STATE OF THE ART

THE BLACK MODEL MINORITY

Slavery, Settlement, and the Genealogy of the Model Minority

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Abstract

This paper interrogates the fundamental anti-Blackness of model minority discourses and how they are embedded in structures of anti-Blackness and settler colonialism through a genealogical examination of the contradictory history of the "Black model minority" within the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute's Indian Program. This program educated both Black and Indigenous students throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and purposefully made racialized comparisons between groups. I read this history through present day scholarship on the model minority myth in relation to anti-Blackness and settler colonialism. I argue that the "Black model minority" at Hampton was predicated on upholding slavery through defining it as an educational project and that slavery and settler colonialism are intimately linked through pedagogy. This narrative of the Black model minority demonstrates that slavery and land dispossession were framed as pedagogic by industrial education institutions. Ultimately, this work questions the idea of "valuing education," which is present in model minority discourses across many contexts, and how it is complicated by this history.

Keywords: Model Minority, Anti-Blackness, Settler Colonialism, Education, Slavery

INTRODUCTION

The model minority myth is a narrative that has permeated discussions of education and race in the United States. While in the contemporary period the model minority myth most often brings to mind Asian American populations, the genealogy of model minority narratives is complex with different racialized groups being portrayed as model minorities depending on historical context and which racialized groups are compared.[1] Despite this variance, many scholars have noted the fundamental anti-Blackness of model minority discourse as a consistent feature of this educational mythology (Abad 2021; Kim 1999). I interrogate the fundamental anti-Blackness of model minority discourses though an examination of what might seem to be a contradictory history of the "Black model minority."[2] My analysis of the Black model minority is not meant to disprove the afterlife of slavery or demonstrate that

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anti-Blackness is somehow less oppressive. It is also not meant to negate the agency of Black people who have negotiated this history in a variety of ways.[3] Instead, I demonstrate the way that the model minority myth itself is predicated on justifying slavery as educational and therefore Black people had to at one time be framed as the model minority. When Black communities are discursively positioned as a model of civilization then they are portrayed as being indebted to slavery as a civilizing force, therefore framing slavery as a benevolent and less violent institution. In addition, I add to this analysis critiques from settler colonial studies in order to place model minority discourses at the intersection of anti-Blackness and settler colonial space making.

My analysis is historically situated in the case of the Hampton Institute, a school that was founded to educate Black students, particularly Black teachers after the Civil War. However, as many scholars have argued, the educational goals of Hampton were not aimed towards the academic goals of Black communities, and instead were grounded in an industrial education model meant to train former slaves in habits of work and industry. This form of education was attractive to the white Southern elite which wanted to maintain a subordinated workforce as well as to Northern philanthropists who operated under assimilatory forms of racist educational thought (Anderson 1988; Spivey 1978; Watkins 2001). Hampton makes an ideal case study of model minority discourse because it did not rest with fashioning a form of education only for those who had been formerly enslaved. Within ten years, Hampton would expand its educational focus beyond Black communities and enroll Native students in its Indian program.[4]

The first Indigenous students to arrive at Hampton were prisoners of war subjected to the educational experimentation of Richard Henry Pratt, the man who would later go on to found the Carlisle Indian Boarding School. The Hampton Indian program ran from 1878 to 1923, a timeframe which intersects with the imposition of Chinese exclusion and other nativist immigration legislation, and enrolled over 1388 Native students from over sixty-five different tribes. During this period Hampton engaged in comparative discussions of both the best ways to educate Black and Indigenous students, as well as the intellectual and civilizational capacities of these populations in comparison to each other (Lindsey 1995). I examine these comparisons in order to understand how Hampton situated Black students as a model minority in comparison to Indigenous students. The materials I analyze are drawn from archival research completed at the Hampton University Archives and the Williams College Samuel Chapman Armstrong Collection in addition to other digitally available primary sources. I read these historical examples alongside theorizations of model minority myths, an understanding of the afterlife of slavery in education, and settler colonial studies as a means to excavate and analyze the genealogy of the model minority myth.

By focusing on an instance where Black students were framed as the model minority, I argue that model minority discourse has always been embedded in a justification of slavery as an educational project and anti-Blackness beyond the use of Blackness as a foil for other groups portrayed as model minorities (Kim 1999; Wu 2015). I also examine how model minority discourse was used as a way to further the settler colonial goals of educating Indigenous people drawing from scholars in settler colonial studies who situate the model minority myth within the framework of probationary settlerhood. I argue that we can only make sense of the way that model minority discourse has been constructed in the present day by looking at how discourses of being a model minority have been embedded in pedagogical models of slavery that are deeply linked to processes of settler colonialism.

