam poetry, teens working with mentors and staff of Young Chicago Authors have the chance to express their feelings from the most personal to the most political, or anywhere in between, and the opportunity to 'tell-on' oppressive social situations. According to Telfer, Young Chicago Authors can "empower young leaders" (personal communication, July 24, 2009) to create change, which, when referring to the tenets of CRT proposed in this paper, a clear connection to the third tenet promoting social justice and civic engagement.

As Telfer and other staff members of Young Chicago Authors utilize spoken word and slam poetry to engage youth of color in exploring their stories, Olivia Gude, director of the Spiral Workshop, reflects on her visual arts projects that encourage the teens to use art as narrative. “It really goes back to my cultural democracy days. It’s the central idea that people should have the tools to tell their own stories” (O. Gude, personal communication, July 21, 2009). Gude notes:

kids want to do projects about themselves, but it doesn’t work to say, ‘Make a picture of yourself and then put in pictures to represent you,’ because the very idea of a real you is a myth. You have a biological code, but you also have family coding, cultural coding. In Spiral curriculum we do projects where you look at the forces that shaped you to act and think the way that you do. (personal communication, July 21, 2009).

To challenge the students to think deeper about their projects and themselves and the greater cultural context, Gude utilizes what she calls subject surveys. “They’re about a subject like dirty or cute or punishment. Through a student investigates him or herself and personal stories, but also how that subject is constructed in culture” (O. Gude, personal communication, July 21, 2009).

In addition to the work of Young Chicago Authors and the Spiral Workshop, Street-Level Youth Media (Street-Level) is a non-profit organization in Chicago working with youth of color to develop their unique voices through the arts. Street-Level:

educates Chicago's urban youth in media arts and emerging technologies for use in self-expression, communication, and social change. Street-Level's programs

build critical thinking skills for young people who have been historically neglected by public policy makers and mass media. Using video and audio production, computer art and the Internet, Street-Level's youth address community issues, access advanced communication technology and gain inclusion in our information-based society (Street-Level Youth Media, 2009).

One project that Evans described in great detail focused on a series of violent crimes against women taking place in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Chicago. Like Young Chicago Authors, Street-Level is not afraid to tackle sensitive subject matter, including sexual assault, with their teens. Evans led the students through a series of artistic investigations including poster design, video production and a strong emphasis on the media's portrayal of people of color (personal communication, July 22, 2009). "We can have a lot of fun, a lot of self-expression, a grand old time, but know that by the end of it we are going to tackle something of substance and we are going to produce something" (S. Evans, personal communication, July 22, 2009).

In partnership with Archi-treasures⁹ during the summer of 2009, Street-Level Youth Media teens produced a documentary¹⁰ about violence in the B.J. Wright community. In this video, teens interview neighbors, school administrators, and local non-profit organizers who also work toward ending violence in Chicago neighborhoods.

⁹ Archi-treasures is an arts-based community development organization reducing social isolation by creating grassroots partnerships to build public spaces, empowering individuals to shape their future and the future of their community (Archi-treasures, 2006).

¹⁰ To see the documentary created by the youth, visit <http://www.vimeo.com/6964391>

Images of the neighborhood are transposed with voices of those discussing community violence and potential solutions. In addition to documenting their neighborhood, the teens have produced and edited the film, intending to send it to President Obama as a gesture toward policy reform.

The examples in this section highlight just how crucial the arts are to providing an outlet for youth to not only share their stories, but to also develop their identities, investigate their communities, define their beliefs in relationship to their communities and society through a creative means of expression. To assist the youth in developing these means, adult mentors serve as crucial guides throughout the process, sometimes leading the way, and other times providing support as the teens work to cultivate their voices.

OST Arts Programming, Adult Mentors, and the Development of Voice

Many of the cultural workers interviewed referenced this point: It is not only imperative to teach about the chosen craft, but how dedicating time and energy to something, such as an artistic pursuit, are valuable skills for the workplace and higher education (Duignan, personal communication, July 22, 2009; Evans, personal communication, July 21, 2009; Gude, personal communication, July 21, 2009; Preseault, personal communication, July 23, 2009; Telfer, personal communication, July 24, 2009).

The work Telfer does with Young Chicago Authors is part instruction and part therapy:

But in order to be good at that genre of art they need to find their voice in that art.

