

PE1813/PE1814/E

Petitioner submission of 13 November 2020

Four hundred and ninety-five years. One hundred eighty thousand, six hundred seventy-five days. That is how long we have been patiently waiting for justice to be served. How much longer do you need? How many more years does one need to borrow when so many have been lent in the past.

For centuries Britain has explored and exploited African nations without the slightest regards. The callous actions go without consequences; exempt from the rule of law.

We have been left idling for so long, that the times for reparations has passed. What we are merely looking for now is the truth. We are looking for both sides of the story to be told.

For too long have we allowed you to strip us of our nations and proud African heritage. For too long have we allowed you to tell fallacies of the history we both share. We may have suppressed our voices of dismay before, but today we say "Enough is enough".

As a child, you should not be forced to second guess the solid reliability of the education you receive, but as it stands, that is precisely what happens. As a child, you go to school with the hopes of leaving the "educational" system with better intellect than when you came in. Sadly, the exact opposite occurs. Instead, you leave school brainwashed with the notion of white superiority and black inferiority.

This act of indoctrination occurs right in front of our eyes, but often we remain blind to what is happening. Being so accustomed to overt racism, the covert racism and racial bias which are ingrained in the schooling system that keeps the perpetual cycle of systemic racism not just alive but thriving remain unnoticed to the naked eye.

So much so that a nursery child aged three will have learnt that to Black is to be inferior all from just the four walls of the classroom. How do you ask? When that innocent child walks into the school and is struggling to find just one doll or toy that shares their complexion they look around only to realise that when they do. The same cannot be said for their white counterparts. They learn that to be Black is not to be equal, but it is to be at a disadvantage. To be Black is to be inferior. To be black means to realise that I am so insignificant that society does not value me. They do not even see me.

Yet, it doesn't stop there when that black child enters primary school. This same message is reinforced by the simple act of opening a book. Were the evident lack of diversity cannot be overlooked.

The disparities are so widely acknowledged that Figures from the CLPE (Reflecting Realities - Survey of Ethnic Diversity in UK Children's Books, 2020) disclosed. "A child from a BAME background is more likely to encounter a book where an animal is the main character. Than they are to meet a book that contains even one character that shares their ethnicity or cultural heritage".

Additionally, a further report published by the CLPE titled Reflecting Realities: (Numbers don't tell the full story – Characterisation) Also recounted that even if a BAME character was present, there was often an issue of the "featured portrayals of BAME figures which were oversimplified" further stating "observing instances of colourism, in which there was a direct correlation with the skin tone and the virtue of a character." The more virtuous the character, the lighter their complexion and vice versa."

The struggle for a black child to see themselves in even a single book is a hardship in itself. Yet, this challenge is made increasingly difficult in that when they do; it is not in a positive light. Because what type of world would it be if black children saw themselves as equals to white children?

By the time that black child starts high school, black inferiority is so ingrained into their subconscious that it no longer becomes practical to use the same methods to reinforce the notion. Instead, the final nail in the coffin is to ensure that when we teach the child about their history, it is the one-sided version of history that is told. It is always the side that paints Blacks as inferior and whites a superior. In a history class, you will learn about the pivotal role the UK played in the Abolition of the slave trade but rest assured that you will not be taught about how the "UK also compensated the Slave owners £17 billion. A £17 billion loan, which taxpayers only finished paying off in 2015." (Fowler and Manjapra, 2020)

So, I ask again how much more time do you need? Because it seems to me that we have given you too much already.