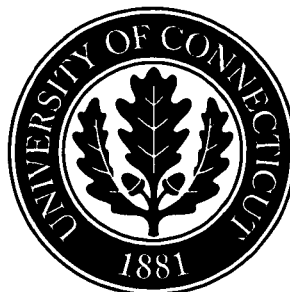## Article

A Critical Race Psychology Is Not Yet Born

GLENN ADAMS & PHIA S. SALTER

Critical Race Theory (CRT) challenges scholars to reveal and dismantle disciplinary conventions that constitute racial power. In this Article, we take up this challenge and consider the potential for a Critical Race Psychology. Although CRT-compatible work has drawn upon psychological scientific research to challenge disciplinary conventions in law, there has been little consideration of disciplinary conventions— including (1) a colorblind epistemology that denies the racially positioned character of scientific knowledge, and (2) an atomistic conception of racism that promotes colorblind ignorance about the ongoing significance of racism—that constitute racial power in psychological science. As steps in this direction, we outline conceptual elements of a Critical Race Psychology, including a critical approach to methodology, identity consciousness in research, and an understanding of race as an epistemological position. We then describe empirical examples of research within psychological science that attempts to identify and counteract colorblind ignorance of racism.

ARTICLE CONTENTS

A Critical Race Psychology Is Not Yet Born

GLENN ADAMS[*] & PHIA S. SALTER[†]

I. INTRODUCTION

In her lead article, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw traces the development of Critical Race Theory (CRT) within the study of law and discusses its extension into other fields of study. Following her lead, this paper considers the extension of CRT into the science of psychology. The lead article notes work by scholars at the intersection of law and psychological science which draws upon the language of CRT. This generous spirit of inclusion with which Professor Crenshaw has mentioned psychological science makes perfect sense to us, as her task is to forge connections across fields and suggest the broad applicability of CRT as an intellectual movement. In turn, we take our task from locations within psychological science to be somewhat different; namely, to adopt a more critical perspective on the prospects for a Critical Race Psychology. Although there are certainly pockets of work that are compatible with a CRT analysis, we propose that it would be premature or too generous to identify psychological science as a site where CRT flourishes. Rather, to paraphrase the West African aphorism,[1] "a Critical Race Psychology is not yet born."

II. CRITICAL RACE REALISM: INTERVENTIONS FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE INTO THE STUDY OF LAW

Among the pockets of work at the intersection of CRT and psychological science, the lead article highlights the perspective of Critical Race Realism, which shares two-thirds of its name with CRT and proposes to inject empirically informed interventions from psychological science into the field of legal studies.[2] A discussion of this perspective will help to clarify an important distinction between a legal scholarship informed by empirical psychological science and a Critical Race Psychology that lives

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[1] AYI KWEI ARMAH, THE BEAUTYFUL ONES ARE NOT YET BORN 214 (1968).
[2] Richard Delgado, *Foreword* to CRITICAL RACE REALISM: INTERSECTIONS OF PSYCHOLOGY, RACE, AND LAW, at xi, xii (Gregory S. Parks et al. eds., 2008) ("Critical race realism as a movement may profit from examining more closely its relation to critical race theory, with which it shares two-thirds of its name. . . . Scientific findings, a critical race theorist might say, rarely speak for themselves; they require an act of interpretation.").

up to the CRT label.

Critical Race Realism draws upon work in psychological science to challenge conventional thinking within the field of legal studies. Rather than a bottom-up assessment based on systematic observation, research suggests that legal scholars, law enforcement officials, policy analysts, legislators, bureaucrats, and everyday decision-makers tend to rely on lay theories of human psychology to explain underperformance, make culpability judgments, or to determine whether a particular behavior constitutes discrimination. The implicit cultural models upon which they draw tend to locate the source of action and experience in agency and subjectivity of bounded individuals, abstracted from social and physical context.[3] Work in the area of Critical Race Realism draws upon empirical research from psychological science to challenge assumptions about agency and subjectivity in legal scholarship and jurisprudence.

To illustrate, consider the topic of anti-discrimination law. Decision-makers generally resemble ordinary observers in applying a relatively narrow understanding of discrimination as individual prejudice. As Linda Krieger notes,

> [f]or the most part, Title VII disparate treatment doctrine reflects a model of gender (as well as ethnic and racial) bias that attribute discrimination to the deliberate, conscious, intentional action by invidiously motivated actors who know they are discriminating, do so consistently across situations, and then dissemble about the real reasons for their decisions when challenged to do so.[4]

The practical consequence of this standard has been to limit the reach of anti-discrimination law by requiring proof of deliberate, differential treatment motivated by racial antipathy that the actor intentionally designs to produce harmful outcomes.[5] Moreover, by limiting the range of events that one might consider to be racism, these implicit models provide the foundation for the experience of postracialism: the sense that racism and oppression are relatively circumscribed "things of the past" that do not require drastic action to combat in the present.

This relatively narrow understanding of racism resonates with cultural models that locate the source of agency and experience in relatively

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[3] *See, e.g.*, Hazel Rose Markus & Shinobu Kitayama, *Models of Agency: Sociocultural Diversity in the Construction of Action*, *in* CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN PERSPECTIVES ON THE SELF 1, 4 (2003) (discussing the relationship between agency and socio-cultural contexts).

[4] Linda Hamilton Krieger, *The Intuitive Psychologist Behind the Bench: Models of Gender Bias in Social Psychology and Employment Discrimination Law*, 60 J. SOC. ISSUES 835, 843–44 (2004).

[5] *See generally* Janet K. Swim et al., *The Role of Intent and Harm in Judgments of Prejudice and Discrimination*, 84 J. PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCHOL. 944 (2003) (analyzing cognitive factors that might influence people's judgments of prejudice and an actor's intent to discriminate).

conscious subjects who deliberately choose actions as a reflection of their deeply held, personally endorsed attitudes. It is, however, at odds with the emerging consensus from social psychological research, which has documented the pervasive occurrence of discrimination without conscious awareness by people who strive to live in a non-discriminatory fashion in accordance with unprejudiced identities that they sincerely endorse.[6] Moreover, the conception of racism as direct, differential treatment is likewise at odds with research on various forms of social identity threat, which suggests that subtle cues about the racialized and gendered character of everyday reality can constitute a hostile climate that is sufficient to reproduce disparate outcomes (e.g., group differences in standardized test performance), even in the absence of the sort of direct differential treatment that lay and expert decision-makers would regard as discrimination.[7] By drawing upon this scientific evidence and transporting it across disciplinary boundaries from psychology into the field of law, the enterprise of Critical Race Realism provides an empirically grounded argument for expanding conceptions of racism beyond prevailing understandings that require proof of intention or direct differential treatment. In turn, this broader conception of racism provides an empirical foundation to challenge claims about the end of racism and illuminate the need for vigorous institutional change to combat ongoing injustice.

Without denying that interventions from psychological science can contribute to CRT objectives in the field of law, one can still question the extent to which the intellectual perspectives associated with these interventions resonate with the broader CRT framework. Do these perspectives heed Professor Crenshaw's call in her lead article "for scholars across the disciplines not only to reveal how disciplinary conventions themselves constitute racial power, but also to provide an inventory of the critical tools developed over time to weaken and potentially dismantle them"?[8] The answer might depend on one's disciplinary perspective.

