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Who will make America great again? 'Black people, of course...'

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ABSTRACT

The author reflects on the relevance of her intellectual journey through the Black consciousness movement in the 1960s to her pedagogy teaching from a Black Studies theoretical perspective on liberating knowledge. This pedagogical approach aims to fortify education students' consciousness regarding a systemic understanding of how racism and domination work. The argument is that this approach is especially needed given the current regime. Using the 1968 poem by Amiri Baraka that asked: 'Who Will Survive America?' the author illustrates content and pedagogy that can respond to the presidential campaign slogan understood as 'making America white again.'

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'We shall have trouble with the negroes here just as long as they can't behave' ... [said] a leading citizen of Statesborough [GA] ... A large supply of buggy whips has been received here in the past two days. These whips are being left at the cabin doors of certain negroes as a suggestive hint for them to leave. – *New York Times* (1904)

What is missing today in Black Studies is the sense of inner confidence and respect that the collective struggle of the sit-in movement gave us. – Cecil Brown (2013)

We live in a thoroughly racist society, so it should not be surprising that people have racist ideas. The more important question is under what conditions those ideas can change. – Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2016, p. 213)

'White supremacists are celebrating, and it's their time, the way they see it' – Richard Cohen, President, Southern Poverty Law Center (Okeowo, 2016)

Introduction

In this article I reflect on what I teach and why in a Department of Educational Policy Studies where my students are pursuing doctorate and master's degrees in various departments and programs in the College of Education and Human Development. I teach Black and white students, for the most part, who typically are professional educators working in hyper-segregated (all Black) 'inner city' schools in the deep south. This article is a brief reflection upon my efforts to contribute pedagogically to what Vincent Harding (1974) referred to as 'the vocation of the Black scholar.' On the cusp of the Black consciousness movement, Harding, historian, scholar of religion, social activist, and speechwriter for Dr. Martin Luther King, advised:

... for those who live with any full consciousness of our history, our present condition, and our future, there is really little choice if the worlds of fantasy are to be avoided. Each of us must find the place in the struggle where he or she can best stand – or admit that we cannot stand ... wherever we are, the search for our living role in the struggle must go on. (p. 27)

The past as prologue

I will discuss the relevance of my pedagogy to my vocation as a Black scholar and to 'our present condition' within the regime of the 45th president,¹ whose raucous campaign slogan, 'Make American Great Again,' inspired me to write this rejoinder of sorts, using these lines from Amiri Baraka's 1968 poem:

'Who Will Survive America?'

Few Americans

Very few Negroes

No crackers at all.

(Baraka, 1968; (c) Amiri Baraka, permission by Chris Calhoun Agency)

However, I recall that when Baraka performed this poem in 1968, after asking: 'Who will survive America?' he said, 'Black people of, course.' James Baldwin, whose prophetic writing also remains relevant, expressed this same sentiment (Baldwin & Peck, 2017). In *The Fire Next Time*, his book of essays published in 1993, twenty-five years after Baraka wrote this poem, Baldwin, too, proposed that it falls to Black people to 'make America what America must become' (Baldwin, 1993, p. 10). It is worth noting that none of the works of these Black intellectuals is familiar to my students. Such socially generated ignorance propels my pedagogy (Spelman, 2007, p. 123).

I want to acknowledge that some readers may feel uncomfortable with the racially pejorative word 'cracker' in the poem. My point in using this poem is to situate this limited reflection on my pedagogy within the interstice of this admitted racial epithet and the poem's juxtaposition of 'Negroes' (who presumably lack critical consciousness) and Black people with 'full consciousness of our history.' Regarding the poem's suggestion that compared to Black people, 'very few Negroes' will survive America, suffice it to say that many in the African American community do not regard our 'brethren,' including legendary retired footballer-activist Jim Brown and rapper Kanye West, who were seen traipsing into 45's gilded New York command center, as the actions of critically conscious Black people (Jouelzy, 2016).

