

The Toronto Africentric Alternative School: Media, Blackness, and Discourses of Multiculturalism and Critical Multiculturalism

NICOLE NEVERSON
Ryerson University, Canada

This article examines the representational discourses in two Canadian ethnic publications after a campaign to secure approval of a publically funded Africentric school in the Toronto District School Board came to fruition. In documenting both publications' problematization of issues surrounding the school, this analysis demonstrates how discourses of multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism structured the articulation of blackness as identity in the coverage. Representational discourses employed by each publication underscore the complicated and nuanced responses to community issues that ethnic media often adopt in order to affirm sociopolitical positions to those within and beyond their referential borders.

Keywords: critical multiculturalism, Canadian media, blackness, Africentric school, discourse analysis

Introduction

On Tuesday, January 29, 2008, trustees of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), in an 11 to 9 vote, approved a proposal to create an Africentric alternative school at the close of a contentious and historic meeting open to members of the public. Although the creation of such a school had been requested by a range of groups within the many Black communities in Toronto since the mid-1990s, evolving debates and discussions in late 2007 seemed to more forcefully galvanize a mostly grassroots movement to petition for the establishment of the school. While reports and editorials in national and local mainstream media publications closely documented the evolution of the debate over whether such a school was necessary or democratically appropriate, ethnic alternative publications catering to Afro-Caribbean communities were doing the same.

Instead of offering a comparison of mainstream versus alternative news publications' "takes" on the establishment of the school, this article analyzes two Afro-Caribbean diaspora-targeted newspapers as bona fide "papers of record" that were significant in telling the tale of the school. By positioning such specimens of alternative ethnic media as papers of record, this article illustrates how the two publications

Nicole Neverson: neverson@ryerson.ca

Date submitted: 2012-09-01

Copyright © 2014 (Nicole Neverson). Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives (by-nc-nd). Available at <http://ijoc.org>.

responded to and bore critical witness to cultural politics in multicultural Canada. The lens of critical multiculturalism offers a tangible and nuanced framework for understanding how alterative ethnic media represented the debate over the Africentric Alternative School (AAS) and ambivalent articulations of "blackness," "identity," and "community." As such, this discussion raises the following questions: In what ways were the projects of multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism taken up and problematized in each publication? How were factors such as blackness and Afrocentricism/Africentrism represented and problematized? How was the status quo of Eurocentric education, and challenges to it, addressed in both publications?

The Toronto Africentric Alternative School: A Background

Dropouts

In January 1992, ruminations of how best to address poor achievement and graduation outcomes among Black students emerged in a Royal Commission report released by the Ontario Ministry of Education entitled "For the Love of Learning" (RCOL, 1994). The Commission reported that a combination of factors (low grades in English and mathematics and poor registration and retention rates in advanced-level courses) were cultivating alarming quantities of "at-risk" Black youth with limited career opportunities and life prospects. In particular, 42% of Black students enrolled in Toronto District School Board (TDSB) schools in 1987 were no longer registered and did not graduate from high school in 1992 (RCOL, 1994). Grim statistics underscored the issue of high drop-out rates and were also used as a partial rationale for recommending a "demonstration school" (RCOL, 1994). Such a school was one that would exist in communities with "large numbers of black students" and be collaboratively developed by the TDSB and members of the Black communities of Toronto.

"For the Love of Learning" (RCOL, 1994) shed light on what some groups in the Black communities of Toronto regarded as a failed school system that was ill-equipped to address the needs of struggling Black youth (see Ekwa-Ekoko, 2008, for discussion). This characterization of the education system stemmed largely from an understanding of the implications of a 40% drop-out rate amongst Black students. In addition, the lack of Black teachers, an inclusive pedagogical approach specifically focusing on the historic experiences and contributions of Afro-Caribbean heritage, and the availability of courses in Black history, among other things, were cited as contributing factors to the sociocultural alienation of many Black students. Critical observers also recognized that systemic forms of racism underpinned the school system. These groups identified an educational system incapable of addressing issues related to racism and ethnocentrism not necessarily because of denial, but because it had rarely been challenged to attend to such concerns.

Approval of the Africentric Alternative School

The process of approval for the school can be classified as a controversial one emboldened with the heavy identity politics of multiculturalism, blackness, and belonging. While proponents of the school argued that its implementation was long overdue, opponents charged that bringing it to fruition amounted to nothing less than racial segregation, if not reverse racism. Some opponents incorrectly charged that the

proposed school would only be for Black students and employ only Black teachers, charges refuted since the plan was initially devised (see TDSB, 2012a). It is important to point out that both proponents and opponents of the school claimed that the very existence of Canada's multicultural identity and, to a lesser extent, its official multiculturalism policy was irrefutable evidence that each of their respective claims (and not the opposing side's) were justifiable (for discussion see Dei & Kempf, 2007; Ilo, 2011; White, 2008).

January 2008 marked the most pivotal month of the approval process. A local feasibility team presented its proposal, entitled "Improving Success for Black Students," to trustees. From this report came four recommendations, the most significant being the creation of a transition team tasked with devising a model for moving forward with an AAS (TDSB, 2012b). In an 11 to 9 vote, the report's recommendations were approved, and plans to establish the AAS were given the TDSB's blessing. By the end of June 2008, a principal was appointed and teaching staff were hired for each grade level from junior kindergarten to grade 5. On Tuesday, September 8, 2009, the AAS opened with 85 students, and by October 15, 2009, it had grown to 128 students with a waiting list of 25 (Paul, 2009). In 2009–2010, the school exceeded average provincial academic standards and enrolled approximately 180 students with plans for an inaugural semester for grade 8 students in fall 2012 (Fanfair, 2012).

Theoretical Framework: Multiculturalism, Critical Multiculturalism, and Blackness

Canada's Multiculturalism Act passed in 1988 (Fleras, 2010). Fundamentally, the policy revolves around the following sentiments: (a) that cultural similarities are more important than differences; (b) that individuals, regardless of race and ethnicity, are equal participants in Canadian society; and (c) that the celebration of differences allows Canadian society to thrive (Fleras, 2010, p. 291; see also Li, 1999). Although laudable in intent, the achievement of these ideals remains uncertain, if not undetermined. *Multiculturalism* as a symbolic and prevailing ideology of promoting Canada within and beyond domestic borders stands in stark contrast to *multiculturalism* that in reality and practice remains a difficult, still-under-construction project charged with the politics of lived inequalities.

