



David Burns

EDITORS

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# “Covenant Keeper”

Derrick Bell’s Enduring  
Education Legacy

Edited by Gloria Ladson-Billings  
and William Tate



PETER LANG  
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## The Utility of “The Space Traders” AND Its Variations AS CRT Teachable Moments

ANA CAROLINA ANTUNES, ROSIE CONNOR, KATHRYN K. COQUEMONT, KEHAULANI FOLAU, ALLISON MARTIN, LAURA TODD, AND LAURENCE PARKER

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### INTRODUCTION BY LAURENCE PARKER

There has been much historical debate in education research circles surrounding the legitimacy of alternative epistemologies, ways of knowing, and research methodologies emerging from critical race theory (Hylton, 2012; Parker, 2105). For example, there has been criticism leveled by some against Bell (1992a) and his fictional narrative “The Space Traders.” In this counterstory, aliens come to earth and offer to solve all of the chronic problems facing the U.S. (environmental contamination, reliance on fossil fuels, the national debt, etc.) if the U.S. agrees to give the aliens all their persons classified as Black. The main character in “The Space Traders” is Professor Golightly, he is an African American moderate Republican who is a member of the president’s cabinet. He, among others, voices strong objections to the offer made by the aliens and works with a group of wealthy White capitalist and business leaders to initially lead a campaign against the offer; he does this because he feels that Whites will be capitalist first and racist second and that the financial impact of Blacks being sent to space will hurt the viability of the U.S. economy. But later in the story, Professor Golightly posits that a position of interest convergence is the best one to take to get Whites to vote with Blacks against the offer. He perceives that interest convergence will be in the best interest of Blacks in the U.S. because they will engage in a campaign of saying that the space trader deal is a form of reverse discrimination and that these space traders will treat Blacks so well in terms of equality, civil rights, and economic

and political opportunities that Whites will be jealous and want to stop and vote against the offer. In the end, however, the vote to accept the deal overwhelmingly passes and the Blacks are boarded on buses to oceanfront areas and beamed up to the alien spacecrafts in the sky.

When I have used the "Space Traders" story in classes ranging from high school American history classes to undergraduate and graduate school classes on Critical Race Theory and education policy, with predominantly African American and majority White European Americans and/or racially diverse classes (e.g., Asian/Pacific Islanders, Latinos/as and Chicanas/os, tribal nation groups), there have been two (among many) themes that emerge in the class discussion. When asked, could this happen now? (1) the high school students, particularly those who are African American, say "yes, it definitely could." Their responses are that "White people don't want us here anyway so they will be glad to send us off in space"; and (2) the undergraduates, to some extent, and definitely the older/professional Master's and doctoral students, have a different, more mixed, view with some saying that with the U.S. having had its first Black president, and, overall, overt individual racist acts in the U.S. being on the decline, therefore the majority of the population, particularly White European Americans, would vote against the space traders' offer. In the classes, reading the counterstory (and also sometimes watching it on video) has brought up the major tenets of CRT theoretical framework in the fields of law and education that explores the ways in which alleged race-neutral policies, practices, and laws perpetuate racial/ethnic subordination. It emphasizes the importance of viewing policies, practices, and laws within a proper historical and cultural context in order to deconstruct their racialized meanings (Bell, 1995; Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This framework challenges dominant liberal concepts such as colorblindness and meritocracy and shows how these ideas operate to disadvantage people of color while further advantaging Whites (Delgado & Stefancic, 1994). Originally developed by legal scholars of color, CRT is grounded in a "social reality that is defined by our experiences and the collective historical experience of our communities of origin. CRT theorists typically utilize dialogues, stories, chronicles, and personal testimonies as a method in their scholarship because some members of marginalized groups, by virtue of their marginal status, are able to tell different stories from the ones White scholars usually hear and tell (Delgado, 1990). There are at least five defining elements that form the basic assumptions, perspectives, research methods, and pedagogies of CRT (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002).

### The Centrality of Race and Racism

CRT acknowledges as its most basic premise that race and racism are defining characteristics of American society. In American higher education, race and racism

are imbedded in the structures, discourses of universities. Race and racism are dimensions of one's identity, such as language and class (Crenshaw, 1995). For people of color, identity can potentially elicit multiple meanings and can also be subjected to different forms

### The Challenge to Dominant Ideologies

A CRT in higher education challenges the objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, and race neutrality acts as a camouflage of dominant groups in American society.

### A Commitment to Social Justice and

CRT has a fundamental commitment to eliminate all forms of racial, gender, language, and ethnic subordination (Matsuda, 1996). In higher education, CRT is conceived as a social justice project that combines scholarship with teaching, and the academic (Solórzano, 1998).

### A Centrality of Experiential Knowledge

CRT recognizes that the experiential knowledge is central and critical to understanding racial subordination. This framework in an analysis of research and practice requires that the experiential knowledge be viewed as a resource stemming directly from the lived experiences. Knowledge can come from storytelling, testimonies, *cuentos*, chronicles, and narratives.

### A Historical Context and Interdisciplinary

CRT challenges ahistoricism and the use of quantitative and educational research. In the field of education, these frameworks analyze race and racism in a historical context using interdisciplinary methods.

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dimensions of one's identity, such as language, generation status, gender, sexuality,  
and class (Crenshaw, 1995). For people of color, each of these dimensions of one's  
identity can potentially elicit multiple forms of subordination, yet each dimension  
can also be subjected to different forms of oppression.

### The Challenge to Dominant Ideology

A CRT in higher education challenges the traditional claims of universities to  
objectivity, meritocracy, color-blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity.  
This theoretical framework reveals how the dominant ideology of color-blindness  
and race neutrality acts as a camouflage for the self-interest, power, and privilege  
of dominant groups in American society (Delgado, 1989; López, 2003).

### A Commitment to Social Justice and Praxis

CRT has a fundamental commitment to a social justice agenda that struggles to  
eliminate all forms of racial, gender, language, generation status, and class sub-  
ordination (Matsuda, 1996). In higher education, these theoretical frameworks  
are conceived as a social justice project that attempts to link theory with practice,  
scholarship with teaching, and the academy with the community (Lynn, 1999;  
Solórzano, 1998).

### A Centrality of Experiential Knowledge

CRT recognizes that the experiential knowledge of people of color is legitimate  
and critical to understanding racial subordination. The application of a CRT  
framework in an analysis of research and practice in the field of higher education  
requires that the experiential knowledge of people of color be centered and viewed  
as a resource stemming directly from their lived experiences. The experiential  
knowledge can come from storytelling, family history, biographies, scenarios, par-  
ables, *cuentos*, chronicles, and narratives (Delgado, 1989; Delgado Bernal, 2002).

