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JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY EDUCATION

Tatum's Social Media Activism as Multiliteracies: Connecting, Advocating, and Resisting Social Injustices

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Abstract: Social media serves as a virtual platform for young people to foster community and amplify marginalized voices, allowing them to actively engage with societal issues and take on roles as activists, advocates, and allies. A 2021 study (McDaniel, 2022) on teens revealed diverse literacy practices employed to address social justice, civil unrest, police brutality, state-sanctioned violence, the global pandemic, and other challenges faced by diverse communities. In a comprehensive three-month multi-case study focusing on the online literacies of teens of Color, the author examined how one youth, Tatum, an 18-year-old Black social justice activist, utilized social media for critical literacy practices and civic engagement. This paper emphasizes Tatum's multiliteracy practices and explores the intersection of justice-oriented activism, social media literacies, and youth identity work. The study advocates for the importance of recognizing youth of Color's multiliteracies and how it enriches teachers' pedagogical practices, providing critical insights for educators.

Keywords: critical literacy practices, digital literacies, social justice advocacy, social media, teen activism,

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Introduction

In the dynamic realm of digital arenas, particularly on social media platforms, youth actively engage in communication to champion social justice causes. Through the expert use of digital literacy practices, they emerge as activists, advocates, and allies, all driven by a collective aspiration to foster positive change and progress (McDaniel, 2022, 2023). This paper delves into a case from a larger multi-case study that focuses on the multiliteracies and identities of teens of Color in online spaces.

In a 2021 study (McDaniel, 2022), six participants engaged in social media literacy practices for activism and civic engagement, exploring the impact of these practices on shaping their identities. The participants included one teenage Black boy and five teen girls — three identifying as Black and two as Latina. I sought to understand how youth of Color, taking on roles as activists and allies, responded to the social justice movements and societal climate in 2020 and 2021. Essentially, the youth were responding to the ongoing events and challenges during the study period, demonstrating asset-based, proactive responses to the prevailing social justice climate by fostering solidarity and engaging in activism and civic participation on their frequented social media platforms.

Specifically, this paper centers on the exploration of one compelling case from the overarching study, Tatum. Tatum's use of social media platforms is examined to uncover how she connects, advocates, and resists, illustrating the application of her online critical multiliteracies — shedding light on the nuanced intersections of identity and digital literacy in the pursuit of social justice.

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Scholarly discussions affirm the widespread online engagement of young people, as indicated by various studies (Black, 2005, 2009; boyd, 2014; Gerber et al., 2017; Greenhow, 2011; Mirra & Garcia, 2017; Patterson, 2017; Skerrett, 2010; Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2017). Recent global events, such as the pandemic and heightened media attention on social justice, particularly racial justice challenges, have spurred critical discussions among young adults (Garcia et al., 2015; McDaniel, 2023; Mirra & Garcia, 2022; Mirra et al., 2022). However, current scholarship often neglects or inadequately represents the actions and experiences of youth of Color in social media (McDaniel 2022, 2023; Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2017), civic engagement (Kahne et al., 2016; Mirra & Garcia, 2017, 2020; Mirra et al., 2022), and multimodal literacies (Kinlock, 2010; Muhammad & Womack, 2015; Skerrett et al., 2013). In short, online contexts afford youth space to construct their own stories, engaging in multiliteracies grounded in 21st-century digital landscape (Garcia et al., 2015; Haddix et al., 2015; Mirra & Garcia, 2017; Muhammad, 2015; Vasudevan, 2010).

It is important to briefly recognize concerns regarding potential risks on these platforms, particularly for teens, including targeted abuse, inadequate safety measures, and potential surveillance (boyd, 2014; Tynes et al., 2012). Despite the negative aspects of online spaces for youth, this paper adopts an asset-based perspective, highlighting the opportunities for activism, agency, and allyship provided by digital platforms. Consequently, this study challenges deficit thinking regarding young people's social media engagements and literacy practices.

This paper presents findings from a three-month qualitative multi-case study on the social media literacies of youth in activism (McDaniel, 2022, 2023), with a specific focus on Tatum, an 18-year-old high school student in an urban district in the South, who identifies as an activist and ally. Tatum's case highlights insights into youth activism, voice, and social media literacies, providing a glimpse into how youth, especially those of Color, engage in online literacies, and shape civic identities. In the classroom, youth like Tatum bring unique knowledge rooted in diverse life experiences including online interactions (Moll et al., 1992). Tatum is named as a youth activist in this study for two key reasons: her self-identification and the study's approach considering her as a reader, writer, and activist rather than solely as a student. This article explores Tatum's roles as an activist and ally on social media, uniquely focusing on how she participates in online social justice-related literacy practices for activism, civic engagement, and identity work in writing. Unlike previous research that concentrated on young people's writing and identity markers, this study specifically examines how Tatum engages in online social justice literacy practices. While the broader 2021 study involved six teen participants (e.g., cases) across four states addressing societal issues on various platforms, this paper narrows its focus to one case—Tatum—addressing the following research questions:

(1) *What literacies does Tatum draw on to engage in justice-oriented activism and civic engagement on social media?*
(2) *How does Tatum enact literacy practices on social media related to her identity work?*

Researchers' Positionality

It's crucial to position myself in this work by acknowledging my background and positionalities. I identify as a teacher educator of Color, specifically I am a Black, heterosexual, cisgender woman. I belong to multiple marginalized communities (e.g., Black, woman) and privileged communities (e.g., cisgender, heterosexual, middle-class). However, I predominantly assume a cultural position as a Black woman in the U.S. My scholarly interests and teacher identity focus on improving the out of and in-school experiences of youth of Color. In this paper, I concentrate on the assets of youth of Color through their online literacy practices. My role as a Black teacher educator and scholar significantly informs this work, acknowledging the complex intersectionality of my identity. In this paper, the focus on one teen's social media literacies is influenced by my background, shaping my research persona, the literature I draw upon, and the theoretical framework guiding the analysis of Tatum's case.

Theoretical Background

BlackCrit Theory as a Lens for Social Media Literacies

Black Critical Theory, or Black Crit (Dumas, 2016; Dumas & Ross, 2016), provided a lens to examine, reflect, and act upon Blackness and anti-Blackness, the history of marginalized Black people, and the inequitable approach of dismissing Black youth within various educational contexts. Specifically, in this study, Blackness and anti-Blackness shaped how I viewed one teens' conversations about race in social media spaces, thus informing how Black people "became marginalized, disregarded, and disdained, even in their highly visible place within celebratory discourses on race and diversity" (Dumas & Ross, 2016, p. 417). Expanding on Johnson's (2018) use of BlackCrit in Critical Race English Education (CREE)—a framework addressing white supremacy and anti-Black racism in ELA classrooms—I apply BlackCrit to explore one teens' multiliteracies in social media spaces.

