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Abstract

Master-scripted “agreed-upon versions of knowledge” are hegemonic constructions that derail the process of recording the past. In the earliest grades, children are introduced to such topics as exploration, settlement, manifest destiny, and freedom and democracy through the grand narratives of U.S. national development. These triumphalist accounts are *all* framed through a Euro-lens that typically omits or marginalizes Indigenous and African peoples even though they figured prominently in these topics. Using Afrocentric theory and culturally informed principles, one can recover history from these exclusions and misrepresentations by reconnecting or “re-membering” the multiple and shared knowledge bases and experiences that have shaped the past. To exemplify this, we show how to re-member the life of Benjamin Banneker using Afrocentric theory. Although Banneker has been included in textbooks and standard curricula for decades, master scripts present him as anomalistic in his exceptionality. In “re-membered” texts, more than the knowledge and experiences of Banneker the individual are present. Also included is content that links Banneker to his African continental and diasporan contexts, showing not only the African source of his scientific genius but his agency and advocacy for human freedom in the colonial period. Thus, “re-membered” texts teach what it is about Banneker’s *being* African that informs who he was and what he was able to do. The article concludes by suggesting how to invite students to use knowledge about Benjamin Banneker to explore the connections between the past and the present—connections between human agency and knowledge for human freedom then and now.

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Afrocentric theory, culturally informed principles, master-scripted curriculum, “re-membered” curriculum

Master-scripted “agreed-upon versions of knowledge” are hegemonic constructions that derail the process of recording the past (Swartz & Goodwin, 1992, p. 58). Unfortunately, corporate-driven and state-sanctioned social studies textbooks are an unequivocal site for observing these master scripts. Although social studies textbooks are not and should not be the curriculum, information typically enters classrooms through the authoritative claims they make (Apple, 1988; Buras, 2008; Cherryholmes, 1988). The master scripts in these volumes begin at the primary level, teaching the grand narratives of U.S. national development throughout the PreK-12 school experience (Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 1994; Buras, 2008; Swartz, 2009).¹ From the sailing of Columbus on the ocean blue to the Pilgrims preparing turkey for Thanksgiving to the cartoons of Uncle Sam and the bald eagle to the westward ho of the wagon trains, young children are introduced to such topics as exploration, settlement, colonialism, manifest destiny, and freedom and democracy. These accounts, however, are *all* framed through a euro-lens or what Sandy Grande (2004) calls a “whitestream” perspective. While Indigenous and African peoples figured prominently in these topics, the triumphalist euro-saga requires their invisibility or sidelining. When present, they must fit within, not challenge, the story of European expansion and colonial settlement in the Americas. In these monocultural textbook accounts, Europeans are the actors and everyone else is acted upon. The power of these grand narratives lies in their ubiquity and verisimilitude—in what seems to be their truth-bearing content because of repetition for 12 or more years of state-sanctioned schooling (Swartz, 2012a).² To write more accurate and fully voiced texts—or even to see the need for them—one must critically examine and rework the now-standard curricular ideas and images that have been consistently fed to students from an early age.

Master-Scripted Curriculum

One way to “see” the standard curriculum is in the limited and objectifying portrayals of African people that are planted at the primary level. These portrayals disconnect African-descent children from the worldview, knowledge, and practices of their ancestors by inaccurately and harmfully positioning the institution of slavery as the place to begin a truncated history of Americans

of African descent. By doing this, all children are disconnected from extant scholarship about centuries of heritage knowledge related to African-descent people. This happens as early as the first grade. In some textbooks, “slaves” have no homeland, and in all textbooks, their enslavement occurs without enslavers. These texts let students know that “not all people were free,” typically accompanied by pictures of slaves working for someone else on plantations, but the “someone else” is never named (Boyd et al., 2011c, p. 230). In addition to falsely positioning enslavement as the defining origin and identity of African people in the Americas, this obscures the connection between White colonial leaders and the slave-holding enterprise from which they and their descendants directly or indirectly benefit. And it obfuscates the contradiction of fighting for freedom and democracy while establishing a constitutionally supported system of slavery. This contradiction is personified by George Washington, who fought for freedom and became the country’s first president, and by Thomas Jefferson, who authored the Declaration of Independence and became the country’s third president—both while being slaveholders. The standard practice of omitting their involvement in the system of slavery sanitizes Washington, Jefferson, and the country and disconnects the enslavement of African people from the White colonial pursuit of freedom and democracy. In these ways, corporate textbooks—and the state curricula and standards they mirror and make—teach young children that at the time of or before independence, only White people had knowledge of and pursued freedom, that Indigenous and African peoples had no experience with freedom and democracy, and that once there was freedom from England, it applied to everyone in the new United States.³ None of these messages could be farther from the truth.

