

Reclaiming Liberation After Struggle: Recognizing Freedom and the Humanity of Blackness in Juneteenth

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Pronouns:
she/her/hers/siya

D.E.I.

- Diversity...
- Equity...
- Inclusion...
- How do we see these in this presentation?



What is
Juneteenth?

Juneteenth:
June + 19th

- Slavery actually officially ended in 1863
- Slavery continued in Texas until 1865



humanity

- What is humanity?
- Why is recognizing other people's humanity important?

humanization

- Humanization is recognizing the humanity in ourselves and others.

humanization

- When we humanize others, we allow for one to pursue their lives in the ways they want and in ways that don't oppress others, and we create communities that uplift our lives, support our needs, and help one another to succeed especially in the face of adversity. Know that we are all trying our best so it's okay when "trying" is messy sometimes (that is human!) .
- How do you humanize one another at work? How do you humanize your family?

humanization

- When we humanize ourselves, we understand that our lives matter even as marginalized people, that we are worthy even if we don't have the most money or have the highest status.
 - How do you humanize people that you don't know?

Slavery – some history

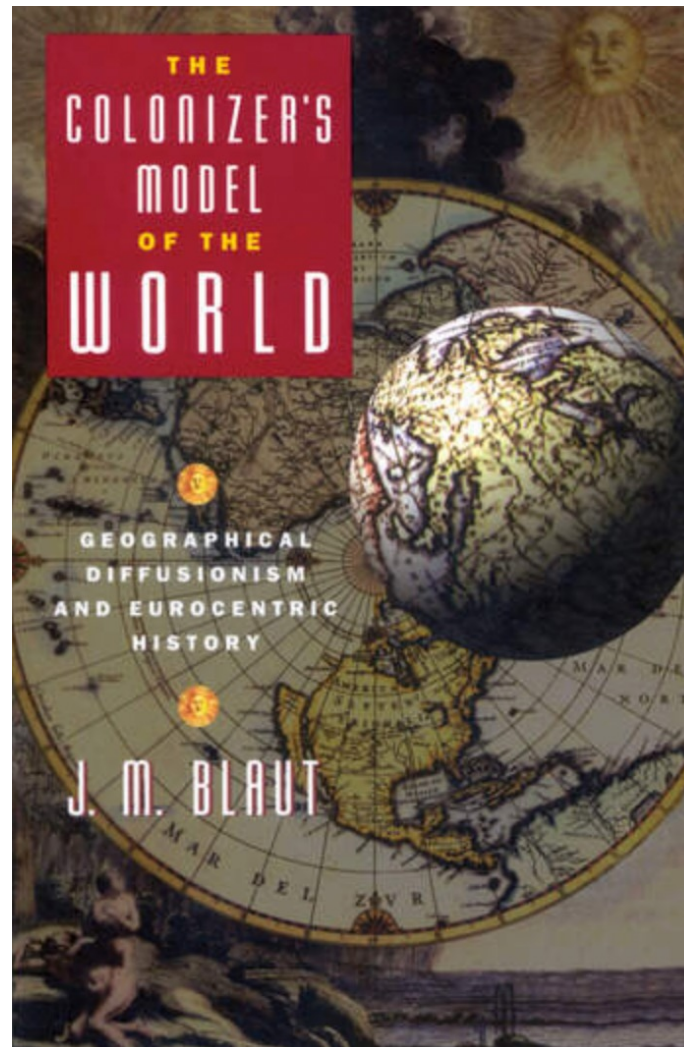
- Slavery in the U.S. existed for centuries (1619)
- Conditions: civilizations → forced amnesia
- Conditions: extremely violent
- Conditions: gender → 1807
- Where do we see dehumanization?

sharecropping

- “40 acres and a mule” (30,000 vs. 4 million)
- After slavery ended, Southern States enacted “Black Codes”
- Money vs. land and crops = massive debt

Before there was slavery...(Anderson and Stewart)

- Sophisticated African civilizations
- “Early developers of agriculture in the cultivation of soil, and the planting and sowing of domestic crops. Animal domestication, iron-smelting, and tool-making appeared among various African populations from about 4300 to 250 B.C.” (44)
- “Africans were the forerunners or concurrent contributors to science, engineering, metallurgy, medicine, architecture, and the fine arts” (44)
- How can “remembering” this be a form of humanization?



Slavery and the spirit of Juneteenth

Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman?" 1851



- Slavery and resistance: Harriet Tubman
- Slavery and resistance: Nat Turner
- Slavery and resistance: Sojourner Truth

Celebrating Juneteenth was controversial

- After slavery ended in Texas, why did white people would try to prevent Black people from celebrating Juneteenth. Why do you think that is?
 - Roediger: slavery was integral to capitalism. The founding of this nation.
 - Universities and businesses
- Why was it important for Black Americans to celebrate Juneteenth, to have this holiday? (June 19, 1866 Texas)

Current Juneteenth: Walmart

- <https://www.cnn.com/videos/business/2022/05/24/walmart-juneteenth-backlash-vo-meade-hln-ldn-vpx.hln>



Current Juneteenth: Walmart



**Children's museum
apologizes for
selling Juneteenth
watermelon salad**

(Washington Post illustration; iStock)

Current
Juneteenth:
watermelon
salad

17

History of watermelon (Black, 2018)

- Egypt and the middle East – “Orientalism” (67, etc)
- Easy to grow
- A sign of emancipation = threatening
- Must “sit down and eat” = lazy (66)
- Happy, celebratory = childlike (66, etc)
(caricatures)/infantilizing

Mayor to quit over Obama watermelon e-mail

The mayor of a small Southern California city who was criticized for sending an e-mail showing watermelons in front of the White House says he will give up the mayoral post but remain on the City Council.



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Feb. 27, 2009, 2:43 AM PST / Source: The Associated Press

The mayor of a small Southern California city who was criticized for sending an e-mail showing watermelons in front of the White House says he will give up the mayoral post but remain on the City Council.

Los Alamitos Mayor Dean Grose heard calls for his resignation this week when he forwarded an e-mail showing a watermelon patch on the White House lawn under the title: "No Easter egg hunt this year."

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Controversy: Who Should Celebrate Juneteenth?

- 1) Everyone?
- 2) Black people?
- How are you including X people on these decisions for celebrations? How can you work to ensure that we are helping to not only represent accurate information, but also help facilitate empathy and awareness? How can you in your position or as a team advocate for better the lives of your communities especially in terms of D.E.I. celebrations?