Toward a Brilliant Diversity

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Abstract

This essay puts forward a theoretical argument in support of culturally consonant character education. Character education supports the moral and civic development of youth in the United States (US), its popularity continues with policymakers, parents, and educators; in fact, 18 states codify character education legislation. Members of majority groups often are unmindful of the significance and scope of cultural distinctiveness in the lives of minority individuals. Rather, majority group members consciously or unconsciously advocate assimilation and adherence to universal virtues, particularly in the field of character education. Cultural-historical conditions, as dimensions of the moral development process, tone the agency and negotiation of character education. To that end, this essay employs Charles Mills' *The Racial Contract* (1998) to not only account for the moralities of exclusion, but put forward a character education philosophy that accounts for cultural distinctiveness

Keywords: Culturally Consonant Character Education, Racial Contract, White Supermacy

Introduction

This aim of this essay is to put forward a theoretical argument in support of culturally consonant character education. Character education supports the moral and civic development of youth in the United States (US), its popularity continues with all stakeholders; as a matter of fact, 18 states legislate character education. An extra 18 states endorse the usefulness of character education in schools and communities, and 7 states support character education without an official statute (Johnson, 2011; Johnson & Hinton, 2018). Current research authenticates assertions that character education programs boost positive youth development (e.g. Duer, Parisi, & Valintis, 2002; Osler & Hinton, 2015; Bohning et al. 1998; Skaggs and Bodenhorn, 2006). Duer, Parisi, and Valintis (2002) indicated that a character education program significantly reduced negative school behaviors such as insubordination, fighting, and truancy. Hinton and Osler (2015) reported increases in civic engagement due to a culturally consonant, sport infused character education program. Survey findings from Skaggs and Bodenhorn's (2006)

longitudinal study pinpointed to observable improvement in character-related behavior. Even though the literature abounds with the documented success of character education, many of today's character programs propound a culturally bounded interpretation of character theory and practice formed from a racial polity that color-coded morality (Johnson & Hinton, 2018; Mills, 1998).

The cultural plurality of the United States (US) is repeatedly flaunted as a strength (Johnson & Hinton, 2018; see also Ford, 2014). Within that plurality, cultural positions between majority and minority groups are idiosyncratic. Prosperity, contentment, and empowerment of minority group members may pivot on their perception of autonomy to experience their cultural distinctiveness unswervingly in their lives (Baerveldt & Voestermans, 2005; Demuijnck, 2015; Johnson & Hinton 2018). Majoritarian group members often are unmindful of the significance and scope of cultural distinctiveness in the lives of minority individuals. Rather, majority group members consciously or unconsciously advocate assimilation and adherence to universal virtues, especially in the field of character education (Johnson & Hinton, 2018). Cultural-historical conditions, as dimensions of the moral development process, tone the agency and discussion of character education (Green, 2004; Johnson, 2008; Siddle-Walker &Snarey, 2004). Nowhere is this more evident than in the US where race and racism have structured economic, socio-moral, and political principles (Mills, 1998). As the United States moves towards a brilliant diversity, the necessity to introduce culturally consonant character education practice seems evident (Johnson & Hinton, 2018).

To that end, this essay employs Charles Mills' The Racial Contract (1998) to not only account for the moralities of exclusion, but put forward a character education philosophy that accounts for cultural distinctiveness. Mills (1998) contends the racial contract normed a moral contract (the foundation of moral behavior) that actualized a specific moral language and moral psychology were generated. This racial contract, then, gave rise to assumptions that majoritarian philosophical structures frame *all* cultures at *all* times (emphasis added). We argue, however, that these principles of vision and division privileged some over others by establishing a dominant culture which created a moral language used for coding the character education process.

Like Mills, we suppose that the existence and structure of white supremacy imposes a character theory and practice that relegates the cultural distinctiveness of non-whites to a point of immorality. This leads us to discard character education approaches grounded in virtue ethics, deontology, and utilitarianism that eschew cultural diversities in the character development practice (Johnson & Hinton, 2018). We contest those character education theorists who argue that context dependent character is implausible counter to morality, character, and character education in a pluralistic society. To dismiss culture, principally race, from the character education process prompts cultural gulfs. Cultural gulfs illustrate the distinctions that transpire among minority and majority group members in their awareness of belonging and their sense of freedom to voice cultural distinctiveness (Johnson & Hinton, 2018). Cultural gulfs may minimize minority youth's capacity to advance those habits of mind and heart required of citizens in a democratic society. Emergent literature on diversity and character education depict culture and race as*sine qua non* to the character education process. Baldwin professed

it "is to history that we owe our frames of references, our identities, and our aspirations" (1998, 20). For non-majoritarian cultures in the US, their characteristic soul and historical narrative shade a distinctive character outlook that methodically confronts the validity and practicality of traditional, majoritarian character education programs.