For decades, social studies textbooks have used 18th-century paintings and drawings to teach young students that only White male colonists pursued freedom (Armento, Nash, Salter, & Wixson, 1991, p. 299; Banks et al., 2005; Boyd et al., 2011a, 2011b, 2011c; Klein, 1983, p. 172). The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution share pages with paintings of White men, as do pages about wanting freedom from England and fighting the Revolutionary War. More recently, textbooks reinforce this monocultural standard by suggesting that equity now exists and by using images of African-descent children to support their euro-spun accounts. One second-grade text states that the government “works for all people . . . follow[ing] a plan that was written long ago” (Boyd et al., 2011c, p. 166). In the same text, this ersatz inclusion is seen in photographs of Sam, a smiling African American second grader, holding the U.S. Constitution (Boyd et al., 2011c, p. 166) and standing next to the Bill of Rights (Boyd et al., 2011c, p. 180)—two

documents that either legally supported the enslavement of his ancestors or were of little use in protecting those who were free. Images of Congress and the Capitol Building and symbols of the American eagle, the liberty bell, and Uncle Sam surround young Sam on both pages. There is a total omission of Indigenous and African peoples in the freedom discourse—as if they simply were not there or had nothing to say. The participatory democracy of the Haudenosaunee and the influence of Haudenosaunee leaders on colonial leaders is absent (Grinde, 1992; Lyons, 1992; Tehanetorens, 1970/1999), as is the African concept of freedom as a natural right and responsibility, which was brought to the Americas and enacted by those who were free and enslaved (Aptheker, 1951/1969; Bennett, 1975; Hart, 1985/2002; Karenga, 2006; Thompson, 1987). These two legacies of freedom and democracy are fully silenced—excluded from the master scripts that sustain whose knowledge is worth knowing.

Using the culturally informed principles of representation, accurate scholarship, and critical thinking,⁴ one can uncover the inference-driven historical distortions that occur through exclusion and through the connection of Sam to documents that excluded and demeaned his people. Applying the culturally informed principle of a collective humanity uncovers something more troubling.⁵ Through Sam's smiling presence, the text invites 7-year-old students of color into a master script as participants in a past that denied the humanity of their ancestors. This new twist in the master script—smiling children of color approving dominant accounts of freedom—comes at the cost of splitting children's individual selves from their cultural selves. Omitting and misrepresenting history is harmful practice, but entering the psyche of children to sever them from the experiences of their people is a new and insidious way in which the master script continues to live up to its name (S. Goodwin, personal communication, March 12, 2012).

“Re-Membered” Curriculum

Countering the grand narratives that support master scripts can be accomplished by identifying sets of knowledge based on scholarship that locates historically marginalized peoples as subjects and historical agents who speak for and name themselves. This concept is advanced by Afrocentricity, which is a human-centric theory that explains this practice (Asante, 1980/1988, 2007). It responds to the dislocation of African peoples caused by European domination and maintained by the current euro-epistemic order that still determines the knowledge worth knowing in school curricula (King, 2004, 2006). This theory posits that by locating African people at the center of

phenomena, not on the periphery to be described and defined by others, the universalized knowledge of the hierarchal European episteme can be replaced with democratized knowledge (Asante, 1980/1988, 2003a, 2003b). This theory and the culturally informed curricular practices that support it provide a way for *all* human groups to be positioned as normative subjects of their own experiences, with each necessarily defining, describing, and acting upon its own realities and knowledge bases as opposed to being defined, described, and acted upon by others (Diop, 1967, 1974; Karenga, 2006; Mazama, 2003b). Such democratized knowledge is able to reconnect or “re-member” the multiple and shared knowledge bases and experiences that have shaped the past (King & Swartz, 2012).⁶ The dearth of such knowledge in instructional materials for children results in the constant recycling of grand narratives and the master scripts that convey them (Epstein, 2009; Swartz, 2009).