Emanuel has found that he is very good at experimental hip hop uh that is his

niche. It is very small. What we are also able to do secondarily to teaching them about art and creative writing is how these kids just sort of form their identities and find their actual voices. If you have a cared for soul, you can write out of that more productively (personal communication, July 25, 2009).

He and other Young Chicago Authors staff members challenge the youth to dig deep, to investigate the most shallow to the deepest parts of themselves. The poet mentors develop significant relationships that have been proven through previous research of successful OST programs as key to positive youth development (Brice-Heath, 1998; Harvard Family Research Project; Afterschool Alliance, n.d.). They do not have an easy task as:

Youth as a complex, shifting, and contradictory category is rarely narrated in the dominant public sphere through the diverse voices of the young. Prohibited from speaking as moral and political agents, youth become an empty category inhabited by the desires, fantasies, and interests of the adult world. This is not to suggest that youth don't speak; they are simply restricted from speaking in those spheres where public conversation shapes social policy and refused the power to make knowledge consequential with respect to their own individual and collective needs (H. Giroux, 1998b, p. 24).

Heath (1998) argues for the importance of mentorship, not only from qualified staff and instructors, but also from older students that have participated in past programs. "Their model filters down to younger members who find it "cool" to emulate the youth experts whose leaderships keeps things going and makes the work fun" (p. 233). The mentorship provided by adult allies, artist instructors, and other participating youth

comes at a time that is critical in the development of adolescent identity and in turn, youth voice. As Erickson (1968) states:

...adolescence is the period in one's life in which choices begin to be made and identities are formed. It is through this process of identity formation that cliques and subcultures tend to flourish. Central among adolescent choices, for Erikson, is the choice of a future career. This issue is made increasingly problematic by the current perceived downward mobility of most of today's young people (as cited in Epstein, 1998, p. 4).

In addition to serving as positive role models and artistic mentors during critical periods of youth identity development, adult allies also help to create a safe space for youth to voice their opinions without hesitation or judgment. As Jim Duignan addressed his concern for the physical and emotional safety of the youth participating in The Stockyard Institutes' *Gang-Proof Suit (2000)* project in Chapter III, scholars in the field of youth development and social justice education also encourage adult mentors to concentrate on creating open spaces for discussion. Henry Giroux (1998b) states:

pedagogically and politically, young people need to be given the opportunity to narrate themselves, to speak from the actual places where their experiences are shaped and mediated. This suggests more than letting kids have the opportunity to voice their concerns, it means providing the conditions – institutional, economic, spiritual, and cultural – that allow them to reconceptualize themselves as citizens and develop a sense of what it means to fight for important social and political issues that effect their lives, bodies, and society (p. 48).

Along with the recognition of unjust social practices, positive adult/youth relationships, youth identity development, and the encouragement to participate in critical civic engagement, research points to the need for educators, political activist, and community-based organizations to create spaces in which youth feel comfortable to develop and exercise their voices. When conducting research in a New York City high school, Jennifer McCormick (2000), observed a teacher and her students engaged in poetry writing exercises that McCormick refers to as ‘aesthetic safety zones’. As with McCormick’s work, Social justice youth development also recognizes the literary arts as a valid space for youth and their expression of voice (Ginwright & James, 2002). This strikes me as a prolific way to express the way in which the arts provides space for voice, both in a classroom, in a journal, or at a poetry slam. Social justice youth development hypothesizes that youth identity development is supported as the “process of healing from social ills by building their identities and providing skills to confront social problems” (Ginwright & James, 2002).

Steven Evans, programs manager at Street-Level, does not shy away from discussing difficult subject matter with his youth, encouraging them to investigate and form opinions on social and cultural issues. Youth working with Street-Level’s focus on new media technologies prepare youth to broadcast their voices to a larger public. Evans notes:

I like for it [program content] to be hard hitting, to tackle some things of great substance, and then just come here to express ourselves. I think you can do that, express yourself, your point of view around something tangible. It's not

necessarily just having fun, or I just need to vent, which there is nothing wrong with that. I just personally have a philosophy, or take on it, that I don't see our youth taking on tough things that affect them, that is real to them, that change their world. (personal communication, July 22, 2009).