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[6] Patricia G. Devine, *Stereotypes and Prejudice: Their Automatic and Controlled Components*, 56 J. PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCHOL. 5, 16 (1989); John F. Dovidio et al., *On the Nature of Prejudice: Automatic and Controlled Processes*, 33 J. EXPERIMENTAL SOC. PSYCHOL. 510, 534 (1997); Russell H. Fazio et al., *Variability in Automatic Activation as an Unobtrusive Measure of Racial Attitudes: A Bona Fide Pipeline?*, 69 J. PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCHOL. 1013, 1026 (1995).

[7] Glenn Adams et al., *The Detrimental Effects of a Suggestion of Sexism in an Instruction Situation*, 42 J. EXPERIMENTAL SOC. PSYCHOL. 602, 614 (2006); Sapna Cheryan et al., *Ambient Belonging: How Stereotypical Cues Impact Gender Participation in Computer Science*, 97 J. PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCHOL. 1045, 1058 (2009); Valerie Purdie-Vaughns et al., *Social Identity Contingencies: How Diversity Cues Signal Threat or Safety for African Americans in Mainstream Institutions*, 94 J. PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCHOL. 615, 628 (2008); Claude M. Steele, *A Threat in the Air: How Stereotypes Shape Intellectual Identity and Performance*, 52 AM. PSYCHOLOGIST 613, 627 (1997).

[8] Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, *Twenty Years of Critical Race Theory: Looking Back To Move Forward*, 43 CONN. L. REV. 1253, 1262 (2011).

From the perspective of legal scholarship, frameworks like Critical Race Realism which draw upon empirical research in psychological science are "critical" to the extent that—at least in the right hands—they serve as tools for challenging conventions that constitute racial power within the discipline of law. For example, legal scholars might draw upon psychological scientific research to illuminate the typically obscured, racialized subjectivity of institutional actors within the legal system (e.g., judges, lawyers, legislators, and law enforcement officials). These institutional actors are not colorblind perceivers, but share the same implicit biases evident in the general population.[9] Closer to the objective of challenging disciplinary conventions, psychological scientific research can provide raw material to help illuminate the typically obscured, racialized standpoint of allegedly colorblind concepts and methods.[10]

From the perspective of psychological science, we propose that such perspectives may be insufficiently critical. In their understandable eagerness to appropriate empirical evidence that bears the legitimizing authority of psychological science, perspectives like Critical Race Realism may turn a blind eye toward the racial positioning inherent in scientific theory and method.[11] As a result, we propose to distinguish the

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[9] This sort of analysis characterizes the main body of work in the perspective of Critical Race Realism, at least as represented in the edited book by that name. *See, e.g.*, Jody Armour, *Stereotypes and Prejudice: Helping Legal Decisionmakers Break the Prejudice Habit, in* CRITICAL RACE REALISM, *supra* note 2, at 11–13.

[10] Examples of the former include such foundational concepts as the "reasonable person" standard, especially when applied to such topics as a "reasonable" level of suspicion about the impact of racism in a series of event. As we discuss at length later in this Article, White Americans tend to deny the plausibility of racism to a greater extent than do people from historically oppressed racial minority groups. To the extent that judgments about racism draw upon White racial subjectivity as the standard for "reasonable" suspicion, these normative judgments will tend to impose a relatively high threshold of suspicion for identifying the influence of racism on a situation and will lead one to conclude that racism has a relatively limited impact. Examples with respect to method include the idea of moral reasoning based on deduction from abstract principles by dis-embedded actors. Research from psychological science not only challenges the possibility that actual decision makers can achieve this standard of dis-embeddedness (i.e., by transcending their racialized subject positions), but also raises questions about the inherent superiority of this standard. Rather than a context-independent pinnacle of moral reasoning, the notion of abstract laws may itself be the product of particular ecologies that afford a sense of abstraction from context. For reviews of work on the contextual grounding of moral and general reasoning, see Richard E. Nisbett et al., *Culture and Systems of Thought: Holistic Versus Analytic Cognition*, 108 PSYCHOL. REV. 291, 291–92 (2001) ("[T]he considerable social differences that exist among different cultures affect not only their beliefs about specific aspects of the world but also (a) their naive metaphysical systems at a deep level, (b) their tacit epistemologies, and (c) even the nature of their cognitive processes—the ways by which they know the world." (footnotes omitted)); Richard A. Shweder et al., *Culture and Moral Development, in* THE EMERGENCE OF MORALITY IN YOUNG CHILDREN 1, 1–2 (Jerome Kagan & Sharon Lamb eds., 1987) (reporting "the results of a cross-cultural development study of ideas about the moral (its form) and ideas about what is moral (its content)").

[11] For general discussions compatible with a CRT critique of scientific method, see SANDRA HARDING, SCIENCE AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY: FEMINIST AND POSTCOLONIAL ISSUES 3–4 (2006); TUKUFU ZUBERI, THICKER THAN BLOOD: HOW RACIAL STATISTICS LIE, at ix–x, xv–xvi (2001); Tukufu Zuberi, *Deracializing Social Statistics: Problems in the Quantification of Race, in* WHITE LOGIC, WHITE METHODS: RACISM AND METHODOLOGY 127, 132–33 (Tukufu Zuberi & Eduardo

appropriation of psychological science and its application to the study of law from the development of a Critical Race Psychology that lives up to the call to reveal and dismantle disciplinary conventions that constitute racial power.

III. OUTLINE FOR CRITICAL RACE PSYCHOLOGY

How would the development of a Critical Race Psychology proceed? What would be its definitional elements? Crenshaw's lead article provides some clues.

A. *Race as Epistemological Position*

A first important clue for development of a Critical Race Psychology concerns the place of *race* in CRT perspectives. In her narrative about the development of CRT, Professor Crenshaw emphasizes that the students at Harvard Law School who initiated the movement did not simply desire courses on discrimination or other explicitly race-relevant topics, nor did they accept proposals to hire faculty of color as adjunct professors with a limited dispensation to teach "racial" topics. Instead, students demanded courses and mentors who would apply a race-conscious lens across the curriculum and practice of the law school.[12]   Stated in more general fashion, the "R" in CRT is not about a particular set of ghettoized,[13] race-relevant topics set off from the supposedly race-irrelevant, normal business of intellectual inquiry. Instead, a key contribution of CRT perspectives is to reveal how allegedly "colorblind" analyses of apparently race-irrelevant topics also bear the mark of racialized subjectivity. In parallel fashion, the focus of a Critical Race Psychology would not limit itself to the study of such explicitly race-relevant topics as prejudice, stereotypes, and identity; instead, it must extend the conscious application of racially positioned knowledge to topics across the entirety of psychological science.[14]

Bonilla-Silva eds., 2008).   For particular critiques of the experimental methods common in psychological science, see Carla Goar, *Experiments in Black and White: Power and Privilege in Experimental Methodology, in* WHITE LOGIC, WHITE METHODS, *supra,* at 153, 159.

[12] Crenshaw, *supra* note 8, at 1265–67.

[13] Pamela Stone, *Ghettoized and Marginalized: The Coverage of Racial and Ethnic Groups in Introductory Sociology Texts,* 24 TEACHING SOC. 356, 356–62 (1996) (finding, in a survey of introductory sociology texts, that issues pertaining to race and ethnicity arose within a limited set of topics and appeared primarily in the chapters specifically dedicated to race).