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THE MODEL MINORITY MYTH, SLAVERY, AND SETTLEMENT

Prior to discussing the case of Hampton, I examine current scholarly discussions of model minority myths, their relationship to anti-Blackness, and how settler colonial theorists have framed model minority myths through the structural location of the probationary settler. I begin by examining scholarship from Asian American studies as much of the scholarship about model minority discourse in education is centered around Asian Americans. In fact, the hegemonic common sense of the Asian American model minority myth has had detrimental effects for both Asian American communities and for policy programs aimed at rectifying racial inequality (Bascara 2006; Kim 1999). For example, conservatives arguing against affirmative action in the courts and in popular discourse have stated that it discriminates against Asian Americans in order to justify their investment in maintaining systems of white supremacy (Kim 2018). Scholars in Asian American studies have extensively critiqued this discourse and pointed out how it is coupled with an increased racialized vulnerability to violence for Asian American communities (Ang 2011; Day 2016). For example, scholars have traced the historical roots of the Asian American model minority myth focusing on the dual constructions of "yellow peril" discourses with the rhetoric of the hard-working model. While the model minority myth has generated a certain hegemonic legitimacy, it is still coupled with nativist and orientalist ideologies that portray Asian Americans as interminably foreign (Hsu 2015; Junn 2007; Osajima 2005; Saito 1997).

Scholars in Asian American studies have also been integral in connecting the Asian American model minority discourse to anti-Blackness. Frank Wu (2002), for example, suggest that, "To be called an "overachiever" begs the question: What, exactly, is it that individuals have achieved over…." He notes that this question has been framed in relationship to Blacks in the United States with the implicit subtext that "they [i.e. Asian Americans] made it, why can't you" (Wu 2002, pp. 40, 49, 59). Janine Kim (1999) also discusses this connection. Citing Ian Haney López, she notes how "'white' does not simply stand for members of the White [sic] race, but for a set of concepts and privileges associated with that race. Accordingly, 'black'[sic] is defined by the denial of those same privileges" (Kim 1999, p. 2385).[5] Similarly, Kim cites Ellen Wu noting that "racial groups are conceived of as white, black[sic], honorary whites, or constructive blacks[sic]" (1999, p. 2395).[6] Kim strongly notes that "[a]ny analysis of racial oppression in the United States, including that of Asian Americans, has as its starting point the enslavement and continued subjugation of African Americans" (1999, p. 2401). Wu, as quoted above, adds to this theorization, noting how liberal ideologies and notions of who can be an "assimilating other" "complicated, yet simultaneously reinforced, this central dichotomy" of the Black-white binary in the United States. She points out how this myth aided in crowding out radical Asian American political movements towards one of inclusion against Blackness (Wu 2015, p. 7).[7] These scholars firmly situate model minority discourses in relation to white supremacy and anti-Blackness, and I follow their lead in arguing that all model minority discourses are fundamentally anti-Black and based in slavery, even when the model minority was Black.

The depth of anti-Blackness in model minority discourse is exemplified in William Peterson's 1966 article in *The New York Times*, "Success Story Japanese American Style."[8] This article has been cited by many scholars as a piece of popular writing that was integral to bringing the discourse of the Asian American model minority into mainstream circulation right at a time when protests against racial inequality were heightened (Wu 2015). Peterson's piece poses the paradoxical problem: If Japanese Americans have faced oppression within the United States, then how have they continued to succeed in spite of this discrimination when other racialized groups have failed to do so, specifically

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indexing the discourse of pathology in Black communities. The article is one of many examples of how the model minority myth has been deployed, framing Asian American success in relation to Black failure. Peterson directly references ideas from both the Myrdal report and the later Moynihan report, which are often considered the geneses of many depictions of the Black family as dysfunctional due to being headed by single mothers and to the idea that Black families do not value education (Moynihan 1965; Myrdal 1944). Peterson's article makes a direct link between the rhetoric of Asian American exceptionalism and Black pathology spanning multiple decades. A more recent article in *The Washington Post* challenged the comparative utility of model minority discourses, yet also attributed Asian American success to a "long Confucian emphasis on education" (Kristoff 2015). American Studies scholar Janelle Wong, quoted in a National Public Radio article, discussed the assertions made by Kristoff noting that these types of arguments "[make] a flawed comparison between Asian Americans and other groups, particularly Black Americans, to argue that racism, including more than two centuries of black[sic] enslavement, can be overcome by hard work and strong family values" (Chow 2017). The focus on strong family values, particularly valuing education, is fundamental to the construction of model minority discourse. In fact, scholars of education and race have proposed that immigrant groups value education more than Black students, yet a great deal of scholarship in both Asian American and Black studies refutes these assumptions (Carter 2005; Lee 1994). I argue that we must interrogate "valuing education" as a desired cultural trait in the context of the model minority myth.

