The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Something Called the Truth: The Role of Controlling Counternarratives in the Formation of K-12 Thought Content

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ABSTRACT

Abstract -African American history is an integral part of the history of the United States, inclusive of the good, the bad, and the ugly. Those parts of it that are emotionally provoking must not be omitted, minimized, sanitized, or ignored. The petits réctis, the micro-narratives of color are legitimate realities that must be considered in the quest of any iteration of truth.

The political use of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in an attempt to banned race-related books or to promote view-point discrimination violates the democratic spirit, a spirit that supports an exchange of ideas, in a robust ideological marketplace. The allegation that race-based civic discourse, is "divisive" seems to be an escape tactic. It seems to be an attempt to avoid the "angst" or guilt that is evoked when truth is spoken to power. This paper contends that the citizenry, including middle and high school students, are capable enough to develop skin thick enough to engage in a hegemonic discourse regarding race-related issues. The paper further contends 1) students, particularly those in middle-school and high school, should have access to the marketplace of ideas, as age appropriate, despite the possibility of provoking "angst" or "guilt" and 2) they should be allowed to engage in freedom of thought and speech without fear of retaliation.

INTRODUCTION

President Trump came to office as the 45th President in January of 2017. The 2020 census occurred under his administration. By the time he returned to office as the 47th president, in 2025, the Census Bureau had released its findings of undercounting African Americans, Indigenous communities, Hispanics, and other minorities. The Census Bureau also noted the overcounting of Euro-Whites, [1]. Despite census data manipulation, the United States was more colorful, than White. The President was under pressure to "Make America 'White' Again."

The 45th and 47th President, Donald Trump has made it clear throughout his campaigns and through executive orders during two administrations, that he is in support of selective book banning, and the removal of Critical Race Theory from K-12 schools. In 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order 14190, Ending Racial Indoctrination in K-12 Schools. [2] The purpose of the policy was to instill a patriotic admiration for the country and remove race-based materials deemed "anti-American" as well as minimize notions of "White Privilege." It was time to launch a political ethnic cleansing agenda, one clearly announced in Project 25. [3]

By the end of 2025, over 20 states had banned Critical Race Theory outright or on the grounds of "divisiveness,) states such as Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia (Executive Order 13950, 2020).

Opposition to Critical Race Theory and race-based book banning was not a Trump administration initiative alone. A number of organizations worked in concert with his administration to accomplished the same end. Moms for Liberty, No Left Turn in Education, Mass Resistance, Council for National Policy, The Heritage Foundation, and the Family Research Council joined the Trump team. President Trump and his constituent organizations shared the same values when it came to law and notions of morality. He supported them and they supported him, using "Critical Race Theory" as an umbrella term to signify anything pertaining to a "Black" or "Brown" ethnicity.

In 2025, the President was sued by the ACLU for banning books, including Black Lives Matter: Protesting Racism [4], An African American and Latinx history of the United States[5], Anti-racism: Powerful voices, inspiring ideas. [6], The Black

friend: On being a better white person [7], Black Skin, White Mask, [8], Dismantling global white privilege: Equity for a post-Western world, [9], Me and white supremacy: Combat racism, change the world, and become a good ancestor, [10], Racial profiling: Everyday inequality (Behnke, 2017), So you want to talk about race, [12], The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness (Alexander, [13], and White rage: The unspoken truth of our racial divide [14], (E.K. v. Department of Defense Education Activity, 2025)[15].

The President's ideological ethnic cleansing agenda was supported by United States Supreme Court decisions. On June 29, 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College and Students for Fair Admissions, Inc.(SFFA) v. University of North Carolina that the universities' race-conscious admissions programs violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. [16]. The affirmative action doctrine to ensure equity justice for people of color was eroding quickly.

In January of 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order 14173. The order banned what he saw was race-based preferences granted to people of color, through organizations and institutions that received federal funds.[17] These institutions and organization sponsored initiatives that would promote "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" (DEI). Over 20 southern and midwestern states followed his lead. States such as Alabama [18]; Arkansas [19]; Florida [20]; Idaho [21]; Indiana [22]; Iowa [23], Kansas [24]; Kentucky [25]; Mississippi[26]; New Hampshire [27]; North Carolina [28]; North Dakota, [29]; Ohio [30]; Oklahoma [31]; Tennessee [32]; Texas [33]; Utah [34]; West Virginia [35]; and Wyoming [35]. In February of 2025, The United States Department of Justice, Office of Civil Rights released the "Dear Colleague" letter. It served as a "gentle threat" that race conscious decisions, however equitable, could lead to a loss of federal funds. (U.S. Department of Education, 2025) Eight months later, in September of 2025, the United States Supreme Court upheld the right of federal Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) agent to systematically stop and question, even United States citizens, based upon race and language [37] .

