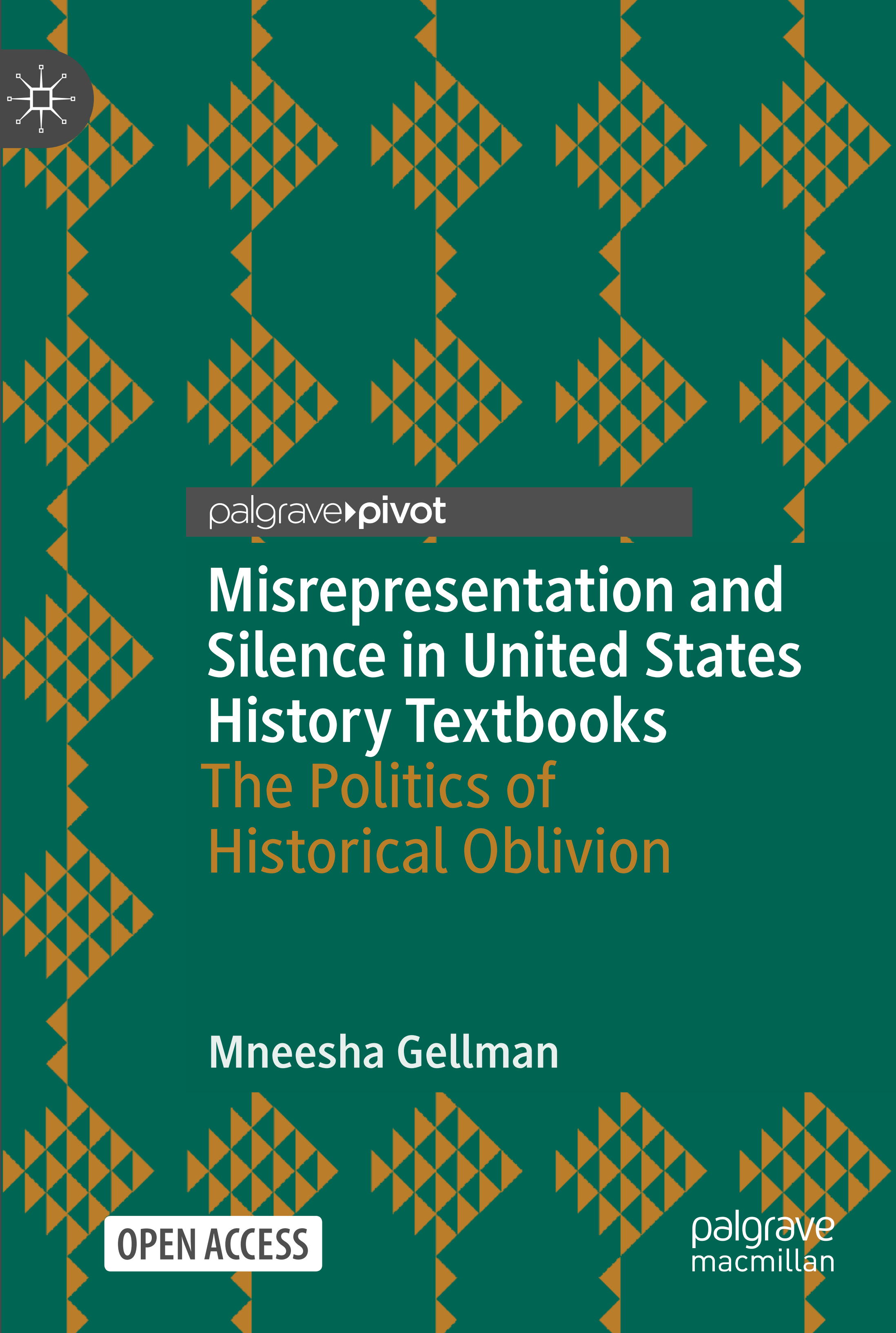

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Misrepresentation and Silence in United States History Textbooks

The Politics of Historical Oblivion

Mneesha Gellman

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There is no education without some form of media. Much contemporary writing on media and education examines best practices or individual learning processes, is fired by techno-optimism or techno-pessimism about young people's use of technology, or focuses exclusively on digital media. Relatively few studies attend – empirically or conceptually – to the embeddedness of educational media in contemporary cultural, social and political processes. The **Palgrave Studies in Educational Media** series aims to explore textbooks and other educational media as sites of cultural contestation and socio-political forces. Drawing on local and global perspectives, and attending to the digital, non-digital and post-digital, the series explores how these media are entangled with broader continuities and changes in today's society, with how media and media practices play a role in shaping identifications, subjectivations, inclusions and exclusions, economies and global political projects. Including single authored and edited volumes, it offers a dedicated space which brings together research from across the academic disciplines. The series provides a valuable and accessible resource for researchers, students, teachers, teacher trainers, textbook authors and educational media designers interested in critical and contextualising approaches to the media used in education.

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To Joshua,
for your willingness to accompany me again and again
in wild pursuit of intellectual freedom and equitable democracy

FOREWORD

There is no education without some form of media. The field of educational media is a growing area of interest in education, as educational policy papers on the "digital agenda," the rapid expansion of media sections in national and international educational research associations, and the range of academic books on media in education show. Educational media are crucial to producing knowledge and shaping educational practices. Conflicts over the contents of textbooks and curricula, widely discussed in the daily news, illustrate how many different stakeholders are invested in sharing their particular understandings of our (shared) past, the current society, and potential imagined futures with the younger generation. Policy-makers, politicians, and activists regard educational media as important tools which not only foster young people's media skills and world knowledge but also shape which ways of living are considered desirable or even legible. Textbooks and other educational media are deeply embedded in the socio-political contexts in which they are developed and used. Given this context, alongside the emerging interest in digital technology in education, the Palgrave Studies in Educational Media series takes stock of current research on educational media by focusing on three issues.

First, today's vibrant and dynamic research and scholarship on technology stems from a broad range of disciplines, including sociology, history, cultural studies, memory studies, media studies and education, and also information, computer and cognitive science. Traditionally, this research has drawn on textbooks and other educational media in order to engage with specific disciplinary questions, such as device-specific reading speed or social inclusion/exclusion. Studies on educational media are only beginning to be consolidated into the kind of inter- or transdisciplinary field which can build and develop on insights generated and exchanged across disciplinary boundaries.

Second, the majority of work in this field continues to focus on best practices, individual learning processes, or concerns over the risks involved when young people use technology. A growing field today attends—empirically and conceptually—to the embeddedness of educational media in contemporary cultural, social, and political processes, and to the historicity of the media used in education. If we see educational media as a highly contested and thus crucially important cultural site, then we need these studies which consider media in their contexts and which take a carefully critical or generative approach to societal concerns.

Third, current work emerging in this field has turned its attention to computers and other digital technologies. Yet looking at today's educational practices, it is clear that (i) they are by no means predominantly digital, and simultaneously (ii) "postdigital" practices abound in which the digital is no longer seen as new or innovative, but is integrated with other materials in daily teaching and learning. The potentials and risks of digital education emit a fascination for politicians, journalists, and others concerned with the future of education, and are undoubtedly important to consider. Empirical observations of education around the globe, however, demonstrate the reach and visibility of a broad range of media (textbooks, blackboards, LEGO™, etc.), as well as the blending of media in contemporary educational settings.

Palgrave Studies in Educational Media aims to address these three issues in an integrated manner. The series offers a dedicated space which brings together research from across the academic disciplines, encouraging dialogue within the emerging space of educational media studies. It showcases both empirical and theoretical work on educational media which understands these media as a site of cultural contestation and sociopolitical force. The focus lies primarily on schools, across the school subjects. The series is interested in both local and global perspectives, in order to explore how educational media are entangled with broader debates about continuity and change in today's society, about classroom practices, inclusions and exclusions, identifications, subjectivations, economies, and global political projects.

The author of this twelfth book in the series, Mneesha Gellman, is a renowned expert and practitioner with a focus on how minorities and disenfranchised people are represented—or not—in all facets of the education sector. This book focuses specifically on the medium of the textbook, and how representations of two minority groups—Native American and Mexican-origin people—are manifest in US high school history books. Drawing on a manual coding of sixteen textbooks, Gellman documents the ways that these groups are represented, through direct quotes, images, and maps, and also considering the impact on youth identity. She also combines the textbook analysis with qualitative data from ethnographic work in four high schools in far Northern California, including interviews with students, teachers, and administrators; focus groups with students; and ethnographic observations in the schools and classrooms.

Gellman's study thus complements others in this series that examine critically—often combining textual analysis with ethnographic data—how representations in educational media contribute to shaping the civic, cultural, and political behaviors of young people as they move into adulthood. Studies such as this one demonstrate in all clarity how educational media form a significant foundation for democratic coexistence and that the politics of media in schools—in this case, the traditional medium of the textbook—remain at the forefront of peace education research.

Mneesha Gellman carried out most of the research you are about to read about in our institute library in Braunschweig, Germany, during her Georg Arnhold Senior Fellowship, which she was awarded in 2022. The publications of the Georg Arnhold Program on Education for Sustainable Peace seek to not only facilitate a conversation between academics and practitioners on an international level but also work to overcome colonial practices in peace education. This study too demonstrates both the necessity and the possibilities to decolonize the curriculum, to examine the socio-political implications of educational media as instruments of the state, and to publish research findings in an accessible way.

Braunschweig, Germany	Eckhardt Fuchs
Oldenburg, Germany	Felicitas Macgilchrist
November 2023	

Acknowledgments

This book was born out of my own frustration at having been misled by textbooks throughout the course of my life. I came of age in the 1980s and 1990s, in public school systems staffed by well-meaning, dedicated educators, many of whom were nevertheless steeped in the political agendas they themselves had been raised in. It was only as an adult, in college, graduate school, and my own decades academic of research, that I began to see more fully the contours of information that had been deliberately kept from me.

Throughout years of researching the impact of access to Indigenous and heritage language education at the high school level, I have spent abundant time analyzing curricula and educational media and observing dialogue across dozens of classrooms in numerous schools and countries. I saw the vibrant stories of survival of Indigenous people, the contributions of immigrants, and the ways that historical narratives are reinvented time and time again to lift the victor's versions of truth. As a college professor, I have worked to incorporate previously silenced voices into my syllabi, expanding the canon of literature that I was taught to better include historically and contemporarily marginalized voices. Such voices can be shocking to encounter after a lifetime of their invisibility. I relate to the surprise my students feel in the college classroom when I think of my own K–12 education.

I left my home area of far Northern California as a young adult knowing almost nothing about local Indigenous people. They were only in books as conquered people who were in the way of national progress. My teachers were so nice, so kind, but they did not have materials to teach from multiple perspectives when it came to US and world history. How could they have told me *that*? And I believed it! How could they *not* have told me about this other thing? And I didn't know it was missing! The majority of my students feel the same way, and wish they had gotten the information I provide earlier in their education—that colonial treatment of Indigenous peoples in the Americas should correctly be labeled genocide, and sometimes culturecide—and that immigrants have tended to provide the back-breaking labor of economic growth for the US, all the while being forcibly assimilated into a whitening process that has left many people culturally untethered to their heritage.

Many of us feel cheated by education when we look back critically on the textbooks and edited versions of history that we received as young people. My objective in this book is to show precisely how these silences and misrepresentations have taken place. Such an undertaking would not be possible without a significant community of supporters, and I thank them profusely for their support.

Two previous grants from the Sociological Initiatives Foundation facilitated earlier fieldwork in California that this study is built on, as did a Fulbright García-Robles US Scholar Fellowship to Mexico in 2020. Those fieldwork experiences, spent mostly in schools, classrooms, and with educators across multiple communities, prepared me to then go deeper into the specifics of textbook research in this most recent project. Emerson College allowed me to take multiple professional leaves that have enabled my research over the years, including granting me the Huret Award in 2022, which permitted me to spend a semester in California doing research in high schools that included educational media analysis.

In summer and fall of 2022, I was a Senior Fellow in the Georg Arnhold Program on Education for Sustainable Peace at the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media/Georg Eckert Institute (GEI), in Braunschweig, Germany, where I carried out most of the textbook analysis shared here. The Leibniz staff welcomed me to their beautiful library and oriented me to the particulars of textbook studies. I am grateful to these institutions and colleagues who facilitated my way during the various semesters of adventurous and logistically complicated fieldwork. In creating this manuscript, Wendy Kopisch was a stellar editor and textbook studies consultant, and Abigail Lange provided top-notch research assistantship and copyediting.

My family has been more than patient with me, and my children deserve a special acknowledgment here. My research trajectory has disrupted their

schooling multiple times, as I have pulled them from school in Boston in order to spend semesters at a time in Mexico and California. They have adapted geographically, culturally, and linguistically to my research needs, and I know they have missed out on things they wanted because of it. They also sat through countless speeches about the importance of diverse narratives, indulged me by allowing me to scrutinize their homework for signs of colonialism, and have tolerated being my own personal experiment in international education. Thank you, Matolah and Chayton, for being open to such an un-sedentary life. And to my husband Joshua, to whom this book is dedicated, thank you for holding it all together for us, balancing the books and schlepping kids to school so I could write just a little bit more. It was a team effort.

About the Book

In this book, I investigate how representation of two minority groups—Native American and Mexican im/migrant-origin people—takes place in high school US history textbooks. I present findings from an original textbook analysis that I conducted in 2022 while I was a Senior Fellow at the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media/Georg Eckert Institute (GEI), in Braunschweig, Germany. I surveyed US history textbooks from the 1950s to 2022, especially focusing on the US History and Advanced Placement US History textbooks used in four regional public high schools in far Northern California, where I also carried out ethnographic fieldwork.

Drawing on manual coding of sixteen textbooks, I focus here on in-depth examination of twelve textbooks that are representative of the larger sample. I document the ways that different social groups are represented, drawing on direct quotes, images, and maps, and I analyze what the impact on youth identity might be based on the content of the curricular material. In my coding, I conceptualize information as existing along a spectrum, with accuracy and visibility at one end and misrepresentation and silencing at the other.

My findings show that White stories of victory and domination disproportionately fill US history textbooks. While representation of non-White perspectives and accurate information about non-White groups does increase over time, with more recent textbooks attempting greater inclusion than older textbooks, the same limited repertoire of events and tropes tends to be recycled from one book to the next. This leaves a need to innovatively rethink which stories are told, why they are told, and from which perspectives they are told within the US history curricula.

I combine the textbook analysis with qualitative data from ethnographic work in four high schools. The data include interviews with students, teachers, and administrators, focus groups with students, and ethnographic observations in the schools and classrooms. The combination of textual analysis with ethnographic data allows me to paint a more holistic picture about US history education from a wide range of demographic backgrounds. The experiences young people have with representation in educational media in their K–12 schooling contribute to shaping their civic, cultural, and political behaviors as they move into adulthood. For this reason, textbooks, and educational media more broadly, are part of the foundation for democratic coexistence.

Praise for *Misrepresentation and Silence in United States History Textbooks*

"Gellman unapologetically illuminates the systematic biases and deliberate omissions that distort the historical narratives presented in US textbooks. It's a refreshingly honest revelation of the harmful consequences of silencing diverse voices and perspectives. Fortunately, Gellman provides educators an alternative proposal to this troubling narrative with practical suggestions on how to foster a more inclusive and critical approach to history education."

—Michael Davies-Hughes, Superintendent of Schools, *Humboldt County Office of Education*

"Gellman uncovers layers of bias and omission within US history textbooks that perpetuate cultural erasure and influence how Native American and Mexican American young people perceive themselves in school. Through innovative mixed methods pairing textbook analysis with interviews and focus groups, Gellman adeptly highlights the transformative role that Indigenous and Spanish language classes play in intervening in and reshaping harmful narratives, while also underscoring the urgent need for inclusive curricular reform."

—Kayla Begay, Associate Professor of Native American Studies, *California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt, USA*

"This book shows how brutality is masked as glory, and how violence, whiteness, and domination become entangled, normalized, and romanticized through the telling of the nation's founding and the maintenance of its borders. A window into the assimilatory mechanics of the US education system, this book adds to the literature illustrating how deeply rooted white supremacy and settler colonialism are in US educational approaches, and how little room we give students to judge, critique, and connect history to their everyday lives. Gellman's call for curricular inspection, reform, and transformative decolonization is important and timely."

—Michelle Bellino, Associate Professor of Education, *University of Michigan*

"This book is an excellent analysis of exclusion of Native American and Mexican-origin peoples from US history textbooks. By using textbook analysis and ethnographic methods, the author presents a clear picture of the shared experiences of Native American and Mexican-origin people and illustrates the importance of including those perspectives in US textbooks."

—Stephanie Masta, Associate Professor, *Purdue University, USA*

"Gellman's book is timely and globally significant as it advances our knowledge and understanding of minority groups in the US, multicultural education, and cultural diversity both locally and globally. The book offers an original, insightful, and informative contribution to the field of multicultural education and cultural diversity in the US."

—Joseph Zajda, Associate Professor, *Australian Catholic University, Melbourne Campus*

CONTENTS

1 Why and How Textbooks Matter for Youth Wellbeing 1

2 Misrepresentation in Educational Media (1954–1999) 19

3 Textbooks in Far Northern California High Schools in 2007–2022 47

4 Teaching to the Test: Undermining Academic Rebellion (2020s) 67

5 Kids These Days: Ethnographic Evidence on the Impact of Textbook Misrepresentation 79

6 Conclusion: In Need of a Curricular Revolution 91

Appendices 97

References 105

Index 113

CHAPTER 1

Why and How Textbooks Matter for Youth Wellbeing

Abstract This chapter presents what is at stake regarding representation in US history textbooks. The chapter highlights why education is so strongly linked with youth identity, and what the implications are for minority students who do not see themselves represented accurately or even at all in their history textbooks. The data sample, textbook coding methods, literature review, ethnographic data, and terminology are all described to ensure readers know the research context of this book.

Keywords Identity • Wellbeing • Education • High school • History • Textbooks • Methods • Literature • Ethnography • Terminology

INTRODUCTION: THE DANGERS OF MISREPRESENTATION

History, the saying goes, is written by the victors. In the United States (US), this means that the recounting of history is told mostly through a lens of White settler glorification that supports the colonization of land and people, and the drawing of borders to keep others out. Such practices are fairly standard in contexts of nation-building and nationalism. But what does it mean for young people to be told each day in the classroom that their ancestors were strong or weak, conquerors or the conquered? What are the long-term effects of misrepresentation in US history textbooks in relation to pluriethnic, multicultural democratic coexistence?

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Training for a patriotic shared identity begins in the early years of schooling. In one textbook for second graders, currently on the market and already picked up by all fifty US states, the problematic myth of the Thanksgiving holiday is reproduced in full, with Pilgrims and Wampanoag peoples sharing a meal to celebrate a good harvest after the Wampanoag helped the Pilgrims learn to hunt and farm (Teachers' Curriculum Institute 2016: 190–1). The statement, "In November, Americans celebrate Thanksgiving and give thanks," (191) implies that anyone who does otherwise is not included in the "American" label. Textbooks throughout the K-12 curriculum are rife with these types of stereotypes and misinformation, which boils acts of political violence down to the benign friendship of Thanksgiving.

In this book, I focus on high school-level curriculum textbooks. In US high schools—upper secondary education—US history is a required course for most eleventh graders (sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds), although some high schools may offer it at a different time. Students offered Advanced Placement US History (APUSH) may score well enough on the APUSH test that they can waive a history requirement in college. For some college graduates, this means that *one* US history class in high school may be all they know of United States history by the time they finish a bachelor's degree.

In my ethnographic work, I have examined how curricula that are meaningful to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students support their wellbeing by affirming identities that are often marginalized elsewhere. In this book, I analyze how representation operates for minority groups, who are frequently presented as passive recipients of White power in the US education system and society at large. While this is true for a range of minority identities, I focus on Native American and im/migrant-origin people, especially Mexicans, because I have also been working ethnographically to document the impact of educational experiences on students from these backgrounds.

Terminology

Before proceeding with this brief introduction, I offer a note on terminology. I capitalize the word "White" throughout this book, despite the fact that the Associated Press's (AP) Stylebook does not yet do so. The AP capitalizes terms like Black and Latino but leaves white with a lowercase *w* (Daniszewski 2020), which the movement for "grammatical justice" has explicitly rejected (Mack and Palfrey 2020). I also use many terms in this book which themselves are politically potent and not always agreed upon, but they show my best effort at representation.

For example, there is no consensus on best practices regarding use of the terms “Native Americans” and “American Indians.” The term “Indian” is codified in US federal law and brings with it certain rights, and it is used by some people throughout the US as a self-referential label. The term “Native American” and “Native” are also common self-referential terms in far Northern California, mostly used when people are speaking more broadly beyond their specific tribe.

I use the term “Native American” throughout this book because, while recognizing its politically charged significance, it was the most common term used both in textbooks and by people in my fieldwork who themselves identified with it. In far Northern California, although the term “Indian” was sometimes used to self-label, it was far less common or acceptable for non-Native people to use that term. For example, even though many of my interviewees over the years have used that term for self-reference, they also cited examples of discriminatory behavior where White people used the term Indian in derogatory ways. In conversations with Native American stakeholders in multiple projects over many years, it was agreed upon that the term Native American was the logical one for me, as a non-Native person, to use. In general ethnographic practice, I work to name the specific tribe of the people I speak with as their identity, but I use Native American as the general term when a specific tribe name is not available and when directly quoting texts.

Because I discuss textbooks coded specifically for references to terms such as Mexico, Mexican and Mexican American, I use each of these terms to refer to a specific status. I use the term “im/migrant” to encompass those who themselves have crossed borders, or have been crossed by borders, and subsequent generations born in the United States but with family roots elsewhere.[1] This terminology, which is beginning to be used more in the United States, is part of an attempt to be as inclusive as possible of a range of identities impacted by migration. Sometimes I use the term “Latinx” to connote people of Latin American origin beyond Mexico, with the final *x* used in place of an *o/a* to avoid gender binaries. Although Latine is also used as a non-binary term, especially among youth, it is not yet the norm within academia. The labor to create a gender-neutral set of terms that are in line with Spanish grammar rules is still a work in progress. I do not weigh in on it here, but I use this term available at the time of writing, recognizing that terms are likely to change in the future.

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[1] I thank Elizabeth Vaquera and Elizabeth Aranda for introducing me to this term at the 2022 Conference on Im/migrant Well-Being.

Many textbooks use the term "Hispanic"—which technically connotes someone of Spanish-speaking heritage—so I place this term in direct quotes if it is used in a textbook. Very few students I engaged with ethnographically used the terms Hispanic or Latinx/e/o/a without prompting, even when directly referring to textbook content. Instead, most defined themselves as Mexican, regardless of how many generations removed from migration they were. Though my textbook coding included data on representation of many other groups, including African Americans and Asian Americans, I limit the data here to how the original settlers of the United States—Native Americans—and other original inhabitants of the pre-1848 west and southwest—im/migrant Mexicans—are treated textually.

Although I separate the sections analyzing Native American and Mexican-origin representation in this book, in fact, these categories are intersecting Venn diagrams. Many Latin American im/migrant people in the US are themselves Indigenous, and this is particularly so in California, where many robust Indigenous Mexican-origin communities reside. Indigenous Mexican im/migrant students therefore bring experiences of intergenerational trauma from state policies of forced assimilation or annihilation that are part of US and Mexican history, politics, and culture, and are ever present in educational settings. Indigenous Mexican im/migrant youth face unique challenges in US schools because they are stigmatized twice. First, they are a minority in general, and second, they are stigmatized within the colorism and racist social hierarchies of Latin American culture as well.

In some cases, Indigenous im/migrant youth may identify more with other Indigenous people, including Native Americans, than they do with Mexicans or other non-Indigenous Latinx people. For example, Indigenous students from Mexico now residing in California may find Mexican im/migrant identity conflictual because as Indigenous people they have been rejected from Mexican mainstream society, but in the White gaze of California, they may be rendered Mexican and not their specific Indigenous identity. I divide the textual analysis in order to simplify identity categories, while recognizing the compromises that such a choice entails.