“Re-membered” curriculum is framed by Afrocentric theory and written using culturally informed principles (King & Swartz, 2012; Swartz, 2007). By being inclusive, culturally informed, comprehensive, and indigenously voiced, “re-membered” curriculum and instructional materials are able to connect the interdependent strands of history that mark the presence of all cultures and groups. Such texts eschew ethnocentric and universalistic constructions of knowledge and steer a mindful course around replacing one hegemonic narrative with another. Molefi K. Asante (1987/1998, 1990) explains that although the acquisition of knowledge is an epistemological struggle for power, complementarity and harmony are possible when a plurality of epistemologies and cultural contexts is recognized. When teachers create lesson plans based on the content of “re-membered” curriculum, their teaching reflects the culturally informed principles that bind such curricula together (Swartz, 2012b). In this way, using “re-membered” curricula and instructional materials is an opportunity to position diverse cultures and groups as subjects of their own accounts, not objects to be invisibilized or placed in the margins of dominant accounts (Asante, 1987/1998).

In the remainder of this article, I examine the life of Benjamin Banneker, a person of African descent, showing how to re-member his biography using Afrocentric theory. I begin by comparing the central features found in both master-scripted and “re-membered” curricula. These features are summarized in Table 1. Although partial because they are drawn from one example, the life of Benjamin Banneker, one is able to see many of the central features of both kinds of curriculum. These features are further discussed and exemplified following Table 1.

Table 1. Central Features in Master-Scripted and “Re-Membered” Curricula About Benjamin Banneker

Master-Scripted Curriculum	“Re-Membered” Curriculum
Centuries of African cultural productions are omitted and/or misrepresented.	The social, political, and economic contexts experienced by individuals and groups are included in accounts.
Noteworthy people of African descent are presented as anomalies—as exceptions to their people.	Perpetrators of violence and inhumanity are named, as are the ways in which they benefit by their actions.
Members of devalued and oppressed cultures and groups are deculturalized.	Interpreting a primary source document seeks congruence between the voice of its author and his or her cultural knowledge base.
A past subjugated status is reproduced by the way it is described in the present.	Cultural knowledge is present.
Portions of primary source documents are selectively used to support grand narratives.	The connections between people and their cultural contexts are maintained.
Slavery, with its unjust and exploitive practices, is presented as an inevitable means of economic growth, as if it “grew” on its own.	Members of all groups are comprehensively portrayed.
The idea of a collective humanity is ignored in favor of a hierarchy of human worth.	Individuals are located in their cultural contexts as normative subjects with agency.
	The idea that we are all one humanity is present.

The Master-Scripted Life of Benjamin Banneker

Master-scripted content about Benjamin Banneker has been included in elementary, middle, and high school curricula and textbooks for more than 30 years (Armento et al., 1991; Banks et al., 2000/2001; Boyd et al., 2011e; Cayton, Israel Perry, Reed, & Winkler, 2007; Drewry & O’Connor, 1987; May, 1984; Viola et al., 2005). Most of these texts have information about Banneker as an inventor, mathematician, and astronomer and about his involvement in the project of mapping the site of Washington, D.C., in 1791.

Some textbooks mention Banneker’s published almanacs and his correspondence with Thomas Jefferson, then secretary of state. However, by generally omitting and/or marginalizing the cultural knowledge, productions, and accomplishments of other free and enslaved African people, and

in no way referencing the knowledge of their ancestors, Banneker the mathematician, astronomer, and surveyor becomes a deculturalized portrait of exceptionality in school knowledge. He is an exception that “proves the rule”—with the “rule” being shown in the truncated and distorted presentations of African people in social studies content. Unless Banneker remains connected to the African and diasporan contexts that were the cultural source of his excellence, such master-scripted inclusion of Banneker reproduces in the present the low group status that enslavement initiated and required in the past.

