

David S. Boateng

## **Backstory**

I created a stream of consciousness poem titled "*Sable*." The term "sable" is used for the color black in heraldry (e.g., coat of arms design). I stumbled upon the word while reading for an Ethnic Studies class about Prison, Slavery, and Abolition. What was most appealing was the positive connotation and association with royalty—the latter being an attribute that contrasts the criminal stereotype associated with Black people. This poem displays the double consciousness I experience as a Black person and as a minority in America. I explore the themes of culture, identity, and ethnic studies pedagogy as they relate to me and others..

First, I began the poem with a nod to critical race theory to address those who deny the narratives of non-white people. For example, Tom Horne, the Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction, helped write a law that banned ethnic studies classes in Arizona schools. However, in week 9 lecture, "Resisting the Norm: Validating Culture and Diversity," we learned that "both students of color and white students benefit academically and socially from an ethnic studies curriculum" (Jones, 2022). To help critical pedagogies progress and persuade people like Tom is crucial. Combative individuals like him are the first line of defense in protecting White Supremacist values.

Secondly, I explore the concepts of personal identity versus social identity. I describe myself as a royal knight, majestic in appearance due to my build and skin tone. Unfortunately, what I view as strength can be an intimidating quality to a stranger. In week 4 lecture, "Cultural Deprivation," we discussed how Black and Latino students are perceived to be older despite their

actual age. Hence, the line about being labeled violent. The unwarranted correlation between students of color and violence is why Black preschool kids are 3.6 times more likely to be suspended. And why the "school to prison pipeline" exists (Jones, 2022). Because even acting your age is enough to get you in trouble. Regardless, while I see myself as harmless, to someone else I'm a hazard.

Lastly, towards the end of the poem, I use the phrase "we been poppin" in reference to Black Wall Street for two reasons. First, as an anecdote of Black history and to dispel myths about Black organization and aptitude. Furthermore, my purposeful use of Ebonics (Black English Vernacular) harkens back to the idea of language deprivation being akin to cultural deprivation. In "Academic Ignorance and Black Intelligence," William Labov clarifies that "linguists and anthropologists alike agreed that standard language is not a medium to teach and learn. The first step in education is not to convert all students to replicas of white middle-class suburban children" (Labov). Moreover, as a reader, if you were able to comprehend the poem and this backstory, I have the utmost confidence that you are wise enough to know that non-standard English does not make a student inept.

#### Works Cited

Jones, M. (2022, April). *Cultural Deprivation*. EDS 117. La Jolla; 06/07/2022.

Jones, M. (2022, May). *Resisting the Norm: Validating Culture and Diversity*. EDS 117. La Jolla ; 06/07/2022.

Labov, W. (n.d.). *Academic Ignorance and Black Intelligence*.

## *Sable*

Note: bold = Stream of Consciousness | Inner Monologue

**A PSA, to the World Wide Web and USA.**

If I mention CRT, they won't even look this way.

What do they see, When they see US?

I'm sable as the night, built like the Templars, ready to fight.

**But they're quick to label you the violent type.**

Intellect, stellar, I know how play my cards right.

**That's not right.**

Always playing us/ deep into the night/ tossed around/ til its lights out

How am supposed to pick myself up now?

**You stole my crown.**

And leave it to history — **Man, cut it out!**

**What's relevant in his story is not our story!**

**They only mention their glory, tales of gore, hypocrisy stories —**

**Colonization is not exploration.**

**Government name, exploitation.**

**Recertification.**

Whites lie if you ask for clarification. **"The Sorcery of Law".**<sup>2</sup>

**You're not mistaken.**

**Solution — decolonization.**

**Help the babies, love their names and faces, no more miseducation, let's be done with the races.**

**Culturally relevant information, then watch them build up their locations.**

**Think Tulsa, we've been poppin.**

Hold on, watch ya language.

**Speak Ebonics they think you lack education.**

Facts, we've miseducated.

By all means necessary, we can still make it.

Culturally relevant pedagogy to save day.

**CRP or CPR, same thing we gotta breathe**

In a world full of hate and disease.

**Let ye repeat, I'm a star, how could I not shine. <sup>3</sup>**

I wonder... will the Sable ever become stable?

## Works Cited

1. Boateng, David. "Sable" [Unpublished assignment submitted for EDS117]. Spring 2022, University of California, San Diego.
2. Dayan, Joan. "Legal Slaves and Civil Bodies." *Materializing Democracy*, 2002, pp. 53–94., <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822383901-003>.
3. West, Kanye. "Kanye West- I Wonder." YouTube, YouTube, 7 Mar. 2010, [youtu.be/TKvpJB8Trhc](https://youtu.be/TKvpJB8Trhc).