Finally, the term "minority" is often taken as controversial on topics pertaining to identity politics. Native Americans were not a minority before colonization, and frequently ignored acts of violence rendered them so, and the use of the term "minority" rarely captures that. I use the term here in the most basic social science way—to refer to people who at the time of this writing are numerically smaller than a dominant group, while acknowledging the dissatisfying limitation of that use. In sum, labels remain inadequate to capture the lived experience and political turmoil behind them. I offer these terminological clarifications to help readers contextualize the terms employed in the following pages.

School and Texts as Nation-building

For many people globally, school is the place one goes to learn, or the place one sends their children to be cared for so that they can go to work. Educational content is not often rigorously interrogated by the general public if the basic schedule and logistics meet the needs of working families. As Simone Lässig writes, "Textbooks reflect the knowledge and values defined by a given society, and particularly its political elites, as essential and thus suitable for passing on to the next generation" (2009: 2). In most contexts, schooling is designed by elites for the masses as part of socialization and state-building. Because textbooks bear "a claim to truth and to general validity," Lässig observes, such educational media "transport specifically authorized information" in ways that embed social and political hegemonic power (2009: 2).

Previous scholarship has looked deeply at textbooks as highly politicized documents that encode societal values within them. Fuchs and Bock's comprehensive edited handbook, for example, includes thirty chapters dedicated to unpacking aspects of textbook theory, creation, use, and impact, including how issues such as colonialism, LGBTQ+ rights, and human rights appear in textbooks (Fuchs and Bock 2018). By elucidating the history, present practice, and future agenda for textbooks in formal education, Fuchs and Bock contribute to formalizing the field of textbook studies and shining light on the many controversies textbooks embody. Such textbook studies are particularly important in light of the purported "truth" that textbooks are generally seen to contain (Lässig 2009: 2).

In fact, what constitutes truth has been under fire in the United States, where a culture war is currently under way, and schools and teachers are in the crosshairs. Heated debates in the United States about teaching critical race theory (Ladson-Billings 2021) and ethnic studies (Scott and

Perez-Diaz 2021) are rampant, and it is evident that educational policies are major sites of controversy. Education is, at its base, political (Oakes et al. 2015; Spring 2017). In fact, what gets taught in the classroom has been politically tense at the state and national level from the beginning of the modern nation-state system and continues to be so to this day.

As European states crystalized their borders in the aftermath of wars that lead to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, states also began nation-building projects to create homogenous populations that saw themselves as cohesive wholes. Textbooks were sites for nation-building in many contexts (Grever and Van der Vlies 2017), such as rebuilding from war (Bentrovato et al. 2016; Gellman and Bellino 2019; Ingrao 2009), and navigating globalization (Zajda 2022). Inculcated with a specific national identity through their schooling, such citizens were then poised to support and defend the sovereignty that undergirds the foundation of the modern state system. Education was not single-handedly responsible for citizenship production, however. Scholars document the use of mechanisms such as the printing press, the census, and museums (Anderson 1991), alongside war, military service, a common language, and the schoolroom to foster national identity (Hobsbawm 1990; Weber 1976).

The impact of multiple forms of globalization—political, economic, and cultural—on education systems and the identities such systems work to produce, have changed over time. The dominance of some languages over others, as in the Englishization movement, is one way this has been made visible (Dor 2004; Kachru 1994; Schmidt 2014; Wickström 2016). Educational content decisions are made in the midst of these social tensions. For example, minority rights regarding language use in schools and elsewhere have been constantly contested and impact national and community identities as part of these globalization dynamics (Gellman 2019, 2020, 2023a, May 2012; Telles and Sue 2019; U.S. English 2021).

In many parts of the world, as governments passed labor laws decreasing the allowable hours that children could work, and increasing the legal requirements for school attendance, public education became more and more a central axis of identity formation for global youth. In the United States, the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, which applied to elementary and secondary education, granted federal recognition and funding for English-language learners. For the first time, bilingual education became part of the grammar of equal educational opportunity. The Bilingual Education Act recognized the right to differentiated services, and to this day cultural and language rights activists reference the Bilingual Education

Act in their demands for culturally sensitive education. Prior to 1968, it was routine for im/migrant students who spoke languages other than English to be segregated into less advanced academic tracks. Such tracking still happens, but it isn't supposed to.

In many districts today, Native American students are subject to merely updated versions of the White supremacist curricula that shaped the education of their grandparents. While no longer beaten for speaking Indigenous languages, they still see their cultures represented as conquered, or as obstacles to progress, if they are represented at all. The achievement gap between Native American and White students is well documented (Simon et al. 2020). Some schools, like the ones where my fieldwork took place, are changing this very slowly. By inserting Indigenous language into formal school curricula, the languages, and their associated cultures, histories, and contemporary presence, have become part of the educational canon in these schools (Gellman 2022, 2023c).

In some similar but also different ways, im/migrant students of Mexican origin face many ongoing obstacles. Even with the legal rights ascribed them under the Bilingual Education Act, schools are still mostly English-immersion affairs, even if they provide multilingual support classes or other academic spaces where instruction in a home language is allowed. In two of my case study high schools, for example, recent newcomer students fluent in Spanish had one to two class periods a day of English Language Development or an associated support class, but spent the rest of their time in English-only classes where they tried to gain language skills through immersion. Their grades reflected their ability in the material, and hence many were not doing well, as the language barrier stood in the way. Both groups of students—Native Americans and im/migrant students—struggle to see a place for themselves in schools that are bastions of White domination. These students code-switch constantly between home and school, not only linguistically, but also in terms of the stories they hear about their people from family members versus those presented in educational media such as textbooks. Schools that value multilingualism and center culturally relevant curricula in a social justice lens may have different effects on students than those that operate from deficit perspectives, viewing non-English speaking students as problems that need fixing.

What does it mean for Native American and im/migrant students to see themselves represented in certain ways, or absent from US education in the first place? Educational media may reinforce or undermine acceptance of students and their cultures of origin depending on the content.

Specific textual descriptions, and how such concepts are utilized by teachers or reinforced by other media, play a role in the impact of representation. How much culturally conscious content teachers choose to bring into the classroom, and how *effectively* such content is incorporated into lesson plans and in the school environment can wield influence over youth identity and wellbeing (Gellman 2023a).

Other factors at play in youth identity include school, community, and family environments; attitudes towards people of different backgrounds; family and community migration patterns; and the regional, state, and international context of inclusion or exclusion that students may be exposed to through news or social circles. In addition, variables like physical insecurity can strongly inform youth wellbeing. In sum, the narratives students encounter depicting people with their own backgrounds matter in the classroom. When people feel invisible or misrepresented, it can be damaging to self-esteem, which in turn inhibits a range of other pro-social behaviors such as joining clubs, playing sports, running for student government, or other typical high school-aged activities. Similarly, the absence of content about things that have impacted people, their families, or communities, can make textbooks seem, at best, out of touch, and at worst, deliberately censoring.

Textbooks are artifacts of culture in any society. They convey the values and norms that people in positions of power have decided that others should follow. Patriotism and nationalism are regularly the lenses through which historical content is filtered before it makes its way into the schoolroom. Such filtration ensures socio-political reproducibility for elites and operates as a policy of narrative replication. Formal education provides a means to incorporate people into a set of shared norms and values, thus facilitating integration. But integration into *what* is a question not asked enough.

Purpose and Contribution

High school is a time of immense identity exploration, when young people often begin individuating from their families and defining who they are on their own terms. This happens both in social and familial contexts and in response to the formal curriculum they are exposed to in school. Representation of Native American and im/migrant people in high school history textbooks informs this identity formation process. My analysis, surveying US history textbooks that have been used in formal educational settings from the 1950s through the present day, shows which kinds of stories are present and absent in the curriculum. How representation happens has an impact on how youth see themselves in the world.

I make two core contributions in this book. First, I document the textbook landscape to show what representation of Native Americans and Mexican im/migrant people has changed over time and what continues to persist. To do this, I present findings from an original textbook analysis data set. This consists of US history textbooks used in three regional public high schools in far Northern California, in addition to textbooks used in United States history classes from 1954 and into the twenty-first century sourced from the library at the George Eckert Institute, for a total of twelve textbooks. My analysis accounts for the ways that Native Americans and Mexican im/migrant people are discussed across spectrums of factual accuracy, including the presence or absence of representation and agency in relation to White settler-colonialism (a major topic in US history courses). I am particularly attentive to the power relationships that play out in textual form.

Second, I look at how textbook representation intersects with youth identity formation to inform the academic and life success of young people in precarious circumstances. The struggles to exist in multiple worlds, maintaining both home and school identities, are particularly acute for Native American and Mexican im/migrant students, many of whose families maintain traditional cultural practices, including heritage languages, while also urging young people in their communities to succeed in White-dominated English-medium schools. Educational media, including textbooks, play a role in shaping student identities and the aspirations that accompany them. How can students imagine successful futures when history classes include a litany of past failures or the subjugation of their ancestors?

This contribution rests on two streams of data. One stream of data was curated in 2022 while carrying out a Senior Fellowship at the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media/Georg Eckert Institute (GEI), in Braunschweig, Germany. Housed within this illustrious institution, the Georg Arnhold Program on Education for Sustainable Peace has an explicit mission to look at the applied aspect of education in addressing conflict. GEI is part of Germany's legacy of the Holocaust. Its founder, Georg Eckert, launched the International Institute for Textbook Improvement at the Kant Teacher Training College in 1951, which formed the foundation of the present-day GEI (Fuchs et al. 2022). Eckert joined the National Socialist Students' Association (NSDStB) in 1934, and the Nazi party in 1937, and later joined the Greek Resistance (Fuchs et al. 2022: 10; GEI 2023). His inner turmoil over his previous Nazi association likely drove his institution-building, which was premised upon a vision of democratically reconstructing Germany's education system after World War II (Fuchs et al. 2022).

Germany's leadership on themes of memorialization after violence extends to the role of schools and educational media by recognizing that both are prime sites of ideological indoctrination. To that end, GEI has curated the most extensive library of German and international textbooks in the world. Scholars come from all corners of the globe to conduct research on educational media and how such media inform democracy and coexistence. From German textbooks with photos of Adolf Hitler on the first page, to Mexican social studies books from a range of states and school years, the GEI library is a comprehensive collection devoted to educational media and stewarded by expert librarians and staff. During my fellowship, I made use of this library and selected my case study textbooks from it.

I immersed in a second stream of data through in-depth mixed-method fieldwork I conducted in California schools in 2018–2022. Here, I draw on interview and focus group materials that are connected to larger bodies of work published elsewhere. While the fieldwork focuses primarily on Native American and im/migrant student experiences, I also include students from many demographics, including the regional White ethnic majority. During this fieldwork, I also examined many additional forms of educational media, such as films and film clips, podcasts, murals, student art, and more traditional products such as supplementary readings and assessment tools. Taken together, the textbooks, educational media, and student interviews and focus groups directly contribute to this portrait of how some identities are represented or silenced in educational settings.

Textbook Data Sample

In 2022—the time of my data collection—the GEI library had a total of 2,636 books in its United States collection. Of those, 853 were at the upper secondary (high school) level. Of the high school level books, 314 were in the general social sciences, including 243 textbooks, with the remaining seventy-one textbooks in math, science, and other subjects outside the social science scope of this study. In addition to using the online catalogue filtering capacity to procure these numbers, I also relied on my own visual assessment of the collection based on time spent in the stacks.

The 243 textbooks cover topics including geography, civics, world history, and US history. It is the last category that I focus on here. A visual approximation based on book titles in their respective categories on the shelves shows that the high school level social science books are relatively equally divided across these four fields, meaning that there are about sixty US history, government, and civics textbooks in the GEI collection.

Of these, I selected sixteen books that were most clearly for use at the high school level in US history classes, which I read thoroughly, while taking extensive notes. Then, I coded the content across themes identified to examine representation of Native American, Mexican, and im/migrant people more broadly. Twelve of these books are then presented in depth here, with four books deemed beyond the scope of this project, as they were intended for civics or government, rather than history classes. I deliberately included four contemporary US textbooks that are in current or recent use at three of the high schools where I carried out fieldwork.

The other sample category included eight textbooks that were used as US history textbooks in schools from 1954 through the twenty-first century and provide historical reference points for how representation has or has not changed over time. These older books were randomly selected from a larger universe of twentieth century history textbooks, with a deliberate selection of at least one book written or published roughly within each decade.

In addition to cover-to-cover analyses of the selected textbook samples, I also surveyed several additional books from each decade this study covers, focusing in a more targeted way on specific passages that included keywords shared with the core sample texts. This survey technique allows me confidence in claims that the selected text per decade is sufficiently representative of others of its time as to not have selected exceptional textbooks, but rather ones with shared features across their time and genre. Both the changes and the lack of changes revealed shifts in popular culture, as well as recalcitrant places of White domination. The textbook list is in Appendix 1.1 and many of the works also appear in the bibliography of this book.

Case justification and context: Native Americans and Mexican im/migrant people share some common experiences but have distinct political and racialized experiences within the United States. I am not conflating or simplifying those complex experiences by studying them in a historical comparative framework. Rather, after years of working ethnographically with students of both backgrounds in public high schools in California, I wanted to investigate in more depth the kind of textbooks that were shaping young people's curricular experiences, and those of their parents, teachers, and other generations. I had heard many complaints from students who identify as Native American, Mexican, or Mexican American with their heritage community's depictions in their textbooks, but I had not yet taken the time to analyze the textbooks in depth myself.

As an outsider to both communities—I am a White, Ashkenazi Jewish college professor from California, now based in New England—I have spent years cultivating trusting and collaborative relationships with stakeholders from both communities in California and Mexico. I write about the collaborative methodology we engage in elsewhere (Gellman 2023a), but I mention it here to explain why I focus so closely on these two particular groups in the textbook analysis. The textual exploration was undertaken with research questions derived from student analyses of their own educational environments that I had heard about for years in interviews and focus groups. This context may also help readers navigate the multiple layers of analysis in the chapters to come. Predominantly, there is a focus on textbooks created at the national level, without an explicit assessment of their state- or local-level implementation. However, the ethnographic chapter honors the origin of this project by returning to high school students in California looking at problems of textbook content in their own words.

Textbook coding methods: In order to create a manageable manual coding strategy for thousands of pages of text, I created a list of key words and historical incidents relating to Native American and Mexico and Mexican im/migrant people. For example, keywords for representation of Native American people include: American civilizations, Thanksgiving, *terra nullius*, missions, Pocahontas, Manifest Destiny, Chief Joseph, Oregon Trail, Settling the West, assimilation, land theft, Sand Creek massacre, Sitting Bull, Tonto, and termination. Keywords for representation of Mexico and Mexican im/migrant people include: War with Mexico, ranching and cattle drives, assimilation, nativism, Gold Rush, farmworkers, immigration, borders, Zoot suits, Hispanic American Organizations, Dolores Huerta, César Chávez, Bilingual Education Act of 1968, bilingualism, North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), wall, and alien.

I read each textbook with the keyword lists next to me, making note of quotes, page numbers, and analytic commentary as I read. For example, I examined references to terms or sometimes unstated ideas such as the Doctrine of Discovery and Manifest Destiny in every textbook. The absences of key terms are as much data points as are their presence and stated definitions. For example, several textbooks did not reference the Doctrine of Discovery, but took the notion of the United States as *terra nullius* as fact. For data regarding Native American representation, I paid special attention to keyword references of first contact. The politics of Thanksgiving versus the National Day of Mourning, or of Pocahontas as willing savior of a White man versus a coerced subject, are still under scrutiny but have not yet reached consensus. In fact, the Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. had highly relevant curated exhibits on both these topics in 2022, speaking to their ongoing complexity in the public sphere.

Other topics, such as the impacts of Spanish missions and western expansion on Native American populations, have been long documented in the literature—populations were decimated and have not recovered from these acts of colonization—but remain strangely invisible in high school-level textbooks. Some tactics of certifiably genocidal policies like land theft, enslavement, and forced reservation relocations are presented in sanitized form only, while others, such as the Dawes Act and termination, are presented through different lenses depending on the era of publication of the textbook.

Similarly, there was remarkable consistency of presentation for some keywords and concepts pertaining to representation of Mexico, Mexicans, and Mexican Americans. Patriotism, American civilization-building, including the decline of the Spanish and French empires, and the US war with Mexico, all changed very little in textbooks spanning the mid-twentieth century through the new millennium. There was more evolution in discussion of subjects including assimilation, nativism, migration, Hispanic American political organizing, and in issues of language use in California schools. Generally, to foreshadow the findings, twenty-first century textbooks were more apt to show cultural rights for im/migrants in a more positive light, while those from the 1960s to the 1980s maintained assimilatory frameworks.

In addition to documenting Native American, Mexico, and Mexican im/migrant representation in the textbooks, I also assessed the textbooks in relation to numerous additional terms pertaining to BIPOC representation. For example, I noted the terminological shift over time from referring to "slaves" versus "enslaved people" in the antebellum United States, the way the Ku Klux Klan is discussed, the internment of Japanese and Japanese Americans during the World War II era, and how terrorism is described in post-9/11 sections. Overall, these additional coding categories served as further indicators of how each textbook frames racial politics in relation to structures of White power. Including these additional categories allowed me to make broader assessments of the political orientation of each textbook and broadly gauge its potential impact on students.

For each of these topics, I analyzed relevant images and maps in addition to the text itself and took dozens of pictures throughout the coding process. While I was ultimately not able to include the images in this book, I describe some of them in depth in the respective textbook sections. The image analysis contributes to assessing what was thought of as worthy of inclusion in the textbooks, but many also reveal commentary about racial and ethnic dynamics at the time of the textbook's production.

I organized each textbook coding in a table under the following four column headings: keyword/theme/topic, excerpt/quote, page number, and analysis. The keywords generally reflected the chronological pattern of the textbooks. In total, the textbook coding resulted in more than 21,000 words of quotes and analysis across the sixteen textbooks. I selected representative examples to share in this book, recognizing that there is a large array of accompanying points left out, as is the case with any presentation of research. In addition, the textbook coding was accompanied by my review of related literatures on schooling, representation, and success for BIPOC students.

Literature Review

I am by no means the first person to carefully read, code, and analyze history textbooks. GEI hosts numerous staff researchers as well as visiting scholars who conduct their own research across all subjects of the social science and humanities, and occasionally the natural sciences, and use their findings to inform textbook commissions and other curricular decision-making bodies. It is a humbling place to work, being amidst those making direct interventions in how history is taught. Yet for many students, and their teachers as well, the politics behind textbook content may be invisible. In the United States, textbooks are frequently taken as fact by the masses, even as small groups of powerful decision-makers may battle over the content.

Historians and others have documented many instances of White glorification and misrepresentation of BIPOC populations in educational media. Prior to embarking on the textbook coding, I read my way through much of this literature, noting the patterns and changes in the work over time. Canonical texts include James Loewen's (2018) *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, Howard Zinn's (2015 [2003]) *A People's History of the United States,* or the versions of both these texts for younger readers (Loewen 2019; Zinn 2009). Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's (2014) *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* is complemented by applied interventions such as the Indian Land Tenure Foundation (2020), which has supported the development of curricula that stipulate the teaching of Native American rights. Other scholarship also problematizes inclusionary efforts (Foxworth et al. 2015).

On the role of education in relation to power, peace, and democratic coexistence, the literature is similarly rich and growing (Bentrovato et al. 2016; Bettinger 2021; Vera and Fuchs 2018). I have contributed to this stream of research in the past through an examination of different kinds of silencing in history textbooks, as well as representation in schooling more broadly in Mexico, El Salvador, Turkey, Sierra Leone, and the United States. In some of those earlier works, I showed how the decisions about whose perspective is included or silenced act as affirmation of who is a valid actor in society. Indigenous people, for example, were frequently written out of history textbooks and replaced by class-based identities.

I also follow literature that looks at im/migrant-origin student experiences with schooling in the United States (Arora et al. 2021; Cammarota 2007; Hernandez et al. 2022; Kirova 2001; Lander 2019, 2022; Maramba 2008; Murillo Jr et al. 2009; Sánchez and Machado-Casas 2009). Scholarship on the challenges for im/migrant, undocumented, and mixed-status family members is highly relevant for understanding additional variables that interact with schooling experiences for BIPOC youth (Andrews 2018; Calderón 2005; O'Leary 2014; Sepúlveda 2018; Stephen 2007).

The literature shows overlapping evidence that BIPOC young people are subject to myriad identity-based harms in their education, and that undermining confidence in relation to identity has real impacts on student success. There are two key points that I draw from these literatures that contribute to my own findings. First, schools are set up to facilitate White achievement and reproduce White narratives of historical success. Textbooks are one of many spaces that do the work of maintaining White supremacy in schools, but the textual problems are often mentioned without a deeper dive into their substance.

Second, it is difficult to find viable recommendations for educational interventions. Identifying concrete suggestions for intervention in schooling to support BIPOC success runs up against numerous obstacles. From budget constraints to cultures of complacency, school districts devise many ways to rebuff or diminish interventions that could be transformative for BIPOC students. As a tangible product directly under the purview of district curriculum committees, textbooks are direct spaces of representation that educators and policymakers have immediate jurisdiction over.

Curricular decisions can be economical. Some of the suggested alternative titles like Dunbar-Ortiz's *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* is far less costly (US$11 average) than the 1,000-page hardcover tomes (US$100 average) usually purchased for eleventh grade US history classes. I do not get into the economics or politics of textbook publishing, but other researchers have (Apple and Christian-Smith 2017; Sewall 2005; Watt 2007), and I hope will continue to do so. It is a big business, and changing representation will implicate publishers as much as individual authors or curriculum committees.

While some variables, such as school and community climate, or im/migrant documentation status—both of which considerably impact student wellness—may be beyond the scope of what educators or administrators are able to influence, textbooks are not. Textbook reform, alongside other viable solutions such as introducing new, up-to-date alternative resources to students, teachers, and staff can move the United States towards an education system that better facilitates the wellbeing and success of all students, and BIPOC students in particular.

Ethnographic Data

I utilize textbook analysis alongside political ethnography, qualitative interviews, focus groups, and surveys in four schools in far Northern California as core data for this book. Combining the textbook research with this ethnographic fieldwork allows the benefit of mixed-method insight triangulated across a range of data sources. The majority of the ethnographic data analysis is presented elsewhere (Gellman 2023a, in progress) but I include a small selection of data in this book to situate and complement the textbook analysis. For this reason, I briefly describe the methodology and methods of the human-involved research.

The Yurok Tribe, located in far Northern California, is the largest tribe in California, with more than 6,400 members. Much of my California-based research has been in partnership with the Tribe and with its Language Program and Education Department. I have worked with the Yurok Tribe's Education Department since 2016 to design collaborative research, where Yurok colleagues participate in co-designing the research questions and data collection instruments with me. With permission from them and the Yurok Tribal Council, from district and school administrators and teachers, as well as opt-in permission from students and their guardians, I carried out mixed-method research in four public, regional high schools from January through May 2022, conducting more than forty open-ended interviews with students and adults in the education community, alongside eleven focus groups with forty-nine total participants, and sixty-six surveys. I also carried out dozens of hours of classroom observations. A fraction of this data is referenced in this book, but it informs the larger framework of the study and is discussed in more detail in Chaps. 3 and 5.

This human-centered research complements the textbook research by eliciting meaning from people as to how they are personally affected by the representations that the textbook analysis describes. Taken together, the textbook analysis and the ethnographic data build on existing literature to show how representation or misrepresentation informs youth identities. Such identity, partially constructed by and through classroom curricula including textbooks, informs political consciousness and can also translate into behavior.

Conclusion and Outline of the Book

In this introduction, I have shown what is at stake regarding textbook content in relation to curricular inclusion for Native American and Mexican im/migrant students. Through a description of the research puzzle, data collection sample, and methods used to form the basis of this study, I have shown the roadmap for how I undertook the research and for what purpose.

The subsequent chapters are as follows. Chapter 2 presents the results from coding and analyzing eight textbooks published between 1954 and 1999. I focus on examples of misrepresentation of Native American, Mexican and im/migrant-origin people in these books. Given the racial overtones of the 1950s–1960s, these early textbook examples demonstrate teachings under the shadow of White supremacy. The effects of these textbook implications on BIPOC students are not overly belabored but are evident in the examples themselves. As textbook publishing adapts to the political environment and social awareness of each decade, the textual politics of the books change in some ways while other attributes remain consistent over time.

