How Do I Know a Children's Book Qualifies as Antiracist? The Educator's Analytic Tool for Choosing Antiracist Books for Children.

By

Lawal Tolulope Adesola (Thesis) submitted
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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to develop an educator's analytic tool for successfully analysing antiracist books for children. The analytic tool was developed through a comparative systematic literature review of literary approaches and themes in modern anti-racist literature from two books: 'Stamped: (Racism, Antiracism, and You) for kids' by Jason Reynolds and Ibram Kendi and 'This Book is Anti-racist' by Tiffany Jewel. The review of literature chapter explored various authors' perspectives on the role that children's antiracist literature plays in creating a society where children of all races are equitably recognized in books. The consensus amongst these scholarly writers was that children's antiracist books are at the forefront of social justice efforts and creating a democratic environment for children. The methodology chapter portrayed how a qualitative research methodology was used to uncover themes and language in children's antiracist literature. A systematic literature review was used to select, appraise, synthesize, and analyse the two books chosen for this study. The analysis of these two books revealed that the following standards must be met when choosing an antiracist book: Age Appropriateness, Historical Accuracy, Systemic racism exploration, Embracing individuality discourse, Intersectionality, Dominant group exploration, Required antiracist actions, explanation of Harmful stereotypes and Examples of racism. Thus, the analytic tool equips educators with important themes to prioritize when choosing antiracist books for a more inclusive and equitable future.

GENERAL SUMMARY

The goal of this study was to create an analysis tool for teachers that would help them evaluate antiracist books for kids. 'Stamped: (Racism, Antiracism, and You) for Kids' by Jason Reynolds and Ibram Kendi and 'This Book is Anti-racist' by Tiffany Jewel were chosen in a systematic literature review examining different antiracist literary approaches and themes. The literature review part looked at how various authors see the role of antiracist children's literature in making the world a place where children of all races are equally represented in books. These academic writers agreed that antiracist books for children are at the centre of fighting for social justice and making the world more democratic. The methodology chapter showed how a thematic qualitative methodology explored antiracist themes and language in children's books. In the research findings, the overarching themes in the two books combined with the review of literature chapter informed the educators' analytic guide to selecting books which qualified as antiracist.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABIPOC African American, Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour

BIPOC Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour

SFK Stamped for Kids

TBAR This Book is Antiracist

My story: A journey into antiracism

I grew up in Lagos, Nigeria, where nearly everyone was Black. As a result, I never felt different from others. My social groups comprised a community of friends and extended family. As a child, I was never alone because it is believed that "community raises a child." I used to spend my holidays with my cousins and friends. We met people in public, chatted, and quickly became friends. I lived in Lagos for 21 years, and despite coming from a low-income family, I never felt inferior.

During my undergraduate studies in Nigeria (I majored in education and minored in political science), I learned about slavery, racism, and segregation. I remember being perplexed as to why anyone would be harmed because of their skin colour. I graduated in 2018 and learned about the Black Lives Matter movement on Twitter in 2020. I remember feeling conflicted and wonder why this was still a thing because racism was taught to me in university as if it were a thing of the past. In all of this, racism remained an unfathomable concept to me. It was too ambiguous for my mind to comprehend fully.

In Nigeria, White people are held in high regard. I recall how excited I was whenever I saw a White person. We used to refer to them as 'Oyinbo.' People were ecstatic to take photos with them, and it was difficult for me to believe that the 'Oyinbo' people we adored could despise us. White people were viewed as the pinnacle of beauty, and I noticed that everyone around me was attempting to meet that standard. They never said it out loud, but we were always told not to stay in the sun to prevent our skin from darkening. Bleaching cream became commonplace. Some people even had chemical washes to lighten their complexion. Some of these chemical creams were applied to babies to help them become fairer. Unfortunately, this is still a thing today. 'Whitening' creams are the most popular in Nigeria, even though research shows that the cream causes skin cancer, kidney failure, and the destruction of the skin's healing

ability. All of these factors, and more, subconsciously contributed to my understanding of white supremacy in my childhood.

In 2021, I relocated to Liverpool, UK, and my reality took a sharp turn. When I spoke with service providers, they all claimed they could not understand me. Remember, Britain colonized Nigeria, and English is our official language. I have been speaking English since I could speak, but because I was multilingual, I had an accent. Regardless, I spoke English fluently. All you need is patience to comprehend what I'm saying entirely. The people of Liverpool have a scousal accent (which some white English speakers find difficult to understand), but their accent is fascinating because they are Europeans. My accent, on the other hand, is mocked because it is considered "other." This minute observation started the foundation of me feeling inferior because of my racial and ethnic background.

In my second month in Liverpool, I boarded a bus, and an unprovoked white man on the bus told me I was a stain on England. 'You people are a stain on England,' he said. Another white woman on the bus advised him not to say such things to people. He responded that it was not a big deal, and the woman beside him (I believe she was his wife) told him he couldn't say such things in public. I was paralyzed. I walked home crying and not saying anything. I cried because I could not comprehend why someone I had not offended had such contempt for me. When I told my husband, he said he hoped I did not say anything so that I was not perceived as angry or violent. He was relieved when I said I was quiet. This was new to me. I used to always speak up for myself, but I realized it was better to be silent. I began to notice odd things, such as no one sitting next to me on a fully packed bus. Only people of colour sat next to me. I asked some friends in the UK, and they said it happens that way and that I should enjoy sitting alone, even if it means putting my bag on the chair to show that I do not care. Sometimes, when my husband and I walked past a white person, they got jittery and held their bags tighter. Everything

changed my perception of ‘Oyinbo’ as pure and good people. I realized that, unfortunately, bigotry was deeply ingrained in people.

In 2022, I started teaching secondary school in Liverpool and encountered racism from my students. I struggled a lot when teaching kids aged 10 to 15. Some students referred to me by the N-word behind me and to my face, and they continued to mock my accents. These incidents all happened to me in one year, and they continually beat me down until I felt completely inferior.

I realized the cycle of disdain was beginning, and it was becoming more difficult for me to hide my disdain for the system that had made hatred and segregation a thing. I started ignoring the students' offensive remarks and focused solely on the curriculum. After six months of teaching, I enrolled in MUN's Research in Social Studies course online. I took this course solely because the lecturer was Dr Vandering Dorothy, my course adviser/supervisor. I also assumed the course was designed to help me become a better social studies teacher. I was mistaken. The course was designed to shake things up. It was intended for introspection. It was intended to shake our worldview about why social studies do not teach specific topics. It was designed to get students thinking about the purpose of social studies and what we should be teaching.

The assignments required us to read articles about Indigenous peoples and why their stories are important. In social studies, we were also required to discuss antiracism. ANTIRACISM!!! This was my first encounter with the term. I was also surprised to find so many articles on the subject. Furthermore, I was baffled as to why a white woman was teaching antiracism. I was puzzled because Dr Dorothy appeared passionate about antiracism, and I thought, "This is a trap." I was being baited and would nicely write about antiracism. My writing contained no snippets of my thoughts. Dr. Dorothy told me she needed to talk to me because I was telling her what the journals said, and nothing showed her my thoughts. We had the call, and I told

her where my head was. I told her that I had only been in Europe for about eight months and that I had too many feelings about racism. I didn't want to say anything inappropriate. I told her about my racist experiences, and she listened to me wholeheartedly. I let it all out and honestly felt a little better. She told me that my story was important! She taught me about structural racism, how racism is often taught to children, and how I can educate.

That day, something in me shifted. I realized that antiracism requires work. Years of toxic norms favouring the powerful had to be broken, and I decided to play my part in breaking this cycle. Since that day, whenever my students engage in racist actions or words toward me or a classmate, I confront and educate them. Sometimes, I call in the student or call out, so everyone knows it’s wrong. I began to notice that, at the very least, my classroom was not a place where children could be comfortably racist. I highlighted structural racisms and encouraged my students to be better because it is up to their generation to make the world a better place.

A lot had changed by the end of the social studies course, and the sense of helplessness had faded until the realization that I would be birthing my child into this system hit me. I was three months pregnant and worried about the racism my son would face in White-dominated countries. I was in the school library one day when I noticed a book titled 'this book is antiracist by Tiffany Jewel' on the interdisciplinary shelf. I was surprised to find this in an English secondary school library. I read this book and thought, "Wow, what if I read this book aloud to my students during their 15-minute break for a month?" Unfortunately, I could not because I became sick and had to resign. However, this book sowed a seed of interest in children's antiracist literature in me. I believe that including antiracist children's literature in the curriculum could help to heal racism in children. I became interested in the themes, languages, and approaches required for a genuinely antiracist children's book. Mainly, I desire to create an analytic tool through research to help myself and other educators choose the right books to teach antiracism.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction:

Teaching antiracism is a massive undertaking, and teachers must consciously choose to become antiracists alongside the students by reading antiracist literature side by side with them (Paris, 2012). Teachers can actively participate in a teaching approach that breaks patterns of inequality by bringing relevant and meaningful knowledge into every student's life in their classes. Though the children's book publishing industry aspires to be more antiracist, organizations with an overwhelming majority of White employees still commission, curate, edit, and publish antiracist books. Therefore, it is crucial to consider for whom and by whom when evaluating any children's book, even antiracist ones (Anand & Hsu, 2022). Ahmed (2004) criticized that these children's books, which purport to be antiracist, reinforce White comfort by dismissing Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) experiences and whitewashing historical wrongdoings. The author goes on to say that these books undermine the fundamental objectives of antiracism by perpetuating ingrained prejudices and providing surface-level, individual-level fixes for systemic, deeply entrenched issues. Ultimately, this leads to an incomplete, sanitized, and false history, with individual-level remedies that appear superficially saviourist and are intended to rectify systemic inequalities.

According to Galloway et al. (2019), antiracist and anti-oppressive pedagogy and practices include addressing racist acts, exposing students' lived experiences within schools and other institutions as racialized, identifying and criticizing structural inequalities, and teaching about White privilege and oppression. Therefore, for a book to be antiracist, its language must explicitly denounce racism and outline the components of what Galloway et al. (2019) refer to as anti-oppressive pedagogy.

1.2 Problem statement:

There are many different ways that racism can appear, from overt acts of racism in interpersonal relationships to more subtle forms like systemic racism. Thomann and Suyemoto (2018) state that research on colourblind racial attitudes and aversive racism has demonstrated that bias regarding White children and adults based on race persists to this day. Furthermore, racial prejudice indeed manifests itself early; White children have been shown to exhibit racial bias as early as age 5 or 6.

All too often, topics on race and equality are avoided in early childhood settings out of concern that young children are too vulnerable or innocent to understand such issues (Spencer, 2022). However, studies show that before teaching children about structural racism, teachers must first provide them with a fundamental comprehension of its significance and existence (Thomann & Suyemoto, 2018). Rather than entirely avoiding conversations about race, children can learn this lesson from age-appropriate antiracist literature. Schools' resistance to antiracist literature is mostly motivated by worries about their capacity to lead these discussions rather than worries about students' preparedness (Landrigan & Johnson, 2021). Antiracist literature provides a wealth of opportunities for educators to engage young children in antiracist discourse. In order to choose these books and determine whether they are appropriate for the students, educators must be aware of the literary techniques used by the authors to convey an antiracist message.

The problem addressed in this study is adapting the complicated subject of antiracism for young readers while ensuring that the language, themes, and literary devices are all designed to foster young readers' development of antiracism. According to Anand & Hsu (2022), the children's publishing industry has seen a rise in the number of books featuring African American, Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (ABIPOC) issues. But in the children's

publishing business and in general, White people still make up the bulk of the workforce, and whiteness continues to be prevalent while remaining overlooked. Therefore, studies are needed to specify the requirements these books must fulfil to be deemed genuinely antiracist. Educators, guardians, and parents who want to teach antiracist principles to children will benefit significantly from this study since it will present them with the necessary characteristics that a truly antiracist book should have before being introduced to children.

1.3 Research purpose:

A search for 'antiracist books for children' yields a list of several books recommended by libraries, antiracist organizations, schools, online bookstores, and even churches for use in teaching antiracist ideals to children in elementary and high schools. A cursory examination of the book abstracts reveals a variety of approaches to antiracist literature for children. Among the methods used are storytelling, historical, and thematic writing. Most books included colourful illustrations and simple language to appeal to a younger audience.

This study will conduct a thorough comparative analysis of the approaches used in two selected children's books, which address complex antiracist ideas aimed at children. The first selected book is titled ‘This book is antiracist’ by Tifanny Jewels, while the second is titled ‘Stamped (for Kids)’ by Ibram Kendi and Reynolds Jason. The process for selection will be addressed in the methodology chapter. In addition, common themes across these two books will be investigated to understand the authors' focus on changing the antiracist world view of their young audience. The language used in these books will be examined to determine whether they are culturally sensitive or antiracist. This study will assess whether these texts give teachers the tools to develop their contexts for antiracist learning, teaching, and living. Finally, this study aims to inform educators on ideas to look out for when selecting an antiracist book for children.

This type of research is essential because, following the Black Lives Matter protests, there has been a spike in the publication industry of 'antiracist' publications (Anand & Hsu, 2022). Educators have an enormous selection of literature to choose from when teaching antiracism. As a result, this research aims to develop an analytic tool that teachers may use to determine if the books they choose to teach antiracism to children are antiracist or merely culturally appropriate.

1.4 Research questions:

Q1: What approaches and themes do ‘Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You for Kids’ by Reynolds and Kendi and ‘This Book is Antiracist’ by Jewel employ to qualify them as suitable for teaching children antiracism?

Q2: How does this analysis inform the development of an analytic tool to aid educators in selecting books that qualify as antiracist?

Q3: How would this analytical tool help differentiate between antiracist, culturally appropriate and non-racist language when educators are selecting antiracist books?

1.5 Theoretical framework:

In the United States, the majority-White children's book industry is increasingly promoting "antiracist" books. Still, these books may unintentionally prioritize the comfort of White children, often at the expense of children of colour (Anand & Hsu, 2022). To address the research questions, *a* critical "White" literacy approach will be used to distinguish between books that reveal the "normalization of Whiteness" that would otherwise go unnoticed, even with the label ‘antiracism,’ and those that do not. Critical "White" literacy enables us to recognize how white comfort is subtly centred inside and outside the text and how one's power is related to Whiteness or White proximity at the individual level (Anand & Hsu, 2022). A critical research approach requires asking questions about who is benefitting and who is

carrying the burden in the context of a research. Thus, a critical Whiteness literacy approach in this context can be used to expose antiracist books that are written for or by white people or by authors who write antiracist books for a White readership. Anand & Hsu's (2022) studies show that "antiracist" children's books demonstrate that Whiteness persists and operates in problematic ways, even in books that directly address "hard histories" of racism, Whiteness, and police brutality. The need for a critical awareness of Whiteness or to uncover Whiteness that is invisible and omnipresent, wherein lies its power, is highlighted by its enduring presence and power. Whiteness sustains power, in part, by maintaining invisibility.

For the purpose of this research, the terms ‘White’ and ‘Black’ will both be capitalised based on the guidelines of the Macauthor’s foundation’s Grammatical Justice and Equity handbook. According to Mack and Palfry (2020), Language is radical, and it can promote or confront the systemic racism we aim to end. According to these authors, Blackness with a lowercase ‘b’ is an adjective with no meaning. Lowercase ‘b’ is meant to be neutral and suggest race is just a descriptor, but it's much more. Blackness and other cultural identities are carried from birth. In terms of the capitalisation of ‘White’, Mack and Palfry (2020) state that Detaching ‘White’ as a proper noun permits White individuals to avoid race discussions and absolves White institutions of racism. We capitalize "White" to encourage people to consider how Whiteness is maintained explicitly and indirectly.

1.6 Chapter Outlines:

Chapter two reviews extensive writings exploring the theoretical basis of children's antiracist literature.

Chapter three outlines the methodology and the rationale for employing a qualitative research method in answering each research question.

Chapter four analyses the data using a Thematic Analysis approach (Braun and Clarke 2021) and answers research questions. The educator's analytic tool can also be found in this chapter.

Chapter five summarizes the research findings while highlighting the limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research.

1.7 Conclusion:

As societies grapple with the complexities of racism and its far-reaching implications, one of the most impactful means of imparting change is through the early education of children. Literature, especially that tailored for younger readers, is instrumental in shaping foundational perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs and also reaches their parents and caregivers. The recent surge in antiracist narratives within children's literature is not only a reflection of societal evolution but also an instrument to guide it. This research aims not only to find themes, language and approaches that determine antiracist children's literature but also how these books can help teachers guide antiracist teaching. Antiracist literature can be a profound tool in education, illuminating various perspectives and challenging entrenched racial biases. However, as Spencer's 2022 study reveals, the impact of such literature is heavily influenced by its mediators, notably teachers (Spencer, 2022).

The next chapter aims to explore research in the field of antiracist literature while exploring children's perceptions of structural racism. It also examines critical Whiteness pedagogy, which encapsulates the importance of challenging and recontextualizing the pre-existing notions of Whiteness and biases ingrained within our educational paradigms.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In the landscape of antiracist literature in a predominantly White context, Borsheim-Black's (2015) pivotal work, "It's Pretty Much White," sheds light on the paradoxical realm where White perspectives predominantly shape narratives about racism. This irony touches upon a broader scholarly discussion of the subtle and overt forces influencing how antiracist literature is approached, received, and internalized. Matias and Mackey (2016) introduced the concept of Critical Whiteness Pedagogy, which delves into the layers of whiteness that permeate teaching methodologies. In tandem with Borsheim-Black's assertions, they shed light on the necessity of understanding the nuances of White perspectives in antiracist teachings. The inability to recognize and critically assess these layers can lead to what Thomann and Suyemoto (2018) describe as a superficial understanding of structural racism, particularly among White youth. These studies collectively underscore the idea that it's not only the content of antiracist literature that matters but also the perspective and depth with which it is approached.

Considering educational frameworks, Gibson and Jamison (2021) stress that practical teaching is inherently antiracist. This implies a hands-on, active engagement with the realities of racial dynamics rather than a passive acknowledgment, creating an antiracist teaching environment. Likewise, Spencer (2022) highlights the potential of children's literature as a medium for instilling antiracist values from a young age. The literature, therefore, must be scrutinized for authenticity and representation, as emphasized by Anand and Hsu (2022), who critically examine Whiteness in antiracist children's literature. Their question, "For Whom and by Whom?" resonates with Borsheim-Black's concerns about representation.

2.2 Structural Racism and Children's Perception

The intricate tapestry of societies worldwide reflects a rich blend of racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. These patterns symbolize the history of human interaction, migration, colonization, and power dynamics. Nevertheless, dominant threads overshadow others, often distorting the overall picture. In this respect, Thomann and Suyemoto's 2018 study becomes a focal point, offering insight into White youth's perceptions of structural racism (Thomann & Suyemoto, 2018). For many, structural racism is more than just an academic term. It signifies the realities they navigate daily, embedded in policies, practices, and societal norms, subtly influencing life outcomes based on race (King & Chandler, 2016). However, the system can appear inconsequential for those benefiting from these structures (Hagerman, 2017).

Thomann and Suyemoto aimed to understand how White youth perceive structural racism. Their findings emphasize the significance of addressing such perceptions early on (Thomann & Suyemoto, 2018). Young minds, being impressionable, absorb information from their surroundings. If unaware of structural racism, they might inadvertently perpetuate or benefit from it. This notion is echoed in the work of Borsheim-Black (2015), who underscored the challenges of an antiracist approach to literature in predominantly White contexts.

Thomann & Suyemoto (2018) showcased how White youth are starting to comprehend structural racism, indicating a shift in the younger generation's perspectives. Yet, the efforts must be consistent and widespread. Articles like those from Gibson & Jamison (2021) and Hagerman (2017) provide educators with practical insights into embedding antiracism into teaching methodologies while also emphasizing the importance of White racial socialization for fostering "antiracist" children.

Antiracist literature is essential here. It acts as a conduit, guiding young minds through the complexities of societal structures and offering them a perspective to identify subtle racial biases (Spencer, 2022). However, navigating this path is not straightforward. Incorporating antiracist literature and fostering environments that promote discussion can reshape future perspectives (Galloway et al., 2019). The future will reflect the perceptions nurtured today, making this endeavour essential for a more inclusive tomorrow

2.3 Whiteness and Antiracist Teaching discourse

The concept of "Whiteness" encompasses far more than a mere skin tone descriptor; it symbolizes a complex ideology ingrained in societal values, institutional policies, and collective norms over centuries. In the sphere of antiracist teaching, comprehending Whiteness is critical due to its substantial effect on teaching viewpoints and student experiences.

