

Pronoun Trouble  
by  
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There was a television show when I was growing up that was very popular and also very full of stereotypes. It was called "The Lone Ranger". The hero was a masked white man who rode a white horse and wore a white hat (the white meant that he was a "good guy"). His sidekick was a Native American man named Tonto who kowtowed to the lone ranger and frequented suffered from and had to be rescued from other, more racist ranchers and cowboys by the lone ranger, who he called "kemo sabe". Later, I became aware of a joke involving these characters. As the joke goes, one day the lone ranger and Tonto were surrounded by hostile Native Americans intent on killing them, the lone ranger said something to the effect that, "Well, Tonto, I guess this is it and we're going to die now". Tonto's response was "What do you mean 'we' Paleface?"

When I was younger, my mother, the English teacher, would frequently remind me when I tried to involve others in my mischievousness, that I had "pronoun trouble" when I said "we" instead of "I" or "me".

That has become a major malady of AUSA (Afrikans from the United States of America). Too many AUSA historians and non-academics want so badly to be included in the "we" of the United States of America that they fight tooth and nail for the right to be included. Admittedly, we AUSA are a major, major part of American history, if the truth be told. But, the misleading, misdirecting and outright fallacious way that our history has been recounted in textbooks, magazines and even newspapers (and now on the internet) should let us know that we are not and never have been seen as a part of the "we in American history.

It is tempting to say that the Black conservatives are victims of this malady. The prominent (among white conservatives) Negro supporter of white supremacy, Candace Owens was recently quoted as saying, "There was no abortion happening when we had slaves". WTF? WE??!!! Also, there are jokes going around about Clarence Thomas the Negro justice of the SCOTUS (Supreme Court of the United States) in which he blindly supports all measures by his fellow conservative justices and suddenly realizes that they have re-outlawed interracial marriage. What's worse, his wife is laughing at him. What a nightmare for him!

With regard to Ms Owens alleged quote, there were indeed Afrikans who enslaved other Afrikans. I say Afrikans because they were in a kind of limbo. They were not citizens of the United States until the 14th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified in 1868. So, if they were not Americans, what were they? I cannot answer that question but I bet Ms. Owens has an answer. Many of these Afrikan “enslavers” were frequently people who worked hard to buy their freedom and then worked hard to “purchase” their spouses and childrens’ freedom. On the record, when a man purchased his wife, he was listed as a slaveowner, when in truth, he was a loving husband who sacrificed to keep his family together. On the other hand, there were. Afrikans who enslaved other Afrikans for the same purposes as whites did. That is a topic for a future essay.

The question that I have now is why do AUSA continue to try to insert themselves where they are demonstrably not wanted? As we continue to reconstruct our history from the rubble of lies that have been told about us, there is enough information available that we don’t need to insist on making ourselves a minor addition to the story of others (who obviously don’t value, respect or even like us). One answer to that question is the education and socialization that we have received. During the period of American Apartheid (segregation), our parents and grandparents demonstrated, sacrificed, and agitated in order to desegregate schools. In short, they sacrificed to send their children to their enemies to be educated. The education that generations of AUSA children have received did not and still does not place AUSA in the center. We are encouraged to learn the white history of the world and the United States. We are taught to revere and idolize their heroes and sheroes, as evidenced by the holidays we celebrate. The black holidays that are recognized are frequented narrated for us and don’t include the truth.

Opponents to Critical Race Theory often lament that teaching the truth about what whites have done in America and the world would make poor little white children feel badly about themselves. But they continue to celebrate men like Thomas Jefferson (Racist slaveholder and statutory rapist), George Washington (racist slaveholder), Abraham Lincoln (white supremacist who is given too much credit for reluctantly doing the right thing) and even Strom Thurman (Daytime segregationist and statutory rapist). The feelings engendered in black children (and adults) when they learn this one-sided and frequently inaccurate history perpetuates pronoun trouble.

One of my teachers, the late Dr. Asa Hilliard, (Maa Kheru) told the story of the sheepdog (actually a guardian dog). These dogs are raised with sheep and, it is believed identify with the sheep so much that they will fight ferociously to defend the sheep, even against their own siblings and parents. I encourage everyone to purchase and read Dr. Hilliard's books.

My good friend, the late poet and TV host Listervelt Middleton (Maa Kheru) frequently said that AUSA are "trapped behind enemy lines". That being said, I am reminded of the Stockholm Syndrome, a psychiatric disorder which is defined as a coping mechanism in a captive or abusive situation. In this situation, victims develop positive feelings towards their abusers. Many AUSA, in my opinion, fall under this diagnosis. Hence, pronoun trouble.

Food for thought.