### A Historical Context and Interdisciplinary Perspective

CRT challenges ahistoricism and the unidisciplinary focus of most analyses in law  
and educational research. In the field of higher education research and practice,  
these frameworks analyze race and racism in both a historical and contemporary  
context using interdisciplinary methods (Delgado, 1989; Lynn & Dixson, 2013).

In addition, other new trends have emerged as part of the discussions about “The Space Traders” and its connection to new trends in CRT, such as those posited by Bonilla-Silva (2015), which include: (1) the epistemology of race, (2) the origins of race analysis in geo-spatial sectors and organizations, (3) intermediate racial categories, (4) refinement and changing analysis of intersectionality, (5) an interrogation as to how deep-whiteness is salient, (6) the racialization of immigrants, (7) racial socialization, and (8) interracial relationships. To this end, I have collected “Space Trader” spin-off counterstories that my doctoral students developed in my CRT class at the University of Utah (spring 2015) that add depth to Bell’s original intent with the story but also bring up new issues for discussion as we use his work in our field as we move into using race and naming racism while questioning these categories themselves in research and theory; while still acknowledging their racial realist saliency in these times of violence against youth of color and tribal nation youth and the materialist conditions of poverty linked to structural racism (Bell, 1992b; Harris & Liberman, 2015; Leonardo, 2013).

### THE SPACE TRADERS RETURN: THE STORY OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICANS BY KATHRYN K. COQUEMONT

On the 25th anniversary of the Space Traders’ first contact with the United States, they returned to the beaches of New Jersey. Like the last time, their arrival had been broadcast for weeks through radio messages, and millions of people woke up early to crowd the Jersey shore, turn on their television, or watch on their phones, tablets, or computers. As New Jersey one of the states with the largest Asian American population, it was of no surprise that while the majority of those standing on the beach were White, a sizeable number were also Asian American, mostly East Asian American.

The weeks leading up to the Space Traders’ return had been filled with excitement for a large portion of the American public. White Americans remembered the benefits of the last exchange, when the aliens left extraordinary amounts of gold to remove the national debt, chemicals to remove pollution, and a nuclear engine and fuel to replace depleted fossil fuels.

Unfortunately, the U.S. government had not wisely used these gifts to make better financial choices, but instead used the lack of debt as a reason to spend at higher rates, particularly in areas of defense and space exploration. Additionally, the exemption of local, state, and federal taxes for a year after the Space Traders’ original exchange led to pressure on Congress to lower taxes to a much smaller rate than the pre-Space-Trader era. Republicans, desperate to stay in power, acquiesced to the public’s demands. Together, these decisions led federal, state, and local governments to again fall into deep debt.

Additionally, the chemicals that ran out after 20 years and could not be replaced during these 2 decades of clean air, land, and living and commuting, American business investments into hybrid and electric extravagant vehicles that made Hummers of the modern era. The last 5 years without thought that the U.S. was heading back toward urban areas.

Because excess had been a way of life, visit, it was difficult for Americans to use of their fiscal and environmental resources. White Americans felt excited about the the U.S. would receive more gold, chemicals.

However, for American citizens of color, alarming. With the removal of 20 million disabilities and illnesses had been experienced passed away or been institutionalized in Black detainees had been reduced to or and inhumane treatment that allowed ment to eventually take over the vast of detainees had been named as trustees. Black detainees were moved to live in ghettos area, similar to Nazi ghettos and American Jews and American Indians before the the health care, education, or rights through Disease, violence, and poverty were all rampant. Americans. Most Americans under the age of direct contact with a Black person, and radio and television were now through African wearing Blackface.

Without Black Americans existing, scrutiny had been directed at the Latin American, Pacific Islander Americans, Middle Eastern, and Jewish Americans. Some affluent American Americans moved to Canada and European nations connected with their ethnic roots by Many Middle Eastern American and Jewish non-Jewish Americans changed their names to ethnic groups. Jewish Americans in partic-

emerged as part of the discussions about to new trends in CRT, such as those posed: (1) the epistemology of race, (2) the actors and organizations, (3) intermediate ongoing analysis of intersectionality, (5) an is salient, (6) the racialization of interracial relationships. To this end, I have stories that my doctoral students developed of Utah (spring 2015) that add depth to also bring up new issues for discussion move into using race and naming racism ourselves in research and theory; while still y in these times of violence against youth materialist conditions of poverty linked to Liberman, 2015; Leonardo, 2013).

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Additionally, the chemicals that removed pollutants from the environment ran out after 20 years and could not be duplicated in laboratories. Instead of using these 2 decades of clean air, land, and water to create more sustainable ways of living and commuting, American businesses used them as a reason to suspend investments into hybrid and electric transportation and began selling more extravagant vehicles that made Hummers one of the most fuel efficient options of the modern era. The last 5 years without the Space Traders' chemicals made it apparent that the U.S. was heading back towards high toxicity levels in the air in most urban areas.

Because excess had been a way of life for the 25 years after the Space Traders' visit, it was difficult for Americans to change their expectations to make better use of their fiscal and environmental resources. Polls showed that the majority of White Americans felt excited about the Space Traders' return, because they hoped the U.S. would receive more gold, chemicals, and aid for their current problems.

However, for American citizens of color, the Space Traders' return was highly alarming. With the removal of 20 million Black Americans, U.S. racial dynamics had changed dramatically. Although those over 70 and those with serious disabilities and illnesses had been exempt, most of these Black Americans had passed away or been institutionalized in the last 25 years. Additionally, the 1,000 Black detainees had been reduced to only a few hundred due to violent crimes and inhumane treatment that allowed White Americans and the U.S. government to eventually take over the vast property and possessions over which the detainees had been named as trustees. Because of their suspended citizenship, the Black detainees were moved to live in government housing in a specially zoned area, similar to Nazi ghettos and American Indian reservations. Like European Jews and American Indians before them, the detainees did not have access to the health care, education, or rights that were inalienable to other Americans. Disease, violence, and poverty were all now a way of life for the surviving Black Americans. Most Americans under the age of 30 could not remember ever having direct contact with a Black person, and most historical representations in movies and television were now through African-filmed productions or non-Black actors wearing Blackface.

Without Black Americans existing in U.S. society, more racism and hostile scrutiny had been directed at the Latino/Latina Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islander Americans, Middle Eastern Americans, Native Americans, and Jewish Americans. Some affluent Middle Eastern Americans and Jewish Americans moved to Canada and Europe, and a small minority of these populations connected with their ethnic roots by moving to Israel and the Middle East. Many Middle Eastern American and Jewish Americans who could pass as White, non-Jewish Americans changed their names to escape hostility directed at their ethnic groups. Jewish Americans in particular were held in contempt as they were

still seen as American traitors for having allied themselves with Black Americans during the original Space Trader offer. Jewish jokes were acceptable in mainstream society, and more and more Jews chose to live in neighborhoods with other Jewish families. Predominantly Jewish public schools were often underfunded by local governments. Although public sentiment indicated that Jewish Americans were seen as untrustworthy, they were not seen as violent criminals like Latino/Latina Americans, Pacific Islander Americans, and Southeast Asian Americans were now widely believed to be.