My point is to illustrate and emphasize that surviving America has more to do with the kind of consciousness a Black Studies pedagogical approach facilitates by problematizing what whiteness and Blackness mean than the denigration of anyone. I believe that is the intended meaning when the poem states: 'Black people, of course,' will 'survive America.' Thus, for me, these terse, provocative lines of verse provide a conceptual vocabulary that succinctly captures how we as educators can respond to the latent racial realities that '45' (the President) has brought into such sharp relief. We can raise consciousness using the past as prologue.

Considering the spate of extra-judicial killings of Black men, women, and children, however, the word 'inherent' rather than 'latent' may more accurately describe the racial realities of 'our present condition' when the repression that was at least *illegal* in earlier periods is now enacted too often with state-sanctioned impunity. The indomitable Civil Rights heroine Mrs. Fanny Lou Hamer's experience is illustrative. She used this racial vocabulary when she reflected on the brutal beating she received at the hands of Mississippi jailers on 9 June 1963:

If them crackers in Winona thought they'd discouraged me from fighting [to register Black voters], they found out different. (Marsh, 1997, p. 24)

The subjugation of Black people was no less virulent during Civil Rights movement days than when the word 'cracker' originated. It referred to the 'white slave driver because he would "crack" the whip,' keeping 'Negroes' in their place ... 'hence the noun cracker' (Urban Dictionary, 2003).

Thus, I am using Baraka's poem to evoke the obdurate structure of ideological 'whiteness' – white supremacy racism – that has defined our society, not only in 1968, but that also terrorizes so many in the aftermath of 45's racially caustic presidential campaign – a campaign that has raised fears about his 'dog whistle' politics, which many have understood to mean: 'Making America white again' (Anderson, 2016; Morrison, 2016; Mozingo, 2016; Preston, Seelye, & Stockman, 2016). This spuriously coded messaging seems to have unleashed those who have been holding back but are still holding fast to deplorable

beliefs about white power and identity (Demby, 2013). In fact the Southern Poverty Law Center (2016) reports a sharp rise in 'incidents of racial and xenophobic harassment' in schools, classrooms and other sites (Okeowo, 2016). A Ku Klux Klan sign was recently hung atop a building in a north Georgia town and a County Commissioner in a community just outside of Atlanta is under fire from Black and white residents after he posted a Facebook message describing Congressman John Lewis as a 'racist pig' (Estep, 2017). 45's folks in Georgia certainly appear to have been unleashed (Dhanao, 2017; Lewis, 2016; Smith, 2016; Walker, 2016).

Liberating knowledge

Asking 'Who Will Survive America?' in 1968 was not merely a poet's rhetorical flourish. That year Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy were both assassinated, American soldiers massacred scores of unarmed Vietnamese civilians – including women and children – in a hamlet called My Lai, and out of the historic student strike at San Francisco State College, the Negro Student Association became the Black Student Union and led the establishment of the first Department of Black Studies in the nation (Rogers, 2009; Karagueuzian, 1971; Rizga, 2016a; Whiting, 2010). The question remains relevant – here and globally – considering the uncounted death toll arising from the use of US drones abroad, deaths from gun violence and the state-violence of political and economic abandonment of our cities, as well as the government's assault on immigrant communities and the racial killings of Black people and others by militarized police (Rogers, 2009).

Some of us are old enough to have memories of these events. Realizing, however, that my students do not have access to such lived examples of the 'full consciousness of our history,' I use a Black Studies theoretical approach to structure learning experiences to jump-start my students' critical consciousness. Consequently, students frequently report that in my courses they begin to think about things they have never considered before.