It is ironic that the "suspect" classification of race, used historically to protect the rights of African American, but currently deemed unconstitutional, allows for the Latinx community to be detained for question because they have the physical characters of a "suspect" class, namely "they look Latino," they speak Spanish, or speak English with a Hispanic accent, even if they are at a carwash or a construction site.

To make race relations worse, in 2026, the United States Supreme Court in Louisiana v. Callais (2026), "gutted" voting protections that were well established in the Voting Rights Act of 1964, including protection against racial gerrymandering. The Court held that a state may not predominantly use race to create majority-minority districts unless the Voting Rights Act clearly requires it. Louisiana's map slid under the radar of that standard [38].

States such as Maryland, Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, and Colorado have already begun to disenfranchise people of color. They can legally weaken the strength of the African American vote by gerrymandering by "partisan" lines rather than "racial" lines. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 protected against racial discrimination, not partisan discrimination [39].

The crux of the matter seems to lie in the avoidance of a collective guilt and historical shame that digitized historical data has evoked. There is also concern about how students might feel about actions committed in the past by members of their race. Curriculum should not evoke feelings of discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of his or her race or sex. Considerations for age-appropriateness, notwithstanding, essential to an "adequate" education and informed democracy is a robust marketplace of ideas, unhindered by Christian nationalist church-state alliances with agendas to control epistemologies and secure socio-political power.

In this article, the crux of the matter is whether K-12 schools, age-appropriateness notwithstanding, will "ignore" the ugliness of its White supremacist history, or minimize the gravity of it by relying on an "avoidance-of-guilt- and-shame standard" in the name of "divisiveness." Instead, what is at issue is whether K-12 school would facilitate "skin-thickening" pedagogies so that "wholistic-truth" civic discourse can occur, even at the middle and high school levels. I intend to discuss the origin of modern Critical Race Theory, in contradistinction from earlier White-based critiques about race, and early Black responses, so as to point out that as long as the discourse about race is outside of the K-12 domain, it will likely be permitted. The article will also address the petits réctis, the micro-narratives, including those theological in nature, the viewpoints of which are likely to be suppressed, by parental efforts to "protect their own children" from, in Heidegger's term "angst," [40]. This angst is an existential emotional reaction to the truth, the whole truth, the ugly truth, the uncomfortable truth, the disequilibrating truth, and maybe the "collective-shame-and-guilt truth" as well as the "collective-anger and rage-truth"

Without the petits réctis voices, middle school and high school education is likely to be left with an "orthodox" version of the truth rather that a wholistic, synthesized iteration of it. The author contends that the heart of the modern Critical Race Theory controversy is less about race-related discussion in general, which has occurred for at least a century outside K-12 classrooms. The modus operandi of the controversy centers upon technological advances in library science that makes the creation of "micro-narratives" accessible to critical thought, thereby opening the possibilities of alternative conclusions about race-related realities in the hearts and minds of K-12 students. "Suppression" or "viewpoint discrimination" just because it produces race-based "angst" has readily been proven to be the disposition of tyrants, and dictators.

Finally, the author will suggest ideas for "thickening-the-skin," even for middle and high school students, so that civic discourses and debate of crucial conversations may occur in an emotionally healthy manner. Middle and high school students ("College" and "Lycée") in many parts of the world have not only developed skins thick enough to endure

confrontational conversations, but they also developed dispositions needed to take action, speak truth to power, and engage in demonstrations. It seems to this author that viewpoint discrimination regarding race-based subject matter is detrimental of wholistic education, antithetical to multi-cultural democracy, and may be on a slippery slope to a form of American neo-fascism. As an inquiry of research, the following question could be raised: What are the implications of laws and policies designed effect the suppression or removal of race-ethnic based materials from K-12 education on freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and viewpoint formation?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The suppression of speech and ideological viewpoints has long been examined in political philosophy, sociology, psychology, and democratic theory. Scholars suggest that restricting the expression of dissenting perspectives can undermine democratic participation, discourage intellectual inquiry, reinforce dominant ideologies, and contribute to social conformity. The literature generally exposes the suppression of viewpoints merely because they challenge prevailing political or institutional beliefs. The term used in suppressive law and policies is “divisiveness,” a catch-all term to meaning any viewpoint that might provoke "angst" or "guilt" for Whites.