BlackCrit serves as a vital framework for contextualizing racism specific to Blacks and exploring social inequities. It guides my work in naming and articulating the individual experiences of youth literacy practices on social media. This approach highlights the significance of placing racialized experiences and sophisticated literacy practices of Black youth at the forefront of my research. Utilizing BlackCrit, I examine the experiences and unique needs of racial minorities in social media contexts. Critical stances, like BlackCrit, offer opportunities for youth to challenge traditional thinking and resist deficit-based assumptions. This case study, grounded in a critical framework such as BlackCrit, addresses an often-neglected area—recognizing the unique and collective experiences of youth of Color in social media spaces.

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In this paper, I choose to capitalize "Black" when referring to groups in racial, ethnic, or cultural terms. This decision acknowledges the shared sense of identity and community among Black individuals. Conversely, I do not capitalize "white" in this context to avoid aligning with white supremacists. This deliberate choice aims to prevent affirming Whiteness as the standard norm, while acknowledging the role Whiteness plays in institutions and communities. Capitalizing "Black" is a step towards reclamation, asserting power, and recognizing the entitlement to a capital letter in this context.

Relevant Literature

Youth's Online Literacy Practices

Online spaces empower teens to engage in multimodal creations like fanfiction (Black, 2005,

2009), digital poetry (Kovalik & Curwood, 2019), and social justice compositions (McDaniel, 2022, 2023). For example, Black (2005) investigated how an adolescent English language learner developed a vibrant online identity as a popular, multiliterate writer through fanfiction, diverging from her perceived identity in school as an unsuccessful, non-writer. Similarly, Kovalik and Curwood's (2019) case study emphasized the influence of authentic literacy practices in digital spaces, such as Instagram, on young people's multimodal writing.

Research illuminates the connection between youths' digital literacies and the imperative for schools to embrace these digital spaces. Lindstrom and Niederhauser (2016) conducted a cross-case analysis of literacy practices within a classroom-based social network site, urging educators to understand youths' out-of-school literacy practices to enhance teaching effectiveness. Literature also emphasizes youth digital literacies in traditional educational settings, particularly for youth of Color like Black young girls. Price-Dennis et al. (2017) explored the multiple identities and literacies of young Black girls, advocating for spaces that amplify their voices, perspectives, and diverse literacy practices. The literature provides guidance for teachers to support the literacy needs and interests of Black girls, emphasizing the crucial role of literacy teachers in developing curricula that nurture these literacies (Price-Dennis et al., 2015, 2016, 2017).

Despite educators adhering to racialized deficit notions about "good writing" that marginalize youth of Color (Golden, 2017; Haddix, 2009; Kinloch, 2010), research indicates that these youth engage in sophisticated multimodal writing practices in digital

contexts. Additionally, youth of Color often demonstrate writing excellence outside of school but may be labeled as struggling writers within it (Haddix, 2009; Skerrett et al., 2013). Literacy research explores how diverse identities influence youths' writing as seen in Muhammad and Womack's (2015) investigation into how Black adolescent girls use multimodal literacy to challenge and reinterpret public perceptions of Black girlhood. Limited research directly explores teens' use of social media for activism and advocacy through action-oriented writing, providing a comprehensive view of their civic, writing, and online lives. Additionally, little research explicitly investigates the role of social media and youth's identities as social justice activists in the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of learning to write across various contexts. Addressing this gap, this article analyzes how one youth utilizes social media spaces to enact literacy practices and writing identities for social justice activism.

Social Media, Digital Advocacy, and Civic Literacy

Extending this work, it is crucial to recognize the foundational contributions of digital literacy scholars who have paved the way in various research areas. Patterson (2017) delves into the intersection of social media, particularly platforms like YouTube, and its impact on the expression of identity among biracial individuals. Moreover, Price-Dennis and others (Price-Dennis et al., 2015; Price-Dennis, 2016; Price-Dennis et al., 2017; Price-Dennis & Muhammad, 2021) have examined the multiple identities and literacies of Black girls, cultivating space for Black girl voices, and enhancing how reimagining curriculum supports Black girls' literacies in digital spaces. Skerrett (2010, 2011, Skerrett et al., 2011; Skerrett et al., 2013) has significantly contributed to the understanding of multiliteracies pedagogy, literacy in the context of social media platforms and third spaces, and connecting youth out-of-school literacies to traditional reading curriculum.

The literature also highlights other Black youth of Color. For example, Haddix and her colleagues (Haddix, 2009; Haddix & Sealey-Ruiz, 2012; Haddix et al., 2015) challenge dominant perspectives on youth and their writing practices, with a particular focus on Black boys. They emphasize the need for emancipatory pedagogies, such as using digital tools and popular culture, to dismantle deficit constructs of Black and Latino boys and their literacy practices. They also examine 21st-century youth writers, activism, and civic engagement.

Garcia and his colleagues (Garcia et al., 2015, Garcia et al., 2021) have explored digital civic literacy practices of youth and critical literacy and civic engagement in the digital age. Lastly, Mirra and others (Mirra et al., 2013; Mirra et al., 2016; Mirra et al., 2018; Mirra et al., 2021; Mirra et al., 2022) have made significant strides in exploring digital advocacy as a form of youth civic participation. They have also developed a speculative approach to civic literacy research and practice, as highlighted by Garcia and Mirra (2021) and Mirra and Garcia (2020). Collectively, these scholars have enriched our understanding of digital literacies and their diverse enactment in today's society.

Youth Activism and Civic Participation

The literature on youth activism explores civic engagement, participatory work, and civic literacies (Bowyer & Kahne, 2020; Cohen & Kahne, 2012; Kahne & Bowyer, 2019). It positions digital advocacy as a new form of youth civic participation, enhancing third space research (Guttierez, 2008; Skerrett, 2010). Here, first and second spaces work together to generate a new third space. As civic engagement intersects with young people's digital citizen participation (Garcia et al., 2015, 2021; Mirra et al., 2013, 2016, 2018, 2021, 2022), the literature provides insights into their online activism. For example, Haddix et al. (2015) explored how a youth writer engaged in activism and civic participation through a community writing project,

underscoring the importance of understanding the civically engaged work of youth writers in effecting social change.

Cohen and Kahne's (2012) research shapes discussions on youth participation in antiracist efforts. Participatory politics, described by Kahne et al. (2016), involves interactive, peer-based actions to exert influence on public concerns. Digital media, facilitating news circulation and social network mobilization, expands youth engagement in participatory politics. In online contexts, participatory politics empowers young people as content creators, utilizing multimodal literacies. Youth online participation is a recurring theme in participatory politics literature (Cohen & Kahne, 2012; Kahne et al., 2016; Kahne & Sporte, 2008), emphasizing the impact of the digital revolution, online activities, and the Internet on their civic and political behaviors.

Moffett and Rice (2023) investigated the connection between TikTok and civic activity in young adults. They found that the hashtag #politics garnered nearly 14 billion views, raising questions about whether politically oriented expression on TikTok leads to increased offline civic engagement. Social media spaces, such as TikTok, play a crucial role in youths' participatory politics. Moffett and Rice (2023) argue that TikTok helps integrate young adults into political social networks, potentially encouraging additional civic activity. Moreover, the playful and humorous nature of TikTok-based political expression fosters the development of participatory, political selves in young adults. Their findings indicate that posting political videos on TikTok correlates with higher offline civic engagement, highlighting the significance of playful political expression in promoting civic engagement among young adults.