According to Galabuzi (2011), the cultural symbolism contained in the Multiculturalism Act offers no steadfast direction on how to put policy into practice. Further, the goal of social justice is not an explicit priority in the document. Recently, scholars like Taylor (2012) and Banting and Kymlicka (2010) have discussed multiculturalism as: (a) a government policy, (b) the subject of domestic and international scrutiny, and (c) a threat to ethnocultural integration. Taylor (2012) notes that although multiculturalism is powerful in sentiment and potential for social transformation, it faces challenges when the normative assumptions of an inclusive mosaic (a society open to all, regardless of origin or culture) exclude certain groups it is supposed to embrace, in principle. Such exclusion gives rise to hierarchies that privilege certain identities over others, thus solidifying the perception that the hierarchies are integral to keeping society intact and thereby destabilizing the very premise and purpose of multiculturalism. For Taylor (2012), the normalization of hierarchies "has to be seen as a denial of equality, which is one of the crucial values of a democratic society" (pp. 415–416). Increasingly, and in response to the conundrum of inequality within the multiculturalism project that Taylor (2012) and others have pondered (see Bissoondath, 1994; Gregg, 2006; Kymlicka, 2005), scholars have considered the potential of critical multiculturalism to neutralize hierarchal relations in the mosaic.

Critical multiculturalism is an alternative discourse to multiculturalism (Fleras, 2010; Henry, Tator, Mattis, & Rees, 2006; May & Sleeter, 2010) and assumes that the fractured nature of the cultural mosaic is constant but not necessarily antithetical to achieving an equitable and progressive society. In this project, the role of ethnic and cultural difference is more than symbolic—it is the basis for cultural inclusion. Acknowledging difference, and conferring upon it an active role, is fundamental to meaningful and equitable social integration. As Henry and Tator (1999) explain:

critical multiculturalism challenges the traditional political and cultural hegemony of the dominant class or group. It calls for a profound restructuring and reconceptualization of the power relations between different cultural and racial communities based on the premise that communities and societies do not exist autonomously but are woven together in a web of interrelationships. (p. 98)

As a critique of multiculturalism, Henry and Tator (1999) go on to add that “critical multiculturalism moves away from a paradigm premised on a hierarchal order of cultures that, under certain conditions, ‘allows’ or ‘tolerates’ non-dominant cultures’ participation in the dominant culture” (p. 98). If multiculturalism, in theory, promotes a community of cultural and ethnic equals, yet in practice it privileges some and not others, then critical multiculturalism in theory and potential practice endeavors to address this flaw. The conundrum, then, for societies like Canada’s, is to value difference not only in sentiment but also in active sociocultural participation. Such participation, in the framework of critical multiculturalism, entails an understanding of how marginal groups and identities can achieve equity while leaving the multicultural project intact.

Theorizing blackness as an identity in the broader Canadian multiculturalism project is a task complicated by the diversity of Black Canadians’ origins. Black Canadians have deep roots in Atlantic Canada; come from Africa, the Caribbean, and South America; and negotiate their identities amidst the fluid backdrop of African American identities in the United States. Adding further complexity are the historical differences in the lived experiences of Blacks in Canada. This has led scholars such as Walcott (2003) and Foster (2007) to declare the futility of any attempt to homogenize and articulate a singular Black identity and commonplace blackness, especially one tied to a particular nation. In addressing this reality, Walcott (2003) offers an alternative to conceptualizing blackness in Canada. In *Black Like Who?*, he writes of the need to acknowledge the variety of “blacknesses” in Canada and how diaspora sensibilities are more fruitful in understanding the realities of lived blackness. Walcott (2003) writes, “Diaspora sensibilities resurrect all that communities and nations destroy, foreclose and prohibit in their dominating narratives of collective belonging. Diaspora sensibilities are methods for overcoming the problem of locating oneself solely within national boundaries” (p. 22). Thus, such sensibilities offer spaces for the meaningful inclusion of blacknesses in cultural dialogue.

The debates surrounding the AAS can be considered biproducts of such diaspora sensibilities. As a response to problematic and inadequate educational experiences among some Black students, the school challenged the one-size-fits-all pedagogical normativity in the Toronto District School Board and acted as a critique of Eurocentric teaching and learning within a broader context of multiculturalism that

marginalizes Black identities. The representation of the AAS in the two publications examined herein highlights how the school came to complicatedly symbolize the problems and inequities experienced by marginalized communities. Primarily, the dominant narratives of embracing cultural diversity, belonging, and equality that were propagated by official multiculturalism policy were reinforced, negotiated, and dismantled in both publications' representations of the school. At the heart of this positioning, the AAS was a marker, open to inter- and intragroup scrutiny, of the complicated nature of making claims about blackness as a distinct and legitimate identity worthy of address and inclusion in a multicultural Canada.

Another crucial factor in theorizing blackness involves understanding the myriad ways through which it is read and performed. In this regard, Foster (2007) posits four distinguishing features of "reading Black and Blackness": Appearance (skin color), status (historically marginalized identity consistently engaged in sociopolitical justice), culture (expression and celebration of customs), and ideals (philosophical worldviews of Blacks as citizens) (pp. 94–95). This conceptual lens of blackness has much analytical purchase in understanding the debates surrounding the AAS because it offers insight into how meanings of blackness "float" (à la Hall, see: Jhally, 1997) or come to mean different things, in different contexts, to different groups of people. As will be examined here, the range of discourses articulated by both publications underscores the subjective nature and meanings of "Black" and "blackness" as identity markers in the arrival of the AAS.

Methodological Framework

The 56 articles used in this analysis were published between January 2008 and November 2009. This time frame was selected for the purposes of capturing the initial ruminations documented following the AAS's approval and reflections on its inaugural fall term. Editorials, opinion columns, general reports, and other information related to the AAS in *The Caribbean Camera* ($n = 25$) and *Share* ($n = 31$) were analyzed. Articles and other documents were collected via each publication's website, street publication boxes, hair salons and Caribbean grocers, and visiting the offices of *The Caribbean Camera* (CC) and *Share* in order to obtain documents not readily accessible online.