Scholars in settler colonial studies have taken another approach to understanding the discourse of the model minority through the concept of probationary settlers. Settler colonial theorists describe the settler-native-slave triad, where these positions do not represent identities but locations that exemplify "what power wants" (la paperson 2017). These triadic relations are seen as temporary in the creation of a unified settler state coalesced around whiteness with the idea that there will eventually be disappearance, inclusion, or exclusion of groups perceived as undesirable others like Black communities, Native peoples, and immigrants. As the settler state moves towards resolving this triangulation, not all "others" are treated in the same manner. Lorenzo Veracini (2010) uses the term exogenous others to describe these groups and notes that some of these groups can be relegated into the category of "probationary settlers" to be assimilated into the state. Inclusion in the settler state necessitates collaboration with it and thus the exclusion and domination of the Indigenous, thus inclusion is always a dominating action (p. 26). This is how model minorities such as Asian Americans are often discussed, for example by Hawaiian scholars that have written extensively about Asian Settler colonialism (Fujikane and Okamura, 2008; Saranillio 2013).[9] Yet, as Iyko Day (2016) and others note, the status of exogenous other also makes Asian Americans vulnerable to state violence, hence why some scholars prefer the term subordinate settler to probationary settler (Stone 2019; Tuck and Yang, 2012). Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2015) also notes the dual outcomes of model minority myths that both prop up settler mythologies and perpetrate violence against exogenous others. For example, she argues that Chinese Americans, who have faced exclusion within the settler state, historically dealt with containment, terrorism, removal, restriction, and exclusion but have also been situated as model minorities. The result is that:

> Within white settler society, the relative success of some Chinese and other Asian Americans have been assigned various roles: as a middleman minority that can act as a buffer between whites and blacks [sic], as a model minority to help hide the history of genocide/slavery, or as an exotic other to display the nation's tolerant multiculturalism (Glenn 2015, pp. 66-67).

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Glenn's analysis is poignant in that it connects migration to settler colonialism and anti-Blackness.

I return briefly to Peterson's article "Success Story Japanese American Style" that is discussed above, to demonstrate this convergence. After Peterson notes how the Japanese have faced racial prejudice similar to Black communities, he frames his argument about how they have succeeded in terms that directly reference both discourses of anti-Blackness and settler colonialism:

> But no degradation affected this people as might have been expected. Denied citizenship, the Japanese were exceptionally law-abiding alien residents…Denied ownership of land, they acquired control through one or another subterfuge and by intensive cultivation of their small plots, helped convert the California desert into a fabulous agricultural land (Peterson 1966).

Peterson indexes discourses of Black criminality through his discussion of Japanese Americans as law abiding, but at the same time references how Japanese Americans acquired land and converted California into productive agricultural space. The discussion of farming indexes settler narratives of converting "virgin land" into capital as well as participation in the settler colonial system of land ownership and property used for capitalist production, particularly through agriculture (Hixson 2013). In this way they are lauded as probationary settlers who are able to transform the land in a manner Indigenous people are seen as not able to do. In this discussion of Japanese American success, Peterson places their success on not being Black, not being criminal, and participating in manifest destiny. In fact, Peterson names both Black and Indigenous people (among other groups)[10] as antithetical to Japanese American success stating:

> This is not true (or, at best, less true) of such 'nonwhites' as Negroes, Indians, Mexicans, Chinese, and Filipinos. The reasons usually given for the differences is that color prejudice is so great in this country that the person who carries this visible stigma has little or no possibility of rising. There is obviously a good deal of truth to the theory, and the Japanese case is of general interest precisely because it constitutes the outstanding exception (Peterson 1966).

This moment in the discourse of the model minority places Japanese Americans as an exception to anti-Black racism (not Black), as having the ability to be settlers (not savages), as well as in relation to other discourses of anti-immigration and orientalist origin. This discussion of the model minority myth allows us to see the intersection between anti-Blackness and settler colonialism within its framing of different racial and ethnic groups as a model. I now to turn to an examination of the Hampton Institute's Indian program and how Black students were framed as model minorities for Indigenous students in order to further historicize the anti-Blackness of the model minority myth and its origin in settler colonial power relations.

THE BLACK MODEL MINORITY AT THE HAMPTON INSTITUTE

The Hampton Institute demonstrates through its discourse, teaching, and organization how the Black model minority was foundational to Southern racial education. My argument is that Hampton framed Black students as the model for Indigenous people for dual purposes. First, to justify slavery as a benevolent and educational institution and minimize white guilt for slavery. Second, as a means of imposing setter colonial land

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relations on Indigenous people through an assimilationist education which also had material effects on Indigenous lands. In this analysis, I draw on the work of Manu Karuka (2019), who examines what he calls a "moral economy of indebtedness for free people" which positions formerly enslaved Blacks as indebted to white civilization (p. 69). The rhetoric of Hampton educators that framed Blacks as a model minority also reframed slavery as indebtedness to white civilization as well as something that had educational value.[11] The embeddedness of the idea of slavery as educational is key to questioning why "valuing education" is so entrenched in the model minority myth. Additionally, it calls into question how "valuing education" in this context contributes to the production of settler colonial space.

Hampton educators, staff, and administrators were very explicit in the way they positioned Black students as models for Native students. For example, Richard Henry Pratt, who is discussed in the introduction to this text as a key figure at the beginning of Hampton's Indian program and in founding federal Indian boarding schools, stated:

> The Negro, I argued, is from as a low a state of savagery as the Indian, and in 200 years association with Anglo-Saxons he has lost his languages and gained theirs; has laid aside the characteristics of his former savage life, and, to a great extent, adopted those of the most advanced highest civilized nation in the world, and has thus become fitted as fellow citizens among them (Lindsey 1995, p. 23).