Furthermore, other recent literature (Clark Schofield et al., 2023; Oden & Porter, 2023) informs youth activism and civic participation, offering valuable insights into post-pandemic research and adolescents' digital practices. This research sheds light on the impact of digital contexts on education and civic engagement. Oden and Porter (2023) investigated social media's influence, including platforms like X, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, on youths' political interests and behaviors, emphasizing civic engagement. Clark Schofield et al.'s (2023) case studies explored the role of smartphones in marginalized youths' online civic engagement, examining critical literacy intersections on social media platforms, such as TikTok, in relation to youths' political interests and civic engagement.

Jenkins et al. (2015, 2020) introduce the concept of civic imagination, emphasizing how youth turn to social media to connect with communities and contribute to discourse about societal issues. This literature illuminates the importance of young people seeing themselves as agents of change to believe in and enact change (Jenkins et al., 2015, 2020). Additionally, it explores how young activists use elements from popular culture to inspire political change, employing imagery and narratives to foster new avenues for political and civic engagement (Jenkins et al., 2015). Further exploration of the intersections between civic participation and literacy gives rise to speculative civic literacies, challenging adult-imposed political systems and utilizing difference as a source of civic generativity and creativity (Garcia & Mirra, 2021; Mirra & Garcia, 2020, 2022). This framework connects to participatory politics, as young people employ contemporary tools and principles to build critical alternatives and foreground their voices in discussions about democracy (Garcia & Mirra, 2021; Mirra & Garcia, 2020).

Connections to Present Work

The literature review, especially sections titled "Social Media, Digital Advocacy, and Civic Literacy" and "Youth Activism and Civic Participation," is directly relevant to this study. There is a need for further research to understand how Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) youth engage in online spaces, particularly in terms of advocacy and civic engagement through social media. This has implications for literacy teachers and educators. This work aligns with research (Gerber et al., 2017; Mirra & Garcia, 2021; Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2017) suggesting that young people are globally connected through online platforms. Building on previous work (Garcia et al., 2020), I am exploring the critical literacies of one Black youth on social media for social justice activism and civic participation. Additionally, more attention is needed on BIPOC youth identity work in online spaces. Given the prominence of social media in youths' daily lives and its integral role in some adolescents' identity development, understanding diverse youth experiences in these spaces is crucial. This research also extends the literature (Price-Dennis, 2016; Price-Dennis et al., 2017; Price-Dennis & Muhammad, 2021) by examining the multiple identities and literacies of Black girls, creating space for Black girl voices, and reimagining curriculum to support Black girls' literacies in digital spaces.

The literature explicitly aligns with my work by affirming the contributions of scholars (Garcia et al., 2015, 2021; Garcia & Mirra, 2021; Mirra & Garcia, 2017, 2020, 2021) who investigate the digital civic literacy practices of youth, exploring critical literacy and civic engagement in the digital age. Specifically, Garcia and Mirra (2021) analyze how youth use online tools for organizing and policy discussions, while other literature (Mirra & Garcia, 2020) focuses on civic literacy, civic creativity, and mutual humanization as elements conducive to a more equitable democratic future. Building upon this foundation, this paper examines youth involvement in social media activism and civic engagement, with implications for reshaping conventional literacy spaces. In brief, the literature informs my work by examining the experiences of youth activists of Color and exploring the opportunities for change (Boveda & Boveda, 2023; Chang & Gamez, 2022). It also delves into (re)surgent youth activism (Chang & Gamez, 2022).

Research Methods

Case Study

The research utilized qualitative methods, centering on an information-rich case study (Stake, 1995) — Tatum. Bound by data collection, which included three semi-structured interviews, field notes about reading Tatum's social media posts on her preferred platforms, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) each day, and the collection of 78 artifacts over three months, the study aimed to offer detailed insights into Tatum's multiple literacy practices concerning social justice activism, civic engagement, and writing identity work.

Why Tatum?

Tatum was chosen as the focal point of this paper due to her exceptional status as a teen with a consistently notable presence on social media. She is unique from other participants of the larger project because she was one of the most active teens on social media at the time of the study. Her proactive engagement with justice-oriented literacies, both online and offline, along with her distinct case illustrating activism, advocacy, and allyship, makes her a standout individual. Through her unique position, the study aims to illuminate the intersection of literacy practices with politics, digital spaces, youth culture, and community involvement, as frequently highlighted in her social media interactions. Despite not having widespread social media recognition, Tatum embodies the everyday youth with an innate interest in activist-oriented literacies and civic

engagement through social media. Her participation in online spaces vividly reflects her critical multiliteracies. Finally, her case is compelling as she transcended social media, actively pursuing justice in her community. She fully embraced her identity as an activist and ally in her real-life experiences, extending beyond the realm of social media.

About Tatum

Tatum was a vocal advocate for people of Color, specifically women and the LGBTQ+ community. She expressed her views through Instagram, X, blogs, podcasts, and interviews, as well as contributing to various local organizations, news outlets, journalism platforms, and youth programs. In an interview with me, Tatum shared how her LGBTQIA+ identity influences her advocacy efforts, stating, "it makes me more active. I feel like it pushes me to speak out more because trans people are bullied the most, and I feel like because I'm cisgender it's easier for me to have these kinds of conversations because people respect weirdly enough cisgender people more than trans people, so I just feel like I have that outlet and platform to speak on it." In summary, Tatum highlights the challenges faced by members of the LGBTQIA+ community, emphasizing that being LGBTQIA+ is one strike against you. She highlights the intersectionality of marginalized identities, noting that as a Black woman, she faces additional obstacles. Tatum consciously rejects the stereotype of the angry Black woman, rooted in racial assumptions, but is aware that as a Black pansexual girl, she is judged not only by her race, but also her sexual orientation.

Tatum delved into fiction writing, crafting a narrative centered on a young woman of Color immersed in rap music, social media trends, friends, TikTok and living as a witch in an American city with a French cultural influence. Furthermore, she addressed the scarcity of Black women's representation in journalism, reflecting on her personal journey pursuing a career in journalism as a young Black woman. More so, Tatum actively engaged in multiliteracies beyond writing by participating in a podcast debate for a junior journalist program. Her advocacy aimed at reassuring prospective college students of Color that not attending a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) is acceptable. In the debate, Tatum outlined the drawbacks of HBCUs, asserting that Predominantly white Institutions (PWIs) provide a better option for Black teens. Concurrently, her teen counterpart highlighted the pros of HBCUs and their significance to Black college students.

