PARADIGMS
In Black Studies

Essays by

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PARADIGMS In Black Studies: Intellectual History, Cultural Meaning and Political Ideology

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Introduction

One of the critical issues facing Black studies is the need for theory. Black studies covers diverse aspects of intellectual terrain, including what might otherwise fit under history, the humanities, and the social sciences. This very diversity constitutes a challenge to any theoretical work in the field. We are not concerned with how theory in an established discipline can be narrowly applied to the Black experience; rather, we are pointing to the need for theory that transcends this taxonomy and establishes a discourse accessible and applicable to the complete diversity of scholars and students in the general field of Black studies. Because Black studies is raising new questions and seeking new answers, it is on the cutting edge of intellectual-academic work.

This collection of essays is published as a contribution toward clarifying the nature of this theoretical task, setting its parameters, stimulating discussion, and guiding more theoretical work in Black studies.* On the basis of these

*The volume is part of a curriculum project designed, especially to meet the need for a text in a senior seminar course that summarizes the theoretical work in the field and is a final integrative exercise for the advanced student. This course was called for in the 1980 Hall Report on Black Studies Core Curriculum adopted by the National Council for Black Studies (see page 41). This curriculum model is noted for its formal structure of beginning with an introductory descriptive survey of the field and ending with a survey course to integrate the field at a general theoretical level. These curricula parameters will eventually lead to an adequate standardization of general knowledge in the field.

essays, students and scholars should be able to advance their grasp of the theoretical work in the field. This introduction proposes an initial approach to theoretical work in Black studies, and identifies some of the key points made in each essay that follows.

Paradigms

The main objects for theoretical analysis in Black studies are modes of thought, especially the fundamental modes of thought. A mode of thought is a model of the Black experience, a cluster of concepts and propositions that attempt to describe, define, and explain the nature of the Black experience. It is a framework within which one conducts research, designs curriculum, and develops public policy. It is a set of assumptions that defines the consensus of an intellectual community. A fundamental mode of thought is a general model of the Black experience synthesized into key texts. It plays a dominant role in guiding the intellectual and political life of a significant sector of the community, and there is an institutional basis for its own social reproduction. This is generally referred to as a paradigm.

Prior to Black studies, the study of modes of thought about Black people was focused almost entirely on the paradigmatic orientations of white scholars, how whites approached the Black experience. Three of the major 20th century models were advanced by William Graham Sumner, Robert Park, and W. Lloyd Warner.[1] Sumner constructed a metaphysical logic based on his notion that folkways and mores were resistant to change. According to Sumner, the long-established racist patterns in the norms and values of whites could not be rapidly changed. This is a conservative model that supports the status quo. Park constructed a model that included four stages of change: contact, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation. This race relations cycle is teleology, an Aristotelian model reflecting liberal optimism. Warner developed a caste-class model in which both continuity and change coexist. Blacks could develop class differences until they had a class structure parallel to that of whites, while at the same time there would be racial "caste" separation. These three models mani-

fest the main differences between conservatives and liberals in white American social thought.

The study of mainstream white modes of thought continues to be an important task, especially because these ideas tend to be powerful antecedents to social policy and subsequent rationalizations of that policy. Three debates over the last twenty years reflect the great intellectual ferment that ultimately led to and rationalized the current conservative policy orientation. All three debates were sparked by books that were given instant acclaim and many awards by the mainstream, while simultaneously rejected by Black intellectuals. William Styron wrote *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, a historical novel about the most well known leader of a slave revolt.[2] Styron turned Nat Turner into a docile, sex crazed Black stereotype, a subordinate prone to irrational violent outbursts. Black writers responded in a volume of ten essays edited by John Henrik Clarke. This was a collective attempt to defend a Black revolutionary tradition and to oppose a pathological model of militant Black men. Another major debate over slavery emerged from a 1974 economic study, *Time on the Cross* by Fogel and Engerman.[3] This volume basically argued that slavery was a rational system in which workers (slaves) were not poorly treated, which implied that slavery should not be the basis for special treatment today. This was debated and refuted by many scholars, who attacked the substantive conclusions and methodological errors. The third key debate was over a 1965 study by Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*.[4] His analysis fingered Black people themselves for the social problems they face and not the overall socio-economic system. Since he was a high ranking official in the Department of Labor, his views were of immediate significance for public policy. It is crucial to point out that these three books present models of Black pathology, while Black intellectuals usually respond with models of the U.S.A. as a pathological social system that creates such problems.