Both *Young Chicago Authors* and *Street-Level* utilize powerful words and imagery to engage youth in speaking out on social issues, including race and racism, as evident in the project examples illustrated in this chapter. By distilling down the main tenets of CRT in to four topic areas and comparing these themes with literature review and data from the field, the final chapter summarizes and outlines the findings of this explanatory research and makes suggestions for implications in arts programming, both in and out-of-school.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This study has utilized CRT as both a lens to examine OST arts programming and also as a methodology for research. By investigating the history of CRT and its application to education research in Chapter II, and then analyzing the four tenets of CRT in relationship to the OST arts field in Chapters III through VI, I have been able to explain the connections between theory and praxis. CRT has been utilized for over ten years now in K-12 education research. This study makes connections between CRT and OST programming, focusing on OST youth arts programs in Chicago, Illinois. My research questions, based on the four tenets of CRT in education asked:

How are after-school and OST arts programs addressing racism, propagating social, historical, and liberal ideologies, giving voice to people of color, and promoting social justice? I addressed the following sub-questions:

- How are artist/instructors/administrators addressing issues of race in program development, delivery, and evaluation for youth in the OST setting?
- How are artists/instructors/administrators operating in the paradigm of colorblindness?
- Are OST arts programs promoting social justice, and if so, how?
- How are OST arts programs providing outlets for youth of color to find their ‘voice’?

This chapter summarizes and discusses the key findings of each chapter based on the proposed research questions and offers implications for further study in the field of OST arts programming, its relationship to public education, and the use of CRT to investigate both in-school and out-of-school methods of educating.

Summary and Discussion

In Chapter II, I discussed the history of CRT and its adaptation from critical legal studies to the field of educational research. By studying CRT in education, I distilled the scholarship down to four main tenets to which I analyzed current practices in the OST arts field. By conducting an extensive literature review on the topic of CRT in education, I developed research questions and a method for gathering stories from participants in the study based on the theory's focus on race, colorblindness, white privilege, social justice, and identity development. Crucial to CRT's methodology and the strategy of inquiry for this study, is the use of narrative. CRT's use of narrative and counter-narrative was a driving force behind the construction of this research and illustrates the power expressed in the words and experiences of youth educators and artists. Thus, I began each chapter with a composite story, or narrative, that was developed from the interviews with arts professionals and their associated organizations. Thematically, each composite story is told to highlight the main topics of each chapter in hopes that the reader will connect with specific experiences that make complicated social constructions, such as race, more accessible. In this section, I will revisit each research questions as it pertains to the OST youth arts field.

In Chapter III, I examined OST arts programs in Chicago through the first tenet of CRT; *CRT recognizes that racism is prevalent in American society*, answering the question: How are artist/instructors/administrators addressing issues of race in program development, delivery, and evaluation for youth in the OST setting? This chapter critiqued funding policies and financial inequities of OST programming for neighborhoods of color. Funding for OST programs through such initiatives as 21st CCLC report that the majority of funds are going to low-income, minority communities, yet, these minority families are reporting they are not receiving information or equal services and opportunities. Chapter III also addressed the racial language used in OST literature. Descriptive words such as “at-risk” promote a deficit model of education, and not one of the interviewees ever used that phrase to describe their students.

Many of the respondents, specifically Olivia Gude with the Spiral Workshop and Steven Evans with Street-Level Youth Media, stated that race was not a crucial part of their curriculum; however, as I analyzed the data and correlated it with current CRT and race scholarship, I feel that there cannot be a disconnect between addressing race in arts programs when working with urban youth of color. Although the topics of the workshops or after-school classes were not directly in reference to race, the life experiences of the students of color could not be ignored. For example, as Steven Evans discussed a Street-Level project on sexual violence taking place in Chicago, the media’s portrayal of African American men was central to their discussion (personal communication, July 21, 2009). Evans did not begin the project by saying that the students needed to address race,

but issues of race emerged throughout, and clearly became a central and relevant aspect to the investigation.