Even though anti-colonial scholarship provides an important historical framework for understanding the potential consequences of suppressing ideological perspectives within educational institutions, it would be banned and classified as “divisive.” du portrait du colonisateur [41] described how colonial institutions perpetuated unequal relationships through the marginalization of Indigenous histories and cultural identities. For Memmi, colonialism creates and maintains a system of inequality that shapes the identities, opportunities, and behavior of both the colonizer and the colonized.

Franz Fanon, in The Wretched of the Earth [42] examined how colonial domination influenced cultural identity, political consciousness, and the capacity of colonized populations to challenge systems of power. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Decolonizing the Mind [43] argued that colonial education privileged European languages and literature while marginalizing African languages and cultural traditions. He described language as central to cultural identity and the transmission of collective memory. He also believed that the privileging of colonial languages and cultural narratives could alienate students from their historical and cultural identities.

Paulo Freire, in Pedagogy of the Oppressed [44] further argued that educational systems emphasizing passive acceptance of authoritative knowledge rather than dialogue and critical inquiry could reproduce existing power inequalities. Historical examples, including apartheid-era education in South Africa and the suppression of critical literacy initiatives in Brazil, demonstrate how political control over educational institutions can restrict access to knowledge and reinforce social hierarchies.

James Banks, in his Diversity, Group Identity, and Citizenship Education in a Global Age [45] emphasized the importance of multicultural education in preparing students to participate in diverse democratic societies. His scholarship provides a foundation for examining whether restrictions on discussions of racial and cultural differences narrow students' understanding of citizenship, pluralism, and social justice.

Collectively, this literature provides a framework for investigating whether contemporary restrictions on classroom discussions of race, discrimination, and competing ideological perspectives may influence K–12 students' critical consciousness, cultural identity, and democratic participation. It also raises the question as to whether “thin-skinness” of viewpoints to which one disagrees, or even appalls, merits exclusion from the marketplace of ideas in K-12 schools. What happens to the minds of middle school and high students who would be denied access to petits réctis, alternative voices, and critical viewpoints. They would likely be left with an “orthodox” version of the truth rather that a wholistic, synthesized iteration of it. We turn now to the methodology of the inquiry.

METHODOLOGY

The suppression of speech and ideological viewpoints has long been examined in political philosophy, sociology, psychology, and democratic theory. Scholars suggest that restricting the expression of dissenting perspectives can undermine democratic participation, discourage intellectual inquiry, reinforce dominant ideologies, and contribute to social conformity. The literature generally exposes the suppression of viewpoints merely because they challenge prevailing political or institutional beliefs. The term used in suppressive law and policies is “divisiveness,” a catch-all term to meaning any viewpoint that might provoke "angst" or "guilt" for Whites.

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DISCUSSION

The far distant and near distant history of the United States is replete with horrific racial injustices, not just of people of color of African Descent, but indigenous, and often forgotten, Native Americans. Recent history of this country has witnessed the exploitation of peoples of Latinx descent, particularly as they work in black labor markets. They oppress system of the black labor market then uses media coverage to symbolize U.S. attempts to keep the White dominate in the midst of data that suggest their numerical demise. Using tactics of ideological control to manage the minds, even using the Bible, has been a proven historical precedent. So it is not surprising to witness a form of ideological ethnic cleansing, one that apparently seeks to first minimize, then eliminate histories, heritages, cultures, identities, languages, and struggles of a people, under the guise of regulating "divisive" viewpoints.

What should be noted upfront, is the offensive nature of the use of the term "divisive."

It suggests that those who speak truth to power about issues of White Supremacy or racial oppression are culprits antithetical to social "harmony." The term, moreover, functions as a defensive mechanism against historical memories that triggers collective angst and guilt. Policies deemed "divisive," in function, could be better characterized as policies that are not "protective" of the feelings of guilt and shame of White folk.