[14] An interesting flipside to this point, one that resonates with mainstream reception of CRT approaches in other disciplines, is the extent to which mainstream work privileges non-racialized, "underlying mechanism" explanations of phenomena (e.g., outgroup derogation, ingroup favoritism, stigma, or dehumanization) that one might otherwise discuss as racism. *See* Crenshaw, *supra* note 8, at 1290–91. This tendency constitutes another way in which mainstream work in psychological science serves to minimize or silence the role of racism. By constructing these phenomena as something other than racism, mainstream research obscures the extent to which racism is itself a "basic" psychological process—albeit a cultural and historical one—that underlies many psychological phenomena.

B. *Identity Consciousness*

The second important clue toward development of a Critical Race Psychology is the explicit acknowledgement in CRT perspectives of the role that identity and racialized subjectivity have in both (a) construction of everyday realities and (b) academic production of knowledge about those everyday realities.[15] From this perspective, it is not surprising that it was students of color who initiated the movement that became CRT. Again, the reason is not some dubiously "natural" interest in explicitly race-relevant topics or the mere expression of ethnic solidarity. Instead, the reason is that these students' identity positions prepared them well to see the typically obscured, racialized character of conventional wisdom in their field of study.

In parallel fashion, the development of a Critical Race Psychology requires a greater degree of identity consciousness—and critical reflexivity regarding the role of racial identity in the knowledge construction process—than has been typical in psychological science. Again, the rationale for such identity consciousness is not to promote monolithic ethnic solidarity or "identity politics" understood as base intergroup conflict.[16] Instead, the rationale is to illuminate the typically obscured role of racial identity and racialized subjectivity in the production of conventional scientific wisdom.

This prescription for identity consciousness, critical reflexivity, and deliberate awareness of racial positioning contradicts conventional academic wisdom, which advocates the cultivation of allegedly colorblind neutrality as a means to insure maximum objectivity.[17] Similarly, this prescription is antithetical to the reigning ideology of positivism in psychological science, which holds as a normative standard the myth of the positionless observer who pursues objective truth without the biasing effects of racial or other identity baggage. As a manifestation of this

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[15] *See id.* at 1298 (emphasizing the importance of "excavating the deeper ideological structures that link the academy to the common sense assumptions that underscore colorblindness").

[16] Indeed, in the case of White identity, the point of identity consciousness is to alert intellectuals and scientists about the extent to which they have a "possessive investment" in certain racialized constructions of reality as a means to enable them to disinvest in those racialized constructions of reality. For more on the notion of "possessive investment," see generally GEORGE LIPSITZ, THE POSSESSIVE INVESTMENT IN WHITENESS: HOW WHITE PEOPLE PROFIT FROM IDENTITY POLITICS (1998).

[17] As Professor Crenshaw notes, this same sort of prescription was evident during the confirmation hearings for Justice Sotomayor, whose interrogators preached about the need to transcend Latina identity in order to achieve the ideal of colorblind justice. Crenshaw, *supra* note 8, at 1341–43. A CRT critique of such statements applies to conventional academic wisdom as much as it does to law and jurisprudence. Specifically, the problem with such statements is not simply that they fail to challenge White justices or academics to acknowledge or transcend their racial identity in performance of their judicial or academic duties. The more important problem is that such statements obscure the process by which White subjectivities thoroughly permeate the tenets of allegedly colorblind justice, academic inquiry, and scientific research.

ideology, standard advice to graduate students in psychological science is that they should leave identities and political sensibilities at the door of the laboratory, strive to conduct their research as a positionless observer, and allow the data to speak for themselves. In vivid contrast, a Critical Race Psychology must strive to illuminate the racially positioned basis of such claims to post-racial or colorblind objectivity. As we discuss later in this Article, such claims often act as a cover for mainstream observers to cloak their racially positioned observations in the legitimizing authority of colorblind science, to portray their racism-denying conclusions as objective truth, and thereby to reproduce systems of domination.

C. *Critical Methodology*

Of course, psychological scientists are well aware in their moments of critical reflection that truly objective observation is impossible and that people can only perceive reality through particular perspectives.[18] However, they place faith in the scientific method—including transparency of procedures, open access to data, and the submission of one's observations for evaluation via peer review—as a corrective to any systematic biases that the researcher might bring to the process. In contrast to this faith in the redemptive power of the scientific method, the third important clue toward development of a Critical Race Psychology concerns a critical stance toward standard methodological practice.

An important contribution of CRT perspectives in law—one that is evident in Crenshaw's article—has been exactly that: to inject more identity-conscious, narrative modes of inquiry into standard methodological practice.[19] Rather than discuss more or less interchangeable, atomistic actors abstracted from social context and historical trajectory, narrative methods recognize and articulate the enduring consequences for agency and subjectivity that result from a history of engagement with specific realities. By illuminating the embodied history that everyday actors and academic observers necessarily bring with them to their everyday activity and academic observation, narrative methods help to reveal, rather than obscure, the ways in which the academic endeavor can reproduce ongoing histories of racial domination.

Within our home discipline of social psychology—the source of many of the insights upon which Critical Race Realism draws for its empirical interventions into law—one sees an almost fetishistic reliance on

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[18] Indeed, this is one of the key lessons to emerge from more than a century of psychological scientific research. For more on this point, see LEE ROSS & RICHARD E. NISBETT, THE PERSON AND THE SITUATION: PERSPECTIVES OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY 59–62 (1991).

[19] *See, e.g.,* Crenshaw, *supra* note 8, at 1272–75 (discussing the formation and early days of CRT).

laboratory experiments as a direct route to scientific truth.[20] This near-exclusive reliance on laboratory-experimental methods is a problem to the extent that it reflects and reproduces ideologies of conceptual and methodological individualism. These colorblind ideologies abstract the participant from social and historical context and obscure the role of ecological and historical forces on behavior and experience.[21] In contrast, the development of a Critical Race Psychology requires greater reflexivity regarding the limitations of experimental methods in combination with more qualitative, narrative-oriented analyses that preserve and illuminate the ecological and historical context.

D. *Summary*

Professor Crenshaw's account of the emergence of CRT perspectives in law provides some hints about directions for development of CRT perspectives in psychological science. Development of a Critical Race Psychology requires that researchers reject the colorblind positivist ideal of a mythical "view from nowhere"[22] or a pure science abstracted from context. In its place, a Critical Race Psychology requires a more self-critical, identity-conscious, reflexive form of inquiry that acknowledges the positionality and ideology inherent in theory and method.[23]

IV. COMPATIBLE THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Although we are unaware of any work that self-consciously adopts the label, there are several theoretical perspectives compatible with a "critical race psychology." In this section, we outline some of the theoretical perspectives that have been most influential in our own thinking. We then describe a program of empirical research to illustrate the ways in which perspectives from psychological science might complement CRT analyses of colorblind post-racialism.

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[20] For an example praising this reliance, see Timothy D. Wilson, *The Message Is the Method: Celebrating and Exporting the Experimental Approach*, 16 PSYCHOL. INQUIRY 185, 185–86 (2005). For an elaboration and critique of the ideology inherent in the psychology experiment, see Richard A. Shweder, *Cultural Psychology: What Is It?*, *in* CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY: ESSAYS ON COMPARATIVE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT 1, 7–10 (James W. Stigler et. al eds., 1990).

[21] On these points, see Glenn Adams & Eric L. Stocks, *A Cultural Analysis of the Experiment and an Experimental Analysis of Culture*, 2 SOC. & PERSONALITY PSYCHOL. COMPASS 1895 (2008) (examining the culture of experimental social psychology and "implicit constructions of reality"— especially various manifestations of conceptual individualism—involved in the empirical process); Jonathan Potter, *Discourse and Critical Social Psychology*, *in* CRITICAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY 57 (Tomás Ibáñez & Lupicinio Iñiquez eds., 1997).