Borrowing from Foucault (1972) and Laclau and Mouffe (1990), Hall (2003) describes discourse as being at the heart of representation and meaning making. Ideologies, or ways of seeing, program or set the agenda for the construction of discourses and, according to Hall (2003, once constructed, given discourses "provide a language for talking about—a way of representing the knowledge about—a particular topic at a particular historical moment" (p. 44). The manner in which the AAS is documented and represented in each publication illustrates the varied standpoints of editorial boards, opinion columnists, and reporters in reflecting on the school and constructing arguments on its necessity and potential efficacy post approval. More importantly, together the CC and *Share*, through telling the tale of the AAS, participate in what Hall (1982) and others (Fiske, 1996; Williams, 2003) refer to as *signifying practices*: the acts of repackaging events and making decisions about how to present and frame them for audience consumption.

Following Gill's (cited in Bryman, 2004) approach to discourse analysis (language as a social construction, where a text is read as a way to understand how language constructs reality), salient

themes were identified in articles documenting the AAS. The articles are representative of how the articulation of opinions, "facts," and potential efficacy of the AAS constructed particular realities about perceived and lived inequalities of some Black students in the education system administered by the TDSB. As Gill (2009) emphasizes elsewhere, our negotiation and reading of the social world is via constructs within given textual accounts and representations (e.g., newspaper editorials, opinion pieces, and reports). These textual accounts and representations are akin to frames that, according to Entman (1993), "define problems . . . diagnose causes . . . make moral judgments . . . and suggest remedies" (p. 52). What this analysis offers overall is some sense of not only how power and identity were negotiated through the newspapers' perspectives on the AAS but also how each publication framed multicultural and critical multicultural discourses favorably, unfavorably, and ambivalently. Further, this analysis illustrates how affirming and resistive discourses of blackness were articulated in both publications' responses to the AAS, illustrating the often conflicting and heterogeneous (not homogeneous) intragroup perspectives present in marginalized communities.

Publications

The *CC* and *Share* are alternative press publications that specifically target members of diverse Afro-Caribbean communities in Toronto. Although ethnic media have various goals, this analysis treats such media as: (a) papers of record that are the initial, if not the sole, sources of information for the communities that they serve; and (b) publications that purport to be "the voice" or collective conscience of given communities. It is important to acknowledge that ethnic media are often considered those that offer counterdiscursive or alternative readings of events and issues that can, whether intended or not, serve to unsettle, if not dismantle, dominant ideologies and representations (Adeyanju, 2010; see also Caspi & Elias, 2011; Deuze, 2006). Even though this may accurately characterize some ethnic media publications, Ojo (2006) cautions against the assumption that there is a unified response to dominant ideologies in others because dueling cultural and political beliefs often exist. As such, the *CC* and *Share* are considered competitors because both publications target Black and Caribbean demographics while often taking different stances on sociopolitical issues.

The Caribbean Camera

The *CC* is a weekly, free press publication circulating in the Toronto and Montreal areas since 1990. In an in-house editorial commemorating its 20th year of publication in 2009, readers are told that the paper is a leader in producing news for "Caribbean people in the Canadian Diaspora" and that its founding philosophy and commitment to serve "people from the Caribbean not on the basis of race, but on the commonality of culture" is one that will continue to drive its reporting ("A milestone," 2009, p. 6). The newspaper regularly covers domestic and international stories and has sports, classifieds, and expert column sections. A typical issue of the *CC* is approximately 20 to 22 pages and is partially subsidized by advertising revenue. On its editorial page, the *CC* claims to serve a 380,315 weekly readership in Toronto and Montreal ("Caribbean Camera," 2012, p. 6).

Share

Like the *CC*, *Share* is also a free press publication. Serving the Black and West Indian communities since 1978, it is wholly supported by advertising revenue gleaned from Black and West Indian businesses and professionals. The Toronto-based paper has a weekly readership of approximately 130,000 ("Share," 2012, p. 6). Entertainment, politics, culture, sports, and events related to the Black and Caribbean communities comprise stories covered. On the first page of each publication, *Share* (2012) claims to be "Canada's largest ethnic newspaper" (p. 1), and even though it is the elder publication, it is considered a rival paper to the *CC* not only in form (newsprint paper, some color pages, accessibility, and length of issue) but content (general scope of topics covered and advertising). In the "About Us" (2013) section of the publication's website, *Share* declares that its mandate is "to encourage, support, represent positively and to defend the community vigorously while educating and sharing information."

Findings and Analysis

Although both publications documented community meetings and developments related to the AAS prior to January 2008, post-approval coverage ramped-up following the school's initial approval on January 29, 2008, and remained steady up until fall 2009. Headlines and text of reports, editorials, and op-ed pieces are examined herein. Due to the nature of their focus, editorials and op-eds are examined together. Fifty-six pieces were collected during the designated time frame: reports (*CC* = 16 and *Share* = 7), editorials (*CC* = 4 and *Share* = 10), op-eds (*CC* = 2 and *Share* = 14), and other pieces (*CC* = 3).

Headlines

Headlines from January 2008 to March 2009 vacillate between identifying the AAS along racial lines (using the term *Black*), to identifying it along cultural lines (using the term *Africentric*). Examples are as follows:

CC

"Black School a Wrong Move" (January 31, 2008, p. 6)

"Black School Gets Green Light" (Sahoye, 2008a, p. 3)

"Group to Oversee Africentric Schools" (Sahoye, 2008b, p. 4)

"Africentric School Takes Shape" (Sahoye, 2008c, p. 1)

"All Set for Africentric School Opening" (Sahoye, 2009, p. 5)

Share

"TDSB Approves Black-Focused School" (Fanfair, 2008a, p. 1)

"Time for Decisive Action on Black School-Pastor" (Fanfair, 2008b, p. 1)

"Opposition Against Africentric School War Against Equal Education" (Morrison, 2008, p. 7)

"Africentric School Heralds a New Beginning" (Fanfair, 2009a, p. 1)

"Not Everyone Celebrating Africentric School" (Watson, 2009a)

