

Afrofuturism as a Bridge Beyond

with Quentin Vercetty Lindsey

Keywords: Anti-Black Racism, Black Art, Afrofuturism, Combatting Stigma, Contextualizing Black North America

Related Course Subjects: Diversity and the Contemporary World, Art, Computation Arts, History, Environmental & Sustainability Science, First Peoples Studies, Human Environment, Performance Creation, Urban Studies/Planning, Black Studies, African Studies

Quentin Vercetty Lindsey talks about the importance of changing the view that is propagated about “black culture” through art and empowering imagery. Quentin talks about Afrofuturism as a pedagogy, creating a space where all people unite and feel safe and welcome, specifically through visual arts and exposure to futuristic black art. We can dismantle the current narratives to create a liberated world.

Goals/Objectives

After watching the video, students will be able to:

- Describe the concept of “Sancophonology.”
 - Name various natural resources originating from Africa
 - Describe the difference between a “preventative” vs a “reactive” approach to health
 - Describe the imagery depicting “black culture” that surrounds us today vs the imagery that Quentin speaks about (how it affects various groups of people)
 - Describe what is the “gap of knowledge” (between ancestral knowledge and what we know today) and have ideas about how to bridge that “gap.”
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About The Decolonial Perspectives & Practices Hub

The Decolonial Perspectives & Practices Hub is a student-led initiative to provide a platform for the community to collaborate and develop meaningful solutions to the systemic issues faced by underserved groups in academia. Our mission is to advance knowledge and understanding of these issues and provide a space to engage in research and learning that is open to all experiences each individual brings.

About the Anti-Racist Pedagogy Project

The Anti-Racist Pedagogy Project is a video library that showcases pre-recorded talks by local community activists, students and educators in Montreal and Canada and transforms them into anti-racist educational resources for the classroom. Undergraduate and graduate students from Concordia and McGill University created the content for these course packages. These resources exemplify the power of student leadership and their contribution to advancing antiracist education.

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Pre-Class Self-Reflection Exercise (Educators)

Fully engaging with antiracist pedagogy starts with self-reflection and accountability. **If you are familiar with antiracist education, you know that the best way to teach antiracist pedagogy is to model antiracist praxis and thought.** As such, we have developed a series of self-reflection questions for you to consider before integrating anti-racist educational materials into your classroom. The night before class or at least a few hours before class, give yourself time, without distractions, to reflect on the questions below - you can write them down or reflect on them with yourself paper free!

Be reflexive

- What does antiracist pedagogy or education mean to you?
- What is the relationship between your identity and antiracist work? How would you describe your role in antiracist work?
- How do you view the mutualistic exchange between yourself and your students? Do you adjust your teaching style accordingly?
- What is the difference between engaging with our repository as a knowledge exchange versus a knowledge extraction?

Be accountable

- To what extent have you engaged with antiracist or anti-oppressive education or philosophies within your life/work? Why or why not?
- What has the silencing or exclusion of another person or group looked like in the environments that you frequent? What have you done, or what could you have done to remedy it?
- Reflect on how you have engaged with literature, presentations and other forms of knowledge led by Queer, Trans, Indigenous, Black, Asian, and other POC in your academic, personal, or professional lives.
- What has been your role in disrupting and mobilizing against racism and oppression interpersonally or in the environments that you frequent?

Guiding Questions

Before watching the video

Pre-Video Questions -Students

- What do you know about the global history of Africa?
- How has “black culture” been depicted through art historically?
- Do you know any black artists? (non-mainstream)



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- Which holistic practises/herbal medicines are you familiar with?
- Where did you gain that knowledge?
- What images/art pieces/sculptures do you see when you walk on the streets of your city? Who are they depicting? In what light?
- What do you know about the history of your land? (From treaties to native populations)

While watching the video

As you watch the video, take note of the following:

- What do you see in the art pieces Quentin momentarily shows us? How are they different from the mainstream depiction of black bodies?
- Identify recurring themes in the video
- What language/quotes does Quentin use within his video? What are the reasons, if any?

After watching the video

Post-video Questions

- What are the potential benefits of “Sancophonology”?
- Do you know anything about the ancient Congo? Ancient great Zimbabwe? Aksum? Abyssinia?
- Quentin talks about “barriers” that have not allowed black people to reach a certain level of education throughout history. Can you think of other “barriers” still in effect today?
- Identify aesthetic elements of the “Afrofuturism” genre
- How can Afrofuturism or “speculative fiction” be a part of your field of study?
- What does it mean to think of yourself as an ancestor?

Assignments / Writing topics

- Research Kimberlee Crenshaw, watch her lectures on “Intersectionality,” and present an in-depth description of the concept to the class.
- Write a critical paper about the “Cross-Analysis of Black Art.” Compare the representation of Blackness within an Afrofuturistic art piece with an art piece that conveys a stereotyped depiction of Black People (e.g., athletic, entertainment industry, criminality, etc.). Write about each art piece’s implications on conveying Black peoples and cultures to a public audience and to whom does it cater?
- Deliver a presentation about the specificities of “Black Canadian Art.”
- Familiarize yourself with an Afrofuturistic book, movie, or art exposition of your choice. Present it to the class with visual support.
- Read the “*Cosmic Underground Northside*” book and write an essay about the discrepancies of a nation that claims to be multicultural yet promotes the erasure and silencing of certain communities. Include what a Canadian Afrotopia might look like.



Taking Action

- Take an elective class in a subject pertaining to the video at your institution. i.e., Africa in Global History, African Popular Culture Africa in the Twentieth Century, The History of Africa Black Canadians, Black Theatre Studies, African Literature.
- Sit down in a public space of your choice. Analyze how different bodies occupy that space. What is happening? Is the architecture at play? Who claims it? What are they doing with their bodies? Report to class with visual support.
- Take a picture of a public space, then digitally photoshop Afrofuturistic elements onto it. Create a QR code for it and place the code back to where the photograph was taken. By scanning this code, people can re-imagine the space before them through your edited work.

Student Group Reflection

1. What is something new that your group learned or began to consider from watching the video?
 2. What type of educational videos on systemic racism would you like to see more of?
 3. How can you combat systems of oppression and exclusion in your individual lives?
 4. Why is having an anti-racist approach to your work/studies important?
 5. After today's exercise, write down two suggestions for your professor on making your class more inclusive.
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Thank you for implementing our resources and supporting anti-racism efforts in education. If you have any questions or feedback, please email us!



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