Latino/Latina Americans, Pacific Islander Americans, and Southeast Asian Americans were now even more widely targeted by institutional and systemic racism in ways similar to how Black Americans had been treated previously. Because these communities often went to Black schools before the Space Traders' visit and had similar social disadvantages and discrimination leveraged against them, it was not surprising that public sentiment now held these populations in the same disparagement given previously to Black Americans. In surveys and polls it was shown that White Americans believed many current social issues such as crime, economic waste, and negative race relations were due to Latino/Latina Americans, Pacific Islander Americans, and Southeast Asian Americans.

East and South Asian Americans continued to be labeled as model minorities by which other racial and ethnic groups were measured. Despite the blatant racism of the American government in the Space Traders' exchange, East and South Asian Americans were still the proof to many White Americans that the U.S. was a meritocracy and that racial minorities could find success if they tried hard enough and stopped being lazy and violent. Because of the government's recent lack of focus on Black Americans, the U.S. now had more time to disaggregate data about the Asian American community. Due to this, it was now widely understood that a wide achievement gap existed between East and South Asian Americans and Southeast Asian Americans. While White America acknowledged the success of many East and South Asian Americans (though not the systemic and oppressive barriers through which they had to persist), White America categorized Southeast Asian Americans as likely to be in gangs, hostile to others, lazy, and unable or unwilling to assimilate to mainstream culture, particularly in education and the job market. Despite these negative stereotypes and racist actions taken against them, Southeast Asian Americans did not consider leaving the U.S. since their migration was often by refugee status due to unsafe past living conditions.

As the sun rose on the New Jersey shore, many Southeast Asian Americans watched from home as the Space Traders greeted the U.S. delegation awaiting them. Again, the aliens acknowledged that their spaceships held enormous amounts of gold and special chemicals to keep the environment unpolluted. This time, they also offered the formula so that laboratories could replicate the chemicals when they were depleted. In return, the visitors asked for another group of

Americans that they could take back to a specific type of American for whom there be at least 2 million Americans in time in exchange for the gold, chemicals, and technology. The Cabinet acknowledged that the proposed trade was not in the best interest of the U.S., but what would happen to those

When the visitors departed again, the Cabinet members of the United States who had been watching the exchange breathed a sigh of relief. This time, his was a meeting. All members of the Cabinet were now men.

Although the Space Traders never visited, the Cabinet already had packets of information about the various ethnic groups of Americans. Thus, the conversation started with the various ethnic groups would be offered to the Space Traders. Pacific Islander Americans, Native Americans, and Southeast Asian Americans on their own would not fulfill the quota. Asian Americans, South Asian Americans, and Southeast Asian Americans all more than compensate for the 2 million people demanded. East Asian Americans numbered 2 million. Southeast Asian Americans numbered 2 million. Space Traders asked, Southeast Asian Americans in total population. As one Cabinet member said, "Over 70 million Southeast Asian Americans with serious disabilities and those with serious disabilities little over 2 million Southeast Asian Americans with serious disabilities security responded, "It is much safer for the United States to have a population removed than to leave a large number of people behind. If we considered other groups, we would have to offer 2 million people to the Space Traders for the remaining population. It is logical that the remaining population represents the number demanded."

"It's a good group to consider, because a lot of them aren't even willing to leave the American economy in a meaningful way. The kids don't care to try in school, and so the workers that won't be over missed."

"Latinos not only make up a much larger percentage of almost all the agricultural workers of our country, but they also have an enormous impact on our food production."

"And East Asian Americans are certainly more than some of the other groups. I worry about what is on our hands," commented the secretary.



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Americans that they could take back to their home star. Although there was no specific type of American for whom the Space Traders asked, they did ask that there be at least 2 million Americans who would board their ships in one week's time in exchange for the gold, chemicals, and formula. Again, the visitors' leader acknowledged that the proposed trade would be voluntary and not forced on the U.S., but what would happen to those potentially traded would not be addressed.

When the visitors departed again in their ships, the president of the United States who had been watching the exchange from his bunker in the White House breathed a sigh of relief. This time, his Cabinet knew to be ready and waiting for a meeting. All members of the Cabinet and the president identified as White and most as men.

Although the Space Traders never mentioned race in their current offer, the Cabinet already had packets of information about each marginalized race of Americans. Thus, the conversation started with the assumption that one of these groups would be offered to the Space Traders. It was immediately noticed that Pacific Islander Americans, Native Americans, and Middle Eastern Americans on their own would not fulfill the quota, but that Latino/Latina Americans, East Asian Americans, South Asian Americans, and Southeast Asian Americans would all more than compensate for the 2 million. Although Latino/Latina Americans and East Asian Americans numbered far more than the amount for which the Space Traders asked, Southeast Asian Americans were counted under 3 million in total population. As one Cabinet member immediately noted, exempting those over 70 and those with serious disabilities and illnesses would still allow for a little over 2 million Southeast Asians to be counted. The secretary of homeland security responded, "It is much safer for a group to have almost its entire population removed than to leave a large number of healthy, young, and angry members behind. If we considered other groups, we would needlessly either give more than 2 million people to the Space Traders or else deal with riots across the U.S. from the remaining population. It is logical and safer to pick the group that most closely represents the number demanded."

"It's a good group to consider, because they aren't actually Americans. I mean, a lot of them aren't even willing to learn our language, much less contribute to the American economy in a meaningful way," added the secretary of labor. "Their kids don't care to try in school, and so most of them become thugs or blue collar workers that won't be overly missed."

"Latinos not only make up a much larger portion of the workforce, they are almost all the agricultural workers of our nation. If we choose them, it would have an enormous impact on our food production," said the secretary of labor.

"And East Asian Americans are connected to much more powerful countries than some of the other groups. I worry that if we selected them, we may have a war on our hands," commented the secretary of defense.

“East Asian Americans and South Asian Americans are also tied to countries where we have significant economic relations that should be protected,” added the secretary of commerce.

“Looking at the statistics, Southeast Asian Americans have a history of low income and high use of government handouts. Trading them would not only bring in gold but also remove the need to pay for welfare, healthcare, and other social services,” said the secretary of health and human services.

