
Beth Fowler, Irvin D. Reid Honors College, Senior Lecturer

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This paper considers how crossover and cover songs on the Billboard charts between 1953 and 1958 reflected and reinforced adolescent views on racism and desegregation campaigns during the U.S. civil rights movement. Although many studies have approached the relationship between rock and roll music and civil rights during this time period, I use archival materials, recent accounts of race in the 21st century, and Google Fusion Tables created with Billboard chart listings to show how post-civil rights concepts of diversity without justice and white innocence were formed as the mainstream music industry expanded to assimilate African-American music into established corporate structures.

Beth Fowler is a Senior Lecturer in the Irvin D. Reid Honors College, where she teaches classes in Urban Studies and American Government. She received her Ph.D. from the Wayne State University Department of History, where she researched connections between rock and roll music and teenage responses to integration movements during the 1950s and 1960s. She is currently working on a book project based on her dissertation.

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