This article presents a Black Studies theoretical perspective, or Afrocentric praxis, on liberating knowledge. I use this praxis to forge knowledge for human freedom with my students, that is, to unsettle the ideological knowledge (e.g. epistemological ignorance) that has shaped their consciousness or lack thereof. A first premise of this pedagogical approach is that racism is a form of knowledge that constrains *human* freedom, not just Black people's freedom and consciousness (King, 2005). Thus, white students and others need pathways toward critical reflection as well, but not positioned as villains or as victims. A second premise is that the reclamation of heritage knowledge (King, 2006), that is to say, the recuperation of consciousness for group belonging and identity (not the fantasy of assimilation), and this includes our identity as African people, is a requirement for the rejection of racialized oppression and Afro-phobia (King, 1995, 2017; Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on Its Mission to the United States of America, 2016).

Three main points that follow from these premises regarding my praxis of liberating knowledge and the African American freedom struggle at this historical juncture inform the standpoint from which I teach:

- (1) The 1960s modern Black Studies movement brought about a knowledge revolution in higher education that not only reignited freedom memories in the minds and hearts of the Civil Rights generation but also evoked our identification as activist intellectuals with the Black struggle as the practice of freedom in the longer historical struggle.
- (2) Liberating education is being systematically reversed and dismantled and remains unfinished business for the post-Civil Rights movement/post-Black Studies movement generation(s) and it must be central in the ongoing Black freedom struggle not only to 'survive America' but to 'make America what it must become.'
- (3) Education for liberation requires the recuperation of subjugated heritage knowledges of various communities as well as forms of identity and consciousness to make intra- and inter-group solidarity possible, including the kinds of collaboration with allies that enabled our fore parents to practice freedom in ways that (mis)education (Woodson, 1933) has all but erased from our collective memory.

Using the concept historian C. Vann Woodward (1955/2002) coined to describe the Civil Rights movement, Marable (1984/2007) refers to the entire period of 1945–2006 as the ‘Second Reconstruction.’ Building on what previous generations knew then – this pedagogical reflection provides examples of how I teach what we need to know now – during this ‘Third Reconstruction’ to ‘stay human’ (McKittrick, 2006, p. 143) and to ensure that coming generations can make their special contribution to the ‘river’ of freedom (Harding, 1993).

‘We are not looking for villains’

In what follows I illustrate some of the classroom conditions I have created to awaken – provoke critical reflection – and to fortify my students by engaging them in a systemic understanding of racism (including conceptual whiteness and conceptual Blackness) from a Black Studies perspective (Wynter, 2006). The students I teach are mostly education professionals working in oppressive school systems. These adult learners, who often feel challenged to think critically about their own roles and their complicity in an oppressive education system, come into my classes with various responses to ‘our historical situation.’ Some are facing a professional identity crisis, others feel morally conflicted and are wondering what they can and should do; some are in denial. Stephen Brookfield’s (2017) description of white students as adult learners learning about race applies:

For most whites being told that they live in a racist world where their unearned power and privilege causes them to perpetuate an unjust system is, quite literally, inconceivable. They can’t imagine that this might actually be the truth. Furthermore, this unimaginable truth is one that sometimes implicates them in maintaining a racist system, something they’d much prefer not to contemplate. (pp. 207, 208)

Teaching about racism and racism when students are ensconced in this mindset, which I described in the 1990s as ‘dysconscious racism,’ can be risky (King, 1991). Moreover, as Shuaib Meacham (2001) points out, the academy is a cultural location that itself constrains such efforts. Meacham argues that in contrast to Black intellectuals, who are disconnected from the Black community and who lack ‘cultural grounding,’ Black musicians have had enormous impact on society by virtue of their intellectual originality and creative independence. Meacham identifies cultural and structural conditions in the academy that block Black scholars’ ‘academic relevance and excellence’:

Whereas the prevailing cultural ethos among African Americans has historically been one of engagement, resistance, and liberation, the underlying ethos of the academy has been one of ‘ivory tower’ distance and isolation. (p. 211)

Meacham’s analysis of BeBop musicians, including Thelonious Monk, as intellectuals suggests the importance of remaining connected to our cultural tradition from which we can draw strength – to the extent that we ourselves are even aware of it. As someone who benefitted from the consciousness made available to me through the Black Studies movement, I encourage my students to challenge the racist ideas that have shaped the development of this nation and that are evident in certain racialized (mis)understandings that we hold about ourselves. I tell my students that we are not looking for villains but we want to understand how the system of oppression, that affects us all, works.

