

CRT: DEBATE SPARK, NOT A TEXTBOOK
By J.E. Malone

I read Critical Race Theory cover to cover to see what the fuss is about. It is not a work of scholarship. It asserts many conclusions and assumptions with little citation, reference or footnote. I do not believe it qualifies as a textbook. Neither do I think it deserves banning from libraries. (Third Edition, Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, New York University Press)

We don't ban books just because they don't deserve textbook status. They can stimulate debate and discussion. Bans simply stimulate sales and encourage book burners. This book is already in its third edition. (It does include an index and other reading suggestions on the subject.)

The book seems to contend that racism grew from American white folks' guilt for slavery. This view is blind to the global history of slavery.

When Abraham's wife concluded that she was too old to bear him an heir, she ordered her female servant to serve as her substitute heir bearer. (Not necessary, it turned out.) There is no indication that the servant had any choice in the matter. That represents an early example of slavery with no evident connection to race.

Historians have produced documentaries with bone-chilling tours of holding cells that housed black Africans, captured by other black Africans and held for the arrival of colonial slave ships. The captured blacks were sold by their black jailers to slave ships for delivery to slave markets in the "New World."

Recent TV reports show slave markets in northern Africa where black Africans are selling other black Africans now. The report suggests many of the buyers are Mideastern Arabs.

I once had a professor in college whose classroom had just been integrated by a very bright black woman. This professor was a native of a Baltic nation where he was captured by Nazis in WWII, held in a concentration camp until transferred to a forced labor camp for the duration of the war.

This rescued white slave asked me over lunch once, "Why did you let the black ones in?"

Christianity has been ambivalent. Gary Greenberg, President of the Biblical Archeology Society of NY, writes that he searched hard for a New Testament explicit prohibition of slavery, but could find not one. He decided, however, that Christianity taken as a whole prohibits slavery.

Rev. John Lewis, a writer about early Christian events, notes that a proposed change to the Catholic canon could not be adopted by the Council of Lateran in the year 1223 because it was rejected by the African Catholic Church.

A Biblical Archeology article reports that one Egyptian pharaoh took pride in his all "Asiatic" slaves.

A Jewish friend of mine became enraged after watching TV reports of a ghetto riot in LA. "They are animals!" he screamed. His Austrian-native wife received an annual government reparation for her years spent in a Nazi concentration camp.

A Cuban emigre, an ex-U.S. Marine friend who also captained a friend's boat, once said he was leaving the boat to run an errand. Thinking it was a friendly goodbye, I said, "Vaya con Dios."

He rebuked me: "Nobody says that but Mexicans!"

I once told a Jamaican immigrant caregiver about another caregiver who previously refused to mop a dangerous spill. She had said it wasn't in her contract.

"That has to have been a Haitian," the Jamaican caregiver said.

Biblical Archeology reports that the Samaritans and Hebrews appear to have been one and the same until after the flight from Egypt and the conquests by Alexander. Then appears a spilt apparently over theological differences on the oneness of God.

Nevertheless, in the tale of the Good Samaritan, the writer goes to pains to point out that the kind stranger on the road was a "good" Samaritan. That appears to be an example of religious bigotry with no racial roots.

I can imagine, absent any proof, that in human prehistory, many a time a villager would warn a child that a stranger approaching around a bend in the woods who looks "different" is likely an enemy.

Should my speculation have any accuracy, then racial prejudice is akin to the human species' inherited appendix. It rests there unnoticed until aggravated or injured. Then it quickly becomes life-threatening unless attended to quickly.

Jordan Rosenfeld, in turn quoting Professor Raj Raghunathan (University of Texas), in a little more academic language, writes: "...taking pleasure in, and seeking, the familiar may be baked into our survival: 'From an evolutionary perspective, it makes sense that familiarity breeds liking...Generally speaking, things that are familiar are likely to be safer than things that are not..."

"...thus one could say that we are hardwired to feel that the 'known devil is better than the unknown angel.'" (Writer's Digest, Jan/Feb 2023)

It seems that only one race—from generation to generation—carries the genetics of racism: The human race.

If my speculation has truth, that racism's biological parallels demonstrate intergenerational transmission of prejudice, then we all need to examine our own inherited attitudes and quell its further transmission to our own children.

Racism and slavery--not always--but often do not persist in parallel. Each infection requires its own diagnosis and medication.

I look forward to corrections and criticisms from those better read and educated than I.