[22] THOMAS NAGEL, THE VIEW FROM NOWHERE (1986).

[23] Stephen Reicher, *Laying the Ground for Common Critical Psychology*, *in* CRITICAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, *supra* note 21, at 83, 85 (noting that "[t]he key step in producing de-socialized psychologies is to abstract behavior from the relational context in which it occurs. When we, as researchers, form part of this context, then this resolves into a problem of reflexivity. . . . I certainly accept that most experimental research does lack such reflexivity.").

A. *Black and Afrocentric Psychologists*

In the immediate aftermath of the civil rights period, an identity-conscious movement "toward a Black Psychology"[24] demanded public questioning of the traditional models and theories that formed the conceptual foundations for mainstream psychology. This work highlighted the centrality of race and racism in American psychology, especially concerning the promotion and endorsement of "objective" scientific studies that implied the universal superiority of White[25] men and the pathological inferiority of "other" patterns that deviated from this prescriptive standard.[26] Mainstream psychological science continues to reflect and reproduce a context where persisting racial hierarchies ascribe normative value to Whiteness and abnormality to Blackness. By encouraging purposeful interrogation of the extent to which instruments and methodologies of mainstream psychological science reflect Eurocentric norms and reproduce White racial domination, work within Black psychology paradigms aligns well with the CRT objective of revealing racialized subjectivities inscribed in disciplinary practice.

B. *Multicultural Counseling*

Multicultural perspectives within counseling psychology advocate purposeful consideration of one's own identity positioning within the profession, including awareness of one's values, assumptions, and biases, attempts to understand culturally different worldviews, and the development of culturally appropriate interventions and practices.[27] Works within this perspective also discuss the detrimental effects that clients experience due to a counselor's failure to examine his or her own racial

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[24] Joseph White, *Toward a Black Psychology*, EBONY, Sept. 1970, at 44, *reprinted in* BLACK PSYCHOLOGY 5 (Reginald L. Jones ed., 1991). For additional work from this perspective, see generally LINDA JAMES, UNDERSTANDING AN AFROCENTRIC WORLD VIEW: INTRODUCTION TO AN OPTIMAL PSYCHOLOGY (1993); Na'im Akbar, *The Evolution of Human Psychology for African Americans, in* BLACK PSYCHOLOGY, *supra*, at 99–124; Wade W. Nobles, *African Philosophy: Foundations for Black Psychology, in* BLACK PSYCHOLOGY, *supra*, at 47–64; William E. Cross Jr., *Toward a Psychology for Black Liberation: The Negro-to-Black Conversion Experience*, BLACK WORLD, July 1971, at 13.

[25] Conventions and preferences for racial identity labels vary across historical periods and individuals. Throughout this paper we use the racial identity terms "Black" and "White" to describe people of African and European descent in the United States. Similarly, conventions and preferences vary between and within disciplines regarding use of capital letters for racial identity categories. Our use of capital letters reflects our use of these labels not as adjectives to describe the physical characteristics of objects or people (e.g., "I have black hair"), but instead as proper nouns (and derivative adjectives) associated with culturally constructed categories (e.g., "I am Black and proud.").

[26] *See, e.g.*, Akbar, *supra* note 24, at 99, 106–07, 119–21 (contrasting "Black Psychology" with "the Caucasian domination and exploitative use of 'objective' methodology which has objectively concluded everything 'white' to be positive and everything 'black' negative").

[27] *See* Derald Wing Sue et al., *Multicultural Counseling Competencies and Standards: A Call to the Profession*, 70 J. COUNSELING & DEV. 477, 480–83 (1992) (proposing "specific multicultural standards and competencies that should become part of what can be defined as a culturally competent counselor").

identity and to question the race-based privileges built into the counselor-patient relationship.[28] To the extent that White counselors fail to examine their racial identity or believe themselves to be colorblind observers, they can reproduce forms of racial domination by treating White experience as normative and denying the relevance or likelihood of race or racism in key events.[29] Work in multicultural counseling psychology challenges White practitioners to recognize that, although their experience of events may feel objective or transcendent of identity position, this is a benefit they enjoy because of racial privilege and domination. By illuminating how denial of the racialized character of experience is constitutive of privilege and power, work in multicultural counseling psychology resonates with the CRT goal of revealing racialized subjectivities inscribed in disciplinary practice.

C. *Discursive Psychology*

Discursive perspectives in psychology emphasize how people's attitudes and other personal stances are not the expression of some internal or personal essence, but instead reflect embodied representations of everyday rituals and discursive repertoires that people reproduce in situated performances of persuasion and justification.[30] This contrasts with the prevailing conception in mainstream psychological science, which tends to locate the sources of racism in individual bias (or, the "prejudice problematic").[31] Although discursive perspectives firmly locate the

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[28] *See, e.g.*, Julie R. Ancis & Dawn M. Szymanski, *Awareness of White Privilege Among White Counseling Trainees*, 29 COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGIST 548, 549–50 (2001) (discussing a study conducted to examine the extent to which White counseling students possess awareness of the personal benefits of White privilege); Janet E. Helms, *Toward a Theoretical Explanation of the Effects of Race on Counseling: A Black and White Model*, 12 COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGIST 153, 153–63 (1984); M.B. Ivey et al., *White Privilege: Implications for Counselor Education Multicultural Identity*, 57 ASS'N COUNS. EDUC. & SUPERVISION 1, 3–6 (1997); Tina Q. Richardson & Kimberly L. Molinaro, *White Counselor Self-Awareness: A Prerequisite for Developing Multicultural Competence*, 74 J. COUNSELING & DEV. 238, 238–41 (1996) (criticizing the traditional counseling theory that is based exclusively on White culture); Haresh B. Sabnani et al., *White Racial Identity Development and Cross-Cultural Counselor Training: A Stage Model*, 19 COUNSELING PYSCHOLOGIST, 76, 76–98 (1991).

[29] Arthur Whaley's work on heightened diagnoses of paranoia among people of African descent is an illuminating example. When Black clients suggest that they are the target of racist persecution, White counselors and scientists are inclined to see this as evidence of paranoid delusion or some other pathological distortion of reality. In contrast, a critical race psychology would emphasize that this inclination reflects the racialized subjectivity inherent in the discipline, which promotes denial of racism in situations where a more "objective' observer might admit its presence. Arthur L. Whaley, *Ethnicity/Race, Paranoia, and Psychiatric Diagnoses: Clinician Bias Versus Sociocultural Differences*, 19 J. PSYCHOPATHOLOGY & BEHAV. ASSESSMENT 1, 1–17 (1997).

[30] For examples of discursive perspectives that are especially compatible with CRT, see Martha Augoustinos et al., *New Racism, Meritocracy, and Individualism: Constraining Affirmative Action in Education*, 16 DISCOURSE & SOC'Y 315, 315–16 (2005); and Kevin Durrheim & John Dixon, *Attitudes in the Fiber of Everyday Life: The Discourse of Racial Evaluation and the Lived Experience of Desegregation*, 59 AM. PSYCHOLOGIST 626, 634–35 (2004).