According to the Executive Order 13950, the term "divisive" means: (a) ''Divisive concepts'' means the concepts that (1) one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex; (2) the United States is fundamentally racist or sexist; (3) an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously; (4) an individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of his or her race or sex; (5) members of one race or sex cannot and should not attempt to treat others without respect to race or sex; (6) an individual's moral character is necessarily determined by his or her race or sex; (7) an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex; (8) any individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of his or her race or sex; or (9) meritocracy or traits such as a hard work ethic are racist or sexist, or were created by a particular race to oppress another race. The term ''divisive concepts'' also includes any other form of race or sex stereotyping or any other form of race or sex scapegoating [48]

Item (8) specifically addresses feelings of "discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of his or race…" Without individualizing or pointing fingers at any specific persons, concepts such as "slavery," "White supremacy," "Jim Crow," "lynching," "Black Lives Matters,**"** **"**colonialism," "apartheid," "racism," "bigotry," "profiling," and "Africana" are not likely to protect the emotions of White people and therefore are likely to be considered divisive concepts. The question to be raised here is whether these concepts should be removed from middle and high school curricula, and what happens to constructions of truth when they are denied access, withing an academic context. This brings us to book banning.

In 2025, E.K. v. Department of Defense Education Activity, twelve K-12 students from military families challenged the removal of school library books and modifications to instructional materials addressing race, gender, and diversity. The plaintiffs argued that these restrictions, implemented following presidential executive orders, violated their First Amendment rights by limiting access to information and excluding particular ideological viewpoints. In October 2025, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia granted a preliminary injunction in part, finding that the students were likely to succeed on their constitutional claims. The court ordered the restoration of affected library books and curricular materials at the five schools attended by the plaintiffs. Here is a sample of books that were banned:

Black Lives Matter: Protesting Racism [50]; A History of Racism in America, [51]; An African American and Latinx History of the United States,[52); Anti-racism: Powerful Voices, Inspiring Ideas [53]; Black Friend: On Being and Better White Person, [54]; Dismantling Global White Privilege: Equity for a Post-Western World, [55]; Ogden, Charlie, Equity and Diversity, (2020); From Black Lives Matters to Black Liberation, [56]; I'am Still Here: Black Dignity in a World

Made for Whiteness, [57]; Invisible Man, Got the Whole World Watching: A Young Black Man's Education, [58]; Everyday Inequity, [59]; Say the Right Thing: how to Talk about Identity, Diversity, and Justice, [60]; Stand Up and Speak Out Against Racism,[61]; The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, [62]; The Other Talk: Reckoning with Our White Privilege, [63]; The Truth about White Lies, [64]; Things that Make White People Uncomfortable, [65]; Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?, [66] and Fanon, Frantz, Black Skin, White Mask, [67]

In 2021-2022 alone, over 1,648 titles were put on the banned book list. Sixty percent of them directly addressed issues of race and racism. In 2025-2026, over 7,000 books were on the banned books list, [68]. The marketplace of ideas in the above-mentioned list could prove to be life changing for a number of middle school and high school students. Without access to available thoughts and ideas, middle and high school students are likely to be left with something called the truth, which may, objectively, be a lie.

White-Based Critiques about Race

When White-Based critiques about race began, there were no executive orders. There was no need. Plessy v. Furguson was still in play and both "de jure" and "de facto" segregation were the realities. [69] Much of the White supremacy realities of people of color was based upon the scientific literature proffered at the time. In fact, some of the first critiques were rooted in the eugenics and racism of White Supremist such as Madison Grant [70], Margaret Sanger [71], Adolf Hitler [72], and John C. Calhoun [73].

Lewis Terman [74] and Henry H. Goddard [75] and Arthur Jensen [76] offered scientific psychological justification for racial inferiority. Finis Dake [77], Charles Parham, [78], and Bob Jones [79] asserted that the Negro was cursed of God through Ham, son of the Biblical Noah. These critiques on race concluded that people of African descent ranked just above animals and were intellectually inferior.

In 1904, a former Presbyterian missionary and slave owner, brought Mbye Otabenga, a Mbuti native, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, later referred to as Ota Benga, along with eight others to the St. Louis World's Fair. At the fair, over sixty countries and over 40 U.S. states participated in the multi-million-dollar event. Ota Benga was a part of the monkey-orangutan exhibit. Two years later, 1906, Benga was displayed in the primate section of the Bronx Zoo along with other monkeys and orangutans as evidence to support eugenic theories. [80] France, German, and Spain also had similar human zoos. Left without a petits réctis, a counternarrative, one could conclude that the sentiments characterized by beforementioned discussion could be rendered as form something called the truth about people of African descent. Fortunately, a counternarrative was provided, the kind of counternarrative that should be accessible to every middle and high school student. We turn briefly to counternarratives to early racial constructs.