In his widely acclaimed, award-winning biography of the African American jazz musician extraordinaire, Thelonious Monk, historian Robin D. G. Kelley (2009) makes this observation about the legacy and memories of freedom Monk’s family passed along to him after the First Reconstruction post-emancipation was overturned: ‘The disenfranchisement of Black folk and the restoration of power to the old planter class (after ‘emancipation’) was rapid and violent’ (p. 2). Yet for Monk’s parents and grandparents, Kelley notes, like ‘any Southern Black person(s) living between 1865 and 1900 ... freedom wasn’t a word taken for granted or used abstractly.’ Indeed, they never ‘lost their memory of post-Civil War freedom, or their determination to possess it once again’ (p. 2).

Also, it is important to place Black people’s memories of freedom, which did not begin with legal ‘emancipation’ within the longer trajectory of the Africana heritage, which does not begin with enslavement. I teach that resistance to oppression is deeply embedded within African American culture and in addition to the struggle for education has also taken political and economic forms of group

advancement following the end of First Reconstruction, through the second and continuing to the Movement for Black Lives (King & Swartz, 2016).

While the barrage of anti-democratic executive orders '45' launched in the first month after being sworn in as president has left masses of people shuddering in fear and panic or taking to the streets in outrage (Culliton-González, 2017; Kane, 2017), the Word among Black folks in my community is: 'We've been here before.' 'We've seen this before.' As pundits point out parallels between the current situation in our society and the rise of Hitler's Nazi Germany in the 1930s (Chong, 2017; Freedland, 2017), a frequent point of reference heard among Black people is the end of the First Reconstruction after the Civil War and northern capitulation to the return of overt white terror (Murphy, 2017; Washington, 2016).

The First Reconstruction was characterized by the violent re-imposition of 'slavery by another name' (debt peonage and chain gangs) and massive disenfranchisement (Blackmon, 2008). White segregationists' resistance to the Civil Rights movement and *Brown v Board of Education*, which took the form of 'White Citizens Councils' and white flight to private academies established throughout the south, are a hallmark of what Vann Woodward described as the Second Reconstruction (1955/2002). The Black revolutionary response to such manifestations of white racism included organizing citizenship education schools and grassroots voter registration campaigns (Payne, 1995), armed self-defense (Umoja, 2013), and the establishment of Black Studies (i.e. African American Studies, Africana Studies) programs in higher education.

In my courses I offer a sociological lens on urban education issues within a Black Studies theoretical perspective on knowledge, race, and racism (Wynter, 2006). What students know and do not know about this history (and their own group's history) is an important point of departure in my courses. Typically, these students have had no academic exposure to a strengths-based Black Studies or Ethnic Studies analysis in their educational careers. This means our students – regardless of their racial/ethnic background – are especially vulnerable to and often have internalized conservative cultural deficit ideologies masquerading as educational theory. In contrast, my own educational formation and intellectual journey, which I share with my students, were nurtured in the Black Studies movement as a student activist advocating for a liberating education, which has continued to inform my career as an activist scholar.

For example, I share the story of how in an undergraduate sociological theory course at Stanford University in 1968, a professor claimed that Native American poverty was the result of and evidence of their lack of achievement motivation. He used Native American Coyote folk tales as incontrovertible evidence. (This professor literally wrote the book on achievement motivation theory.) When assigned to use this theoretical explanation and its statistical measurement in a course assignment, I devised an alternative statistical formula and in my paper I argued (and provided empirical evidence) that African American folk tales ('Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox,' 'The Tar Baby') demonstrate much higher levels of 'achievement motivation' when compared to Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes ('Humpty Dumpty,' 'Little Miss Muffett,' 'Old Mother Hubbard,' 'Jack and Jill,' etc.). I also tell my students what the Teaching Assistant in that undergrad course said to me years later when we were both teaching at the same university and met at a faculty party. She asked if I remembered the paper that I wrote in that class. I said, 'Of course.' Then she said, quite unself-consciously: 'We always wondered if it was your own work.'