The article is divided into five sections. In the first, we use Mills' The Racial Contract to address the influence of white majoritarian culture on the establishment of Western morality, character, and character education. This will include a description of Mills' racial contract and how the racial contract fashioned a moral contract, whereby to be white is to simultaneously exist as part of the white race and honorable and square-dealing (Johnson, 2011; Johnson & Hinton, 2014, 2018). In the second, we describe the relationship between morality, character, and character education. We include a brief outline of the history of character education in the US with a discussion on how race and racism fostered a morality of exclusion when it came to character education and research. From there, we explain the role of culture in the character development process before outlining how a majority culture conceives of and puts forward traditional, culturally devoid perspectives on character education. We conclude with how minority cultures can foster cultural distinctiveness in the character development process by outlining a culturally consonant approach to character education.

The Racial Contract

Mills (1998) defines the racial contract as a domination or exclusionary contract that conceptualizes the reality of white supremacy. It operates as a series of contracts between whites to classify non-whites into a subordinate moral and legal position comparative to whites. Nonwhites, and their culture, are the objects rather than the subjects of the contracts (Mills, 1998). Mills argues that "Since it is a contract of group domination, it is holistic, anti-atomistic in nature, being explicitly predicated on human collectivities, dominating and dominated" (1998, p 21). The racial contract establishes racial policies which privileges whites over others. More important, all whites profit from the agreement, although they may not have specified approval. The racial polity is a system which not only privileges whites, but political power is in the hands of whites, for their collective benefit. It, then, functions as a global conception impacting the socio-economic, political, cultural, moral, ideational, and juridical spheres (McPhail, 2004).

Dissimilar from the social contract idealized in Western philosophy. The racial contract brings into relief ideological assumptions and conditions that confined race relations since the 1400s (McPhail, 2004). Mills (1998) describes the racial contract as an ideological predisposition that informs the beliefs that people of European descent have developed about themselves and others, and the behaviors in which they have engaged as a result of those beliefs. Unlike the idealized "social contract" that accounts for racism either as abstraction or anomaly, the racial contract assumes "that racism is the norm and that people think of themselves as raced rather than abstract citizens, which any objective history will in fact show" (1998, p. 24; see also McPhail, 2004; Johnson, 2011).

Five main components structure the racial contract.

1. To subject contractarianism to an ideological critique and expose the racist presuppositions of contract theorists from Thomas Hobbes through John Rawls.
2. To identity the origins of white supremacy as a political system in a Racial Contract between whites against non-whites.
3. An argument to show that being white encompasses white privilege, that is, material and psychological benefits.
4. To show that race is a social construction fashioned for the intention of political rule over non-whites.
5. The only historically viable answer to white supremacy is liberal democratic capitalism.

At first sight, racial contract theory embodies a philosophical commentary of contractarianism. Contractarianism stems from the Hobbesian line of social contract thought, holds that persons are primarily self-interested, and that a rational assessment of the best strategy for attaining the maximization of their self-interest will lead them to act morally. Contractarianism represents that foundation for racial contract theory. It serves as a contradiction between ideological functions and objectively rendered ideological practices that shape majoritarian culture (McPhail, 2004; Mills, 1998).

The racial contract, then, created a moral contract, whereby to be white is to simultaneously exist as part of the white race and honorable and square-dealing (Johnson, 2011; Johnson & Hinton, 2016). This moral contract assumes an ethic of dualism in contrast to equality. It is the ethical justification for a partitioned social ontology divided between persons who are white and nonpersons who are racial and nonwhite. Consequently, the racial contract operating through the racial polity has negative implications for provinces of Black life—constitutional status, racial identity, political inclusion, moral standing, and appealing value. With the formation of a racial polity, "the color-coded morality of the racial contract restricts the possession of this natural freedom and equality to white men" (Mills, p 54).