In the headlines of 2008, the identity of the school is either explicitly articulated in racial or cultural terms, whereas those of 2009 shed the explicit racial marker *Black* for the cultural *Africentric*. There are a few speculative conclusions that are plausible in explaining this shift. First, the headlines exemplify how the potential merits and meaning of the AAS to the various Black communities in Toronto were entrenched in deep intraracial and cultural divisions that manifested themselves in the centralized location of the community paper. Thus, references to a "Black school" in headlines signify that discourses taken up in reportage involved an evaluation of race as the dominant and distinguishing feature for the alternative school. In each paper, both claiming to serve and voice the concerns of Black communities, *Black* and *Africentric* as aspects of blackness were represented similarly. The use of *Black* by *CC* and *Share* prior to the opening of the school signifies the reality of the racial and cultural struggle over meaning and belonging as well as the politicization of *Black* and *blackness* as identities, albeit with different meanings, as will be examined. Even after the AAS's approval, the use of *Black* in headlines signifies the embrace or rejection of an essential and/or a political blackness as the criteria on which the school was required. Second, since the school's name was not determined until mid-2008, it is equally plausible that references to it were couched in deliberate racial terms for the sake of clarity for both sides of the issue. In other words, for the *CC*, the use of *Black* as a racial marker of the school denoted reservation and hesitation, if not some level of cynicism about the necessity and legitimacy of the school. For *Share*, the use of *Black* is unabashedly political and progressive. Promoting the school as a Black school is not considered inaccurate or risky; it is a political practice of supporting blackness as an ideal.

Reports

Coverage of the approval of the school is neutral in most of the *CC*'s 16 reports from January 2008 to March 2009. From March 2009 onward, reports turn favorable and are similar to those found in the pages of *Share*. All seven *Share* reports tended to be favorable of the AAS. The disparity in total reports for each publication is notable in that the *CC*'s reports overwhelmingly outnumbered those of *Share*. As will be evidenced below, the *CC* editorialized the AAS far less than *Share* did. Further, *Share*'s overall coverage was dominated by consistent editorials and op-ed pieces defending the school, and reports privileged voices favorable of the school.

Although reports illustrate a solid commitment to informing readers of the historical issues associated with advocating for the AAS, a divergence in the manner in which the AAS was covered can be observed in the publications. The *CC* consistently frames its reports in neutral terms, and voices for and against the school, along with those of government education officials, are afforded a role in the telling of its narrative. *Share's* reports are also constructed around those voices for and against, but they are partial to perspectives touting the advantages and appropriateness of the AAS. In addition, in many of *Share's* pieces, the approval of the AAS is discussed in conjunction with other sociopolitical struggles experienced by racialized, mainly Black people, and the reports feature commentaries of government officials and community players who are ever-supportive of the school. The overlay of other sociopolitical struggles on the decision to approve the AAS serves to unify the Black community via shared experiences and cast the school in the overall narrative of sociopolitical justice in a multicultural Canada. Of the 16 stories published by the *CC*, 6 are given front page attention, whereas 5 of *Share's* 7 are, suggesting that the latter placed more prominence and importance on the issue than the former. Also, in the *CC*, the planning associated with the school, official sources commenting on it, and ambivalent responses to it frame most reports. *Share's* reports predominantly frame the AAS via narratives in favor of its approval (i.e., the voices of official sources such as government and board officials).

One *CC* report highlights the TDSB's recognition of its responsibility to students in quoting then Director of Education Gerry Connelly: "The issues affecting achievement among Black students are very diverse and complex. . . . We have a responsibility, as educators, to ensure that all of our students are successful" (Sahoye, 2008a, p. 3). In a later story entitled "Angry Emails Flood Toronto Board Over Africentric School Plan," which presented feedback from the public to the board on its decision to establish the AAS, readers learn that opposing voices heavily outweigh those of supporters. The report notes that of 60 e-mails, received by the board between January 2008 and February 2008, only five were supportive of the AAS. "Angry Emails" (2008) cited the following excerpts from letters to the school board:

I'd prefer to see my tax dollars devoted to community support, rather than a regressive, racist, segregated educational experiment that needs to have a stake driven through it quickly.

It is this very "Eurocentric" history and culture, so maligned by these racial advocates that has allowed our freedoms to flourish.

What's next, girl focused schools where girls can learn proper girl things like home-ec and nursing? (p. 3)

Such comments implicitly and explicitly assess the AAS as unaligned with agreed-upon multiculturalism principles and in direct opposition to the normative European ideals upon which Canada's cultural mosaic is founded. The final comment trivializes the school, which can be read as an effort to dismiss and symbolically discredit it, however coyly. Although the article does quote the comments of a person supporting the school, citing the existence of other alternative schools (introduced on similar cultural and inclusivity grounds catering to French-speaking and gay/lesbian groups) as evidence of the innocuousness of the AAS, overall it reports on the perceived inappropriateness of the AAS. In short, the comments, to

varying degrees, vilify blackness as a valid argument for the creation of and support of the AAS. Blackness in the context of these comments, as culture and status (Foster, 2007), is rejected not only as an identity but also as grounds for educational redress.

Reports in *Share* are decidedly frank in their examination of the merits of the AAS and the meting out of social justice associated with its approval. The establishment of the school is framed in terms of social, cultural, and political struggle in the publication's reports. This differed from the *CC* in that *Share* moved beyond acknowledgement of the school as the spoils of long-fought battle, and continued to represent the AAS as a site of continuous struggle against naysayers and the uncritical mainstream (especially White media) blind to racial, social, and cultural equity rights in a truly multicultural society. It is in *Share* where a more explicitly recognizable critical multiculturalism discourse is present. The following passages from Fanfair's reports exemplify this:

When I look back at the initial discussions around the idea of the Africentric school where we faced much opposition from many quarters about whether this school was a good thing for kids or not and having to keep explaining, clarifying and interpreting what it is as well as what it's not and trying to convince people that this is fully consistent with the goals of the TDSB, we have come a long way. (2009a, p. 1)

We affirm today that the school board can be an engine of social change and it can lead in the innovation, creativity and new approaches to meet the diverse communities that we serve. . . . Don't let people say you can't and don't let people say it will never work because, over the last 18 months, that was what people said to me about the Africentric School and here we are. (2009b, p. 1)

I think we all recognize that it's not going to solve all the issues, but when you have a 40 per cent failure rate in your system and you keep doing the same thing over and over, you are going to get the same result. So I applaud those that have been involved and those that continue to advocate for this school. (2009c, pp. 1, 16)

The threads of the transformative powers of the school board as a social institution and committed community members as agents of social change occur in *Share's* month-long attention to the opening of the AAS. Drawing on the values of critical multiculturalism, *Share* is relentless in highlighting that the creation of the school was a grassroots response to institutional reform and a lack of sociocultural inclusivity. Advocates and supporters of the AAS are constructed as seeking and obtaining empowerment via resistive strategies—both elements that are crucial to understanding the purchase of critical multiculturalism and blackness in the vein of Foster's (2007) *status* (shared historical marginalization) and *ideals* (similar worldviews).