“They also are not achieving in K–12 education. They cost more money to educate since they often require special education. We also provide many of them free school breakfasts and lunches since they often live in poverty, though few go on to college so will probably never pay the states back with much tax money as high income earners,” stated the secretary of education.

“Should we consider Jewish Americans? Or asking for volunteers?” asked the White House chief of staff.

“Not only would Israel have issues with that, but so would most of Europe given the history,” said the ambassador to the United Nations.

“I don’t think we could find and organize 2 million volunteers in the next 6 days,” commented the president. “It sounds like the most favorable option would be to select the Southeast Asian community for this honor of serving our country. It also sounds like we are in agreement that we should not pass up this highly valuable offer to fix our economic and environmental struggles. Attorney General, can you please draft proposed legislation? I will call a special session of Congress so that we can get something passed as soon as possible. Thank you for your time and ideas. Meeting adjourned.”

## AN EXAMINATION OF BLACK FEMALE PHYSICIAN FACULTY USING A CRITICAL RACE THEORY LENS BY ROSIE CONNOR

This is a fictional account of a conversation I had with a White colleague, who we will call Robert. Robert is founder and president of a medical device company in southern California. He is well connected with many well-known physicians and within the healthcare industry.

- Robert: “So what’s your dissertation topic?”  
 Me: “I’m planning to do a critical examination of the Black female physician faculty pipeline.”  
 Robert: “That should be interesting.”  
 Me: “Well, there’s hardly any published research on this group. I became interested in this group of doctors when I worked at the medical school. I worked with these awesome women who were not well represented

in the school’s leadership and literature either.”

- Robert: “What kind of study will it be?”  
 Me: “Well it started out as a quantitative study. Looking at the numbers I realized I was talking about myself.”

Robert: “Why’s that? How many Black women?”

Me: “Well, there are a little more than 18,000 Black women. That’s only about 2 percent of the population. Numbers are even worse for medical school. There are only about 2,000 Black female physicians in the nation.”

Robert: “18,000! I’m surprised it’s that low.”

Me: “What?”  
 Robert: “What’s the Black population?”  
 Me: “It’s about 13.5 percent.”

Robert: “The Black population is about 18% in the country. Black women are about 10% of the population. I think about all the shit that I’ve heard about why I’m surprised the numbers are so low.”

Me: “Well, I agree with that, but the numbers are even worse for medical school.”

Robert: “Hey, most of them don’t even have a home with my father. So they’re poor and in the hood. So, please don’t blame them.”

Robert: “Okay, okay, okay. So that’s why you guys have unbelievable numbers. It’s through medical school is why you guys have unbelievable numbers. I know what happens though.”

Me: “That’s exactly why I need to do this. 2 percent who make it. It’s all about the reasons why they don’t.”

Robert: “That’s true, but I think having an unbelievable dissertation. Just like you’re right. One woman’s story with the data needs to be that’s a little harder to deny.”

Robert: “You’re right. One woman’s story with the data needs to be that’s a little harder to deny.”

Me: “You’re right. One woman’s story with the data needs to be that’s a little harder to deny.”

Robert: “You’re right. One woman’s story with the data needs to be that’s a little harder to deny.”

There are points to like and loathe about Robert acknowledges that Black women from his “insider” perspective on “what goes on” in the medical characterization of Black family life was completely expressed later in a conversation). My

Asian Americans are also tied to countries that should be protected," added the

most Asian Americans have a history of low incomes. Trading them would not only bring money for welfare, healthcare, and other social and human services.

0-12 education. They cost more money to educate. We also provide many of them because they often live in poverty, though few go to the states back with much tax money as a result of education.

icans? Or asking for volunteers?" asked the

with that, but so would most of Europe and to the United Nations.

organize 2 million volunteers in the next 6 months like the most favorable option would be unity for this honor of serving our country. It is that we should not pass up this highly visible environmental struggles. Attorney General, when I will call a special session of Congress as soon as possible. Thank you for your time

## FEMALE PHYSICIAN FACULTY THROUGH A WOMAN'S LENS BY ROSIE CONNOR

relationship I had with a White colleague, who was the president of a medical device company in which I worked with many well-known physicians and

on topic?"

clinical examination of the Black female physi-

g."  
published research on this group. I became a doctor when I worked at the medical school. Some women who were not well represented

in the school's leadership and not very well represented in the scholarly literature either."

Robert: "What kind of study will it be?"

Me: "Well it started out as a qualitative study, but once I started looking at the numbers I realized that the numbers also tell a story all by themselves."

Robert: "Why's that? How many Black female physicians are there in the country?"

Me: "Well, there are a little more than 18,000 Black female physicians. That's only about 2 percent of the physician population. The numbers are even worse for medical school faculty members where there are only about 2,000 Black female physician faculty members in the nation."

Robert: "18,000! I'm surprised it's that high!"

Me: "What?"

Robert: "What's the Black population in the U.S.?"

Me: "It's about 13.5 percent."

Robert: "The Black population is about 13 percent and 2 percent of the doctors in the country are Black women. That's freaking amazing! I mean just think about all the shit that Black women have to go through. That's why I'm surprised the number is that high."

Me: "Well, I agree with that, but ..."

Robert: "Hey, most of them don't even know who their fathers are."

Me: "Did you really just say that? That's such stereotypical crap! I grew up in a home with my father. So did most of my friends. And, yes we were poor and in the hood. So, please don't ..."

Robert: "Okay, okay, okay. So that point is debatable. But it's still true that you guys have unbelievable obstacles. The fact that 2 percent made it through medical school is f\*cking amazing! I work with these White guys. I know what happens there."

Me: "That's exactly why I need to do this research. It's not because of the 2 percent who make it. It's all about all the others who don't and all the reasons why they don't."

Robert: "That's true, but I think having the women tell their stories would make an unbelievable dissertation. Just one woman's story would be incredible."

Me: "You're right. One woman's story would be amazing, but I think this story with the data needs to be told first. The numbers will tell a story that's a little harder to deny."

There are points to like and loathe about Robert's point of view: the fact that Robert acknowledges that Black women face unique challenges in America; and his "insider" perspective on "what goes on" in medical education. But his stereotypical characterization of Black family life was problematic (which was more completely expressed later in a conversation). More troubling than Robert's misguided



lane is privy to the demands and becomes indignant, whereby they convene at their makeshift Central-Command—the local Suckyourbucks Coffee—to map out a logistics plan of attack:

"Well, this does not include our kids, our children score well above proficiency."

"Why don't they just take the non-proficient students? We'd all be better off without their scores bringing down our school grade. We might make an 'A' instead of a 'B+.'"

"How can they expect we bear the burden for the Low Latin@s (LLs)? It is unjust the way the school enables them."

"We do not have the advantages they do—we have to do it all on our own by paying for private tutors and ski coaches, summer camps, and travel to broaden their horizons, yet they have Latinos in Action."