Mills offers an explanation for the origins of the moralities of exclusion by using an alternative conception of contractarianism which explains the formation of white supremacy and how its structures liberal democratic politics. Consequently, virtues such as freedom, equality, and responsibility have been theorized and reified in radically different ways by whites and non-whites (McPhail, 2004; Mills, 1998). Such racialized moral development perpetuated moralities of exclusion. These moralities of exclusion structured the range and type of character development. Moralities of exclusion stand as a psychological method where majority group members regard their own group and its customs as superior, thus diminishing, ostracizing, and even degrading particular groups (Johnson & Hinton, 2018). Here, the categorization of non-whites on the moral margins produced a conspicuous otherness between virtuous and depraved, leading to the segregation of those who were deleteriously distinguished from the moral community (Johnson & Hinton, 2018). Mills (1998) claims that such segregation is innately and overtly correlated with race and racism, which has reliably dominated the cultural-historical landscape of American society.

Morality, Character and Character Education

Morality concerns right or wrong and distinguishes good from bad behavior. It relies on virtuous behavior demonstrating high moral standards. Good character stands as virtuous behavior (Johnson, 2007). Character stimulates accountability. It is responsible for determination though obstacles might be present. Character constrains desires and structures the internal law that governs our mind and heart. A person's character includes sentiments of righteousness, justice, care, compassion, remorse, shame and well-being—all virtues. As behavioral tendencies and dispositions, virtues are habits one develops by consistently choosing and acting on the good (Baumrind, 2005).

What is character education, then? Milson and Mehlig (2002), described character education as expanding an understanding, responsibility, and propensity to function in line with ethical values. We define character education as a distinctive content along with an array of civic and moral virtues learned in an effort to augment positive qualities in youth (Johnson 2008; Johnson & Hinton, 2018). It is a societally relevant activity produced in schools, homes, and communities. In these contexts, character education seeks to prepare youth to act and respond ethically. Character educators attempt to promote a setting favorable to the growth of moral habits in youth. Habits acclimate the mind and ensue particular patterns of conduct that are strengthened by repetition (Baumind, 2005).

A Brief History of Character Education in the US

Historically, character education has encompassed an essential element in US society (Berkowitz & Bier 2004; Hunter 2000; Johnson & Hinton, 2018; McClellan 1999); shifting social, political, and economic ideas refashioned character education dialogue and custom over time (Johnson, 2008). Originally focus on the indoctrination of Christian values, character education progressed into a more secular-based method (Johnson 2008; Johnson & Hinton, 2018).

Character education in the Colonial Period and Early Republic

The colonial period witnessed a moral bent toward character education where Christianity was used to uphold religious orthodoxy, encourage social harmony, and encourage hard work. (Johnson, 2008; Laud 1997; McClellan 1999). Colonial families employed family devotions, reading, and writing to inculcate a Protestant moral creed (Hunter 2000; McClellan 1999). We noted in an earlier work that John Locke's 1693 essay, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, directed parents to mold their children in line with such virtues as piety, loyalty, industry, and temperance (2018). In 1723, the General Assembly of Maryland authorized "the liberal and pious education of the youth of this province" (Hunter 2000, 37).

The relative stability of the early republic allowed parents and civil authorities to expand faith in "the corrective and educative powers of community life" (McClellan 1999, 10). Communities served to morally teach children. The colonial period cherished the mother's role as chief moral teacher (Johnson & Hinton, 2018; Norton1996). Early 19th century American society counted upon public, religious, and private schools to support moral education. The advent of public

schools allowed moral education to become embedded in classrooms and textbooks, where puritanical values such as honesty, hard work, godliness, thriftiness duty to parents were espoused (McClellan 1999).

Progressive values

Urbanization, industrialization, and immigration swiftly altered the social, political, and economic arrangements of early 20th century communities (Hunter 2000; Johnson & Hinton, 2018). Public schools turned towards new, progressive character development programs that incorporated citizenship education (Johnson 2008). Hunter (2000) stated that teachers "insisted that the institutions of democracy and capitalism carried important moral influence too" (p. 60). Concepts such as consent of the governed, justice, and individual liberty were revered in mainstream American society. Corresponding concepts influenced competing perspectives of moral education, traditional versus developmental (Johnson, 2008; Johnson & Hinton, 2018).

The traditional perspective sought to reinforce the values of the nineteenth century as a method for confronting the socio economic and socio political challenges of period. In a prior piece, we noted that "Those who supported this practice sought a central place in public schools for teaching specific virtues and cultivating traits of good character" (Johnson & Hinton, 2018, p. 103). Contrarily, the developmental method diminished teaching explicit moral tenets and promoting special characteristics. This type accentuated a more malleable method on morality "that would meet the evolving needs of an ever-changing order" (McClellan 1999, 48). This method received substantial interest beginning in the mid-1920s. By the 1930s, the Character Education Committee of the National Education's Department of Superintendence supported a moral education where relativity "must replace absolutism in the realm of morals as well as in the sphere of physics and biology" (McClellan 1999, 56). Traditional character education, however, overshadowed classroom practice (Johnson 2008).