Education systems, predominantly in the West, historically showcase a Eurocentric bias. Many might see this perspective as neutral or all-encompassing, yet it's suffused with undertones of Whiteness (Banks, 2004; Au, 2009). Borsheim-Black (2015) opines that such a viewpoint not only dictates our overt actions but also subconsciously shapes our educational milieu. Thus, educators need to understand how to traverse a system laden with Whiteness ideologies, many times unbeknownst to them.

Whiteness thrives in invisibility. Its potency lies in its ability to set itself as the "standard," thereby sidelining or alienating experiences, stories, and histories not aligning with this so-called standard (Ahmed, 2004; Stanley, 2014). This systemic alienation deeply affects students from diverse backgrounds, either misrepresenting their identities or excluding them from educational narratives (Sleeter, 2001; Solomona et al., 2005).

Recognizing Whiteness is the cornerstone of building more inclusive, diverse, and equitable educational frameworks (Picower, 2021). Educators who identify and challenge Whiteness

pave the way for genuine inclusivity beyond superficial gestures. For instance, Spencer (2022) emphasizes using children's literature as a vehicle for antiracist teaching, while Sions (2022) reflects on the importance of preparing educators with an antiracist curriculum.

However, understanding is merely the starting point. There's a palpable difference between recognizing the omnipresence of Whiteness and taking active measures to challenge it. Matias & Mackey (2016) cite the notion of Critical Whiteness Pedagogy, urging educators to delve into the nuances of Whiteness and its repercussions. The ultimate aim should not be limited to teaching diversity but should center on integrating antiracist principles at the educational system's heart (policies and curriculum).

The manifestations of Whiteness in educational spaces, the intricacies of dual positionality, strategies to challenge ingrained Eurocentric ideologies, and conceptualizing a future where antiracist pedagogy is commonplace, not an outlier, will be explored.

The strand of Whiteness is especially dominant, impacting everything from curriculum design to student interactions. Recognizing its prevalence is the first step in cultivating a genuinely inclusive and antiracist educational environment. Borsheim-Black (2015) explored the challenges of an antiracist approach to literature instruction, particularly in a Whiteness-dominated context. In many literature courses, canonical works predominantly feature White writers, thereby overshadowing significant contributions from authors of colour (Smith, 2022). Historical narratives often centre around European or Western perspectives, overshadowing global perspectives (Au, 2009; Banks, 2004). Additionally, science and math, usually considered neutral fields, are not exempt. The highlighted figures in these subjects are predominantly White, sidelining non-White contributors.

Beyond the curriculum, the representation or lack thereof of non-White figures perpetuates biases. Educational materials often present White individuals as the norm, and when people of

colour are depicted, they sometimes serve as tokens or are placed in stereotypical roles (Sleeter, 2001). This disparity can lead to feelings of invisibility or alienation among students of colour, making them feel as if their identities are marginalized (Solomona et al., 2005).

Often imbued with Eurocentric values, traditional teaching methods can unintentionally alienate students from diverse backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 2014). This extends to how individual achievement is usually valued over community-based learning or how analytical thinking might be prioritized over more holistic approaches (Paris, 2012). Matias & Mackey (2016) illuminate the need to deconstruct these ingrained pedagogies to make room for antiracist teaching practices.

School policies can inadvertently bolster Whiteness. Policies that penalize specific hairstyles or cultural attire can disproportionately affect students of colour, marking their cultural expressions as "other" (Carter et al., 2014). The institutional framework of schools often mirrors societal norms steeped in Whiteness, reflecting its dominance even beyond the classroom. McIntosh's "invisible knapsack" metaphor effectively captures the unseen benefits of White privilege in education. The entrenched dominance of Whiteness in educational settings doesn’t exist in a vacuum; it has tangible consequences. For students of colour, the omnipresence of this influence can result in feelings of marginalization, self-doubt, and disconnection. Delving into its impact provides a clearer picture of the challenges these students face and the resilience they often showcase in navigating a system that can feel alienating. Students of colour, in seeking affirmation through a reflection in their educational mirror, frequently face a curricular dominance that predominantly focuses on White experiences. This erasure of diverse identities in academic settings is a significant concern, as it denies students the opportunity to see themselves in their studies. Sleeter (2001) articulated this concern, noting that the "overwhelming presence of Whiteness" in educational curricula and methodologies often leaves little room for exploring and affirming diverse identities.

White students might not have to question the relevance of the curriculum to their culture or feel out of place due to their accent or appearance (Ahmed, 2004). For educators to level the playing field, there's a pressing need to recognize and confront these nuanced privileges.

The influence of Whiteness in educational settings is not merely a passive force but actively shapes interactions and perceptions (Morrison, 1992; Wagner, 2005). However, acknowledging its pervasive nature is merely the beginning. With a comprehensive understanding of its influence, educators can strive to challenge and eventually dismantle these structures, laying the groundwork for a genuinely antiracist educational framework. Building on the concept of "stereotype threat," as Steele and Aronson introduced (cited in Matias and Mackey, 2016), the constant reminder of negative stereotypes can inadvertently affect a student's performance. This perspective is further reinforced by Matias and Mackey (2016), who discuss the implications of navigating an educational system dominated by Whiteness, emphasizing the internalized pressures that students of colour may feel when confronting racial stereotypes.

The preference for individual achievements over community successes in pedagogical choices influenced by Whiteness can create an environment of cultural alienation. Banks (2004), in his exploration of multicultural education, emphasizes the need for a balanced representation to foster inclusivity and cultural acknowledgment. As Salem & Tillis (2021) assert, in environments where Whiteness is prevalent, the unsaid expectations for students of colour often revolve around assimilation, further distancing them from their cultural identities. The challenge of staying true to one's cultural roots while navigating predominantly White educational spaces is a tightrope many students of colour walk. Spyropoulou et al. (2022) emphasize the detrimental effects of microaggressions, noting that they are not only isolated events but form part of a larger pattern that can significantly impact a student's sense of

belonging and self-worth. In these micro-moments, students often feel the weight of their differences, further emphasizing the dominance of Whiteness in educational settings.

Despite these challenges, there is a resounding call for resilience and creating spaces where students of colour can find support and community. Anand & Hsu (2022) stress the importance of scrutinizing representations in literature, advocating for a more inclusive approach that speaks to diverse experiences. While the challenges posed by the dominance of Whiteness in educational settings cannot be understated, there's also a rising tide of antiracist teaching methodologies and strategies (Gibson & Jamison, 2021; Spencer, 2022) that aim to create a more inclusive, affirming, and empowering environment. As educators and institutions become more attuned to these challenges, it's essential to continuously advocate for educational leaderships that genuinely embrace diversity at its core.

2.4 Addressing Whiteness in Education and its Benefits

The education system has, for a long time, been influenced by 'Whiteness,' which often prioritizes White, Eurocentric perspectives to the detriment of a diverse and comprehensive curriculum (Au, 2009; Banks, 2004). This influence goes beyond the curriculum to disciplinary policies, representation, and the very structure of educational environments (Carter et al., 2014). Thus, addressing this pervasive issue requires a deep understanding of its historical development and systematic efforts to deconstruct it. Some of these efforts include;

Curriculum Diversification: Drawing on Borsheim-Black (2015), it's evident that many literature instructions within multilayered White contexts primarily centre around White narratives. By diversifying the curriculum, students can grasp a global perspective that isn't just centred on a single race or ethnicity. Spencer (2022) further advocates for the use of children's literature as a means to advance antiracist teaching, promoting inclusivity from a young age.

Teacher Training and Professional Development: The necessity of ongoing learning to understand and address Whiteness cannot be overemphasized. Thomann and Suyemoto (2018) emphasize the importance of understanding structural racism, especially in shaping the perspectives of the youth. Teachers need tools such as focus groups, lectures and training to navigate and address these complexities effectively. Furthermore, the paper by Matias & Mackey (2016) underscores the role of introducing Critical Whiteness Pedagogy to break down entrenched biases.

Representation Matters: The overwhelming presence of Whiteness in the teaching community often contributes to a limited perspective in educational settings (Sleeter, 2001; Solomona et al., 2005). Diversifying staff goes beyond token representation; it's about enriching the educational discourse with varying cultural experiences and perspectives and making diverse hiring practices a priority.

Creating Safe Spaces for Dialogue: Schools must encourage open conversations about race, racism, and privilege. These open conversations can happen through discussions during book reading or social justice clubs. Hagerman (2017) demonstrates that White racial socialization plays a pivotal role in raising antiracist children. Classroom dialogues facilitated around these topics can be transformative and instrumental in fostering an antiracist stance (Picower, 2021).

Actively Seeking Feedback: Spyropoulou et al. (2022) highlighted the success of a multicultural-antiracist program for elementary students. Seeking feedback from such initiatives provides invaluable insights that can be integrated into the broader educational system, ensuring that schools remain relevant and responsive to evolving societal needs.

Challenging Zero-Tolerance Policies: Overly punitive disciplinary policies often disproportionately affect students of colour, reinforcing racial disparities (Carter et al.,

2014). Embracing restorative justice approaches can pave the way for equity in disciplinary actions.

Celebrating Diversity: Transitioning from passive acknowledgment to active celebration of diverse cultures is crucial. Anand & Hsu (2022) assert that even in "antiracist" literature, there needs to be scrutiny to ensure the representation is authentic and not tokenistic.

Establishing Partnerships: Galloway et al. (2019) emphasize the importance of language in school change efforts. Collaborating with external organizations can provide schools with the tools, resources, and expertise to effectively frame their initiatives.

In essence, dismantling Whiteness in education goes beyond merely addressing overt signs of racism. It's about restructuring the system, revisiting curricula, challenging the status quo, and prioritizing inclusivity (King & Chandler, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Matias, 2013). Persistent efforts, collaborations, and a commitment to equity are indispensable to achieving an inclusive educational landscape.

The pursuit of dismantling Whiteness in education is not merely a nod to political correctness, nor is it a transient movement. It is a conscious stride towards creating a future where education is truly an equalizer. Addressing and challenging the pervasive influence of Whiteness in education systems around the world has numerous benefits, many of which reverberate beyond school walls. Examples of these benefits are;

Cultivating Empathetic Global Citizens: Borsheim-Black's study on literature instruction within a multilayered White context (2015) emphasizes the need to break away from a predominantly White narrative. By diversifying narratives, we produce students who can appreciate and understand global perspectives, consequently becoming more empathetic global citizens.

Fostering Higher Levels of Critical Thinking: Thomann & Suyemoto (2018) highlight how White youth understand structural racism. Their findings suggest that promoting multiple perspectives in the curriculum allows students to critically assess societal structures and become more proactive in questioning the status quo. This fosters analytical mindsets, which is crucial for academia and real-life situations.

Reducing Racial Tensions and Misunderstandings: According to Spyropoulou et al. (2022), multicultural and antiracist programs for elementary school children can be pivotal in reducing racial misunderstandings. A curriculum rich in diverse racial narratives curbs stereotypes and prejudices, reducing racial tensions and misunderstandings.

Empowering Marginalized Students Matias & Mackey (2016) discuss the concept of "Critical Whiteness Pedagogy." They argue that education reflecting the histories and cultures of students of colour empowers these marginalized groups, leading to a more inclusive and diverse range of future professionals.

Enriched Classroom Dynamics: Salem & Tillis (2021) explore reimagining antiracist education. A classroom that truly values diversity becomes a vibrant space, fostering a microcosm of the real world. This equips students to navigate diverse workplaces and communities.

Driving Societal Change: In discussing how language matters for school change, Galloway et al. (2019) stress the ripple effect of promoting inclusivity in schools. As schools challenge Whiteness and establish inclusive benchmarks, they inspire societal shifts across various sectors.

Meeting the Needs of a Diverse Population: Drawing insights from Ladson-Billings (2014) on "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 2.0", it's evident that modern societies are complex

tapestries of different cultures. Addressing Whiteness ensures an education system meets the needs of its entire population, promoting equal opportunities for all.

By referencing Morrison's (1992) exploration of "Whiteness and the literary imagination," it becomes clear that the task is not merely about addressing past wrongs. The goal is to mould a future that's equitable and rich in diversity. The education system embarks on a transformative journey, promising everyone a brighter, inclusive future by embracing antiracist pedagogies and diversifying the curriculum.

2.5 The Conundrum of Antiracist Literatures

The transformative power of literature, especially when directed towards young, malleable minds, is irrefutable. As society grapples with the deep-seated prejudices and systemic inequalities of its past and present, there's a mounting urgency to address these issues early. One of the most potent avenues for this is children's literature. These books engage with complex issues surrounding race and racism, encouraging young readers to not be merely passive consumers but actively question, introspect, and understand the world around them. However, the path to genuine antiracist literature, especially for children, is laden with challenges. Borsheim-Black's 2015 study draws attention to these, highlighting the issues faced in the antiracist approach to literature instruction, especially in predominantly White contexts. The question arises of authenticity and impact: How can literature challenge and change entrenched racial biases in an environment where such biases are the norm?

Delving deeper into this issue, the concept of Critical Whiteness Pedagogy, as presented by Matias and Mackey in 2016, provides some insight. This approach emphasizes the importance of critically addressing and deconstructing Whiteness in antiracist teaching. It underscores that to understand and combat racism truly, one must first understand the nuances and privileges associated with Whiteness, which often go unexamined (Matias & Mackey, 2016).

Children literature's power lies in its ability to seamlessly weave morals and values into tales of adventure, friendship, and discovery. As society becomes increasingly aware of the structural injustices that permeate our daily lives, there is a pressing need for books that can mirror the world's diversity and actively combat prejudices. In this instance, antiracist literature for children is a genre that aims to break the chains of racism by laying its foundations on authenticity, representation, and critical thinking.

Recent studies and literature reviews have underscored the significance of these books. Spencer (2022) posits that antiracist children's literature goes beyond mere representation. It challenges young minds to question the status quo, to recognize the subtleties of bias, and to stand up against it. Books in this genre do not only tell stories; they stimulate thought and pave the way for important discussions about race, identity, and justice.

However, representation alone is not enough. Anand and Hsu (2022) provide a critical perspective, asking vital questions about the portrayal of Whiteness in antiracist children's literature. Their study emphasizes that representation is a complex issue. It is not merely about introducing characters from diverse backgrounds but questioning who crafts these narratives and for whom they are intended. For instance, if a book centred on an antiracist theme is written by an author who has not lived the experience, or if it is majorly targeted at a White audience, the narrative may inadvertently become a tool of appeasement rather than genuine understanding and change.

Diversity in children's literature should not be a box-ticking exercise. Gibson & Jamison (2021) argue that real change happens when antiracist values are embodied in the very fabric of the narrative. Children should not merely read about characters from different racial backgrounds; they should be presented with their dreams, struggles, joys, and challenges in a manner that fosters empathy and dispels myths. Moreover, it's essential to note that these books

not restricted to combating prejudices Black communities face. Authentic antiracist literature embraces all racial and ethnic groups, challenging stereotypes and dispelling myths about Asians, Latinos, Indigenous peoples, and more. The goal is a holistic understanding of race, instead of a Black-and-White dichotomy.

Yet, the journey towards genuinely antiracist children's literature is filled with challenges. The industry still grapples with issues of tokenism, shallow representation, and sometimes even inadvertent reinforcement of stereotypes. The objective is not just to increase the number of diverse characters but to ensure these characters have depth, agency, and authenticity.

2.6 Using Antiracist Book Sets with Young Children

Often considered an innocent stage of life, childhood holds within it the potential for profound discussions on topics that adults sometimes shy away from—one such crucial discourse centres around the subject of race and racism. Landrigan and Johnson (2021) assert that children, even at a tender age, possess the cognitive capability and emotional sensitivity to engage in dialogues about racial identity and discrimination. They continue by highlighting how stands in contrast to a widely held belief that children should be shielded from these discussions.

Delving further into the topic of racism, its pervasive impact can be seen even among young learners. Racial biases, although not always overt, might subtly penetrate their psyche, thus shaping their worldview. This, in turn, raises the pressing question: If children are already aware of and affected by racism, shouldn't they also be equipped with the tools to understand and challenge it? Landrigan and Johnson (2021) underline that the hesitancy in introducing children to racial discussions often stems from the adults' discomfort or lack of preparedness rather than the perceived unreadiness of the children themselves.

This is where the role of antiracist books in early childhood education becomes indispensable. Introducing children to antiracist literature is more than just an exercise in reading; it is an

intentional endeavour to mould young minds into critical thinkers who question, understand, and challenge the status quo. The dynamic nature of such literature provides children with diverse perspectives, ensuring a well-rounded understanding of the topic. Furthermore, as Paris (2012) opines, reading antiracist literature in the classroom is not only an academic exercise but also serves as a reflection of the broader democratic ethos, where diversity and inclusion are valued.

However, the task is not as simple as selecting a book and reading it to the class. Spencer (2022) underscores the complexity of the process, as seen in his year-long study of eight teachers. This research illuminated how a sustained engagement with diverse children's literature significantly contributed to the teachers' evolution as social justice educators. The selection of books that addressed themes of diversity, equity, and justice allowed these educators to delve deep into the nuances of these subjects, thereby refining their understanding and approach. The ripple effect of this was evident in their teaching methodologies, as they integrated these themes into their curriculum, fostering an environment of inclusivity and awareness. Thus, antiracist children's literature's pivotal role in shaping educators and students becomes clear. By serving as a mirror to society, these books prompt young readers to reflect upon and question societal norms, while hopefully nurturing an informed, empathetic, and proactive generation in challenging racial prejudices.

Drawing from the insights of Borsheim-Black (2015), educators must also recognize the contextual intricacies of the classroom. Because all classrooms do not have the same racial diversity and population, literature choices must reflect and respond to the unique needs of each teaching environment, ensuring that the discourse is informative and transformative. Albeit even though a classroom is not racially diverse, it is not an excuse to avoid rich literature diversity.

The significance of integrating antiracist literature within early education is grounded in the fundamental principle that children are never too young to engage in racial conversations. From a young age, children are exposed to various cultural and racial nuances, consciously or subconsciously, through their daily interactions, media exposure, and narratives they encounter. Therefore, it's not surprising that they have innate curiosities about racial differences and the complexities that surround them. Landrigan and Johnson (2021) reaffirm this sentiment, stating that children are ready to address race and actively formulating sophisticated inquiries, such as "How did this all start?" Such profundities emerging from young minds underscore the urgency for educators to be equipped with appropriate resources, like antiracist book sets, that facilitate these conversations. However, the hesitancy in approaching these discussions in the classroom does not stem from children's unreadiness but educators' comfort levels in handling potentially sensitive topics. Borsheim-Black (2015) expounded on the challenges of antiracist literature instruction, particularly in predominantly White contexts. It was noted that educators often grapple with their understanding and comfort with racial discussions, which in turn influences their pedagogical choices. It becomes evident that a classroom's literature landscape is deeply intertwined with the educator's self-efficacy in addressing racial themes.

Nevertheless, the importance of antiracist literature, especially in early childhood education, cannot be overstated. Such books act as mirrors, reflecting diverse experiences and windows, offering insights into lives different from one's own (Landrigan & Johnson, 2021). They create avenues for meaningful discussions and provide children with tools to comprehend, question, and challenge societal norms and prejudices.

Antiracist books set in early childhood education can shape young minds, fostering a more inclusive, understanding, and empathetic society. By incorporating these materials thoughtfully and effectively, educators can play a pivotal role in combating systemic racism and promoting

equity for all. As Gay (2010) aptly states, culturally responsive teaching isn't just a method or strategy but a pedagogical imperative that ensures all children see themselves in the stories they read, understand the rich tapestry of our global community, and are empowered to challenge biases and injustices.

The proliferation of "antiracist" children's literature brings forth the challenge of its integration and reception within educational settings. Teachers, parents, and educational stakeholders are responsible for selecting appropriate content and facilitating discussions that can harness the potential of these books. Understanding how such literature is received in classrooms is paramount. Teachers, especially those who are White, must reflect on their racial literacy and biases. As Tatum (2017) notes, teachers' racial awareness heavily influences the way they present antiracist literature. Without adequate preparation or self-awareness, there's a risk of perpetuating the stereotypes these books aim to combat.