In this comparison, he makes a direct claim of indebtedness that Blacks should feel towards white civilization and this indebtedness claim is inherently tied to a view that slavery had an educational function. The reframing of slavery as educational is a primary way that industrial education programs justified their educational approach and evidence of how they function through anti-Blackness despite claiming to serve Black communities.[12] This strategy is particularly insidious because education, something that had been denied to enslaved people and that they valued, was reframed to make the labor done in bondage stand in for the education that was denied. This anti-Black form of "valuing education" is about a justification of slavery and a means to enforce slavery's afterlife on Black communities post emancipation. In this mode of "education" the goal was for Black people to be grateful to white civilization, to feel a sense of indebtedness to it, and to believe that "valuing education" also meant justifying the conditions of dehumanization as pedagogical.

Similarly, the founder of the Hampton Institute, Samuel Chapman Armstrong, discussed how Black students at Hampton were benefactors for Indigenous people and models of civilization: "The Negro has shown the same generous spirit toward the Indian as he has toward all other races. I think the true test of civilization of any race, is shown by the desire of that race to assist those whose position is more unfortunate than theirs" (Hampton Institute 1880, p. 103). This quote sets up a "moral economy of indebtedness" to civilization that is compounding. Implied in this idea is that the white race was noble and civilized for educating the Black race (through slavery framed educationally) and therefore Blacks serving as a model for Indigenous students would compound upon Black indebtedness to white civilization, multiplying the effect of civilizational debt.[13] Armstrong qualifies this statement further by noting:

> I do not mean to say that the negro is thoroughly civilized, but do mean to say that it reflects much credit on his civilization while he himself is yet struggling for a place among civilized races, reaching out his hand to assist a less fortunate race. It shows that though he himself be oppressed, he has become enough enlightened to rise

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> above mere race prejudices in doing his duty towards other men (Armstrong 1988, p. 2).[14]

Armstrong is careful to limit the ways in which Black students serve as a model. They are more advanced than Indigenous students, yet the civilizational state of Black students becomes an ambivalent construct. Their model status both demonstrates the state of their civilization in relation to Indigenous people who have not embraced assimilation, yet he is careful to not equate Black model status as equality with white settlers. This pattern of setting up a model minority with limitations is also important in the genealogy of model minority myths.

Armstrong continued to be explicit about how Black students served as models for Indigenous students throughout his various writings and correspondence. In a letter to the Indian Commissioners, he states "The Indians of a necessity must be taught the habits of industry…It is here the Negro can help the Indian. He has learned to work and when sent to the field or the shop expects to do it, giving the Indian an example."[15] He frames the roots of the Black ability to be a model in taking oppressive circumstances, which consist of past enslavement despite being unmentioned explicitly, and turning it towards the good of others allowing for the afterlife of slavery to inhabit post emancipation education. This would imply that slavery as pedagogy may also have been positioned as beneficial for other groups, allowing slavery to have a multiplicative educational effect (Marquez 2019). In fact, the multiplicative effect of slavery as education is directly tied to how plantation slavery worked in tandem with the settler colonial takeover of Indigenous land. The plantation that "educated" Black people in how to work transformed stolen Indigenous land into a productive and profit driven space for white settlers, because the plantation is also the settlement (King 2013).

Slavery as an educative project has been discussed by a number of other scholars in the history of education. Donald Warren (2005), in his discussion of Ulrich Bonnell Phillips' (1929) *Life and Labor in the Old South*, describes the many spatial iterations of slavery as educative:

> At its center stood the plantation, a multipurpose institution. It was "a school", with intentional training and socialization programs for slaves, although Phillips viewed the "civilizing of the Negroes" as actually "a fruit of plantation life itself." That was because the plantation also functioned as the workplace of a "conscript army", a "homestead" shaped by the customary human forces through which "a common tradition was evolved embodying reciprocal patterns of conventional conduct", and "a factory" organized to realize profits. It was "a parish" established to Christianize slaves, "a pageant and variety show", with slaves as both audience and entertainers, and "a matrimonial bureau" to promote domesticity, or as one of Phillips' sources put it, a "magnificent negro boarding-house" (Warren 2005, p. 44).

In this discussion, the plantation is the settlement and also the school. The educative nature of the plantation, and its dual location as the settlement, means that settlement was also framed as educative in the schooling of Indigenous people. The transformation of land through Black labor on the plantation produces a myriad of effects: eliminating Indigenous presence on that land, creating settler space, and creating settler profit for the white settler/master (King 2013). The plantation complex (Curtin 1998) is tied up in settlement, which has been theorized so aptly by King, yet it is also an educational complex. In fact, slavery as an educational project has always been integral to missionary ideals of work and civilization that were important in conceptualizing industrial

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education as a paradigm from its inception in locations like Hawaii and into its formation in the Black South (Engs 1999; Lindsey 1995). The need to teach Black and Indigenous people how to work, and making this a key educational goal for industrial schooling, was framed within the afterlife of slavery and the conversion of Indigenous land to property. It would seem no coincidence then that the evolution of the plantation complex after large scale emancipation in the western hemisphere included the use of contract labor from Asia, and that Asian Americans became inextricably connected to the concept of the model minority (Lowe 2015).