As a junior journalist, Tatum not only wrote about her passions and impactful issues but also assumed the role of a voice for the voiceless. An illustrative example of her advocacy is her participation in an NPR podcast on politics and culture, where she discussed improving civic education for young people in the U.S. Tatum, along with other teens, wrote a corresponding blog emphasizing the importance of making civic education relatable to teens' lives. In the podcast episode, Tatum shared her experiences and opinions on what young people need to learn in civic education. The accompanying online blog highlighted the inadequacy of current civic education in schools and emphasized the role of social media in filling this gap. Led by Tatum, the group expressed that despite the insufficient civics education many young people receive, they remain eager to engage in the political process. Recognizing the lack of formal civic education, they highlighted the inclination to seek information through social media. Tatum reflected on how youth see more on social media about why they should vote. As a way to encourage her friends to vote, Tatum expressed how it takes about the same amount of time to create an Instagram account as it does to register to vote. She used this example to demonstrate why it's important to make civics education relatable and how important it is to have young people involved in the content of civics education, reimagining civic

education as she compares the time it takes to register to vote to creating an Instagram account.

This example illuminates the significance of educators in rendering civics education relatable and highlights the value of involving young people in shaping its content. Tatum, adopting a fresh perspective, draws a parallel between students' civic education and the time it takes to register to vote or create an Instagram account. Through this comparison, she advocates for change in the educational system. In essence, Tatum is outspoken and self-identifies as a rebel. Her passion extends to environmental causes, advocating for change, and standing up for her beliefs. Actively involved in her school, she holds the positions of Class President, head photographer of the school's media team, high school choir member, and ranks in the top 5% of her class.

Additionally, Tatum serves as a youth leader in her local community, participating in various youth programs and holding leadership roles, such as the Youth Transit Leadership Cohort Lead for her local transit program. She emphasizes the need for more widespread and youth-inclusive transit events. Tatum extends her impact nationally as an Editorial Advisor for organizations. Aspiring to study mass communications, public relations, and marketing, she aims to become the CEO of an international PR firm. Tatum is also an LGBTQIA+ ally and member, engaging in debates on X about topics such as (anti)racism, (in)equity, (in)justice, and supporting the LGBTQIA+ community.

Recruitment and Participant Selection

In this section, I contextualize the case study by discussing the recruitment process, participant selection, and the rationale for choosing Tatum.

Finding Youth. To recruit youth for the overarching study, I employed online recruitment methods aligned with their digital presence. This included direct communication through social media channels—utilizing direct messages and email—and conducting virtual recruitment meetings via Zoom. Given the pandemic context and the online nature of the study, leveraging the social media platforms she frequented proved to be the most effective approach to establish rapport. Specifically, I strategically used Instagram and X, creating and managing accounts to search relevant hashtags related to youth activism. Additionally, I employed algorithms on both platforms, exploring "suggested accounts" that ultimately led me to Tatum. To expand the participant pool, I employed a snowball sampling method within the online, social-mediated context. For instance, after successfully recruiting one teen, I engaged in snowball sampling (Merriam, 1998) to discover Tatum through the networks of other potential participants. To assess Tatum's qualification as a youth activist, I examined her social media profiles, focusing on elements such as hashtags, diverse compositions, and shared content. Additionally, I looked for indications of involvement in social justice discussions or interaction with her audience. During an online Zoom interest meeting, I directly asked Tatum if she identified as an activist, and she confirmed, also noting her role as an ally.

Researcher's Decision-making

In the study, I assumed dual roles as a social media observer and co-constructor of data with Tatum, without directing her online activities. In the observer capacity, I closely monitored Tatum's public, multimodal content on platforms like Instagram and X. As a co-constructor of the data with Tatum, I utilized project-specific social media profiles to immerse myself in these online spaces, engaging in social justice discussions and interacting with young individuals. This approach aligns with

Gerber et al.'s (2017) emphasis on the researcher's positioning in online research, recognizing the significance of active engagement in social media communities for this research.

Data Sources. Data collection comprised of three virtual semi-structured interviews and daily reading of Tatum's Instagram and X profile posts. Additionally, digital artifacts (e.g., content such as memes, quotes, pictures, and videos, captions, hashtags) were collected. This comprehensive approach sought to provide insights into Tatum's literacy practices associated with justice-oriented activism, civic engagement, and writing identity work on social media. I concentrated on Instagram and X, despite Tatum having additional platforms like TikTok and YouTube. She identified herself as a non-active poster on TikTok, using the platform mainly for information and entertainment without actively posting or sharing others' content. The same applies to her YouTube.

To guide participation, I instructed Tatum to continue her normal social media activity, closely observing her profiles, collecting justice-oriented artifacts, and conducting interviews. These interactions delved into her literacy practices, content reflecting experiences, online identities, and intersections with social justice issues. I engaged with her online by liking and commenting on her posts, observing her social media literacy practices with a protocol. Tatum's reflections on her writing identities, social media literacy practices, activist and civic participation, and racialized self were noted. Additionally, I shared her content on study-specific social media profiles. This action aimed to interact with the participant in a manner consistent with typical social media engagement—emphasizing the sharing of others' content. I obtained Tatum's consent to repost content at my discretion, adhering to the dynamic nature of social media.

Additional interactions included a participant interest meeting and three semi-structured online Zoom interviews with Tatum. In these interviews, I explored Tatum's perspectives on social media, the influence of her writing identities on her content, the impact of her racialized identities on justice-oriented creation and sharing, and how social media shaped her understanding as a teen of Color today. It's important to highlight that Tatum engaged online without adhering to any formal interaction norms, maintaining control over her profiles throughout the data collection process.

Data Analysis

The data is analyzed and reported separately, employing thematic data analysis methods. I employed a case study (Stake, 1995) centered on Tatum, aiming to gain deeper insights into her critical literacies related to social justice activism during a specific time and place. The construction of a case about Tatum facilitated an exploration of broader concepts, such as the influence of social media on activism, literacies, and civic identities.

Utilizing codes derived from triangulating data instances (e.g., interview transcripts, social media artifacts, and analytic memos from field notes), I conducted thematic analysis to co-construct Tatum's case. Thematic analysis (Table 1) served as a methodological approach to identify patterns in the data and involve Tatum in the analytical process. This analysis aided in focusing on recognizing and comprehending major themes and their interconnections.

Example of Case Data Analysis

In weekly analytic memos, I initiated the documentation of emerging themes relevant to Tatum. These memos captured Tatum's topics, composition methods, communication style,

Table 1

Example of Data Analysis

Tatum's Case Initial Codes (e.g., phase one open coding)	Tatum's Case Code Combinations and Groupings (e.g., axial coding)	Tatum's Case Study Themes	Tatum's Case Study Sub-Themes
Using Voice in Online Spaces Advocacy as a Response to Injustice Recognition and Value	Demanding Attention	Black Teens Front and Center: A Call to Being Seen and Heard	Using Platforms for Self-expression Healing Through Speaking Feeling Seen, Loved, and Supported is a Treasure
Enacting Activism to Avoid Hate Being Independent-minded Despite Expected Behaviors Identifying as LGBTQIA+ Within the Black Community	Enacting Identity Work	Allyship and Anti-Hate: Standing Against Fighting Hate Without Perpetuating It	That Didn't Exactly Stick to my Core Just Because You're Black Doesn't Mean you Have to Hate White People How you get Seen in the Black Community is Completely Different
Countering Stereotypes Unapologetic Activism Civil Dialogue	Enacting Change	Navigating Necessary Conversations in Respectful Ways	The Angry Black Woman Making the Comfortable, Uncomfortable RESPECT is Very Simple

intended audience, expression of identity through online literacies, and her use of multiliteracy practices. The analytic memos laid the foundation for thematic analysis, incorporating open and axial coding (see Table 1) to identify themes and subthemes in Tatum's case, with a specific emphasis on social media artifacts.

