

Call Me Anything But Black

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"A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people" - Mahatma Gandhi.

I no longer want to be called Black, African American, BIPOC, or interested in America's determination of my identity. Since the Portuguese initiated the trade of Africans to the Americas, there has been an ongoing issue concerning my identity as a man.

Race is a social construct, rather than a biological reality. Racial categories are based on social and historical factors, not inherent biological differences. The concept of race evolved from European exploration and colonization, which categorized populations based on physical differences. This led to the subjugation and marginalization of groups deemed racially inferior.

There is frequently confusion regarding the concepts of race and ethnicity. Race refers to perceived physical characteristics, whereas ethnicity pertains to shared cultural traditions, ancestry, language, and other cultural determinants.

In the United States, race is utilized as a metric to identify differences in characteristics. Legal classifications for race include American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White. These definitions are used to measure variations among different racial groups. Despite the recognition that all individuals possess equal capabilities, racial discrimination continues to exist.

Black people have never wanted DEI, Affirmative Action, or, for that matter, Civil Rights Legislation. The expectation is that America will follow the principles outlined in the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and its amendments. Too often, discussing race forces one to defend themselves against others' perspectives.

White America aspires to achieve colorblindness. So, from now on, call me Man.

Undoubtedly, the discussion of diversity is intolerable to a dominant culture that has appropriated many of its achievements from others. This commentary does not aim to discuss racism; rather, it focuses on the concept of eraseism.

The historical context of Africans' arrival in America and their contributions remains essential, regardless of their representation in history, literature, or cultural celebrations. Despite facing significant challenges, including limited access to higher education, training opportunities, and civil rights, Africans brought to America have made essential contributions to the scientific and industrial advancement of the United States.

So, what are the reasons behind the current societal norm's stance on removing diversity or my Black existence?

Ignoring my skin color does not change my American identity.

Frowning on the display of the natural texture of my hair or the adornment of traditional African wardrobe in the boardroom or school does not change my nationality, political views, or patriotism.

Forgetting that Africans built America as an agricultural empire cannot erase the irrecoverable loss of my Ancestral wealth.

Recognizing the atrocities of the Atlantic Slave Trade, where 1.5 million Africans died in transit, does not diminish the suffering experienced by Ashkenazi Jews persecuted for their faith during the Holocaust inflicted by other ethnically motivated Europeans.

Admonishing that one in four cowboys were African ranch workers should not affect children's enjoyment of play or their choice of roles when wearing a black or white hat.

Abandoning historical records of post-Civil War oppression, lynching, and discrimination does not negate the obstacles established to deny my ancestors their rights and equality after emancipation.

Forsaking the contributions of African descendants in all battles for American freedoms, or omitting from military history that of Sgt. William Carey, a freed man, was the first African American to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor for his service with the all-Black Massachusetts 54th Regiment during the Civil War. This overlooks the essential history related to democracy and African representation in American history.

Illuminating critical race is essential for understanding that from 1861-1864, there was not merely a civil war, but a war between states over federalism, states' rights, and economic factors. The commodity in dispute is African slaves. Critical thinking offers a deeper insight into historical context and highlights the role of Africans in American history.

When I affirm that Black Life Matters, it does not imply that other lives do not; it serves as a reminder that my life, because of the color of my skin, is at risk.

You see, denying diversity, erasing my racial characteristics and contributions from history may result in the oppressor feeling better, but it leaves the oppressed disenfranchised. However, opposite highlights both the significance of change and the influence of American diversity.

If it is preferable, you may refer to me by any term other than Black. Rest assured, we both know the difference.

The National Urban League's mantra is "Not alms but opportunity."

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