Jim Duignan's story of the Stockyard Institute's *Gang-Proof Suit (2000)* provided a narrative example of how urban youth of color engage in the art making process as a means to solve a problem or answer a question. In the case of the *Gang-Proof Suit (2000)*, the students grappled with personal safety; what does it mean when you are afraid that you will get shot in the back on your way to school? How can we make something to tackle this subject in a way that is meaningful? These are a few of the questions Duignan hoped would be answered by the students as they worked through the specifics of the project. This chapter also highlights the mural work of Olivia Gude of the Spiral Workshop, and the Free Street Theater project. By coding and analyzing Duignan's narrative and correlating it with other relevant examples provided by other interviewees, several common themes emerge. First was the discussion of racism and OST policy and program development. Chapter III shows that the organizations involved, in general, do not focus on race or racism as a main component of their work, but as CRT claims, race and racism are undeniable factors in all social contexts. The programs are not saying that racism is bad or that we are fighting racism through the arts. They are taking a much more advanced approach to working with students of color in the form of critical pedagogy.

Chapter IV explained the correlation of the second tenet of CRT; *CRT challenges dominate ideology by critiquing liberal principles of colorblindness, introducing instead whiteness as a social marker* and OST arts programs, responding to the question: How

are artists/instructors/administrators operating in the paradigm of colorblindness? This chapter synthesized current scholarship on colorblindness and white privilege while focusing on the work of J. Paul Preseault and The Tribes Project, Jim Duignan and The Stockyard Institute, and Claudia Lara with After School Matters. These artists work with teens through their respective organizations to challenge the status quo and engage in discussions on colorblindness and white privilege. Engaging youth in exploring each concept is a challenge, which was sometimes magnified by the race of the artist or instructor. Here I feel it is imperative to note that out of the eight interviewees, I observed that only three were people of color, and the remaining eight I would identify as white. Duignan, Preseault, Gude, and Evans all referenced their race in some way during their interviews. Duignan, Preseault, and Gude addressed their whiteness and its affect on the youth that they mentor as well as colleagues and peers engaging in similar artistic efforts.

Preseault's narrative about Diva and her persistence for getting a role in the Tribes production, partly based on her race, is an example of how OST arts programs are in line with CRT's position on colorblindness. Preseault knew that in addition to talent it was important that the actress for that particular role was a Black female.

Chapter V explored the relationship between the third tenet of CRT; *CRT is committed to not only discussing race in relationship to society but to promoting social justice and the eradication of all forms of oppression*, and OST arts programs, through examples from The Shanti Foundation for Peace, Spiral Workshop, the Stockyard Institute, About Face Youth Theatre, Young Chicago Authors and Street-Level Youth Media, addressing the question: Are OST arts programs promoting social justice, and if

so, how? Literature review and data from the field addressed social justice youth development, civic engagement, and the use of the arts in the campaign for social justice and suggest that OST arts programs are indeed working toward a more socially just world.

For example, this chapter's narrative focused on the formation of The Shanti Foundation for Peace and the evolution of the organization from a small, fundraising campaign to a city wide in-school and out-of-school program that blends the arts and promotes non-violent solutions to problem solving. Indira Johnson, founder and director of Shanti, reflected back on the origins of the organization with the *Getting Along Peace Bus* project. To Johnson, spending only three to four hours with a group of students was not enough to affect true change. She felt it was crucial to extend the time spent with the students, and moved the organization in the direction of artists residencies, after-school arts programs, and summer learning experiences. This dedication of time and an in depth study and practice of teaching arts and non-violence contributes to a socially just education by exposing youth to topics of concern for them and the world around them and then enabling them to make and share their opinions based on their artistic investigations.

Out of the eight organizations studied, Shanti's mission statement is one of the only statements that included the term social justice. Many of the interviewees were hesitant to say that they were doing social justice work. Preseault of the Tribes Project said that it is never their intent to go out and "shake up the people" in the name of social justice, but Tribes provocative work with race and youth-theater, is doing just that. Olivia

Gude also seemed hesitant to call the work she does with the Spiral Workshop a form of social justice. Quite frankly, she hates the term (O. Gude, personal communication, July 21, 2009) but goes on to talk about training arts educators that do not simply show up and teach, but work to make the system of education better for urban youth.