Armstrong (1880) echoes this description of slavery and the plantation itself as a school when he states that:

> Slavery brought colored men into close contact with his white brother, training him in habits of work, giving him knowledge of the white man's language and religion. Never, I believe, in the history of civilization, has a great mass of barbarous people advanced so rapidly as have the Blacks on this continent in the last three hundred years…. The negro was taught to work, to be an agriculturalist, a mechanic, a material producer of something useful. We can hardly claim such results from our reservation system (p. 114).[16]

The argument that slavery/education made Black people "producers of something useful" is tied to the settler ideologies of the Doctrine of Discovery, which relied on the differences between the use of land and traversing over land to justify U.S. sovereignty over Indigenous space (Barker 2005). Making use of the land is what undergirds the legal argument for converting Indigenous land into property and, as shown here, the plantation system, Black labor, and industrial schooling are integral to the continuation of those property relations.

The uniqueness of slavery/education is pointed out in each of these excerpts, noting how slavery has simultaneous functions and the ways that those functions were exceptional in scope and size. The description of slavery functioning as a school positions it as something that can be justified as well as a way of lessening its horror. Additionally, by positioning it as a school, the extension of logics of slavery to other groups become less problematic. The use of Asian contract labor on plantations, or of plantation logics in industrial education within Indian boarding schools, is based on a conception of the plantation and slavery that frames it as benevolent and aspirational.

Hampton staff also made Black students participate in the framing of the "Black model minority."[17] The manner in which the concept of "emancipation" was discussed at Hampton shifted its meaning to place it firmly in a settler colonial frame. Indian Emancipation Day was celebrated at Hampton and was modeled after Emancipation Day, celebrating the Emancipation Proclamation, yet Indian Emancipation Day celebrated the passage of the Dawes Act, an act that stripped Native peoples of their lands (many guaranteed to them by treaty rights) and allotted sections of land to individual families. During the celebrations of Indian Emancipation Day, Black students of the school were utilized by white educators to give speeches about the great gift of freedom and citizenship with the stated intent of "softening Indian resistance." The goal of this use of emancipation was coercively didactic rather than celebratory in that it was meant to serve as a lesson to Indigenous students on the benevolence of government intentions in the creation and implementation of the Dawes Act. Donal F. Lindsey (1995) discusses how this was portrayed as a "constructive engagement between minorities," where the celebration of Indian Emancipation Day each year served as an example of "the dialectical power of minority example." This "constructive engagement" created a discourse wherein Native peoples were in need of civilization in relation to not only

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whites, but also Blacks, and one that justified slavery as creating a civilized Black model by appropriating the concept of emancipation towards the enactment of industrial pedagogy (Lindsey 1995, p. 100). However, it also framed the loss of Indigenous land held in common and allotted into individual farms as an emancipating process. Framing allotment as emancipatory worked to make settler colonial land seizure and erasure of Indigenous peoples seem like a cause of social justice and equality. It once again, compounds their civilizational indebtedness while at the same time functioning through dispossession. Indigenous people are therefore made to feel grateful for their dispossession in the same way industrial education works to make Black students grateful for slavery.[18]

In this example, the Hampton Indian Program is shown to be a space where engagement between both groups was purposefully used in order to re-narrate the history of slavery as one that had educational purpose as well as to justify the political, legal, and material subordination of Black people. It also materially upheld Indigenous dispossession. Black and Indigenous students were differentially treated within the institution of Hampton based on these respective political-legal circumstances. For example, the Hampton program utilized a racial hierarchy across its student populations, which placed Black students as models for Native students because of their perceived advanced state of civilization and docility (Lindsey 1995).[19] This hierarchy discussed in the curriculum was mirrored in the physical organization of the school. Within the leadership and disciplinary structure of Hampton, Black students held positions of authority over Indigenous students. In a letter to Indian Commissioners, Armstrong describes why Indigenous students made lower wages than Black students. He cites that the government contributes money for Native students but also makes the argument that Native students "do not realize their physical inferiority to the negroes as workmen; not being under the same pressure, also, makes a difference in their work and earnings."[20] The argument here is twofold in that there is a physical comparison being made as well as a discussion of structural pressures as educational. Therefore, the physical structures of government intervention in Indigenous lives were used as a justification for racial differences in earnings. Lindsey (1995) notes the irony of this being called a "constructive engagement between minorities," and cites Hampton staff member Susan M. Giles, who stated that this engagement "brought mutual benefit, the traits of one race supplementing the other" (p. 100). The notion of mutual benefit allows for each "race" to be a model, yet also be deficient.

