

LET'S TALK ABOUT IGNORANCE

By

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Even though being called ignorant is often intended as an insult, in reality it isn't an insult at all. Simply put, to be ignorant just means that a person doesn't know something. It means that they are unaware or uninformed. Not knowing something is not bad in and of itself, however, it is when a person doesn't know and doesn't want to know that it becomes a bad thing. I call that stupid.

So, now. Did you know that there is a science that studies ways of making people ignorant? That science is called Agnotology, which is formally defined as the study of culturally induced ignorance or doubt. It has been used for many years without the public being aware. Perhaps the best-known example of the use of Agnotology is the way that the big tobacco companies were able to hide the fact for so many years that cigarettes (indeed, tobacco) was harmful to our health. The big tobacco companies were aware of that fact for many years before it became public knowledge. Many lives were destroyed and even lost because of that induced ignorance.

The use of Agnotology that has not been discussed, however, is the way that history has been manipulated to hide the truth. The purposes differ. There may be political purposes as well as psychological, spiritual or cultural purposes. Regardless of the purpose, however, for people of Afrikan Ancestry, Agnotology has been devastating.

How is ignorance induced or created? There are five ways that have been used:

- 1 Deliberate or inadvertent neglect. This refers to the fact that certain events are ignored. This can be intentional or due to the fact that certain facts are not considered important. Much like Afrikan and AUSA (Afrikans from the United States of America) history and culture

- 2 Secrecy and suppression. This is intentional hiding of historical facts. Most people don't realize that Afrika had thriving, literate civilizations with complex governmental structures and universities with law schools and medical schools long before coming in contact with any white people. Afrikans in America right out of decades of enslavement created prosperous towns that were destroyed by white mobs with tremendous loss of AUSA life. This has been hidden and suppressed.
- 3 Document destruction (or creation). An example would be the way that the American Historical Society and the Daughters of the Confederacy manipulated textbooks and history classes to make people believe that Reconstruction was a failure.
- 4 Unquestioned tradition. Glorification of everything Southern before the Civil War makes that tradition seem wonderful when this was a less-than-ideal lifestyle for anyone not white, not rich and not male.
- 5 Culturopolitical selectivity (inherent and avoidable). This is cultural chauvinism where a person deems their own culture and/or political opinions superior and suppresses opposing views.

Once ignorance has been created, there are at least three kinds of ignorance:

1. Native state. This refers to the state of mind before knowledge has entered the brain. Before taking a course on algebra, we are ignorant of that subject.
2. Selective choice. Another name for this is cognitive dissonance, which, the brilliant Black revolutionary psychiatrist, Frantz Fanon described as having a strong belief that a person holds on to even after being given evidence that this belief is not true. When this happens, the person will ignore or deny anything that doesn't fit in with their belief. This kind of ignorance is rampant in America today.
3. Deliberately engineered strategically. This is what has happened to people of Afrikan Ancestry in the world. Our memories (history)

have been altered and, in some cases erased. In an individual, this can be called amnesia but in a group of people, it is called ahistorical. Ahistorical people are more prone to what is called internalized racism. This is when a person, has subconscious self-hatred which they express in their actions towards people who look like them. The fact that this has been (and is) “a thing” is exemplified in this quotation: *“We have, as far as possible, closed every avenue by which the light may enter the slave’s mind. If we could extinguish the capacity to see the light, our work would be complete. They would then be on the level of the beasts of the fields.”* This was spoken by Henry Berry in the Virginia House of delegates (Slave Debate of 1831-1832), January, 1832 (five months after the Nat Turner Rebellion).

Given these observations, it seems obvious that relearning and reclaiming our history is mentally liberating and psychologically healthy.

Food for thought.