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2019 Volume II: Teaching about Race and Racism Across the Disciplines

Decolonizing the Imagination: Teaching about Race Using Afrofuturism and Critical Race Theory

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Teaching multicultural literature is happily a big part of the modern conversation about English classes. However, a question that is less often asked is, what is the root of the need for it? Many Americans shuffle about their lives oblivious to the structural racism that permeates much of our society and culture. Those who choose “not to see color” or race are proliferating opportunities for a dominant culture to continue and even expand, thereby limiting opportunities for others. Through utilization of two important concepts – Critical Race Theory and Colorblind Racial Ideology – we can improve humanities instruction by scrutinizing the much bigger, and often ignored, picture of modern racism. Combining this with instruction on the art of Afrofuturism – specifically the work of Octavia Butler, Sun Ra, and Jean Michel Basquiat among others – we can also fill a similar gap in the modern American imagination.

(Developed for African American Studies, grades 11-12; recommended for American Studies and English, grades 9-12)

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