Chapter 3 focuses the textbook analysis on US history books in use in far Northern California high schools, where I have carried out extended ethnographic work on both this and other related projects. I engage both the textual content, as well as the school and community environments where the content is delivered to highlight why curricular revision is so crucial.

Chapter 4 looks in depth at the politics of Advanced Placement US history through a textual analysis of the textbook used for the APUSH class in one far Northern California high school. In addition to the central themes of Native American and Mexican im/migrant representation, I also briefly review the politics of Advanced Placement more broadly.

Chapter 5 brings the voices of students and alumni to the forefront as they articulate how they have experienced the representation of groups that match their own identities in textbooks. Chapter 6 concludes the book by emphasizing the findings and crafting a call for a textbook reform effort to undo White supremacy as the guiding filter through which US history is taught.

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CHAPTER 2

Misrepresentation in Educational Media (1954–1999)

Abstract In this chapter, eight textbooks are analyzed from the years 1954 through 1999. From dissecting quotes, images, and maps within the textbooks, the textbook rhetoric is highly steeped in themes of White glory, White superiority, and White supremacy. There is excess justification on *why* White colonizers had to take over Native land, and very little mention on the plights of Mexican or Mexican American experiences in the 1800s Mexican-American War. Textbooks of this time were highly inaccurate and avoided the hard truths. Beginning in the 1980s, though, some of the analyzed textbooks started to improve by providing more accurate representations of the plights experienced by Native Americans, but the textbooks remain problem-ridden.

Keywords Colonization • White supremacy • Land • Mexican-American war • Misrepresentation • Silence • Inaccurate • Truth

INTRODUCTION

This chapter takes readers through numerous history textbooks published in the second half of the twentieth century for use in United States public school classrooms. Touching on readings from each decade from the 1950s through the 1990s, the chapter highlights what has and has not changed regarding representation over time. In keeping with the book's

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primary themes, I focus on representations of Native American, Mexican, and Mexican American people. I also mention additional themes that illustrate how non-White stories are included or excluded when it is useful to explain shifts in textbook approaches over time.

THE 1950S: AMERICANIZATION AND GLORIFICATION

My data textbook sample begins in 1954. *Our Nation's Story* is a book by and for White people with a White supremacist agenda. It reflects the overwhelming socio-political dynamics of its time. At the opening section of each chapter the author makes sweeping assumptions about who their readers are—generally White middle-class high school students—through the use of the royal "We." These textual assumptions happen more than twenty times throughout the book, enough to make it a foundational flaw rather than an outlier. Though the intention may have been to create a sense of intimacy or connection with readers, it does not age well.

When read through the lens of cultural diversity, such encoded social assumptions seem bizarre. For example, several passages are highly assumptive: "At football games you have often watched the work of the officials. You know they are there to enforce certain rules…" (447); "You have probably followed political campaigns and listened to election returns. You are looking forward to the time when your vote will be among those counted" (448); "When you were a small child your home and neighborhood were all you knew of the world" (552). But what of the students who don't like football or don't like attending sporting events, or students from disenfranchised communities who view elections skeptically, or those who, for whatever reason, have had to grow up before their time? The homogeneous assumptions about reader character set the tone for this textbook. Such assumptions are further compounded by the way that information about groups of people is conveyed throughout the chapters.

Native American representation in the 1950s: Native Americans are repeatedly made invisible or subservient in *Our Nation's Story*. In a map early in the book, it shows what is now the United States as a tabula rasa, or empty slate, paired with the quotation, "This is the land on which Americans have found work to do, built their homes, and established a free nation" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 14–15). The map leads into passages that describe the Doctrine of Discovery, the notion that land unoccupied by Christians was land available for the taking and non-Christian inhabitants were colonizable. This concept is reinforced by section headings and word choices found throughout this book that leans on terms like "found" and "discovered" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 35).

In another example of invisibility, the colonization of California is recounted without mentioning Native American people at all. In a section on the Gold Rush of 1849, readers are simply informed that: "By the end of the year, the population of California was approaching 100,000" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 301–2), as if all 100,000 people were new arrivals in *terra nullius*. In a section heading labeled "Conflict with the Indians," White violence toward Native American people is subsumed under the term "conflict," suggesting mutual aggression (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 400–1), and this trend continues through nearly all the textbooks coded in this project. I went on to see the term "conflict" as the default term when talking about colonization through westward expansion. Conflict is substituted consistently instead of alternate descriptions that I, as a social scientist, might use to describe an intergroup dynamic more accurately, like "genocide toward" or "attempted annihilation of." Conflict means that both parties likely have responsibility for conflictual behavior, which ascribes less responsibility to aggressors.

The colonization of the Great Plains area saw intense violence and aggression towards Native Americans, yet the authors use avoidance language to describe it: "Before the plains could be settled, two formidable occupants had to be removed, the Indians and the buffaloes" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 400–1). First, comparing Indians and buffaloes plays into tropes about Indian savageness, rendering them like animals as opposed to humans. Second, this text places Native Americans as an obstacle that must be overcome. Because of the evolution in weaponry, particularly firearms, the authors reassure readers that "the white man could face his Indian opponents with confidence" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 400–1). The White supremacist convictions inserted into a text used in high school classrooms are revealing in taking the political pulse of the period.

As the story of the Great Plains concludes in the text, the authors use dehumanizing language—"They fought all the more savagely" (403)—but also make attempts to show that White violence toward Native American people was extreme. "The use of frightful methods of warfare was not limited to one side. The policy of the army in dealing with the Indian problem was based on the idea that the only good Indian was a dead one" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 403). The textbook describes how White settlers killed the bison at an alarming rate, until near extinction. Bison were the main food and clothing source for local tribes, and their mass killing condemned the latter to death or a dramatic change of lifestyle. In this telling, however, the same White people who were killing the Native Americans' way of life were also their saviors: "The desperate plight of the Indians appealed to the humanitarian instincts of people in the East" (403). Though parts of the Plains text appear sympathetic toward Native American people at times, the authors see no irony in the notion of White politicians wanting to solve a problem their fellow colonizers created in the first place. Nor is the irony evident in an image of a Native American guide pointing the way for White colonizers wearing Indian-inspired clothing, and illustrations that show both the reliance colonizers had on Indigenous knowledge for directions and basic survival, but also the power dynamic in which Native people had to serve colonizers in order to survive.

The blinders remain firmly in place throughout the discussion of reservations. The Dawes Act, which allowed the privatization and sale of traditional Native American lands, is presented as a salvation for poor people; detractors became a burden on the state. This is alluded to in the following passage: "Those who did not take advantage of the provisions of the Dawes Act remained the wards of the nation and continued tribal life on reservations. Efforts were also made to improve the lot of Indians by education … compulsory education" (404). Here, "compulsory education" is a less incriminating term than forced boarding schools, which is what the authors are actually describing.

Similarly, the erroneous term "ward" is used to describe those in need of government care once they had been forced off their lands and made indigent through intentional state policy. This textbook constitutes a strong example of Native American misrepresentation. In fact, students who read this book in their US history class most likely came away with a very different version of what actually happened to Native Americans.

Depictions of Mexico and im/migrant people in *Our Nation's Story*: Representation in *Our Nation's Story* does not improve when analyzed for depictions of Mexico or Mexican Americans. In a section about Mexico and the battles for the Alamo and Texas, the language of domination stands out.

> Mexico revolted from Spain and Texas became a Mexican province. Naturally a new arrangement was required … by 1830 the increasing stream of

> American immigrants caused some of the Mexican leaders to feel that the territory [Texas] might be seized forcibly by the US … superior Mexican forces pushed into the fortress [Alamo], killing all of its defenders. The ruthlessness of the Mexicans and the courage of the defenders aroused a spirited resistance among all the Texans. (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 284)

This passage is transparent in its agenda to lift White people at the expense of others. “Naturally” Texas could not stay part of Mexico, which was full of “ruthless” people rather than courageous ones.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is described with similarly problematic language. The authors write, “The war with Mexico had added a princely domain of 529,355 square miles of territory to the United States” (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 292). The word “princely” adds an especially gloating feeling to what is already an intense colonial situation. The authors reinforce this, speaking about the war with Mexico as “a training school for a corps of junior officers who were soon to achieve fame” (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 292). Though many wars are likely training grounds for military personnel to move through the ranks, articulating it in this way lends an air of utilitarian justification to the losses faced by Mexico—of both land and people killed—for the sake of bringing fame and promotion to US military figures.

An additional coding concept I followed throughout my textbook analysis was any discourse on immigration around 1890. This period was a turning point for division between White immigrants from Europe and newer immigrants from Latin America and Asia. The textbook authors seek to justify immigration restrictions and racist quotas by invoking cultural differences between original colonizers and those more recently arriving. Referring to newer immigration as “waves of people,” the authors claim that these people “had in their homeland little opportunity to become familiar with democratic procedures and ideals. As members of persecuted minorities or of nations poor in natural resources they were accustomed to low standards of living” (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 519–20). This highly generalizing and racist assessment seeks to justify closing the borders and imposing restrictions because people were not versed enough in democracy to be let in. By emphasizing that they were already accustomed to poverty, the text seems to be attempting to legitimize the treatment of abandoned migrants.

Treatment of White supremacy: Some political content very clearly crosses an ethical line. I routinely coded each textbook for mention of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) as an additional indicator of how racial violence is discussed. *Our Nation's Story* almost reads like KKK fan mail: "Denied the right to engage actively in politics, some of the former leaders of the South organized a number of secret societies … the Klansmen, wearing awe-inspiring regalia, would parade the streets or visit the home of a person offensive to them" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 332–3). Readers might have turned this page with the impression that KKK members were impressive but disenfranchised people who were compelled to behave as they did due to discrimination they faced.

In an attempt to be charitable to the authors, I can say that, while in later textbooks that I sampled the authors attempted to hide their political agendas even while reinforcing the same tropes of White supremacy, *Our Nation's Story* is at least honest about its intentions. For example, in their introductory remarks the authors write, "[W]e love our country and are proud of it and we want to increase your love of it and pride in it … The growth of our country is something we want you to know about—how the vision of courageous pioneers led to the settlement of this vast land" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 5). It is a patriotic textbook with the mission to increase patriotism. Deeply rooted in Rudyard Kipling's notion of the "White Man's Burden," the authors share a perspective that Kipling writes about (1899), that "our country has been obliged to accept the role of leader of the free nations" (Augspurger and McLemore 1954: 742). What began as new leadership during the post-World War II era of the 1940s and 1950s grew into a policy of American exceptionalism that continues to govern US relations both domestic and international.

1961: Honoring Christopher Columbus

In 1961, *Living in the United States* was published by the Macmillan Company.[1] Its dark-green hardcover showcases multiple images that belie its political orientation. First, the green and white globe centers the United States, which is logical since that is the factual geographic focus of the book. Next, a column of images on the left-hand side show a clear depiction of whose version of history will be explained within its pages. The top image shows a European explorer's ship en route to new land. In the next square, Christopher Columbus, in his shiny silver armor with his ship and the Spanish flag waving behind him, lords over obsequious Native Americans who recognize his suggested supremacy. The image of a Brown figure kneeling down in subservience to a hallowed Columbus is repeated within the text (King et al. 1961: 36), as are other images that similarly convey White conquest. Subsequent cover squares show the pioneer wagon trains used in westward colonization, and the creation of the Panama Canal, a major colonial benchmark for US commerce. All these images highlight White supremacy over subjugated peoples coupled with the success of colonization.

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[1] The target age-group for this book was not verifiable, but middle to high school is plausible based on the level of writing and kinds of activities recommended in the teacher's guide portion of the book.

Multiple passages in this textbook hail colonization as an unparalleled good: "Today we honor Columbus as the greatest discoverer of all time. He did what others of his time dared not do. He sailed westward across unknown waters and found a new land. His courage opened a new world" (King et al. 1961: 47). In fact, Polynesian explorers were also sailing the oceans, but Columbus's exceptionalism is a useful foundation for American exceptionalism. Regardless, numerous parts of the text reinforce stereotypes and inaccuracies. The 1492 narrative of Columbus's arrival in the "West Indies" reads simply: "They found only brown natives in crude huts. Columbus called these people Indians" (King et al. 1961: 46).

Living in the United States contains numerous passages glorifying Whiteness at the expense of Native Americans. For example, Native Americans are made to sound animal-like themselves, lacking social cohesion: "Some Indians lived in simple ways. They depended on the animals and plants they found as they wandered about" (King et al. 1961: 3). Similarly, the textbook *Our Nation's Story*, *Living in the United States* prefers euphemism to fact when discussing White violence toward Native Americans. The problems faced by early colonizers were also framed as the fault of Native Americans: "Trouble with the Indians kept the settlement small at first" (King et al. 1961: 286). Though later on the same page the authors acknowledge that Native Americans also facilitated colonial survival—"The Indians are bringing wild geese to the settlers" (1961: 286)—the overarching message is that White people prevailed despite Native American violence. Using the terms trouble or conflict, rather than a more accurate description of the attempted extermination of Native American people, deflects responsibility from White people.

In terms of how colonizers related to the original inhabitants of what is now the United States, the authors of this book are unequivocal in their bias: "The Pilgrims were fair with the Indians. White men and red men lived at peace with one another for many years" (King et al. 1961: 77). One of the regular keywords I coded each textbook for was "Thanksgiving," which is described in this book with laudatory praise for the freedom it represents to the authors. "Thanksgiving Day is one of our best-loved holidays. Each year, on the fourth Thursday in November, Americans thank God because we live in a free country" (King et al. 1961: 77). In fact, the concept of freedom that Thanksgiving represents is a uniquely White Protestant celebration. Though many of us may now gather around food-laden tables with family regardless of our ancestry, *Living in the United States* reminds readers of the assumptions that are packaged with the holiday (King et al. 1961: 77).

Colonization in *Living in the United States*: The authors in *Living in the United States* manages to make almost no mention whatsoever of immigrants beyond this:

> The ancestors of the people who live in the Americas came from many lands, many countries, and many races. All of these people brought something with them. Many brought their ways of preparing foods, their songs and dances, their love of art. Some brought love of freedom. Others brought skill in farming or in manufacturing. Each has helped to make the countries of the New World what they are today. But the people of the New World are alike in one important way. They are all Americans. (King et al. 1961: 29)

This textbook is remarkable in its use of the third person passive voice to relinquish any responsibility for colonization. In a section titled "Far-away lands added," the authors explain that:

> Our country added lands outside our borders until we had land in every hemisphere. Alaska was added far to the north. Then the Philippines, near the coast of Asia, Hawaii, and other islands on the Pacific were added. Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, in the Atlantic, became part of our country." (King et al. 1961: 421)

By becoming part of "our country," these sovereign countries need not worry over the loss of their autonomy because now they have access to the US. Depicted as a booming society in the aftermath of World War II with railroads, steamboats, cars, and other industrial wonders that make it all worthwhile (King et al. 1961: 286–7), who wouldn't want to be part of it?

Living in the United States contains minimal mention of Mexico or Mexican-descendent people. In the passage regarding the aftermath of the US war with Mexico, the authors say, "Mexico lost not only Texas but also much land to the west of Texas. On the map … find the land given up by Mexico. After this war the United States stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific" (King et al. 1961: 366). Other than being briefly acknowledged as "giving up" the land that now is Texas, Mexico and its citizens are hardly acknowledged at all in this textbook.

Slavery, one of the wider subject indicators of racial politics throughout this study, appears quite problematically in this textbook. California is described as joining the Union in 1850 with a constitution prohibiting slavery (369), but there is no mention of White enslavement of Native Americans during colonization, which in fact was a widespread practice in the second half of the nineteenth century in California. While this particular silence is shared even across contemporary textbooks showing a great deal more inclusivity than this one, *Living in the United States* takes the approach of downplaying the need for and the reality of human enslavement. In nearly the only place it is even mentioned in the book, slavery is described as follows:

> You recall that in 1619 Dutch merchants brought the first Negro slaves to Jamestown. The Virginia planters welcomed them because there were few workers to hire. Soon more Negroes were brought. At one time slaves were used in every English colony in America.
>
> But Northerners did not really need slaves. Their small farms could be worked by the farmers and their sons. It was expensive to clothe slaves in the cold climate and to feed them on small farms. So Northern farmers began to sell their slaves or to set them free. Many Southerners also found that owning slaves did not pay. Tobacco plantations did not need many slaves. So some Southerners sold the slaves they owned or gave them their freedom. (King et al. 1961: 151)

The way enslavement is framed in this passage as an economic "need" for the South is particularly shocking. The North did not "need" slaves economically, so they were able to do away with them. At the same time, the South's complete dependence on slavery for wealth accumulation is dramatically downplayed. This understatement of what slavery actually was continues in the final passages when slavery is eventually mentioned regarding President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Southerners didn't respond to the requirement of ending the institution of slavery because they didn't consider Lincoln their president and "the slaves continued to help their masters" (196). The framing of enslaved people as appreciative helpers of beneficent masters perpetuates justifications of a practice that violated a litany of human rights.

I reviewed the teacher's annotated edition of *Living in the United States*, which, like most teacher's editions, contains suggested exercises and questions for classroom discussion that are meant to help teachers quickly translate the textbook content into daily lesson plans. In this case, many of the questions and activities in the book demonstrated ways to translate a White supremacist agenda into a curriculum for young people. By reinforcing stereotypes of BIPOC groups, deflecting White responsibility for human rights abuses of BIPOC people, and reframing colonization as a public service deemed right by God, *Living in the United States* perpetuates misrepresentation and silences across multiple identity groups. It is unclear when this book was rotated out of circulation for classroom use.

1966: Remaking *Our Nation's Story* in *United States History for High Schools*

The 1966 *United States History for High Schools* textbook has a hard blue cover featuring an eagle and the United States flag. It looks unassuming, yet contains numerous inaccurate representations of Native Americans and disparaging language toward them and im/migrant people. The book is authored by two of the same three writers who created the 1954 *Our Nation's Story* discussed earlier, and it is hardly surprising that many of the same tropes are evident in this more recent textbook. However, the intervening twelve years between the two textbooks were a highly political twelve years for racial politics. There are some small changes evident in how certain issues are presented in the newer *United States History for High Schools*, although the majority of its coverage remains in line with the older *Our Nation's Story*. I highlight here selected examples to show both the standard tropes as well as representation unique to *United States History for High Schools.*

"The Indian Problem" is a heading in the first pages of the book (6), casting Indigenous peoples as a problem White people can solve through violence. Over dozens of pages following this headline, Native Americans are cheated when they come to trade furs with Indian agents (45), and appropriated and stereotyped through the costumes worn by the colonists of the Boston Tea Party (72) and the mountain men who would wear clothing obtained by trading with Native Americans (75). Thanksgiving is described as an American tradition that began in 1621, without agency or even real identity ascribed to Native Americans in this story (77)—a common presentation of Thanksgiving across most of the textbooks I reviewed.

There are also mixed messages in the discussion of the frontiersmen Paxton Boys, who are described as both retaliating "against Indian attacks" and murdering "twenty peaceful Indians" (56). The language here perpetuates the false conception that Native Americans were constantly violent against settler-colonists, but also points out non-instigated White violence. The images and descriptions of White glory over Native Americans are rampant, from the Battle of Fallen Timbers (136), the Battle of the Thames (159), the Tippecanoe River Battle in 1811 (283), to White superiority in technology, with the image of a puzzled Native American listening to a telegraph wire (356).

Apparently, these authors consider "The Indian Problem" to be so considerable that this heading is used a second time in the book to differentiate between "good" and "bad" Indians. Doing so is an ingrained trope in US history and has been the inspiration for many Indigenous writers for potent satire. For example, Deborah Miranda (Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen) in her memoir, *Bad Indians* (2012), examines the way these binary categories of good and bad are overlayed on assimilatory processes of cultural renunciation.

Referring to some Native American groups, the authors of *United States History for High Schools* write, "They learned the ways of the settlers and adapted themselves to their culture. This was not true of the Plains Indians" (335). In this description, assimilation makes some Native Americans acceptable to mainstream White settler-colonial society, but because they refused assimilation, Plains Indians were seen as deviant. As in other books, there is some recognition that Indians were cheated (45) and that some of their violence was in self-defense or in defense of their traditional lands. In a section titled "Government Aid to the Indians," the authors reference the 1881 book, *A Century of Dishonor*, which argues that "a more humane Indian policy" is needed (338), and is described as a way to acknowledge wrongful treatment of Native Americans. Yet it is done under the banner of government assistance to Native Americans and is meant to inspire appreciation for the resources the US government has invested in Native communities.

Appreciation for aspects of Native American art, for example, happened after the colonization of the land was complete and it could be exotified as a relic of the past. In *United States History for High Schools*, this is visible in the photograph and its accompanying caption of a buffalo robe painting extolling Native American art (180). At the same time, a whitewashing of the past appears for White people as well. In another of the book's images showing a family camping by a lake with the caption, "Many Americans find pleasure and relaxation in reverting to the ways of life of their pioneer ancestors. They enjoy 'roughing it'" (78). The representation of recreational campers drawing on pioneer ancestry firstly makes clear who is going camping, and secondly sends a message about the idyllic contours of pioneer life, while downplaying its hardships.

Mexico and Mexican-Americans in *United States History for High Schools*: In 1966, *United States History for High Schools* had no reason to hide its endorsement for Manifest Destiny—the notion that colonizers had a God-given calling to expand control of Indigenous lands in what is now the United States. In a section labeled "The Triumph of Nationalism," Manifest Destiny is described as something that gained new land for the country, and in the process, provoked war with Mexico (Shafer et al. 1966: 231). Although the perspective taken by the authors is that Manifest Destiny was worth fighting for, the way this discourse plays out has distinct implications for how Mexico and Mexicans are represented in the text. As in *Our Nation's Story*, the history of the Alamo is told with a "poor Texans, bad Mexicans" trope (236).

However, in *United States History for High Schools*, the authors are clear that President Polk deliberately provoked the "Mexican War," as it was called from 1846–1848 so "that the United States could attack Mexico and say it was in self-defense" (246). Polk did not want to be accused of starting war, but even at the time it was widely understood that Polk "had purposely enticed Mexico into war over the Texas boundary question in order to get California and New Mexico territory which Mexico refused to sell" (246). The book labels Polk as deceitful to both the public and to Congress in order to acquire the territory (249). Yet even after such a recriminating description, the textbook leaves readers with a strong sense that, although Polk was wrong to provoke and deceive, the outcome was good for the United States. This justification for unethical means to an end is a worrying lesson for young people and for the society that it reflects.

US history textbooks mimic society in general by reducing migration to a story about assimilation as part of nation-building. The cultural value of countries of origin is usually ignored, replaced by a focus on learning English. Most curricular material presents im/migrants as people who need to be brought up to speed on norms of the arrival country rather than being accepted while maintaining their core identities. Also, migration is sometimes presented as the result of free choice rather than a forced process or one that is shaped by hardship, and this is something textbook analyses must especially address (Cetin 2020).

Most of the textbooks I analyze in this book use terms like "flood" or "surge" to describe a rising number of non-European immigrants who began emigrating to the United States beginning in 1890. This language is still used today in the media, usually as a way to arouse fear and dehumanize immigrants or distance readers from their experiences of emigrating by using terms reminiscent of uncontrollable natural disaster. *United States History for High Schools* describes that, prior to 1890, Britain, Germany, Norway, and Sweden were the main migrant-sending countries to the US, while southern and eastern European migrants arrived after that, fomenting social tension based on cultural conflicts (451). This discussion about the necessity to foster assimilation while also putting in place legislation to curb non-White migration is, in many textbooks, the precursor to talking about Mexican migration.

Assimilation: Native American people are conveniently dropped from the assimilation narrative, which includes passages such as, "The first immigrants from England established the patterns of American society and those who came later had to adjust" (452). Assimilation is discussed as an overt good at this time: "Motivated by fear of competition and repelled at times by 'foreign ways,' some treated the newcomers with suspicion. Nevertheless, ways to assist the immigrant in his assimilation were found" (453). In this narrative, US treatment toward newcomers was the same as toward Native Americans; first they are persecuted, and then the US government steps in to help them assimilate to White settler-colonial norms.