Clarifying values: A shift towards value neutrality

Two Supreme Court decisions, The *Engle v. Vitale* and *Abingdon v. Schempp,* forced public schools to take a value neutral position on issues of morality (Hunter, 2000). Numerous public schools ditched formal character education due to constitutional fears and mounting cultural and religious diversity (Johnson & Hinton, 2018; Vessels 1998). Moral reasoning and values clarification influenced character education approaches after 1963. In their text *Values and Teaching*, Raths, Harmin, and Simon (1966) indicated values clarification as "the reigning fashion in moral education" (Hunter 2000, 74). The authors combined Dewey's moral growth theory with Rogers' client centered therapeutic intervention model to assemble a method that allowed youth to formulate their values by following a seven-step process (Johnson 2008). Consequently, this process compelled educators to suppress their own beliefs while cultivating students' values (Johnson & Hinton, 2018; Leming 1997).

A virtue-centered movement and the move towards performance character

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, some character educators endorsed a virtue-oriented approach. This approach varied from previous character approaches that focused on moral relativism and values clarification (Johnson 2008); in fact, a considerable number of character educationists deemed moral reasoning and values clarification methods as abandoning core Democratic (Glanzer & Milson 2006). These educators recommended school leaders' connect with their communities to advance an inventory of character traits to guide community oriented character education programs. Prevalent methods concentrated on teacher role modeling and exhortations, reading stories of virtue and vice, and the acknowledgement of students who exemplified particular character traits (Johnson & Hinton, 2018; Johnson 2008). As the US approached the 21st Century, character educationists promoted the idea assisting students learn to "do their best" in addition to "be their best" (Johnson & Hinton, 2018). Curriculum standardization and accountability measures drove researchers and theorists to concentrate on character traits associated with success in K-12 schooling. Such an approach to character education was christened performance character and complemented the traditional attention on moral character stressed in earlier periods (Johnson & Hinton, 2018).

The previous century has seen character education vacillate in place and priority in the school curriculum (Johnson, 2008). Yet, educators, researchers, and policymakers continue to promote character education in schools. Nodding's avows ''the greatest obligation of educators inside and outside formal schooling is to nurture the ethical ideals of those with whom they come in contact'' (1984, 49). Even though character development remains popular, questions linger regarding why traditional character development programs and research lack attention to cultural and linguistic diversity (Johnson & Hinton, 2018). Research points out that traditional character development programs are entrenched in a racialized moral psychology that propagates moralities of exclusion (Johnson 2011; Johnson & Hinton, 2018; Siddle-Walker & Snarey 2004); race and racism spawned philosophies that enunciated a sidelining and a dismissal of a broad moral sphere that values diverse cultural identities (Johnson 2008). Accordingly, traditional character development methods are constructed on this racialized moral psychology. Particular "individuals or groups are perceived as outside the boundary in which moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply" (Opotow 1990, 3). Traditional character practices abandon the morally positioned "double consciousness" that exemplifies minority racial/ethnic groups in the US. For this article, we delineate morally positioned *double consciousness* as applying dominant moral values and theories to on ones-self (Johnson & Hinton, 2018).

As presented in the previous section, character education movements situate their approaches and understanding of virtue in conflicting political philosophies that place liberals against conservatives in culture wars. As stated, the character education movement gravitates toward a traditionalist perspective of education where knowledge is transmitted (Baumind, 2005). Educators, then are critical to fortifying virtuous habits of good character. On the other hand, Baumind (2005) suggest that the character education movement leans more progressive or liberal as it rejects direct character teaching. This approach supports the position that a school's

moral environment and how educators concern for children enhance cognitive and moral development. The Kohlbergian tradition follows this outlook. The Kohlbergian tradition is constructivist in nature as it emphasizes cognition and Socratic instruction. With the conservative character education movement, the Aristotelian is encouraged. Moral habits of obedience, loyalty, and diligence are inculcated via extrinsic motivation, encouragement, and execution of rules (Baumind, 2005). The virtues cherished most by this approach encourage orderliness and the status quo. Despite the interplay between morality, character, and character education, the racial contract, which gave rise and prominence to the Western moral philosophical tradition, structure moralities that impacted the cultural foundation of schools and communities, thus denying the cultural distinctiveness of non-whites to integrate into the character education process in the US.