Finally, Chapter VI addresses the connection between tenet four, *CRT accepts experiential knowledge through the use of storytelling, narratives, and counter-narratives*, and OST arts programs addressing the final research question: How are OST arts programs providing outlets for youth of color to find their ‘voice’? Literature review and data from the field suggests that OST arts programs have a powerful effect for urban youth of color in identity formation. Young Chicago Authors, Street-Level Youth Media and the Spiral Workshop are featured in this chapter on discussing identity development through storytelling. All three programs utilize the arts to encourage students to find their voices, in particular, the work of Robbie Q. Telfer and Young Chicago Authors.

The composite story by Telfer talks about the process of preparing the students for slam competitions and the many benefits of poetry as an outlet for self-expression. The approach is unbound and unrestrained by traditional K-12 education standards, therefore allowing the students to talk about issues impacting their daily lives such as racism, sexual abuse, love, and death. The community created by Young Chicago Authors with the teens allows them to feel safe enough to share their deepest thoughts and feelings, while training them to understand that the art of spoken word poetry requires long hours, determination, and a level of professionalism as an artist.

Findings and Conclusions

Did the use of CRT as a methodology and research lens prove that after-school and summer arts programs are combating racism through the arts? Not necessarily, but it did provide the basis of the implications listed below. I looked critically at the racial implications in both the literature review and data analysis, utilized the tenets of CRT to provide a framework for inquiry, and found that all of the programs studied are empowering youth by teaching them an artistic craft, and then encouraging them to use their knowledge and ability to think critically to understand the world around them. Program coordinators and teaching artists in this study may not intend to address theories of race, colorblindness, and social justice, but their work with youth shows that they are committed to providing an community where youth can discover their voices through the arts, and shape their outlook and interaction with the world as knowledgeable and creative citizens.

By studying OST arts programs through a CRT lens, I have found several common denominators across organizations that led to the following conclusions. Successful OST arts programs create a community, including a safe space to share their thoughts, feelings, and interactions with the world around them. Successful OST arts programs studied utilize critical pedagogy by helping youth to empower themselves to become agents of change in their communities. Successful programs employ educators who not only serve as positive role models and mentors, but also as professional artists who teach their craft with the expectation that the students approach their own work with the highest level of professionalism.

Creating Safe Spaces

One common theme emerged from both a literature review on race and OST programs as well as data collected from participating organizations. Successful programming results in the development of a community, one in which the students feel safe. Jim Duignan of the Stockyard Institute discussed how art making is often secondary to the process he engages youth in because he first works to build a level of trust and dialogue before even attempting to introduce an art practice. As Duignan stated in reference to his students interaction with PBS during the filming of the *Gang-Proof Suit (2000)*:

I think they were really kind of holding true to this idea that we talked about, this information being withheld from the public. That those conversations we had in the studio space were ours, and that they would stay there. And I was really glad that they listened to that and thought that this was their space and our vocabulary that we built from the ground up, and it was important for them that this person didn't pay their dues to kind of get a piece of that. (personal communication, July 22, 2009).

Several of the interviewees made reference to the creation of community and the thoughtful, often slow-moving process that it can be. It takes time to develop the relationships with the teens that are necessary to getting to the heart of their lives and their concerns. Duignan 'walked the beat' of the neighborhood in which he was working before even encouraging the students to tackle something as heavy as gang violence.

By working with the students as co-authors and co-artists and less as empty slates waiting to be filled, the commitment and level of ownership increases exponentially (J. Duignan, personal communication, July 22, 2009). The creation of this community, this safe space, was paramount for Duignan and the students. The artwork developed from this safe space would not have been as powerful if Duignan had not dedicated his time to getting to know the youth.

The work of Telfer and Young Chicago Authors also highlights the transformative power of the arts for youth of color when a safe space is created. Youth involved in Young Chicago Author programs tackle very personal subject matter and utilize the art form of poetry and spoke word to share their experiences with a larger audience. Telfer's insistence to "care for the whole person" is evident when he joked about telling his students, "just don't call my cell phone after ten p.m." (personal communication, July 24, 2009). He is not only working to create a safe space for youth to share their feelings through poetry, he has developed bonds with his students that allow them to feel cared for and supported. I will address the need for time spent developing programs in relationship to the OST field in the implications section of this chapter.