Lack of Access and Limitations of Counternarratives

One of the first counter critiques on race emerged during the period of reconstruction, 1865 to 1877, concurrently with the second industrial revolution, 1870 to World War I. During the is era, people of color demonstrated Black intelligence working collaboratively with and independently amongst their White peers. During this era, Marie Curie discovered polonium and radium and began to forge new understanding regarding radio activity. Nikola Tesla pioneered new understandings of alternating current (AC). The use of electricity was becoming commonplace and the need for longer lasting lightbulbs was essential. Lewis Howard Latimer, an African American, invented a method of using carbon filaments for the incandescent lightbulb proved to make them last longer than precedent iterations [81]. Granville Tailer Woods, also known as the "Black Edison" invented "telegraphony, " a process which combined aspects of the telephone and telegraph so that messages could be sent and received from a distance. The system was eventually purchased by the Alexander Graham Bell Company [82].

George Washington Carver's methods of crop rotation became infamous [83]. Sarah Breedlove, also known as, Madam Charles Joseph "C. J." Walker, sold black hair care products to women and became the first self-made millionaire in the country [84]. Jan Ernst Matzeliger invented a groundbreaking device that revolutionized house the tops of shoes were joined to their soles, the process was called "shoe-lasting," [85]. Elijah "the real" Mcoy, invented a method of automatically lubricating steam engines (McCoy, 1872). Garett Augustus Morgan invented the Three-position, red-yellow-green traffic signal [86].

These displays of high intelligence produced a category of Black human "outliers" that contradicted presumptions of Black inferiority. These contributors to society were Black, but they were far from inferior. The inclusion of their contributions into the K-12 curriculum, therefore, is likely to meet state approval, in that these contributions are not likely to produce divisive emotional "angst," except for those for whom such achievements may suggest equality or Black superiority. There were some "talented tenth" voices during the reconstruction era that certainly would cause "angst" in Whites by directly challenging early White supremacists' notions and conclusions that concluded that Blacks were inferior, a notion which was presumed largely normative at the time, with some "talented tenth" exceptions.

Post-Reconstruction Voices:

From the 1880s to the late 1920s, historic voices spoke truth to those in control of White power structures and "deconstructive truth" to Black communities about themselves. Although these post-reconstruction voices, at times, clashed

in dissonance, they all sang from the same hymnal when it came to the role of education played in the upward mobility of the people of color.

Marcus Garvey, Africa was the ideal geographical location for the repatriation of descendants of the African Diaspora; and he would use his steamship company, the Black Star Line, to get them there. Back in Africa, Garvey envisioned a unified economically robust Africa, politically independent and self-governed. Whether in Africa, Jamaica, or the United States, Garvey concurred with the mantra of education's power to change society. He believed that education was one of the most important tools for the liberation of people of the African diaspora. Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association had an educational division that promoted the building of schools. Garvey also readily advocated self-education. In his 1937 speech in St. Kitts, West Indies, he encouraged Blacks to "read, read, read" in order to acquire the knowledge [87].

Self-education, classical education, vocational education, and spiritual education were deemed necessary for the upward mobility of the post-reconstruction, second-industrial revolutionary Negro. In Up From Slavery, Booker Taliaferro Washington, like James Edward Shepard, believed that education at all levels were necessary, including vocational training. 1881, Booker T. founded Tuskegee Institute in Alabama [88]. Nine years later, in 1910, James E. Shepard founded the National Religious Training School and Chautauqua (the latter term refers to a summer Sunday School training program.

In 1913, Shepard's interest in secular education grew after a pivotal visit to Scotland, London, Paris, Milan, Jaffa, Cairo, Syria, Athens, and other countries. The National Religious Training School later became North Carolina Central University. [89]

A contemporary and friend of James E. Shepard was William Edward (W.E.) Dubois. Born just seven years apart, both men believed in an educated negro populace [90]. Dubois believe in a classical education capable of produce "talented tenth" leadership would aid in the process. This too, believed Jame E. Shepard. Both men believed in an intellectual pool that could navigate the delicate terrains of working with Whites to produce a multi-racial democracy, while working together with everyday Black folks. Unlike Dubois and with views more like Booker T. Washington, Shepard also believed in a vocational strand of education. Both classical and vocational, Shepard contended, were needed in the post-reconstruction era.