A useful historical summation of general white views of Blacks was published by Turner and Singleton.[5] This summary chart presents essential aspects of the social environment in which Black people have had to survive and struggle. It is important to recognize that there have always been at least

A Summary of the Structure of Racial Oppression and Racial Beliefs in American History

PERIOD[a]	STRUCTURE OF OPPRESSION	DOMINANT BELIEFS	"PROGRESSIVE" BELIEFS
English Heritage –1650	1. Colonial expansion 2. Indentured servant system	1. Blacks are uncivilized heathens 2. Blackness is evil—a curse of God 3. Blacks are bestial by nature	
Colonial America 1650–1760	1. Slave trade 2. Institutionalization of slavery	1. Black bestiality, especially their sexual aggressiveness, requires control	
Revolutionary Era 1760–1820	1. Abolition of slave trade 2. Confinement of slavery to South	1. Slavery is a "necessary evil" 2. Blacks are ill-suited or unprepared for freedom	1. Slavery is inconsistent with Revolutionary ideology 2. While culturally deprived and debased by slavery, blacks are capable of betterment
Ante-Bellum 1820–1860	1. Further institutionalization of slavery in face of ideological challenges and North–South economic and political competition 2. Spread of Northern Jim Crow practices	1. Slavery is a "positive good" that protects the interests of masters and slaves alike 2. Slavery harnesses the savage nature of blacks, civilizing them as far as possible 3. The childlike dependency of blacks requires white protection 4. Northern stereotype defines blacks as ignorant, lazy, and immoral	1. There are "racial" differences 2. Blacks' "childlike simplicity" reveals a basic Christian nature 3. Slavery is morally wrong—it corrupts and takes advantage of a naturally submissive people
Civil War and Reconstruction (1861–1877)			
Post-Reconstruction to WWI 1877–1914	1. Dismantling of Radical Reconstruction 2. Growing legalized segregation in all institutional spheres 3. Relegation of blacks to menial	1. Black corruption in Reconstruction confirms their inherent inferiority 2. Blacks have failed to take advantage of "equal" opportunities	1. The Negro race is less advanced than the white because it has not progressed as far on the scale of evolution

	farm-factory occupations 4. Enforcement of segregation and relegation through white violence 5. Legalized and de facto disenfranchisement	and, in accordance with social Darwinism, should be left to find their social niche 3. Without the supervision and compulsion of slavery, blacks have degenerated to their natural state, where they are lazy, prone to crime, and lust for white women 4. The traits of blacks which make them different from and inferior to whites require separation of the races	2. Blacks are potentially useful citizens—their natural docility and kindness can be channelled through education, industrial training, and white guidance 3. Racial purity and the instinct of race prejudice necessitate racial segregation
WWI to WWII 1914–1941	1. Northern migration of Southern blacks and their confinement to ghettos 2. Last hired and first fired policy 3. Union exclusion and confinement to low-scale occupations 4. Segregation and disenfranchisement backed by violence, formal law, and de facto practices	1. Black inferiority is an indisputable scientific fact backed by evolutionary theory and intelligence testing 2. Segregationist doctrine continues to be affirmed: racial segregation is natural and instinctive, for the good of and desired by both races; blacks are permanently inferior beings necessitating segregation to control their criminality and lust and to guard against amalgamation	1. All apparent social, cultural and intellectual differences between the races are the result of the environment 2. Blacks are the victims of an oppressive environment that creates discontent, frustration, and fatalistic sense of powerlessness
WWII (1941–1948)			
2nd Reconstruction 1948–1968	1. Efforts to increase opportunity without alterations of basic institutional and community patterns 2. Efforts to keep domestic tranquility through control by welfare system	1. Rejection of legal segregation 2. Blacks have been discriminated against in the past 3. Blacks are not inherently inferior to whites and are capable of change 4. Change is best accomplished by	1. Black appearances of inferiority reflect cultural deprivation and the impact of undesirable environments 2. Complete social integration is the only viable means to racial harmony