This concept of White saviorism is especially strong in textbook passages about the Mexican Revolution:

> The Mexican peoples, usually poor and illiterate, could not and did not develop the country's rich resources—the oil and the minerals—nor develop industries—smelters and factories. Foreign capital poured in; with it came foreign businessmen and engineers, and with them came foreign domination. For over thirty years, a dictator, Porfirio Diaz, kept order as he encouraged foreign investment. (Shafer et al. 1966: 501)

The textbook goes on to describe Diaz's ousting in 1920, and unlike the 1954 textbook, this 1966 textbook calls him a dictator (501). Making the generalization that an entire people are "poor and illiterate" may reinforce the stereotypes some readers hold, and further discrimination toward Mexican im/migrant people in the United States. The alleged inferiority of Mexico is reinforced by the description of US President Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy. "[W]ith his strong sense of responsibility, [Wilson] believed that the United States had a moral duty to restore order in Mexico and help in the establishment of a democratic government" (501). No mention is made of Wilson's financial interests in Mexico, and the passage leaves readers with the residue notion that Wilson was a good Samaritan rather than a racist robber baron.

1974: *LET'S VISIT CENTRAL AMERICA*

Although I mostly focus on US history textbooks in this analysis, during the coding process I came across a middle school textbook from 1974 in the GEI library titled *Let's Visit Central America*. Because the book adopts the same over-generalizing tone about Latin American people as the 1966 *United States History for High Schools*, it merits a brief comparative passage here. *Let's Visit Central America*'s conclusion includes this paragraph:

> We have learned that many people in Central America do not go to school, never learn to read or write. Some of the pictures in this book show that people live in tiny houses. There are villages so far out in the jungles and mountains that people are cut off from the rest of the world. There are fine homes in the big cities. But for the most part, Central Americans are poor and uneducated. It has often been easy for dictators to gain control because so many citizens are uneducated. It is difficult for an ignorant worker in the jungle or on a banana plantation to know much about democracy. (Caldwell 1974: 91)

Students assigned this book would conclude their literary tour of Central America with the admonition that communism in Central America would be the region's downfall (92–3), that the United Fruit Company should be thought of as a benevolent form of foreign aid (72–4), and that if only the rest of Central American countries were like Costa Rica, with no military, there would be no wars (94). While the book is clearly a timepiece, it captures stereotypes from textbooks both before and after its time.

1981: Native Americans in *A Short History of the American Nation*

Originally published in 1974, I analyzed the third edition of *A Short History of the American Nation* (1981), with its soft cover featuring a painting of a New England field. I also coded the book's companion teacher's manual, originally published in 1977. Author John Garraty states in his introduction that the textbook is intended for high school students.

In many ways, this book is more broadly inclusive and sensitive to issues of difference in comparison to textbooks from earlier decades. Specific to my categories of interest, there are multiple perspectives offered on both colonization and immigration. However, the Doctrine of Discovery trope is still reiterated throughout the textbook and teacher's manual. This section assesses the representation of both topics in turn.

A Short History of the American Nation perpetuates the notion that the United States was a tabula rasa, a blank slate; or *terra nullius*, an empty land. Use of phrases such as "a vast land, almost uninhabited" and "almost untouched land" (Garraty 1981: xxi, 1, 47) renders Indigenous people invisible as a population and neglects to depict the complexities of their interaction with the physical environment. These worn mischaracterizations are reinforced through exercises such as multiple-choice questions and television broadcast summaries in the teacher's companion manual (Garraty 1977: 2, 6, 55).

Garraty continues a reinvented story of colonization through his treatment of Thanksgiving as a mythic tradition of peacemaking (12), as well as through the well-worn description of Indians as "making trouble" (118) and as a "problem" (168). At the same time, Garraty also recognizes that "the settlement of America ranks among the most flagrant examples of unprovoked aggression in human history," (6) with White violence at its core. Yet on the same page, he tries to justify some of that violence by acknowledging that chauvinism and "cruelty, slavery, greed, and war existed in the New World long before Columbus" (6–7). Such behaviors, as reprehensible as they are, are not justification for genocide—the physical annihilation of people—or culturecide—the killing of culture. Garraty's text vaguely asserts that such violence might be justifiable because of the nation-building imperative that fueled the colonizers' mission.

Nearly on neighboring pages, though, Garraty also presents in-depth descriptions of Native American suffering as a result of White actions. For example, in the "Indian Wars" section, referring to Indian attacks on White settlers, he asserts that "Had the Indians been given a reasonable amount of land and adequate subsidies and been allowed to maintain their way of life, they might have accepted the situation and ceased to harry the whites. But whatever chance the policy had was greatly weakened by the government's maladministration of Indian affairs" (281). This framing is much more accurate to historical fact and contextualizes Native American violence not as acts of savagery, but as self-defense in the face of potential annihilation. Under the heading "Destruction of Tribal Life," Garraty writes:

> No more efficient way could have been found for destroying the plains Indian. The disappearance of the bison left them starving, homeless, purposeless. In 1887 Congress passed the Dawes Severalty Act, designed to put an end to tribal life and convert the Indians to white ways of living. Tribal lands were split up into small units, each head of a family being given a quarter section (160 acres). (Garraty 1981: 282)

This more contextualized treatment of Native peoples does not mitigate the book's earlier destructive language about the United States as *terra nullius.* But while the inclusion of both themes—ignoring Native Americans as the original peoples of the land, and Native Americans as victims of White cruelty and incompetence—shows some evolution in the representation of ideas, but it is still a mixed portrayal. As the next section shows, this carries over into the same book's representation of Mexico and im/migrant people.

Mexico and im/migrant people in *A Short History of the American Nation*: As in *United States History for High Schools* (1966), Garraty describes President James Polk as the aggressor towards Mexico in 1845 and 1846 (187). This fact is reinforced through various lesson plan exercises laid out in the teacher's companion manual (Garraty 1977: 61). However, at the close of the US's aggressive maneuvers, Garraty then paints a different picture, one in which the US are victors, stating: "The Mexicans were thoroughly beaten, but they refused to accept the situation" (189). This US victory approach is further cemented by Garraty's summative statement in the concluding section about "The Aftermath" of the war. He declares, "The Mexican War, won quickly and at relatively small cost in lives and money, brought huge territorial gains" (189). This US-centric perspective is interspersed with continuing disparagement about Latin American and Caribbean countries in the lead-up to the immigration section. Garraty asserts that "the Caribbean countries were economically underdeveloped, socially backward, politically unstable, and desperately poor," (369) without providing context for the roles of the US and Europe in making it so.

Many of the textbooks I reviewed, from *A Short History of the American Nation* through more present-day texts, tell a similar story about shifts in immigration patterns that justify White supremacy. The story told by Garraty goes like this:

> Forgetting that earlier Americans had accused pre-Civil War Irish and German immigrants of similar deficiencies, they [gatekeepers in government] decided that peoples of southern and eastern Europe were racially (and therefore permanently) inferior to "Nordic" and "Anglo-Saxon" types and ought to be kept out. Organized labor, fearing the competition of workers and low living standards and no bargaining power, also spoke out against the "enticing of penniless and apprised immigrants … to undermine our wages and social welfare." (Garraty 1981: 315)

The need for large numbers of unskilled workers in industries such as mining meant that some companies were in favor of more relaxed immigration rules (Garraty 1981: 315), which is similar to the dynamic with agricultural industries today, many of which rely on undocumented workers and the low wages they accept to stay competitive in the marketplace. In the teacher's companion manual, Garraty provides a discussion question and lecture idea focused on why xenophobia appeared in the US after World War I (1977: 142). At the same time, he elides a long previous history of xenophobia that took place throughout the nineteenth century.

In line with earlier textbooks from the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, Garraty notes that the 1924 quota adjustment in immigration policy created permissions to allow just 2 percent of people from a given country of origin the right to emigrate to the United States in a given year (415). By 1924, because immigration from northern European countries had substantially slowed, those populations routinely had empty quotas, while people from Latin America, Asia, and other Global South countries found themselves denied entry to the US because of the quota system (415).

One result of the 1924 immigration reforms was that, by the mid-twentieth century (1945–1964), there were so few newcomers that "the country seemed ever more homogenous" (489). By the 1960s, "over 95 percent of all Americans were native born. This made for social and cultural uniformity. So did the rising incomes of industrial workers and the changing character of their labor. Blue-collar workers invaded the middle class" (507).

This overview of culture change sets the stage for the political tumult of the 1960s and 70s, as identities are renegotiated in public spaces. This textbook provides a very short overview of Chicano and Native American protests over discrimination, but has more extensive coverage of Black power social movements (519). This is typical of textbooks in the last two decades of the 1900s, where discussion of the Civil Rights movement leads into a focus on the Black Panther Party and related developments, with Latinx and Asian American rights as much smaller additions to the main story. The teacher's manual meant to accompany the textbook lifts César Chávez, the founder of the National Farmworkers Association, but only briefly (1977: 173).

Overall, *A Short History of the American Nation* is an accurate representation of a particular period in US nation-building. There are overtures of inclusion, with some attempts to temper history as one long saga of White glorification with the impact of that glory on marginalized populations. However, the dominant tone of the textbook is still one that vaunts White glory and recognizes its necessity in taming the assumed empty wilderness of the New World. Native American people were treated unfairly sometimes, Garraty shows, but ultimately students would leave this textbook assuming that the ends justified the means. Similarly, Mexican-origin people are shown as newcomers who only play a minor role in the beginning of organized agricultural labor, rather than longtime inhabitants of the entire western and southwestern United States.

1981: *FREEDOM AND CRISIS: AN AMERICAN HISTORY*

Freedom and Crisis brings some improvement in racial and ethnic inclusion, but also more of the same rhetoric on Native American and Latin America and im/migrant origin people found in textbooks that proceeded it. Volume II of the third edition of this textbook is also accompanied by a teacher's guide. In brief, *Freedom and Crisis* avoids grand sweeping claims written in the same period about "uninhabited lands." Though it remains a very White-focused perspective on US history, it is written with slightly more racially sensitive language. For example, words like "Indian independence" and "white settlement" are used rather than phrases such as "expanding our home," which many other volumes used to convey a sense of entitlement to colonization.

Under the heading "The West: frontiers in transition," *Freedom and Crisis* discusses Native American people during the 1850s through 1900 in neutral language. Throughout an extended description, the authors show agency by "Indians" and dishonest treatment by Whites alongside extended coverage of many White atrocities against Indians (Weinstein and Gatell 1981: 100–516). There are multiple extended descriptions of settler colonialism and the resource quest by White people that led to infringement on Native American rights (505–519). In providing a more balanced and historically accurate perspective on White-Native American relations, *Freedom and Crisis* is a distinct improvement compared to other volumes available as of 1981.

This more balanced perspective is also visible in how *Freedom and Crisis* handles history in relation to US-Latin American politics. Though the authors perpetuate the rhetoric of the "friendship of our sister republics of Central and South America," they also note that President Wilson "used military force in Latin America even more than his Republican predecessors" (681). Similarly, on Mexico's revolution of 1910, the authors describe the reality of the revolution without praising authoritarian President Diaz (681).

On immigration and the racial and ethnic composition changes at the turn of the twentieth century, the authors' tone is informational and without a visible polemic, including a sensitive discussion of immigrants and racial dynamics from the 1890s onward (Weinstein and Gatell 1981: 586–596). Regarding US-Latin American relations in the post-World War II era, the authors maintain an accurate and progressive recounting of the facts.

> The United States faced a particular problem in Latin America, where it tried to maintain traditional hemispheric influence and safeguard nearly $10 billion of American investment. Strains developed in an area that many Americans regarded as their backyard. In 1954, after the Central American republic of Guatemala took a turn toward the left, Dulles denounced the existing government. But more than words were involved. The CIA helped finance Guatemalan groups opposed to the left-leaning government in a successful seizure of power. (Weinstein and Gatell 1981: 818–9)

The study guide that accompanies this volume of *Freedom and Crisis* similarly offers a mix of historically grounded facts with some phrases that lift the experiences of those oppressed by colonial and imperial forces of the United States, along with some that perpetuate unequal power dynamics. Viewed alongside comparable volumes of its time, *Freedom and Crisis* shows that it was possible to convey US history in the 1980s without relying only on the victor's history. The trend toward more inclusion of diverse viewpoints is echoed in the California-specific textbook that I analyze next.

1984: *The World and Its People: California Yesterday and Today*

In the 1980s, California textbook discourse shifted to acknowledgement of diversity while still firmly adhering to a settler-colonial portrayal of social studies. Broadly representative pictures span the cover and chapter divisions of *The World and Its People: California Yesterday and Today*, with people in wheelchairs and people of color, including Native American figures in traditional dress represented in the smiling faces of the nation. In the teacher's edition, the question under the cover image directs the teacher; "Have your class look carefully at the drawings of the woman and girl reading a map, the surfer with his surfboard, the mature farmer and her basket of produce, and the handicapped park ranger. You might ask your pupils to tell you what they think these drawings tell them about California." These directions are clearly prompting students to comment on how diverse California is, and how people can accomplish many roles regardless of their identities. Textbooks like this one are doing a very important job; they are breaking the silence of BIPOC invisibility by representing them in some form.

While the 1961 *Living in the United States* textbook managed to elide all mention of immigrants, by 1984 in *The World and Its People*, immigrants and BIPOC communities writ broadly are represented. But then the question becomes *how* are they represented? The answer here is mostly historical rather than contemporary fact. For example, in a state map of "Early Indian Tribes" that shows the traditional territory of Indigenous people color-coded on the map, the teacher's note instructs educators to ask students why so many of the names are unfamiliar today (Anema et al. 1984: 79). In fact, most of the tribes are still active tribes, although some are very small.

A charitable interpretation of the prompt could be that the names are unfamiliar because of settler colonialism. However, the numerous surrounding pages, which walk students through Native Americans' affinity for nature (78), housing (80), artisan production (81), boats (82), foods (83–85), and village life (86–88) is exclusively written in the past tense. There is an entire page description of traditional gathering and food preparation practices with illustrations of how to process acorns, for example, without recognizing gathering as a contemporary practice. While admirable to continue this Indigenous knowledge, the book almost exclusively refers to Native Americans in the past tense. So, while knowledge about Indigenous culture is being shared, students could easily assume that it is past, not present knowledge.

After ten full pages of historic description, one paragraph is allotted to "Indians today" (89):

> There are still many Indians living in California. Some live together in tribes. Others choose to live in towns and cities with other people. Many California Indians want to keep the ways of their parents and grandparents. The Indian traditions and customs are shared and taught to family members. All California Indians are very proud of their history. (Anema et al. 1984: 89)

Setting aside the romantic trope of the noble savage in harmony with nature that is clearly visible in this textbook, the relentless past tense descriptions are highly problematic, and are reinforced by most of the teacher's annotated activities. Students could very well learn a significant amount about Native Americans without ever realizing that many of their cultural practices continue today, and if not, how colonization was the protagonist of that story.

The misrepresentation of Indigenous California takes a different turn in the missions section. This is not surprising, as California maintained a required mission unit until 2017 that promoted a highly sanitized version of what missions were and how they affected Indigenous peoples. But this section shows the assimilationist ideology propagated at the time, that although work at the missions was hard, students should celebrate the accomplishment of adapting to something challenging, as several of the teacher's exercises promote.

Regarding Latinx visibility, the textbook offers a few paragraphs describing the reality for Mexicans who find themselves living on US territory following the cessation of much of the Southwest in 1848.

> For the United States, the end of the war meant that its lands now stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific. But for Spanish-speaking Californians, the end of the war had other meanings. The Spanish language would now in most places give way to the English language. Customs and ways of life that were once Spanish would become American. Under a law passed a few years later, Californians had to prove their right to the lands they lived on. Many had owned these lands for years but had no papers to prove it. So some of those living on the old ranchos for years now had to give up their lands. (Anema et al. 1984: 134–5)

Events such as the Mexican-American War of 1848 and subsequent ceding of much of what is now the western United States is presented with Mexico losing passively to the stronger and more entitled United States. Narratives like this, along with the accompanying absence of positive Mexican im/migrant-origin representation in the majority of the curricula, have two major impacts on student wellbeing, as my data presented later in this book reveal. First, they invoke shame or a sense of invisibility in Latinx students, and second, such curricula feels irrelevant to them, so they tune out academically.

This textbook, like its predecessors evaluated here, continues to be problematic particularly in what is *not* said. It does make many improvements on previous decades in that BIPOC people are visible in the text. At the same time, the use of antiquated tropes, the past tense, and ongoing neutral language to avoid ascribing responsibility for the dispossession of BIPOC people precludes fostering a real understanding of contemporary (for then) BIPOC issues.

1999: Native American Representation in *A History of the United States*

Boorstin, Kelley, and Frankel Boorstin's *A History of the United States* (1999) is a giant hardcover tome, the kind that strains shoulders lugging it to class. I note here that the third author is listed as "with Ruth Frankel Boorstin," an awkward author listing choice that acknowledges input without giving full credit for authorship. It is clear that the third author is the wife of the primary author, but her role in the manuscript preparation is not made clear. On the "About the Authors" page, it is stated that "Mrs. Boorstin has been an active collaborator on all her historian husband's books" (Boorstin et al. 1999: vi). Because of this, I list her as a third author when referencing this text and note that even this clarification itself is a product of the time in which the textbook was authored.

A History of the United States mostly paints a conservative, White-centric picture of US history. However, the authors combine their own generational biases with deeply researched historical scholarship. This means that while they reinforce problematic tropes within US historical storytelling, the authors also offer more than one perspective in many places and prompt some critical thinking on issues of the time.

As with textbooks from the 1950s and 1960s, Boorstin, Kelley, and Frankel Boorstin address Columbus as the beginning of United States history, but with a twist.

> He discovered a new world … If it hadn't been for Columbus, years might have passed before the people of Europe "discovered" America. But it was only for the people of Europe that American had to be "discovered." Millions of Native Americans were already here! For them, Columbus, and all the sailors, explorers, and settlers who came later, provided their "discovery" of Europe. (Boorstin, Kelley et al. 1999: 6)

Reflection on the impact of "discovery" is subtly pushed by the authors in the review section for Chap. 1, where they show a graph with declining lines indicating that the Indian population of Central America diminished dramatically from 1500 to 1620, and the accompanying question asks students to hypothesize on what happened to Indians during this period (Boorstin et al. 1999: 25).

However, this section points readers toward Spain as the real enemy, and in doing so, creates a responsibility loophole for White colonists. The authors write that a leading missionary figure, Father Junipero Serra "stood up for the Indians against the Spanish army" (Boorstin et al. 1999: 29). Yet on the next page, the Spanish are seen as forward-thinking civilizers, in whose missions "the Indians were taught Spanish ways of building, farming, and worshipping. But they were not allowed to leave these mission 'schools.' They were forever students of the friars" (Boorstin et al. 1999: 30). The mission system in California and throughout the Southwest was a particular case study I coded in each textbook that I reviewed. Much has been written about Native American enslavement in the California mission system and the politics around the fourth-grade mission unit in California's elementary curriculum (Keenan 2019; Kryder-Reid 2016; Risling Baldy 2017). Yet at the high school level, this history is generally sanitized in line with how *A History of the United States* handles it.

Discussion of Pocahontas is another standard case study I analyzed across the textbooks. Boorstin, Kelley, and Frankel Boorstin summarized her life with the statement "She married John Rolfe and died in England," with no mention of her abduction or forced marriage (37). Instead, the authors focus laudatory praise on the first colonizers and their attempts at governance rather than genocide: "We still revere the Pilgrim Fathers as the first successful settlers of the New England shore, who began an American custom—finding a way of self-government for every occasion" (40).

To be fair, the authors cite many instances of White violence against Native Americans, and in doing so they temper their own praise for Whiteness in some sections. From land theft, broken treaties, and speeches by Native American elders demanding their land back (201), to Andrew Jackson's Indian Removals (1820–1840) (234), corrupt Indian agents (387), and the termination of reservations, tribal status, and relocation in the 1950s (861), the authors show genocide, culturecide, and discrimination as the foundations of United States history. But they do not name it as such, and in some ways continue to excuse it or leave a deafening silence around White violence.

The colonization of California is one such topic that is discussed only in relation to the 1849 Gold Rush and mining life, with no mention of genocide against California tribes (394). There are also chapter review questions like this one that seem particularly insensitive to the impact of colonization on Native American communities: "How did the opening of the West affect business opportunities in your region?" (303). Moreover, the romanticization of the West, now a mega-industry in everything from theme parks to outdoor adventure tourism, continues to paint the "Old West" as "a place of romance—the scene for an exciting book, or movie, or TV program" (385). This romanticization persists into the characterization of Native American people: "White Americans did not understand what the Indians had achieved. With their spears and bows and arrows and different manner of living, they had mastered the ways of the American wilderness" (388).

Romanticization also goes hand in hand with the paternalism of the 1960s prior to the uprising of the American Indian Movement, which is barely noted in this textbook. Instead, a deficit approach shows presidential concern for what Lyndon B. Johnson called "the Forgotten American" in a 1968 message to Congress, noting "poor housing, their alarming 40 percent unemployment, and the fact that only half of the young Indians completed high school" (861). The interest in presidential intervention to help Native Americans did not extend to returning the Black Hills to the traditional owners, despite extended litigation by tribes asking for this in the face of White mismanagement (862–863).

The authors point out the deep inequity in how Native Americans were treated, noting that "they were here, of course, centuries before the first Europeans or Africans. As the US grew, their own cultures had not prospered" (860). The textbook data visualizations also show Native presence through basic numbers, including a chart of twentieth-century Native American population growth, from less than a quarter million people in 1900 to over two million in the 1990 census (861). The authors also show a photo with a caption describing how Native American students have access to bilingual schooling in order to maintain Indigenous languages (873), but without discussing why such languages came close to disappearing.

In sum, Native American representation in *A History of the United States* is an accurate snapshot of mixed White responses to Indigenous peoples in the 1990s. On the one hand, increased historical research showed the depth of White abuse of Native Americans that is factually depicted. On the other hand, ongoing trends to characterize contemporary Native Americans as lacking in their former self-sufficient glory, without situating this in structural violence perpetuated by colonization, leaves the trope of White paternalism as the new iteration of White conquest perpetuated in previous textbooks. Next, I turn to representation of Mexico and im/migrant people of Mexican origin within the same textbook.

Mexico and Mexican Americans in *A History of the United States*: As in multiple earlier textbooks, President Polk's "aggressive measures" to provoke war with Mexico in order to gain Mexican territory for the United States is clearly depicted (299). Polk's provocation is contextualized, though, in light of a dozen more aggressive senators who voted against Polk's recommendation to approve the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo because they wanted to annex Mexico entirely, rather than the Southwest territory delineated in the Treaty (302). In this way, Polk's agenda comes off looking like the less aggressive option.

As with Native American land taken over by colonizers, the map showing US territory acquired by taking it from Mexico is simply labeled "Growth of the US to 1853" (301). Additional maps are labeled "Relations with Our Southern Neighbors, 1898–1933" and show what was a US possession, what resulted from US military intervention, where US financial intervention was taking place, and what locations had special relationships with the US. This information is important to show how both colonization and imperialism were operating in the US at the time.

Given that I am an education politics researcher, I pay close attention to how schooling is depicted. Boorstin, Kelley, and Frankel Boorstin fall into the standard glorification of schools as important assimilation and Englishization mechanisms, with headings such as "The schools make Americans" (447). While it may be true that free public high school was "an American invention" and that "flourishing schools made the United States one of the world's first literate nations" (447), it is also important to note what was lost in the process of schooling. I have written elsewhere (Author 2023) about boarding schools as culturecidal spaces for Native Americans, where culture was killed in the classroom as a result of Indigenous languages being suppressed and White values forcefully inculcated.

This was also true for other minority groups, including Mexicans and Mexican Americans in California. The authors skirt this issue, instead contemplating the purpose of secondary schools through Dewey's work (1859–1952)—"Were schools mainly to prepare those who were going on to a 'higher' learning in college? Or should they be designed for everyone?" (764).

The textbook includes a photo of a Mexican Independence Day parade in Los Angeles, and notes that two thirds of all Spanish-speaking people in the United States were of Mexican origin when this book published in the 1990s (849). In fact, "By 1990 there were over 13 million Mexican

Americans in the United States and thousands more were entering the country every year. By far the largest number of them have continued to settle where their first settlements lay—in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas" (864). And yet there is almost no discussion of how schooling, and the linguistic and cultural assimilation required by it in states such as these, impacted im/migrant-origin students. Nor are these students imagined as target readers for the textbook, which replicates discourse and design primarily for White students seen in textbooks from the 1950s–1980s.