I share this personal experience with ideological hegemony in education – the professor's racialized notions about Native Americans' achievement motivation, which were presented as objective, scientifically-based theory, as well as the professor's apparent suspicions about my work – to illustrate the still prevalent assumptions in this society and among educators about Black (Native American, Latinx) peoples' intellectual inferiority (King, 1996). Note that no such musings about a cognitive or academic achievement gap between white and 'model minority' Asian American students dominate the education research agenda (Hsin & Xie, 2014). I show my students how the Black Studies movement inspired me to have confidence in my own intellect, to know more about my heritage, to hold onto that heritage knowledge as an epistemological weapon, to respect the cultural integrity of diverse groups and to demonstrate that education is a site where we can stand as our vocation in the liberation struggle (King, 2006).

Now, forty-five years after students at San Francisco State University – my peers – initiated the first Black Studies Department at a four-year college in the country and a year after Baraka published his poem (Rogers, 2009), in order to contextualize current educational conditions I am required to fill enormous gaps in my students' knowledge regarding what racism does vis à vis African Americans and other marginalized groups. I am motivated and able to take this stand as a result of the epistemological and moral foundation the Black Studies and Black consciousness movements provided me as a student activist and Black intellectual. Our doctoral students have rarely had the intellectual foundation to situate their own research interests within this knowledge tradition, which is largely missing in higher education today and most critically in the preparation of teachers and school leaders (Grant, Brown, & Brown, 2015).

Re-membering/identifying with Black struggle as the practice of freedom

A primary mechanism through which African Americans and other culturally dispossessed people are currently being disempowered and disenfranchised in this Third Reconstruction period includes the disestablishment of public education and the specific un-doing of the epistemological revolution the modern Black Studies movement (and other Ethnic Studies initiatives) launched in the 1960s. Not only has this knowledge revolution failed to transform the K-12 sector (Traoré, 2008), which the current regime threatens to disestablish altogether, but high stakes testing – and 'high stakes cheating' (Morrow, 2013) – actually obscure the epistemological challenge and potential that Black Studies continues nevertheless to represent. And while several states have established policies that require teaching African American history, these initiatives, such as the Amistad Commissions in New Jersey and Illinois, for example, have had little or no impact on teacher preparation or classroom instruction (Akua, 2017; King, Akua, & Russell, 2014; King, Swartz, Campbell, Lemons-Smith, & López, 2014). Moreover, multicultural education has become in too many instances a gate-keeper staving off more radical and transformative curriculum interventions grounded in community ideals and values of freedom, cultural sovereignty, and group self-determination (King, 2012; Swartz, 2007).

The scholarship of race offers serviceable conceptualizations of the way 'epistemological ignorance' is deployed to maintain the hierarchical racial contract (Spelman, 2007). I find it useful in my classes to demystify 'whiteness' itself by historicizing both white identity (conceptual whiteness) and Black consciousness. In my courses I use film to facilitate critical reflection about how domination works. For example, I refer the class to the popular film 'Brave Heart' – when 'merry old England' conquered the Scots (and where this episode of settler colonial oppression did not involve any Black people). Rather, the Irish and Scots occupied subordinated roles and dehumanized identities before the concept of whiteness (and 'crackers') originated (Wikipedia, n.d.). I constructed the Timetable below (Figure 1) that locates the Hollywood version of the story of Scottish rebel William Wallace's efforts to resist English imperialism in the Middle Ages. I present this example of domination among Europeans within a longer historical trajectory that also situates African enslavement in a broader narrative of oppression, ironically at the hands of Scots who immigrated to the Americas (Mullen, 2009). We also discuss how the English perception of the Irish as 'savages,' as shown in Figure 1, parallels the way subordinated groups in our society today are viewed by those who have 'become white.'