This narrative of the Black model minority at Hampton demonstrates how framing slavery and land dispossession as pedagogic was embedded into the very functioning of the school. It provides a background to understand why the valuing of education in model minority discourse has an effect to silence those who dissent. In its formation after emancipation, industrial education's goal was to silence dissent among Black and Indigenous communities. This historical instance of the model minority should make us even more cautious about attributing the idea of "valuing education" to racialized groups not only because it creates a false meritocratic narrative, but also because the education itself was often conceived around justifying enslavement and settlement as educative. I argue for a critical evaluation of the "what" that is being valued when it is stated that racialized groups "value" education.

THE MODEL MINORITY AND ITS CONVERSE

In showing these various deployments of Black people as a model minority in opposition to Indigenous people we see how the model minority works to entrench notions of white

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civilizational superiority, Black indebtedness and compounded Indigenous indebtedness to white civilization, Indigenous backwardness and savagery, and justifications for the taking of Indigenous land. However, the Black model minority as used at Hampton was often reversed as needed for a variety of purposes. As discussed above, there are many examples of the "model" discourse being shown to have limitations and descriptions that frame Black communities, or portions of them, as ultimately deficient. The converse of being the model minority is to be the pathological other that is undeserving, and this pathological other always exists in tandem with the model. The fact that the model minority discourse can be flipped at any time, and in fact has been, demonstrates the ambivalence of the model minority myth itself.

For example, Richard Henry Pratt (1964), when leaving Hampton, argued that Indigenous people should only be educated with whites and founded Carlisle Indian School in opposition to Hampton in rural Pennsylvania where whites could be set up as the educational model. It was seen as beneficial for Native students to have a model, yet anti-Blackness also continued to frame Black people as a flawed model. In a similar turn, in his letter to the board of Indian Commissioners, Armstrong discussed how "[t]he co-education of the negro and the Indian races has certainly proved most successful while the Indians have their separate quarters and tables in the dining-room."[21] The maintenance of segregation at Hampton belied the idea that Black students could be models for Natives in the same way that whites were. Interracial mixing was feared by Hampton educators and therefore they had separate living and eating spaces. This came from white anxieties about Black students corrupting "noble savages" with low morals as well as worries about interracial relationships. In the same letter Armstrong also noted that the co-education and sharing of space by Black and Native students had educational benefits. He states, "the Negros have certain advantages, especially in their knowledge of English, they are not so far in advance as to cause the Indians discouragement."[22] This quote exemplifies the ambivalence of the model minority myth. The model status of Black students is contingent and predicated on their incomplete civilization as shown by the idea that they "are not so far in advance." Armstrong also found other ways to set Indigenous students apart from Black students claiming that Native peoples "have a deeper religious nature, I think, than the Blacks; less demonstrative, but more thoughtful. The Indian catches a clearer glimpse of god than other savages."[23] In this discussion, Armstrong undercuts Black religiosity, which is one of the main arguments used in Black respectability politics (Glaude 2000; Higginbotham 1993), and upholds ideas of "noble savagery," including that Blacks themselves are savage despite their position as model minority at Hampton.

The Black model minority narrative is mediated by the idea that some Black people can advance towards progress while others become more "savage" in the transition from slavery to freedom. Being the model minority is always coupled with its converse, being the other which the model is defined against. Model minority narratives both justify slavery as bringing progress as well as making Black people into "savages" who are not deserving. Hollis Burke Frissell (n.d.), the second president of the Hampton Institute from 1893 to 1918, discussed this explicitly:

> The reservation has held the Indian as slavery did the negro upon a dead level. Freedom and citizenship will make divisions among them. Civilization means classification. Some will move forward, others will little more than hold their own, while still others must be expected to drop back further toward barbarism. Among the negroes it is estimated that the passage from slavery to freedom has

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resulted in giving about one third of the whole negro problem to each of these classes (p. 4).

The aspect of the model minority that is most on display here is that it is both contingent and incomplete. Black people are always at risk of "division among them." Therefore, their place as model can be undermined by the structures of slavery's afterlife. With the model minority always containing division (as it does for Asian Americans) it allows for a shift in which a group is considered a model with changing historical context. The model minority myth's ambivalence, foundational anti-Blackness, and entrenchment in settler colonial property relations are constitutive of its functioning.

THE BLACK MODEL MINORITY AND THE ASIAN AMERICAN MODEL MINORITY

In this final section I examine how the Black model minority at Hampton dovetailed with discussions of the Asian American model minority. During the same time period of the Indian Program, Hampton also had a very small number of Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino students who attended and the school newspaper, *The Southern Workman*, featured articles about Chinese migration, missionary work for Chinese populations in both China and the United States, descriptions of Chinatowns in New York and San Francisco, and various discussions of Asian and Asian American culture. In examining the way Chinese and Japanese Americans were compared to Black and Indigenous people through Hampton's comparative educational discourse, I noticed many of the same patterns discussed above in relation to the Black model minority, anti-Blackness, and the use of model minority discourse in creating settler colonial space.