Particular portions of Banneker’s correspondence with Jefferson are used selectively in master-scripted accounts to fit with the grand narrative of slavery. A fifth-grade textbook states that he sent a letter “asking Jefferson to help improve the treatment of African Americans” (Boyd et al., 2011e, p. 367). Similarly, a high school text states that Banneker sent a letter along with a copy of his first published almanac “calling for better treatment of enslaved African Americans” (Cayton et al., 2007, p. 241). By suggesting that Banneker was primarily concerned about “better treatment,” as if that could somehow ameliorate the state of being held as chattel against one’s will in perpetuity, these textbooks appropriate and distort this African voice to construct a master-scripted interpretation that is compatible with the grand narrative of slavery. In short, as is typically the case in mass-marketed textbooks, slavery continues to be presented as a seemingly inevitable means of economic growth—one that “grew” (as if on its own), a phenomenon to debate (as if freedom is not an inherent human entitlement), and a system to be compromised over for decades by White Northerners and Southerners (as if that was reasonable). In this way, Banneker’s correspondence with Jefferson is disingenuously used to maintain the master-scripted grand narrative of slavery that “hides” its justification in a hierarchy of human worth, a justification that predominantly permits only the voices (and views) of whiteness to speak from the past. Banneker’s correspondence is selectively manipulated to represent this White supremacist view, the only view that frames and tells the story of enslavement. Sound bite quotes, such as those taken from Banneker’s letter, and the distorted interpretations of primary sources that are more recently included in textbooks only serve to obstruct a critical dialog among those who were present in this era of our country’s history. When textbook accounts omit, distort, or appropriate the knowledge and experiences of free and enslaved African people, their voices, agency, and excellence are submerged, which allows the idea of a collective humanity to be ignored in favor of a hierarchy of human worth.

The “Re-Membered” Life of Benjamin Banneker

In this section, I provide narrative examples of characteristics presented in “re-membered” texts about Banneker and identify concepts of Afrocentricity that frame such texts. Molefi Asante (2007) explains that “an Afrocentric theory is one that is constructed to give Africans a centered role in their own phenomena” (p. 102). Thus, in a “re-membered” text framed by Afrocentric theory, more than the knowledge and experiences of the individual, Benjamin Banneker, is present. Also included are the African social, political, and economic phenomena that Banneker experienced in his social milieu. For example, scholarship in the intellectual tradition of Black studies affirms that in the 18th century, African people viewed freedom as an inherent or natural right that they had never forfeited; and slavery was seen as a system of taking African people’s knowledge, skills, and labor that Europeans did not have or want to pay for (Aptheker, 1951/1969; Asante, 1995/2002; Carney, 2001; King, 2006; Woodson, 1936/1968). African people understood slavery as an unreasonable and inhumane system that concurrently enriched Europeans and their White descendants and impoverished Africans on the continent and in the diaspora, and history records numerous examples of African people, both enslaved and free, who resisted it (Bennett, 1975; Franklin, 1992; Hart, 1985/2002; Hilliard, 1995; Price, 1979; Thompson, 1987). This representation of African people, which is indiscernible in standard social studies content, as the above-cited texts about Banneker illustrate, is exemplified in a “re-membered” K-2 student text titled *Remembering Our Ancestors* (Swartz, 2012c) and a third- and fourth-grade text titled *Freedom and Democracy: A Story Remembered* (Swartz, 2012b). Both of these texts have content about Benjamin Banneker.⁷

In Banneker’s letter to Thomas Jefferson, which he sent along with a manuscript of his 1791 almanac, he describes the injustices of slavery and reminds Jefferson of its parallel to English tyranny and the state of servitude the colonies recently suffered. He further reminds Jefferson of his own words in the Declaration of Independence, “that all men are created equal,” and then recommends that “you and all others wean yourself from those narrow prejudices which you have imbibed with respect to them [Africans]” (Bennett, 1968, p. 23). Banneker’s words, taken from the extant letter he wrote to Jefferson, contradict the grand narrative of slavery and deserve quoting at length:

Here was a time, in which your tender feelings for yourselves had engaged you thus to declare; you were then impressed with proper ideas

of the great violation of liberty, and the free possession of those blessings, to which you were entitled by nature; but sir, how pitiable it is to reflect, that although you were so fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father of Mankind, and of His equal and impartial distribution of these rights and privileges, which He hath conferred upon them, that you should at the same time counteract His mercies, in detaining by fraud and violence, so numerous a part of my brethren under groaning captivity, and cruel oppression, that you should at the same time be found guilty of that most criminal act, which you professedly detested in others, with respect to yourselves (Bennett, 1968, p. 23).