The steps undertaken for thematic analysis included: (1) Familiarization with the data through transcription of interviews, review of artifacts, and observation of patterns across the dataset. Weekly analytics memos were consulted to enhance understanding. (2) Creation of initial codes by engaging in thematic analysis coding, forming a set that represented observed meanings and patterns in the data. A thorough review ensured appropriate code assignment. (3) Grouping of data with specific codes (e.g., open coding). (4) Determination of code combinations and grouping of codes into themes to identify trends and patterns (e.g., axial coding). Sub-themes were derived from overarching themes. (5) Review and revision of themes to guarantee adequate data support and distinctiveness. Similar themes

were merged, and unsupported themes were eliminated. The final step involved crafting a case study narrative with Tatum as the central focus. Member checking played a crucial role in this case narrative. Here, Tatum validated themes and sub-themes.

In brief, I conducted a thorough thematic analysis to closely examine the data, identifying recurring themes and understanding patterns of meaning that emerged consistently in both interview data and artifacts. For the larger study, the initial phase involved crafting individual intra-case narratives for each participant. It's crucial to note that a second phase of data analysis occurred to address the broader study. This phase involved crafting a thematic cross-case narrative, examining patterns, commonalities, and shared meanings across the six cases (e.g., teen participants) through axial coding.

> "The presented findings ... underscore the significance of prioritizing and amplifying the voices of Black youth, aligning with the principles of critical perspectives such as BlackCrit."

Tatum's Agency in Data Collection and Analysis

To highlight Tatum's involvement in data collection and analysis, I detail the primary data source: social media artifacts. Following my artifact protocol, I collected relevant social media data and later presented these artifacts to Tatum during member checking. Tatum granted consent for all justice-oriented posts; any disagreement resulted in exclusion of the respective artifact as per the established protocol. During the three-month study, three artifacts were excluded from Tatum's dataset. During the data analysis phase, Tatum actively participated in member checking, providing feedback on drafts of her case narrative and contributing insights to the development of emerging and final themes. The analysis excluded irrelevant social media posts, focusing specifically on social justice content.

Findings

This section explores Tatum's case, specifically highlighting her use of literacy practices on social media to articulate her racialized experiences. It examines how these literacies have influenced the shaping of her identity. Three main themes: (1) Black Teens Front and Center: A Call to Being Seen and Heard, (2) Allyship and Anti-Hate: Standing Against Hate Without Perpetuating It, and (3) Navigating Necessary Conversations in Respectful Ways. These themes illustrate how Tatum employed literacy practices on Instagram and X for justice-oriented activism and civic engagement, as well as to navigate her identity work.

BlackCrit theory serves as the foundation for the findings, offering a lens to comprehend Blackness and anti-Blackness while centering on Black youth. The presented findings contribute to the study's grounding theory, BlackCrit, by emphasizing how one teen of Color utilizes multiliteracy practices in social spaces to effect change. Consequently, these conclusions underscore the significance of prioritizing and amplifying the voices of Black youth, aligning with the principles of critical perspectives such as BlackCrit.

Theme 1: Black Teens Front and Center: A Call to Being Seen and Heard

Marginalized youth often lack opportunities to spotlight their own stories, perpetuating the notion that Black teens require platforms to showcase their talents, notably their voices. In our initial interview, Tatum articulated her sense of purpose, stating:

> It's my life's purpose to use my voice. I've been gifted this significant voice and personality, and I feel compelled to use it... I love speaking for marginalized groups, giving them a voice, and being a voice for the voiceless. I love it.

Tatum's articulation of her life's purpose and her commitment to using her voice foregrounds the urgency of addressing the marginalization of Black teens. Through the BlackCrit lens, I recognize this as a response to the historical silencing of Black voices. Tatum's advocacy against silencing, particularly on social media, becomes a strategic tool in challenging dominant narratives and fostering a more inclusive discourse.

Further, Tatum advocates against silencing youth, emphasizing social media as a crucial platform for expression. For instance, she employs multiliteracies on X to voice her disagreement with the idea that "trans people shouldn't participate in cisgender sports." During our interview, she shared her active role in shaping discussions within her student body on the topic of trans inclusion in high school sports, stating, "I expressed my opinion on Twitter, and whoever sees it, sees it. If you disagree, that's fine. I still believe in the importance of education without disrespect." While Tatum embraces this opportunity, she acknowledges the rarity of visibility and voice for other Black teens. This theme emphasizes the pivotal role platforms play in addressing the marginalization of Black teens, with a particular focus on Tatum's experiences. BlackCrit highlights systemic disparities in visibility, highlighting the need for creating spaces where Black youth can articulate their experiences and perspectives.

Tatum announced on X, "i'm about to start a podcast for Black teenagers, and a LOT of my followers have strong controversial opinions... y'all should come speak your peace." Leveraging her various platforms for self-expression, Tatum aims to create inclusive spaces for Black teens to voice their opinions. Through this podcast initiative, she invites her predominantly Black X audience to take center stage and be accessible to others. Additionally, Tatum's initiative to start a podcast specifically for Black teens reveals a deliberate effort to counter the lack of opportunities for visibility within mainstream media. This aligns with BlackCrit's emphasis on dismantling structural inequalities by providing avenues for self-expression. By creating a platform, Tatum not only addresses the deficit in representation but also actively invites controversial opinions, fostering a space where diverse perspectives within the Black teen community can be heard.

Through her X platform, Tatum emphasizes the importance of providing continuous opportunities for teens of Color to openly discuss their racialized experiences, trauma, and healing. This advances racial literacies and promotes activism for equity in digital spaces (Price-Dennis & Sealy, 2021). She shared a retweet that states, "how can you heal what you never revealed? Make it a standard to allow black boys to speak their transgressions willingly." This aligns with BlackCrit's focus on acknowledging and addressing historical injustices. Tatum's use of X to promote dialogue on these topics emphasizes the importance of verbalizing struggles as a means of personal and collective healing, challenging the historical silence imposed on Black communities.