Editorials and Op-Ed Columns

The discursive themes in editorial and op-ed pieces, especially in the pages of *Share*, illustrate a clear distinction between the problematic status quo of the school system and the transformative potential

of equitable educational opportunities, such as the AAS, offering a different brand of inclusivity that goes beyond mere curriculum reform. All 10 editorials published in *Share* were favorable of the AAS, whereas only 1 of the *CC*'s 4 was. Further, all of *Share*'s 16 op-ed columns favored the school, while the *CC*'s 2 were split in verdict. An editorial entitled "Black School a Wrong Move," found in the *CC* (2008), puts forth the following:

Should we send our kids to a school with a curriculum that is heavily biased in their favor, with the hope that it appeals to them and as such, keep them in school, at the expense of them losing the opportunity for a more rounded education that includes a diversity of educational and social experiences? . . . You see, students from other cultural and ethnic backgrounds teach our children what the best teachers or the most inclusive curriculum in the world cannot—the life essentials of social integration and cultural (including religious) sensitivity. These elements contribute significantly to the whole person that emerges at the end of the educational process, and it is that person who ends up the most desirable citizen. . . . Thus the black school may result in the exact opposite of what it is intended to do—the creation of social misfits who, at the end of the day, may be far worse off than high school drop-outs. (p. 6)

In stark opposition, two editorials published in *Share*, "Black Schools Worth a Try" (2008) and "Finally!" (2008), respectively, read:

There are a lot of Black students—probably the majority of them from Caribbean backgrounds—who are not only doing well but excelling in the current school system. . . . This is not about them. This is about those students who, for whatever reason, are turned off and have tuned out, of the current system. All the African studies and other special programs offered in the current system have failed to attract or stimulate them. So, the parents of some of them are asking—no begging—us to consider something else, something that we have not tried before. . . . While Black-focused schools won't be the solution for all the Black students who are failing, if it helps to save some of them from a life of lost potential, wouldn't it be worth the effort? (p. 6)

What we have gained is the high possibility of a reduced rate of failure among our youth which also could mean a reduced rate of crime down the road. Wasn't that something worth fighting for? . . . One retired Black educator opposed to a Black-focused school was quoted recently as saying that the best educators would not go to such a school. That was just plain stupid. . . . The ones who wish to have nothing to do with this are some of the very ones responsible for the chaos in our schools today and we will do well to have them not come anywhere near this school, where they can continue to destroy the hopes and dreams of our children. (p. 6)

The contrast in editorial slant in the passages mirrors that existing between multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism. Creating educational silos champions a pernicious type of segregation that is counteractive to preparing Black students for a diverse and multicultural Canada in the view of the *CC*.

Setting up a "Black school" is not beneficial because it flies in the face of desired cultural tolerance, which is one hallmark of the multicultural society. A Black school, no matter whether curriculum is based on Black culture, will forever be widely interpreted as one based on race. For *Share*, the claim of segregation is a nonstarter. In fact, there is a clear discursive dichotomy between "us" (the marginalized) and "them/they" (the nonmarginalized *and* the marginalized who are on-side with the nonmarginalized). Rather pointedly, "Finally!" (2008) further asks:

What were you afraid of that has come to pass, except that, with the success of the Black-focused school and programs, there will be more well-educated Black young people graduating from high school to compete for scarce university spaces and, later, jobs with your kids? (p. 6)

Share expresses the need for change and, in opposition to the *CC*'s rendition, articulates the AAS's identity in the cultural term *Africentric*, while unproblematically embracing the label of *Black*. For *Share*, that the AAS is defined on the markers and multiple understandings of Black and blackness is an advantage and a necessary reality involved in a culturally relevant pedagogy because it challenges and resists the traditional Eurocentric ideals of an education system proven to have failed some marginalized students.

The fact that ethnic media serving identical communities will inevitably be oriented toward similar and, at times, diverging perspectives must also be taken into account when examining issues taken up in the publications' editorial content. In his article debunking the myths of a homogenized Black community, often uncritically reinforced in the mainstream mass media, Mensah (2005) discusses the actual heterogeneity of Blacks as a group in Canada. When discussing how this heterogeneity gives rise to multiple political affiliations and allegiances, Mensah (2005) argues that this phenomenon highlights "the difficulties imbedded in any attempt to mobilize Blacks for political and other actions" (p. 76). Mensah's work is instructive here as the *CC* and *Share* aptly illustrate how perspectives on the sociocultural and sociopolitical landscape are different at the intraethnic group level. Although this analysis focuses on the post-AAS approval, the *CC*, unlike *Share*, opposed the school in late 2007, when TDSB-community meetings began debating the issue, until January 31, 2008. No other editorials of the school appear in the *CC* until one on February 11, 2009, entitled "Supporting Our School," which is the first and only to express cautious support for the AAS. Again, unlike *Share*, the *CC* devoted less editorial space to the AAS, suggesting that the issue was less of a concern and perhaps that the paper was taking less of a political stand, championing its cause.

In the final two paragraphs of the previously cited *CC* editorial "Black School a Wrong Move" (2008), the publication states, "The black school is a band-aid for a major wound. Our education system requires surgery. It isn't going to work. But we are open to be proven wrong" (p. 6). Two op-ed columns in the *CC* move away from this ambivalent stance only one week after the January 31, 2008, editorial. In one, Raynier Maharaj expresses that a Black-focused school is not the solution for a 40% drop-out rate among Black students and that the proposed solution involves examining the problems arising in the home lives of students from a specific Caribbean island. The descriptions put forth by Maharaj lead those familiar with ongoing interisland politics to deduce that he is referring to Jamaica. The column does not

condemn or blame the island, but instead outlines how historical foreign policies and agreements with global organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have left it with a burden-filled legacy of socioeconomic strife and hardships that harm family relationships in a trickle-down effect. Maharaj (2008) closes:

Remember this: if 40 percent of black students are dropping out of the school system, this means that 60 percent are finishing school in the *exact same system*. Not just that, but children of other minority backgrounds are excelling in the same school system where the curriculum also does not address their specific ethnic or cultural needs. (p. 6)

In the other CC op-ed piece, Oscar Wailoo (2008) critiques the very name of the AAS and expresses his skepticism with labeling the school in racialized essential terms and/or ethnocultural ones. He writes:

The trouble with Africentric education (formally Black-focused education, then Afrocentric before settling on this current incarnation, convincing only to its proponents), is that it is based on a catch all category, resistant to definition as the multicultural, multicolored, and multilinguistic "black" constituency it claims to want to represent. But for most of "the community", Black/Afro/Afri, Blafrio if you like, it is a false category, an intellectual conceit, which takes a lot of people for granted; people who do not locate their ethno-cultural identity in the same place where the purveyor of Africentricity is convinced he resides. (p. 7)

This hard-hitting critique of the basic core identity of the AAS and the type of education that it supposedly provides once again underscores intragroup unease with the school and exposes dilemmas of identity articulation of and disarticulation from blackness. What is also highlighted is the struggle over meanings associated with the AAS. In *Share*, however, the meanings associated with victory in the AAS saga are clearer. An op-ed piece penned by community activist and Black lawyer Lennox Farrell (2008) posits that the approval of the AAS is akin to a "tipping point towards justice" (p. 6). In the same issue, another piece (Hampton, 2008) entitled "Africentric School a Search for Solutions" (p. 6) frames the meaning of the AAS in terms of social justice and cultural equity.

Although published over a year after Wailoo's column, Murphy Brown's (2009c) piece in *Share* challenges such views and explicitly aligns them with the position of the privileged, nonmarginalized (i.e., non-Black) mainstream and members of the Black community who either lack the capacity to realize or deny that they have been engulfed by it:

This Africentric School has been described as a Black-focused school by some who cannot grasp the concept of Africentricity. A Black-focused school could be any school where the students and staff are identified as Black and where the minds of the Black staff are so colonized that they can only see themselves and their students through the eyes of a White supremacist lens. (p. 12)

Brown's comment can be read as a response seeking to nullify the semantics game in the struggle over meaning of the AAS. Her comments indicate that referring to the AAS as a "Black-focused" school exposes dated multiculturalism sympathies (and sympathizers) that are incapable of conceiving of *inclusivity* as meaning separate and equitable as opposed to meaning part of a generally Eurocentric (and White) dominated whole. Again, this discourse is closely affiliated with critical multiculturalism and moves away from a one-size-fits-all conception of the grounds for cultural citizenship and participation. In the end, Brown's commentary renounces the privileged status of White, Eurocentric culture in broader Canadian society and its symbolic authority in defining non-White identities.

The critical multiculturalism banter continues in *Share* via more of Brown's op-ed pieces and those of Pat Watson. Both contributors explicitly challenge the dominant White hierarchy of power that the AAS openly challenges and confront the ongoing problematization of the school. As Watson (2009b) writes:

There is a whole segment of society that has never lived a day being Black, yet has ready answers about what is wrong with "those people", and what "they need to do." . . . Incredibly, people who make a habit of dumping on Black people rarely make the connection between their contempt and the types of difficulties Black people of all strata and cultures encounter. As if it's not a big deal and we should just roll with it. (para. 10)

This was followed by Brown (2009a, 2009b), who wrote:

It is quite disconcerting to see articles published in the mainstream (White) daily newspapers repeatedly referring to the new Africentric Alternative School as "controversial". I thought they had moved on from there. Who made this school "controversial"? (para 1)

We need to think critically whenever we read stories about our community in the White media. (para 11)

There are many in power who continue to oppose the Africentric Alternative School and there will be some deliberate sabotaging attempts, but we must remain strong and determined. . . . Reading some of the comments against the Africentric Alternative School [in mainstream media] it seems some people fear that the students will not see themselves through the limiting eyes of White people. That must be frightening for people whose sense of superiority is threatened. (p. 12)

Share's editorials and op-ed columns again invoke the discourses of critical multiculturalism and antiracism—a natural activist companion. Brown and Watson's arguments are steeped in an awareness of how an antiracist lens exposes institutional racism within the education system and beyond it. Further, their opinions are in kinship with blackness as status and appearance. These excerpts illustrate a defense of the AAS on racial grounds (skin color) by calling out the "mainstream (White) daily newspapers" and

"White media," as well as by calling on Black communities to take ownership and lend reinforcements and solidarity to the cause of the AAS.

The vigilant surveillance of the adjudicating eye of the privileged "other" (i.e., mainstream [White] media) in many of *Share's* pieces serves as a focal point not only for laying out grievances related to social injustice but also, in the words of Henry (2002), "challenging the hierarchy that currently divides people into *us* and—the rest—of *them*" (p. 239). Similarly, editorials bolster this evidence and are unremitting in naming sources of (White) mainstream media (especially the *Toronto Sun* and *Toronto Star*) believed to be leading sabotaging agents of the AAS. In an editorial entitled "Vicious Campaign!" (2008), the publication accuses local (White) media of being "hell-bent on stopping [the] school," (p. 6). Another editorial, "Some Honesty Please!" (2008), published a week earlier, dismantled and dispatched the *Toronto Sun* (commonly accepted as a right-leaning newspaper) and its condemnation of the AAS as an "abomination." The editorial retorts, "An abomination? A school to help a few Black kids and to keep them from dropping out to a life of hopelessness and possibly a life of crime is an abomination?" (p. 6).

Discussion and Conclusion

Beneath the surface, the discourses articulated in the *CC* and *Share* illustrate an uneasy, contentious, and complex exercise in intragroup reflexivity. If *collective ethnic identity* refers to a group's consensus of what makes it different from other groups, and *individual ethnic identity* is a sense of one's relationship to others within their group (Satzewich & Liodakis, 2010), then the tale of the AAS as relayed through the perspectives of the *CC* and *Share* is one of multilayered intraethnic struggle. It is an offshoot of the ethnic and racial identity crisis, or "double consciousness" described by Du Bois (1995) long ago, and not unlike Foster's (2007) more recent exploration of blackness, race, and multiculturalism in *Blackness and Modernity*. An argument can be made for understanding the call for the AAS in Toronto as one focused not only on the ethnocultural struggles that accompany multiculturalism but also on race. Defining *Black* or *blackness* is a difficult task theoretically, discursively, and materially. This was unambiguously illustrated in the coverage of the AAS in both publications. As Walcott (2003) reminds us, it is far more fruitful to interrogate the debates surrounding the AAS as examples of how *blacknesses*, and not *blackness*, work in and against the existing struggles of the diaspora.