Moreover, the dynamics within classrooms play a role. In diverse classrooms, the reception of a predominantly White-centric narrative can lead to feelings of alienation for students from marginalized backgrounds (Agarwal-Rangnath, 2020). Conversely, there's a risk of reinforcing pre-existing biases in less diverse settings.

2.7 Conclusion

Children's literature is a vital cornerstone in the early cognitive, emotional, and social development stages. Educators and caregivers can foster a more inclusive and critical-thinking generation by introducing young readers to antiracist narratives. Morrison (2015) emphasized that stories can create bridges of understanding. This can aid in reducing prejudices early on and cultivating a generation of readers who recognize and celebrate differences. Antiracist narratives often challenge societal norms and established narratives. Paris (2012) articulated

that when children engage with such content, they are more likely to develop critical thinking skills, questioning the world around them and the information presented.

According to Salem & Tillis (2021), it has been said that introducing children to issues of racism and prejudice can be a double-edged sword. While they need to be aware, care must be taken to ensure that these topics are approached in age-appropriate ways. Without guidance, some children might grapple with fear, anxiety, or confusion (Salem & Tillis, 2021). However, these books are important because seeing themselves represented in literature can offer validation for children from marginalized backgrounds. Such representation can help them develop a positive self-image and counteract the effects of societal biases (Tatum, 2019).

Some caregivers may feel that children are too young to be exposed to complex topics like racism. It becomes crucial for educators and writers to curate sensitive and appropriate resources, emphasizing the importance of early intervention in countering prejudices to guardians. In their formative years, children might be unable to discern between nuanced representations and those that carry subtle biases; hence, a trained teacher needs to help navigate these biases.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction:

The qualitative research method is used to solve the research questions that guided this study. The research aims to investigate the approaches, themes, and language used in the two selected books to teach children about antiracism effectively. Additionally, the research seeks to determine how analysing these two books can contribute to creating an analytic tool that educators can utilize to assess the suitability of literature for teaching antiracism in classrooms. According to Köhler et al. (2022), when fully utilized, qualitative research methods facilitate theorizing, challenge entrenched thinking patterns, question assumed knowledge, investigate unfamiliar phenomena, samples, or contexts, and collaboratively generate understanding and meaning, among other objectives. Due to its nature of being exploratory and detailed, qualitative research is the most suitable approach for this study. This study aims to understand the language, themes, and literary techniques authors use to create antiracist literature targeted at young readers.

A qualitative research method will examine the data to compare the themes, language, and approach of books promoting antiracism. The study will combine a systematic literature review method and a thematic literature analysis to address the research questions. A systematic literature review is a procedure that involves formulating specific research questions, identifying and evaluating all relevant studies, and summarizing their conclusions (Bettany-Saltikov, 2012, as quoted in de Souza, 2014). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), an analysis is a method for discovering, assessing, and reporting patterns or themes within data. This chapter outlines the methodological approach to documenting antiracist book themes to create an educator's guide for selecting such books.

3.2 Rationale for a Qualitative Research Methodology

Qualitative research is best suited to addressing a research problem where the variables are unknown and must be investigated (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The review of the literature chapter focused on the general characteristics that a book must have to be classified as antiracist. Examples of such features include the exploration of racial bias and standing up to racism (Spencer, 2020), age-appropriateness (Sions, 2022), the exploration of systemic racism (Thomann and Suyemoto, 2018), and the exploration of global narratives (Banks, 2004). However, qualitative analysis of selected popular antiracist books on the market can help us identify more precise themes that define an antiracist book. A thematic analysis of the books is conducted to help identify the themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) propose thematic analysis as a valuable and flexible tool for qualitative research. They argue that thematic analysis of qualitative data reveals patterns and is a foundational tool for researchers.

The qualitative research approach is differentiated by methods focused on a search for understanding, the researcher's role, the ability to communicate the perspectives of its samples, and extensive description (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Interpretation is central to qualitative research, and researchers commonly create reports with flexible, evolving frameworks and assessing criteria that incorporate the researchers' subjective reflexivity and bias (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). This study's examination of the selected books is based on the researcher's background (as a Black woman of African origin), understanding of the chosen books, and themes that emerge consistent with the researchers' study of existing literature (as noted in the review of literature chapter) on children's antiracist books. The survey of existing articles on children's antiracist books helps to create reflexivity and validity of the analyses of the chosen antiracist books

3.3 Rationale for a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) Method

In order to analyse the methods, themes, and language used by authors of antiracist books to communicate complex antiracist ideas to children, it is essential to obtain a collection of antiracist children's books as a sample group. Hence, the Systematic literature review (SLR) approach is most appropriate as it facilitates gathering relevant publications and documents that align with our predetermined inclusion criteria, enabling us to address specific research inquiries (Mengist et al., 2020). Conducting an in-depth review of the relevant literature evaluation is crucial to any field of study. It aids in mapping and assessing current knowledge and deficiencies on specific matters, enhancing the knowledge foundation. Systematic literature review (SLR) distinguishes itself from traditional narrative reviews by adhering to reproducible, scientific, and transparent techniques (O'Brien & Mc Guckin, 2016). According to Oxman & Guyatt (1993), a study conducted accurately and with minimal errors can yield credible findings and conclusions. These findings can then assist decision-makers and scientific practitioners make informed decisions and take appropriate actions.

An examination of available research employing the systematic literature review approach (O'Brien & Mc Guckin, 2016; Del Amo et al., 2018; Mengist et al., 2020) uncovers a typical procedure that comprises four fundamental stages for conducting a systematic literature review. The steps engaged are searching, appraising, synthesizing, and analysing data. A meticulous approach was taken to address the study problems, with each step thoroughly described in this chapter.

3.4 Search

This step entails establishing a specific search string and identifying the databases to be reviewed. The study utilized three search databases, including The Children's Book Council (CBC), Amazon Books, and numerous Canadian public library websites, to locate children's

books promoting antiracism. The literature searches were concluded on September 5, 2023. Relevant information was collected by searching internationally recognized databases. Amazon books featured the book's overview and included feedback from readers on the books' significant role in their journey towards being antiracists. The Children's Book Council (CBC) is a nonprofit trade group in the United States representing publishers and packagers of commercial books and related materials for children and young adults. According to its website, the CBC promotes children's books and fosters a love for reading. The formation of the Children's Book Council dates to 1944. CBC provided a curated compilation of recommended literature and instructional materials pertaining to the Black Lives Matter movement and antiracist movements, which is suitable for children of various age groups. Nevertheless, employing a sophisticated exploration of several Canadian public library websites revealed a comprehensive compilation of nationwide publications aimed at fostering children's antiracist mindset. The libraries were found to have nearly identical collections of antiracist literature for children, with a maximum of only seven such books in each library.

The search string used can be seen listed in table 1

Databases	**Searching string and searching terms**	**No of books**	**Date of acquisition**
Amazon books	Children antiracist books Children antiracist literature	605 95	30/08/2023
The Children's Book Council	Children antiracist books Children Antiracist resources	9 115	31/08/2023
Canadian public library websites	Children antiracist books	11	1/09/2023

	(Vancouver, Toronto, Halifax, Ottawa, Edmonton, Burlington, Regina, Oshawa and Norfolk)		

Table 1 Search string and data base.

It is essential to acknowledge that Amazon Books employed a broad interpretation of the term "antiracist books," as many of the books categorized as such primarily focused on cultural appropriateness and inclusivity. Nevertheless, this catalogue also included significant literature promoting antiracism.

3.5 Appraisal

Upon obtaining the list of antiracist publications that were accessible based on the search string, the next phase was appraisal. The appraisal process involves using predetermined criteria for literature inclusion and exclusion and the assessment of quality to pick the books that will be appraised. During this step, the books chosen during the search were appraised in light of the research questions. This procedure involves screening the selected literature to determine the relevant books for the review task. The process consists of two fundamental stages: the selection of books based on predetermined inclusion criteria and quality assessment.

3.51 Book Selection Based on Specific Criteria for Inclusion.

Books that met the specified inclusion criteria were chosen for additional examination and evaluation of their content, following the application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The predetermined criteria for literature inclusion and exclusion necessary for conducting this systematic review are outlined in Table X. Excluded were primarily works produced before 2020, colouring books, books that are difficult to get, and books that are not in English. It is possible for there to be books that address antiracism, even if they do not explicitly include the term 'antiracist' in their title. Nevertheless, these particular genres of books were excluded from

the review due to their divergence from the primary focus of the study, which is to examine the methodology, language, and themes employed in antiracist literature and their potential utility in helping to create an educators guide to curating their antiracist book collections. Table 2 illustrates the screening procedures and the systematic approach for identifying pertinent publications.

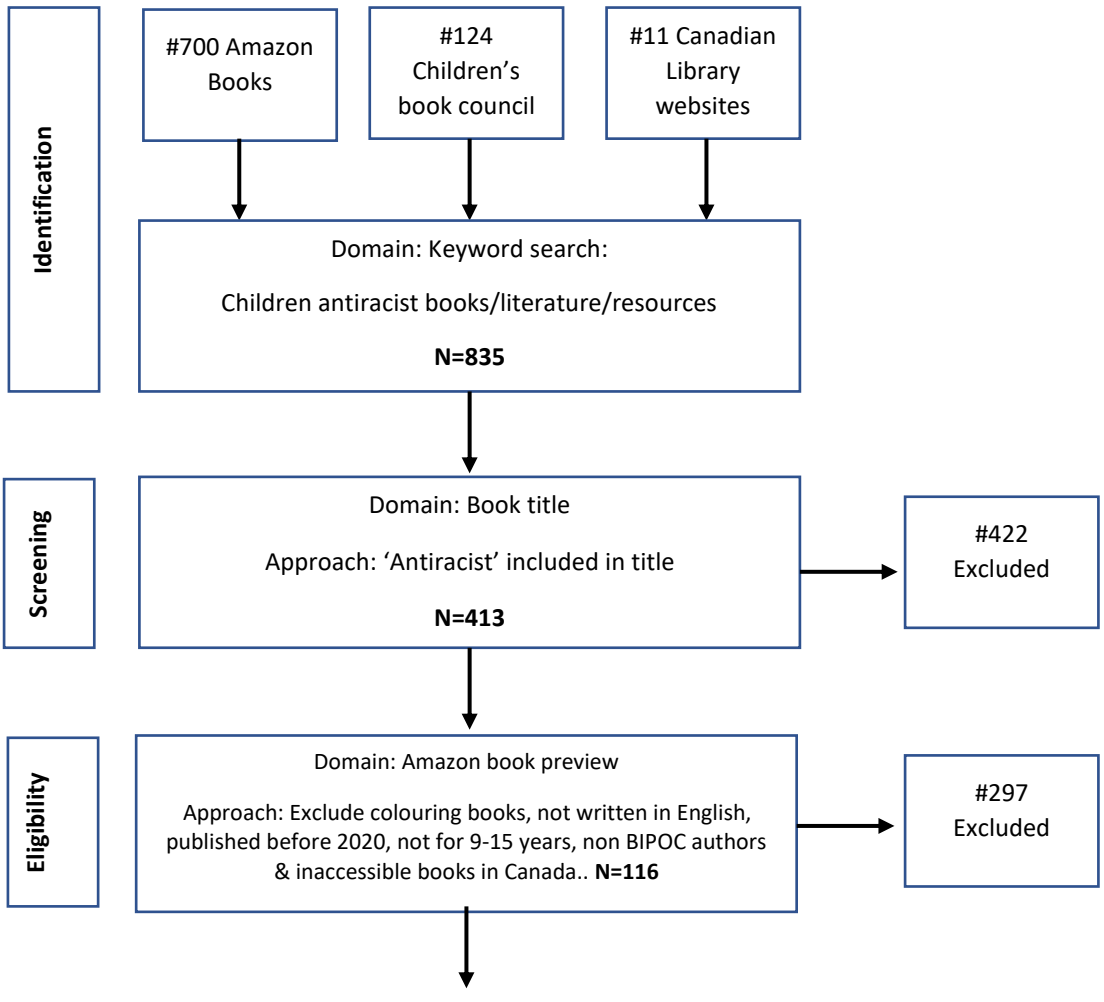
A total of 835 records were found in the preliminary phase, consisting of 700 entries from Amazon books, 124 from The Children's Book Council suggestion, and 11 from Canadian public library websites. By excluding books that lacked the term "antiracist" in their title and abstract, the total number of literature articles decreased to 469, which were then selected for further examination. Subsequently, only 126 articles met the requirements for additional abstract examination. Books excluded at this stage include those not intended for readers aged 9-15, colouring books, books published before 2020, books not written by BIPOC authors and books not written in English. Upon perusing the article abstract, 107 books were selected for further examination of their main body.

Criteria	Decision
The word 'antiracist' is included in the title/abstract	Included
Age 9-15	Included
Written in the English language	Included
Published post Black Lives Matter protests in 2020	Included
Author(s) are BIPOC	Included
Books that are not easily accessible in Canada	Excluded
Colouring book	Excluded

Table 2. Inclusion And Exclusion Criteria.

3.52 Quality Assessment

Several exclusions were made during this stage from the primary body skimming process. Out of the total, 89 books were excluded due to their restricted or oversimplified antiracist premise. Based on the literature review (chapter 2) standards, these books communicated antiracism at a more superficial level and lacked depth in the antiracism discourse. Subsequently, six books underwent further investigation, focusing on their appropriateness for children based on opinions/reviews gathered from antiracist websites. Ultimately, only two books were selected for this systematic literature review. Hancock and Trent (2001) assert that the demanding and time-consuming process of collecting and analysing data requires using small samples in qualitative data analysis. To conduct a comprehensive analysis of antiracist literature, just two books were chosen. Below is a chart that summarizes the search and appraisal of books for this study. This design is traditionally used in the selection of literature for a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology.



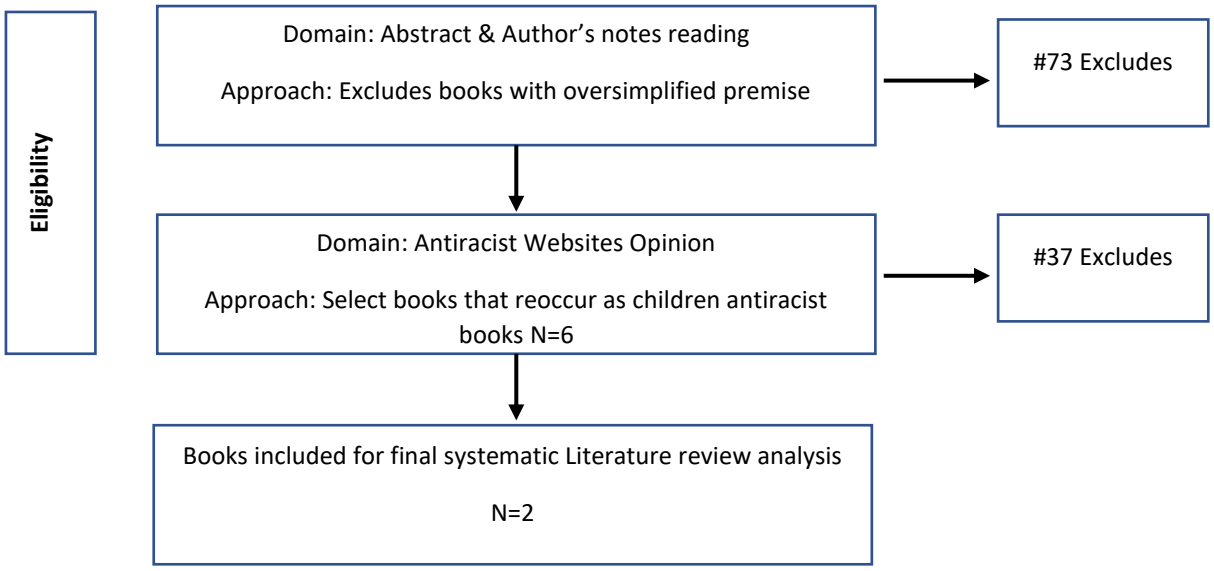


Fig 1. Search and Appraisal Chart

3.6 Synthesis

The synthesis phase involves extracting and classifying pertinent data from chosen books to get knowledge. The two selected books are as follows:

- This Book is Antiracist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, And Do the Work By Tiffany Jewel And

- Stamped (For Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You by Sonja Cherry-Paul, Kendi, Ibram X. and Reynolds Jason.

3.61 Overview of Information Needed

Once the books have been selected, it is critical to create a map of the information required from the books to answer the research questions. The following are the three research questions that this study aims to answer:

Q1: What approaches and themes do 'Stamped: Racism, antiracism, and You for Kids' by Reynolds and Kendi and 'This Book is Antiracist' by Jewel employ to qualify them as suitable for teaching children antiracism?

Q2: How does this analysis inform the development of an analytic tool to aid educators in selecting books that qualify as antiracist?

Q3: How would this analytical tool help differentiate between antiracist, culturally appropriate and non-racist language when educators are selecting antiracist books?

The overview of the information needed covers the types of information required to answer research questions and shed light on the subject under investigation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). They include contextual, perceptual, demographic, and theoretical information.

- Contextual information: The researcher must compare the circumstances that provide a framework for the themes and language employed in the chosen antiracist literature. This entails gathering information regarding the language and approaches utilized in these books that convey antiracist messages to young children.
- Demographic Information: The researcher compares the book authors' backgrounds and determines how this influences the themes they each explored. The researcher must also investigate the numerous geographical and historical contexts indicated by the authors in their explanation of racism.
- Perceptual information: This pertains to the authors' perspectives on the antiracist discourse. This entails discovering how the authors perceive racism based on their experiences and research. Their perception is demonstrated by the way they convey antiracist messages to children.
- Theoretical information: This involves using data from many literature sources to analyse what is already known about children's antiracist books to guide the analysis of the two chosen antiracist books.

3.62 Data Collection Process

The data extraction method entails identifying and retrieving relevant information from the chosen books. At this point, themes that answer the research question for the systematic literature review are coded. In order to fulfil the objectives of the systematic literature review (SLR), the variable of interest was categorized based on the overarching similarities and distinctions across the books. The books' general information encompasses the authors' approach, themes and language employed. The categorization phase involved the systematic classification and processing of the data into appropriate categories (such as themes, language, and approach) to facilitate further analysis, culminating in the presentation of the final result.

Ultimately, the synthesis step is the initial step to answer the first research question regarding themes and approaches used across the books. At this stage, a mental note is created while skimming through the two books as to areas where they are similar and where they differ.

3.7 Analysis

Analysis involved the narration of the result and reaching a conclusion. The analysis phase encompassed evaluating synthesized data and extracting meaningful information from the selected books. During this research phase, *a thematic literature analysis* was employed. The books were analysed more thoroughly during this phase, focusing on identifying and discussing similarities and differences in themes and languages. This analysis is conducted to address the first research question.

A flexible standard of categories was used during this phase, meaning that categories were modified as more data from each case was thoroughly examined (Coffey & Atkinson, 1992). As new theme categories emerged, the books were constantly compared, and groups were refined, merged, or deleted as needed (Charmaz, 2000). This classification process helped stay in tune and uncover themes covered in the two antiracist texts. Cross-checking the coding

of the main themes ensured a comprehensive examination of the data and facilitated discussions that improved the understanding of the classifications (Barbour, 2001). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis needs researchers to participate actively in reading, coding, and theme development.

The subsequent phase entailed addressing the second research question, which pertains to ascertaining how examining these two books might aid in developing an analytical instrument that educators can employ to evaluate the appropriateness of literature for teaching antiracism in educational settings. During this analysis phase, the answer to the first research question on themes and language was utilized to guide the development of an analytical tool. This process was carried out by applying text analysis and interpretation of the more significant meaning of the findings. The analytic tool was developed with flexible, emerging frameworks and evaluative criteria.

A critical Whiteness pedagogy was used to inform the creation of this analytic tool. Critical Whiteness Pedagogy is more than just a theoretical tool; it aims to peel aside the layers of inherent privileges and unconscious biases sewn into the fabric of Whiteness. As Borsheim-Black (2015) correctly highlighted, the world of literature, especially for younger audiences, frequently reflects a largely White setting. Critical Whiteness Pedagogy encourages educators and students to critically confront these normative norms and question their preconceptions about race, identity, and cultural hegemony. The educators analytic guide aims to help teachers highlight the themes which a book should cover to help shake this deeply rooted foundation of Whiteness. It should be mentioned that this tool may include the researchers' subjective reflexivity and bias. The researcher aims to create an analytic tool that people of all races can use. However, because of the researcher's African descent and experiences of racism, specific antiracist themes may be more prioritized in the analytical tool.