On X, Tatum retweeted a post by Brett Gray, a young Black actor known for his role as Jamal on Netflix's "On My Block." The tweet conveyed, "Last day playing Jamal. PSA to let the funny, weird black boys in your life be funny and weird. Show them love and support and make them feel seen. You never know what treasures they may uncover" with several emojis. The show is set in a challenging Los Angeles neighborhood, depicting the lives of four intelligent, humorous, and street-smart teens navigating high school. Tatum's advocacy for authentic expression

and support, as seen in her retweets, resonates with BlackCrit's emphasis on dismantling stereotypes and norms. The retweet by Brett Gray highlights the need to appreciate the uniqueness of Black individuals, especially those who don't conform to societal expectations. Tatum's support aligns with the BlackCrit framework's call to recognize and value the diverse qualities of Black youth.

Moreover, the intersectional nature of Tatum's advocacy for the LGBTQIA+ community is a vital aspect analyzed through the BlackCrit framework. Tatum's emphasis on visibility, support, and love for the LGBTQIA+ community, especially the trans community, aligns with BlackCrit's commitment to addressing the layered oppressions faced by Black individuals. Her personal journey within the LGBTQIA+ community (e.g., a Black pansexual) further emphasizes the interconnected struggles and the necessity of allyship.

In conclusion, Theme 1, when analyzed through BlackCrit, reveals the multifaceted efforts of Tatum to combat the marginalization of Black teens. The strategic use of voice, multiliteracies enacted on platforms, and emphasis on healing and support collectively contribute to an understanding of the challenges and aspirations within Black youth. BlackCrit guides this analysis, unveiling layers of systemic inequalities and highlighting the necessity for deliberate interventions such as disrupting inequities through youth digital activism (Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2017), to amplify the voices of Black teens.

Next, I introduce the second main theme, "Allyship and Anti-Hate: Standing Against Hate Without Perpetuating It," illustrating how Tatum employed literacies on Instagram and X to articulate her justice-oriented activism and civic engagement and enact literacy practices related to identity work. She emphasizes the imperative to combat hate without succumbing to an easier path of responding with more hate. Tatum, in line with BlackCrit principles, employed multiliteracies to promote allyship and an anti-hate stance against racial prejudice. Utilizing critical digital literacies, she contributed to social change in addressing racial hate and racism (Garcia et al., 2020).

Theme 2: Allyship and Anti-Hate: Standing Against Hate Without Perpetuating It

Theme 2 demonstrates how Tatum's case highlights the complex dynamics of allyship, racial hatred, and the impact of racialized experiences. BlackCrit, as a lens, supports exploration of Tatum's literacy practices on Instagram and X as tools for comprehending justice-oriented allyship on social media and the impact on identities. Many marginalized individuals endure persistent racism without the prospect of holding perpetrators accountable for their discriminatory actions. Rather than harboring resentment for this lack of justice, Tatum urges the Black community not to combat hate with more hate. Instead, she advocates for celebrating allies who support rather than oppress marginalized people. As a Black cisgender woman and pansexual, Tatum values relationships with white allies who have supported her journey as both a member of the LGBTQIA+ community and an ally. Despite negativity towards white individuals due to racism, hate, police brutality, and injustice, Tatum emphasizes the importance of recognizing allyship. Thus, she enacted multiliteracies on Instagram and X to engage in justice-oriented activism and civic engagement (Garcia et al., 2021; Mirra et al., 2022) on social media and to navigate identities (Patterson, 2017; Price-Dennis et al., 2017). Here, she expressed her concerns about the negative relationship between the Black community and white individuals regarding issues of racial justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

In her third interview, Tatum discussed her experience at an all-Black high school, where she often found herself in positions that did not align with her values. She explained, "I went to an all-Black high school with the mentality of the HBCU experience, teaching us to be strong Black individuals. However, that stigma didn't exactly align with my core, which is why I consider myself such an activist." Tatum recounted instances in various classroom situations where she spoke out against the prevailing belief that Black people should harbor resentment towards white individuals. She emphasized her relationships with white friends and cohorts, advocating for mutual respect between races. Here, Tatum highlighted the negative views towards whites within her predominantly Black environment based on racialized experiences. She acknowledged her white friends on social media as respectful allies who support and share common beliefs. Tatum's activism extends to her social media presence, particularly on X, where she challenges the prevalent hate within her school community towards those of her own race.

Tatum's stance against combating hate with more hate aligns with the BlackCrit emphasis on dismantling systemic oppression. Through her experiences, she advocates for celebrating allies, emphasizing the need for mutual respect between races. In a predominantly Black high school environment, Tatum challenges the ongoing belief that Black individuals should harbor resentment towards white people. This disrupts the historical narrative of racial animosity, reflecting BlackCrit's commitment to breaking down harmful stereotypes and fostering inclusive narratives.

In alignment with this work, Tatum shared the following tweet, addressing the gatekeeper attitude, particularly in response to the argument that white people shouldn't attend HBCUs.

i don't understand the gatekeeper attitude...i don't like when y'all try to gate keep anything that was formed by a black person but get mad when white people say you don't belong in certain areas. just because you're black doesn't mean you gotta hate white people

Tatum's use of X to address gatekeeper attitudes reflects a BlackCrit analysis of power dynamics within racialized spaces. Her tweet demonstrates the importance of not replicating exclusionary behaviors, even in response to historical injustices. By advocating for an inclusive approach, she challenges the notion that one's race should dictate their belonging or exclusion, emphasizing unity over division. Although Tatum's experiences are rooted in Black spaces, she reflects on allyship and draws from it to defend the treatment of those who often cause Black pain.

On another note, Tatum's experiences as a Black pansexual in predominantly Black spaces are explored through the BlackCrit lens. The framework allows me to understand the distinction of acceptance and rejection within the Black community based on sexual orientation. Tatum's emphasis on caution against generalizations, particularly in the context of racial tensions, aligns with BlackCrit's commitment to acknowledging diverse experiences within Black communities. By enacting multiliteracies on social media, Tatum articulates the complexities of her identity, challenging stereotypes and advocating for allyship within the Black community.

In conclusion, Theme 2, analyzed through BlackCrit, examines the dynamics of allyship, hate, and racialized experiences within Tatum's case. The framework allows for a nuanced exploration of literacy practices, revealing identity work in online spaces, and the need for inclusivity. Tatum's advocacy for unity, respect, and allyship becomes a

powerful call to action within the broader context of dismantling systemic racism and fostering a more inclusive society.

The third theme, "Navigating Necessary Conversations in Respectful Ways," illuminates Tatum's literacy practices on Instagram and X become tools for engaging in difficult yet essential conversations about race. BlackCrit guides my understanding of how Tatum navigates these conversations, emphasizing the necessity of respectful dialogue to dismantle systemic inequalities and foster understanding.

Theme 3: Navigating Necessary Conversations in Respectful Ways

This theme explores Tatum's aspirations to engage in critical conversations in predominantly white spaces, emphasizing her role as a representative voice for the Black community. The BlackCrit lens helps explain the development of Tatum's identity as she navigates different environments, aiming to bridge conversations and dismantle stereotypes through respect-oriented interactions.