Youth Empowerment and Civic Engagement

Empowering youth by teaching them an artistic means of investigating the world was a main goal of most of the interviewees in this study. Olivia Gude of the Spiral Workshop spoke to the success of the program when a former 'Spiral kid' became a member of the staff of the workshop. Gude states, "I can see how that Spiral experience shaped them. What's interesting is we don't think of Spiral as being directed toward

preparation for college. We think of it as a preparation for life, preparation for being culturally aware people” (personal communication, July 21, 2009). Jim Duignan of the Stockyard Institute and Gude also introduced the idea of the student as a ‘cultural worker’ or a ‘cultural producer’.

Both Duignan and Gude spoke to the sense of pride their students feel when showing their families the artwork that they had created or the radio show they helped to produce during their time with either organization (personal communication, July 22, 2009; personal communication July 21, 2009). Watching the documentary series *Brave New Voices (2009)* provides evidence for the powerful impact OST arts programs are having on youth in urban America. Youth have a vehicle to express their voices on a variety of issues, to identify themselves as artists, as poets, and as culture producers. Therefore, the students are not simply making art projects and hanging them on the wall, they are investigating cultural themes and creating a new culture of youth artists in Chicago. Gude hopes that by engaging in such projects will make the youth say, “hey! Wait a minute! That’s not right” (personal communication, July 21, 2009) when confronted with cultural norms such as stereotypical gender roles.

Out-of-School Time Educators – Professional Artists and Youth Mentors

Evident in these field observations as well as through the *Brave New Voices (2009)* documentary was the importance of adult mentors. The relationships that made the programs so profound were based on a mutual respect and effort for the art form, whether it was spoken word or printmaking. Also common in interview responses and program observation was the level of professionalism displayed by the artist instructor

and demanded from the student. Take the students seriously, show them to take the work seriously and they flourish from there. In an extremely compelling example of mentorship, Queen God Is, Brooklyn, New York mentor for Youth Speak at Brave New Voices 2008, demands that her team hold their hands in the air until a combative student, B. Yund explains to his peers why he had not memorized the required poem. She continually requested him to say the line, "I refuse to be the bleeding animal in the middle of the room" taken from teammate Britney's poem regarding her physical handicap that requires her to walk with crutches. While looking into Britney's eyes, B. Yung, a young and physically healthy nineteen year old, says the line in a way that caused chills down my spine. Her stare and her profound words expressed in poetry, as well as the guidance from Queen God Is, enabled B. Yund to reveal his frustrations, apologize to his team, and make what seemed to be a prolific break-through in his ability to open up and express his voice (R. Simmons, 2009).

Contributions to the OST Arts Field

By analyzing the OST arts field through a CRT lens, I found that this particular methodology serves as an important reminder that we must remain aware of context when developing programs and policies affecting the lives and education of youth, especially youth of color. At times I felt the OST literature to be narrow-minded and in direct opposition to practices in the field. By continually referring to youth as at-risk and including this raced-language as a search category on their website, the Harvard Family Research Project, a forerunner in the OST research field, propagates the idea of youth as deficits, not as assets. Not one of the study respondents ever referred to their students as

‘at-risk’. I believe that the term has racial implications and serves as another way to assert White privilege and its associated characteristics, over students of color.

The use of CRT as a Research Tool for Community Development

Above all, I feel CRT has implications for the OST arts field to serve as a tool for evaluation and program development. This research shows that CRT can serve as a tool to evaluate current community climates that then can make relevant suggestions to communities because of the focus on narrative (or counter-narrative). Each person has a story, the OST arts programs studied in this research show that they are committed to finding this out. Public school educators do not have the time or resources to get to know their students.

Can the programs studied serve as a model for best practices in OST arts education? Yes and no. What CRT has taught me is that each story is unique –more useful as a tool for assessment rather than a basis for curriculum development, which is different from what I had originally expected. I also feel that CRT can provide a model for training OST educators to better work with youth of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Currently, there are very few education opportunities for teaching artists. Many of the professionals interviewed received their training in their arts discipline, some in education, which seems to be common among artists who then use teaching to make a living. Teaching and mentoring youth comes naturally to some, but should also continue to be developed and cultivated in the form of training workshops and higher education options.