Finally, the study's third research question was how this analytical tool may help differentiate between antiracist, culturally appropriate and non-racist language when educators are selecting antiracist books. The answer to this question will be guided by the Galloway et al. 2019 study, which deeply explored the difference between "Culturally responsive," "Antiracist," and "non-racist" pedagogy. The educators' analytic tool will be used on a chosen antiracist book to illustrate how educators can use the tool to differentiate between antiracist, culturally appropriate and non-racist books.

This stage also encompassed explaining and narrating the results, discussing the way forward for future research, and inferring a conclusion.

3.8 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness highlights the credibility, dependability, and transferability of the study. According to Bloomberg & Volpe (2016), a study's credibility measures how well the researcher conveys the participants' accurate perceptions (in this case, the authors' communication of antiracism for children audience). To ensure accuracy, the specific pages on which each theme was located were quoted while analyzing the themes each author covered in the two books. A comparison and contrast of the writers' approaches to communicating each theme was used to address the research's first question. Following the exploration of the themes, a cross-reference was carried out to ensure that the book's cited pages were accurate so that the actual ideas from the book were not misreported.

The dependability of a study is measured by the precision of the data collection techniques employed and by a detailed description of the procedure followed in collecting and analyzing the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). The idea behind doing a systematic literature review (SLR) is to create an audit trail that allows other people to track the researcher's path and the methods used to arrive at their conclusions. This offers transparency, ensuring the

dependability of the research findings. Through searching, appraising, synthesizing, and analyzing, SLR offers a reasonably reproducible method for research analysis.

As defined by Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), transferability is the degree to which the reader believes the research context fits into other contexts. This alludes to how the research conveys its conclusions so readers can apply the knowledge to their situations. A clear articulation of the design and context supported the research findings' transferability. Readers can assess if the study findings are relevant to their setting by understanding its methodology and context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). An analytical tool for educators was developed with the thorough literature analysis of the two books chosen for this study. This tool can be helpful to all educators in their selection of antiracist literature for their pupils. As a result, the study's conclusions can be generalized because a wide range of educators can apply the findings in their settings.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This research did not require review and approval by a Research Ethics Board (REB) because the data was published/publicly available literature. The data was not modified to suit an ideological argument or political perspective, nor was it used to violate the dignity or freedom of any individual or group in recognition of both their rights and of differences arising from age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural identity, partnership status, faith, disability, political belief or any other significant characteristic." (BERA, 2018). For the systematic literature review, the authors were not criticized in a defamatory or unprofessional manner in any medium as with the BERA (2018) guidelines.

3.10 Chapter Summary

Hancock et al. (2009) state that qualitative research aims to enhance the comprehension of our social environment's origins and current state of affairs. The authors also assert that qualitative methodology is more suitable when the research question involves investigating individuals' experiences, perspectives, or opinions, exploring uncharted territories where issues are not yet comprehended or adequately identified, evaluating the feasibility of a new service, examining real-life contexts, or addressing sensitive topics where flexibility is necessary to prevent distress. Due to the questions this study seeks to answer, it was essential to conduct qualitative research. A systematic literature review (SLR) method was used to select and analyze two children's antiracist books. The study investigated the language, themes, and approaches chosen by children's literature authors to convey antiracist ideals to young readers. The findings of this exploration were then utilized to develop a guide for educators to assist them in selecting antiracist books. The objective of producing this guide is to ensure that children are introduced to accurate antiracist resources at an early age, that might enable them to develop into antiracist individuals.

The upcoming chapter will present the findings of a comprehensive analysis utilizing the systematic literature review method. This analysis aims to comprehend the critical characteristics of an excellent antiracist book for youngsters. The conversations will illuminate antiracist subtopics that are essential for youngsters to be acquainted with to initiate their path toward antiracism.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction:

This chapter presents a thorough analysis of the two books to answer the following research questions:

- Q1: What approaches and themes do 'Stamped: Racism, antiracism, and You for Kids' by Reynolds and Kendi and 'This Book is Antiracist' by Jewel employ to qualify them as suitable for teaching children antiracism?
- Q2: How does this analysis inform the development of an analytic tool to aid educators in selecting books that qualify as antiracist?
- Q3: How would this analytical tool help differentiate between antiracist, culturally appropriate and non-racist language when educators are selecting antiracist books?

Areas of similarities and differences are unravelled using a thematic literature analysis exploring the themes and approaches used in the two books. More attention will be given to the significance that history plays in the teaching of antiracism because, without a knowledge of the past, readers cannot understand how structural and systemic racism became the norm. This chapter will also unveil the authors' literary tools employed in carefully unearthing antiracism to a nine to fifteen years old readership.

After exploring the themes and approaches used by the authors, a thematic analysis was employed to inform the development of an analytic tool that educators can use to successfully analyse literature before deeming them appropriate for use in teaching antiracism in classrooms. This thematic analysis will be rooted in critical Whiteness pedagogy which aims to combat the normalisation of Whiteness in readers. Critical Whiteness Pedagogy invites educators and students to challenge the normalisation of Whiteness and reconsider their assumptions about race, identity, and cultural hegemony. The educators' analytic guide aims to

assist teachers in identifying the issues that a book should cover to shatter this deeply ingrained basis of Whiteness.

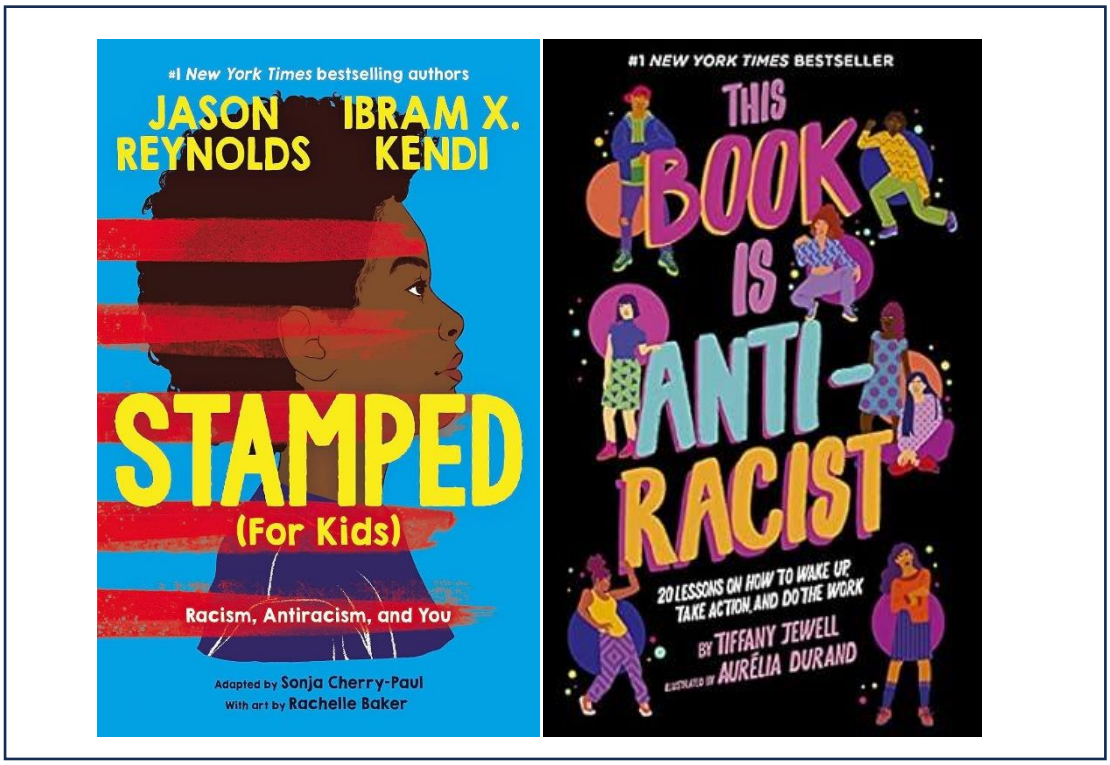


Fig. 2 Selected books' cover pages

4.2 Identifying Themes and Approaches in The Two Selected Books

In order to identify the themes covered in the two selected books, the books were read for the first time, and critical points were highlighted in the text. After that, the books were reread to see where they align and areas of differences. The table below highlights the findings:

		Stamped (for Kids)	This Book is antiracist
Approach	Similarities	- The Use Of Personal Pronouns - Definition of key words: - The use of call-out boxes:	

		- The Recognition That Every Child Has Pre-Existing Ideas Of Race/Racism - The use of images/illustrations. - The recognition that these types of ideas are mostly not taught in school. - The use of history in explaining racism: - Portraying antiracist heroes - Naming victims of racist attacks - The importance of affirmations	
	Difference	- American historical context - Impersonal; writing point of view - Introspective section	- Activity section - Global outlook: - Personal experiences
Theme	Similarities	- Racism has a history: - There has always been the work of disruption. - The dominant culture" box - Stereotyping and false narratives. - Systemic racism: - A distinction between personal and institutional racism - White supremacy has a history - White privilege - White saviourism:	

		- Antiracist can be of any colour: - Antiracism requires action: - Antiracism is a journey -	
	Difference	- the use of rope metaphor - BIPOC people can also hold racist ideas - The under representation of women in antiracist movement:	- A deep dive into social identities: - Intersectionality - Reverse racism is not real - Spending one's privilege

Table 3. Similarities and differences between TBAR and SFK

4.3 Approach

4.31 Similarities

1. *The Use of Personal Pronouns*:

The authors of both Stamped (for kids) and This Book is Antiracist speak to 'you' in a way that indicates to the child reading the book that the message is addressed to them. Personal pronouns can have an immense impact on the reader. In both texts, personal pronouns such as "I," "you," "we," and "they" are utilized to establish a sense of connection, inclusivity and empathy in the reader.

2. *Definition of Keywords:*

TBAR (This Book is Antiracist) provided definitions for numerous terms, including antiracist, social identities, race, ethnicity, systemic racism, prejudice, and allyship, so that children could comprehend their meanings when they appeared later in the chapter. At the beginning of the first chapter (page 6), the author states that "an antiracist person is someone who is opposed to racism." Their dedication is to oppose unjust legislation, discriminatory policies, and racist mindsets. Antiracism is how we liberate ourselves from centuries of habitation in a racialized society that has kept us apart and oppressed. Racism is defined by the author on page 30 as both individual prejudice and bias and the systemic oppression and abuse of authority by institutions.

The writers of SFK (Stamped for Kids) define terms such as segregationist, assimilationist, antiracist, equality, equity, and others. On page 119, for example, the author states of the terms segregationist, assimilationist, and antiracist: 'Segregationists are hateful people. People who despise you because you are not like them. Assimilationists are persons who only like you if you behave like them. Antiracists love you because you are who you are.' '(p 119). The author defines equality and equity thus: 'Here's the thing: Equality and equity are two words that appear similar, but there is a fundamental distinction between them, especially regarding education,' the authors write on page 125. Equality means that all children have equal access. Equity refers to children having access to what they need to be learning. (p. 125)

Both books also include glossary pages at their ends that provide dictionary and contextual meanings to the complex and recurring words used in the books.

3. *The Use of Call-out Boxes:*

This approach was utilized throughout TBAR to highlight the purpose, key definitions, and essential points in each chapter. In addition, call-out boxes were employed to pose introspective questions to readers. For example, the call-out box on page 17 says, 'The dominant culture is

the social group that wields the most power and is frequently in the majority. White, middle-class, Christian, and cisgender individuals are the dominant culture in the United States.'

In SFK, the author includes a 'LET'S PAUSE' call-out box at the end of each chapter. These boxes highlighted additional essential points that should be remembered in the chapter. For example, on page 34, the box reads, '[Let's PAUSE] Black people were urged to change rather than be themselves to fit into White people's conceptions of what it meant to be civilized and human. This is racist. Assimilationists believe that Black people should act in ways that make White people comfortable with their presence. [Let us unpause].'

4. *The Use of Images/Illustrations.*

Drawings and pictures are used in both books. TBAR, however, employs a very colourful and catchy art that captivates readers. Some images depict various types of humans of different races, and each page is vibrant. SFK also employs visual illustration, albeit in a less colourful and smaller number of instances. Both books contain illustrations of historical figures who have advocated against racism.

5. *The Recognition That These Types of Ideas are Mostly Not Taught in School.*

According to the author of TBAR, 'I would have loved to have read this book when I was a child. And I intend to read it to my children. It contains information I never got when I was younger and that you are unlikely to learn in school' (p. 4). On page 86, the author also maintains that TBAR helps children see the world in ways they did not notice before. The author states, 'You are creating a new lens through which to view yourself and the world around you. You have a better understanding of history (both what you have been told and what has been intentionally kept out).'

On page 77, the authors of SFK claim that White people kept spreading racist views and considered Black people as less human in the 19th century, and the education system

exacerbated this by refusing to convey the truth about race in America. This was because it was overly preoccupied with defending and safeguarding the White race.

6. The Use of History in Explaining Racism

SFK draws readers in with a historical framework and assists in creating a vertical understanding of how racism began in the United States and where we are now. The authors explain why they chose a more historical approach to this subject. According to the author, 'When you read stories about individuals and events from the past, you may have wondered, "What does this have to do with my life today?" This book incorporates the past and is closely related to our lives as we live now (p. 15). This comment by the author helps the reader comprehend that racism today is not only a product of the past, but it also affects our lives in the present. The author also emphasizes that this is not a book of their opinions. 'This is a book about both America and you. This book is filled with truth. It's jam-packed with facts about humans' decisions over hundreds of years that led us to where we are today. People are still making decisions. (p. 7).'

It is vital to notice that each chapter of SFK is dedicated to racial incidents in chronological order. For example, Racism on Screen: 1912-1915, Pain and Protest: 1963-1965, Antiracism Rising: 1968-1982, Fight the Power: 1971-1994, and so on.

Another example of how history can be used to explain today's racism is how the author discusses how the phrase 'go back to your country' became popular in America. According to SFK, racist ideas of today are linked to racist concepts of the past. 'The expression "Go back to where you came from" that is occasionally said to Black and Brown people today ties to the "go back" notion of the past. The roots can be traced back to Thomas Jefferson. The authors added that when Black people demanded emancipation from slavery, he stated that he would send enslaved people "back" to Africa to be liberated. However, many Black people did not

want to "return" to a land they had never known. Their forefathers were taken from Africa and brought to North America, where generations of Black people were born. They had built America as enslaved people and demanded what was rightfully theirs. They wanted freedom in the country they had constructed. America had become their home. Imagine what Native Americans and Black people must have hoped for their White oppressors; the author adds: Can we send White people "back" to Europe?'

While TBAR offers less history of race and racism (3 chapters out of the book's 20 chapters), the author does discuss several crucial historical issues that have contributed to racism in the present. The author writes on page 56, 'My history began before me. It starts before the stories I know and want to know. My story goes back hundreds and hundreds of years, as well as yours.' According to TBAR on page 57, 'We bear the history of both the colonizer and the colonized... In France, we remember Louis XIV imposing Le Code Noir (the Black Code) in 1685, which prohibited enslaved Black folks (particularly) from having any rights. They were declared "movable," implying they may be purchased, sold and passed down.' According to the author on page 62, 'The history we bear with us here in the US is the Indian boarding schools that started in 1860.' The idea was to integrate Indigenous peoples into "American culture." TBAR explains that these institutions inspired residential schools in Australia and New Zealand. They were founded in 1814 by Christian denominations and supported by the British government. These schools were established to assimilate Indigenous, Aboriginal, and Maori kids for service jobs. The final residential schools were closed in the 1980s. The students compelled to attend these schools are called the 'stolen generation.'

The author adds on page 70, 'The history we carry with us is the police bombing of the Black liberation group, MOVE, in a West Philadelphia neighbourhood in 1985. It refers to the prohibition against wearing the complete burqa in France, Denmark, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and other European countries.' It should be noted that at the intersections here,

racism, sexism, and Islamophobia collide. Those who died while in the custody and care of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention centres are part of the history we carry with us. It validates who we are and how society has trained us to be. Our history exists, and we can share them and tell the truth about them.'

7. Portraying Antiracist Heroes

TBAR and SFK frequently cited historical and contemporary heroes who persistently performed antiracist work. While TBAR discusses antiracists worldwide from Africa, Asia, Europe, and America, SFK discusses antiracist figures in American history. On page 87, SFK discusses Dr. Martin Luther King and how his antiracist activism was sparked by Emmett Till's killing at the hands of White people. The author discusses Du Bois, who rose to prominence as the "father of pan-Africanism" due to his advocacy on behalf of African nations and Black people, on page 79. The author mentions Malcolm X, a preacher in the Nation of Islam, a religious group dedicated to the emancipation of Black people, on page 91. Stokely Carmichael, who promoted the term "Black Power" in 1966 during antiracist demonstrations, is mentioned on page 103.

Additionally, on page 107 are Black Panther Party leaders Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, who assisted with breakfast for underprivileged Black schoolchildren. Black feminists Audre Lorde, Ntozake Shange, Alice Walker, and Michele Wallace created poetry, stories, and novels that reflected their reality and ensured that it was acknowledged, heard, and not forgotten. Any attempt to silence Black women and the LGBTQ+ community was met with resistance by their work (p. 117). Rappers like Queen Latifah, whose successful record All Hail the Queen inspired young Black women, are mentioned by SFK on page 121. "Ladies First," one of her songs, was about empowering women. It responded to those who oppressed women by trying to minimize them. Women like Queen Latifah, MC Lyte, and Salt-N-Pepa held prominent

positions on the hip-hop scene. Black women like Opal Tometi, Alicia Garza, and Patrisse Cullors were highlighted on page 133. They launched a movement in addition to the slogan #BlackLivesMatter.

On page 75, TBAR states that "we are the ones we have been waiting for" and reiterates the fact that antiracist historical figures have existed throughout history. The author discusses the formerly enslaved person Jean-Jacques Dessalines, a general in Louverture's army, on page 76. Dessalines led the Haitian revolt on November 18, 1803, and after defeating the French forces, Haiti became the first sovereign Black nation. Yuri Kochiyama, a Japanese American lady who collaborated with Black American and Puerto Rican liberation activists, is also mentioned in TBAR. Yuri dedicated her life to helping political prisoners and was frequently the first to be called to help initiate conversations with law enforcement. She supported restitution for the thousands of Japanese and Japanese Americans who were unfairly held during World War Two and opposed the Vietnam War. The League of Coloured Peoples was established in Britain in 1931 by Dr. Harold Moody as a civil rights organization because he could not obtain employment as a licensed physician.

> Kwame Ture (previously Stokely Carmichael), Marielle Franco, Fannie Lou Hamer, Dolores Huerta, Maya Angelou, Grace Lee Boggs, Steve Biko, Bayard Rustin, Quanah Parker, Gloria Anzaldúa, Claudette Colvin, Brittany Packnett, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi, Marley Dias, and a host of other activists and change-makers are responsible for our history (p. 78).

8. *Naming Victims of Racist Attacks*

SFK lists historical victims of racist attacks. The 14-year-old Emmett Till was killed after hissing at a White woman (p. 87). Four young women lost their lives in Birmingham, Alabama: Cynthia Wesley, Robertson Carole, Carol Denise McNair and Collins Addie Mae. KKK

members and White supremacists bombed them. The beating of twenty-five-year-old Black Rodney King by Los Angeles police officers is described on page 99. Although the beating by the police was not unprecedented for a Black individual, it was one of the first to be extensively publicized on film (this occurred before smartphones). Despite being charged, the cops were found not guilty (p. 122). Black children (Jones Aiyana, Martin Trayvon, Rice Tamir, Michael Brown.) died at the hands of law enforcement and people who disregarded Black humanity. Black individuals were killed at the hands of White persons who were not held accountable and police officers. While running, Ahmaud Arbery was shot and pursued by White guys (p. 133). Officers shot Breonna Taylor inside her residence. George Floyd followed. Killed by a White police officer while on camera, igniting a fury that was stoked by the knowledge of how many Black people had died before him (p. 138).

Jewel says in TBAR,

> ‘It hurts for all of the people we honour with hashtags, our tears, our rage and frustration, our exhaustion and the will to move on—for Emmett Till, Tamir Rice, Korryn Gaines, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, Bobby Hutton, Antwon Rose Jr., Stephon Clark, Rekia Boyd, Stephen Lawrence, Charleena Lyles, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Aiyana Stanley-Jones, and Trayvon Martin, as well as for all of them (p.4).’