Space does not permit a fuller explication of the importance of deconstructing what students know and do not know about the enslavement of African people and what Black students know and believe, for that matter, but this brief re-writing of the 'master script' interrupts and forces my students to interrogate their own (mis)education (King, 1991, 1992; King & Swartz, 2016).

'All the Black people we read about are dead'

Although Black/Africana Studies departments and the discipline of Black Studies have become thoroughly institutionalized in higher education, and notwithstanding the fact that these academic units remain precariously situated (Rizga, 2016a), in these last forty years there has been no normative

Before and after “Brave Heart” – From the Middle Ages to African Enslavement

711 African Moors conquered Spain and Portugal. Cordova, the capital, was Europe’s most civilized city with paved, lamp-lit streets, libraries and public baths.

Ireland and Scotland share the same ancestry, a common language and customs. Ireland and Scotland were called Greater and Lesser Scotia.

1066 Before Roman times, slavery was normal in Britannia. From the 9th to the 12th centuries Dublin, Ireland was a major slave trading center involving *Gaelic, Pictish, Vikings, Saxons* and other kingdoms. There was still a slave trade operating out of Bristol in the 11th century. In 1086 over 10% of England’s population were (European) slaves.

1066-1087 William the Conqueror claimed England. Chattel slavery, which had existed before Roman occupation, gradually disappeared after the Norman conquest, replaced by feudalism and serfdom. William introduced a law prohibiting the sale of slaves overseas.

1180’s The Anglo-Norman colonizers ruled Ireland harshly for centuries. In the Middle Ages people were born into proscribed roles: those who prayed, those who worked, those who fought, those who ruled and owned the land. As far as the English were concerned, they had good reason to despise the Irish. Gerald of Wales, a Chronicler with the British colonizers, described what he saw: the savage and uncivilized conduct of the native Irish people.

“The Irish are a rude people subsisting on the produce of their cattle only and living themselves like beasts, a people that has not yet departed from the primitive habits of pastoral life—neither willing to give up their old habits or learn anything new, abandoning themselves to idleness and immersed in sloth. Their greatest delight is to be exempt from toil. Their richest possession: the enjoyment of liberty. This people, then, is truly barbarous. Indeed, all their habits are barbarisms. In whatever requires industry they are worthless.”

Topographia of Hibernia, 1188

1315-1316 The Scottish Bruces (Robert & Edward) invaded Ireland to expel the English but there was great famine across Europe and Ireland; the Bruces retreated.

1492 The Moors were expelled from Spain after more than 700 years. Columbus voyaged to the New World.

1591 Moroccans with Spanish support defeated the West African Songhay Empire, a historical watershed event that opened the way for the capture, deportation and mass TransAtlantic enslavement of Africans.

1641 Following an Irish uprising, the British transported as many as 50,000 “rebels” to the West Indies and North America. New Scotland (Nova Scotia) was founded in Canada in the early 1600s. Edinburgh judges passed laws (1662-1665) ordering the enslavement, banishment or emigration of Scottish “rogues” and other “undesirables” to the colonies.

1661 The Barbados Slave Act established the British concept of chattel slavery, which treated Africans as beasts of burden with no right to life, and superseded (Irish and Scottish) white indentured servitude.

1715, 1746 Jacobite Scottish rebels were forcibly transported to the colonies after the uprising at Culloden in 1745. Scottish Highlanders are major slaveholders in the Caribbean, including sexual slavery.

1762 Forced evictions and displacement of Highland Scottish farming families from traditional land tenancies carried out by aristocratic hereditary landlords in the 18th and 19th centuries, the “Highland Land Clearances,” resulted in significant emigration to North America and Australia.