[31] MARGARET WEATHERELL & JONATHAN POTTER, MAPPING THE LANGUAGE OF RACISM: DISCOURSE AND THE LEGITIMATION OF EXPLOITATION 201 (1992) (internal quotation marks omitted);

foundations of racism in everyday rituals and discursive repertoires, they also restore notions of personal agency to the study of racism. In contrast to the emerging implication of mainstream work on automatic racism, which tends to portray ordinary people as the unwitting conduits of racist ecological structures, discursive perspectives emphasize the role of the dynamic actor in preferential selection of discursive resources during those situated performances of persuasion and justification. Through this process of dynamic selection, actors collaborate with discursive partners in the reproduction of the systems of meaning and practice that maintain domination.[32]   To the extent that discursive perspectives extend conceptions of racism beyond the limiting conception of racism as individual prejudice that informs conventional wisdom in mainstream psychological science, they resonate with the intellectual goals of a CRT analysis.

D. *Critical Psychology*

Critical Psychology perspectives endeavor to highlight the ideological assumptions that pervade psychological science and to elaborate new theoretical positions that provide avenues for social change.[33] Critical psychology initiatives emphasize the extent to which dominant discourses in psychology operate in the service of power and privilege, how all varieties of psychology are culturally and historically constructed,[34] how psychology's assumptions about the mind have infiltrated common "knowledge," and how "ordinary" or lay psychology (or, "what people know") can shape academic psychological work and serve as a basis for disciplinary change.[35] Similar to the CRT critique of Critical Legal

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see also various contributions in BEYOND THE PREJUDICE PROBLEMATIC: EXTENDING THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF INTERGROUP CONFLICT, INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE (John Dixon & Mark Levine eds., forthcoming).

[32] For more on these ideas, see generally KEVIN DURRHEIM ET AL., RACE TROUBLE: RACE, IDENTITY, AND INEQUALITY IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA (Marth Augoustinos & Danielle Every eds., 2010); and WEATHERELL & POTTER, *supra* note 31.

[33] *See* Ian Parker, *Critical Psychology: Critical Links,* 1 ANN. REV. CRITICAL PSYCHOL. 3, 12–16 (1999) (defining Critical Psychology). For an application of Critical Psychology approaches to the study of racism, see Caroline Howarth & Derek Hook, *Towards a Critical Social Psychology of Racism: Points of Disruption,* J. COMMUNITY & APPLIED SOC. PSYCHOL. 425, 425–30 (2005). In their introduction to the special issue, Hook and Howarth called for psychologists to problematize the ways in which mainstream psychological science reproduces racialized differences and to develop ways to disrupt these practices. *See* Derek Hook & Caroline Howarth, *Future Directions for a Critical Social Psychology of Racism/Antiracism,* J. COMMUNITY & APPLIED SOC. PSYCHOL., 2005, at 506, 507 ("[T]he multiple permutations of historical forms of racism . . . require the ongoing generation of new analytical frames, new modes of intervention that will not simply be completed, 'finalized.'. . . [A] critical social psychology of racism and antiracism is best served by a field of multiple types of analysis, enquiry, debate and involvement." (emphasis omitted)).

[34] Dennis R. Fox, *A Critical-Psychology Approach to Law's Legitimacy,* 25 LEGAL STUD. F. 519, 519–20 (2001).

[35] *See* Parker, *supra* note 33, at 6 (discussing how different forms of psychology influence other methodologies).

Studies, one might critique Critical Psychology for taking race (and racism) as a topic rather than an epistemological position from which to conduct critical work [36] Even so, Critical Psychology provides a useful foundation from which to develop Critical Race Psychology to the extent that it advocates self-critical reflexivity about the ways in which psychological science reproduces domination.

E. *Liberation Psychology*

The action-oriented perspective of Liberation Psychology is one of the few theoretical approaches in psychological science that emerged in the "majority world" or postcolonial contexts.[37] The defining statement of Liberation Psychology analysis comes from the work of Ignacio Martín-Baró,[38] who received his Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of Chicago and served as vice-rector at the University of Central America (UCA) in El Salvador until he was assassinated by right-wing death squads in 1989.[39] In addition to his identity as a social psychologist, Martín-Baró was a Jesuit priest who drew inspiration from the Liberation Theology movement[40] and served in an impoverished parish near San Salvador. His vision of liberation psychology resulted from the intersection of these two identities: an application of psychology to the cause of social justice. In general, his and others' work emphasizes the need for a psychological endeavor that (a) is oriented toward the needs of marginalized peoples; (b) uses methodologies and ways of knowing aligned with perspectives and social realities of the oppressed; and (c) is critically conscious of its own transformative power. To the extent that Liberation Psychology perspectives draw upon identity-conscious knowledge to reveal the role of ordinary science in reproducing domination, they resonate strongly with the objectives of a CRT analysis.

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[36] In her lead article, Crenshaw notes that CRT grew out of the dissatisfaction with Critical Legal Studies among scholars who, although quite comfortable with the critique of disciplinary power, were quite uncomfortable with a race-conscious version of that critique. Crenshaw, *supra* note 8, at 1287–90.

[37] The reference to "majority world" comes from the work of Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı, *Is Psychology Relevant to Global Human Development Issues?: Experience From Turkey*, 50 AM. PSYCHOLOGIST 293, 293–94, 297–98 (1995).

[38] IGNACIO MARTÍN-BARÓ, WRITINGS FOR A LIBERATION PSYCHOLOGY (Adrianne Aron & Shawn Corne eds., 1994).

[39] *See id.* at 1 (describing the final moments before Martín-Baró's death on November 16, 1989); David P. Hamilton, *Ignacio Martin Baro, Leader of a College Under Fire*, TECH, Apr. 26, 1985, at 11 (highlighting aspects of Martín-Baró's life through 1985).

[40] For a detailed discussion of the Liberation Theology movement in Latin America, see generally GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ, A THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION (Sister Caridad Inda & John Eagleson eds. & trans., Orbis Books 1973) (1971).

F. *Cultural Psychology*

The theoretical perspective of Cultural Psychology investigates the extent to which structures of mind embodied in brains exist in bi-directional relationships of mutual constitution with structures of mind inscribed in cultural worlds.[41]   One direction of this relationship emphasizes the cultural constitution of psychological experience: how subjectivity, agency, and identity necessarily reflect the particular meanings, ideas, institutions, and practices present in local ecologies.[42] The other direction of this relationship emphasizes the psychological construction of cultural worlds: how everyday realities arise via acts of preferential selection and reproduction that objectify people's beliefs and desires.[43]

The utility of a Cultural Psychology perspective for CRT objectives lies in its potential to reveal the particular positioning of allegedly positionless mainstream theory and research. Mainstream psychological science often implies a Eurocentric standard and tends to treat other patterns—say, tendencies for people from a variety of oppressed groups to perceive relatively high levels of racism in American society (to pick a not-so-random example)—as a deviation from natural baseline that requires explanation.[44]   In response, a Cultural Psychology analysis proposes two strategies.[45]   The first strategy is to provide a *normalizing* account of "other" patterns that mainstream psychological science regards as abnormal.[46]   In the context of the example, this strategy emphasizes the extent to which the oppressed group tendencies to perceive racism are not a distortion of objective reality, but instead reflect accurate knowledge of ongoing racism in American society.[47]   The second strategy is to

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[41] *See* Hazel Rose Markus & MarYam G. Hamedani, *Sociocultural Psychology: The Dynamic Interdependence Among Self Systems and Social Systems, in* HANDBOOK OF CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY 7–8 (Shinobu Kitayama & Dov Cohen eds., 2007) ("The sources of mind and behavior are distributed, existing both internally in the mind and externally in the world."). For a definitive statement of this perspective, see Richard A. Shweder, *Cultural Psychology—What Is It?, in* CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY, *supra* note 20, at 1–2. For a more recent articulation, see Glenn Adams, *Context in Person, Person in Context: A Cultural Psychology Approach to Social-Personality Psychology, in* OXFORD HANDBOOK OF PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY (Kay Deaux & Mark Snyder eds., forthcoming 2012).