Implications for Further Study

Many of the participants in this study utilized forms of critical pedagogy in educating youth in OST hours. This type of educational framework can help to improve students' learning, both majority and minority populations, by encouraging a more realistic view of power relationship, and how these relationships form the systems in which we live. As noted in the "Movement for 21st Century Schools":

Today's students live in a world that is extremely fast-paced, constantly changing, increasingly culturally diverse, technologically driven, and media-saturated. We cannot continue to deliver a 20th century, scientific-management, factory-model education. This new context of the 21st century requires that we redefine "education", "school", "curriculum", "teacher" and "learner". It requires that we provide an education designed to help our students truly succeed. (Twenty-First Century Schools, 2004).

OST arts programming is a crucial component to the 21st Century Schools initiative, not only as means of educating students through a complimentary system of learning, but as a model for "education", "school", "curriculum", "teacher", and "learner". It is my belief that the OST arts programs and educators studied in this research are pioneers in the development and delivery of 21st century curriculum by utilizing critical pedagogy, and should be studied further by both OST and K-12 educators. Therefore, the field should not only address how current OST arts programs are finding success with urban youth, but also how the development of training materials and best practices based on these success for youth educators is critical to improving education for all youth.

The programs are not only providing the space, materials, instructors, and ideas to educate mainly youth of color, they are also revolutionizing the way in which these students are educated. By asking them about themselves, their communities, what they think needs to be changed and how they think they can change it, art educators in the OST field are requiring the students to take ownership over their craft and develop their own knowledge through critical inquiry. As Duignan spoke about the *Gang-Proof Suit (2000)* project, stating that:

it was also about getting kids to understand how they could continue to sort of be in that neighborhood and function and love their families and their friends and not really take anything away other than the accomplishment of spending a long time working on a project and finding a way to satisfy this sort of capacity for educating themselves. (personal communication, July 22, 2009).

The arts teach the students discipline and creativity, while providing a vehicle for youth voice. Visual arts, dance, music, poetry, media arts, and theater are essential forums for students to honestly explore the world around them and then create their own knowledge based on their investigations.

Classroom Teacher and Arts Specialist Training

By studying OST arts programs through a CRT lens, the idea of developing ways to teach artists and educators in the methodology of the practice became a crucial part of implications for the field. Not only is it apparent that each community, including OST programs, schools, and classrooms, are different, it was observed in this research that to glean the most success from each student, teachers and instructors must be sensitive to

student's individual stories. Therefore, it would not be beneficial to create a training program or curriculum to replicate nationwide, but it would be useful to develop a method for teachers, instructors, and artists to employ in their various capacities. The local community narrative should inform the curriculum and policy development for that community, and the OST educators should be able to utilize the tools of CRT to create such curriculum.

In the end, educating student through the arts and the investigation of this education through a CRT lens, points to the need to enable students of color to have access to equal opportunities, and to also learn ways in which they can create new knowledge and new opportunities for themselves to succeed. As evident from the participants interview responses and examples of student successes, the arts are a key forum for social justice education to occur. But to do this, we, artists and educators, as well as policy makers and funding institutions, must take into account the stories at the margins, and particularly of our youth, and be prepared to deal with the conversations that arise. It is happening in OST arts organizations in Chicago, and the programs included in this research should serve as models for both OST and K-12 education development and policy.

APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTION: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Data Collection: Document Analysis

Data ID:

Organization:

Date:

Location:

Document Type:

Reference Citation:

Coding

Information

Notes

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: ARTS ADMINISTRATORS

Interview Protocol: Arts Administrator

Data ID:

Location:

Date:

Name:

Address:

Contact Information:

Consent: _____ Oral _____ Written _____ Audio Recording _____

OK to quote _____ Member Check _____

Interview Context:

Coding

Information

Notes

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: TEACHING ARTISTS

Interview Protocol: Teaching Artist

Data ID:

Location:

Date:

Name:

Address:

Contact Information:

Consent: _____ Oral _____ Written _____ Audio Recording _____
 OK to quote _____ Member Check _____

Interview Context:

Coding

Information

Notes

APPENDIX D

DATA ANALYSIS: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Data Analysis: Participant Observation

Data ID:

Location:

Date:

Activity:

Details:

Coding

Information

Notes

APPENDIX E
RECRUITMENT LETTER

Date

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Dear <POTENTIAL INTERVIEWEE>:

You are invited to participate in a research project titled **Out-of-School Time Arts Programming: A Critical Race Theory Approach** conducted by Lauren Suveges from the University of Oregon's Arts and Administration Program. The purpose of this study is to explore how out-of-school time arts programs have been affected by the influence of critical race theory in education.