A Summary . . . Continued

PERIOD[a]	STRUCTURE OF OPPRESSION	DOMINANT BELIEFS	"PROGRESSIVE" BELIEFS
	3. Community and economic resistance to integration 4. Sporadic and inconsistent government pressure to decrease segregation and exclusion	improving substandard schools, providing more vocational schools, and renovating black ghettos, in other words, by providing "equal opportunities"	3. Forced integration of schools is essential to any program of change
1968–present	1. Continued de facto residential segregation 2. White violence and protest of educational integration 3. Decreased political and legal efforts to enforce civil rights legislation, even in face of "affirmative action" policies	1. Blacks' inferior status is largely attributable to blacks themselves, especially their lack of motivation 2. The pace of change in race relations has been too fast 3. Enough has been done—reverse discrimination and forced integration measures such as open housing laws and busing are wrong	1. Racism is generic to the social structure of American society 2. The "equal opportunities" doctrine has failed—there is need to redress for past wrongs 3. Immediate integration is not possible—community control and group power are more practicable

[a]Dates correspond to the following historical events:
1650: roughly marks the beginning of the distinction, soon recognized in law, between indentured servitude for whites and lifetime servitude for blacks
1760: first serious antislavery crusade gets into full swing (see Jordan, ch. 7)
1820: height of debates leading to the Missouri Compromise; reemergence of strong antislavery sentiment
1860: election of Lincoln; beginning of Southern secession
1877: election of Hayes; withdrawal of federal troops from the South
1914: World War I
1941: World War II
1948: Truman establishes Commission on Civil Rights, issues executive order desegregating armed forces
1968: Assassination of Martin Luther King: publication of the Kerner Report; election of Nixon

two sets of views held by whites-at least two opposing modes of thought-but that at every historical juncture there is one dominant paradigm, one fundamental mode of thought. Except for times of exceptional change (e.g., emancipation, migration, and the 1960s), conservative paradigms dominated liberal ones.

These general modes of thought can be traced through formal academic disciplines. Studies of these shifting paradigms have been more numerous in sociology than in other traditional disciplines. Frazier carefully delineated sociological shifts from idealist racist models imported from 19th century Europe to the empirically based models developed and tested at the University of Chicago in the 1920s.[6] This tradition also has been summarized by others. Pettigrew, Lyman, and Rose present general surveys of the field, and there have been several studies of virtually every major author, including the famous Myrdal study.[7]

This literature was critical, especially as a positive academic reflection of the anti-racist protest emanating from militant Black struggles in the post World War II period. However, there was general acceptance of liberal white views as the inevitable march of intellectual progress. In the late 1960s, Black criticism became more aggressive and articulated a desire for a more authentic Black sociology through the negation of white sociology. The major collective statement of this tendency was published in 1973, *The Death of White Sociology*, edited by Joyce Ladner.[8]

The general approach discussed thus far was guilty of Whitehead's "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" by focusing solely on the viewpoint of whites. Initially this could be corrected only by mobilizing Blacks themselves to be a major force in studying the Black experience, and to be the necessary catalyst for all researchers to accept a new orientation. Black scholars had to initiate a rationally humane approach to scholarship that recognized the humanity of Blacks, and respected their subjectivity as a profound particular realization of the general human experience, including culture, religion, art, etc.

A debate began over who should/could do the work. Robert K. Merton challenged "the insider's doctrine" that Black sociological studies could be done

only by Blacks.[9] William Wilson reaffirmed Merton's defense of social science as a public activity based on objective methods, not subjective experience.[10] However, he went on to argue that the best approach is to continue the critical tradition of Black sociologists, because they represent the best combination of "autonomous standards of scholarship" and insights from their "experiences as Black Americans."