[42] *See* Markus & Hamedani, *supra* note 41, at 9 ("Identifying the vast system of meanings that affords agency in middle-class European and North American contexts underscores the possibility of marked differences in agency in other contexts.").

[43] *See id.* at 8–9 (noting that an individual "is not simply a passive recipient of what the social world has to offer, but is instead an active, intentional agent").

[44] *See* Glenn Adams & Phia S. Salter, *Health Psychology in African Settings: A Cultural-Psychological Analysis*, 12 J. HEALTH PSYCHOL. 539, 540, 548 (2007) [hereinafter Adams & Salter, *Health Psychology*] (discussing the assumptions and conclusions of mainstream scientific approaches with respect to health psychology in African settings).

[45] *Id.* at 540.

[46] *See id.* at 541 ("Although typical accounts construct these phenomena as a pathological mixture of paranoia and superstition, our account emphasizes the normality of these phenomena.").

[47] Phia S. Salter, Perception of Racism in Ambiguous Events: A Cultural Psychology Analysis (2008) (unpublished Masters thesis, University of Kansas); *see also* Jessica C. Nelson, The Role of

denaturalize patterns that mainstream psychological science tends to portray as standard.[48] In the context of the example, the tendency for White Americans and mainstream institutions (like psychological science) to perceive relatively little racism in American society is not a "just natural" reflection of objective reality, but instead constitutes a phenomenon—denial of racism—that requires scientific investigation.[49] By "turning the analytic lens" to reveal the particular positioning of mainstream psychological science, a Cultural Psychology perspective provides a potential foundation for development of a Critical Race Psychology.[50]

V. COLORBLIND IDEOLOGY IN ACADEMIC WORK: EMPIRICAL EXPLORATIONS

Despite its potential to provide a foundation for a Critical Race Psychology, existing work in the perspective of Cultural Psychology has typically shied away from analyses of racial domination or other topics that might appear too "political," preferring instead to seek mainstream legitimacy—and reproducing relations of domination—by claiming a mythical scientific neutrality.[51] Running against this current, our work has applied a Cultural Psychology analysis to illuminate the extent to which mainstream American realities serve as *intentional worlds* of racial domination: everyday constructions of reality that (a) bear the imprint of racialized subjectivity in that they are the material expression of White American beliefs and desires and (b) direct subsequent action in ways that reproduce racial domination somewhat regardless of individual inclination. In this section, we describe a program of research that applies the idea of intentional worlds to an analysis of colorblind ignorance about the prevalence of racism in American society.

Media polls and scientific surveys consistently find that White Americans are less likely than Black Americans (and other people of color) to perceive racism in American society.[52] Resonating with ideologies of colorblind ignorance and claims of post-racialism, media and scientific

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Knowledge of Racist History and Identity in Perception of Racism (2010) (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas).

[48] *See* Adams & Salter, *Health Psychology*, *supra* note 44, at 541 ("[O]ur account considers how health scientists' reactions to [health and illness in African settings] are not neutral observations of objective facts, but instead reflect particular constructions of reality that are themselves open to question.").

[49] Glenn Adams et al., *The Effect of Self-Affirmation on Perceptions of Racism*, 42 J. EXPERIMENTAL SOC. PSYCHOL. 616, 616–26 (2006) [hereinafter Adams et al., *Self-Affirmation*].

[50] For a discussion of "turning the lens," see Adams & Salter, *Health Psychology*, *supra* note 44.

[51] *See generally* Sumie Okazaki et al., *Colonialism and Psychology of Culture*, SOC. & PERSONALITY PSYCHOL. COMPASS, Dec. 2008, at 90.

[52] For examples, see Glenn Adams et al., *Perceptions of Racism in Hurricane Katrina: A Liberation Psychology Analysis*, 6 ANALYSES SOC. ISSUES & PUB. POL'Y 215, 216–21 (2006).

observers of these differences tend to focus on oppressed-group tendencies to perceive racism as the abnormal phenomenon that requires explanation.[53] In contrast, our research highlights mainstream denial of racism (in psychological science and elsewhere) as the phenomenon that requires explanation.

In particular, our work locates mainstream denial in two broad sources. One source of this denial is motivational pressure; that is, White Americans and other people invested in mainstream American society are motivated to deny the ongoing significance of racism to preserve a sense of collective self-worth and to defend the legitimacy of a status quo from which they derive benefits.[54] Another source of this denial is a form of cultivated ignorance; that is, even when people genuinely strive for an honest assessment, group differences can also result because the everyday ecology of different communities promotes divergent judgments about the ongoing significance of racism. We have investigated this idea with respect to two sources of material that serve as intentional worlds for the cultivation of ignorance.[55]

A. *Representations of History*

One source of cultural production that helps to cultivate ignorance concerns understandings of history that inform judgments about racism. To investigate, we have used a procedure that distinguishes the tendency to accurately identify consensually documented indicents of past racism from similar-sounding, researcher-manufactured incidents (in other words, *false alarms*). After completing this procedure, participants complete a measure of racism perception (e.g., judgments about the extent to which high rates of poverty in Black communities are a reflection of racism).[56] Results generally reveal that, regardless of race, perception of racism is positively related to accurate distinction between historical fact and plausible fiction.[57] White Americans, however, score lower on the measure of

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[53] *See id.* at 221 ("The tendency for people from oppressed groups to perceive racism in society may occur not only because they apply relatively broad definitions of racism, but also because they have more knowledge about historically documented incidents of racism. Likewise, the tendency for people from dominant groups to perceive relatively little racism may occur not only because they apply narrow definitions, but also because they are less aware of historically documented incidents.").

[54] *See* Adams et al., *Self-Affirmation, supra* note 49, at 618 ("People from perpetrator groups appear motivated to minimize perceptions of racism in everyday events."); *see also* Brian S. Lowery et al., *Framing Inequity Safely: Whites' Motivated Perceptions of Racial Privilege*, 33 PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCHOL. BULL. 1237, 1237 (2007) ("[W]e argue that Whites' perceptions of in-group privilege are driven, in part, by individuals' need for positive self-regard. More specifically, we theorize that the existence of racial privilege threatens Whites' self-image, forging a link between their need for positive self-regard and their acknowledgment of privilege.").

[55] For various discussions on the notion of ignorance, see generally RACE AND EPISTEMOLOGIES OF IGNORANCE (Sharon Sullivan & Nancy Tuana eds., 2007).

[56] Salter, Perception of Racism, *supra* note 47; Nelson, *supra* note 47.

[57] Salter, Perception of Racism, *supra* note 47; Nelson, *supra* note 47.

historical accuracy than Black Americans do, and this difference in accurate knowledge of past racism partially accounts for group differences in perception of present racism in U.S. society.[58] In other words, it is White American tendencies to deny racism, rather than Black American tendencies to perceive racism, that reflect delusion, ignorance, or lack of contact with consensual reality.