1776 The American “Revolution.”

1812 US - British war: Francis Scott Key, a slave-holding lawyer, wrote the “Star Spangled Banner,” which applauds slavery. The British granted freedom to the enslaved who fought on their side and resettled these Black Refugees in Nova Scotia after the war.

Figure 1. © Joyce E. King, The Academy for Diaspora Literacy, Inc. 2016.

connection between this knowledge base and professional studies in education. A Google search produces one undergraduate degree at York College in Brooklyn that links Black Studies and Early

Childhood Education. This situation is exacerbated by what amounts to the ethnic cleansing of Black teachers from the profession (Rizga, 2016b).

One of my students completed a class research project focused on the need for transformative, liberating curriculum knowledge for teachers. When students opt to do a project, I also require them to engage a 'community learning partner' in their investigation. This requirement validates my epistemological stance: knowledge resides not only in the university and scholarly publications but also with practitioners and people who are living the problems we are examining. My student chose a friend who is a classroom teacher in an inner city elementary school in Texas. When she presented her project in class my student reported that during their discussion of this problem her community learning partner made this comment regarding the importance of this research topic: 'All the Black people we read about are dead.' Thus, even if the children in this teacher's classroom successfully graduate and enroll in college, they are not likely to have had an opportunity to identify with the Black struggle for freedom – or with the ongoing justice struggles of other peoples (King, 2017).

The viewpoint expressed below by a supporter of 45's campaign, Michael Anton, who is now a senior national security advisor in the White House, writing under the pen name 'Publius Decius Mus' (Schulberg, 2017), is one indicator of the civilizational crisis we are facing and the critically urgent need for pedagogy that enacts the epistemological commitment to human freedom of the Black Studies movement. Anton writes:

The other related source of [his] appeal is his willingness – eagerness – gleefulness! – to mock the ridiculous lies we've been incessantly force-fed for the past 15 years (at least) and tell the truth. 'Diversity' is not 'our strength'; it's a source of weakness, tension and disunion. America is not a 'nation of immigrants'; we are originally a nation of settlers, who later chose to admit immigrants, and later still not to, and who may justly open or close our doors solely at our own discretion, without deference to forced pieties. Immigration today is not 'good for the economy'; it undercuts American wages, costs Americans jobs, and reduces Americans' standard of living. Islam is not a 'religion of peace'; it's a militant faith that exalts conversion by the sword and inspires thousands to acts of terror – and millions more to support and sympathize with terror. (Publius Decius Mus, 2016)

Who will help us all survive 45's America? When he delivered the 3rd Annual Kamau Brathwaite Lecture at the University of the West Indies entitled 'Trumpism and the Crisis of Black America,' Robin D. G. Kelley (2017) commented on the platform organized by the Movement for Black Lives (<https://policy.m4bl.org/platform/>). This mobilization, which developed in the aftermath of the killing of Trayvon Martin in Florida and expanded further with Michael Brown's killing in Ferguson, Missouri, is calling for a redirection of resources from the carceral and military state to support for a genuinely inclusive democracy (Green, Kelley, Lipsitz, Poe, & Rogers, 2016). Kelley observed: 'the savings would be invested ... in a peace dividend' and concluded by noting: '...when all Black lives are valued – we will change our country and possibly change the world.'

Note

1. The argument is that this approach is especially needed given the current regime. The use of term 'regime' is intentional, consistent with the widely used 'regime theory' framework in political science, and to illustrate what scholars have identified as the changing nature of the US Government, including the president's placement of family members and white nationalist extremists in senior position of influence and lawsuits challenging apparent violations of the constitutional emoluments clause (Blades, 2017; Davis & Tumulty, 2017; Gordon, 2017; Stone, 1989).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Joyce E. King holds the Benjamin E. Mays Endowed Chair in Urban Teaching, Learning and Leadership in the College of Education and Human Development at Georgia State University. She is past-president of the American Educational Research Association.

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