In addition to identifying Jefferson's hypocrisy, Banneker identifies with his African ancestry and names enslavement as fraudulent, violent, criminal, and a contradiction of all people's natural entitlement to freedom. This is no request for "better treatment"; it is a searing and condemning assessment of the inhumanities experienced by millions of his brethren. So, how did Jefferson respond to this letter? He wrote that he would send Banneker's almanac manuscript to the Academy of Sciences in Paris to be reviewed. On the subject of ending slavery, he said and did nothing.

Afrocentric Concepts and Benjamin Banneker

A number of Afrocentric concepts (Asante, 1987/1998, 2007; Karenga, 2003; Kershaw, 1992; Mazama, 2003a) can be seen in Banneker's correspondence with Jefferson. His words demonstrate his collective consciousness and self-determination. Locating Banneker as a normative subject with agency, responding to the contexts and conditions of his time, puts him in the center of his own story. Writers of "re-membered" curricula and instructional materials use Afrocentric concepts to expand historical knowledge that has been submerged or marginalized in standard accounts. For example, whereas Banneker's letter to Jefferson in master-scripted texts is a footnote in colonial history, "re-membered" texts present it as it was—a significant demonstration of liberation thinking and acting in American history. Whereas master-scripted accounts selectively use a thin slice of a primary source to position Banneker's letter as a request for "better treatment," "re-membered" accounts are informed by fuller content from the same primary source. In the former, Banneker is presented as asking a slave master (Jefferson) for kindness; in the latter, he is presented as critiquing that slave master's hypocrisy and the system of slavery itself. Banneker's critical analysis epitomizes human agency, and the moral

argument he articulated underscores his humanity—both of which contradict the implicit justifications of slavery in master-scripted texts.

Importantly, Afrocentric theory broadens social studies content by locating Banneker within his community so that connections can be made between African and diasporan cultural knowledge and between Banneker and African people in colonial North America. Given thousands of years of documented African knowledge and cultural productions in every discipline—a knowledge base that Afrocentric theory is built upon—scholars claim that Banneker's mathematical, scientific, and astronomical knowledge is an example of the cultural continuity that exists between Africa and the diaspora (Adams, 1992/2007a; Lumpkin, 1997; Van Sertima, 1983/2009). As stated above, by the 17th century, Europeans and their descendants seeking to generate wealth in American colonies knew that enslaving African men, women, and children would bring the highly developed knowledge and skills of people from diverse African nations to the Americas. Benjamin Banneker's African grandfather was no exception. Coming from a lineage of free people, he was captured in west Africa and enslaved in the colony of Maryland. The knowledge of his family, community, culture, and homeland came with him.

Afrocentricity draws from the knowledge bases of ancient to modern African history and culture to reclaim that history from centuries of misinformation and denigration. Banneker's life has been probed through oral and written histories, with some details remaining unclear or contested, but scholars are coming closer to identifying his specific African ancestry. His Anglicized name comes from his grandfather Banne Ka, called Banneky in many English accounts. One scholar (Eglish, 1997) claims that Banne Ka was Wolof (Senegal) on the basis of a version of his name that was identified in the Wolof language. Another (Cerami, 2002) suggests that Banne Ka was Dogon (Mali), a people well known for their ancient and highly sophisticated knowledge of astronomy, numerology, and irrigation (Azuonye, 1996; Adams, 1992/2007a). When he was captured and enslaved, did Banne Ka—whose royal lineage was acknowledged in an early firsthand account of his family (Tyson, 1854)—bring the knowledge of Dogon people to benefit his family's farm in Maryland? Was the success of their tobacco farm attributable to his knowledge of irrigation technology and of the planets to determine the best times to plant and harvest crops? There is no doubt that his grandson Benjamin Banneker was an intense observer of the natural world and that through self-study, he became highly skilled in mathematics and astronomy (Bedini, 1999; Latrobe, 1845; Lumpkin, 1996). Banneker observed the double star system of Sirius—which had been accurately charted by the Dogon of west Africa centuries before European telescopes