The lenses of multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism are also relevant to making sense of the publications' efforts to articulate their positions on the approval of the AAS. The *CC* decidedly embraced the promise and rhetoric of multiculturalism as a goal and desired reality in which social institutions such as education should theoretically thrive. As such, coverage in the *CC* appeared to accept multiculturalism, along with its flaws and inconsistencies, in a less critical manner in comparison to *Share*. *Share's* representation of the AAS was weary of multiculturalism promises and platitudes and actively articulated activist principles akin to critical multiculturalism in tone and argument. These different orientations toward conceiving of the AAS carried over into the ways in which both the *CC* and *Share* problematized aspects like blackness, segregation, and Afrocentrism/Africentrism. For the *CC*, such aspects were problematized on the grounds that they were in direct violation of multicultural tenets and because the ethnic identities of other racialized and marginalized students also could not be found in manifest curricula. Support for and solidarity with the AAS on the grounds of shared social and cultural

politics in *Share's* overall editorial slant performed two tasks. The first was applauding the TDSB's decision to approve the school and recognize inequities in curricula. The second involved actively taking on the role of staunch defender of the AAS—a role that unproblematically accepted essentialized identity markers (e.g., blackness and Africentric) as legitimate foundations from which to highlight grievances.

Within multiculturalism, *Black community* is, however inaccurately, assumed to describe and account for all people of Afro-Caribbean descent. This analysis illustrates that this assumption is a nonstarter in making sense of how the *CC* and *Share* covered the AAS. Both publications purport to serve the Afro-Caribbean/Black communities of the greater Toronto area, yet offered contrasting takes on the social, political, and cultural stakes regarding the school and the merits of blackness. Multiculturalism alone is incapable of conceiving of a Black community in which multiple intragroup perspectives compete, conform to, and actively work to disrupt common sense logic within and beyond the imagined borders of said community. As Sooknanan (2000) writes:

Black community has become a nebulous entity, one which is identified by the politics of skin more than as a negotiated process. The end result of a sedimentary knowing of Black community is a homogeneous, transparent identity category, which offers entrenched and inflexible boundaries. Black community becomes a finished product in that it is thought of in advance, and to call on something called the Black community is to perform a set of erasures. (p. 148)

What Sooknanan describes in this ever-present penchant to hail or interpellate (à la Althusser, 1971) a definitive Black community is a futile practice that is engaged in by members beyond *and* within said community. What the reports, editorials, and op-ed pieces contained in both the *CC* and *Share* demonstrate is that the idea of a homogeneous Black community, with a unified voice and response to lived conditions of inequity, cannot be wholly confirmed.

References

- About us. (2013). *Share*. Retrieved from <http://sharenews.com/about-us>
- Adeyanju, C. T. (2010). *Deadly fever: Racism, disease and a media panic*. Winnipeg, Canada: Fernwood.
- Althusser, L. (1971). *Lenin and philosophy*. New York, NY: Monthly Review.
- A milestone. (2009, June 4). *The Caribbean Camera*, p. 6.
- Angry emails flood Toronto board over Africentric school plan. (2008, April 24). *The Caribbean Camera*, p. 3.
- Banting, K., & Kymlicka, W. (2010). Canadian multiculturalism: Global anxieties and local debates. *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 23(1), 43–72. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/205003334>
- Bissoondath, N. (1994). *Selling illusions: The cult of multiculturalism in Canada*. Toronto, Canada: Penguin.
- Black school a wrong move. (2008, January 31). *The Caribbean Camera*, p. 6.
- Black schools worth a try. (2008, January 24). *Share*, p. 6.
- Brown, M. (2009a, September 11). Why is the Africentric school still “controversial”? *Share*. Retrieved from <http://sharenews.com/archives/opinion20090911why-africentric-school-still-controversial>
- Brown, M. (2009b, September 17). “No fear” as kids lift their voices in song. *Share*, p. 17.
- Brown, M. (2009c, October 15). Students will thrive in a nurturing environment. *Share*, p. 12.
- Bryman, A. (2004). *Social research methods* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Oxford.
- Caribbean Camera. (2012, July 5). *The Caribbean Camera*, p. 6.
- Caspi, D., & N. Elias. (2011). Don't patronize me: Media-by and media-for minorities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 34(1), 64–82. doi:10.1080/01419871003743413
- Dei, G. S., & Kempf, A. (2007, November 16). Debunking myths about African-centred schools. *Toronto Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/article/276932--debunking-myths-about-african-centred-schools>
- Deuze, M. (2006). Ethnic media, community media and participatory culture. *Journalism*,

7(3), 262–280. doi:10.1177/1464884906065512

- Du Bois, W. E. B. (1995). The souls of Black folks. In J. J. Macionis & N. V. Benokraitis (Eds.), *Seeing ourselves: Classic, contemporary, and cross-cultural readings in sociology* (pp. 186–190). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Ekwa-Ekoko, I. (2008). *Afrocentric schools within a multicultural context: Exploring different attitudes towards the TDSB proposal within the Black community*. Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.ryerson.ca/islandora/search/mods_identifier_path_ms:dissertations~slsh~82
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x
- Fanfair, R. (2008a, January 31). TDSB approves Black-focused school. *Share*, p. 1.
- Fanfair, R. (2008b, February 21). Time for decisive action on Black school-pastor. *Share*, pp. 1, 6.
- Fanfair, R. (2009a, September 3). Africentric school heralds a new beginning. *Share*, pp. 1, 16.
- Fanfair, R. (2009b, September 10). Students urged to “chase their dreams.” *Share*, p. 1.
- Fanfair, R. (2009c, September 24). Educating Black boys a test for TDSB-Dr. Spence. *Share*, pp. 1, 16.
- Fanfair, R. (2012, June 28). I was wrong on Africentric school - kande. *Share*, pp. 1, 17.
- Farrell, L. (2008, February 14). Black-focused school a rare “tipping point.” *Share*, pp. 6, 7.
- Finally! (2008, January 3). *Share*, p. 6.
- Fiske, J. (1996). *Media matters: Race and gender in U.S. politics*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Fleras, A. (2010). *Unequal relations: An introduction to race, ethnic and aboriginal dynamics in Canada* (6th ed.). Toronto, Canada: Pearson Canada.
- Foster, C. (2007). *Blackness and modernity: The colour of humanity and the quest for freedom*. Sherbrooke, Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. London, UK: Tavistock.
- Galabuzi, G. E. (2011). Hegemonies, continuities, and discontinuities of multiculturalism and the Anglo-Franco conformity order. In M. Chazan, L. Helps, A. Stanley, & S. Thakkar (Eds.), *Home and*