The utilitarian view of education as related to the upward mobility of Black folk during the second industrial revolution was clearly articulated by Carter Godwin Woodson. Woodson contended that Euro-centric education excluded Black history and reinforced racial inequality. He believed that the Negro needed an educational system that promoted self-knowledge, critical thinking, independence, and community advancement [91]

The Black church was also essential for community advancement. Woodson viewed the Black church as a crucial institution for leadership, education, as well as cultural preservation. It was one of the few institutions that was Black owned and Black controlled [92]. The Black church, for Woodson, was not to attend just to the spiritual needs of the Negro community but also should be concerned about economic advancement.

In a similar ideological vein, Alain Locke, the father of the Harlem Renaissance, believed in a Negro Renaissance. As the first African American Rhoades scholar to Oxford, the cultural and artist self-expressions that were occurring in India, China, Egypt, Ireland, Russia, Bohemia, Palestine and Mexico, he contended that such artistic and intellectual expression could be found among the new American Negroes, from 1918 into the 1920s [93]

By the end of the Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Zora Neale Hurston and Countee Cullen used poetry to capture Negro realities. The literary works of Jean Toomer and Alain Locke became a common canon of self-pride Black thought. Fats Waller, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and lesser known but excellent musicians provided new Black expressions, for the sole cultural purpose of social entertainment, rather than an agenda focused on Black social reconstruction.

The Harlem Renaissance played a significant role in "the roaring" of the 1920s. Katherine Durham, and Bill Robinson were household names as dance performers. Chick Webb at the Savoy Ballroom and Cab Calloway at the Cotton Club. Jazz at the Cotton Club fostered and love of the genre for "White Only" audiences; Negro musicians were allowed, however, to carry out their performance duties. The Savoy integrated the races and allowed them to do the Charleston, the Black Bottom, the Lindy, and other forms on the same dance floor. There would be no "roaring 20s" without the music of Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, or Bix Beiderbecke, the music of all races was influenced by the Harlem Renaissance.

On the more classical side of things, Marian Anderson was the first African American to sing at the Metropolitan Opera House. Paul Robeson sang opera as well as and sang classical art songs in German and French. Oratorios, African American spiritual, and other folk songs from difference countries. Roland Hayes, likewise, sang the latter.

From the 1880s into the late "roaring" 1920s, historic voices exposed ills of White supremacy on one hand, while engaging "deconstructive truth" to members of the Black communities. The deconstructed-inferior-self was replaced by an elevated view of the new Negro; one that was intelligent, culturally expressive, educated, fashionable, moral, resilient, and persistent. During this period, although these post-reconstruction voices, did not always agree, they were on the same page when it came to the promotion and preservation of the dignity of people of color. Some post-reconstructive voices would go a step further and advocate for the erection educational institution, strengthening of the Black church, and the pursuit of economic opportunity, in "White-Black-Only" conditions or back in Africa.

It should also be noted, that concurrent with the "roaring 20s," of the United States, the Pan-African Anti-Colonial consciousness began to take roots, which set the stage for a Parisian amalgamation of the Nègritude movement of the 1930s 40s, and 50s. The petits réctis, the counter narrative of Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Léon-Gontran Damas, Léopold

Senghor, Kojo Tovalou Houénou, and others espoused views that would likely cause angst, evoke collective guilt, and be considered "divisive." Unfortunately, the absence of African American history in many K-12 public schools, even during Black History Month, may speak volume about the reality of angst-avoidance, collective shame-avoidance, and exposes an unwillingness deconstruct one's way through the past in a manner that leads to acceptance of historical truth.

Civil Rights and Liberation Theology

In the 1960s, the counternarrative continued. During the era, Black people were ready to fight. Boxing heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali, once known as Cassius Clay, provoked an anti-draft fight with the US military. He went to jail and was stripped of his title as a consequence. His contemporary, the sky-hooking NBA basketball icon Ferdinand Lewis, AKA "Lou" Alcindor, conscientiously objected to his slave- name and renamed himself Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

The Negro National Anthem was certainly not to be played in White environments. Most White Americans would never have embraced the 1905 Negro musical work, lyrics written by James Weldon Johnson in 1900 and its music written by his brother J.

Rosamond Johnson.

These athletes stood on the shoulders of a number of athletic pioneers. In the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, brown-eyed Jesse Owens made pooh-pooh on the White Supremacy dicta of Adolf Hitler. He defeated every blue-eyed Aryan, winning gold medals in the hundred-meter dash, the long jump, the four-by-four relay, and the two-hundred-meter dash.