9. *The Importance of Affirmations*

The author of SFK provides a detailed account of how antiracist individuals and groups have utilized affirmations throughout history to support and elevate others. For example, in 1968, James Brown's song "Say it Loud—I'm Black and I'm Proud" became an anthem that spurred individuals of African descent to recover their sense of pride in their race (p. 109). The author goes on to say that as a direct result of the success of this song, people proudly accepted dark

skin and Black hair as beautiful physical characteristics. There was a market for African attire. Colleges and elementary, middle, and high schools needed more Black studies courses. All different kinds of antiracists, regardless of their race or ethnicity, joined the campaign.

Affirmations are approached from a more personal perspective by TBAR. The author states on page 10 that 'many things contribute to your identity.' The author adds, 'You are a sum of your family, your friends, your neighbourhood, your school, your food, your clothes, your feelings, your dreams and your ancestors' On page 11, the author adds that there will be those who want you to conform to the dominant culture's norms, but you must be unwavering in your commitment to being who you are.

4.32 Differences

1. *Activity Section*

TBAR provides activities after each chapter. Since the goal of the book is to help children become antiracist, each chapter ends with a to-do list of active antiracist activities. For example, chapter 1 ends with this activity:

Pull out a notebook. (Make sure it's a notebook you'll want to keep returning to, one you can carry around with you.) For the next five minutes, write down everything you can think of that makes you who you are (p. 14).

Chapter 6 ends with this activity:

Grab your notebook. Carry it around with you for a day or longer. Look and listen for the microaggressions around you. Write them down and note your observations—notice who they are directed toward and who is saying and doing them. Come back to these observations another day. Reflect on how these words and actions affect the person or group they are directed toward (p. 53)

The author also provides sample answers to these activity questions or explicit guides that help push readers to form their ideas.

SFK, on the other hand, does not have an activity session.

2. *Geographical Disparity:*

TBAR presents a more international perspective on racism due to its prevalence in numerous nations, whereas SFK focuses more on the American manifestation of racism.

3. *Personal Experiences*

In TBAR, Tifanny Jewel talks about her experiences with racism and fighting it. She spoke of her childhood attempts to fit into Eurocentric body types and how she straightened her hair with chemicals and hot irons. On page 89, she discusses how she would have reacted to her teacher's racism against a kid as a 9-year-old. She wished that she had used her voice when her teacher was so mean all the time. She talked about her privileges as a mixed kid with mostly White features.

4.4 Themes

4.41 Similarities

1. *Racism Has a History:*

SFK uses a vertical approach to map the evolution of racism. The author categorizes observed/experienced emergent themes via time period. SFK claims that before the 15th century, Europeans conquered many nations and enslaved indigenous people of all ethnicities. Gomes Eanes de Zurara popularized the notion that slavery was tied to skin colour and that trading slaves might result in enormous riches. Various Europeans misrepresented Africans. Some thought Africans were inferior. They believed being Black was a curse from God. The first African slave ship reached the Americas in 1619. America accepted slavery and used it to

form a nation. European churches and institutions promoted the idea that they were superior to Native Americans and Africans. Their religions and institutions preached these principles, which, when combined with Zurara's and other beliefs, eventually justified slavery. Enslaved Africans laboured for free on plantations, but Europeans retained all profits.

Phillis Wheatley, a Black female poet, wrote a collection of poems at a time when poetry was associated with wealthy Whites. After being published in Britain, Wheatley challenged the notion that African Americans lacked intelligence. According to an anti-slavery physician, Phillis Wheatley demonstrated that slavery dehumanized African Americans and that they were not innately barbarous. Another instance of Black dehumanization occurred after independence in 1776 when the United States decided on state representation proportions. Each state's population would decide its represented portion. Discord developed because southern states had more slaves than northern states. If enslaved people were human, the South would wield more political power. Northern states disagreed and saw through. The Founding Fathers counted Black people as three-fifths. This equated three Whites to five slaves. This agreement affirmed slavery and racism in the US Constitution. The authors traced the history of racism down to the first Black president's inauguration and the Black Lives Matter movement.

In TBAR, Jewel approaches the history of racism from a different perspective. The author maintains that we carry our history with us. The author states:

> My past precedes me. Before the stories I'm familiar with and eager to hear. For centuries, I have existed. We talk about John Gregory, Victor (no surname), and John Punch, three servants who escaped slavery in 1640. The rest were White Europeans, while John Punch was Black African. Following their arrest in Maryland, the three servants were transported to Virginia by their employer. Each male received 30 lashes. The two European slaves' contracts were extended for a year. John Punch received a

> life sentence for serving his lord. The court assigned their penalties based on race: "And that for the remainder of his natural life, whether here or elsewhere, the third, a Black man named John Punch, shall serve his said master." John Punch was one of the first servants who were enslaved because of their race (p. 56).

The author expands on the history of racism by discussing colonization. Unlike SFK, the author discusses colonial successes by Britain, Denmark, the United States, France, and Spain. According to TBAR, racism exists worldwide and has existed for millennia. Page 64 of TBAR discusses racism during the British Windrush era. The massive HMT Empire Windrush ship transported Caribbean Commonwealth children to Britain. Between 1948 and 1971, the United Kingdom received thousands of colonists. Caribbean countries such as Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad and Tobago sent workers. The British government asked them to fill postwar job openings. Under the 1971 Immigration Act, all Commonwealth citizens living in Britain were granted permanent residency. Many Windrush children came with their parents' passports. Despite lacking passports or documents, many children assumed they were British citizens. Since January 1973, tighter immigration restrictions have required UK resident documentation. Police, doctors, landlords, and employers were encouraged to conduct document checks to establish that immigrants were unauthorized. Without proof, this generation faced deportation, no healthcare, and job loss. These more stringent laws were enacted to keep immigrants out of Britain, resulting in a generation of individuals who feel unwelcome in their homes.

Based on the similarities between both of these books, a classroom instructor who wishes to select an antiracist book must ensure that the book explains how racism came to be. This could be accomplished using various methods, including storytelling, historical mapping, or mentioning examples. Thus, antiracist literature does not avoid confronting history as it is. These stories teach children that racism is not an abstract concept but rather an epidemic that

began at one point in history. TBAR even makes readers realize that racism is not only an American problem but one that exists in many parts of the world.

2. *There Has Always Been The Work of Disruption.*

According to the author of TBAR, there has always been opposition to racism, even though certain people have worked hard to lay the groundwork for racism's current, strong foundation. According to the author, our past includes tales of bravery, love, happiness, and revolution. June Jordan, a poet and activist from the Caribbean, once said, "we are the ones we have been waiting for." Page 76

A whole chapter of TBAR tells the tales of BIPOC people who have rebelled against oppression at the hands of dominant groups. The author highlights historical figures who opposed racism; these figures were thoroughly discussed in the Approach section's portion on "Portraying Antiracist Heroes." Illustrative figures include Jean-Jacques Dessalines (a formerly enslaved person and general in Louverture's army who spearheaded the revolution until the French forces were defeated and withdrew from the island of Haiti on November 18, 1803); Yuri Kochiyama (a Japanese-American, was raised in a Japanese internment camp that held 120,000 Japanese detained Japanese and advocated for solidarity with Black activists); Malcolm X; Dr. Harold Moody (who established The League of Coloured Peoples in Britain in 1931); Gloria Anzaldúa, Claudette Colvin, Brittany Packnett, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi, Marley Dias, Marielle Franco, Fannie Lou Hamer, Dolores Huerta, Maya Angelou, Grace Lee Boggs, Steve Biko, Bayard Rustin, Quanah Parker and so many more.

Additionally, SFK emphasizes how racist and oppressive American culture has constantly been disrupted. Most of the book was devoted to chronicling the history of antiracist activism. The author talks about Jean-Jacques Dessalines (who fought for the freedom of over 500,000 slaves in Haiti in 1791 after the revolution against French people), Ida B. Wells-Barnett (a journalist

who investigated lynchings and helped women get the right to vote with the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution), Dr. Martin Luther King (who organized nonviolent protests in the city of Birmingham Alabama and convinced the nation of the importance and urgency of civil rights), Malcolm X (who was a minister in the Nation of Islam, a religious organization focused on the liberation of Black people), Huey Newton and Bobby Seale (leaders of the Black Panther Party whose goals included fair housing, antiracist education, peace and an end to police brutality).

As educators, it is critical to select antiracist books that demonstrate that there have always been disruptions in history. History shows that there have always been activism and movements to wage war against racism. Minorities have not been fighting this war in silence. They have been battling openly despite propaganda efforts to keep them silent.

3. *"The Dominant Culture" Box*

The TBAR author emphasizes that children cannot be placed in a box because they are everything that exists inside of them and everything that surrounds them. According to the author, 'Identity varies and evolves with you. Certain things are constant and never change. For as long as I can remember, my skin tone and the numerous freckles on my face have been a part of me, and they will be until I am at least 103 years old! (p. 12).'

The purpose of these remarks is to let children of colour embrace their authentic selves rather than viewing Eurocentric identities as the standard. This alone has the potential to alter readers who identify as BIPOC's internalized racism.

The author adds for White readers on page 12,

> 'You fit into this box if you are White, from the upper middle class, cisgender male, educated, athletic, neurotypical, and able-bodied. People who identify as belonging to the "subordinate culture" include people who are Black, Brown, Indigenous People

of Colour of the Global Majority, queer, transgender, and nonbinary people; cisgender women; youth; people who identify as Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, atheists, and non-Christians; people who are neurodiverse; people who live in poverty; and many more. There are far more people than those who fit inside this fictitious box who exist outside it.'

In SFK, the author mentions on page 33 that even though some White people opposed slavery in the early 1800s, they encouraged Black Americans who managed to escape slavery to live and behave in a way that would win over White people. For instance, they asserted that to dispel all misconceptions held by White people about Black people, Black people have to attend church consistently, acquire the skills necessary to communicate in "proper" English, learn trades, and get married. William Lloyd Garrison, for example, in 1831, founded a newspaper. He supported Black people's instant bodily independence. However, his theories required Black people to demonstrate their equality to White people, who would then come to acknowledge them. To put it, he held the view that being human is insufficient, so you should be free today but equal someday when White people are sure you deserve it. Black people shouldn't have to persuade White people that they are equal, according to SFK!

According to the author (on page 130), racial remarks are frequently the deadliest when they are uttered. The author states, "These words were used like knives to inflict pain and suggest danger by the dominant group." Common expressions that associate Blackness with evil include "black sheep," "blackmail," "blacklist," and others. They bolster the notion that Black people are evil.

One of the most essential things educators should strive to cultivate is students' acceptance of who they are, regardless of individual differences. An antiracist book should celebrate this diversity and convey the message that it is acceptable to be different. It is critical for the

selected antiracist book to depict what the prevailing culture includes and what it means to be outside of this box. The world seeks to create a clear-cut box into which each of us fits, and we must stand with our shoulders high and decide who we are without trying to fit into this box.

4. Stereotyping and False Narratives.

The perception of European supremacy spread through words. SFK maintains that there was no race-based slavery in the 15th century. As long as you were defeated, your appearance was irrelevant. Gomes Eanes de Zurara promoted new enslavement ideologies that related slavery to race. Despite referring to Africans as "savage animals" in need of teaching, Zurara treated Black people as if he possessed a good pair of shoes. Zurara was the first to write about and defend Black human ownership, and his famous book helped spread false, anti-Black, racist ideas throughout Europe. Zurara's deception pushed Europeans to practice race-based slavery. These ideologies misrepresented slaves' traumatic experiences to justify White enslavers' mistreatment of Black people. (p.23)

SFK (page 24) demonstrated that many Europeans perpetuated Zurara's destructive writings about Africans, using words to influence people's ideas and behaviours. According to British preacher Richard Baxter, slavery benefited Africans, and some wanted to be slaves so they might be baptized. According to the English philosopher John Locke, only White people have pure minds. Lucilio Vanini, an Italian philosopher, believed that Africans and Whites were distinct species. Racist ideologies were disguised as "science" to reinforce Black stereotypes.

According to SFK (p.66), people have tried various techniques to foster oppression. They employed books, writing, weapons, battles, speeches, marches, legislation, and education. They began using movies as technology advanced. Historically, films have promoted racism. While watching, we may not see their harm or bigotry. Story ideas stick and become ingrained. The author analyzes the 1912 Tarzan film. The author (page 67) depicts the plot as a White

orphan named John raised by apes in Central Africa. The monkeys call him Tarzan, which means "White skin." Tarzan becomes the most skilled hunter and combatant. He read better than the majority of Africans. Later episodes show Tarzan saving Jane from "savage" Africans. Although slavery was abolished, this film reinforced the absurd and discriminatory notion that Africans were "savages" who required it. (p.68)

In TBAR, the author discusses the lies used to justify racism and slavery. According to the book, chattel slavery employed a constructed science to legitimize the enslavement of Black and Brown people, claiming that people with different skin tones and geographical locations are physically distinct and superior or inferior (p.59). As stated on page 33, "Everyone has prejudices or biases." We believe we discriminate against these. Certain prejudices are conscious, while others are unconscious. Our environment has instilled in us these preconceptions and teachings. By the age of two, prejudices have formed. We absorb our preconceived notions, which define our worldview. However, they are subject to change.

The author cites an example of how her elementary school taught her about Syracuse, New York, and local history according to page 37. The Haudenosaunee originally lived in a medium-sized metropolis.

> We looked at the Confederacy's tribes, notably the Onondaga, who farmed Syracuse and lived in longhouses. Our instructors scarcely discussed Onondagas. We studied about Hiawatha, wampum, and how they lived. Haudenosaunee was mentioned in the past tense. Our teachers never displayed images, read us stories and articles by local Indigenous authors, artists, and activists, or welcomed Onondaga Nation speakers to class. Because of this, we and many other American children assumed Native Americans only existed in history. History writings that ignore or only highlight our achievements and resistance from the dominant culture's perspective silence us (p.37).

On page 86, the author states, "This confirms the dominant culture." Your school may have hairstyle or headgear policies. You've noticed that the majority of the actors and actresses in your favourite shows and movies are White, whereas the majority of terrorists are Western Asians who speak Arabic. Stereotypes are developed and maintained in visible ways. With resources, you can learn and understand more.

When educators decide that they want their pupils to be exposed to antiracist content, they are on a path to becoming truth seekers. It is consequently critical to teach antiracist children how to identify the truth amid misinformation and Whitewashed narratives. A good antiracist book should help readers unlearn the habit of accepting classic literature, cinema, words, or stories as they are and instead learn to sit with them and analyze if they promote "normal" or "other."

5. *Systemic Racism:*

According to TBAR, the American legacy includes systemic persecution of BlPoC groups. Schools are more segregated today than they were under legal segregation. City architects, with government and financial assistance, divide neighbourhoods. Blacks are more likely to be imprisoned than Whites. The median White family is 41 times wealthier than the median Black family. Racism has its roots in slavery (p.59). TBAR highlights British police racism. Approximately 20% of the Metropolitan Police Department's 2,000 officers and employees are racially biased, and Black persons are eight times more likely to be stopped by cops than White people.

TBAR uses contemporary examples from government, media and entertainment, business, housing, banks, the criminal justice system, education, and health care to shed light on systematic racism. The author believes that systematic racism is subtle and requires experienced eyes to see, making it difficult to speak out against.
On page 40, the author explains systemic racism against BIPOC using the White London

mansions. Kensington and Chelsea, London's wealthiest borough, has the highest income inequality. The 24-story Grenfell Tower was the only affordable option for working-class and underprivileged inhabitants. Grenfell residents were ignored when they complained about poor living conditions and low-cost construction materials, yet neighbours a block away could afford clean, safe, and stable housing. On June 14, 2017, the fourth-floor units burned. Residents did not hear fire alarms since none existed. The 350 residents of the 127 units were urged to "stay put" unless their property burned down. The tower caught fire instantly, trapping residents and killing 72, including BIPOC and underprivileged people. London Mayor Sadiq Khan has questioned the government's disaster response. According to lawyer Imran Khan QC, investigations into safety breaches failed to uncover systemic prejudice. Housing discrimination in the United Kingdom is not unique. The issue is global.

TBAR (page 41) states that "less than 20% of US public school teachers are from the Global Majority," while more than half of students are. Black and Brown pupils face more detention due to "disrespectful" behaviour. A predominantly White teaching force, hairstyle bans, and curricula that do not reflect our cultures all contribute to this. In 2017, only 1.5% of first-year students at Cambridge and 1.2% at Oxford identified as Global Majorities. Racism in UK/US medicine began with unethical, forced research on enslaved people and immigrants who were denied healthcare because of their citizenship. Medical biases and historical maltreatment of Black, Brown, and Indigenous peoples have caused BIPOC to mistrust doctors and live shorter lives. Approximately 4% of US doctors are Black, and 6% are Latinx. White and non-Black doctors are more anti-Black, weakening healthcare. According to studies, doctors do not believe Black people who seek aid because they believe they can better manage their discomfort.

In SFK, the author analyzes systemic racism in the United States during the 1900s, especially Black property ownership (page 80). In northern cities, White people blocked Black

people from residing where they desired. The Whites prohibited Blacks from purchasing properties in "their" neighbourhoods. The Supreme Court ruled that segregated neighbourhoods were illegal. This outraged Whites. Outraged that Black people had joined "their" areas, they withdrew and devised new ways to segregate them. Despite various anti-racist laws, systemic racism persists, according to the author (page 101), because laws have never ensured universal freedom. Who would enforce the laws if the legislature, lawmakers, and police were all racist?

Page 129 contains another example of institutional racism and its consequences. Hurricane Katrina struck in August 2005. Flooding on the Gulf Coast killed nearly 1,800 people, displaced millions, and caused billions of dollars in property damage. Scientists and the media had warned Southern Louisiana, which has a substantial Black population, for years that a major hurricane may endanger the area. Nobody acted. The Bush administration's response to Hurricane Katrina was delayed, resulting in significant disaster affecting poor Black citizens.

Because systematic racism is subtle and requires expert eyes to detect, antiracist literature must teach children how to see it. As a result, a teacher must ensure that the antiracist literature they choose will unquestionably open their pupils' eyes to systemic racism. These books utilize real-life instances of systemic racism in schools, hospitals, government housing, and other settings to help students understand this concept.

6. A Distinction Between Personal and Institutional Racism

In TBAR, the author distinguishes between personal and institutional racism to explain racism. Page 33 depicts individual racism in terms of beauty standards. According to the author, many people worldwide believe having pale skin and European characteristics is ideal. Beauty is standardized on White skin. Dark-skinned people have been deemed inferior for

generations. Light-skinned people have received the finest treatment, wielded the most power, and continue to be promoted as superior. To look beautiful and "normal," some people use bleaching lotions and chemicals to change their hair.

On page 39, the author provides examples of institutional racism in the government, media, entertainment, business, housing, banks, the criminal justice system, education, and healthcare sectors. Institutions create laws, policies, programs, and regulations. People establish these institutions. Individuals and institutions promote racism through laws, customs, and opportunities that benefit one group over others. Page 40 analyzes systemic racism in corporations, using these instances. According to recent data, 24% of BIPOC across Europe face workplace racial discrimination, with 44% in Italy. Participants in the study reported prejudice based on their skin colour, appearance, accent, and country of birth. In the United States, businesses and corporations may have dress codes that limit what you can wear, whether you can have visible tattoos or piercings, and how you wear your hair. Employees may be fired if they fail to follow the "neutral hairstyles" standards. Business regulations may restrict particular haircuts, but the Civil Rights Act forces them to allow racial differences. Employers can still prohibit dreadlocks (an anti-Black policy). The US Navy forbade Black nonbinary femmes and women from wearing dreadlocks, braids, and topknot buns until 2018. UK businesses can set any dress code, regardless of race.