The Moralities of Exclusion, Schooling, and Character Education

The moralities of exclusion organized education in the US, including the range and type of character development. Psychological process where majority group members view their own group as superior, moralities of exclusions positions minority group members as unsuitable of moral rights and protections. Non-whites, then, inhabit the moral margins of otherness (Johnson & Hinton, 2018). Mills (1998) contends that such exclusion is linked to race and racism, which has consistently dominated the cultural-historical domain of American schooling. Historically, African Americans were deprived of schooling by dominant society, whether it was masters in slave society, or by public authority in the society of free Blacks in the North and South. Exclusion forced African Americans to fight relentlessly for an equal education in a non-segregated setting (Johnson & Hinton, 2018).

The weight of moralities of exclusion likewise impacted the Latino population. Public schools, too, were unfriendly to Spanish-speaking citizens, with the presence of Mexican Americans in the schools begrudged. Language differences were converted into learning handicaps. Parochial schools neglected to safeguard Spanish culture and language. Consequently, not all Puerto Ricans nor Mexican-Americans could seek Catholic schools as a means for defending their culture and language. The Church represented an upper-class organization with trivial regard for the socio-cultural interests of the people. Polish immigrants in Buffalo or Chicago sent their children to Polish-language church schools; however, no such choice existed for Spanish-speaking minorities. For the indigenous culture, schools, both federal and local, thoroughly barred indigenous curriculum. Even on the Navajo Reservation, where indigenous children attended schools, —a fraction of the teachers were indigenous, and the curriculum was culturally alienated from the students (Johnson 2011; Johnson & Hinton 2018; Weinberg 1977).

The morality of exclusion, too, characterized the breadth and nature of character education in the US. Character education was frequently outlined as a reaction to particular values accentuated in a particular milieu, mirroring the generally putative traits of good character and responsible citizenship infused in Western tradition (Johnson 2008; Johnson & Hinton, 2018). Traditionally, character education in the US assumed a White, middle class, heterosexual stance. Puritanical beliefs such as thriftiness, patriotism, hard work were embedded into character

education discourses and programs. Colonial settlement of the US gave way to an ideology that removed the moral belief structures of non-whites (Johnson & Hinton 2018). This reasoning created "the other", who would be recognized as operating beyond the periphery where moral values apply (Mills 1998).

Nevertheless, some racial minorities decided to culturally appropriate majoritarian character development practices as a method for contesting racial typecasts (Bair, 2009). Mary McCloud Bethune and Nannie Helen Burroughs approached character development by accentuating innocence, modesty, piety, purity, and domesticity-- deemed the ideal. These African American women character educationists acknowledged that a path to racial uplift was to make the design of inferiority defenseless and to confront the stereotypes by which African Americans, in particularly women were described. In this apartheid, racist environment Bethune and Burroughs articulated character in terms of decorum respectable conduct than as a core moral compass (Bair 2009; Johnson & Hinton 2018).

Culture and the Character Development Process

Does character development adhere to universal or culture-specific rules? According to Snarey and Siddle-Walker (2004), moral theorists and character educationists fail to account for or demonstrate interest in cultural diversities in morality. Aware of varied moral conduct in different societies, both Plato (1984) and Kant (1789/1965), for example, recommended collective ethical beliefs regarding virtue and rationality (Guerra & Giner-Sorolla 2010). Universalists, advocate a lone authentic moral sphere concerned with justice and rights, prevalent in where (Bhatia, 2000; Miller, 2001) all cultures (Guerra & Giner-Sorolla 2010; Kohlberg, 1981; Piaget, 1977).

Cultural relativists, however, suggest that moral norms are culturally and historically embedded (Baumrind, 2005). Such methods acknowledge the likelihood of moral universals but accentuate the cultural-historical quality of moral philosophies such as interpersonal associations and religious norms (Guerra & Giner-Sorolla 2010Miller, 2001). Miller and Bersoff (1992) indicated that cultural values envisage moral reasoning and judgment