Most of the very limited discussions on Mexican and Mexican American people in this textbook fall into the "Brown Power" and César Chávez categories (865). These are the most regularly cited topics in US history textbooks from the 1990s to more recent times. The other discussion is focused on immigration as the threat to US stability. For example, under the heading of "Refugees from Latin America and the Caribbean" the authors describe "Another wave of unhappy people arrived from troubled Central America" and "More came from Mexico every day" (868). Using inflammatory language like "flood of refugees," that in the 2020s is understood to be a dog whistle to political right-wing White nationalists in the United States, the authors state "Many Americans felt that illegal aliens, many of whom received government assistance, took too great a toll on the nation's resources" (868–869). They never provide factual information that contradicts this claim—in fact, it is widely researched now that undocumented people contribute far more to the US economy than they take from it (NAE 2021).

Boorstin, Kelley, and Frankel Boorstin's portrayal of Mexican and Mexican Americans is most notable for its very limited content, revealing more absence than presence in the story of the United States, and for its conformity to xenophobic tropes that continue to cast im/migrant people as "others" who are targets of suspicion. In many ways they try to provide multiple perspectives and prompts for critical analysis, but this textbook does not demonstrate best practices that stand the test of time over the subsequent decades.

Conclusion

There has been significant evolution over time in how representation of Native American and Mexican im/migrant people takes place in textbooks. And yet what is truly remarkable is how much has stayed the same.

While some content is added to address requirements of diversity and inclusion that continue to evolve in US culture, only a small amount of older content is cut out of the textbooks reviewed here; outdated analyses of history are rarely deleted, but instead augmented with small additions of revised content. The politically correct terminology is updated, to be sure, to meet demands of subsequent decades. But the uncanny repetition of the same stories, told through very similar lenses, for much of the second half of the twentieth century, is concerning.

Essentially, the US history education my parents received in the 1960s is not all that far from what I was taught in the 1990s, or what my children are likely to learn in the 2020s. Given how problematic this representation is, I look to the future to find optimism that textbooks can do a better job in bringing contemporary presence and positive characteristics to discussions of Native American and Mexican im/migrant people in the twenty-first century.

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CHAPTER 3

Textbooks in Far Northern California High Schools in 2007–2022

Abstract At the turn of the twenty-first century, textbooks still show concerning representations of Native American and Mexico and im/migrants. This chapter starts off with a discussion of how the twisted and inaccurate tale of Pocahontas is still being taught in schools today, followed by an analysis of textbooks published in 2007, 2013, and 2019. It also includes an excerpt from Robert Anderson, a teacher at Hoopa Valley High School in far Northern California, describing his qualms with the required problematic texts he is supposed to teach. Even the more recently published textbooks in 2013 and 2019 still make subtle cues towards a White-centric point of view of US history, rather than facing the hard and ugly truths of our nation's past.

Keywords Textbooks • California • Native American • Mexico • Immigrant • Migrant • Pocahontas • Hoopa • White-centric

INTRODUCTION: STILL TWISTING THE TALE OF POCAHONTAS

It is the fall of 2022, and my family and I have just moved back to Boston after spending the spring semester in far Northern California, where my kids attended the local public schools while I carried out fieldwork. My fifth-grade daughter brings home a worksheet from her Boston public school class titled "Pocahontas Claims and Evidence: Writing Exercise."

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M. Gellman, *Misrepresentation and Silence in United States History Textbooks*, Palgrave Studies in Educational Media,
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The instructions ask students to use what they have learned in class to fill in the evidence statement about what Pocahontas did. The first claim box states “Pocahontas was a diplomat.” My daughter’s neat handwriting in the evidence box proclaims, “She married a European. This led to the ‘Pocahontas Peace.’” The second printed claim states “Pocahontas was a connector.” Below it, my daughter has written, “She learned to speak English and converted to Christianity.”

My children know what I do for a living. They just spent the previous spring hearing me complain about public school curricula and politics at the end of my fieldwork days. My daughter has been tolerating me critique her social studies lessons for years, and even has a few cameos in my books. Sometimes she rolls her eyes and groans, but this time, her ears perk up when I ask whether her class had learned that Pocahontas was actually enslaved and forced into marriage. “What?!” she exclaims and appears to pay attention to me for a moment. “They made it sound like she *wanted* to get married.”

In general, I am a critic of my children’s large, urban public school, where much of what I hear about in the classroom is socio-behavioral management rather than academic content. Yet, I know that my daughter’s teachers have opted into a pilot curriculum bringing greater consciousness to how Black enslavement is taught—for example, replacing the term “slave” with the more humanizing “enslaved people,” which is one of my indicators of curricular shift in textbook coding—so I am caught off-guard that the tale of Pocahontas is still being told closer to the Disney fairytale version rather than the historical truth. The latter version, in which Pocahontas’s marriage and diplomacy was part of her survival story as she navigated her own abduction and enslavement, is much less comfortable for people than the story of a remarkable female peacemaker.

The Pocahontas trope has been in effect for a long time. In 1846, textbook author Emma Willard, who mostly wrote disparagingly of Native Americans as “savages,” held up Pocahontas’s story as “a unique example of Native American womanhood and female moral authority” (Yacovone 2022: 109). Historian Donald Yacovone, who has written the most recent analysis of how textbooks in the United States reinforce White supremacy, analyzes Willard’s writing and notes that in the eyes of White society “in marrying John Rolfe [Pocahontas] became a hero and white” (Yacovone 2022: 110). The whitening of people of color or other ethnically specific groups based on arbitrary decisions by US gatekeepers is an old story. There are texts about how representations of Jews, Italians, and Mexicans became whitened over time (Brodkin 1998; Gómez 2018; Guglielmo and Salerno 2003). For Pocahontas, her whitening facilitated a cult status that rewrote the story of her enslavement.

2007: *The American Vision* and Its Relevance Today

The US history textbook *The American Vision*, a 1,137-page tome of the type that likely causes shoulder pain to carry, provides a generic White perspective on history. Published in 2007, it is out of date in many ways that one would expect could be a turn-off to Generation Z[1] students, but it is still circulating as an approved textbook at Hoopa Valley High School (HVHS) in far Northern California. The book contains some updated text regarding classic tropes from the end of the twentieth century. For example, interspersed throughout the pages of *The American Vision* are numerous boxed inserts highlighting problems that affected BIPOC communities throughout history. But overall, the book's emphasis is on battle descriptions and territorial delineation. It provides an assumptive settler colonial history from a White perspective.

The American Vision has a text box insert about Pocahontas. In a place of prominence, the authors insert Captain John Smith's tale of an eleven-year-old Pocahontas throwing her body between him and her tribal members on the cusp of his execution in 1607 (Appleby et al. 2007: 62). The authors state that in 1613 Pocahontas was abducted by a White captain, held as ransom, and was not returned to her family and tribe even after they offered up what food and goods they could to the English. Then, "a member of the Virginia Company named John Rolfe announced to the colonial administrator that he and Pocahontas had fallen in love, and he asked to marry her" (Appleby et al. 2007: 62). As the story goes, her father gives his consent, the couple marry and have a baby, then go to England to drum up more investors for the Virginia Company (Appleby et al. 2007: 62).

Within the same textbook, more than 300 pages later, a small correction appears.

> The *London Spectator*, reporting on the work of Mr. E. Neils, debunks Smith's tale of the young Pocahontas flinging herself between him and her father's club. The young girl was captured and held prisoner on board a

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[1] Generation Z refers to anyone born in or after 1997.

> British ship and then forcibly married to Mr. John Rolfe. Comments *Appleton's Journal* in 1870: "All that is heroic, picturesque, or romantic in history seems to be rapidly disappearing under the microscope scrutiny of modern critics." (Appleby et al. 2007: 397)

This correction is shocking. On page 397, the authors are essentially saying that the story of Pocahontas they presented earlier on page sixty-two was not accurate. There is no reference to this correction anywhere else in the book. It is unclear why the corrected text appears so much later in the book rather than alongside the original erroneous textbox. Perhaps it was strictly for ease of updating a later edition's page layout? Leaving aside the fundamental issues around Pocahontas's ability to give consent while trying to survive abduction, it is striking that if the textbook authors knew the correction to the Pocahontas story, that they waited more than 300 pages to offer it, as an addendum, to readers.

How would my daughter's Pocahontas worksheet have looked if she had been taught the addendum? Perhaps she would have noted that, because of her abduction and forced marriage to a White man, Pocahontas learned to be both a diplomat and connector in terms of her own survival and that of her Native American family. Pocahontas learned her survival skills under duress. The structural inequality of colonization forced her to find ways to stay alive in a violent world where women's bodies and lives were meant to be at the service of men.

My own child learns this correction at the kitchen table as we go over her classroom handouts. Though her eyes glaze over as I start in on a socio-historical lecture, I can tell she gets the gist of what I am saying. But what about everyone else's children? They may leave the fifth grade with the Disney version of Pocahontas reinforced. Findings from an analysis of *The American Vision* on the representation of Native American people still shows pervasive silences and inaccuracies that characterize their representation.

Patriotism in *The American Vision*: HVHS is a public high school that sits on the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation, where a majority of the students identify as Native American or Native-descendent. The reservation is remote by any metric, nestled in a riverside valley more than an hour's drive from the closest large town. Though rich in its own natural resources and cultural continuity, the area reflects the ravages of colonization, with intergenerational legacies of trauma playing out in contemporary familial and societal issues. Post-colonization, Hoopa Valley has been woefully underserved by the United States government. Services, including medical, wellness, and educational, operate at a minimal baseline. Other civic access issues, such as voting rights protected through ballot box proximity, or food security through grocery availability, have been highly variable for decades.

With this context, the notion of Native American youth sitting down in class and turning the pages of *The American Vision* is an example of a disconnect between educational media and youth identity. What elements of this textbook could help youth on a reservation feel better connected to the United States? The book's "American Creed" text on page one, boxed next to flag etiquette instructions and the Pledge of Allegiance, reads as follows:

> I believe in the United States of America as a Government of the people by the people, for the people, whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a Republic; a sovereign Nation of many sovereign States; a perfect Union, one and inseparable; established upon those principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes. I therefore believe it is my duty to my Country to love it; to support its Constitution; to obey its laws; to respect its flag, and to defend it against all enemies. (Appleby et al. 2007)

Though Native Americans have served in the US armed forces at high rates, the intergenerational trauma resulting from loss of population through mission schools, massacres, and disease lend this creed a questionable resonance for them. Similarly, what might it feel like for US-born immigrant-origin students suffering the loss of a deported parent to read this opening page? There are many historical factors we have to set aside to view this text as part of what Deborah Miranda calls a "postcolonial thought experiment" (2012). First, believing in a country as something by and for the people may be difficult to reconcile for many Native Americans and other BIPOC-identified people who have been systematically excluded or forcibly assimilated in order to gain citizenship privileges. Black people whose forebears were forcibly brought to the US may question *which* people the country is really for, and how such founding principles of equality are defined. Therefore, these questions may lead to critical analysis that makes the American Creed unpalatable as truth.

While the American Creed plays a role in the nation-building aspect of US public education, its ability to alienate young people from school, textbooks, and themselves is a risk. To boldly claim the proclamations that the American Creed makes, many BIPOC students would have to set aside their own ancestral stories—including those that include widespread human rights abuses against them—that inform the cultural identities they carry with them when they pass through the schoolhouse door. Genocide, enslavement, deportation, incarceration, and other harms have characterized many BIPOC interactions with representatives of the United States.

Declaring it one's duty to love the United States, or to ascribe to it the values of "freedom, equality, justice" in contrast to one's lived experience, risks rendering the individual-state relationship a farce. This is especially true for BIPOC people who on the daily have to navigate a host of negative things said about themselves or their heritage communities all around them—from the media to their own politicians in elected office. Facing content like the American Creed in schoolbooks that are supposed to convey the history of the country to its residents exacerbates an already heavy burden.

The American Vision simply assumes that assimilation into American culture is the positive goal of public education. The text states, "Public schools were often crucial to the success of immigrant children. It was there the children usually became knowledgeable about American culture, a process known as Americanization. To assimilate immigrants into American culture, schools taught immigrant children English, American history, and the responsibilities of citizenship" (Appleby et al. 2007: 485). There is no discussion about what impact assimilation might have on young people, or why it might be a positive or negative process. Instead, the authors assume that schools were a place where students become knowledgeable and assimilated to then be able to undertake the responsibilities of citizenship.

A teacher's response to *The American Vision*: Robert Anderson, a US history teacher at Hoopa Valley High School whom I have written about elsewhere (Gellman 2023a), recognizes that *The American Vision* does not speak to his students. The majority of the young people he teaches—more than 80 percent in 2022—are Native Americans (DataQuest 2022). Many of them are the descendants of people who either forcibly or voluntarily went to US boarding schools. The traumas of those experiences have been passed down through the generations. Hoopa residents know the intentions of the US government in their attempts to assimilate people into what it defines as good "Americans." Why be surprised when chronic absenteeism reaches nearly 20 percent at Hoopa Valley High School (EdData 2022), given the mismatch between textbooks like *The American Vision* and their readers?

Since 2017, I have been doing mixed methods research in far Northern California, in collaboration with the Yurok Tribe's Education Department. In the course of that research, I have carried out ethnographic work in multiple US history classes and have also conducted textbook analyses of the books used in classes at multiple schools in the area. Here, I document Mr. Anderson's response to working with this textbook to show the complicated lines that teachers have to walk when dealing with curricula.

Mr. Anderson has labored to find ways to make his curricula culturally relevant to his students. He teaches all the US and world history classes, in addition to civics, and has been constructing his own curricula to supplement or replace the textbooks that have been approved by his district. I coded several of the textbooks he uses across his various classes, but *The American Vision* (Appleby et al. 2007) is the main US history textbook used at the school and is in line with this study sample.

Anderson describes how the school board has struggled to work with him to find textbooks that meet both the state requirements as well as the needs of his students. He notes that "these titles were adopted some years before my term here" and he wrestles with the texts, sometimes photocopying chapters from other publications to swap for the core textbook reading. The textbook tends to be "ponderous," in his charitable description, or longwinded in mine. Anderson also describes how his "teaching had begun to rely on lectures to support or substitute from the texts" because the texts themselves do not resonate well with students.

Anderson describes at length his feelings about the textbook in correspondence with me in 2022, and with permission, I share an excerpt here. He writes:

> *The American Vision* was written as a tame narrative of tempered American exceptionalism, but without much inclusion of traditionally excluded groups and perspectives. Its staggering deficiency in dealing with Manifest Destiny led me to my first self-created substitute reading for that unit in my second year. This was an issue I dealt with first by lectures that clarified and rewrote parts of their narrative for accuracy and inclusion, but then I'd adapted the narrative of mainstream college textbooks.

> All the while, I was hoping for an academic rebellion from our institutions to challenge the flawed and ineffective textbooks available. Instead, I saw the problems growing worse. In 2020, I concluded I had to make for my students the tools that no one else seemed able or motivated to create, and began to write my own textbook in earnest. This proved to be beneficial, for really the countless hours that went into this, as when Covid forced us into remote instruction. Had I only had our textbooks, which I had been fixing through lecture, I would have had to send them to work in their homes without any challenge to those flawed materials without support. Instead, I could force my chapters down into shorter, more easily digested chapters and know that at least the text worked on its own.
>
> The profit motive seems unable to support this kind of work, so it would seem to need to come from someone like me who would be crazy enough to attempt to change the world, [laughs]. Seriously, though, the context of where I work and the supports I have do the most for me in this way. A stronger district might have worked to get me better materials, but they would also be strong enough to smother this ambition of fixing the absence of a supportable and relevant history textbook for the average high school student's use.
>
> I understood the challenges of history instruction from my own experiences as a student, made so clear by reading James Loewen the summer before I joined university with the intent in becoming a high school history teacher. I also understood, in grim theory, what it could look like to teach in the context of a colonized and impoverished community. But, if you were to really know my work, the core of what this is about, at the core of it is not how to work in this context but how to use my work to help transcend this into something that is enriching and affirming of our human potential and framing the ideas and concepts of social studies to support that potential best in our students. The rest is simply the storm tearing through the leaves. (Anderson 2022)

I have written elsewhere about Yurok and Hupa[2] educators who are leading the way in designing culturally responsive curricula within the Klamath Trinity Joint Unified School District that HVHS is part of. Yet, teachers like Mr. Anderson are still trying to find their way. Working to meet state requirements while also delivering content that is culturally meaningful is a tall order anywhere, but especially so at a school like HVHS that has so much instability in leadership—a constantly rotating principal and district superintendent—and students struggling for basics such as housing and food security. Finding ways to better support educators by innovating the curricula to be more culturally responsive is a difficult but much needed part of educational media updating more broadly.

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[2] Hupa refers to the ethnicity and language, while Hoopa, the Anglicized name, refers to the reservation and valley.

2013: Native Americans in *History Alive!*

The Teachers' Curriculum Institute's (TCI) 2013 *History Alive! Pursuing American Ideals: Equality, Rights, Liberty, Opportunity, Democracy* was used at Eureka High School (EHS) as a core textbook in US history class for many years, including 2021–2022. At the very beginning of the book, the authors show awareness of bias, something that is unmentioned in the majority of history textbooks. In contrast, this textbook is explicit: "Sometimes a source contains information or conclusions that reflect a distinct point of view. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but historians are careful to look for signs of bias when analyzing evidence. In general, bias is any factor that might distort or color a person's observations" (TCI 2013: 3). Although the TCI textbook authors thus demonstrate an awareness of bias, they then go on to exhibit it themselves in what they do not cover. I mention here just a handful of the silences regarding Native American presence that I observed in this textbook.

The entire first three chapters of *History Alive* fail to mention Native American people. Chapter 4 opens with the year 1620 and the section heading "Colonial Roots of America's Founding Ideals," (29) and tells a White-centric story. When Native Americans are introduced, it is in this way: "The land that drew colonists to America was, of course, already occupied. At first, relations between native peoples and colonists were mutually beneficial … settlers eventually stripped eastern tribes of most of their land through purchase, wars, and unfair treaties" (31). Though the text uses "of course" to show assumed knowledge of Native American existence, a student must get to page thirty-one before they are mentioned, and even then, Native American habitation is not discussed, but is assumed as background knowledge that students would have prior to reading the textbook.

The Doctrine of Discovery is not mentioned in this textbook, but "Indian attacks" are included in relation to territorial wars between British and Spanish troops (54), railroad expansion (134–135), and Plains land acquisition by colonists (136). Especially within the latter two examples, Native Americans are framed as, in the words of a government official at the time, being “an obstacle to the progress of settlement and industry” (136). Though the textbook is pointing out that this is the government’s view, it also reinforces it itself, for example in a caption for an image of Chief Geronimo, who, the book states, “refused to settle down” but “finally surrendered … and took up farming” (136). The patronizing phrasing used to describe Geronimo and other Native Americans who resisted colonization make them seem culpable of obstructing White progress rather than telling the story of colonial violence that spurred genocide and culturecide.

Such subtle cues to readers are enforced through the passive language used to describe White violence towards Native Americans, who “were killed” euphemistically (137) rather than murdered by White people. Syntax as a tool to render White people less culpable of violence appears throughout this textbook. For example, under the heading “Adaptation and Efforts to Assimilate American Indians,” there are passages like this one: “The settlement of the West was disastrous for large numbers of American Indians. Many died as a result of violence, disease, and poverty. Others clung to a miserable existence on reservations. The survivors struggled to adapt to their changed circumstances” (TCI 2013: 137). Through the use of the passive voice and syntax, this textbook avoids clearly showing White responsibility for Native American destruction.

At the end of the chapter on the “Indian Wars” the authors summarize: “The tribes on the Great Plains fought to preserve their way of life. To prevent conflict and open lands for settlement, the government moved tribes onto reservations. Through the Dawes Act, it tried to assimilate Indians into white culture” (141). By avoiding to describe colonization as violence, as this phrasing does, *History Alive* undermines a basic tenet of Native American history—that the colonization of the United States by White people was constituted by genocide and culturecide of Native Americans. Any textbook that does not explicitly say this, and place responsibility where it is due, does a disservice to its students.

Mexico and Mexican Americans in *History Alive*: Like predecessor textbooks, *History Alive* describes the Alamo and “Mexican War” in ways that lift US glory, even though the war was provoked by a deceptive President Polk (220–221). The cartoon depiction of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo shows an image of the Mexican Eagle—Mexico’s national symbol on its flag—plucked (222). Though the recounting is factual in relating that the US military conquered the Mexican military and subsequently took its territory, it is also celebratory. This is in line with every previous textbook reviewed in this analysis.

History Alive's approach to immigrants and immigration is also in line with textbooks from the 1990s, with a focus on assimilation as a good and necessary step that immigrants must take to Americanize (174). The 1924 immigration quota system is similarly laid out with keywords from previous texts, although here the authors use the word "Nativism" to describe the xenophobia coloring immigration restrictions more directly (294). Under the heading "Crossing the Southern Border: Immigrants from Mexico," the authors make no mention of the larger structural connections that provide context for modern migration politics. They do note that:

> Like other immigrant groups, the Mexicans often suffered at the hands of native-born Americans. They might be welcomed as cheap labor, but they were commonly scorned as inferior to white Americans. Racist attitudes towards Mexicans, especially those with dark skin, led to discrimination. They were kept in low-level jobs and commonly denied access to public facilities, including restaurants. Many Mexican children were only allowed to attend segregated schools. (TCI 2013: 178)

Several hundred pages later, racism towards Mexican and Mexican American people is countered through the efforts of Dolores Huerta (523) and César Chávez (528), whose activism for farmworkers' rights is described as laudatory. There is also explicit discussion of language politics under the heading "La Raza: A People United," where the authors write: "A key issue for Chicano activists was bilingual education, or teaching in two languages. In 1968, President Johnson signed the Bilingual Education Act, legalizing instruction in languages other than English" (528). While this is a factual account, the authors neglect to mention that English is not officially the national language in the United States, and therefore the legislating of language politics itself is skewed toward a default English Whiteness that is not made explicit but understood as the expectation.

When the textbook does try for explicitness, it gets it wrong. Under "Diverse People Speaking One Language" the book states "Latinos, or Hispanics, are a diverse group" (527). Here, the authors reproduce conceptual errors widely made by scholars across multiple disciplines, conflating these two distinct terms. "Hispanic" refers to a language group derived from Spanish, so people of Spanish-speaking origins are Hispanic, which excludes, for example, people from Brazil. “Latino” refers to a cultural group with shared cultural reference points, which would include Brazilians. Through this heading and the mixing-up of terms, this book furthers misinformation about basic ethnic categories.

Another point of misinformation appears in reference to armed service volunteerism and citizenship. The book accurately depicts that people of “Mexican ancestry served with distinction in WWII … [and] received medals for bravery in combat. Some of these GIs were Mexican nationals—citizens of Mexico living in the US” (406). However, it goes on to say that “Service in the armed forces gave them a better chance to gain US citizenship,” (406) which may have been true in the twentieth century, although the statistics on this are hard to come by. But the truth of military service as a path to citizenship has been a fraught one, and readers of this passage might assume they or family members can join the military and obtain their citizenship. This is a dangerous and irresponsible claim to leave so vague.

In another example, a picture of a Social Security card is accompanied by a text insert box stating: “If you live and work in the United States, you should have a Social Security card and Social Security number. This is the number that the federal government uses to keep track of you, your earnings, and your future benefits. You will have the same Social Security number throughout your life” (376). Of course, this normative statement ignores the situation of many undocumented people, such as those who use other people’s Social Security numbers in order to gain employment, or undocumented children without Social Security cards who might be reading this textbook in high school. Since they are living in the US, but don’t have a card, what does this tell them about the legitimacy of their own lives? While this may or may not be intentional on the part of the textbook authors, the result is the opposite of a trauma-informed approach to this type of information.

Finally, an indicator available in textbooks published after the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the US, Mexico, and Canada in 1994 is how NAFTA is discussed. *History Alive*’s approach is to say that “Whether or not NAFTA has been good for the U.S. economy is open to debate” (672) without querying its benefits for all three countries. Given the disastrous effect on the Mexican economy and workers across agriculture and manufacturing sectors, which was widely documented by the time this textbook was published, this omission is another example of US-centrism in the curricula.

