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## Social Justice Autobiography

Leon Fields

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Social Justice Autobiography  
By Leon Fields

Oppression is a science, and those who practice it in this country do so with surgical precision.

Consequently, I, Leon Fields R25705, have been a victim of various forms of social terrorism for over forty-four years of my existence. This flagrant subversion of my actualization is a consequence of my phenotype, but to attribute causation to the color of my skin would be self-defeating, as it infers that “I” am amiss. Conversely, culpability lies at the feet of white provincialists due to their insecurities which contribute to their neurosis. As the descendant of enslaved Africans, my struggle is one of “Power”: the ability to cause or prevent change. My experiential and historiographical acquaintance with social justice is intimate, which necessitates insightful analysis. My autodidactic journey has been extremely rewarding by equipping me with the requisite tools that allow richer interpretations of life. In absence of such an analytical capacity, my destiny shall follow the masses of Pavlovian dogs or Skinnerian rats.

My journey began in the womb of a Black woman, which at that time was the most dangerous place to be in America for a Black child. Murderous thoughts of infanticide permeated the atmosphere. At this intersection of possibilities more than 30 million potential saviors were killed as a credit to the racist eugenicist, Margaret Sanger. In her words, “The chief obstacles to the normal expression of woman’s force are undesired pregnancy and the burden of unwanted children.” I thank God for giving my mother the strength to bear me. I too could’ve been a victim of Planned Parenthood as the strategic genocidal mechanism being placed in my communities.

The primary goal of an education is to provide the student with the ability to cope with tomorrow, in as much as my tomorrow diverges from that of my oppressor and their children. Instead of empowering me intellectually and psychologically based on my unique history, the Chicago Public School system as an institution became a catalytic agent of my demise. Special problems require special solutions. Their so called neutral curriculum was an exercise in futility. As a descendant of enslaved Africans with specific epigenetic issues I was unwittingly and indiscriminately prodded into imitating my oppressor via the curriculum. The “standard” American education is a major instrument of Euro-American socioeconomic supremacy. Being a special target of hostile white male domination, this essentially was a form of genocidal subjection.

Integration has failed and should be stopped. The U.S. Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling that segregated schools were “inherently inferior and unequal” was simply wrong. They are unequal when unequally supported. The initial Clarendon County S.C. lawsuit in 1953 only wanted to stop the local board from giving white schools four times as much as they allocated to Black schools, until litigation was taken over by the N.A.A.C.P. Under the auspices of forced integration, white America responded by providing an educational paradigm designed to cause self-hatred in vulnerable and impressionable Black children.

In 1987 I was bussed to a predominately white school in an all-white community. Being one of only four Black males, without any young Black females, my class demographic remained

that way through eighth grade graduation. The ambivalence was pervasive every single day. This arrangement damaged my psyche on so many levels. Until later in life, I didn't fully understand the impact of social inheritance, specifically white middle class. This perceived level of integrated competence as it relates to young white females compounded by the competence of the white female teachers created a situation where my mind, unconsciously appraised Black females at a value below their actual worth. Consequently, I've spent decades recovering from the substantive trauma created by this experience. I needed to re-learn how to value and appreciate Black women.

The vast majority of K-8 teachers are middle-class white women, most of whom lack the adequate psycho-social conditioning to bring out the best in Black children. None of them ever informed me that, based on my historical experience, my responsibility was to reacquire the power which had been usurped from me. She never informed me that I needed to develop the fortitude to be able to swim upstream. That I needed to become more resilient because society is malignant. This was complete dereliction of duty, but this is how the system is designed.

Black children love their relationship to their teachers, and they can become catalysts for our education. But I could feel her apathy and its vibrational energy emanating from her. In some cases, maybe the cultural deficit was too steep to overcome for most of my white teachers, or maybe they just didn't care enough. Reasons aren't excuses. Indifference is a spiritual disease of the heart. I later learned that the sensory apparatus of people exists on a contrast scale. Even though our Black teachers were few, we were able to compare the two and feel the shift of force. As a result of the white teacher's apathy, I've witnessed a few of my peers develop what I now understand as disliking distortion, where we have a tendency not to learn appropriately from someone we dislike. The powerful psychological tendency has altered the trajectory of the lives of countless Black children.

I distinctly remember the depressive movements elicited during insufferable history lessons as I was being indoctrinated with slavery as the nexus of my existence. There was nothing nostalgic in the curriculum for me. Illuminated pictures of "Great White Men" lined the books, walls, and halls, along with their great accomplishments. Contrast these powerful images with those of the gloomy, worn, despondent features of Black leaders devoid of any happiness during their perpetual struggle against oppression till death. The intent was to create an impression. The impression that "whites" are the gods of the earth. They are the standard for which we should all strive. An educational paradigm that Hitler would've been proud of had he prevailed. I was given keys to doors that won't open for me. Taught to believe that the world was benign, but in reality, my world is full of contradictions. Where is justice in that?

There are some controversial statements in this essay, like anti-abortion sentiments, but Fields' is strongest in his last paragraph. This essay would do well with a companion piece, either from a woman's perspective regarding pregnancy and raising a Black child, or a commentary piece on the critiques of *Brown v. Board* from the Black community, or racism in American public schools post-Brown.

Genre

## Social Justice Autobiography

Tags:

Education; racial consciousness; anger and frustration