As scholars in Asian American studies have noted, anti-Blackness is a key component of framing Asian Americans as models. This was evident in Hampton publications that described Chinatown in New York as much safer due to its resident population, stating that crime rarely occurred there in contrast to the unnamed group that U.S. racial common sense defines as being more criminal: Black communities. In a discussion of Japanese laborers in Hawaii, W.N. Armstrong (1894) writes for *The Southern Workman*: "If the colored people of the South had the industrious habits of these asiatics [sic] the white man would relinquish the land to them. The Japanese have not been cursed with too much land as the people of the South have been."

Asian Americans are discussed often in Hampton publications and framed as better workers, more productive, and less criminal than Black and Native populations; however, this is also still coupled with discussions of Chinese American gangs, leprosy, and prostitution. This is consistent with literature in Asian American studies that focuses on the anti-Blackness of Asian American model minority discourses. However, I would add that because this is happening at the same time that Black students are being discussed as a model for Indigenous students, there is an implied idea that Asian Americans were capable of work that Black communities were not and therefore did not necessitate enslavement to learn to work. It firmly situates slavery as necessary for Black advancement when it is not necessary for other groups if they already labor appropriately.

Another key aspect of how Chinese and Japanese Americans were portrayed by Hampton was as probationary settlers who were able to transform the land in a manner Indigenous people were seen as not able to do and a group that was better situated to do so than Black farmers. In the same 1894 issue of *The Southern Workman* discussed above, it states that Indians do not utilize farm land well and juxtaposes this with Chinese

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workers who tend gardens and who, it states, make better use of the land (Armstrong 1894). In the 1903 edition of *The Southern Workman* this idea is repeated in discussing the 1900 census which, the articles states, shows that Black farmers spend less money per acre but get a higher return than Indians or Native Hawaiians (Hampton Institute 1903). This dovetails with Black model minority discourse and the idea that slavery trained Black people to farm efficiently, whereas Indigenous people lacked this training in work. Yet the article continues by stating that Blacks get a "higher return than all but the Chinese and Japanese." This demonstrates both the ambivalence of model minority discourse which can shift depending on the frame of reference, but also the way it privileges settler discourses such as the productive use of land. Anti-Blackness becomes mediated by participation in settlement which is forced on Black bodies through slavery. Therefore, slavery once again is validated and its afterlife is linked to settler progress.

Hampton framed the need to teach Black and Indigenous people how to work as a key educational goal for industrial schooling. This goal was structured within the afterlife of slavery and the conversion of Indigenous land into property. Discourses abut Black and Native peoples were opposed to the racialization of Asian Americans who were constructed through model minority discourse as able to work better, although still indebted to western civilization. An important aspect of the model minority is that while at specific historical moments there may seem to be clear hierarchies of models, these hierarchies are generally ambivalent as they have to maintain both the model and its converse. It also maintains foundational anti-Blackness, even when showing Blacks as models or at least making an argument in favor of Black uplift. These excerpts particularly demonstrate the way the Asian American model minority discourse was framed as beneficial to settlement as opposed to Indigenous people who did not properly utilize land.

CONCLUSION

I began this article with a discussion of scholarship on the model minority myth and outlined the ways that the model minority myth plays out at the crossroads of anti-Blackness and settler colonialism. In order to better demonstrate this connection, I have examined a historical moment when the model minority was Black. I examine the Black model minority in industrial education programs to demonstrate that this form of schooling framed slavery as pedagogical. The moral economy of indebtedness (Karuka 2019) embedded within slavery/education is compounded upon Indigenous people when Black students become the model minority for them. In this genealogy slavery/education is both anti-Black and an integral part of settler colonialism.

This genealogy calls into question the very idea of what "valuing education" may mean within the context of model minority discourses. By understanding how slavery itself was framed as educational as part of the framing of the "Black model minority" it has implications for the ways that model minority discourses, when applied to other groups, continue to be fundamentally anti-Black. For example, Asian American model minority discourses set this population up as a foil to Black communities which, it is claimed, do not adequately value education. Yet, the value it is derived from is tied to slavery and labor being educational. The compounded moral economy of indebtedness is part of the genealogy of present-day model minority myths. By implying that Black communities do not adequality value education in the present day, there is the implication that they do not value slavery as pedagogical.

Education in the U.S. settler state has always been structured as a way to make productive citizens. Understanding how education has been a tool to make productivity

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for the settler state and erase Native peoples reframes the notion of what kind of citizen is being made. I make a call to continue to be critical of discourses that ascribe "valuing education" as part of racialized education discourses. This genealogy contends that racial education functions as the plantation and the settlement. We must read present-day model minority discourses in relation to this history.