While a strong base of literature exists connecting critical race theory and education, there is a significant gap in describing and explaining the connection between critical race theory and out-of-school time programming. To begin to address the need for out-of-school time arts programming based on the tenets of critical race theory, this study aims to analyze and assess **programs in Chicago, IL by interviewing professionals in the field**. The first phase of the study involves a comprehensive review of literature linking critical race theory and education as well as an extensive review of the relationship between public arts education and out-of-school time arts programming. Subsequent data collection through **interviews** will inform how these methodologies relate to the practicing field.

You were selected to participate in this study because of your leadership position with <NAME OF RELEVANT CASE STUDY ORGANIZATION> and your experiences with and expertise pertinent to out-of-school time programming in **Chicago, IL**. If you decide to take part in this research project, you will be asked to provide relevant organizational materials and participate in an in-person interview, lasting approximately one hour, during **summer** 2009. If you wish, interview questions will be provided beforehand for your consideration. Interviews will take place at <NAME OF ORGANIZATION>, or at a more conveniently located site. Interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. In addition to taking handwritten notes, with your permission, I will use an audio tape recorder for transcription and validation purposes. You may also be asked to provide follow-up information through phone calls or email.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (614) 746-4086 or lsuveges@uoregon.edu or Dr. Lori Hager at (541) 346- 2469 . Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510.

Thank you in advance for your interest and consideration. I will contact you shortly to speak about your potential involvement in this study.

Sincerely,

Lauren Suveges
244 High St.
Eugene, OR 97401

APPENDIX F

CONSENT FORM

Research Protocol Number: _____
Out-of-School Time Arts Programming: A Critical Race Theory Approach

Lauren Suveges, Principal Investigator
University of Oregon Arts and Administration Program

You are invited to participate in a research project titled **Out-of-School Time Arts Programming: A Critical Race Theory Approach** conducted by Lauren Suveges from the University of Oregon's Arts and Administration Program. The purpose of this study is to explore how out-of-school time arts programs have been affected by the influence of critical race theory in education.

While a strong base of literature exists connecting critical race theory and education, there is a significant gap in describing and explaining the connection between critical race theory and out-of-school time programming. To begin to address the need for out-of-school time arts programming based on the tenets of critical race theory, this study aims to analyze and assess **programs in Chicago, IL by interviewing professionals in the field**. The first phase of the study involves a comprehensive review of literature linking critical race theory and education as well as an extensive review of the relationship between public arts education and out-of-school time arts programming. Subsequent data collection through **interviews** will inform how these methodologies relate to the practicing field.

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Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will be carefully and securely maintained. Your consent to participate in this interview, as indicated below, demonstrates your willingness to have your name used in any resulting

documents and publications. If you wish, a pseudonym may be used with all identifiable data that you provide. It may be advisable to obtain permission to participate in this interview to avoid potential social or economic risks related to speaking as a representative of your institution. **Risks may include embarrassment, loss of respect from others, labeling resulting in negative consequences, and diminishing the subject's opportunities and status in relation to others.** Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

I anticipate that the results of this research project will be of value to the out-of-school time sector as a whole, especially in the Midwest. However, I cannot guarantee that you personally will receive any benefits from this research.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (614) 746-4086 or lsuveges@uoregon.edu or Dr. Lori Hager at (541) 346-2469 . Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510.

Please read and initial each of the following statements to indicate your consent:

_____ I consent to the use of audiotapes and note taking during my interview.

_____ I consent to my identification as a participant in this study.

_____ I consent to the potential use of quotations from the interview.

_____ I consent to the use of information I provide regarding the organization with which I am associated.

_____ I wish to have the opportunity to review and possibly revise my comments and the information that

I provide prior to these data appearing in the final version of any publications that may result from this study.

_____ I wish to maintain my confidentiality in this study through the use of a pseudonym.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you have received a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. You have been given a copy of this letter to keep.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date:

Thank you for your interest and participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Lauren Suveges
244 High St.
Eugene, OR 97401
(614) 746-4086
lsuveges@uoregon.edu

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