In our initial interview, Tatum expressed her aspiration to attend a liberal arts school or a predominantly white institution (PWI), highlighting this desire in a podcast episode where she was a guest. Her intention is to be a representative voice for the Black community in these spaces, emphasizing the need for diverse voices in environments lacking racial representation. Tatum envisions engaging in conversations about instigating change and fostering dialogue, particularly with white individuals. She emphasized, "I'm gonna go to a school where I can be representative of the Black community." Tatum further discussed her childhood, highlighting her uniqueness from other Black girls in her ability to connect with those outside her culture, appreciating pop and rock music while also relating to Black culture through R&B and rap.

Additionally, Tatum advocates for crucial dialogues within Black communities, including her high school and family, promoting support and respect for the LGBTQ+ community. She also recognizes the importance of race-centered discussions in majority-white spaces, emphasizing her commitment to engaging in these conversations herself. Tatum believes she can contribute to these dialogues based on her unique experiences in Black spaces and her ability to connect with white youth. BlackCrit framework guides my analysis of Tatum's advocacy for critical conversations within her high school and family dynamics, emphasizing support and respect for the LGBTQ+ community. By acknowledging the necessity of race-centered discussions within predominantly Black spaces, Tatum challenges internalized prejudices and stereotypes. The commitment to fostering respectful dialogue within the Black community aligns with BlackCrit's call for recognizing and dismantling anti-Blackness even within marginalized groups.

The intersection of Tatum's race and gender countered stereotypical representations that she intentionally worked not to embody. In our initial interview, Tatum expressed her reluctance to be perceived as the "angry Black woman," emphasizing the need to navigate her behavior in a way that counters this stereotypical portrayal. She recounted an incident in her local junior journalist program, highlighting the challenges she faced as a young Black woman dealing with racial dynamics. Tatum accentuates the importance of managing her image, particularly on social media, to avoid conforming to stereotypes. This unveils Tatum's conscious effort to navigate and challenge racial and gender stereotypes.

Moreover, Tatum delved into the intersectionality of her identity, acknowledging strikes against her for being Black, a woman, and a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. She emphasized that these factors motivate her to be more active in advocacy,

especially for the LGBTQIA+ community, where she sees her cisgender status affording her a platform to speak out. Tatum highlighted the complexity of navigating societal judgments, acknowledging that being a member of the LGBTQIA+ community adds a strike against her, while being Black and a woman compounds the challenges due to the intersectionality of her marginalized identities. In summary, she is aware of the judgments she faces as a Black pansexual girl and recognizes the intersectionality of her marginalized identities.

Adding to this, Tatum's advocacy for racial justice, particularly within the context of the Black Lives Matter movement, offers a unique perspective from a youth of Color. Her emphasis on prioritizing conversations centered on Black lives in the broader discourse on race is evident through her multiliteracies. For instance, in solidarity with the racialized experiences of Black individuals, Tatum retweeted a post emphasizing the significance of Black lives within various familial and social contexts, sharing, "I have a Black father. A Black boyfriend. Black brothers. Black uncles. Black cousins. Black friends. Their lives matter." While she supports the broader goals of the Black Lives Matter movement—anti-racism, equity, and justice for the Black community—Tatum maintains a distinct perspective on its methods. In our initial interview, she shared her views, expressing support for the movement's objectives but critiquing certain tactics. Tatum articulated:

> I support them, to a certain degree. I like what they're trying to do, but do they always execute it the right way? I do know I don't support that all the time. I don't support them protesting and looting...I don't support that because then the media will portray you in a certain way.

Thus, Tatum offers a critique of the Black Lives Matter movement, suggesting a perceived lack of

organization and advocating for alternative channels like government engagement.

In our third interview, she further elaborated on her disapproval of protesting, acknowledging the movement's strength but expressing concerns about its commercialization. Tatum emphasized that while some support may be genuine, she discerns when it's not, cautioning against the movement becoming a trend. Tatum's critique of the Black Lives Matter movement also aligns with an emphasis on engaging critically with social movements. Her advocacy for alternative channels and concerns about the movement's commercialization reflects a commitment to dismantling systemic racism. Here, BlackCrit informed my understanding of how Tatum actively participates in conversations that challenge dominant narratives, making the comfortable uncomfortable within her advocacy.

Still, she firmly asserts the importance of Black Lives Matter beyond a trend, countering the All Lives Matter narrative with a focus on the current urgency for Black lives. In this way, Tatum actively engages in making the comfortable uncomfortable, unapologetically asserting the primacy of the Black Lives Matter movement in ongoing conversations about racial justice. For example, Tatum echoed LeBron James's sentiments by retweeting his post:

> I'm so damn tired of seeing Black people killed by the police. I took the tweet down because its being used to create more hate - This isn't about one officer. it's about the entire system and they always use our words to create more racism. I am so desperate for more ACCOUNTABILITY.

Here, she illuminated the persistent issue of police violence against Black individuals. James emphasized the need for accountability within the entire system, expressing frustration with the misuse of his words to fuel hatred.

Similarly, Tatum sees accountability as a fundamental aspect of her purpose, particularly within the LGBTQ+ community. In our second interview, she explained:

> I have a bunch of friends in the LGBTQ+ community, and I'm in GSA [Gay-Straight Alliance - student-led organization], so they know I'm actively open to supporting the community, which really, you know, makes them upset. I feel like if I'm not making the comfortable uncomfortable with things that they need to be comfortable with, I'm not doing my job.

While Tatum's activism predominantly centers around the LGBTQ+ community, she is also committed to raising awareness about police brutality against Black lives. Discussing the murder of George Floyd, expressing support for charges against Derek Chauvin, and advocating for uncomfortable conversations, Tatum actively engages in these issues on social media. She retweeted a post praising Nickelodeon for airing a "I can't breathe" commercial, recognizing its potential to spark crucial conversations in households and disrupt comfort zones.

Extending this work, Tatum employs multiliteracies on social media to advocate for a societal shift towards respect. She emphasizes the importance of support and allyship through demanding respect, promoting understanding and acknowledgment of marginalized individuals' practices, perspectives, and lived experiences, even if not necessarily in agreement. For instance, Tatum took to X, passionately stating, "RESPECT TRANS PEOPLE. I'm sick of having this conversation over and over again. RESPECT is very simple. I get 'opinions,' but RESPECT is something that never changes," including emojis. In this tweet, she advocates for the LGBTQIA+ community, drawing from her experiences within her majority Black student body and her traditional Southern Baptist Black family, where she perceives a lack of respect, particularly for trans individuals.

As a vocal ally, Tatum sheds light on the inequities and injustices faced by this marginalized group. Further emphasizing her support, Tatum retweeted a post that urges people not to speak on the trans experience unless they are trans themselves, stressing the importance of empathy and understanding. Thus, BlackCrit guides my understanding of Tatum's advocacy for respect within marginalized communities. The emphasis on respect becomes a tool for challenging societal norms, fostering inclusivity, and amplifying the voices of marginalized individuals. Tatum's commitment to respect as a fundamental character trait aligns with BlackCrit's call for recognizing, acknowledging, and valuing diverse practices and perspectives.

