

Is Critical Race Theory Driving the Anger in Society?

History. In the postmodern age it's a tricky subject.

For starters, few young people really know the history of where they come from or how their country got to where it is now. [The Nation's Report Card](#) glaringly confirms this reality, as only 12 percent of high school seniors are proficient in U.S. history.

Sadly, the history that they do know is often slanted in its perspective. One such example of this is presented by historian Roger McGrath in the [February issue](#) of *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture*. Writing on the legacy of Andrew Jackson, McGrath explains how the common view of Jackson – a person “emblematic of our racist and imperialistic core” – isn't justified by the record. Instead, evidence shows Jackson demonstrated compassion in his dealings with minorities.

Jackson is usually blamed for the Trail of Tears tragedy, a characterization which McGrath claims is inaccurate. Jackson, he notes, left office roughly 18 months before the incident took place. But that's not the only thing about the Trail of Tears which is often overlooked:

Most descriptions of the Trail of Tears fail to mention that the Cherokee dragged more than 2,000 of their black slaves along with them, and some of those slaves contributed to the number of dead.

That statement, although surprising, fits with [a recent essay](#) written by retired Vanderbilt law professor Carol M. Swain. Commenting on *The New York Times* 1619 Project, Swain explains how the Project creates a “revisionist narrative” which excludes “the fact that free blacks and Indian tribes were

right there alongside whites, buying and selling slaves after slavery became legal in 1661.” Swain, a black woman herself, believes “there’s plenty of guilt to go around,” for “slavery was an institution that blacks, Native Americans, and whites participated in as slaveholders.”

Why are so few of us aware of the inaccuracies in the common narrative? The answer, Swain says, is critical race theory:

Critical race theory is an analytical framework to analyze institutions and culture. Its purpose is to divide the world into white oppressors and non-white victims. Instead of traditional forms of knowledge, it uses personal narratives of marginalized minority ‘victim’ groups (blacks, Hispanics, Asians) as irrefutable ‘evidence’ of the dishonesty of their mostly white heterosexual oppressors.

The objective of critical race theory? “Remake society so that the victim class eventually displaces the oppressors and becomes the new ruling class.” This narrative “create[s] anger, frustration, and despondency among persons in the victim categories.”

Swain writes that such an attitude is in stark opposition to what she was taught as a child.

Even though I was born and grew up in rural southern poverty during the era of segregation, I was not taught to hate white people or to hate America. Instead, my black teachers stressed our need to work hard and excel. I grew up to be a proud American who never doubted she lived in the greatest country in the world. No one around me encouraged me to see myself as a victim. I never fixated on the fact that I was black, poor, and female. Had I done so, I doubt I would have achieved anything.

One doesn’t see attitudes like this very often these days.

Instead, we see young adults who are angry about their circumstances, feeling they are victimized by racism, poverty, sexism, or myriad other forms of alleged privilege in others.

Is it possible that such anger is permeating the younger generation because of the prevalence of critical race theory in schools and society? Perhaps if we taught our children to examine history through a lens of hope for future success, instead of a lens of victimhood in the past, we would resolve this tension that so troubles society.

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