- native land: Unsettling multiculturalism in Canada* (pp. 58–82). Toronto, Canada: Between the Lines.
- Gill, R. (2009). Mediated intimacy and postfeminism: A discourse analytic examination of sex and relationships advice in a women's magazine. *Discourse & Communication*, 3(4), 345–369. doi:10.1177/1750481309343870
- Gregg, A. (2006, March). Identity crisis: Multiculturalism: A twentieth-century dream becomes a twenty-first-century conundrum. *The Walrus*. Retrieved from <http://walrusmagazine.com/articles/2006.03-society-canada-multiculturalism/4>
- Hall, S. (1982). The rediscovery of "ideology": Return of the repressed in media studies. In M. Gurevitch, T. Bennett, J. Curran, & J. Woollacott (Eds.), *Culture, society and the media* (pp. 56–90). London, UK: Methuen.
- Hall, S. (2003). The work of representation. In S. Hall (Ed.), *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (pp. 15–63). London, UK: SAGE Publications.
- Hampton, H. (2008, February 14). Africentric school a search for solutions. *Share*, p. 6.
- Henry, F. (2002). Canada's contribution to the "management" of ethno-cultural diversity. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 27(2–3), 231–242. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/docview/219616030/F1074874E59341C0PQ/1?accountid=13631>
- Henry, F., & Tator, C. (1999). State policies and practices as racialised discourse: Multiculturalism, the Charter and employment equality. In P. Li (Ed.), *Race and ethnic relations in Canada* (2nd ed., pp. 88–115). Don Mills, Canada: Oxford.
- Henry, F., Tator, C., Mattis, W., & Rees, T. (2006). *The colour of democracy: Racism in Canadian society*. Toronto, Canada: Harcourt & Brace.
- Ilo, S. C. (2011, November 18). Segregated schools are an admission of failure. *Toronto Sun*. Retrieved from <http://www.torontosun.com/2011/11/18/segregated-schools-are-an-admission-of-failure>
- Jhally, S. (Producer and Director). (1997). *Race, the floating signifier* [Motion picture]. United States: Media Education Foundation.
- Kymlicka, W. (2005). The uncertain futures of multiculturalism. *Canadian Diversity*, 4(1), 82–85.
- Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (1990). Post-Marxism without apologies. In E. Laclau (Ed.), *New reflections on the revolution of our time* (pp. 97–132). London, UK: Verso.

- Li, P. (1999). The multiculturalism debate. In P. Li (Ed.), *Race and ethnic relations in Canada* (2nd ed., pp. 148–177). Don Mills, Canada: Oxford.
- Maharaj, R. (2008, February 7). Problem starts at home. *The Caribbean Camera*, p. 6.
- May, S., & Sleeter, C. E. (2010). Introduction. Critical multiculturalism: Theory and praxis. In S. May & C. E. Sleeter (Eds.), *Critical multiculturalism: Theory and praxis* (pp. 1–16). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Mensah, J. (2005). On the ethno-cultural heterogeneity of Blacks in our "ethnicities." *Canadian Issues*, Spring, 72–77. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/docview/208687715/B28605E597A243AFPQ/21?accountid=13631>
- Morrison, B. (2008, March 20). Opposition to Africentric school war against equal education. *Share*, p. 7.
- Ojo, T. (2006). Ethnic print media in the multicultural nation of Canada: A case study of the Black newspaper in Montreal. *Journalism*, 7(3), 343–361. doi:10.1177/1464884906065517
- Paul, G. V. (2009, October 15). Africentric school—kids on waiting list. *The Caribbean Camera*, p. 3.
- Royal Commission on Learning (RCOL). (1994). *For the love of learning*. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/abcs/rcom/main.html>
- Sahoye, J. (2008a, January 31). Black school gets green light. *The Caribbean Camera*, p. 3.
- Sahoye, J. (2008b, April 10). Group to oversee Africentric schools. *The Caribbean Camera*, p. 4.
- Sahoye, J. (2008c, November 13). Africentric school takes shape. *The Caribbean Camera*, pp. 1, 3.
- Sahoye, J. (2009, August 27). All set for Africentric school opening. *The Caribbean Camera*, p. 5.
- Satzewich, V., & Liodakis, N. (2010). *"Race" and ethnicity in Canada: A critical introduction*. Don Mills, Canada: Oxford.
- Share*. (2012, June 28). *Share*, pp. 1–6.
- Some honesty please! (2008, February 14). *Share*, p. 6.
- Sooknanan, R. (2000). The politics of essentialism: Rethinking "Black community." In R. Walcott (Ed.), *Rude: Contemporary, Black Canadian cultural criticism* (pp. 137–158). Toronto, Canada: Insomniac Press.

Taylor, C. (2012). Interculturalism or multiculturalism? *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 38(4-5), 413-423. doi:10.1177/0191453711435656

Toronto District School Board (TDSB). (2012a). *Africentric Alternative School: About our school*. Retrieved from <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Findyour/Schools.aspx?schno=3949>

Toronto District School Board (TDSB). (2012b). *Africentric Alternative School: Background*. Retrieved from http://www.tdsb.on.ca/SchoolWeb/_site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=10423&menuid=24893&pageid=21547

Vicious campaign! (2008, February 28). *Share*, p. 6.

Wailoo, O. (2008, February 7). Good plan without the Afri overlay. *The Caribbean Camera*, p. 7.

Walcott, R. (2003). *Black like who? Writing Black Canada* (2nd rev. ed.). London, Canada: Insomniac Press.

Watson, P. (2009a, September 11). Not everyone celebrating Africentric School. *Share*. Retrieved from <http://sharenews.com/archives/opinion20090911not-everyone-celebrating-africentric-school>

Watson, P. (2009b, September 16). Time for compassion, not disdain. *Share*. Retrieved from <http://sharenews.com/archives/opinion20090916time-compassion-not-disdain>

White, P. (2008, January 18). Afrocentric: Bad word, good idea. *Globe & Mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/afrocentric-bad-word-good-idea/article1050819>

Williams, K. (2003). *Understanding media theory*. London, UK: Arnold.