What are the sources of these group differences in historical knowledge?[59] To examine this issue, we conducted an investigation of displays for Black History Month (BHM) in Kansas City area schools.[60] This investigation revealed differences in the content of BHM representations such that schools with majority White populations were more likely than schools with majority Black populations to (a) use "commercially available, 'pre-packaged'" BHM displays; (b) link BHM to larger issues of cultural diversity rather than Civil Rights; and (c) de-emphasize struggles against racism.[61] Additional evidence suggests that these differences were not coincidental. When we exposed White American undergraduates to photographs of these BHM displays, they rated their liking to be greater for displays from majority-White schools than for displays from majority-Black schools, even though they were unaware of the source of any particular display.[62] Moreover, we found that participants for whom White identity was highly self-relevant were especially inclined to dislike displays from majority-Black schools.[63] This pattern suggests that the representations of BHM that find their way into majority-White schools (and, by extension, other mainstream American

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[58] Salter, Perception of Racism, *supra* note 47; Nelson, *supra* note 47.

[59] Here again, a mainstream lens seems to focus on Black American knowledge as the deviant phenomenon in need of explanation—perhaps in terms of identity-conscious, Afrocentric education programs that provide Black Americans with "specialized" rather than "standard" knowledge. *See* Mwalimu J. Shujaa, *Afrocentric Transformation and Parental Choice in African American Independent Schools*, 61 J. NEGRO EDUC. 148, 157 (1992) (discussing studies suggesting "a need to identify specific school characteristics that reflect levels of development toward Afrocentric education"). Such explanations again obscure the extent to which mainstream knowledge is not a colorblind standard or an objective rendering of the past, but instead reflects the identity-conscious or "White-washed" construction of reality via processes of selection and silencing. On the concept of "White-washing," see MICHAEL K. BROWN ET AL., WHITEWASHING RACE: THE MYTH OF A COLOR-BLIND SOCIETY 1–5 (2003). On the concept of silencing, see MICHEL-ROLPH TROUILLOT, SILENCING THE PAST: POWER AND THE PRODUCTION OF HISTORY, at ix, 4–11 (1995), and Tuğçe Kurtiş et al., *Generosity or Genocide? Identity Implications of Silence in American Thanksgiving Commemorations*, 18 MEMORY 208, 208–09 (2010).

[60] *See* Phia Shante Salter, Representations of Black History as Intentional Worlds of Oppression and Liberation 12 (Sept. 22, 2010) (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas) (on file with the University of Kansas library) (noting that the author, as part of the study, "contacted [sixteen] schools in a large U.S. Midwestern metropolitan area").

[61] *Id.* at 12–16.

[62] *See id.* at 19 (observing that "White Americans reported more positive emotions while viewing Mainstream displays . . . than while viewing Minority displays").

[63] *See id.* at 19–20 (noting that the data suggested that White American undergraduates tended to react more positively to representations of Black history in majority-White schools than in majority-minority schools).

institutions) are not colorblind or accidental. Instead, those representations arise and persist because they resonate relatively well with White American identity concerns and preferences regarding collective memory.

Results of a follow-up study suggest a reason for this difference in preference. In that study, we exposed participants to either the set of BHM displays from majority-Black schools or the set from majority-White schools.[64] Results revealed that only BHM displays from majority-Black schools, and not BHM displays from majority-White schools, were effective at promoting perception of racism and support for anti-racist policy relative to a no-display control condition.[65] This result suggests that White American students' dislike of BHM displays from majority-Black schools may reflect a barely conscious awareness of the implications of these representations for identity-relevant action.[66]

Participants in this study also indicated which BHM display they most preferred and the reason why they liked it.[67] Responses to these open-ended items suggested an important reason for White American dislike of BHM displays from majority-Black schools: the extent to which these products direct attention to a topic—the centrality of racist oppression in the history of the United States—about which they would prefer to remain ignorant.[68] Results of yet another study suggest a functional reason for this ignorance: present-day denial of racism.[69] In this study, White American participants rated their familiarity with historical facts in one of three conditions: *celebratory* representations of Black history that emphasized individual achievements (for instance, famous inventors); *critical* representations that emphasized past instances of racism; and *mainstream* representations of U.S. history that rendered people of African descent invisible.[70] Participants then completed a measure of racism perception and support for remedial policies, scores on which were higher among participants exposed to critical representations than among participants in the other two conditions.[71]

To summarize, results suggest the extent to which mainstream representations of history serve as intentional worlds for the cultivation of

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[64] *Id.* at 25.

[65] *Id.* at 27–28.

[66] *See id.* at 35–36 ("White American students may dislike displays from majority-Minority schools more than displays from majority-White schools . . . in part because the former include more critical representations that focus on historical barriers and racism. . . . An *intentional worlds* hypothesis suggests that . . . the presence of critical themes is the active ingredient in promoting racism perception and policy support.").

[67] *Id.* at 29–30.

[68] *See id.* at 35 (observing that White American students may dislike displays from majority-minority schools more than displays from majority-White schools because the former contain more critical representations than the latter that center on historical oppression and prejudice).

[69] *Id.* at 46.

[70] *Id.* at 39–40.

[71] *Id.* at 42–43.

ignorance. These cultural products are not colorblind accounts of the past; instead, they reflect racially inflected preferences to maintain silence about racism. Likewise, these cultural products are not neutral, but, instead, serve as tools that reproduce racial domination (for example, by undermining support for remedial policies).

B. *Teaching About Racism in Academic Psychology*

Another source of cultural production that serves to cultivate ignorance is one that we have discussed earlier in this paper: the conception of racism that informs conventional scientific wisdom.[72] Despite an accumulation of evidence within the field that reveals the inadequacy of this conception, psychological science, like society generally, tends to imply the same atomistic understandings of racism—direct differential treatment motivated by abnormal race-based antipathy. This conception of racism is evident in titles of textbook chapters and courses that typically refer to prejudice and stereotyping rather than racism and oppression[73] and a conceptual focus on prejudice reduction rather than social justice.[74] Again, a Critical Race Psychology suggests two questions about the dominance of this atomistic conception of racism.

The first question concerns sources of atomistic conceptions of racism that persist in mainstream psychological science. Rather than colorblind observations of racially position-less observers, a Critical Race Psychology must emphasize the extent to which atomistic conceptions of racism resonate with White racial subjectivity.[75] Indeed, research suggests that White Americans are relatively likely to endorse an *atomistic* conception of racism (as a problem of individual bias), but relatively unlikely to endorse a *sociocultural* conception (as a problem inherent in the very fabric of American society).[76] One reason for this pattern may be

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[72] *See supra* note 17 and accompanying text.

[73] *See* Glenn Adams et al., *Teaching About Racism: Pernicious Implications of the Standard Portrayal*, 30 BASIC & APPLIED SOC. PSYCHOL. 349, 351 (2008) (exploring the portrayal of racism in textbooks and concluding that "these standard pedagogical resources construct the topic of racism as a problem of biased individuals").

[74] *See* Stephen C. Wright & Micah E. Lubensky, *The Struggle for Social Equality: Collective Action Versus Prejudice Reduction*, *in* INTERGROUP MISUNDERSTANDINGS: IMPACT OF DIVERGENT SOCIAL REALITIES 291, 292–93 (Stéphanie Demoulin et al. eds., 2009) (recognizing the strategic contradictions inherent in two of the most common areas of social psychological research, prejudice and collective action, and asserting that these differences may undermine progress toward social justice).