Character Devoid of Culture and Race: Majoritarian Perspectives

We have established how the racial contract established a moral convention with specific language and codes that deemed non-whites as inferior and morally bankrupt. The racial contract normed white, majoritarian perspectives on character and character education. Though there are numerous majoritarian perspectives that advance character and character development devoid of culture and race, we will focus on the more notable of these—virtue ethics, utilitarianism, and deontology. Each of these perspectives are rooted in Western philosophical traditions. Virtue ethics dates as far as Ancient Greek philosophy. When Kantianism and utilitarianism dominated the moral philosophical debated in the 19th and 20th centuries, virtue ethics was pushed aside. Virtue ethics accounts for moral behavior according to virtues. Case in point, humans should be truthful not because it violates moral law, but because humans should not engage in untruthful behaviors. Virtue ethics is agentic instead of

centered on the action or principle latent to a decision. A virtuous person exhibits an array of virtues rather than a solitary trait (Johnson, 2007). Virtuous behavior then is natural as virtues are perpetual character traits observed in virtuous people. Concrete situations that require moral action may be very complex. Virtuous people exhibit their virtues in intricate circumstances. Aristotle emphasizes that virtuous adults, distinct from youth, bear a higher level of phronesis or the faculty to distinguish morally pertinent features a situation; moreover, virtuous adults use this discern to assess likely consequences of decisions and ascertain what is truly significant and valuable for obtaining and maintain the good life. Such an ability necessitates the "right education" but also life experience (Baumrind, 2005).

Deontological and utilitarianism perspectives station the circumstances of right and wrong entirely on the outcomes (consequences) of choosing one action over other actions. As such, it moves beyond the scope of one's own interests and takes into account the interests of others (Baumind, 2005; Demuijnck, 2015). Deontology is exemplified by Kantianism. Kant's theory action as a guiding principle stands as universalizable. Universalizable represents the standard when judging an act or behavior as morally acceptable. Universal values, then, establish our moral responsibilities and rights. A significant variance, though, is that deontological and utilitarianism majoritarian perspectives center on supreme moral reasons that validate or denounce actions or decisions. Virtue ethics conveys a straightforward version of moral behavior (Baumind, 2005; Demuijnck, 2015).

Toward a Brilliant Diversity

How can non-white, minority cultures foster their cultural distinctiveness in the character development process? We stress that any character development process recognizes the collective memory, both cultural and historical, of non-white persons. To do so, then acknowledges the dominance of the racial contract in the moral, character, and character education process. Culture and history governs how we think, how we believe, and how we behave. Character practice should accommodate the culture and language of students. Culturally consonant character education buttresses effectual character practice in culturally diverse classrooms. Rooted in an inclusive moral philosophy, culturally consonant character is organic and agentic, thus creating culturally situated citizens woven from varied tapestries (Johnson & Hinton 2018). Such character practice engages and motivates all students. Cultural dimensions are employed to bridge a character education cultural rift culturally consonant character education balances the cultural features that shape character-oriented actions and goals, which include: 1) spirituality, 2) harmony, 3) affect, 4) expressive individualism, 5) communalism, and 6) social perspective of time. The first feature, spirituality, indicates an emphasis on the spiritual world in lieu of the physical. Harmony accentuates "the whole rather than the parts that comprise the whole" (Johnson & Hinton 2018). It fashions a cultural synchronization that confirms the personal and cultural traits youth retain. By valuing each student, an educator builds an interdependent community in which all members are accountable not only for themselves but also for one another (Johnson 2007; Siddle Walker1996). Affect, the third dimension, places value on feelings and is most clearly illustrated in the explicit sharing of emotions in the classroom.

Expressive individualism respects differentness and creativity. An example includes how youth present themselves to others. This could include name choice, dress, and hairstyles. Communalism, on the other hand, places the group over the individual. From a communalistic standpoint, group connection is a powerful aspect of identity, and benefits accrued by individuals are used in the advancement of the group. A style of communalism, *other mothering*, refers to the ability of African American grandmothers and other mothers to assume a parental role for children with whom they may share no household bond (Johnson & Hinton 2018). . Foster (1993), Beauboeuf-Lafontant (1999), and Johnson (2008) noted other mothering and social perspective of time in their work. Social perspective of time appreciates social interaction and interpersonal relationships. The importance of a social perspective of time deemphasizes physical time and highlights the collective bonds cultivated during an occasion. Fostering and maintaining these connections contextualizes time. In classrooms, social perspective of time may be performed through socialization and interactions involving discussion on topics germane to the course content or community events.

Character development embodies an important function of American schooling. Traditional character development approaches shun the cultural and historical influence of race on moral development. To fail to recognize the power and pervasiveness of culture or race in the character development process inadvertently undervalues children (Johnson & Hinton, 2018). It is our goal to provide a theoretical foundation for culturally consonant character development that expands discourses on character and moral development so that all cultures may finally have a seat at the table.

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