Summarizing the mixed results of *History Alive*: I conclude that, while it brings more awareness to multiple perspectives, *History Alive* does so through a passive voice that elides White responsibility for violence toward Native Americans, and harmfully reinforces assimilation and Englishization as necessary for im/migrant acceptability, perpetuating a White-centric notion of what the United States is supposed to be. Many additional indicators—the use of the word "slaves" rather than "enslaved people" (31), the omission of Henry Ford's extreme racism while praising his industrialism (149), and similar silence on Woodrow Wilson's racism (207) lift Whiteness without an honest presentation of the discrimination that existed in many of these historic accounts.

This textbook does not shy away entirely from difficult pasts. For example, in a section on the Vietnam War, there is the 1963 photo of a Buddhist monk self-immolating in protest of the war in South Vietnam (569), and a photo that textbook author James W. Loewen mentions he was not allowed to include in the young readers' version of *Lies My Teachers Told Me*, at risk of it being banned by school boards (Loewen 2019: 186). But what is allowed and what is censored reveals something about which histories are deemed acceptable because they are considered too threatening to foundational myths of what the United States is and, especially, for whom.

An additional Teachers' Curriculum Institute (TCI) textbook I reviewed in the course of this project is also currently in use as the core textbook in Eureka High School's civics class. *Government Alive! Power, Politics, and You* (2014) does an admiral job conveying many of the basic points of factual civic education that every graduating senior should know. Students can complete their reading of the textbook knowing the basics of how the electoral college works (TCI 2014: 51), and different categories of immigrants and what their labels convey (TCI 2014: 117), to name just a few examples.

However, there is a problematic section titled "Americans' shared political values" that elicits the same discomfort I had throughout much of *History Alive*. The first parts are generic descriptions of "American values" and though these make the US sound better than it is—espousing Liberty, Equality, and Democracy (123) even though these are not experienced equally by people—it is standard language in this type of textbook. But the entry on "Patriotism" is particularly galling. TCI writes, "Americans feel great pride and loyalty toward their country. Many believe that the United States is the greatest nation in the world. They also take pride in the values of American democracy" (TCI 2014: 124). There is no critical reflection on this belief by the authors, nor any mention of the damage such belief in US greatness inflicts on others.

It is perhaps this underlying backbone of patriotism that runs through *History Alive*. It alienates me, as a US-born White person. What might it feel like to someone with less individual or structural privilege, someone who sees even less of themselves than I do in statements beginning with "Americans believe…" Through such generalizations, paired with unmitigated patriotism, TCI's textbooks risk casting many young readers outside the circle of belonging.

2019: *United States History and Geography*

A few hours north of HVHS and along the cost, Del Norte High School (DNHS) is the northern-most high school in California before the Oregon border. I didn't have the chance to carry out ethnographic work in the US history classes there. Instead, I focused my time on the Yurok and Spanish language classes. But I corresponded with the then-US history teacher in 2022, who has since left the school, and she oriented me to the core texts and online resources she used to teach the classes. In turn, I gave feedback about elements of the curricula as they pertain to Native American representation (DNUSD 2022), both to the teacher and to school and district administration. Here, I offer a brief analysis of some key themes from coding the core US history textbook at DNHS.

United States History and Geography is written by two of the same authors who wrote the 2007 *The American Vision* textbook that Robert Anderson critiques earlier in this chapter and which ultimately led to his writing his own history textbook. This updated version, used at a neighboring high school, similarly meets some needs of students, and disregards others. In many ways, *United States History and Geography*, and its accompanying workbook, titled *Inquiry Journal* (Appleby et al. 2019a), which I focus on here, play into many of the same tired tropes of Native American subservience to White colonizers, or violence toward colonizers that justified White violence toward them (Appleby et al. 2019a: 48–50). But the authors also use text, images, and questions to assert Native American presence in ways that were not always the norm in earlier books, including in *The American Vision* (2007).

In a section of the *Inquiry Journal* headed simply “Native Americans,” *United States History and Geography* authors pose multiple open-ended questions such as “How was Native American society structured prior to the arrival of American settlers?” or “What led to Native American uprisings against the settlers? (Appleby et al. 2019a: 48). Questions like this are challenging to decipher in terms of their purpose because the *Inquiry Journal* is linked back to specific pages in the textbook, but the tools to answer the questions are still not explicit. On the one hand, open-ended questions do push students to refer to the text passages and make inferences based on their own analysis. The questions can be used as free-writing prompts to get students thinking critically about the text passages, which show multiple perspectives for students to draw on. But this approach allows for a very wide array of potential answers, from “Native American society was structured in democratic means with local governance structures varying across tribes” to “Native Americans lived simply in nature” (my example answers, not textual citations). Students could come to either conclusion from the text, and it isn’t clear that they would be equipped to decipher in which direction to go from the text alone.

My own research does not include teacher preparation and accountability (Avalos 2011; Sleeter 2017; Taubman 2010), itself an enormous field of study. But this particular passage points to the importance of teacher training as a critical aspect of curricular representation. Whose story is being emphasized and how is something teachers may sometimes address as interpreters of the textbooks within their own lesson plans. Such a role is particularly important when addressing general questions like these.

This open questioning style continues in the *Inquiry Journal* with the section titled “What is Americanization?” In a passage asking students to identify connections, the authors ask, “How did boarding schools, the Dawes Act, the Citizenship Act, and the Indian Reorganization Act each promote or discourage Americanization?” (Appleby et al. 2019a: 48). Here, the question is more specific and therefore has less potential to go astray, although it could still elicit a very standard answer. For example, boarding school “helped Native Americans assimilate” or a more progressively, “each of these things required Native Americans to sacrifice an aspect of their Native culture to access benefits defined as good by colonizers.” It is a question with pros and cons that requires students to consider more than one perspective about Americanization, but the politics of the answer are still questionable in terms of fair representation for Native American people.

In a section about Native American boarding schools titled “Educating the Indians—a Female Pupil of the Government school at Carlisle Visits Her Home at Pine Ridge Agency,” a young woman is pictured assimilated, in the clothes and haircut of settlers, while her tribe is in stark contrast in their native dress (Appleby et al. 2019a: 52–3). The authors ask, “What possible bias might readers of this magazine [where the photo was first published] have had as they interpreted this image?” (Appleby et al. 2019a: 52–3). Highlighting the way that bias and contrast between cultures was being selectively portrayed can prompt critical thinking in students. However, it might not lead students to question the problem with forced assimilation, as took place at the Carlisle Indian Boarding School, for example, because the text remains relatively vague on the process by which students were remade into assimilated beings.

The politics of such questions are never far away, and the potential to skew towards upholding White glory and justification of violence continues in this textbook. A few pages later, there is a passage asking students to:

> Explore the context: In 1864, tensions in Colorado were high between miners entering the territory and the Cheyenne and Arapaho groups already there. Native Americans raided the settlers’ wagon trains and ranches, burning homes and killing an estimated 200 settlers. The governors persuaded the Native Americans to surrender. (Appleby et al. 2019a: 50)

Again, the fact of the raid may be true, but the language makes Native American violence sound far worse, whereas Whites were only “entering the territory” (Appleby et al. 2019b: 50). In fact, as miners, those settlers were looking for land to dig up, water sources to re-route to mining, which would result in environmental contamination and many other impacts that would undermine Native livelihood.

In a final example regarding Native American representation in the *United States History and Geography Inquiry Journal,* under the heading “Termination of Federal Supervision over Certain Groups of Indians” the authors ask readers: “How did this policy aim to assimilate Native Americans into society? Cite evidence from the text. How did this policy change the lives of Native Americans? In your opinion, was assimilation a good idea at the time?” (Appleby et al. 2019a: 334–5). While the first two questions seem to promote important historical research skills drawing on critical thinking, the last question seems dangerous. What are students basing their opinion of assimilation on? There is so little perspective from Native Americans in this book that, though students have the authors' multiple perspectives to draw on, they have few testimonials to help them reason with whom assimilation was good for, and for whom it was not.

In a way, the question becomes an apologist's inquiry. Students have been given a text rooted in Whiteness, in which Whiteness has been the mission and the vision of the country whose history they are learning. Then they are asked whether it is good to try to assimilate into this social hierarchy; an open-ended question that will lead many students to see the benefits of assimilation rather than to question its detriments, which would be more visible in a book such as Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's *An Indigenous People's History of the United States*, where the negative impacts of assimilation on Indigenous people are frankly discussed throughout the book.

Mexico and im/migrant representation in *United States History and Geography Inquiry Journal*: Unsurprisingly, many of the same issues that make *United States History and Geography*'s treatment of Native American representation questionable have the same effect on representation of Mexico and im/migrant-origin people. In discussing the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the authors display the same open-ended question format, here asking the "Essential question: How should societies settle disputes?" (Appleby et al. 2019a: 40). Asking students to analyze the post-1848 US conquest of Mexican territory, the authors write, "In your opinion, were the treaty's attempts to protect the rights of Mexicans currently living in the newly acquired land enough?" (Appleby et al. 2019a: 41).

Bringing the historical issue into the present, the authors then write, "Mexico is a border country and close ally of the United States. How would you describe how our relationship has evolved since the time of the treaty?" (Appleby et al. 2019a: 41). This last question is enormous and spans 170 years of colonization, immigration policy, and xenophobia, so it is hard to imagine that a high school student would be able to properly understand this question in a chapter that provides almost no context for contemporary US-Mexican relations.

A certain amount of context pertaining to immigration is provided about 150 pages later. In a section urging readers to take action in regard to citizenship, they write:

> The cultural identity of the United States continues to shift and change today, in large part through immigration. The issues surrounding immigration are just as important and relevant today as they were in the 1920s. Throughout this chapter you read and learned about aspects of isolationism and nativism, the belief that one's native land needs to be protected from immigrants. Think about the incredible diversity of the US today and the different attitudes toward immigration in our society. Research some of the difficulties and successes of immigration policy. Using your information, initiate an informed conversation with your peers about immigration policy in the US today. Being aware and able to discuss current issues will help you to meaningfully engage in and improve your community. (Appleby et al. 2019a: 196)

This call to critical thinking and action is very progressive compared to other teacher's editions or study companion books I reviewed in this project. At the same time, the authors still use labels like "Wave of Immigration" that repeats old tropes about floods of immigrants (Appleby et al. 2019a: 498).

Other questions that address Mexican American issues squeeze too many marginalized groups into one question to allow for meaningful responses. For example, in the "Overview of Mexican-American Education," the "Essential question" is "How has society changed for students, women, LGBTQ activists, and Latinos?" (Appleby et al. 2019a: 424). Combining marginalized groups is sometimes a way of looking for lines of solidarity across them. Other times, it is a way to spend the least amount of time and cover the widest array of groups possible, which does no favors to the groups covered this way.

In sum, the *United States History and Geography* textbook and its associated *Inquiry Journal* prompts critical thinking for students while still invoking some of the same problematic labels and framing of themes that do not support Native American and Mexican American equitable representation. But the *Inquiry Journal* does push students to consider the "Essential questions" that could guide the rest of the course of study: "Why do some people fail to respond to injustice while others try to prevent injustice?" (Appleby et al. 2019a: 260). At least asking the question might get readers to contemplate which response they choose.

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CHAPTER 4

Teaching to the Test: Undermining Academic Rebellion (2020s)

Abstract Advanced Placement US History (APUSH) courses offered in high schools, and the materials learned from them, have important implications for students. Since APUSH courses can be used as college credit, some young people might not even take a subsequent history course when in college—making the curricula in these classes all the more important. This chapter looks specifically at a 2020 textbook titled *Fabric of a Nation* used for APUSH courses. Out of all the textbooks looked at in this analysis, *Fabric of a Nation* is undoubtedly the most inclusive and most up to date. It prompts critical thinking and includes more accurate historical context. However, the book is not perfect. It continues to reinforce Native American passivity and doesn't expand enough on issues of immigration when it comes to Mexican and im/migrant representations.

Keywords Advanced Placement US History (APUSH) • Critical thinking • Passivity • Immigration • Representation • Curricula • Textbooks • Teachers

Introduction: A Test's Textbook

The Advanced Placement US History (APUSH) class, since its creation in 1955, has become a high school benchmark that operates on many levels. For students, AP classes enforce academic divisions that in turn foster

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social ones. “Smart kids”—those planning to go to college—take AP classes, while “everyone else” takes regular classes. AP classes are also measurement benchmarks for the high schools and teachers who offer them. High schools that offer fewer AP classes are ranked lower and considered less academically robust than those that offer numerous AP courses. For AP teachers, in some schools, student AP scores are part of their annual job reviews. As a result, many teachers have vested interests in teaching to the test to ensure high student scores.

APUSH classes are taken to be equivalents to college-level courses, but available to students in high school. Classes cater to students identified as college-bound, and AP credit earned with top scores on AP exams will usually be accepted by colleges and universities in lieu of taking comparable courses at college. If students earn enough AP credits across multiple subjects, they can sometimes graduate college a semester early, save tuition expenses, or add space to their schedules for other opportunities.

Textbooks for APUSH classes are distinct from those for non-AP US history classes—in fact, they are rarely the same book. In the far Northern California schools I focused on in my fieldwork, APUSH classes have entirely distinct textbooks and related but separate curricula. AP textbooks are defined by repetitive exercises designed to prepare students for the standardized test. The constraints of the test have implications for teachers too. AP courses are expected to be the same across the United States because the purpose is to prepare students for the standardized test (College Board 2022).

APUSH has been highly controversial over the years, with a range of polemics on what content should be covered. Because AP classes are part of the business empire of standardized testing, there is a lot of money to be made from both the textbooks and the tests themselves. This has only expanded in the 2020s in light of the 2023 elimination of Critical Race Theory from the AP African American History curriculum (Wright 2023). Educational content, and AP content in particular, has been an arena of contestation over ideas around wokeness and political correctness versus what others might term freedom of speech. This chapter explores the details of one APUSH textbook currently in use in far Northern California to better understand how representations of Native Americans and Mexican im/migrant people play out on its pages.

2020: Native American Representation in *Fabric of a Nation*

Stacy and Ellington's *Fabric of a Nation: A Brief History with Skills and Sources* was designed for use in Advanced Placement US History (APUSH) courses. This book was used in the APUSH course at Eureka High School during the 2021–2022 school year. In general, this book shows some major improvements from earlier reviewed textbooks in terms of updated identity-first language (e.g., "enslaved Africans" rather than "slaves") and inclusion of Native American resistance rather than only depictions of domination by settler-colonists.

There are many attempts at open-ended questions in *Fabric of a Nation* that try to promote critical thinking, but they end up asking the wrong questions. For example, a painting of the Seneca Chief Cornplanter, child of a White father and Native American mother, is captioned by the question, "What elements of this portrait portray the influence of European culture on Cornplanter?" (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 200). Yet, shouldn't Cornplanter, who fought on the British side during the Revolutionary War and then encouraged assimilation by American Indians afterward, evoke more questions than just those of physical appearance? How could Cornplanter's biracial identity impact his political choices? What would motivate a Native American Chief to cede territory or sign treaties with settlers? *Fabric of a Nation* is a book for high schoolers—young people who are already driving vehicles and will be eligible to vote in a year or two. It is also a highly contemporary book that has been updated in multiple ways through both text and image inclusion. High schoolers, especially those in an APUSH class, are capable of answering more difficult questions than the above example. Students can be asked hard questions, and they can grapple with confronting answers.

But *Fabric of a Nation* is still very confined in preparing students for the AP test that the College Board has defined. It is set up for students to excel on the test, so that teachers get the kinds of professional rewards their schools and districts have attached to high test pass rates. The content redundancy and practice test content are not seen in non-APUSH textbooks. This book is explicitly teaching to the AP test at every step. While much of the volume does promote a deeper kind of critical thinking than non-APUSH textbooks, many of the practice questions have seemingly innocuous multiple-choice questions. Even if they lead to a non-racist answer, the questions themselves include racist or discriminatory options that render these alarming views included and prevalent in the volume itself, even if they are not the correct answer on the test. For example, in one practice area, a map labeled "American Indian Economies, Late 15th Century" shows where Native Americans were hunting, fishing, and farming. The multiple-choice practice question then asks:

> This map best supports which conclusion about American Indian economies before European contact?
>
> A. American Indian economies were less advanced than those in Europe.
> B. American Indians lived a more "natural" lifestyle than Europeans.
> C. American Indian economies were diverse and adapted to local resources.
> D. American Indians exhibited a greater respect for natural resources than Europeans. (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 39d)

Options A, B, and D all feed into stereotypes of Native American people. Even though C is the correct answer, A, B, and D reinforce said stereotypes just by being viable options on the page. Though the text around the map and question delivers the information students need to make the right choice, this example points to the impact of standardized curricula as tools to both deliver information and incidentally reinforce misinformation.

Strikingly, the captions still outline a worldview that is deeply problematic, like in the heading "Westward Expansion and Indian Resistance" (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 449). Phrasing of White-Native American relations are spaces of reoccurring problematic representation in this textbook as well as its predecessors. For example, in this sentence, "Puritans and Pilgrims faced serious threats from their American Indian neighbors" (76), the structural context gives readers a one-sided view of threat. Sentences like this are sprinkled throughout the textbook. Though it is factually true—Native Americans did attack settlers sometimes—they did so far less than they were attacked by settlers, which is hardly mentioned. In fact, Native Americans faced serious threat from Puritans and Pilgrims, but this reverse presentation is never made in this or in any other standard textbook I reviewed.

Fabric of a Nation does include a discussion that is a significant improvement from earlier textbooks covering this period. In a section titled, "American Indian Removals and Relocations, 1820s–1840s" (315), the accompanying map shows arrows of forced removal and asks readers the question “What do these maps reveal about the impact of American expansionism on American Indians?” (315). While arguably “colonialization” would be a more accurate word choice instead of expansionism, this illustration and accompanying text does show harm toward Native Americans in ways that begin to balance the claim that Natives were “serious threats” to Puritans and Pilgrims.

In addition, *Fabric of a Nation* is one of the few textbooks I reviewed that explicitly point out false images previously in circulation. The image titled “Cherokee Removal, 1838” appears with text that says:

> This woodcut appeared in a U.S. geography textbook from about 1850. The title “Indian Emigrants” and the image of Cherokee disembarking from a steamboat falsely suggests that the emigration was voluntary and the means of travel relatively easy. The U.S. fort on the hill symbolizes the role of the federal government in forcing the Cherokee to move west of the Mississippi. Based on the title of this image and its portrayal of the Cherokee, what was the purpose of the woodcut? Explain your reasoning. (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 316)

This is a significant historical correction. I wanted the authors to offer even more information about the “Indian Emigrants” image. For example, how long did that image stay in textbooks, misinforming students about the Cherokee removal? Perhaps that is a project for another researcher.

Native American treatment as agentive people in *Fabric of a Nation* appears mixed at many points. The Dawes Act, passed in 1887 as an assimilatory tactic to force the division of tribal lands into homesteads, is discussed as being based on “flawed cultural assumptions. Even the most sensitive white administrators of American Indian affairs considered them a degraded race, in accordance with the scientific thinking of the time” (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 457). The textbook makes clear that the Dawes Act was detrimental to tribes, which is true. But ill treatment by the government continued.

> During WWI, to save money the federal government had ceased appropriating funds for public health programs aimed at benefiting American Indians living on reservations. With the war over, the government failed to restore the funds. Throughout the 1920s, rates of tuberculosis, eye infections, and infant mortality spiked among the American Indian population. Boarding schools continued to promote menial service jobs for American Indian stu-

> dents. On the brighter side, in 1924, Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act granting citizenship and the right to vote to all AIs. Nevertheless, most remained outside the economic and political mainstream of American society with meager government help. (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 630)

On the one hand, in the excerpt above, the authors do an important historical service in showing government neglect. At the same time, it is problematic to say the Indian Citizenship Act was "on the brighter side," when federal government did not consult with Native Americans about their interest in becoming citizens in the first place; Native Americans did not get to negotiate what those rights even looked like. In this way, even as the authors try to show a more balanced snapshot of government policy violence on one front, they highlight the paternalism of granting citizenship without consultation as being on the "bright side" of government behavior.

This lack of Native American agency is continued in discussion of the 1934 Indian Reservation Act, which "terminated the Dawes Act, authorized self-government for those living on reservations, extended tribal landholdings, and pledged to uphold native customs and language" (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 658). While this is factually what happened, it is again written as something done to Native people rather than something they had agency over defining for themselves.

In general, *Fabric of a Nation* conveys information in ways that prompt critical thinking, even if that critical thinking is channeled solely to excel on the APUSH exam. Sometimes the information it conveys pushes readers to understand White violence toward Native Americans during colonization, and other times, the way the information is written, even if factually correct, continues to reinforce notions of Native American passivity. Like most other textbooks I reviewed, *Fabric of a Nation* confines Native Americans to the beginning of the book and does not circle back to show contemporary Native life beyond brief mention of resistance to assimilation (459) and the American Indian Movement takeover of Alcatraz Island of 1972 (774).

Even though the book allots space for some sensitive treatment of Native Americans, they are mostly treated as historical and obsolete, as in this passage under the heading "American Indian Civilizations": "The frontier was home to diverse peoples long before white and immigrant settlers appeared. The many native groups who inhabited the West spoke distinct languages, engaged in different economic activities, and competed with one another for power and resources" (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 452). It would be easier to educate high school students about the contemporary existence of Native American people when they are described in more ways rather just in the past tense as they are throughout hundreds of pages of scholarly textbooks like this one.

Indigenous, Mexican, and Im/migrant Representation in *Fabric of a Nation* (2020)

When my family lived in Mexico during multiple iterations of my fieldwork for previous projects, I taught my daughter about Mexico's Malinche,[1] who, in a story similar to that of Pocahontas, learned multiple languages when she was enslaved and became a translator (and concubine) for Hernán Cortés. *Fabric of a Nation* presents an image of Malinche with Cortés meeting Montezuma at Tenochtitlán in 1519 (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 31) that particularly stuck with me. Though the amount of page space devoted to Malinche is more than in previous volumes, this textbook still directs students to draw broad generalizations that move away from structural critiques of colonization and exploitation.

The caption below the image of Malinche states: "It is a reproduction of an image created by Tlaxcalan artists and represents an American Indian perspective on these events. Identify Cortés, Malintzin, and Montezuma. What can you infer about the artist's attitude toward Cortés and Malintzin based on this image?" (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 31). That there could be one "American Indian" perspective as denoted by the caption is a highly generalized assumption. It also oversimplifies Indigenous people. Indigenous to what group? Were they the victors or the vanquished in the war with Cortés? Were artisans of this era generally wealthy or poor? Pro-Malinche or contra? Why not ask students to consider how colonialism shaped Malinche's options in the meeting with Cortés and Montezuma, or how enslavement structurally alters people's lives?

In line with my coding of other textbooks, I note that *Fabric of a Nation*'s treatment of the Alamo is the most improved of any other textbook to date. The authors note that, in 1936, "American newspapers picked up the story of the Alamo and published accounts of the battle, describing the Mexican fighters as brutal butchers bent on saving Texas for the pope. These stories, though more fable than fact, increased popular support for the war at a time when many Americans were increasingly hostile to Catholic immigrants in the United States" (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 312). This accounting shows the political impetus for "fable," which facilitates a structural critique of US propaganda in characterizing Mexican soldiers as butchers, providing a much-improved rendition of the Alamo.

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[1] Malinche's name is sometimes represented as Malintzin.

At the same time, the book's insistence on using the term "expansion" in relation to the Mexican-American War (1846–1848) (360) and elsewhere (449) perpetuates a myth that expansion is not theft or colonialism. Expansion is invoked when recounting how Mexico ceded approximately one million square miles to the US after surrendering militarily. Under a war map the authors pose the question: "To what extent was expansion through war in 1846 a new policy for the US?" (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 360–1). The question provokes reflection on the use of war in state-making. But when explaining the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the authors frame it this way: "With victory ensured, U.S. officials faced a difficult decision: How much Mexican territory should they claim?" (363). Such framing is problematic. What about that decision is difficult? In the face of a US-instigated war with Mexico, weren't there other "difficult decisions" that could be examined?