[75] For a similar set of ideas, see Alan David Freeman's discussion of the "perpetrator perspective," which contemplates the effects of viewing "'racial discrimination'" from the perspective of either its victim or its perpetrator. Alan David Freeman, *Legitimizing Racial Discrimination Through Antidiscrimination Law: A Critical Review of Supreme Court Doctrine*, 62 MINN. L. REV. 1049, 1052 (1978).

[76] *See, e.g.*, Adams et al., *Teaching About Racism*, *supra* note 73, at 350 (stating that "[e]vidence suggests that White Americans prefer an atomistic conception of racism as differential treatment from hostile individuals rather than a more systemically embedded phenomenon").

motivational pressures. White Americans and mainstream institutions may prefer atomistic conceptions of racism because a construction of racism as individual prejudice rather than a systemic problem enables a non-prejudiced self-image and defends the legitimacy of a system from which they benefit.[77] Another reason for the dominance of atomistic conceptions may be the broader conceptual and methodological individualism of psychological science, which tends to locate the source of action and experience in agency and subjectivity of individuals abstracted from context.[78] Although these cultural tendencies of individualism are prevalent throughout American society, they are particularly evident in middle-class White communities.[79]

A second question concerns the consequences of atomistic conceptions of racism. To the extent that these conceptions obscure the broader sociocultural and historical forces that reproduce racist oppression, they may lead people to understate the ongoing significance of racism and therefore to oppose energetic measures to deal with the problem. An experiment that investigated this idea featured tutorials that presented raw material from mainstream research in one of two ways.[80] Drawing heavily upon existing pedagogy, the standard tutorial presented the topic of racism as the product of biased individuals.[81] In contrast, the sociocultural tutorial presented the topic of racism as something embedded in the fabric of U.S. society.[82] A few days after participants viewed one of these two tutorials, they completed dependent measures.[83] Results indicated that participants

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[77] *See id.* at 349 (suggesting that "ego-defensive motivational pressures" may taint White Americans' perceptions of racism and asserting that White Americans may perceive less racism as a result of "collective guilt" or because racism "threaten[s] White Americans' sense that they are citizens of a nonracist society, or threaten[s] the perceived legitimacy of a social order that promotes White privilege").

[78] *See* Adams & Stocks, *A Cultural Analysis, supra* note 21, at 1896–97 (discussing the influence of individualism on social psychology, which is in part due to the "belief that one will come closest to psychological truth by investigating minds in a purified, experimental setting where one can safely control the contaminating effects of superficial variation").

[79] *See* Alana Conner Snibbe & Hazel Rose Markus, *You Can't Always Get What You Want: Educational Attainment, Agency, and Choice*, 88 J. PERSONALITY & SOC. PSYCHOL. 703, 703, 705 (2005) (noting that "[i]n contemporary European American society . . . people with higher socioeconomic status (SES) perceive and exercise more choice, control, self-efficacy, and self-direction than do people with lower SES" and discussing studies and views on individualistic tendencies); *see also* Nicole M. Stephens et al., *Why Did They "Choose" to Stay? Perspectives of Hurricane Katrina Observers and Survivors*, 20 PSYCHOL. SCI. 878, 878–86 (2009).

[80] *See* Adams et al., *Teaching About Racism, supra* note 73, at 352 (presenting experiments in which the authors "examined effects of instruction on perception of racism").

[81] *See id.* at 355–56 (explaining that materials for the standard tutorial came from textbooks and the American Psychological Association's website and "portrayed racism as a phenomenon rooted in individual bias").

[82] *See id.* at 356 (describing how the sociocultural tutorial materials covered the same topics as the standard tutorial yet "discussed them in a way that portrayed racism as a systemic phenomenon embedded in American society").

[83] *See id.* (listing the elements measured in the survey, which included conceptions of racism, acknowledgment of systemic racism, and policy-relevant beliefs and attitudes).

who viewed the sociocultural tutorial perceived greater racism in events and showed greater support for remedial policies (such as reparations for slavery) than did participants who viewed the standard tutorial or no tutorial.[84] In other words, results confirmed that the standard tutorial, which implied an atomistic conception of racism, was ineffective at promoting perception of racism and support for anti-racist policy, especially relative to a more sociocultural conception of racism.[85]

To summarize, results suggest the extent to which atomistic constructions of racism in mainstream psychological science and elsewhere serve as intentional worlds for the cultivation of ignorance. First, these cultural products are not colorblind accounts of objective reality, but instead reflect the white-washed identity position, and racialized institutional subjectivity, of mainstream psychological science. Second, these cultural products are not neutral, but instead serve as tools that reproduce racial domination by undermining support for remedial policies. In short, despite genuine desires to increase consciousness of racism and support for anti-racist policy, the ironic implication is that psychological scientists, and people from other fields who draw upon psychological science, may unwittingly reproduce racist outcomes when they deploy a racism-denying atomistic conception as individual prejudice.

VI. CONCLUSION: COLORBLIND SCIENCE AS A TROJAN HORSE OF RACISM

As psychologists, we take a measure of professional satisfaction in the fact that scholars of law have found some of our collective scientific production useful for a CRT-compatible critique of law and policy. We caution, however, that an uncritical engagement with the colorblind empirical project of psychological science can function as a "Trojan Horse" of racism, to borrow a phrase from Jerry Kang's influential 2005 article.[86] That is, although psychological science can sometimes produce particular empirical results that appear to be useful for the intellectual project of CRT, one must be wary of the conceptual and ideological tools packed inside.[87] As we have attempted to outline in the preceding discussion, these hidden tools include a colorblind epistemology that denies the identity position or racialized subjectivity of scientific

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[84] *Id.* at 358.

[85] *See id.* (contending that the study's results "provide[d] no evidence that the standard pedagogical approach was effective at promoting consciousness of racism" as compared to the control group, but did provide evidence to suggest that the sociocultural approach promoted perception of racism).

[86] Jerry Kang, *Trojan Horses of Race*, 118 HARV. L. REV. 1489, 1591–92 (2005). Although we borrow the phrase, we use it in a somewhat different sense that is closer to the original sense of danger hiding inside an ostensible gift.

[87] Kang used the example of television news to make a similar observation. *See id.* at 1592 (noting that, while "[l]ocal news explicitly furthers the public interest," its "fetish for violent crime" causes it to be self-undermining).

knowledge; an atomistic conception of racism, as individual prejudice, that promotes a limited understanding of ways in which systems of oppression cause harm; and a tendency to reproduce colorblind ignorance about manifestations of racism in everyday society.[88]

In contrast to the conventional wisdom of mainstream psychological science, we propose that the time is ripe for development of a Critical Race Psychology that can serve as a partner in the interdisciplinary effort to dismantle structures of racial domination, including those that operate within "liberal" intellectual spaces. Taking inspiration from Kimberlé Crenshaw's lead article, we have traced some directions along which this intellectual project might proceed. We have also described examples of empirical research to demonstrate the utility of a Critical Race Psychology for discussions regarding the reproduction and consequences of colorblind ignorance about ongoing racism and oppression in American society. As these empirical examples make clear, the intellectual project of a Critical Race Psychology does not necessarily require total renouncement of the conceptual and methodological tools of psychological science, including the laboratory experiment. Rather, the essential component of this intellectual movement is the identity-conscious, reflexive use of these conceptual and methodological tools, wary of the extent to which disciplinary conventions have evolved to serve interests of racial domination.

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[88] *See supra* Part V.B.