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NOTES

1. For example, see discussions of the Cuban model minority (Perez 2002), Black women as a model minority (Kaba 2008), and the history of the South Asian model minority from 1923 to 9/11 (Puar and Rai, 2004). Additionally, as Falungi A. Sheth (2014) has noted, geopolitical circumstances form the backdrop of racial relations such as the dynamics of model minority discourse.
2. I use the term Black and capitalize it, following Michael J. Dumas (2016), as it "is understood as a self-determined name of a racialized social group that shares a specific set of histories, cultural processes, and imagined and performed kinships. Black is a synonym (however imperfect) of African American and replaces previous terms like Negro and Colored…" (p. 12). Further I purposefully do not capitalize white following Dumas (2016): "White is not capitalized in my work because it is nothing but a social construct and does not describe a group with a sense of common experiences or kinship outside of acts of colonization and terror" (p. 13).
3. My use of this term comes from Saidiya Hartman (2007) and I draw on her work to think about how the afterlife of slavery is used pedagogically in education.
4. I purposefully capitalize the term Native to indicate the political weight of the term as used in struggles for Indigenous sovereignty following Ruth Panelli (2008). As Haunani-Kay Trask (1996) notes, it is an imposed term that has roots in colonial power relations yet the capitalization, like the capitalization of Black, denotes it's weight as a political term and as a way to "to emphasize the political distance between that which is Western and that which is Native. I also capitalize Native to highlight the word and therefore its referent" (p. 906). I also use the terms Native and Indigenous interchangeably throughout the text, purposefully utilizing neither Native American or American Indian because of their connection to settler state sovereignty. I use the term Indian when referring to its historical usage at the Hampton Institute.
5. Kim's (1999) discussion cites Haney López: "Hence, to recognize the 'constructedness' of race is also to understand that 'Black' and 'white' may signify more than our immediate understanding of specific racial categories" (p. 40).
6. Other work has made similar claims such as the argument of the negroization of the Chinese (Caldwell 1971) and Gary Y. Okihiro's (2014) contention that "Model minority myths place Asians closer to white on a theoretical scale of oppression…Yellow is a shade of black[sic] and black[sic] a shade of yellow" (p. 34).
7. Wu (2015) also notes that "The rearticulation of Asian American from Ineradicable aliens to assimilating Others by outside interests bolstered the framing of U.S. hegemony abroad as benevolent—an enterprise that mirrored the move towards racial integration at home" (p. 5). This effort to justify U.S. claims to superior racial democracy through racialization also ties into the justification of the settler colonial state which has the right to define who is included

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and excluded in the state regardless of its relationship to the original inhabitants of the land. I place this inclusion and exclusion dynamic in relation to settler colonialism and anti-Blackness, because inclusion through participation is part of those structures of power. As an alternative to this Fred Lee (2016) suggests disidentification as well as a decolonial politic decoupled from statism as an Asian American political response.

8. This logic is echoed in an eerily similar article in *U.S. News & World Report* (1966) titled "Success Story of One Minority Group in the U.S." which focused on Chinese Americans rather than Japanese Americans, published in the same year (1966).
9. Scholars have critiqued the origin of settler colonial studies among white European and Australian scholars and how it is a white perspective on this form of colonialism (Konishi 2019). Additionally, Tiffany King (2019) notes that the term settler is less harsh than the actions taken by settlers, preferring to use terms like conqueror, murderer, etc.
10. While Peterson names other groups—Mexicans, Chinese, and Filipinos—these comparisons have been theorized rigorously by scholars who note the way the Asian American community is not homogenous in its portrayal as model minority and in discussions of Asian American racialization in comparison with Latinx Racialization (Glenn 2015).
11. There is an inherent connection between something that has educational value and the functioning of capitalism. This connection has been noted by numerous scholars in education such as Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976).
12. Scholars have noted how white philanthropic money funded these programs as a means to create a docile Black working class in the New South (Anderson 1988; Spivey 1978).
13. I theorize this framing of moral indebtedness in relation to compound interest. When interest is compounded the debt becomes harder to work out of for the debtor, but it also increases profits for the extender of credit. The compounded moral economy of debt serves a settler economy of civilization and mirrors capitalist organizations of credit and debt.
14. Letter from Samuel Chapman Armstrong to General E. Whittlesey and A. K. Smiley of the Board of Indian Commissioners, March 15, 1888, Samuel Chapman Armstrong Correspondence, Hampton University Archives.
15. Letter from Samuel Chapman Armstrong to General E. Whittlesey and A. K. Smiley from a Section of the report dated December 4, 1887.
16. Letter from Samuel Chapman Armstrong to General E. Whittlesey and A. K. Smiley.
17. This is also true in reading Black scholars both prior to and after Hampton's founding. Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington both wrote about the superiority of the Black race in relation to Native people (Douglass 1851 as cited in Lopenzina 2010; Washington and Du Bois, 1907).
18. It is necessary to note that this practice did not always work. Black response to these forms of pedagogy was varied and no pedagogy is able to produce a total ideological agreement.
19. The idea that Black students were docile and ideal models for "war like Indians" shows the context specific nature of model minority constructions. In later instantiations of this narrative Black people become the criminal group, for whom Japanese Americans are discussed against in Peterson's 1966 article.
20. Letter from Samuel Chapman Armstrong to General E. Whittlesey and A. K. Smiley.
21. Letter from Samuel Chapman Armstrong to General E. Whittlesey and A. K. Smiley, p. 2.
22. Letter from Samuel Chapman Armstrong to General E. Whittlesey and A. K. Smiley, p. 2.
23. Letter from Samuel Chapman Armstrong to General E. Whittlesey and A. K. Smiley, p. 15.

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