Scholars searching for a Black orientation to overcome the dominant racism renewed their interest in the historical ideas Blacks have had about themselves. What emerged was a focus on Black contributions to each field of study.[11] In the case of sociology this led to a number of conferences, bibliographical essays, reprints of out-of-print books, and studies of the major figures.[12] Several books and articles even adopted the name Black sociology as titles to suggest they had made the break through in establishing a new theoretical synthesis.[13] However, most attempts were limited to descriptive summary statements and not new theoretical models.

A major reason for this failure to create Black studies theory is that adequate social theory of the Black experience will not fit the severe limitations of conventional disciplines. In general, this is an epistemological crisis underlying the "turf" battles over how universities are organized. On the general level this is reflected in a struggle over where one discipline ends and another begins. In addition, this is experienced as a split between the behavioral researchers, who use quantitative models, and the humanistic interpreters of the meaning of human society, who utilize qualitative methods. There is also a split between describing general logical structures and focusing on the concrete specifics of a social process. Most analysis is a-historical and, under the guise of being scientific, would also claim to be politically neutral. Nevertheless, most theory accepted by the academic mainstream argues against the possibility of change for the oppressed.

This runs counter in every respect to the major Black thinkers who defy disciplinary boundaries. They use both quantitative and qualitative methods, develop arguments through discussions of the historical structure and process of social change, and serve humanistic values of Black liberation through the

highest standards of scholarship. The theoretical breakthrough is more likely to come as a higher order, theoretical task that transcends the parameters of a traditionally defined profession.

To summarize, our Black studies theoretical study is on modes of thought. The main focus of academic disciplines has been on the way white intellectuals have thought and written about the Black experience. However, Black studies theory requires a focus on the structures of meaning within the Black experience itself. This includes analyzing the historical productivity of Black intellectuals, decodifying meaning in Black culture, and analyzing the substance of Black political ideology.

Black Intellectual History

The key aspect of Black intellectual history is Black intellectual productivity, i.e., creating some material product or performance (e.g., a publication, audio or video tapes). There have been efforts in the past to chronicle or summarize Black intellectual productivity. For example, Monroe Work published Negro yearbooks, and Alain Locke published annual summaries of Black studies publications in *Phylon*.[14] There are two current sources of bibliographical indexing of Black studies publications. *Index to Periodicals by and about Blacks* is published by librarians at Central State University (Wilberforce, Ohio),[15] and the Cooperative Research Network in Black Studies publishes the *Afro-Scholar Newsletter*, a comprehensive listing of conferences and recent publications (books and articles).

Black intellectual productivity has been approached from two different angles: as individual productivity, and as an organized process of social production. As individual productivity, the first task has been to profile the total population of Black intellectual producers and consumers. The approach most generally used is based on high educational achievement. The main focus until the 1960s was on the Black college graduate.[16] Now, the focus has shifted to the Black doctorate.

The studies that deal with the Black doctorate are especially useful in dis-

cussing the modern stage of Black intellectual history. Greene lists and describes all Black doctorates from 1876 to 1943.[17] Bond probes the distinctive social origins of this academic elite.[18] The current trend data for Black doctorates are published by the National Research Council in their annual report on all U.S. doctorates.[19]

Another related literature focuses on Blacks in the professions, an equally educated, occupationally-defined group. This literature begins with DuBois and Woodson, and has been at the center of the study of the Black middle class.[20] There has been a shift in recent years from the liberal service professions (law, medicine, teaching, and social work) to the scientific/technical professions.[21]

A second approach to individuals has been to develop lists of elites. This is important because these lists are useful data sets for research. McBride and Little focus on the *Who's Who in Colored America* data set (1927 - 1950), Henry looks at the *Ebony* data (1963, 1971 - 1981), and Mullins and Sitres use the *Who's Who in Black America* data (1976 - 1983).[22] All of these lists sum up the transformation of the Black elite into an urbanized, educated middle class, that is competitive with the mainstream of their middle class, professional white counterparts.