"What programs does the school sponsor for *our* children?"

"We should have CIA. (Caucasians in Action) to equalize the playing field."

Latinos in Action gives them a leg up when they apply to college. The

Ivies look favorably upon these programs. Our kids deserve the same."

"The district has opened up the dual-language classes for native speakers. How is this fair? They already speak a foreign language."

"Now we are going to have to go to a lottery system for our younger kids. They might not get a seat in the classes, and we already have our tickets booked for Spain next summer."

"I am over how Mt. Excellence under-educates our children as it is and Standardized Aliens are threatening to take over the schools because of *their* scores?!"

"What more can we do? I email all Bobby's teachers every week. I volunteer in the library shelving books so the librarians can take a break, and I do not see any LL parents at the school helping, yet we are expected to suffer because they are not prepared and proficient? I think not."

"What are our options?"

"Why don't we start a charter school?"

"Yeah, we can be the board and make sure only 'qualified' applicants are accepted to the school."

"Our charter will start with no standardized testing, dual-language classes will only be offered for students who do not speak any other languages."

"We will have a mandatory summer study abroad program in Chile or Spain."

"Instead of shelving books, we will create a Cyber Café with e-books and espresso machines."

After all, they are more than your average moms; they are committed to White Smother Mothering because their children's lives depend on it.

## ALTHY ROCKIES

vn, privilege and White elitism runs deep. winning ski resorts, and a climate conducive eated a niche lifestyle and drawn a cadre of o *choose* to live here. They visit during a ski pen space, and choice schools—along with "run anywhere, make it viable to get out of d the exorbitantly priced boroughs of New e used to diversity in their neighborhoods, e like an episode of *The Twilight Zone*. An o color in the demographic landscape, save lies—cleaning their homes, hotels rooms, e is a deep divide between the two groups eir way into the school for PTO meetings, it meetings, and a session with the school be missing the next 2 weeks because they tional, or their family cruise to St. Bart's asly week over spring break, or Tommy's include a sail around Martha's Vineyard. daughter will be completing all work on r with built-in Wi-fi hotspot. r pick up, but the *Early Release pick up*, s, lugers, aerialists, snowboard free-styl- bike racers, and ice skaters leave to train e majority of the White population), the -pitched static. The kids start moaning t surprised—they are used to the dron- . This time it is not the principal or the Alien. Standardized Alien commences ns will taking over Mount Excellence ts to Neoliberalimville unless *all* stu- e test. The pod of moms in the pickup

## SPACE TRADERS IN THE U.S. ON TV IN BRAZIL

### BY ANA CAROLINA ANTUNES

The news first broke out in the U.S., but in the era of the blink-and-you-miss-it news cycle it did not take long for the story to make its way to Brazilian television. The channel's logo took over the screen, interrupting the afternoon re-run of high-school-set American drama. Janaína wasn't much of a news enthusiast, so she lazily reached for the remote on top of her belly to change the channel. Her TV set was not new, in fact, she thought, it was as old as old can be, like pre-flat-screen old. Janaína didn't even have to wait for the image to form, in her old TV set the sound would come in first to a black screen, the image would form in a few seconds, but for the girl that was enough time to know that the report had taken over all of the channels in her basic cable package. After circling through all the channels once, she finally settled on one.

"It is still not known," the perfectly coiffed reporter announced, "what the aliens intend to do with the population offered up as trade or if the offer will be extended to other countries, but the Brazilian president has already called a meeting with civil and religious leaders in order to be prepared for future contact."

Janaína looked around, trying to take in the moment and the news. Aliens. People. As. Trade. But for what? She reached for her canvas backpack on the foot of her bed. Trying to be economical in her movements, she got up from her bed just enough to touch the opened front pocket, and, with the tips of her fingers, she grabbed her phone.

While the TV and other appliances in the house may not have been top of the line, Janaína had told her mother that she could not, "I mean literally, could not," in her exact words, go to school without the newest, coolest smartphone. Her mother, Maristella, had conceded in this case. For most of their lives, it had been just the two of them, and Janaína had had to live without a lot of the luxuries that some of her schoolmates have. No trips to Disneyworld, no private English lessons, no dance class, and no fancy birthday party when she turned 15. So Maristella had put the fancy phone on the credit card and hoped for the best.

In the next few minutes, Janaína read all the posts on Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, and Instagram, trying to piece together what was happening. Not an easy task, the threads, posts, and tweets were faster than she could follow, but the key points of the situation were becoming clear: an alien ship had appeared above Washington, DC and the ... the people—Janaína wasn't sure how to refer to aliens, people didn't seem right but what else was there?—had proposed some sort of trade, all of the Black Americans for a sort of fix-all ticket. At that moment, Janaína thought about the TV infomercials, with their tacky voiceovers and their promises of solving all of the viewers' problems. She could see the "wait, but there

is more" part coming soon. That is why t  
an emergency meeting. "We are the free b  
of one."

She sat up on her bed, and looked at  
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she knew deep in her gut that it would be

As the afternoon progressed, more in  
updates, and the hashtags. Janaína followe  
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caught up in the never-ending reports tha  
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was already in the house by the time she r

Maristella shook her head as she s  
She knew her daughter too well. Witho  
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Janaína tried to muster an explanation: "I  
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while she worked in front of a computer  
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Something about aliens? Now, I did not t  
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benefits that the trade would bring to the  
loss," said the international correspondent  
of the reporter gave way to footage of Bla  
news: hugging their families, crying hyster  
to flee to Canada and to Mexico. The w

## ON TV IN BRAZIL

5

out in the era of the blink-and-you-miss-it story to make its way to Brazilian television screen, interrupting the afternoon re-run. Janaína wasn't much of a news enthusiast, on top of her belly to change the channel. She thought, it was as old as old can be, like she had to wait for the image to form, in her first to a black screen, the image would form as enough time to know that the report had been on the basic cable package. After circling through all the channels, she found one.

The news anchor, a woman with her hair neatly coiffed, announced, "what the government has offered up as trade or if the offer will be accepted. The Brazilian president has already called a meeting to be prepared for future contact." Janaína made a note in the moment and the news. Aliens. She reached for her canvas backpack on the foot of the bed. Her movements, she got up from her bed, she took her sock, and, with the tips of her fingers, she

she thought in the house may not have been top of the line. She could not, "I mean literally, could not," in her opinion, the newest, coolest smartphone. Her mother, she thought, for most of their lives, it had been just the way of life without a lot of the luxuries that some people have in Disneyworld, no private English lessons, no money, and when she turned 15. So Maristella had never had and hoped for the best.