The authors continue to lack irony in their characterization of immigration in a space of rapidly moving borders. Though the text does mention nativist backlash, much of the focus is on the "surge," "wave," and "flood" of migrants (501) who arrive in the US. For Mexicans specifically, "[f]rom 1860 to 1924, some 450,000 Mexicans migrated to the U.S. Southwest … to jobs on farms, mines, mills, and construction" (502). There is no mention that only by the mid-1800s were Mexican migrants in these places, whereas twelve years prior they would have been residents within their own country.

The California Gold Rush has mostly been a space of silence and absence in representation of Native American, Mexican, and Mexican American people in US history textbooks. Stacy and Ellington in *Fabric of a Nation* handle this content somewhat better.

> The rapid influx of gold seekers heightened tensions between newly arrived whites, local American Indians, and Californios. Forty-niners confiscated land owned by Californios, shattered the fragile ecosystem in the California mountains, and forced Mexican and American Indian men to labor for low wages or a promised share in uncertain profits. New conflicts erupted when

> migrants from Asia and South American joined the search for wealth. Forty-niners from the US regularly stole from and assaulted these foreign-born competitors. (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 363)

This factual recounting of White violence against Mexican, Californio (people of Mexican ancestry but born in California), and Native American people sets a foundation to look honestly at the complexity of immigration, which this textbook does better than many others to date, while still reinforcing some tropes.

When the authors discuss the "melting pot" they note that it "worked better as an ideal than as a mirror of reality. Immigrants during this period never fully lost the social, cultural, religious, and political identities they had brought with them" (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 508). While the authors note that the role of school is as an important assimilation tool, there is also an underlying implication that immigrants *should* lose their culturally specific identities in order to melt better.

Broadly speaking, the authors use maps about 1910 immigration patterns (571), discussion of pre-1920s immigration restrictions to highlight existing "religious bigotry" (628), and the National Origins Act passed by the 1924 Congress (629) to explain changing immigration rules in a non-fearmongering approach. They note that "immigration from Mexico and elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere was exempted from the [1924] quotas because farmers in the Southwest needed Mexican laborers to tend their crops and pressured the government to excuse them from coverage" (629). This exception for Mexicans came with many caveats, which the authors judiciously explain:

> In the Southwest and on the West Coast, white people aimed their Americanization efforts at the growing population of Mexican Americans. Subject to segregated education, Mexican Americans were expected to speak English in their classes. Anglo school administrators and teachers generally believed that Mexican Americans were suited only for farm work and manual trades. For Mexican Americans, therefore, Americanization meant vocational training and preparation for low-status, low-wage jobs. (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 629)

This excerpt provides a critique of what Americanization means in the context of discrimination against Mexicans. It also shows how the authors' definition of White supremacy—the "belief that all white people, regardless of class or education, were superior to all black people"—was extended to Mexicans (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 328). Moreover, the authors insinuate that class and education are bound together with race and ethnicity in societal notions of superiority and inferiority that dictate social hierarchy.

Fabric of a Nation works to show that Mexicans and im/migrant-origin people stood up to White supremacy, not only through the usual sections on César Chávez and Dolores Huerta, but also through the political party La Raza Unida (Stacy and Ellington 2020: 773–4). They also show White violence as rooted in the glorification of racist pasts, from the colonial costumes and American flags visible in a photograph of school busing opponents in 1970s Boston (762), to Trump's electoral victory in 2016, rooted in working-class White "attitudes toward minorities and immigrants" (849).

As a critic and analyst, I look for things to critique. *Fabric of a Nation* offers much improvement from earlier textbooks regarding the representation of both Native American and Mexican and im/migrant-origin people. However, that is a low bar to set. The book also continues to normalize White violence and make "expansion" feel necessary rather than a choice to colonize. The book engages person-first language (107), meaning language that centers people's humanity rather than identifying characteristics of how people are socially categorized, for example, by using the term "enslaved people" rather than "slaves," which was the more common term in other textbooks in my sample. In doing so, *Fabric of a Nation* demonstrates an interest in resetting dialogue about the past. Yet as a teach-to-the-test textbook, it will remain as limited as the test-makers to whom it caters.

Conclusion: A Personal Reflection on APUSH

I took APUSH when I was a student at Eureka High School in the late 1990s. I found the class material boring, but the teacher, Paul Bressoud, was a fun, tie-dye-wearing follower of the Grateful Dead who would fill the time between lessons regaling us with deeper life messages: be kind to each other, don't be so uptight. He cared about his students even as he himself questioned the system that both teachers and students were meant to conform to.

I come from a small town and Mr. Bressoud and I would run into each other over the years, sometimes at the local co-op where he would stock shelves as a side-job. After I finished my Ph.D., when I came to town to visit my parents over the summer, he bought me a beer to celebrate and we talked about education politics. He had been deeply involved with the teachers' union in his school district and now that he was retired, he was jaded and glad to be away from it.

I've shared a few drafts of my critiques of APUSH curricula over the years with him, including some of the ethnographic work done with students and this textbook analysis. With his permission, I share his thoughts here to frame some of the challenges of courses like APUSH before I return to textual analysis.

> I think of my own self, just living in my like-minded zip code thinking I'm cool and not the problem. [Your writing] challenged that thinking. I taught the subject for thirty years and I'm certain I never had the width of inclusivity that really is required to do it right. Though I tried to expand, I was also a product of an even narrower primary and secondary education myself.
>
> Maybe you wanted a more academic response, but what really happened is through your expert telling of a compelling story, one that really resonated with me, you got this old man thinking hard and questioning even himself. I'm thinking about these questions: How do we teach history? Who should be teaching history? Is AP truly a supplement for a college class? Is it a racket? Do students have a say in their curriculum? Do they have an avenue for any grievance? What kind of educational system do you construct when you don't listen to students? If it's unbalanced here in groovy Northern California, then what's it like elsewhere? We need to elect better school board members!
>
> And so on and so forth. My mind was blown on many levels, both with disappointment and introspection. (Bressoud 2022)

Mr. Bressoud's questions are the ones that every teacher and educational administrator needs to be asking themselves. Do students have a say in their curriculum? What does it mean to teach things that have no personal meaning or resonance for students? What are the virtues of a standardized curriculum if it does not inspire learning or, even worse, produces shame and even misinformation in students? Is APUSH just, as he asks, a racket? As we consider the politics of textbooks within the wider lens of educational policy, it is vital to ruminate on these questions. They aren't just the musings of an "old stoner," as Mr. Bressoud calls himself, but questions at the core of many educators' worries as to whether they are using their time in meaningful ways.

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CHAPTER 5

Kids These Days: Ethnographic Evidence on the Impact of Textbook Misrepresentation

Abstract To expand on the importance of culturally relevant curricula and textbooks, this chapter features the voices of students themselves, who attend various schools in far Northern California. Each have their own backgrounds and personal stories tied to their cultures, but much of their points are the same. They wish for things like teachers who understand their experiences and classroom activities and textbooks that include Native and other BIPOC experiences. Highlighting student voices and perspectives shows the dire need facing the US school system today when it comes to curricula being taught.

Keywords Ethnography • Focus groups • Interviews • Far Northern California • Teachers • Curricula • BIPOC • Student perspectives

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE CURRICULA

While spending hundreds of hours in schools and classrooms carrying out the ethnographic portion of my research, I reviewed not only textbooks but also supplementary readings, films, school posters, murals, and mascots to broadly assess how representation might impact student wellbeing. Findings show that a significant portion of education media in the US

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history curriculum either contributes to misrepresentation of the communities of origin of BIPOC students or demonstrates a deafening silence that renders BIPOC contributions to past and present contemporary society invisible.

Some educators and administrators have found innovative ways around this harm and are working hard to include students from many backgrounds, while others continue to systemically exclude them. I present a sample of representative student and alumni voices that speak to their experiences of their own identities represented in the curriculum.

Maurice Alvarado[1] graduated from Eureka High School in 2019 and identifies as a Yurok descendent, meaning he is not tribally enrolled but has Yurok heritage. In 2019, Maurice was one of the first two students to successfully complete the California State Seal of Biliteracy (SSB) in Yurok, a prestigious accomplishment demonstrating advanced-level Yurok language skills—something only eight students have achieved to date in the whole state. I interviewed Maurice in 2022, and in our conversation about the role of Yurok language access and identity in his life he also mentioned his experience of his own high school history curricula.

> In my history classes, I thought Native Americans were portrayed very poorly. You only learned the big things that happened to us—we were killed! Native Americans just don't have a good spectrum of information being told about them. One thing I noticed is that with teachers and students who cared, when we were able to be in those environments where people want to learn, we could do more. I remember we had a class where there were just two chapters about Native Americans for the whole year!
>
> But Ms. D was my history teacher, and one memory I have is when she found out I was Native and taking the Yurok language class, she scheduled a whole half an hour for me to talk about the Yurok Natives. A lot of people assume all Native Americans live in tepees and wear certain clothing. Yuroks are a lot different from Blackfoot Indians; any tribe is different from the next. Ms. D was huge on that. She did not like the textbook but wanted to keep her teaching job, so she taught us what was in the book but also tried to do extra. (Alvarado 2022)

I also interviewed the second student to achieve the SSB in Yurok in 2019. Danielle Schunneman[2] is also a Yurok descendent who took all four years of Yurok language, a course offered as a language elective at Eureka High School. Danielle observed:

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[1] Maurice gave permission to use his real name.

[2] Danielle gave permission to use her real name.

> My US history class covered mostly from WWI to WWII. We didn't really talk about Native Americans. We talked about wars and industrial revolutions, how we made our machines. I do remember talking about Columbus and thinking "ugh!" But our Yurok language teacher talked about contact with the Vikings and Yurok people. He said we [Yurok people] traded with them. They didn't slaughter us. That was interesting to see that facts he had about it were different than what I had heard always about Columbus and being killed. (Schunneman 2022)

While this book looks at Native American representation broadly, Maurice and Danielle give examples of how conscientious educators were able to facilitate inclusion of Yurok-specific content in the classroom. While in Maurice's example it put the burden on him to be the expert in front of his peers, his teacher was at least creating a space for Yurok visibility that was sorely lacking elsewhere.

Both of these alumni named their Yurok language class as the single most important educational intervention they had. It was a place where they were taught Yurok language, culture, history, and contemporary practices by a Yurok person. It was healing, formative, and impactful in how they viewed themselves then and the identities they took with them after they left school.

Focus group results with Yurok students on Native Americans in education: At Del Norte High School (DNHS), I conducted a mini-focus group with two Yurok language III–IV students who are both enrolled in the Yurok Tribe and live on the Yurok Indian Reservation in Klamath, California. When I asked them about representation of Native Americans they have encountered during their schooling, the stories came flooding out, with some exclamations accompanied by table-slapping with open palms. These two students are clearly friends and were comfortable finishing each other's sentences and showed strong emotion as they spoke.

> #2: I got in an argument with a teacher once because they said something wrong and I was like "F**k that about Columbus! That isn't right!" That was a few years ago.
> # 1: At high school, the English teacher last year was talking about some things that were okay. But in history this year, the teacher kinda says some things that are iffy. I think she is more ignorant about it, not really racist.

> #2: She posted something [online] that wasn't good, but I didn't say anything.
> #1: Last year's history teacher did really want to be respectful. She got Columbus things right. But there is definitely still room to grow for her. She says some things that are not okay. The issue is that kids come into her class …
> #2: … and then they go out in the world thinking that's all right to say stuff like that!
> #1: Or they believe that [wrong] stuff! When you tell 'em what actually happened, they don't believe you. They say "that's not what my teacher said!" But confronting the teacher in front of class …
> #2: Saying, "I'm just trying to make sure you're getting your facts straight …"
> #1: … they take it like you're trying to call them out!
> #2: But they need to get their story right …
> #1: … and not praise Christopher Columbus! (Focus Group 10.1 2022)

This is one excerpt from a sizable list of complaints about teachers at DNHS and the content they conveyed about Native people.

Both focus group participants commented on how significant the identity of teachers has been in relation to the class content and whether or not they feel understood in the classroom. Participant #1 noted: "In our elementary school, the majority of the teachers were Native. So, they knew the deal and taught us right. Here [at DNHS] our only Native teachers are for language and Native Studies" (Focus Group 10.1 2022).

Somewhat uniquely in the overall data set of student comments, participant #2 had experiences at two different high schools. The school where I met her, DNHS, is predominantly White and in a mostly White town with a reputation for racial hostility. The school she attended previously, HVHS, is on the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation, where the town and school are home and educator to a vast majority of Native Americans. She observes, "When I went to HVHS for a little while, I did so much better with grades and assignments up there, because teachers understood us and our learning styles. I had As and Bs there, but when I came back here, I got Ds and Fs. Teachers were so much more understanding and helpful there, and the students too" (Focus Group 10.1 2022). While recognizing that there were multiple intervening variables happening for participant #2 across her HVHS and DNHS experiences, the ability to study material that included Native content, in a Native-dominant environment, with teachers who understood her without her having to explain it all, felt like it made a difference in her academic success. She explained further:

> #2: Teachers there [HVHS] have kinda their own way of teaching. They talked about our culture and had us write about it. And they had more cultural classes up there.
> #1: I think because most the teachers are Native there, or if they aren't, they're honorary Native …
> #2: … Teachers there respect Natives. They actually really cared about us and put in the effort as well. We're a bit slower sometimes, some of us ….
> #1: They probably felt like they could teach more about Native stuff because it was more Native. Here, we have all kinds, so someone will feel like, "why aren't you teaching about my group?" Kids will get defensive about it.
> #2: And also, the teachers at Hoopa probably know your family. And teachers are elders, or in that [age] zone. So, people want to behave better.
> #1: Right, a teacher can be like, "don't make me go tell your auntie. She's just in the next classroom!"

I asked the students what it would mean to them to have more Native teachers:

> #2: I'd go to class more.
> #1: I'd show up to class more!
> #2: I'd be more comfortable in there. I'd get my work done more.
> #1: Natives know better how Natives work. The majority of this school is White. There are a lot of Mexicans and a whole bunch of other ethnic groups. But Native kids learn differently. Some Native families be havin' it rough! Mom or dad can't find a job and they're barely making it through, but the kids still come to school. And they are trying to learn, but teachers don't know *how* they learn. It is easier to learn from someone that's Native or someone that at least knows how Native people are. (Focus Group 10.1 2022)

These students made three important points throughout the focus group. First, they want to have a more Native curriculum. It is interesting to them, they care about it, and it makes them want to participate. They are offended by misrepresentations of Native peoples in their classes, which happen frequently in subjects like US history.

Second, they see value in Native American teachers. There is a pipeline problem in education and credentialing that is closely linked to long-term legacies of settler colonialism. But it is a problem that can be systematically addressed if it is prioritized and if resources are allocated to the training and recruitment of Native educators.

Third, they acknowledge culturally competent teaching as something that impacts how they feel about school. Teachers do not *have* to be Native in order to teach in ways that are most helpful for Native students, but they have to "know how Native people are" (Focus Group 10.1 2022). Students walk into the classroom with their own personal and cultural stories. Understanding that, even if one is not an expert in the stories themselves, can be demonstrated through a range of inclusive practices. This could mean ensuring the training in and the practice of trauma-informed pedagogy, which makes some alterations from traditional methods of teaching to help students dealing with high levels of trauma feel more comfortable.

For example, teachers could ask for volunteers rather than calling on students, or they could meet privately with students to discuss behavioral issues rather than publicly addressing them and shaming students in the process. These examples are all part of a trauma-informed toolkit. In one common example that came up across the schools, students mentioned being spoken to by teachers in front of their classmates after putting their heads down on their desks and closing their eyes. While admittedly such action might look like disrespect or boredom, in fact students talked about housing insecurity or high care-giving burdens that led to such exhaustion that they needed to rest. For students dealing with homelessness, school may be the one physically safe environment where they can do so.

More awareness of these realities, facilitated by increased training in these matters offered by schools and districts, can help foster increased sensitivity among educators and administrators. Such shifts in professional culture for teachers, alongside a deep evaluation of curricula to assess and address misrepresentation variation in teaching methods and assessments, can be meaningful for students. Standardized testing, for example, has long been shown to have a White bias, and yet it is still used in classrooms across the country (Au 2015: 23–32). When teachers expand the way they evaluate student achievement, they may find different results than one constrained testing model shows.

When it comes to issues pertaining to curriculum, I asked these two students what they think is working well in terms of accurate representation in the classroom at DNHS.

> #2: Language classes are really good. I hear the Tolowa classes are great too. The language class teachers know the most about our heritage. They know all our ancestors' stories, so they get it right. Most history teachers are White and not getting it right. Even having guest speakers from local Native populations would be an improvement. I think a history class should have guest speakers come in before they teach anything about Native American heritage, and then after that, teachers should go into their lesson plans and see what they got wrong before they teach. People would be willing to come in and speak. (Focus Group 10.1 2022)

Though they are using different language to describe it, these students are speaking to the fact that they do not want to be taught inaccurate, colonial-derived information. They want educators to be more active in seeking out ways to provide accurate representation, which may directly contradict the information they had previously prepared in their lesson plans. This levelheaded call by these young, bright teenagers should be an incentive to educators everywhere to start thinking more creatively about how to provide accurate information that respects Native cultures.

Mexico in the Curriculum

Across the hall from the Yurok language classroom at EHS, where I spent many intensive hours with students and the teachers from 2018 to 2022, is the Advanced Placement Spanish class. Further down the halls, lined with red and green metal lockers, is the English Language Development Support class. I've spent time ethnographically observing these classes and conducted interviews and focus groups with students. One student, Dana,[3] is in both classes, as she is a native Spanish-speaker working to get her English up to a level that will let her pass the classes she needs in order to graduate. Dana was born in California, but accompanied her mother when she needed to return to Mexico, and did the majority of her schooling there. She has only studied for a few years in the US, and she has been alarmed at the stereotypes of Mexicans that she sees in the curriculum:

> Sometimes Mexicans are shown as hard-working in the books, like in history. But frequently, Mexicans are shown as bad, as invading the country [US] and abandoning theirs. But it isn't true. It is complicated why people leave [Mexico]. It isn't that they want to come. They come because there is

[3] A pseudonym.

> something they need that they can't get where they are: safety, a job that will let them live. (Anonymous 2022a)

Dana is very clear that the curricula she sees paint Mexican people in a negative light, and she hangs her head when I ask how it makes her feel about herself. Our interview is in Spanish. "*Malo*," she says, "bad." "Obviously I know the real reasons people come, but it still makes me feel like I and my family have done something wrong" (Anonymous 2022a).

Stories like Dana's demand real-world change. The problems of representation in textbooks are not hypothetical. Students are affected by them. Education policy-makers, administrators, educators, and staff at high schools can learn from students' perspectives and suggestions, as can the rest of us community members. Young people provide insights for how adults in their communities can better support them at school. Taken together, such lessons can help us remake the world into a place where all are welcome as their whole selves.

"A bit more representation": Carl[4] is Dana's classmate in Advanced Placement Spanish, and he is bilingual, having grown up in Eureka his entire life with parents from Mexico. He is outgoing, gangly, prone to laughter and to play things down. He wants to be accepted, but he doesn't want to complain. Whereas Dana radiates a calm intensity that demonstrates a character that is always watching and taking things in, Carl appears to float through his days, bounding from situation to situation. He is much more caught off-guard by the interview questions, which he reacts to as if this is the first time he has thought about these issues. He doesn't have the language to describe what he sees, and he fumbles his way through our exchange. I edited out many of the pauses in his answers to make it more fluid reading, but there was a lot of rephrasing questions and defining terms in our conversation.

Carl is enrolled in US history during the 2021–2022 academic year when I interview him, so I ask him about that class. He tells me about representations of Mexican people, and people from other minority backgrounds, that he has read, watched, or discussed in his history curricula.

> I feel like in history it [misrepresentation] happens a lot. They change up, not the story, but, like, the way it's interpreted, to try and make one side

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[4] A pseudonym.

> seem better than the other. I'm trying to think of an example right now … like how California become the US and not Mexico.
>
> In Spanish class we definitely talk about immigration. We have the, uh, the little podcasts that we're playing right now. We're listening to a story that's on, like, this person that works as one of the people that helps others get across the border, and they get paid for doing that. That's the only class we talk about stuff like that in. In the other classes, like in history, we learn about how like, in the 1800s all the Europeans and also all the Asians came here.
>
> I feel, like, there should be a bit more representation, I mean just all of the immigrants in general, not just Mexicans. But I feel like they do a decent job, 'cause, like, they go over how the Europeans, like, came from that side, and how the Japanese and some Chinese, they all come from different areas, but they also talk about how they got discriminated, and how some people in those groups have stood up for it [against discrimination]. It's so-so.

This balanced approach shows that Carl is able to recognize the importance of multiple perspectives and stories about many identities. However, it is telling that only in his Spanish class, taught by a particularly engaged teacher, does he hear about immigration as it pertains to his own family's experience. Carl goes on to emphasize the importance of getting to read about Mexican im/migrant identity in another class.

> In AP English and composition, uh, we were doing a unit on the American dream, and the teacher let us pick from five or six books. One was from, uh, Mexicans, that was the one that I chose—me and my other friend—and there was another one with just Asians, but I forgot what type, and there were a few others from different cultures. The one I read was called, uh, *The Distance Between Us*. I like how, since it was about the American dream, it's not just, like, one American dream, but the American dream of Mexicans, and Asians, and everyone else. It was an interesting unit. And we also did presentations, like each person did different books, and it was fun seeing the different views from these different cultures. (Anonymous 2022b)

This excerpt speaks to the importance of culturally relevant curricula. Carl felt affirmed in reading about stories that resonated with his own, but he later noted that they were few and far between and he wished he had more. For diverse schools, creating curricula like the book selection that can be a choose-your-own-adventure approach, rather than one book for everyone, is a strategic way to meet the interests of a multifaceted demographic.

I recognize that textbook reform is not a top priority for many of the students I spoke with in focus group interviews. Yet reading between the lines, themes of representation and identity are present in the excerpt below, where I ask a focus group of three Eureka High School Advanced Placement Spanish students (#1 and #2 are Mexican American and #3 is White) to imagine that they had a magic wand and could wish for anything.

> #1: If I could wish for something it would probably be to make the world, like, love each other more, because with that everything else will fall into place. And I would wish for more money, 'cause like, my parents don't have that much. We as a family don't have enough to just be comfortable. I'd wish for better jobs so we can earn a little more just to be, like, more stable than we are today.
> #2: For me, if I had a couple magic wishes I'd try to change like, discrimination and stigmas. And make it so students can go to college easier. Like, put systems in place that actually give students money to go to college. And I'd ask for a road to citizenship, because I know that my parents can't reap all the benefits that provides, even though they pay taxes and all that. They don't have social security, they can't retire later in life, just because they're immigrants.
> #3: Well, of course, not to show off my geek side, but I would like to have a phantasmal world where there's, like, dragons and magic! But more realistically, I would like the world to be more unified, like, instead of trying to fight with each other, just trying to solve the world's problems. I also did like that free education idea! A lot of people are kinda held back by their level of education. Like, most of us aren't able to go to college because we can't pay for it, because our parents don't have a good enough education to help us out. So I'd wish for a chance to actually achieve our goals and dreams, to go out and help our community and our country, to help benefit society. (Focus Group 2.2 2022)

Representation in educational textbooks is one small part of a much larger puzzle about youth wellbeing. Other pressing concerns—economic stability, social discrimination, educational access, immigration reform—weigh on these students. These concerns translate into emotional baggage young people carry into the classroom with them every day. It is with them at their desks as they bend over their textbooks, and it is with them when they go home at the end of each day homework assignments in hand. As a society, we have minimal control over what awaits people in their homes, but schools are the purview of the state. There, these students can find stories that are sensitive to their identities and that reflect them and include them. Or not.

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CHAPTER 6

Conclusion: In Need of a Curricular Revolution

Abstract In the previous chapters, the textbook analysis showed what little progress US history textbooks have made in the last seventy years. White stories of victory and domination continue to disproportionally fill textbooks. While representation of non-White perspectives and more accurate information about BIPOC groups does increase in more recent textbooks, the same limited and narrow-minded tropes, events, and passivity still persist. So, what can be done? In the conclusion, I reiterate the link between culturally relevant curricula and youth wellbeing. Curricular reform is a beginning step that educators, policy-makers, and school districts could make to ensure their BIPOC students feel seen, heard, and valued as students and as people. Such a proposition is deeply political, but is necessary to correct past wrongs when it comes to misrepresentation in school curricula. Such reforms will move us toward providing a more inclusive environment for all students.