For SFK, the author does not create a clear distinction between personal and institutional racism. However, the literature contains examples of these racisms. Even as Black people fought back, additional racist laws and practices were enacted in the 1990s to persuade a new generation of Americans that Black people, not racism, were the problem. On page 119, SFK demonstrated how racist laws and practices helped politicians win elections between 1971 and 1994. The author cites Reagan's War on Drugs. Although White and Black people sold and consumed drugs at comparable rates, the new drug bans disproportionately affected Black

people. One rule made it a more severe violation to be caught with small amounts of narcotics detected in poor Black neighbourhoods than with more significant amounts of drugs commonly found in wealthy White neighbourhoods. Millions of Black Americans were imprisoned under this new technique. George H. W. Bush used the prejudiced view that Black people were dangerous to gain the presidency. The Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of President Bill Clinton resulted in the largest prison population increase in US history. This reinforced the racial stereotypes that "Black people are violent" and "Black people are mostly criminals."

On page 129, the author illustrates American personal racism. Successful Black people have been utilized as symbols to demonstrate that they are "extraordinary" and "exceptional." It suggests that they are "different" and "better" than the average Black person. It indicates that they "overcame" being Black. It implies that being Black, not racism, is the problem. Again, Black people are symbols. White people who deny racism point to the success of Oprah Winfrey, Michael Jordan, and Barack Obama. This is akin to putting a few successful Black people as protagonists in a fictional story set in a race-free country. An accurate portrayal of Black advancement in the United States must consider the entire population, not only a few. It requires reviewing all national systems, including education, housing, and employment, to determine whether they serve everyone.

7. *White Privilege*

SFK highlights that White privilege has persisted throughout history. For example, In America, wealthy White landowners were concerned that impoverished Whites who did not own property might band together with Native Americans and enslaved Africans to improve their circumstances. The landowners needed impoverished Whites—all Whites—to feel special and on their side to gain more property, money, and power. So they provided all White people

with rights and perks simply for being White, regardless of money. All White people would be deemed superior to non-Whites, with unrestrained authority to chastise and torment Africans. However, as more slaves worked the fields for free, enslavers feared an uprising. They implemented racial laws that prohibited Black people from marrying White people, travelling freely, and holding positions of authority.

On page 80, SFK describes how segregated Southern schools contributed to white privilege in the mid-1900s. Black students attended underfunded schools. There was insufficient funding for schools, transportation, books, desks, and seats. White students attended well-funded schools. Their schools were huge and well-maintained, with enough funding for buses and supplies. The Supreme Court pronounced public school segregation illegal. This verdict had a racial idea. It was agreed that black children would be integrated into White schools. But White pupils were not required to integrate into Black schools. This reinforced the racist belief that White people are superior and that Black children needed White students to succeed. This also enraged White people. They were so enraged that White mobs followed Black students to "their" schools. They screamed, called Black children derogatory names, spat on them, and threatened their lives, whether they were in high school or first grade, like Ruby Bridges. So upset that six-year-old Ruby had to be led to school each day by federal marshals to safeguard her from hostile White crowds. Angry that White parents would not let their children attend Ruby's class, have lunch with her or play with her at recess. Ruby was taught alone in her classroom, with federal marshals guarding the entrance.

On page 119, SFK states that racist views have traditionally provided White people with privileges and money; thus, they are unwilling to give them up. For example, page 125 illustrates how standardized testing benefits White children. Standardized tests, while administered uniformly, are not equitable because they were not created for each student. Because they believe that all students have the same resources. However, test results from

underfunded and segregated schools (which are lower than scores from schools with more resources!) are used to promote the racist notion that Black people are less intelligent than White people and are physiologically different. Politicians exacerbated these skewed exams by rewarding higher-quality schools with increased funding. This assures that the wealthy continue to prosper while the poor become poorer.

TBAR presents a more personal picture of how privilege benefits the dominant group. The author states, 'There are oppressed parts of ourselves and parts that wield power. For this reason, we strive to understand our identities in the context of society; we must always study our complete being. Regarding power and agency, identities that fit neatly into the imaginary box frequently wield the most power.' In this sense, privilege refers to the benefits that one has because of their proximity to the dominant culture. A White, cisgender male who is non-disabled, heterosexual, attractive, and speaks English is an example of someone with more privilege than a Black transgender woman. Fortunate people have an advantage over those who are not. Privilege is not reserved for all. People of colour who do not benefit from their social identities and are part of the subordinate culture have little to no privilege and influence.

When choosing an antiracist book, teachers must verify that it explicitly explains White privilege. The selected literature must explicitly illustrate what White privilege involves and how racist beliefs have historically provided White people with perks and advantages, making them unwilling to give them up. Also, the literature may further explain how proximity to Whiteness confers privilege.

8. *White Saviourism and 'Colour-Blindness':*

The author of TBAR addresses the issue of White saviorism. According to the author, colonialism never indeed ended. Even if some nations are sovereign and do not technically belong to another country, they are left with an overexploited environment, poor soil, and a

scarcity of natural resources. The colonizer-colonized relationship has recently evolved into one of support and charity. People and nations have been depleted of their wealth and resources and now rely on charity. This relationship exemplifies "White saviourism," when well-meaning folks believe they can save those who have been deprived of resources without relinquishing power and privilege. On page 100, the author gives an example of a typical comment made by White individuals, "I don't see colour." She believes that, while this term may not appear offensive, it is critical to acknowledge that people differ from one another. When you deliberately try to disregard someone's race or skin colour, you are denying them of it. You're denying their histories. You are denying them their racial and ethnic background. In essence, you're saying it doesn't matter who they are. Your goal is to homogenize them to fit into the same imagined box.

SFK outlines some of the problematic assumptions held by White saviours throughout history. For example, on page 126, the author asserts that President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind Act failed to reach many children. Black children. This approach lowered school funding when children's standardized test scores declined. The majority-Black schools were already underfunded and lacked the same resources as the majority-White schools. This policy perpetuated the stereotype that African Americans were to blame for all issues rather than the discriminatory laws.

Furthermore, even though this policy mostly disadvantaged Black and Brown students, assimilationists and segregationists maintained that the remedy to racism was simply to stop focusing on it. The idea that we should pretend not to notice racism is like acting not to see colour. We refer to it as colour-blindness. The writers add, "Here's the problem with this" -This is absurd! Everyone can indeed see skin colour. People pretend not to notice dark skin, supporting the belief that there is something wrong with Black skin. Racism is not visible to

those who do not perceive colour. As a result, if you don't truly want to erase racism, it's a lot easier to pretend you can't perceive colour.

An antiracist book outrightly condemns the ‘I don’t see colour’ rhetoric. When educators decide on antiracist content, it is crucial to educate on this sensitive topic.

9. *Antiracism is a Journey, and People Can Shift Ideologies.*

On page 142 of TBAR, the author recommends not letting mistakes define you. I make mistakes because I'm still learning. On page 147, the author states that we all have different anti-racism and liberation paths. They will meet and combine, but first, we must travel our respective routes. Just when you think you know yourself, you discover more. Knowing yourself and your views on anti-racism takes time. Jewel hopes this book inspires people to start their anti-racism journey and gain a new perspective.

According to TBAR, Angela Davis once said, "In a racist society, it's not enough to be nonracist; we must be anti-racist." We live in a racist world, and being nonracist will not solve racism. Inaction will only maintain the current quo. Anti-racist activity alters everything. In antiracism, everyone experiences times to call in and call out. Don't defend yourself after being called out. Instead, consider what the other person said. Listen to what they're saying. Thank them for their feedback and indicate that you have listened. We all learn and improve in this way.

According to the authors of SFK, you will realize that people are not always the same way. They can express segregationist, assimilationist, or antiracist sentiments in the same sentence—sometimes all three. Most significantly, people change. For example, SFK addresses Abraham Lincoln's bigotry and slavery. Lincoln attempted to become a senator by opposing slavery but not racism before running for president. Lincoln desired to abolish slavery, but he did not believe that Black people should be treated equally with White people. Lincoln also

believed that slavery should be abolished because free labour would harm poor Whites. They couldn't afford to own people, so they had to work. How could they work if slavery rendered them unnecessary? Lincoln wanted slavery abolished, not because it was terrible. He sought to end it to assist disadvantaged Whites in finding work and earning money.

The book explores BIPOC's issues with racism, prompting readers to consider how to address the problem by researching racial history. By recognizing historical racial principles and applying them to current occurrences. By reading, thinking, and inquiring. Contrast racist beliefs with antiracist ones (p.119). Antiracism does not imply denying racism's existence. Instead, it means collaborating with antiracists to promote freedom and equality for all (p.129).

When educators decide to expose their pupils to antiracist content, it is because they believe that unconscious racist biases (instilled by the world we live in) can be overcome. As a result, the selected antiracist books must be optimistic and convey the belief that the world may change if we all renounce our separatist mindsets in favour of equality and fairness.

10. Antiracists Can Be of Any Colour:

SFK recognizes that antiracist allies have come from many historical backgrounds (p.77). The author also included White antiracists' historical and current efforts. Franz Boas, a German immigrant, was one of America's most essential anthropologists in the early twentieth century, focusing on human nature. He focused on Black history before America. And why African history was not inferior. He described it as one of the bright empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay, full of knowledge and creativity (p. 65).

On page 89 of TBAR, the author describes a hypothetical scene. The book discusses police mistreatment of Black people and how readers can help prevent violent or tragic situations. According to the author, 'certain of your decisions will need you to take risks. Some might not. Understand your privilege and power (or lack thereof). It will influence your

approach to everything. White and cisgender people can use their privilege to speak up to the police. As a Black, Brown, or Indigenous Global Majority member, you must analyze how each outcome will affect you. White people, because you are at the core of the system, taking a risk with any of these possibilities is unlikely to result in arrest or injury.'

When selecting antiracist texts, educators should consider if the book emphasizes the importance of allies. Everyone has a role to play in this fight, and no one should feel excluded because they do not belong to the oppressed group. TBAR even goes above and beyond in the activity session by creating racial scenarios and demonstrating how each group can intervene.

11. Antiracism Requires Action:

On page 80 of SFK, the author states that laws alone cannot ensure freedom. To ensure everyone's freedom, people must work for and enforce acceptable laws that benefit everyone. On page 103, SFK explains how words can combat racism. Words fought against racism at a 1966 rally. Stokely Carmichael, the SNCC's new strong leader, shouted BLACK POWER. These words portrayed Blackness as strength. On page 117, the author writes, "Black feminists wrote another crucial story." Because of its prominence, a television miniseries was created. Alex Haley Origins: The Saga of an American Family featured slavery. It addressed the prejudicial belief that Black people were enslaved because they were less human, whereas White enslavers were caring. The author concluded that antiracist ideas spread through words, storytelling, and literature.

On page 120, the author discusses how antiracism was carried out through music. In the 1970s, White people used racial laws to advance their agenda. Hip-hop played a significant role in promoting change and empowerment. Public Enemy's songs "Don't Believe the Hype" and "Fight the Power" were powerful. These songs served as their form of protest, a powerful critique of mainstream America and a reminder that the liberation revolution was still ongoing.

The author explains the origins of Black Lives Matter on page 134. #BlackLivesMatter was an immediate response to police brutality. It made it evident that to be antiracist, we must reject all injustices, such as sexism, homophobia, colourism, and classism, which harm so many Black people. In 2014, Black Lives Matter moved from social media to protesting with placards and chanting at antiracist events across the country. These protesters challenged the six-century racist argument that Black lives do not matter. The antiracist love proclamation #BlackLivesMatter quickly grew into a movement. When George Floyd was killed on camera by a White police officer, the Black Lives Matter movement retaliated, motivated by outrage over the other Black persons killed before him (page 138). This time, the demonstrations and uprisings were global.

TBAR goes much further in emphasizing the need for action to combat racism. A chapter is labelled 'disrupt,' and the author states that it is impossible to be anti-racist while remaining silent. Use your voice to speak out against injustice and share rarely heard history. Talk to your family, friends, classmates, and anyone willing to listen. Continue to write and share. Make and share artwork. On page 91, the author provided examples of walking to a witness and recording with a phone. The author emphasizes safety in these actions. On page 94, the author emphasizes action. If you remain silent, you promote the dominant culture. You enable racism.

On page 95, the author recounted her anti-racist actions from childhood to the present. At 11, she produced a poem to express her dissatisfaction with her history lectures, which glorified European colonization while ignoring reality. During high school, she sold T-shirts and cards to collect funds for community-based schools, toilets, maternity care, and garden construction. At 22, she led rallies against unscrupulous lenders and unfair healthcare systems. She advocated for Black and Latinx people. At 27, she openly discussed power dynamics with her students. She taught them prejudice and resistance.

Educators should promote antiracist literature that demonstrates how people can be antiracist. Their chosen antiracist text needs to recognize that complacent antiracists do not exist, and they cannot remain mute in the face of injustice. Antiracism can be promoted through a variety of channels, including social media, language, music, and the arts. They can also inspire others to take action against racism and oppression.

12. Intersectionality

According to the author of TBAR, studying intersectionality allows us to comprehend how our social identities affect our lives. Kimberlé Crenshaw, a Black female lawyer, novelist, scholar, and civil rights activist, invented the term "intersectionality" in 1989 to describe how being a woman and Black was more unfavourable than simply being a woman. Looking via a single lens narrows your comprehension of a person and their experiences (p. 22). The author argues on page 134 that intersectionality helps us understand that, while we share social identities, our experiences are different.

> 'There are numerous Black multiracial cisgender women around the world. We share identities, but our experiences differ. In elementary and senior school, my sister and I took various advanced classes—even the "gifted and talented" program allowed for greater exploratory learning. Our white mother and family raised us. Our school district labelled us White. Because of my pale skin, my teachers thought I was superior to my darker peers. I've noticed that my proximity to Whiteness has allowed me to move freely within the dominant society. I am more White-friendly. This privilege expanded my educational opportunities. Because of my proximity to the dominant culture, I can drive without worry of being pulled over for anything other than a brake light. People place more trust in me because of my privilege.'

The authors of SFK felt it was their responsibility to highlight the presence of Black women heroes in America's antiracist/antislavery fight who had previously been overlooked or omitted. The author discusses the Black power movement of 1968 on page 110. The Black Power movement was strong yet flawed. Men ran it. Women were relegated. Black women marched in Washington, DC, on August 28, 1963. Daisy Bates read a brief vow to the women's movement. Dorothy Height, a renowned activist who planned the event and was the only woman on the stage alongside Dr. King, was not invited to speak. Neither was Rosa Parks. Or many other Black women whose efforts propelled the movement (p. 93).

The author claims that Black women are always on the rise. Fannie Lou Hamer, Diane Nash, and Angela Davis were Black women who advocated for civil rights, voting rights, and economic opportunity. Despite being marginalized, Black women have led resistance (p. 111). In response to those who claimed that Black male lives mattered more, antiracist feminists bravely challenged America to #SayHerName to spotlight the women affected by racism. The new activists, like Angela Davis' antiracist daughters, represent optimism and the transformation of potential into power (p. 135). The author demonstrates that antiracism entails combating all oppression. To combat racism, we must also address sexism, homophobia, colourism, and classism, all of which kill Black people (p. 134). SFK makes us reflect on ourselves and understand we must fight for freedom and justice.

Both authors recognize that antiracism is a movement against all types of oppression. As educators, it is our responsibility to guarantee that the antiracist literature we utilize discusses intersectionality and how being antiracist means that all aspects of humanity's diverse identities deserve freedom.

4.42 Differences

1. *The Rope Metaphor*

The author suggests thinking about rope while reading about race. Sometimes, a rope can serve as a lifeline. It protects climbers and prevents falls. Rope is sometimes used as a weapon. It can be used to control and injure. Rope can powerfully connect people and objects like a swing on a playset or a tree branch that lifts you. Rope can be used for tying, pulling, holding, and lifting. What links individuals to racism and antiracism? Who pulls from each end? How do racist attitudes keep people down? How do anti-racist principles empower people? How did things become so tangled in the first place? And who is attempting to sort out this mess? (p. 4). Racist ideas are like tangled rope—hard to unravel (p. 24).

2. *BIPOC people can also hold racist ideas*

SFK demonstrates that racist people of colour have always existed. When Black people plotted a slave revolt in the 1700s, two anti-emancipation enslaved people informed their masters. This resulted in additional slave deaths and heavy punishment. W. E. B. Du Bois, a Black activist, thought that Blacks should be taught to be more like White people. If that's the case, Whites would accept them. He believed just one in ten could learn. He felt that only the "Talented Tenth" should attend college and lead the Black people, including himself. Another well-known Black leader, Booker T. Washington, believed that instead of pursuing education, Black people should learn trades such as farming and carpentry and avoid competing with White people or becoming politicians. Washington felt that Blacks should forgo political equality. Instead, they should suffer being mistreated by White people and succeed at farming and carpentry to get respect.

3. *A deep dive into social identities:*

TBAR delves deeply into our social identities. According to her (P. 18), social identity is a societal construct. The author argues that our social identities are often bundled together without consent. Our communities and nations have been organized in this manner for decades. Social identity categories can help us understand ourselves and others and influence how others perceive us. Our role is to learn and act.

On Page 24, the author distinguishes between race and ethnicity. The author states, "In this book, when we talk about race, we refer to our skin colour." According to the author, skin tone, hair texture, physical characteristics, and cultural history have long divided people. TBAR demonstrates that dominant culture has historically produced racial classifications. In the mid-1700s, European scientists began classifying humans as if they were classified as plants and animals. Schools continue to teach Carl Linnaeus and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach. Their "science" elevated light-skinned Europeans to the pinnacle of a human hierarchy. Indigenous and darker-skinned people were undervalued. According to the author, people in the United States are classified as White, Black (or African American), Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native (or Indigenous), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and multiracial.

On Page 26, TBAR states that race is frequently confused with ethnicity. According to the author, your ethnicity determines your cultural identity. This is a social construct. In contrast to race, which looks at your appearance, ethnicity labels you based on your family's language, traditions, and history. Sudanese, Japanese Americans and Caribbean Navajo are all ethnicities. Your background frequently influences your ethnicity. Race and ethnicity are sociological constructs, as evidenced by how different countries classify people. Race creates confusion. There is no empirical evidence that lighter-skinned people are brighter, prettier, or superior. However, our species has practiced this for centuries.

4. *Reverse racism is not real.*

According to TBAR, interrupting racism may lead to the perpetrator denying it. They may respond, "Why are you always making this about race?" to discredit me. Perhaps they say, "You're being racist against White people." They may respond, "Are you saying I'm racist?" and claim that because they are lovely, they cannot be racist. Racism against Whites is not real. Racism is defined as both personal prejudice and the abuse of institutional power. I can be prejudiced against White people, but there is no centuries-old system that oppresses them. Our civilization does not engage in reverse racism. People will bring it up; remind them that personal prejudice exists. However, institutions continue to abuse their power to oppress Black, Brown, and Indigenous people. Only White people benefit from this. Racism, contrary to the dictionary definition, extends beyond "personal prejudice."

5. *Spending one's privilege*

On page 121, the author of TBAR emphasizes how her closeness to Whiteness gives her privilege, which she uses to speak up for others. She claims,

> 'I know myself. I'm still finding how my components combine to make me a complete person in society. I know that I have elements of myself that are out of the ordinary and others that conform to mainstream society. My light skin provides comfort to those who live inside the box. My non-AAVE speaking makes them more open. Some aspects of myself grant me some access to Whiteness. Maintaining privilege and power strengthens the dominant culture and perpetuates racism. That isn't my thing. My proximity to the dominant culture allows me to overthrow it. This will enable me to keep doors open for marginalized individuals. You can, too—especially if you live in a dominant society. Spending privilege involves wielding power and shifting perspective.

White people should join the voices of the Global Majority, step aside and allow them to lead and listen (p.121).'

4.5 The Educator Analytic Tool for Choosing Books That Qualify as Antiracist

The analysis of the approaches and themes used in the two books can be used to create a descriptive-analytic tool to help educators choose the right antiracist books for their students. It was established in the literature review chapter (Chapter Two) that systemic racism is deeply rooted in the normalization of Whiteness, which is strengthened by its invincibility. Antiracist books thus need to uproot this status quo through a critical Whiteness approach to uncovering systemic racisms to its young readership.

The core of Whiteness extends much beyond skin colour. It describes a sociocultural construct firmly rooted in historical settings, power dynamics, and systematic privileges (Gibson & Jamison, 2021). Educators choosing books about antiracism that do not address this complex construct may result in surface-level comprehension on the learners' part. Critical Whiteness Pedagogy requires that teachers thoroughly assess the books' stories, characters, and themes before introducing them to their classrooms. This is why the analytic tool created by this study is important. The analytic tool creates a straightforward list of themes that qualify a book to be antiracist. These themes were intentionally selected because they help to dispel the normalization of Whiteness and help students uncover its invisibility. Using Critical Whiteness Pedagogy, educators can guide students toward comprehending the underlying themes of power, domination, and historical erasure of minorities (Spencer, 2022).