She read all the posts on Facebook, Tumblr, and she put together what was happening. Not all the news reports were faster than she could follow, but she was getting a clearer picture: an alien ship had appeared in the sky over the Amazon—Janaína wasn't sure how to refer to it, but she thought that else was there?—had proposed some kind of trade for a sort of fix-all ticket. At that moment, she thought of the news anchors, with their tacky voiceovers and their dramatic announcements. She could see the "wait, but there

is more" part coming soon. That is why the Brazilian government was calling for an emergency meeting. "We are the free bonus," she thought, "the two for the price of one."

She sat up on her bed, and looked at the clock on the nightstand. "I want to remember the exact time," she thought. Janaína had been too young to remember 9/11, but she had heard her older cousins talking about the exact moment they learned what had happened. "This is one of those moments, a moment I'll remember for the rest of my life." She wasn't sure how this moment would affect her, but she knew deep in her gut that it would be in a big way.

As the afternoon progressed, more information started to arrive on TV, status updates, and the hashtags. Janaína followed closely as reports of meetings between political, religious, and civil rights leaders happened in the United States. "How can there be so much discussion? Nobody would say yes to this." Janaína got so caught up in the never-ending reports that she forgot it was her turn to make dinner. It was only when she heard the key entering the lock that she realized how late it was. She tried to rush out of her bedroom and into the kitchen, but her mother was already in the house by the time she made it past the hallway.

Maristella shook her head as she set her purse on the table by the door. She knew her daughter too well. Without saying anything the woman entered the kitchen, turned the stove on and grabbed a frozen lasagna from the freezer. Janaína tried to muster an explanation: "I'm sorry ... I ... have you been watching the news? It is crazy!" Maristella worked as secretary at a small firm, and while she worked in front of a computer all day, she hardly had time to do anything else other than work. She was the scheduler, accountant, human resource, and courier. "I heard about it but have not gotten a lot of information about it. ... Something about aliens? Now, I did not think I would live to see something like that!" "It's all over the news," said Janaína. "I mean, it is the ONLY thing on TV." Janaína turned the TV on and set on the couch. In the rush to get to the kitchen before her mother came in, the girl had left the TV in her bedroom on, and the same transmission could be heard from the living room, with a slight delay. Normally, nothing would have bugged Maristella more than two TVs on at the same time, but today was a different day. She sat by her daughter and took off her shoes.

"And reports are just in that the American government has just decided to accept the aliens' proposal! This is incredible! Despite the protests that have sparked all over the world, the American government has announced that the benefits that the trade would bring to the overall population outweigh the human loss," said the international correspondent straight from New York City. The image of the reporter gave way to footage of Black Americans reacting differently to the news: hugging their families, crying hysterically, looting stores on the street, trying to flee to Canada and to Mexico. The women sat in silence as the news played

through the night. The images of people reacting to the news became images of people being escorted to the place assigned for pick up.

As she sat next to her mother, holding hands together, Janaína started to think about the possibility of the proposal being extended outside of American borders. In Brazil, she had always been called “morena” “café com leite” or “escurinha,” but as she watched the people being taken to the trade-off spot she noticed people who were a lot lighter than she was. What would happen if the deal got extended to other countries? Would each country determine what it means to be Black? Would American standards be extended to all? Janaína held her mother’s hand a little tighter, and then an even scarier thought came to her mind. She looked at her mother’s hand again; juxtaposing both of their skins she could see how much darker her mother was. She had never really noticed it until now. “What if,” she tried to push the idea away from her mind, “no, that wouldn’t happen. ... What if ... what if mom was considered Black but I wasn’t.” She thought about her life without her mother. Who would take care of her? She knew she couldn’t count on her dad, and if her mother was traded, her grandmother would be too, definitely. Suddenly a sense of guilt came over her; she remembered all of the times her grandmother came to pick her up from school and her friends thought she was the nanny. “I never corrected them,” she thought, “I should have told them she was my grandma, but I didn’t.” Despite their limited means, Maristella always put Janaína’s education first, and for the last couple of years they had counted on the help of Janaína’s grandmother to pay for the girl’s school. The weight of the old woman’s sacrifice was even heavier now.

The night turned into day as the sun rose up through their window. The alarms rang in the bedrooms, first in Maristella’s and then in Janaína’s, adding to the TV echoing in the back. The cacophony played on, but nothing disturbed the women. They were lost so deep in their thoughts, hoping that their fate would be different than the people on TV.

They couldn’t be sure what time it was, but when the sun was already high in the sky a reporter came on live from Brasília. “We just received the information that the president will make an announcement shortly confirming a trade with the United States. We’ve been hearing rumors all night that the American government was offered to have its fresh water and renewable energy supply doubled if it could double the number of people traded with the aliens. The previous deal promised to solve all current problems but did not guarantee they would not arise again; with the second offer the country would most likely never have issues again. In order to fulfill the deal, The United States has offered free-trade agreements to the nations that are willing to help the Americans fulfill the second quota.” The reporter turns her back to the camera, “it seems that the president is walking out as we speak.” The camera moves away from the reporter and zooms in on the podium.

Maristella and Janaína look motionless at what is about to come.

## THE SPACE TRADERS COME TO SCHOOL’S HANDS BY ALLISON

Mr. Johnson hung up the phone and laid his head on his desk. He was still in his office. To say today was a quiet day was an understatement. It began, as the past 4 days had been, with a news report on the radio. To Park Hills High, the school where Mr. Johnson had worked for 11 years. When Mr. Johnson had started teaching, the school was one of the best high schools in the state. The students were mostly wealthy and White. The college graduation rates and a trophy case full of awards were evidence of this. In the last few years, the school had been in a transition. As the racial composition shifted and White families moved out, the school’s racial composition shifted. At first, Mr. Johnson noticed the changes. Diversity was something the school was finally getting some students they called “all-White” school. And Mr. Johnson wanted to keep their curriculum and pedagogy the same. That showed they believed all students could learn. Mr. Johnson wished someone would explain to the member who keeps publically criticizing the school for not providing a quality education to its African American students.

At the thought of Mrs. Boston, Mr. Johnson looked around. Was she right? Sure, test scores were nothing compared with the controversy. Jensen, the school’s star quarterback, was suspended from the school’s “White-out” pep assembly last year for talking to students with it. Reports of other instances of racism in as well. Other football team members were suspended from the locker of a teammate who was African American for not intervening when they heard student talk. Mr. Johnson was accused of racism for not intervening. He called another student the n-word during a pep assembly. An African American student in the hospital. That was the school’s policy was very clear. Both students were suspended. Mr. Johnson couldn’t let one off easy just because of his mean name. What kind of leadership would



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d for pick up.

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Maristella and Janaína look motionless at the screen, their hearts racing for  
what is about to come.