In conclusion, Tatum's case study, analyzed through BlackCrit, offers valuable insights into the complexities of Black youth literacies and identity formation. The framework serves as a powerful tool for understanding Tatum's experiences, shedding light on the challenges, aspirations, and agency within Black youth navigating anti-Black structures.

Learning from Tatum's Case: Implications for Understanding Black Youth Literacies through a BlackCrit Lens

From a BlackCrit lens on Tatum's case study, I learned a small piece of the Black experience and how anti-Black racism is embedded in their lived experiences. Through this framework, I was able to analyze the way "social structures, policies, and practices are influenced by anti-Blackness" (Dumas & Ross, 2016, p.106). Thus, I learned how race affects Black youth and how they enact multiliteracies specifically.

BlackCrit serves marginalized youth, like Tatum, and has the potential to inform research and teaching, serving as a tool used to understand race, racism, and white supremacy. This matters beyond Tatum, as educators need to make sense of elements of Blackness, and make determined efforts to deal with white supremacy, specifically anti-Blackness. Further, Tatum's case calls for a Blackness and anti-Blackness exploration of multiliteracies. Multiliteracies encompass the ability to recognize, interpret, generate, and convey meaning through diverse forms of communication. Thus, Black girls' multiliteracies like Tatum could be explored through a theory of Blackness in an anti-Black society (Dumas & Ross, 2016) Tatum's case paired with a BlackCrit lens fills a purpose - one that not only addresses but challenges white supremacy and the oppression of marginalized people, namely Blacks -something that has been largely ignored and concealed for far too long - in systemic structures, precisely educational spaces that minoritized youth occupy (Dumas & Ross, 2016).

> "... youth of color employ multiliteracies in social media, with a foundation in justice-oriented activism and civic engagement."

Through Tatum's case, I discovered that she utilized multiliteracies on social media for justice-oriented activism and civic engagement. Furthermore, I learned that her literacy practices on social media are intricately connected to her roles as both an activist and an ally. The exploration of three main themes—(1) Black Teens Front and Center: A Call to Being Seen and Heard, (2) Allyship and Anti-Hate: Standing Against Fighting Hate Without Perpetuating It, and (3) Navigating Necessary Conversations in Respectful Ways—revealed that youth of color employ multiliteracies in social media, with a foundation in justice-oriented activism and civic engagement. In alignment with BlackCrit's three foundational ideas (Dumas & Ross, 2016), which offer broad frameworks for these concepts, Tatum's case shed light on how: (1) anti-Blackness is not only endemic but central to

the way we make sense of the social, economic, historical, and cultural dimensions of human life; (2) Blackness exists in tension with the neoliberal-multicultural imagination; (3) there is a crucial need to create space for Black liberatory fantasy and resist a revisionist history that perpetuates dangerous majoritarian narratives.

The implications of Tatum's case extend to educational spaces. Educators can recognize and address the embedded anti-Blackness within systemic structures. For instance, BlackCrit offered a framework for understanding race, racism, and white supremacy, informing research and teaching practices. Tatum's case highlights the importance of creating spaces for Black liberation and actively challenging harmful narratives within educational settings.

Social Justice Advocacy through Tatum's Multiliteracies and Identities

Tatum focused on connecting, advocating, and resisting as represented by her multiliteracies enacted on social media. For example, Tatum leveraged social media for activism, action, and allyship, aiming to address long-standing racial issues and scrutinize preceding generations. Through digital protests and online advocacy, she actively opposes systemic racism and challenges the perceptions of her generation as overly sensitive. Tatum asserts that they are focused on accountability rather than sensitivity, stating, "we are not sensitive; we are just in the business of holding people accountable, and they don't like that." Using platforms like X, Tatum and her Gen Z peers refuse to tolerate ongoing social issues related to race, gender identity, and sexuality, emphasizing their

commitment to ending injustices and holding Generation Z accountable for instigating change.

On X, Tatum retweeted tweets addressing America as a nation plagued by mass shootings, and violence. In addition, Tatum commented on racist police departments, specifically calling out the Chicago police amid scrutiny for the shooting of 13-year-old Latinx boy, Adam Toledo, a Mexican American boy. Her tweets advocated for the importance of Brown lives. She retweeted a post urging women to refrain from centering their identity around how men perceive them.

> "Through a BlackCrit frame, I emphasize the need to explore Black girls' multiliteracies within the context of anti-Black societies."

Furthermore, Tatum shared tweets highlighting police brutalities leading to fatal outcomes, referencing the shooting of Daunte Wright by a Minnesota police officer. Further, Tatum explained her use of voice, stating, "God gave me this big voice. This is what I am supposed to do. This is why he gave me a big voice." In a different interview, she asserted, "my generation, Gen Z, we are not standing for stuff other generations allowed to happen." However, Tatum exhibited a dual approach to social media, using it both for activism, action, and allyship, as well as for typical teenage expression. In informal discussions, it became apparent that Tatum, holding various leadership roles in school, considered herself popular. She emphasized the importance of using platforms like Instagram for sharing both important real-world issues and "just regular teen stuff" with her friends. On X, where her high school friends also followed her, Tatum focused on engaging in activism and highlighting her advocacy for social justice while showcasing her life as a high school senior.

In short, Tatum's use of literacy practices on Instagram and X reflects her experiences and influences the shaping of her identity. This case offers insight into how Tatum, a Black teen of Color, employed literacy practices that played a role in forming her identities as an activist, ally, and Black pansexual and cisgender woman. Through a BlackCrit frame, I emphasize the need to explore Black girls' multiliteracies within the context of anti-Black societies. Tatum's case calls for a deeper exploration of how intersectional identities influence literacy practices, providing a framework for understanding the complexities of Black youth literacies. Further, Tatum's use of social media for activism, action, and allyship becomes a significant aspect of her identity formation. She actively opposes systemic racism, challenges stereotypes, and engages in critical conversations within and beyond the Black community. Thus, Tatum's multiliteracies on platforms like Instagram and X serve as tools for justice-oriented activism, contributing to broader discussions on racial and social justice.

Conclusion

Tatum's case has implications for teens who employ multiliteracies on social media to assert their visibility, stand against systemic injustice, and engage in critical conversations as part of their social justice activism, advocacy, and allyship. This paper explores how one BIPOC youth, Tatum, utilizes social media to champion racial justice and dismantle injustices faced by diverse communities. Tatum's bold online literacy practices serve as a testament to her unique form of activism and civic participation. Educators could strive to create a supportive environment that nurtures youth identity and political engagement through culturally-infused teaching methods. This involves rethinking traditional approaches, embracing learner-centric methods, providing opportunities for students—especially those of

Color—to engage in multiliteracies, civic engagement, and identity work. Furthermore, this case has implications for teachers seeking innovative approaches to empower young people's activism and initiating community dialogues on social justice, racial justice, and diversity issues. It emphasizes the effective use of social media platforms for meaningful multiliteracies engagement.

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