Below is the Lawal Educators' antiracist analytic book guide:

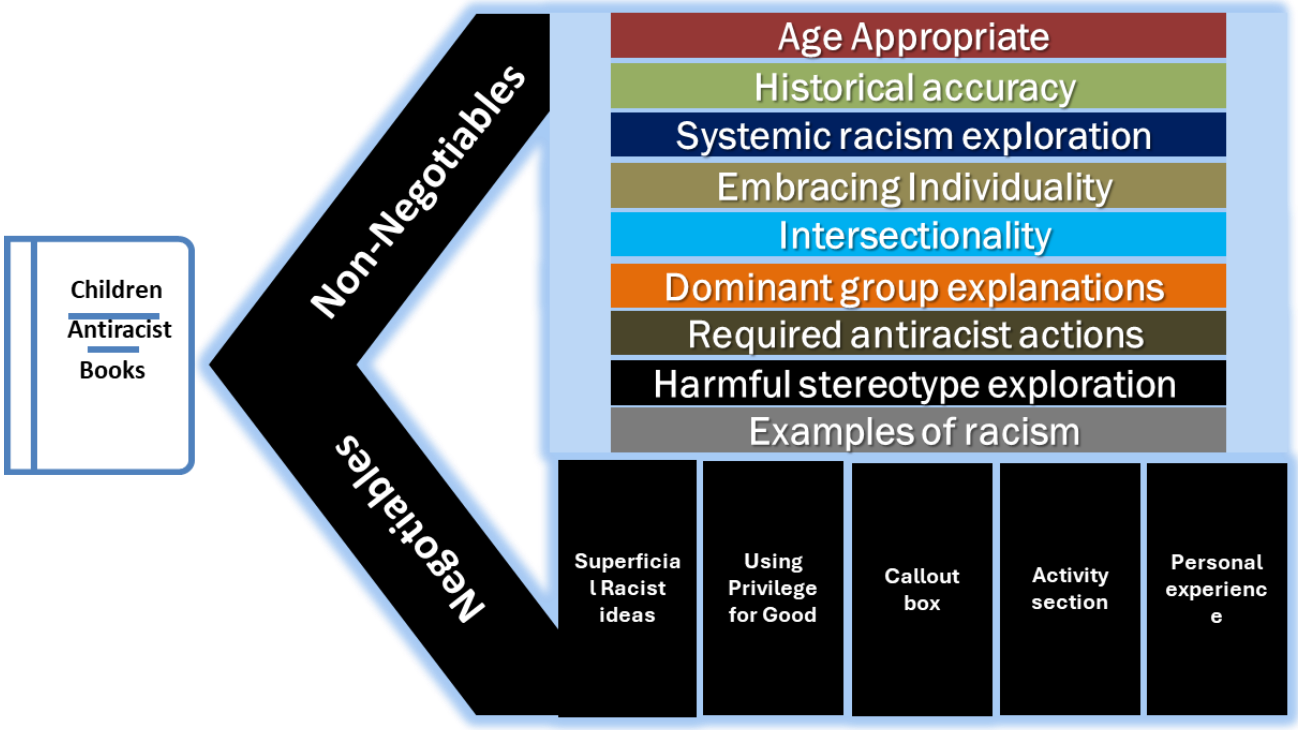


Fig.3 Lawal Educators' Antiracist Analytic Book Guide

The analytic tool highlights non-negotiable and negotiable features that qualify a book to be antiracist. The factors chosen as non-negotiables are based on the analysis of themes in the chosen children antiracist books for this study and critical Whiteness pedagogy tenets. This means that the analytic guide is based on the tenets of existing research explored in the Chapter 2 of this study, the thematic analysis of the two selected antiracist books and critical Whiteness pedagogy. The non-negotiables are rules and themes that a teacher must ensure that their chosen antiracist text must explore in order to qualify as antiracist. The negotiables are important aspects of antiracism; however a book might not cover these themes but still qualify as antiracist.

4.6 The Educators Guides Role in Differentiating Between Antiracist, Culturally Appropriate and Non-Racist Language In Selecting Antiracist Books

Language is the lens through which we view, understand, and construct our world. It is not only a means of communication but a tool that shapes thoughts, beliefs, and behaviours. This is particularly true for children in the formative years of their cognitive and emotional development. As such, the language used in literature, especially children's literature, wields immense power. Its impact can either fortify the walls of prejudice or dismantle them brick by brick.

To identify how the analytical tool can assist in distinguishing between books that are antiracist, culturally appropriate, and non-racist, each term must be defined according to existing literature. According to King and Chandler (2016), non-racist curriculum and pedagogy is a racially liberal approach to race that condemns extreme forms of racism while promoting passive behaviours, discourses, and ideas. These characteristics limit the definition of racism to immoral and discriminating behaviour, as well as a microanalysis of the individual. An anti-racist viewpoint, on the other hand, clarifies how racism manifests itself in a variety of contexts and aggressively rejects the institutional and structural components of race and racism, highlighting the social construction of race.

Galloway et al. (2019) delve deep into the semantics of education, highlighting the nuances of terms such as "culturally responsive" and "antiracist. While these might appear interchangeable on the surface, each carries its weight and implications. For instance, "culturally responsive" focuses on the positive acknowledgment of cultural diversity, "antiracist" actively confronts and challenges racism. One of the primary elements to consider in antiracist children's literature is its linguistic presentation. In children's books, it is paramount that authors are aware of and intentional with the terminology they use. The chosen words can either clarify the narrative's intent or muddy its message.

In straightforward language, an antiracist book condemns all forms of racism, shows the systemic structures that perpetuate racism in our world, and encourages readers to take action against racism. Culturally appropriate books positively acknowledge people of all ethnicities and colours. Still, they do not necessarily reflect deeply ingrained prejudices or the need to change our world. Non-racist books take a liberal view of race, objectively criticizing discriminatory behaviours but reducing racism to individual actions while remaining passive in the fight against racism.

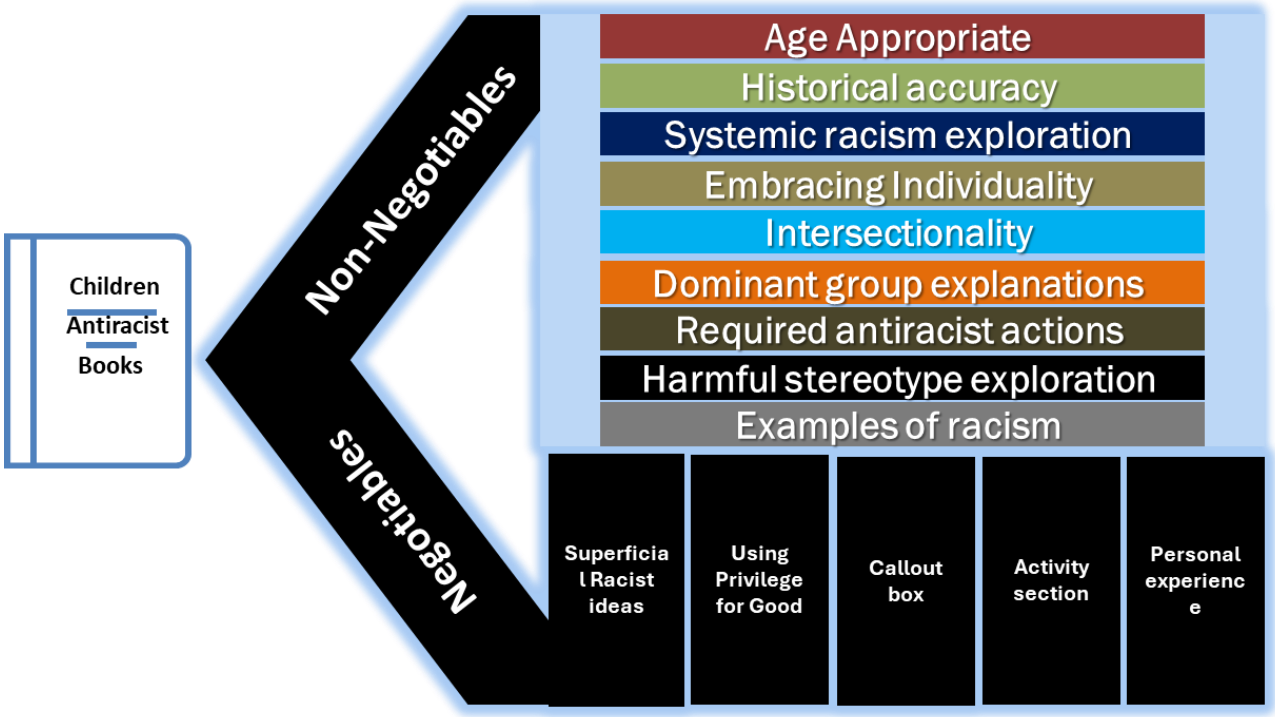
SFK authors cite a book that was meant to change White people's perspectives on enslavement but promoted racism. On page 39, the author says that White people have been writing antiracist literature to stop slavery since 1831. Many of these books portrayed White people as smarter than Black people, which was problematic. Uncle Tom's Cabin was one of the most popular books. Some of you may have to read it in school. Harriet Beecher Stowe, an abolitionist, created a story about an enslaved man who befriends a young White girl and remains Christian despite being mistreated. Stowe wrote the novel to change White people's opinions toward slavery through fiction and help them understand its evils. Still, this story contains racist notions. Even while it inspired many readers to join the abolitionist struggle, it maintained the stereotype that Black people were less intelligent and human than White people. Thus, any book that centres on White comfort or makes a White person the saviour is not antiracist, although it may qualify as nonracist.

Educators can use the analytical tool to decide which books are objectively antiracist. The tool lists non-negotiable themes a book must cover to be antiracist. According to the tool, antiracist books must explore the following: Historical accuracy, systemic racism, individuality, intersectionality, dominant groups, antiracist actions, harmful stereotypes and examples of racism. Based on themes explored in the analytic tool, a culturally appropriate book will likely

include ‘Embracing Individuality’ and ‘intersectionality.’ A non-racist book would like to explore ‘examples of racism,’ ‘harmful stereotyping,’ and ‘superficial racist ideas.’

4.7 Illustration of The Antiracist Tool Being Used

Teacher A wishes to introduce her Year 9 students to antiracism. The first step is to choose a book that teaches antiracism correctly. She will subsequently utilize the Lawal antiracist analytic tool to determine which book best suits her year group.



Teacher A comes across a book titled Handbook for Young Antiracists by Tinashe Willamson. Teacher A must ensure this book ticks most of the boxes in the analytic tool. This is portrayed below.

4.71 Non-Negotiables

- ✓ Age Appropriate: The book is for children aged nine and above. It meets the requirement.

- ✓ Historical Accuracy: This book includes research-accurate history. The author provides historical context for racism, including its origins in slavery.
- ✓ Systemic racism: This book describes systemic racism in a way children can understand. The author calls it structural racism, which is synonymous with systemic racism.
- ✓ Embracing individuality: The author talks about the importance of diversity and how it helps to see all parts of our identity represented in media, cuisines and toys.
- ✓ Intersectionality: Antiracism opposes all types of segregation and discrimination. This book talks about segregation based on religion, sexuality and gender.
- ✓ Dominant group exploration: The book explores this under the heading 'White privilege.'
- ✓ Required antiracist actions: This book teaches children how to be antiracist through illustrative discussions. For example, the author explains how to correctly ask someone about their ethnicity by asking their roots rather than where they are really from.
- ✓ Harmful stereotype: According to the author, some people assume that the colour of a person's skin determines their value. They have preconceived notions about how people of a particular skin colour behave and think, and they assess every one of that skin colour accordingly. This is harmful.
- ✓ Examples of racism: The author provides examples of people being mistreated because of their skin colour. The author also provides examples of persons who have died as a result of racist attacks.

4.72 Negotiables

- ✓ Superficial ideas of racism: The author compares thoughts of minor acts of racism to raindrops. If you think of a racist remark as a raindrop, one will not get you wet. But ten thousand raindrops will get you soaked. These "little" comments, these incidents of

everyday racism, can feel like small droplets, but I know that many people have been feeling extremely wet for a long time.

- ✓ Using privilege for good: The author exemplifies how children can speak up or help safely, regardless of race.
- ✓ Callout box: These boxes highlight important quotes from the book pages.
- ✓ Activity section: This book has an activity session after each chapter. The activity sections are geared towards opening conversations amongst classmates, teachers and parents.
- ✓ Personal experiences: Tinashe talks about her experience of racism as a woman born in Norway to Zimbabwe parents. She talks about how she never confronted racist people around her and how, now that she has four children, she wanted them to become antiracists who are vocal against prejudice.

Review: The Handbook for Young Antiracists by Tinashe Willamson is an antiracist book as it meets all the requirements of the analytic tool.

4.8 Chapter Summary

An analytic tool was developed by analyzing the themes and writing method in two selected antiracist children's books ('This Book Is Antiracist' and 'Stamped for Kids'). The analytic tool aims to guide educators in selecting appropriate antiracist literature for children. The goal was to make the tool straightforward and easy to use. Later in the chapter, this tool was utilized to evaluate a book. As a result, the tool displays a map that can be used objectively to determine if a book is antiracist. This is because the analytical tool addresses the fundamental concepts that an antiracist book must explore.

The lingering concern in this study is the reality that some good antiracist books may not cover all of the topics specified in this antiracist analytic tool. In this scenario, we ask, 'What should

an educator do?' An educator may decide to augment their chosen antiracist book with additional books/writings that address the ideas left out by the selected book. An educator may also elect to drop the entire book in favour of one that contains all of the underlying ideas specified in the analytical tool. In conclusion, the analytic tool will benefit from future testing of numerous antiracist books and may be revised based on more research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction:

As societies grapple with the complexities of racism and its far-reaching implications, one of the most impactful means of imparting change is through the early education of children. Literature, especially that tailored for younger readers, is instrumental in shaping foundational perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs. The recent surge in antiracist narratives within children's literature is not only a reflection of societal evolution but also an instrument to guide it. The systematic literature review of two notable books: 'Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You for Kids' by Jason Reynolds and Ibram Kendi and 'This Book is Antiracist' by Tiffany Jewel, helped formulate an analytic tool.

This review unpacked these books' narrative strategies, thematic foci, and linguistic nuances through a comparative lens. With an eye toward their implications in an educational context, the review dissects their means of presenting antiracist ideologies to young minds. In doing so, the review also offers educators, caregivers, and stakeholders insights into the importance of these antiracist narratives. These books' profound effects and potential cannot be underestimated in an era that yearns for equity and inclusivity.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The analyses of the books 'Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You for Kids' by Jason Reynolds and Ibram Kendi and 'This Book is Antiracist' by Tiffany Jewel helped formulate an antiracist analytic tool. This analytic tool can help decide which books educators deem appropriate for teaching antiracism to children between the ages of nine and fifteen. The tool illustrates that the following standards must be met when choosing an antiracist book: Age Appropriateness, Historical Accuracy, Systemic racism exploration, Embracing individuality discourse, Intersectionality, Dominant group exploration, Required antiracist actions, explanation of

Harmful stereotypes and Examples of racism. The tool also adds some standards that may be used in choosing antiracist books: exploration of superficial ideas of racism, Using privilege for good, Callout box, Activity section and Personal experiences.

5.2 Discussion

5.21 How the books ('Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You for Kids' by Jason Reynolds and Ibram Kendi and 'This Book is Antiracist' by Tiffany Jewel) Adapt the Complex Topic of Antiracism in Literature for Children

During the thematic analysis of the two books selected for this study, it was discovered that the antiracist authors use varying methods to break down the antiracist discourse for their young audience. One thing that the authors shared in common was a passion to dispel the truth without sugarcoating or prioritizing comfort. They write hard and painful histories in a way that moves readers to introspection and seeking to become agents of change. These books aim to stir discomfort in the child but help them desire to make the world a better place free from all forms of racism. This shows that when comfort is centred in an antiracist book, it loses its purpose and adds to the problem rather than mitigates it. Thus, any book that centres on White comfort or makes a White person the saviour is not antiracist.

In terms of its audience, both books are written with the authors directly stating that every child, irrespective of racial background, can be antiracist. TBAR highlights that antiracism is a journey and everyone has their individual paths which may meet at some point. The author states that this means that every child has a role to play in antiracism and even gives explicit examples of essential roles White children can play as antiracist allies. Stamped (for kids) cites historical examples of how White allies have helped in the fight against racism and why they are so important. Although these books are written to fight against racisms faced by

minorities, every child can benefit from these books in such a way that no child feels left behind.

The authors of SFK wrote a significant part about racism in their country (USA), while TBAR's authors focused on the global issue of racism. Both approaches are important because sticking to the reality of racism in a child's country of residence helps the child understand how the problem of racism exists where they live and how they can help become a part of the solution. On the other hand, teaching children that racism is a global problem also helps them understand how deeply ingrained racism has become in today's world and that the problem is not a localized one. The antiracist books mostly gave recent and visual examples of racisms in our society, both personal and institutional. They also highlighted graphic incidents of how racism has had real-life consequences for BIPOC children.

It was also noticed that antiracist books were written in the current generation's lingo. The authors adjusted the topic of racism to the present realities of children. They painted the children's real-life day-to-day experiences and how some perpetuate racism. For instance, in Stamped for Kids, Ibram Kendi calls racists 'haters,' which is a word children use in their lingo to describe a negative or critical person. The author also talked about the popular Marvel movie 'black panther' and how the name was gotten from a civil rights movement.

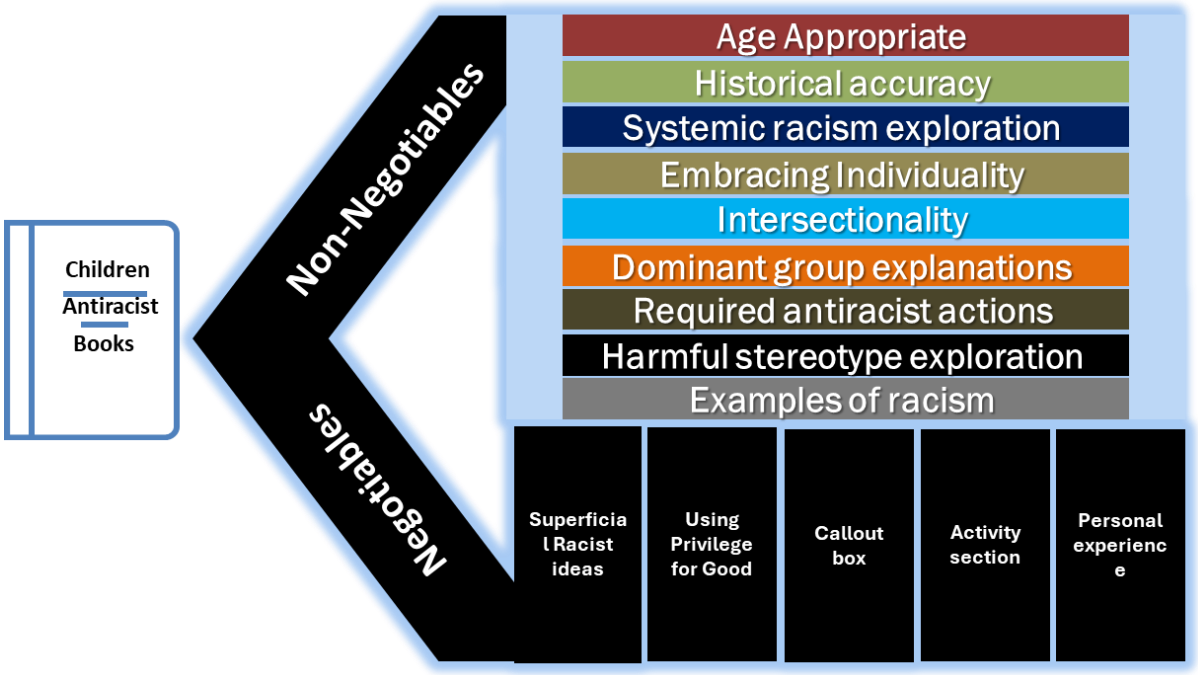
One cannot discuss antiracist literature without addressing the aesthetics of representation. Both antiracist children's books feature illustrations that reflect the diversity of humans. Gibson & Jamison (2021) discuss the nuances of "Practical Teaching Is Antiracist Teaching," highlighting the significance of visual cues in children's literature. Such cues can perpetuate stereotypes or challenge them, whether through colours, features, or backgrounds. Illustrations accompanying the text in children's literature also form a significant aspect of representation. Images, just like words, communicate messages, sometimes even more

powerfully. If these images consistently represent racial or ethnic groups in stereotypical manners or reduced, tokenistic ways, they risk perpetuating the very biases the literature aims to eradicate.