### THE SPACE TRADERS COME TO TAKE A "PROBLEM" OFF A SCHOOL'S HANDS BY ALLISON MARTIN

Mr. Johnson hung up the phone and laid his head on his desk. It was after 6 p.m. and he was still in his office. To say today had been long would be an understatement. It began, as the past 4 days had begun, with news crews lining the entrance to Park Hills High, the school where Mr. Johnson had been principal for the past 11 years. When Mr. Johnson had started, Park Hills was considered one of the best high schools in the state. The students attending this large suburban school were mostly wealthy and White. The combination resulted in high test scores and graduation rates and a trophy case full of academic and athletic awards. But in the last few years, the school had been in something of a decline. As the economy shifted and White families moved out of Park Hills neighborhoods, the school's racial composition shifted. At first, Mr. Johnson and his staff were happy with the changes. Diversity was something the school always struggled with and now they were finally getting some students they could point to when criticized for being an "all-White" school. And Mr. Johnson was proud of the way his teachers kept all their curriculum and pedagogy the same despite the school's shifting demographics. That showed they believed all students were the same, regardless of race, right? Mr. Johnson wished someone would explain that to Mrs. Boston, the nosy board member who keeps publically criticizing the school and its teaching staff for not providing a quality education to its African American students.

At the thought of Mrs. Boston, Mr. Johnson lifted his head from his desk and looked around. Was she right? Sure, test scores had gone down recently but that was nothing compared with the controversy currently facing the school. Miles Jensen, the school's star quarterback, was accused of wearing a KKK hood during the school's "White-out" pep assembly last week and taunting other, mostly Black, students with it. Reports of other instances of racial discrimination kept coming in as well. Other football team members stood accused of drawing a swastika on the locker of a teammate who was African American. Teachers were accused of not intervening when they heard students use the n-word in the hallway. Even Mr. Johnson was accused of racism for not more harshly punishing a student who called another student the n-word during a fight that ended with the African American student in the hospital. That one really got to him. After all, school policy was very clear. Both students were fighting so both were punished equally. Mr. Johnson couldn't let one off easy just because he lost the fight or was called a mean name. What kind of leadership would that be?

Try telling that to the news cameras lined up outside. Mr. Johnson audibly snorted. All the media seemed interested in reporting was how Park Hills High was racist. Headlines such as “KKK football player not punished” and “Racist incident at Park Hills” had run each day since the controversy made the news. Meanwhile, Mrs. Boston used the attention to further criticize Mr. Johnson and his staff for failing to meet the needs of their African American students. It was all too much; Mr. Johnson put his head back on his desk. What was he to do now?

Just then a bright light and loud beeping noise interrupted the silence. Mr. Johnson looked up just in time to see a video seemingly projected in mid air above his desk. On the screen, a White, middle-aged man appeared. “Mr. Johnson, I represent a consortium of powerful individuals who are interested in helping you out. We can solve your school’s PR problem, raise student test scores, and ensure the School Board views you and your school positively. As an added bonus we can guarantee you the state football championship as well as scholarships to top-tier schools for all your graduates. All we ask in return is all of your African American students.”

Mr. Johnson was stunned. “What do you mean all African American students?” he asked.

“We simply ask for access to every African American enrolled in your school. They will be removed and no longer your concern. In return, you, your all-White teaching staff, and remaining students will benefit from everything we have offered you. High test scores, a positive reputation, support and praise from the School Board, a football championship, and scholarships for all graduates.”

“What will happen to the African American students?” Mr. Johnson asked.

The man in the video replied simply, “Do not worry about that, this is our offer. You have 24 hours to accept.”

The next morning Mr. Johnson called an emergency meeting with his two assistant principals. As the three were sitting down in the conference room, Mrs. Boston and the district superintendent walked in insisting they be heard. As it turned out everyone in the room had received the same message and were eager to discuss their options.

“This could be a great benefit to the school and the remaining students,” Superintendent Calhoon began. “We wouldn’t have a problem with racism if we didn’t have Black students and the school could certainly use higher test scores. Not to mention how happy parents will be with the scholarships.”

The two White, male assistant principals nodded in agreement. Mr. Johnson then looked to Mrs. Boston. Certainly she would have an opinion on this.

Mrs. Boston looked like an average White, middle-aged, suburban mom. She was elected by a slim margin and seemed to gain the favor of her constituents by criticizing the school and arguing for reforms. She had a talent for persuasion and frequently pushed the school to adopt policies and practices aimed at “evidence-based” changes that would help the school’s “low performers rise to the top.”

Mrs. Boston scanned the room before families of Park Hills High and intend to At this she paused and looked directly at who no longer attend Park Hills High ar

The superintendent nodded knowin offer, our African American students will not our concern. We have to consider the

“Research shows that when students they also achieve more. There are plenty c efit from such a trade being made.” Mrs. .

Mr. Johnson leaned forward in his ch dents without drawing attention to the tr need any more negative media attention f

“I don’t think that will be a problem,” s “Part of the deal was positive PR and I th For all we know, they’re sending these stu suited for teaching Black students. These k education someplace like that anyway.”

At this point, Mr. Wilson, one of the t sure will hurt our athletics. I mean, I know pionship but I don’t see how that happen we have to consider basketball as well.”

“Wilson brings up a good point,” conc

“We have to stop worrying so much “It’s test scores that determine whether or We cannot allow other concerns to trump the data for this school. Without the Afri get a small boost automatically but this tr ciency score. That is amazing and will real those college scholarships. How can we tu

“It looks like we’re agreed then.” Mr. J go about letting the traders know.”

Just then the video screen reappeared. “ We’ll take it from here ...”

## POETIC COUNTERSTORIES: SPO FORM OF TALKING BACK BY KEI

Note to reader: This section cannot be read ferent stories side-by-side: the majoritarian read one side of the story, you must go back

ras lined up outside. Mr. Johnson audibly  
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d to gain the favor of her constituents by  
eforms. She had a talent for persuasion  
opt policies and practices aimed at "evi-  
e school's "low performers rise to the top."

Mrs. Boston scanned the room before she spoke. "I was elected to serve the  
families of Park Hills High and intend to do what is best for them. ALL of them."  
At this she paused and looked directly at the superintendent, "Of course, students  
who no longer attend Park Hills High are not our concern ..."

The superintendent nodded knowingly, "Yes, Mrs. Boston, if we accept this  
offer, our African American students will no longer be our students and therefore  
not our concern. We have to consider the needs of the students we serve."

"Research shows that when students attend schools with high achievement,  
they also achieve more. There are plenty of students who will be left and will ben-  
efit from such a trade being made." Mrs. Boston added.