Malcolm Little joined the Nation of Islam, a Black Muslim movement, dropped his slave-name Little, and replaced it with X. American citizens could not escape presidential impeachment rumors, mass riots, violent and nonviolent protests, lunch counter sit-ins, nor turn a blind eye to the numerous organized and sometimes very unorganized marches.

Klan culpability found protection in legal immunity loopholes. Members of law enforcement from the local municipality, who had ascended well into levels of the FBI, pledged to follow the Klan traditions and commitment to carry out the practices of the Klan organization, even if that meant hooded parades, waving the Confederate flag, burning crosses, and lynching people of color when off duty. When found guilty in the lower courts, which was not likely to happen with all-White judges and juries, the Imperial Wizard and his followers could rely on Supreme Court Justice Hugo Lafayette Black to do his Klan membership part from the highest court in the land.

With Martin, Malcolm, Jack, and Robert, suspiciously-maybe not so suspiciously murdered and Rosa Parks having done her part, the Black Panthers, the Nation of Islam, the Black church, and other civil rights organizations used political means to better the plight of the "Black Man." Such improvement of the Black Man's condition would also require the talent and skills of a well-organized legal team. Thurgood Marshall, Derrick Bell, John Hope Franklin, Kenneth and Mamie Clark, and other members of his NAACP legal defense team brought their best to Brown v. Board of Education I and Brown II.

The transitional 1970s and 1980s, with Dr. Derrik Bell and others in the forefront, saw the elimination of overt discriminatory laws and policies so as to end the "de jure" legacy of discrimination. (Bell, 2004). It was during this same period that Burger and Rehnquist Courts began to eliminate the punitive remedies for discrimination. Clearly aware of the "vestiges of historic and overt discrimination" test, states began to programmatically shut down schools with a history in " de jure" segregation, and erect others based upon "de facto" gerrymandering. States learned how to produce "de facto" discriminatory outcome while remaining prima facie neutral in policy language. Income and geographic, housing curfews, zoning proximities, although neutral on their face, were used during the transitional 1970s and 1980s.

For the last 45 years, 1980-2025, the counternarrative has included millionaires and billionaires of color. More college and university graduates than in any point in the history of people of color. The "dream" in part, was kept alive and make manifest in 2008, with the election of the United States first African American president, Barach Hussien Obama. Despite court-packing in favor of the conservative-right, attacks against any racial critiques, and attempts at book banning, attempts to suppress viewpoint through institutional measure have proven to be unsuccessful, particularly in light of social media and artificial intelligence. The counternarrative continues, but largely outside the K-12 forum, where students spend most of their time.

CONCLUSION

My great grandfather, Jacob David Hill was born into slavery in 1839 in Scotland Neck, North Carolina. At that time, it was illegal via an act passed in 1830, by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, Session of 1830–1831 preventing the teaching of slaves to read or write to Read or Write. [94]. He served as a plantation butcher and a drive of the wagon to take slave daughter "Missy" to school. The counternarrative here is that Missy used her Bible to teach David Jacob Hill to read. Unfortunately, they developed a "fondness" for each other and my great grandfather had to runway to save his own life. Once able to read, his epistemological world changed forever.

African Americans are not prohibited outright from reading by law. There have, however, been attempts to control what people of color read and discuss in public schools, particularly about themselves and their history. At its core, the rationale for such a denial seems rooted in the historic memory of the dark side of American history, a side that triggers emotions of collective guilt and shame.

Recent attempts to gut the Voting Rights Act as well as remove vestiges of any duty to affirmative action toward equity, including an affirmation of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the banning of books seems to be a part of a larger fear.

When considering census undercounting of people of color in the United States and census overcounting of Whites, a counternarrative of ethnic control in America awaits to be written by the real ethic majority. Anti-racial, anti-ethnic gestures of the Trump administration particularly are just symptoms of a perceived threat of losing policial and social power. That's the elephant in the room. Restoring voting right protections as well as empowering ethnic dominant legislatures with authority to re-gerrymander voting districts in favor of a Black-Brown-Plus social-political coalition, coupled with an initiative to grant citizenship to the Brown community, opens additional doors for economic dominance, and maybe even an opportunity to oppress White people. That's the real elephant in the room; the rest are just reactionary symptoms.

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