Additionally, the role of illustrations in children's literature cannot be understated. According to Collins and Singh (2019), the visual cues in children's books can reinforce or challenge textual messages. For instance, if a story showcases diversity in its language but the illustrations depict stereotypes, the overall message becomes conflicting and potentially harmful.

5.22 The Antiracist Analytic Book Guide: Linguistic Presentation in Antiracist Children's Literature

The Lawal Educators' antiracist analytic book guide highlights features to help educators decide if a book qualifies as antiracist. Some of these features are themes that antiracist books must explore to fulfil their purpose.



The language used in literature, especially children's literature, wields immense power. Its impact can either fortify the walls of prejudice or dismantle them brick by brick. The chosen books for this study ('Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You for Kids' by Jason Reynolds and Ibram Kendi and 'This Book is Antiracist' by Tiffany Jewel) do a great job of setting an example of the linguistic presentation that is expected to be an antiracist book.

One of the primary elements that the linguistic presentation of antiracist children's literature books must possess is using explicitly antiracist language. Galloway et al. (2019) delve deep into the semantics of education, highlighting the nuances of terms such as "culturally responsive," "antiracist," and "anti-oppressive." While these might appear interchangeable on the surface, each carries its weight and implications. For instance, while "culturally responsive" focuses on the positive acknowledgment of cultural diversity, "antiracist" actively confronts and challenges racism. In children's books, it is paramount that authors are aware of and intentional with the terminology they use. The chosen words can either clarify the narrative's intent or muddy its message. According to the analytic tool, this means that these books must highlight history correctly, explain systemic racism in-depth, cite examples of racism, detail how dangerous harmful stereotypes are, talk about what dominant culture means and teach allyship (antiracist actions). While the journey towards genuinely antiracist children's literature is promising, it requires vigilance, introspection, and continual evolution. It is not just about changing the narrative but ensuring that the language and representation within that narrative are accurate, empowering, and inclusive.

The narratives, characters' dialogues, descriptions, and settings all contribute to a story's overarching theme. Salem & Tillis (2021) emphasize the importance of reimagining antiracist education for children. Traditional story structures might inadvertently propagate stereotypes. For instance, consistently portraying characters from minority backgrounds as sidekicks or in subservient roles reinforces hierarchical racial stereotypes. On the contrary, stories that place

such characters at the centre, imbuing them with agency, complexity, and depth, actively combat racial prejudices. In SFK, the author showcased the multidimensional aspects of Black people in America. The author tells a history of Black people being scientists, poets, public speakers, teachers, artists, etc, to combat the racist negative stereotype that Black people are inferior.

However, it's not merely about the content but also the context. Who writes these stories, and from what vantage point? There's a growing demand for authentic narratives — stories penned by authors who have lived the experiences they describe. This is not merely about authenticity but about providing a platform for voices historically marginalized (Galloway et al., 2019). One of the potential pitfalls in the journey towards antiracist children's literature is the "single story" phenomenon. As Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) has eloquently pointed out, reducing individuals or cultures to a single narrative can be profoundly damaging. While it is essential to address issues of racism and discrimination, it is equally important to showcase stories of joy, love, adventure, and mystery from diverse perspectives, ensuring that children see the multifaceted nature of every community. Tifanny Jewel (the author of ‘This Book is Antiracist’) notably wrote her book because of her experience as a mixed-race Black woman who had a White presenting phenotype. She wrote of her struggles with accepting her differences and the parts of her that provided her advantage. This was the strength of her book because readers could relate to her joys and struggles and identify their roles in the antiracism fight.

The term antiracist, according to Galloway et al. (2019), delves deeper into the systemic structures that perpetuate racial disparities. This means that antiracist books do not merely acknowledge the presence of racial biases but actively combat them through critical discussions about race, racism, and oppression in society. While 'culturally responsive' teaching might advocate for inclusivity, 'antiracist' teaching challenges the systemic roots of exclusion. This

distinction is crucial. Carter et al. (2014) argues that for teaching to be genuinely antiracist or anti-oppressive, it demands active participation in conversations about racism and social injustices. This means that both educators and students should be willing to face these issues head-on, diving deep into the intricate, often uncomfortable discussions about racial biases and systemic oppression.

For children's literature to genuinely embrace an antiracist perspective, the narratives and themes must go beyond mere representation. These books should actively challenge and deconstruct racial biases, providing readers with tools to understand, identify, and oppose systemic racial injustices. Anand and Hsu (2022) further scrutinize the landscape of "antiracist" children's literature, questioning the underlying intentions and the narratives these books often promote, particularly in terms of how they address (or sometimes sidestep) the complexities of race.

In summary, while 'culturally responsive' literature for children is a step towards inclusivity and understanding, genuine antiracist literature needs to address and oppose the roots of racial biases actively. The choice of language, themes, and narratives in these books plays a pivotal role in shaping the young readers' understanding of these complex issues.

A truly antiracist children's book should offer proactive engagements with concepts of race and racism. Thomas and Reese (2020) posit that books which only aim for positive representation, without addressing systemic issues, can inadvertently maintain status quo thinking. For literature to be antiracist, it should not only showcase diverse cultures but should also actively challenge racial biases, highlighting and critiquing the systems that support them.

Antiracist language in children's literature is a delicate balance of proactive representation, active challenge to biases, and a nuanced understanding of diverse experiences. For literature to truly engage in antiracist dialogue, it must grapple with these complexities and

ensure that both its textual and visual narratives align in promoting an authentic, diverse, and critical understanding of race and racism.

5.23 The Role of Educators and Caregivers in Mediating Antiracist Literature

A challenge educators face when aiming to adopt an antiracist stance in their teaching is the potential resistance from certain quarters that prefer to maintain the status quo. The avoidance of difficult conversations about racism can sometimes be seen as a more comfortable route. Galloway et al. (2019) caution against this approach, suggesting that evading such discussions may inadvertently perpetuate racial biases and uphold the very structures of inequality that antiracist pedagogy seeks to dismantle.

Antiracist literature can be a profound tool in education, illuminating various perspectives and challenging entrenched racial biases. However, as Spencer's 2022 study reveals, the impact of such literature is heavily influenced by its mediators, notably teachers (Spencer, 2022). Relying solely on literature without contextual real-world examples can lead to a shallow understanding of antiracism (Sions, 2022). This underscores the importance of continuous learning for educators. The ever-evolving realm of antiracist literature consistently introduces new narratives, voices, and perspectives (Landrigan & Johnson, 2021). Educators can ensure their teaching methods remain pertinent and influential by actively updating their resources, attending relevant workshops, networking with peers, and learning with and from their students.

Drawing insights from a broad spectrum of scholars, the call to action is evident: engage with antiracism with depth, introspection, and authenticity. Recognize the White perspectives, but also uplift marginalized voices. The journey to genuine antiracist literature, as Borsheim-Black poignantly puts it, passes through the heart of lived experiences. Antiracist literature acts as a

conduit, guiding young minds through the complexities of societal structures and offering them a perspective to identify subtle racial biases (Spencer, 2022).

To effectively leverage antiracist literature, educators must first deeply understand the content. This necessitates a comprehensive knowledge of the nuances and themes within these literary pieces, enabling enlightening discussions that foster inquiry, analysis, and empathy (Gibson & Jamison, 2021). However, a significant challenge in this realm is the "Whiteness" often inherent in the educational landscape (Borsheim-Black, 2015; Anand & Hsu, 2022). This Whiteness can manifest in multiple layers, from the predominance of White authors to the Eurocentric perspectives often presented in literature. Such factors can inadvertently perpetuate racial stereotypes, thereby emphasizing the need for critical examination and proactive inclusivity in literature choices.

In addition, the classroom environment plays a crucial role. It is about the literature and cultivating a space where open dialogues on race, identity, and biases are encouraged (Matias & Mackey, 2016). Students should feel secure expressing their interpretations, posing questions, or challenging the material. Such engagement not only fosters critical thinking but also aids in distinguishing between superficial and genuine antiracism (Thomann & Suyemoto, 2018).

Moreover, the broader framework of multicultural education has long been a topic of discussion, with scholars such as Banks (2004) emphasizing its historical development, dimensions, and practices. As the field has grown, there's been a call to move from non-racism to anti-racism in pedagogical strategies, emphasizing a proactive stance against racial biases (King & Chandler, 2016). Furthermore, as Wagner (2005) highlighted, the journey toward anti-racist pedagogy has challenges. The path requires continuous reflection, learning, and adaptation from recognizing and acknowledging racial disparities in the discipline (Carter et

al., 2014) to challenging the inherent 'Whiteness' in some supposedly 'antiracist' literature (Anand & Hsu, 2022).

The pivotal journey towards antiracism is not confined to the pages of children's books. The actual value of these texts is unlocked when parents and educators actively engage with them and extend the discourse beyond the written word. The symbiotic relationship between antiracist literature and its facilitators – the adults in a child's life – can shape how the next generation perceives race, justice, and equality. Educators wield tremendous influence in framing how children process and understand literature and how and when and whether kids are 'allowed' to question or wonder. Sions (2022) underscores the crucial role educators play in this landscape. No matter how powerfully written, a well-intentioned book can lose its impact if not properly contextualized and delivered. Conversely, educators trained with an antiracist mindset can stimulate enriching conversations, encouraging students to challenge stereotypes, ask questions, and empathize with diverse characters. This becomes especially pertinent in the wake of findings by Borsheim-Black (2015) that emphasize the challenges faced in antiracist approaches, particularly in predominantly White contexts.

Moreover, the classroom itself serves as a microcosm of the broader society. Here, interactions, friendships, and conflicts unfold, all under the observant eyes of children. An educator familiar with antiracist literature and its themes can leverage these real-world scenarios to invite learners to consider and wonder about the values of equity and inclusion. For instance, by recognizing and addressing casual racism, favouritism, or stereotyping within the classroom dynamics, educators can provide practical lessons on antiracism, making literature come alive.

However, the school or educational institution is just one aspect of a child's learning ecosystem. Home, where foundational values are often instilled, plays an equally if not more crucial role. Hagerman (2017) brings to light an essential facet of antiracist education – the importance of

White racial socialization. Progressive caregivers, irrespective of their racial or ethnic backgrounds, are central to this process. They can mould their children's perceptions by actively choosing diverse books, fostering open conversations about race, and modelling inclusive behaviour. While literature is a potent springboard for these discussions, caregivers can amplify its effects by providing real-world contexts. For example, suppose a story revolves around a child facing racial prejudice. In that case, parents can relate it to current events or historical episodes, helping children draw connections and understand the broader implications. Moreover, parents and educators can work in tandem. According to Hagerman (2017), collaborative efforts, like book clubs, reading sessions, or discussion groups that bring together students, teachers, and parents, can magnify the impact of antiracist children's literature. Such collaborative spaces deepen comprehension and build a community around shared values of justice, equity, and mutual respect.

In essence, while antiracist children's literature is a formidable tool, its efficacy is amplified manifold when backed by proactive educators and parents. They connect the fictional tales of courage, hope, and justice to the real challenges and opportunities of the world outside. Together, they hold the potential to mould a generation that doesn't just read about antiracism but lives it every day.

5.24 *The Future of Antiracist Children's Literature*

According to Landrigan & Johnson (2021), The fabric of children's literature has evolved significantly over the years. From tales dominated by singular perspectives to narratives echoing diverse voices, there's an undeniable shift toward inclusivity. With the rise of antiracist discourse, the trajectory of children's literature is geared towards not only reflecting diversity but actively challenging racial prejudices. As society strides towards genuine equity and justice, antiracist children’s literature is at the heart of shaping the next generation.

The surge in antiracist children's literature, exemplified by texts such as "Antiracist Baby," heralds a promising future (Landrigan & Johnson, 2021). The authors add that such literature possesses the power to foster a generation determined to catalyse societal transformation. These books do not merely provide diverse representation; they actively challenge readers to recognize, question, and combat systemic racism.

However, the journey towards a fully antiracist literary landscape for children is intricate. As literature continues to adapt, several facets need scrutiny. Firstly, there's the pressing matter of representation. Anand and Hsu (2022) delved into the portrayal of Whiteness in antiracist children's literature, prompting questions about the creators behind these narratives. Authentic representation necessitates a rich tapestry of authors and illustrators from varied backgrounds, ensuring the stories are rooted in genuine experiences and perspectives.

Moreover, the future promises to expand the realm of antiracist children's literature to different mediums. With technology playing an ever-increasing role in children's lives, interactive e-books, apps, and virtual reality experiences offer novel avenues to impart antiracist values. Such immersive experiences can reinforce concepts introduced in traditional books, ensuring children receive consistent messages across platforms.

Yet, with these advancements comes the responsibility of constant vigilance. The criteria for what is deemed antiracist must remain stringent. The risk of commodification, where antiracism becomes a buzzword rather than a deeply embedded value, looms large. To counter this, rigorous reviews, feedback from diverse communities, and continuous dialogue among educators, parents, and literary experts become imperative.

Future endeavours in antiracist children's literature also hinge on collaborations. Publishers, authors, educators, and activists must converge, ensuring that the literature produced resonates with current societal needs while anticipating future challenges. Initiatives like community-

based book readings, interactive workshops, and collaborative story crafting can be powerful platforms to amplify the reach and impact of antiracist narratives.

Antiracist children's literature, while a beacon of hope, remains a work in progress. It promises a future where children grow up not just reading about equity, justice, and inclusion but internalizing these values, ready to challenge the status quo. With collective efforts from all stakeholders and a commitment to genuine change, the realm of children's literature stands poised to lead societal transformation, one story at a time.

However, the task is not as simple as selecting a book and reading it to the class. Spencer (2022) underscores the complexity of the process, as seen in his year-long study of eight teachers. This research illuminated how a sustained engagement with diverse children's literature significantly contributed to the teachers' evolution as social justice educators. The selection of books that addressed themes of diversity, equity, and justice allowed these educators to delve deep into the nuances of these subjects, thereby refining their understanding and approach. The ripple effect of this was evident in their teaching methodologies, as they integrated these themes seamlessly into their curriculum, fostering an environment of inclusivity and awareness.

The exploration of antiracist narratives in children's literature, mainly through the detailed lens of works like 'Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You for Kids' by Jason Reynolds and Ibram Kendi, as well as 'This Book is Antiracist' by Tiffany Jewel, highlights the transformative potential of literature in shaping young minds. With their distinct approaches, themes, and linguistic styles, these works offer a rich tapestry of knowledge and perspective, enabling children to navigate complex societal issues with maturity and understanding. The comparative analysis reveals that, while each book has its unique strengths and methodologies, both play a vital role in the overarching movement towards fostering a more inclusive and equitable future. For educators, parents, and society, these findings underscore the importance of selecting age-

appropriate literature and ensuring that the narratives within reflect the principles of antiracism, equality, and justice. As the world marches toward a more inclusive future, the role of antiracist children's literature as a beacon of change, hope, and enlightenment cannot be emphasized enough.

Antiracist language in children's literature can have profound effects on young readers. While there are undeniable benefits in terms of empathy, critical thinking, and inclusivity, there are also challenges that educators, caregivers, and writers must navigate. The key lies in fostering a supportive environment and carefully curated resources to ensure children are empowered, informed, and compassionate. The inclusion of antiracist literature in educational contexts has the potential to foster an inclusive, empathetic, and critical-thinking generation. However, this incorporation must be done judiciously to maximize benefits and minimize pitfalls.

5.3 Study Limitations

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations of the study. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016), acknowledging limitations is a key reflective activity that lists the elements of the design and methodology that may have influenced the conclusions of a study. The following are the limitations of this study.

- The researcher's racial background as a Black woman influenced subjectivity in prioritizing and ranking the themes in the analytic tool (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).
- The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, thus may lead to bias affecting the interpretation of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).
- The generalizability of the analytic tools might have been limited by the nature of just two books selected for the study. The study analyzed two non-fictional books; thus, the analytic tool may not benefit fictional antiracist books.

Some of the limitations listed above point to the need for more future research in children's antiracist literature.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Although black/mixed-race authors wrote the two selected books for this study, the books reflected racism against BIPOC people in general. However, there is still a need for the analytical tool to be used on more antiracist books that have more diverse authors. This means that the analysis of antiracist books written by Indigenous, Asian or other people of colour may help uncover some important antiracist themes which could make it into the study's analytic tool.

Also, an analysis of fictional antiracist books in the future will help create an educator's guide to choosing fictional antiracist books, as some children may prefer fictional books. This means that an in-depth analysis of fictional antiracist books can help understand the themes and language used in these books. This can help create analytical tools to help educators choose fictional books that qualify as antiracist. Lastly, there is room to develop analytic tools for younger age groups like 1-4 years old and 5-8 years old.

5.5 Recommendation

The antiracist themes emerging in children's literature present an optimistic future. However, as with all significant societal shifts, the journey will require introspection, adaptation, and a genuine commitment to change. Authors, publishers, educators, and parents all have roles to play in ensuring that the books children consume today shape them into the inclusive, empathetic, and justice-seeking leaders of tomorrow. The surge in antiracist literature has not been without criticism. Some argue that these books introduce complex sociopolitical topics prematurely, while others believe they might present a one-sided narrative. This dichotomy has

led to debates on censorship. For instance, some schools have banned books addressing racial issues, deeming them controversial (Bishop, 2019).

Additionally, the implications of antiracist children's literature stretch beyond individual classrooms. At a systemic level, there is a dire need for restructuring teacher training programs. To effectively leverage these books, educators must be well-equipped in racial literacy, critical pedagogy, and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018). Moreover, school curricula need regular updating to reflect contemporary societal challenges. Simply incorporating antiracist books without contextualizing them within broader curricular objectives may result in fragmented understanding. Parents and communities also play a vital role in the reception of antiracist literature. Collaborative efforts between schools, parents, and communities can lead to a more holistic integration of these books. Regular dialogue sessions can provide a platform for addressing concerns and misconceptions, ensuring the literature serves its intended purpose.

The future holds promise, with increasing awareness about the nuances of antiracist literature. More BIPOC authors are getting platforms to share authentic narratives. However, it's essential to remember that genuine antiracism is not just about adding diversity; it's about reevaluating the power dynamics inherent in publishing, teaching, and societal structures (Reynolds & Kendi, 2019). Antiracist children's literature has the potential to shape future generations' perceptions of race and equity. Yet, its integration and reception in educational settings require careful navigation. Stakeholders must commit to ongoing learning and collaboration to ensure these books genuinely serve as tools for enlightenment and change.

5.6 Conclusion

The transformative power of literature, especially when directed towards young, malleable minds, is irrefutable. As society grapples with the deep-seated prejudices and systemic inequalities of its past and present, there's a mounting urgency to address these issues early.

One of the most potent avenues for this is children's literature. By embedding antiracist narratives within the pages that cater to young readers, society can start laying the foundation for a more inclusive and equitable future. Children's books are not merely tools of entertainment. They are mirrors and windows, reflecting the familiar and opening vistas to the unfamiliar. They shape perceptions, guide emotional growth, and foster values. In this context, the role they can play in dismantling prejudices and sowing the seeds of antiracism is monumental.

In recent years, literature that addresses these concerns head-on has begun to surface. Works like ‘Stamped: Racism, antiracism, and You for Kids’ by Reynolds and Kendi and ‘This Book is Antiracist’ by Jewel are more than just stories; they're manifestos for the young. Thus, children's literature's significance in this discourse extends beyond merely introducing diverse characters and stories. It involves a conscientious effort to challenge the norm, question prevailing narratives, and present alternatives that foster inclusivity and understanding. The objective is not to sideline any group but to ensure that every child, regardless of their racial or ethnic background, finds representation, validation, and an impetus to think critically.

Children's literature is one thread in the grand tapestry of societal evolution. Yet, as the books by Reynolds, Kendi, and Jewel indicate, it's a thread that can weave significant change. As society moves forward, there's a collective responsibility to ensure this potential is recognized, harnessed, and directed towards creating a more inclusive future for all.

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