Mr. Johnson leaned forward in his chair, "But how will we remove these stu-  
dents without drawing attention to the trade? I don't know about you, but I don't  
need any more negative media attention for this school or our students."

"I don't think that will be a problem," Superintendent Calhoun quickly replied.  
"Part of the deal was positive PR and I think the trade-makers could handle that.  
For all we know, they're sending these students to a special charter school better  
suited for teaching Black students. These kids are probably going to get a far better  
education someplace like that anyway."

At this point, Mr. Wilson, one of the two assistant principals, spoke up, "But it  
sure will hurt our athletics. I mean, I know they promised us a state football cham-  
pionship but I don't see how that happens without Black players, and, of course,  
we have to consider basketball as well."

"Wilson brings up a good point," conceded Superintendent Calhoun.

"We have to stop worrying so much about sports!" Mrs. Boston exclaimed.  
"It's test scores that determine whether or not students will be successful in life!  
We cannot allow other concerns to trump that. Now, I went ahead and looked at  
the data for this school. Without the African American students, test scores will  
get a small boost automatically but this trade gives us a guaranteed 100% profi-  
ciency score. That is amazing and will really show that our students are ready for  
those college scholarships. How can we turn this down?"

"It looks like we're agreed then." Mr. Johnson said quietly. "I wonder how we  
go about letting the traders know."

Just then the video screen reappeared. "That won't be a problem, Mr. Johnson.  
We'll take it from here ..."

## POETIC COUNTERSTORIES: SPOKEN-WORD POETRY AS A FORM OF TALKING BACK BY KEHAULANI FOLAU

**Note to reader:** This section cannot be read from page to page. I present two dif-  
ferent stories side-by-side: the majoritarian and the counterstory. When you have  
read one side of the story, you must go back to read its counterstory.

## Majoritarian Story

## Ten Reasons to Make English the Official Language of the United States

History has blessed [the U.S.] with all the freedom and advantages of multiculturalism. But it has also blessed us, because of the accident of our origins, with a linguistic unity that brings a critically needed cohesion to a nation as diverse, multiracial and multiethnic as America.

1. To stipulate that although government may use other languages, to be legally binding and authoritative, e.g., "official," it must act or communicate in the English language.
2. To clarify that whenever there is a conflict in meaning between government laws, regulations, or pronouncements issued in more than one language, the English version is the authoritative one.
3. To clarify that unless government decides to provide it, no one has an entitlement or right to government services or documents in a language other than English.
4. To recognize the historical fact that the United States has been an overwhelmingly English-speaking nation since it was created and that its constitution and foundational documents are in English.
5. To recognize that while the people of United States value and respect diversity, they want to preserve English as their common language and therefore immigrants have the responsibility to learn English.
6. To conform to the majority of the states (31) that have already made English their official language.

## Counterstory

## My Rant To Public Schooling's View on Language

*I'm getting sick of you telling me  
That my multilingual tongue  
Presents a problem against your  
Bias educational system.  
You tell me that my language  
Is the barrier  
But let's be real here,  
Since supposedly your educators  
Do not tell lies, where the real barrier lays.  
The barrier is your solution in this institution  
that calls my English broken  
While everyone else is  
being objectified, commoditized, and exploited.  
You call your language an art,  
Requiring me to take it every year  
I'm in your system,  
And by the time I'm out  
Your institution has given birth  
to a perfect little assimilated me.  
Answering my mom in English  
when she asks pwopwo, iahirehmwi?  
Answering my dad in English  
when he asks fefeako?  
Answering my Papa in English  
when he asks fefe hake?  
Recognizing for the first time that  
anga' fakatonga and faka'apa'apa  
Sounds like I'm saying something  
totally different ... in English.  
Language is not the barrier.  
Language is not the barrier.  
But the melting persists.  
Because the only way I'll have an opportunity  
to get an opportunity,  
Is through your system.  
But I'm forgetting.  
I'm forgetting what I do not speak,  
Do not hear,  
Do not see written.*

7. To respond to the will of the American people, 87 percent of whom believe English should be our official language, according to a May 2010 Rasmussen Reports survey.
8. To conform to the rest of the world: Eighty-five percent of the United Nations' member nations have official languages. Fifty-three (53) of those nations have adopted English as their official language.
9. To avoid the costs, burdens, and conflicts that arise in nations like Canada or international organizations like the European Union that attempt to conduct business in more than one official language.
10. To bring the federal government into conformity with national institutions like the U.S. Army and the federal court system, who for practical reasons have decided to operate in English. ("Ten Reasons to Make English the Official Language of the United States," n.d.)

## MY COUNTERSTORY

As a multilingual student, I struggled as a was taken out of class to attend English as courses to push my speech towards the "6 years old I came home and when my dad language, Tonga, I answered, "Tuku lea fak My parents migrated from the Pacific Islar

## Counterstory

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*I'm forgetting that favor on my tongue  
Only to find myself getting  
tongue-tied from the lost words,  
Remembering that I have an opportunity  
to get an opportunity.  
Language is not the barrier.  
So let's be real here,  
Since supposedly your educators  
did not tell lies,  
Where the real barrier lays.  
The barrier is your system.  
The barrier is this bias institution.  
The barrier is your hegemonic discursive  
ideology  
Language is not the barrier.  
Language is a tree.  
With roots deeply embedded in its ancestry,  
Branching out to its inheritance.  
Leaving words of truths,  
Stories of the past, passed down  
to the fruits of their labor.  
You have created a struggle of remembering.  
Trying to hook us into your  
culture of the assimilated  
But even Captain Hook would have  
no hold on hooks words  
When she writes,  
"Language is also a place of struggle.  
We are wedded in language,  
have our being in words."  
So now that I know  
I choose to resist and speak.  
Kebaulani Folau*

## MY COUNTERSTORY

As a multilingual student, I struggled as a child academically. During elementary, I was taken out of class to attend English as a Second Language and speech therapy courses to push my speech towards the "standard language." I recall when I was 6 years old I came home and when my dad asked me how school was in his native language, Tonga, I answered, "*Tuku lea faka-Tonga. I'm gonna speak English only.*" My parents migrated from the Pacific Islands for a better future for my siblings and

me. So without much thought, they agreed with me and started speaking English at home. Now, reflecting on my schooling experience, I regret that moment telling my dad I only wanted to speak English.

I find strength in spoken word poetry and the spoken word poems of these modern-day orators. I also find decolonization to be a hard and long process, but being aware, I find myself in the margins that have become a space of openness and site of resistance against internalizing oppression. Spoken word poetry is the platform to express my emotions, insights, and frustrations. "My Letter/Rant to Public Schooling" was a way I found to cope with the stresses of being marginalized by a system I am trying to navigate as well as a way I talk back to the oppressive schooling system.

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