“discovered” it (Adams, 1992/2007a, 1992/2007b)—and he included notations of its apparent rising and setting in his first and subsequently published almanacs (Banneker, 1792). Banneker’s lifelong undertakings in mathematics and astronomy and his understandings of the natural world were anchored in the knowledge and ancestry of his grandfather. Martha E. Tyson (1884), daughter of Banneker’s neighbor and friend George Ellicott, confirms this in her biography of Benjamin Banneker: “All who had known his grandfather, the African prince, conceded that it was from him that the student grandson inherited the fine qualities of mind through which the name Banneker became famous” (p. 31).

Freedom is another African legacy to which Banneker was connected. The enslavement of his grandfather, Banne Ka, was ended after 2 years by Molly Welsh, the woman who purchased, enslaved, and then married him in Maryland—a woman whose African ancestry has been contested by biographers who have used their interpretations of early oral accounts to claim that she was White (Bedini, 1999; Perot, 2008; Tyson, 1854). Whatever the lineage of his wife, the children and grandchildren of Banne Ka were free. In the early 1700s, the Banneker family lived in a sparse rural farming area just south of the small community of Baltimore. People in the area were mostly White, with a smaller number of free and enslaved African-descent people and an even smaller number of remaining Indigenous people (e.g., Pamunkey, Piscataway, Susquehannock, Nanticoke; Bedini, 1999; Tayac, 1988). Benjamin Banneker demonstrates his collective consciousness, self-determination, and agency by being an advocate for human freedom in the colonial period, which not only echoes his own experience as a free man but also exemplifies centuries of African people’s experiences with freedom that they brought to this hemisphere and that they have consistently pursued to this day (Bennett, 1968; Franklin, 1995; Harris, 2001; Karenga, 2006). As stated above, this long history with freedom and principles of justice is manifestly absent from the master-scripted narrative of the African experience on the continent as well as in this hemisphere. In master-scripted texts, students learn only that Banneker is African American, not what that means in terms of his African heritage. In this way, such texts fragment Banneker’s identity and ironically deculturalize him. By using a “re-membered” text that draws from the above content, however, students can learn what it is about Banneker’s being African that informs who he was and what he was able to do. Keeping historical figures connected to the knowledge base of their cultural identity, rather than isolating them from it or erasing their cultural heritage, also debunks the master script’s patronizing inclusion of deculturalized knowledge and experiences of individuals too prominent to omit altogether.

As students learn about Benjamin Banneker from “re-membered” accounts of historical developments, how can the knowledge they gain also be connected to the recent past and present? Banneker was a man who had concerns about injustice that reflected the thoughts and beliefs of millions of free and enslaved African people. He wrote to the U.S. secretary of state and actually got an answer. Could that happen today? What is communication with government officials like today? What similarities and differences in communication exist between then and now? What connections does one see between Banneker’s actions for human freedom and the actions of Barbara Lee, who cast the only vote in Congress against the use of military force following the events of September 11, 2001? How does one see collective responsibility and self-determination in the actions of Benjamin Banneker and in the actions of those who write about and protest the school-to-prison pipeline and the prison-industrial complex? Engaging with questions such as these, which are possible given the content in “re-membered” texts, invites students to explore the connections between the past and the present, connections between human agency and knowledge for human freedom then and now. Today’s actors are tomorrow’s historical actors. Asking students to consider how people have acted on the world as individuals and members of the human collective makes the past relevant to the present and the present relevant to understanding the past. Although much has changed, not the least of which is technology, much remains the same. Using “re-membered” social studies texts makes it possible to link the past and present, thereby producing a unified vision of history, one that connects a shared past to a shared present. The above example of applying Afrocentric concepts to learning about Benjamin Banneker illustrates how a process of historical recovery informed by Afrocentric theory can democratize social studies knowledge by locating historical figures as the subjects, not objects, of accounts about them. Thus, when the history of the colonial or any other period is “re-membered” with broader and more voiceful social studies knowledge, the presentation of the past is connected to our own possibilities for action in the present.