Keywords Textbooks • Victory • White • Colonization • BIPOC • Curricula • Curricular reform • Misrepresentation • Wellbeing

Socially dominant groups have a monopoly on crafting the historical record. History's victors ingrain specific narratives in social consciousness. In the US high school history curricula, this means that the recounting of history is mostly through a lens of White settler glorification that supports

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the colonization of land and people, and the drawing of borders to keep others out. Such practices are standard in contexts of nation-building and nationalism, but the long-term effects are corrosive on pluriethnic, multicultural democratic coexistence.

In this book, I have investigated how representation of Native American and Mexican-origin people takes place in high school history textbooks. I have presented findings from an original textbook analysis surveying US history textbooks from the 1950s to 2020s. I especially focused on the US History and Advanced Placement US History books currently used in several regional public high schools in far Northern California, where I have also carried out ethnographic fieldwork.

By manually coding the textbooks based on keywords, historical incidents, and vivid labels, I documented the ways in which different social groups are represented, drawing on direct quotes, images, and maps, and analyzed what the impact on youth identity might be based on the content of the curricular material. In my coding, I conceptualized information as existing along a spectrum of both accuracy and visibility, as opposed to misrepresentation and silencing. I logged textual excerpts and then placed them on this spectrum through in-depth analysis, reading, and coding the textbooks myself cover-to-cover. I sampled a wider range of textbooks than I include here, and the selected examples are meant to be representative but not exhaustive. I focus on Native American and Mexican im/migrant-origin representation, but also code widely enough to see that the generalizable findings pertain to representations of other minority groups as well.

I combined the textbook analysis with qualitative data from ethnographic work in far Northern California high schools to paint a more holistic picture about the impact of the textbook content on youth from a range of demographic backgrounds. The experiences young people have with educational media in their K–12 schooling contribute to shaping their identity as they move into adulthood. Such identity-formation processes also contribute to both youth and adult civic, cultural, and political behavior, and therefore play significant roles in practices of democratic coexistence.

My findings from this textbook study are straightforward. I have shown that White stories of victory and domination continue to disproportionately fill US history textbooks. While representation of non-White perspectives and accurate information about non-White groups does increase in more recent textbooks, the same limited repertoire of events and tropes tends to be recycled from one book to the next, leaving a need to innovatively rethink which stories are told within educational media. Why are these same stories being told, by whom and for whom?

Many textbooks like the ones I analyze here contribute to culturecide—the killing of culture—stripping Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students of stories that are meaningful to their communities. While I coded the textbooks, I imagined what it would be like to read them from non-White perspectives. Would Native American students feel connected to a student thanking God for the existence of the US? Would Black students whose ancestors were enslaved? Translated into US history textbooks, many BIPOC groups are presented as passive recipients of White power. Although more recent textbooks do include diverse perspectives about non-White actors, they tend to be brief addendums to otherwise dominant White histories. In this way, neocolonialism plays out in public schools through White-centric curricula that only perpetuate more harm on BIPOC students.

What We Can Do

Discussion around race and ethnicity is under attack in the US. In the two years it took me to research and write this book, dozens of teachers at the high school and college level have gone public about having been fired for teaching about race and ethnicity, more than a thousand books have been censored in schools, and diverse curricula are under attack. Organizations like the African American Policy Forum have built interactive maps to keep track of all the censorship occurring across the US, and they are calling on people to fight back (AAPF 2023). A significant number of firings have been in southern states controlled by ultra-conservative elected officials, but they span the US (Johnson et al. 2022; Zahneis 2023). Florida has been the most noticeable state taking aim at teachers, with Governor Ron DeSantis pushing legislation to shut down conversations around diversity, equality, and justice (Roberts-Grmela 2023). But this is not a new fight. It has been an ongoing debate since historical facts became translated into public records. Political hotspots like California have also seen controversial educational legislation by pushing English-only education (California Department of Education 2000), and Arizona's criminalization of teaching ethnic studies (Cintli Rodriguez 2009) preceded Florida as a stage for debate about what can and should be taught in school. The assault on Critical Race Theory and ethnic studies casts a pallor over teachers' ability to engage BIPOC stories in the classroom.

Misrepresentation and silence in educational media harms BIPOC youth's positive self-identity, which has long-term implications for a pluriethnic, multicultural democracy. Vetting and editing educational media with White-biased content would not only improve BIPOC youth wellbeing at school, but it would also address the cycles of misinformation that White youth, and all youth, receive in schools about White domination. The implementation of culturally relevant curricula, including through replacing textbooks that perpetuate these harmful narratives, is one way to intervene in the damage wrought by past textbooks and could promote the wellbeing and accurate education of all students. Such changes will necessitate substantial curricular revision to how many versions of history are told.

Ignoring this identified need for curricular change would come at great cost. Overwhelming evidence from both my textual and ethnographic work shows that schools are set up to facilitate White achievement and reproduce White narratives of historical success. Textbooks are only one of many spaces that do the work of maintaining White supremacy in schools. But they are an eminently revisable one, as tangible products directly under the purview of district curriculum committees. Frequently, curriculum committees at the district level directly control which textbooks teachers are or are not allowed to use in the classroom. Yet, such committees are often staffed by people with little expertise in things like implicit bias; rather, they are educators or administrators who have been made to serve on committees as part of their jobs. Combined with teachers who may be repeating the same lessons they themselves learned decades previously, formal educational content can be rife with harmful bias (Supahan n.d.).

It is worth persevering on curricular reform efforts. Costing districts a significant portion of their materials budgets, textbooks are one of the most direct spaces of representation over which educators and policymakers have immediate jurisdiction. Other variables—teacher training, teacher-student congruence, school and community climate—which also considerably impact student wellness—may be beyond the scope of what educators or administrators are able to influence. But textbook reform, and educational media more broadly, can move US history courses toward versions of the past that factually validate the identities of Native American and Mexican im/migrant-origin students in ways that undo White supremacist narratives while also contributing to BIPOC student success.

If we want to find ways to better close educational achievement gaps and increase the success of minority students, offering a culturally relevant and accurate curriculum that is not simply a victor's history is one of many ways to do it. Such a proposition is deeply political, as it questions the stories and histories we tell about ourselves. It also questions how schools serve to further the perpetuation of White-dominant views. Decolonization of curricula is one small but significant step that schools and their districts can undertake to provide an inclusive environment for all students. Such changes will necessitate substantial curricular revision to how many versions of history are told. Schools need to proactively revise their curricula, including required textbooks that youth in US schools are subjected to daily. Textbooks that take a decolonizing approach to historical content will interrupt patterns of misinformation that continue to shape the educational content imparted to youth from all backgrounds.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1.1. TEXTBOOKS ANALYZED

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Wilson, James Q., John J. Dilulio Jr., Meena Bose, and Matthew S. Levendusky. 2022. *American Government: Institutions and Policies*. 17th ed. Boston, Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.

Appendix 1.2. Example of original textbook coding dataset on Native American representation

From Appleby, Joyce, Brinkley, Alan, Broussard, Albert S., & Ritchie, Donald A. (2007). *The American Vision*. New York: McGraw Hill Glencoe.

Theme/topic	*Excerpt/quote*	*Page #*	*Coding and analysis*
Doctrine of Discovery	Shows a painting by Albert Bierstadt, 1893. The Landing of Columbus in San Salvador. Depicts Indians in headdresses bowing down to White boat crew.	11	Glorification of discovery and White supremacy, Native American subjugation and inferiority.
"Pass the popcorn"	"According to legend, popcorn made up part of the menu at the first Thanksgiving feast in 1621."	24	Perpetuates the Thanksgiving myth in a flippant way. No discussion of what that feast was.
Missions	"The priests and missionaries in California and those in New Mexico took different approaches to their work. In California, they forced mostly nomadic Native Americans to live in villages near the missions. In New Mexico, on the other hand, the priests and missionaries adapted their efforts to fit into the lifestyle of the Pueblo people. They built churches near where the Pueblo people lived and farmed, and tried to teach them Catholic ideas and European culture. The Spanish priests tried to end traditional Pueblo religious practices that conflicted with Catholic beliefs. Some priests beat and whipped Native Americans who defied them. In response, a NA religious leader named Popé organized an uprising against the Spanish in 1680. Some 17,000 warriors destroyed most of the missions in New Mexico. It took the Spanish more than a decade to regain control of the region."	54	This passage contains some information about Native American agency, but there is not nearly enough said about treatment of Native American people at California missions, and it is silent on deeper levels of abuse there. The final sentence, that it took the Spanish more than a decade to regain control, squarely places Spanish control as the desired outcome to be worked toward.

(*continued*)

Appendix 1.2. (continued)

Theme/topic	*Excerpt/quote*	*Page #*	*Coding and analysis*
Pocahontas (1596–1617)	“In 1623, Captain John Smith told a remarkable tale to a British commission investigating the Virginia Company. In 1607 NAs had captured him and prepared, as he said, to ‘beate out his braines.’ Just then, Pocahontas, the 11-year-old daughter of Chief Powhatan, ‘got his head in her arms, and laid her owne upon his to save him from death.’ Although her father watched the English with concern, Pocahontas continued to interact with the people in the Jamestown settlement. Unfortunately, her friendliness and curiosity were not kindly repaid. While visiting a nearby NA settlement in 1613, Pocahontas was abducted by Captain Samuel Argall, a Jamestown resident. Pocahontas was supposedly being held as ransom for the lives of English prisoners and for arms, tools, and food. After the NAs gave what they could, however, the English still refused to return Pocahontas. The following year, a battle seemed imminent when the two sides met, but two of Pocahontas’s brothers were so excited to see her that they agreed to work out a truce. Soon thereafter, a member of the Virginia Company named John Rolfe announced to the colonial administrator that he and Pocahontas had fallen in love, and he asked to marry her. After hearing the proposal, Chief Powhatan gave his consent, and the couple soon married. Eventually, Pocahontas bore one son, whom they named Thomas. In 1616 Pocahontas traveled with her husband and son to England to search for investors for the Virginia Company. Unfortunately, Pocahontas grew ill in 1617, just before the family was due to return to America, and she died of pneumonia or smallpox.”	62 (in text insert box)	This description is a very Disney version of the story. See “Milestones” note in this table for update.

Native American quote showing White violence	“You charge me with killing your people, stealing your cattle and burning your houses; it is I that have cause to complain of the Americans. … I shall use force to stop any armed Americans from passing my towns or my lands” Quoted in The Seminoles of Florida.	243	Quote insert shows legitimate Native American grievance, questioning White supremacy and demonstrating agency.
Manifest Destiny narrative	“In this period, Americans strove to expand the nation’s boundaries. Many believed they had a ‘manifest destiny’ to spread democratic ideals. Others simply wanted to go west to find a new and better life. In Texas, settlers came into conflict with Mexico, while those going west on the Oregon Trail came into conflict with Native Americans.”	292	This uses neutral verbs about White land invasion of Native American territory to avoid White responsibility and deflect abuse into an anonymous passive voice.
“Milestones: Reexamined. The Romantic Story of Pocahontas”	“The *London Spectator*, reporting on the work of Mr. E. Neils, debunks Smith’s tale of the young Pocahontas flinging herself between him and her father’s club. The young girl was captured and held prisoner on board a British ship and then forcibly married to Mr. John Rolfe. Comments *Appleton’s Journal* in 1870: ‘All that is heroic, picturesque, or romantic in history seems to be rapidly disappearing under the microscope scrutiny of modern critics.’”	397	This factually accurate update to the previous erroneous Disney-fied text on page 62 appears here more than 300 pages later, and at the original point of misinformation, no mention is made that a factual correction will be provided later in the book. Since the authors knew the information on page 62, it is problematic to include it and then offer this small and buried correction.
“Interpreting Statistics”	Graph: Rows and columns show connection between approved miles of railroad track in US in relation to approximate Native American population. The numbers show that the more track laid, the more the Native American population got smaller. The exercise asks “What claim does this set of statistics seem to support? Is there a correlation … Is this positive or negative?”	424	The statistics prompt students to really consider the impact of White expansion on Native American lives.

Appendix 1.3. Example of original textbook coding dataset on Mexico and Mexican im/migrant-origin representation

From Stacy, Jason and Matthew Ellington (2020). *Fabric of a Nation: A Brief History with Skills and Sources. For the AP U.S. History Course.* Boston, Bedford/St. Martin's.

Theme/topic	*Excerpt/quote*	*Page #*	*Coding and analysis*
Malinche/ Malintzin	There is a whole page discussion of how Malinche came to be the translator for Cortez, including a note that she was enslaved and learned Maya because of that. The image that accompanies is a painting depicting her with Cortés meeting Montezuma at Tenochtitlán, 1519, and says "It is a reproduction of an image created by Tlaxcalan artists and represents and American Indian perspective on these events. Identify Cortés, Malintzin, and Montezuma. What can you infer about the artist' attitude toward Cortés and Malintzin based on this image?"	31	The amount of space devoted to Malinche is an improvement from other volumes, although it still leaves ambiguous her direct relationship with Cortés (which was as a concubine). And the "American Indian" perspective in the picture caption is a very general assumption. The perspective could be totally different depending which type of person made it. Indigenous to what group? Wealthy or poor? "American Indian" is a huge category and part of intersectional identities and it is problematic to pose the question in such general terms.
Mexico/ Alamo/Texas	"On March 6, 1836, General Santa Ana crushed settlers defending the Alamo in San Antonio. Soon thereafter, he captured the U.S. settlement at Goliad. At this point, Santa Ana was convinced that the uprising was over. But the U.S. government, despite its claims of neutrality, aided the rebels with funds and army officers. American newspapers picked up the story of the Alamo and published accounts of the battle, describing the Mexican fighters as brutal butchers bent on saving Texas for the pope. These stories, though more fable than fact, increased popular support for the war at a time when many Americans were increasingly hostile to Catholic immigrants in the United States."	312	This is a much improved and more balanced recounting from earlier textbooks that cover the same topic. This passage includes that important intervention that much of the butchery was a fable rather than fact.

Mexican-American War	Text describes how from 1846 to 1848, Mexico ceded approximately 1 million square miles to the US. The image on p. 361 shows a war map and lists a question beneath it: “To what extent was expansion through war in 1846 a new policy for the US?”	360	This section continues language of US expansion rather than processes like the Mexican-American War being land theft or colonialism. But the provocative question underneath the map pushes reflection on the use of war in state-making.
Guadalupe-Hidalgo	“With victory ensured, U.S. officials faced a difficult decision: How much Mexican territory should they claim?”	363	This is problematic framing. What about the decision to claim Mexican territory is difficult in the face of what the US choice to start a war meant for Mexico? Very White-centric.
A New Wave of Immigrants	“Surge,” “wave,” and “flood” are words that are all used on this page.	501	Though text also mentions there was a nativist backlash, the use of these three words is problematic and plays into longstanding tropes of anti-immigrant rhetoric.
Melting pot	“However, the image of America as a melting pot worked better as an ideal than as a mirror of reality. Immigrants during this period never fully lost the social, cultural, religious, and political identities they had brought with them.”	508	Shows that the role of school is as an important assimilation tool. But the section is written as if immigrants *should* lose these things to aspire to the melting pot.
Immigration	Map 7.2 Immigrants in the US, 1910, shows distribution of percentage of foreign-born US population, question is “What settlement patterns do you notice here? What explains these settlement patterns?”	571	This is a non-fear-mongering approach, and is much improved from other reviewed volumes.
Immigration	“In the Southwest and on the West Coast, white people aimed their Americanization efforts at the growing population of Mexican Americans. Subject to segregated education, Mexican Americans were expected to speak English in their classes. Anglo school administrators and teachers generally believed that Mexican Americans were suited only for farm work and manual trades. For Mexican Americans, therefore, Americanization meant vocational training and preparation for low-status, low-wage jobs.”	629	This is an important critique of what Americanization means in the context of discrimination against Mexicans and Mexican Americans.

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Index[1]

A
Advanced Placement Spanish, 85, 86, 88
Advanced Placement US History (APUSH), 2, 18, 67–69, 72, 76–77, 92
African American Policy Forum, 93
Alamo, 22, 23, 30, 56, 73, 74
Alvarado, Maurice, 80
American Creed, 51, 52
Americanization, 20–24, 52, 61, 75
The American Vision (2007), 49–55, 60
Anderson, Robert, 52–54, 60
Assimilation, 4, 12, 13, 29, 31, 44, 45, 52, 57, 59, 62, 63, 69, 72, 75

B
Bad Indians (2012), 29
Battle of Fallen Timbers, 29
Battle of the Thames, 29
Bilingual Education Act, 6, 7, 12, 57
Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), 2, 13–16, 18, 28, 38–40, 49, 51, 52, 80, 93–95
Black Panther Party, 36
Boorstin, Ruth Frankel, 41, 42, 44, 45
Bressoud, Paul, 76, 77

C
California Indians, 39
California State Seal of Biliteracy (SSB), 80
Caribbean countries, 35
Carl, 86, 87
Central America, 32, 33, 41, 45
A Century of Dishonor (1881), 29
Chávez, César, 12, 36, 45, 57, 76
Colonialism, 5, 37, 39, 73, 74, 83
Colonization, 1, 5, 13, 21, 25–28, 30, 33, 37, 39, 42–44, 50, 56, 63, 72, 73, 92
  of California, 21, 27, 42

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by ‘n’ refer to notes.

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M. Gellman, *Misrepresentation and Silence in United States History Textbooks*, Palgrave Studies in Educational Media,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-50353-5

Columbus, Christopher, 24–28, 34, 41, 81, 82
Communism, 33
Cornplanter, 69
Cortés, Hernán, 73
Critical race theory, 5, 68, 94
Culturecide, 34, 42, 56, 93
Curricula
  reform, 94

D
Dana, 85, 86, 88
Dawes Act, 13, 22, 56, 61, 71, 72
Del Norte High School (DNHS), 60, 81, 82, 84
Diaz, Porfirio, 32, 37
Doctrine of Discovery, 13, 20, 33, 55
Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne, 15, 16, 63

E
Eckert, Georg, 9
Educational media, ix–xi, 5, 7, 9, 10, 15, 19–46, 51, 55, 92–94
Emancipation Proclamation, 28
Englishization, 6, 44, 59
English Language Development Support, 85
Enslaved people, *see* Enslavement
Enslavement, 13, 14, 27, 28, 42, 48, 49, 52, 59, 73, 76
Eureka High School (EHS), 55, 59, 69, 76, 80, 81, 88
Expansion, ix, 13, 21, 55, 70, 74, 76

F
Fabric of a Nation: A Brief History with Skills and Sources (2020), 69–76, 102
Father Junipero Serra, 42
Fieldwork, 3, 7, 10, 11, 16, 47, 48, 68, 73, 92
Ford, Henry, 59
Freedom and Crisis: An American History (1981), 37–38

G
Garraty, John, 33–36
Genocide, 21, 34, 42, 52, 56
Georg Eckert Institute (GEI), 9–11, 14, 32
Globalization, 6
Gold Rush, 12, 21, 42, 74
Government Alive! Power, Politics, and You (2014), 59
Great Plains, 21, 56

H
Hernán Cortés, 73
Hispanic, 4, 13, 57
History Alive! Pursuing American Ideals: Equality, Rights, Liberty, Opportunity, Democracy (2007), 55
A History of the United States (1999), 41–45
Hoopa Valley High School (HVHS), 49, 50, 52–54, 60, 82, 83
Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation, 50, 82
Huerta, Dolores, 12, 57, 76

I
Ideological indoctrination, 10
Im/migrant, 2–4, 7–11, 13, 16–18, 22, 23, 26, 28, 31, 32, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40, 43, 45, 46, 52, 57, 59, 63, 64, 68, 72–76, 87, 88, 92, 95, 102–103

Immigration
  characterization, 74
  policy, 35, 63, 64
  quotas, 57
  reform, 36, 88
Indian Citizenship Act, 72
"Indian Problem," 21, 29
Indian Removals (1820-1840), 42, 70
Indian Reservation Act (1934), 72
An Indigenous People's History of the United States (2014), 15, 16, 63
Inquiry Journal (2019), 60–64
Intergenerational trauma, 4, 51
Invisibility, 21, 40
  BIPOC, 38

J
Johnson, Lyndon B., 43, 57

K
Ku Klux Klan (KKK), 14, 24

L
Lässig, Simone, 5
Latine, 3
Latino, 2, 57, 58, 64
Latinx, 3, 4, 36, 40
Let's Visit Central America (1974), 32–33
Lies My Teachers Told Me (2018), 59
Lincoln, Abraham, 28
Living in the United States (1961), 24–28, 39
Loewen, James, 15, 54, 59

M
Malinche, 73
Manifest Destiny, 12, 13, 30, 53
Melting pot, 75
Mexican-American War, 40, 74
  See also "Mexican War"
Mexican Independence Day, 44
Mexican Revolution, 31
"Mexican War," 30, 35, 56
Minority groups, xi, 2, 44, 92
  rights, 6
Miranda, Deborah, 29, 51
Missions
  California mission system, 42
  Spanish missions, 13
Montezuma, 73

N
Nationalism, 1, 8, 92
National Origins Act (1924), 75
Nation-building, 1, 5–8, 31, 34, 36, 52, 92
Native American, xi, 2–4, 7–13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 25, 27–31, 33–39, 41–46, 48, 50–52, 55–64, 68–76, 79–85, 92–94, 99–102
Nativism, 12, 13, 57, 64
North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), 12, 58

O
Old West, 43
Our Nation's Story (1954), 20, 22, 24, 25, 28–32

P
Panama Canal, 25
Patriotism, 8, 13, 24, 50, 59, 60
Paxton Boys, 29
A People's History of the United States (2015 [2003]), 15
Pilgrims, 2, 26, 70, 71

Pluriethnic, 1, 92, 94
Pocahontas, 12, 13, 42, 47–50, 73
Polk, James K., 30, 34, 44, 56
Postcolonial thought experiment, 51
Puritans, *see* Pilgrims

R
Representation, 4
Rolfe, John, 42, 48–50
Romanticization, 42, 43

S
Schunneman, Danielle, 80, 80n2, 81
A Short History of the United States (1981), 33–36
Smith, John, 49
Social Security card, 58
Southwest, 4, 36, 40, 42, 44, 74, 75
Spain, 22, 41
Standardized testing, 68, 84
Stereotypes, 2, 25, 28, 32, 33, 70, 85

T
Tabula rasa, 20, 33
  See also Terra nullius
Terra nullius, 12, 13, 21, 33, 34
  See also Tabula rasa
Textbook(s), 1–18
  analysis, xi, 8, 9, 12, 16–18, 23, 32, 48, 57, 77, 92
  reform, 16, 18, 88, 94
  representation, 9, 13, 15–18, 33, 43, 45, 46, 60, 70, 74, 86, 88, 92, 94, 99–103
Textual
  analysis, xi, 4, 18, 77
  politics, 18
Thanksgiving, 2, 12, 13, 26, 29, 33
Tippecanoe River Battle, 29
Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 23, 44, 56, 63, 74

U
United States History and Geography (2019), 60–64
United States History for High Schools (1966), 28–32, 34

V
Visibility, 92
  Latinx, 40
  Yurok, 81

W
Wampanoag peoples, 2
Westward expansion, 21, 70
  See also Expansion
White bias, 84
"White Man's Burden," 24
White glory, 29, 36, 62
White saviorism, 31
White supremacy, 16, 18, 24, 25, 35, 48, 75, 76, 94
  See also White violence
White violence, 21, 25, 29, 33, 42, 56, 60, 72, 75, 76
Willard, Emma, 48
The World and Its People: California Yesterday and Today (1984), 38–40
World War I, 35
World War II, 10, 24, 26, 37

X
Xenophobia, 35, 57, 63

Y
Yacovone, Donald, 48
Yurok
  language, 60, 80, 81, 85
  Tribe, 17, 81
Yurok Tribe's Education Department, 17, 53

Z
Zinn, Howard, 15