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Notes

1. The purpose of grand narratives is to explain the origins, causes, and consequences of macrohistorical events (Megill, 1995; Weinstein, 2005). Whereas postmodern historians advocate replacing the explanatory power of macronarratives with particularistic accounts, I suggest that the problem with grand narratives is not in their power to explain but in their consistent representation of hegemonic patterns and unquestioned practices that falsely position European and White people and their favored descendants above all “Others.”
2. The social studies textbooks cited throughout this article were selected from textbooks in the author’s collection. Although random selection from a broad range of textbooks satisfies social science conventions, using social science to “find” the minor variations I have observed in more than 25 years of text analysis suggests that such limitations can be known only through the same epistemic order that produced them. Clearly, social science is a useful epistemology, but requiring a procedural verification of obvious insufficiencies in standard school knowledge actually serves to retard change. For example, it is true that inclusion of historically omitted groups has increased, but there have been *no* changes that disrupt the dominant accounts that textbooks have historically been charged with upholding (Apple, 1988; Appleby, Hunt, & Jacob, 1994; Swartz, 1992). Our work needs to focus on making such changes, not on endlessly “finding” that the status quo remains the same.
3. Textbooks and state curricula closely mirror each other (King & Swartz, 2012). Although it may seem that corporate publishers follow state standards and curricula, decades of similarities and minimal changes in both cases suggest that they follow each other—that they have a symbiotic relationship. Given the huge influence of archconservative Texas as a textbook adoption state, along with pressures on other state and local school boards to change curricula and textbook adoption criteria in a conservative direction, social studies textbooks are a gauge for what is taught nationally (Collins, 2012; Lee, 2012). For example, a Tea Party coalition in Tennessee is demanding that new textbook selection criteria include the following: “No portrayal of minority experience in the history which actually occurred shall obscure the experience or contributions of the Founding Fathers, or the majority of citizens, including those who reached positions of leadership” (Lee, 2012). Before thinking that this effort to obstruct scholarship happens only in the South, one needs to acknowledge that northern urban districts implicitly agree with this criterion as seen in the textbooks they purchase. For example, these texts either omit the participation of the Founding Fathers in the system of slavery, minimize it in sidebars or one-liners, or justify it as a common practice of the day (e.g., Boyd et al., 2011a, 2011b, 2011c,

- 2011d, 2011e; Cayton, Israel Perry, Reed, & Winkler, 2007; Danzer, Klor de Alva, Krieger, Wilson, & Woloch, 2005).
4. Culturally informed principles (also called culturally responsive principles) are assumptions or claims about what happens when each principle is used. For example, the claim related to the principle of representation is that "when portrayals of individuals or groups are contextualized, their ways of being, knowing, and doing are manifest." The claim related to accurate scholarship is that "when errors are avoided and relevant knowledge is present, curriculum is a reflection of history rather than an appropriation of it." And the claim related to critical thinking is that "critical thought identifies areas of significance and produces knowledge" (Swartz, 2012a, pp. 139-140).
 5. The claim related to the principle of a collective humanity is that "knowing that the whole of humanity is one makes equitable practices normative" (Swartz, 2012a, p. 140).
 6. The term *re-membered* refers to the praxis of putting back together the fragmented pieces of any constituent whole (Christian, 1995; Swartz, 1998). In this case, it is history that has been severed through a hierarchal and hegemonic recounting of the past. To recover history, Afrocentric theory, culturally informed curricular practice, and critical reflection are combined to construct accounts based on the diverse knowledge bases that shaped any era, event, or topic. This praxis of historical recovery is detailed in "*Re-Membering*" *History: Afrocentric Theory to Practice* (King & Swartz, 2012).
 7. For copies of content about Benjamin Banneker in *Remembering Our Ancestors and Freedom and Democracy: A Story Remembered*, contact the author at elswartz7@gmail.com.

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Bio

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