Of course, the most outstanding of this intellectual elite are often singled out for special consideration. There are a number of bio-bibliographical studies of key figures who emerged in several fields: Alain Locke and Eugene Holmes in philosophy; Charles Johnson, E. Franklin Frazier, and Oliver Cox in sociology; George Washington Williams and Carter G. Woodson in history; Just in biology; and some prominent literary figures and mathematicians.[23] Paramount attention is being given those individuals whose collected works are being published.

PROJECT	CHIEF EDITOR	HOST INSTITUTION
Frederick Douglass[24]	John Blassingame	Yale
Booker T. Washington[25]	Louis Harlan	Maryland
Marcus Garvey[26]	Robert Hill	UCLA
W. E. B. DuBois[27]	Herbert Aptheker	Massachusetts
Martin Luther King[28]	Clay Carson	Stanford, MLK Center

The second major approach to Black intellectual history is the study of the social processes of intellectual production. There are five major institutions that promote the production and distribution of knowledge about the Black experience primarily by Black scholars: the historically Black colleges and universities, the Black libraries, the Black media, the Black museums, and the Black think tanks/research institutes.

There are many case studies of Black institutions of higher education. The most important institution is Howard University.[29] Howard has the largest faculty and student body, and has professional schools as well as doctoral-level academic programs. Major Black-oriented journals, such as the *Journal of Negro Education*, the *Howard Law Review*, and the *Journal of Religious Thought* are housed there along with the only major Black university press. The second place goes to a consortium of schools making up the Atlanta University Center, including Morehouse, Spelman, Clark, Morris Brown as well as Atlanta University.[30] Three key journals are housed there: *Phylon* the *Journal of Negro History*, and *SAGE: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women*.

There are major library collections that remain the main repositories of the written record of Black intellectual history. An important survey of the academic collections, including a useful bibliography, is provided by Smith.[31] The general historical and current views of Black librarians is contained in a volume edited by Josey.[32] The card catalogues of the following important collections also are available: Vivian Harsh Collection of the Chicago Public Library (9 volumes), Arthur Schomburg Collection of the New York Public library (9 volumes), and the special collections of Fisk (6 volumes), Howard (9 volumes), and Hampton Institute (2 volumes).

The media include Black newspapers, publishing companies, and journals. The current listing of the media can be found in the annual publication, *The Black Resource Guide*.[33] Joyce presents the best overview of Black book publishers.[34] Johnson and Johnson present an analysis of Black literary magazines, while McWorter deals with the current scholarly journals in Black studies as of 1981.[35] There are a number of popular magazines that publish useful data and analyses covering their subject, e.g., *Black Enterprise* publishes data annually

on the 100 largest Black businesses. Further, a new media form being published is the critical newsletter. The Joint Center at Howard University publishes *Focus*, a monthly report on politics.[36]

A fourth institutional basis for Black intellectual work is the Afro-American museum.[37] There are 106 museums dedicated to preserving the material culture of Black history. The research/policy institute is the most recent development. There are some profit making consulting firms as well as non-profit research centers.

Black intellectual history is based on identifying the main body of literature and its producers who have most consistently analyzed the Black experience from the viewpoint of Black people. There is no greater source than Black people themselves, in this case those Black people who create the written record of the experience. But, this written record is only part of the overall story. We are interested in the consciousness of Black people, their paradigmatic orientation. Most Black people do not create the written record, and few even have access to its consumption. In order to expand our scope of the reflective life of Black's, and their knowledge of and judgement about the Black experience, we have to turn to the meaning of Black culture. The task is to interpret Black culture and its impact on the consciousness of the people.

Decodification of Cultural Meaning

Culture is an essential aspect of experience, something that provides the shared cohesiveness of a nationality, a basis for common consciousness.

> In general, culture is the sum of values and behavioral preferences that make up a people's life style and approach to the activities of everyday life. The most profound manifestation of culture is in common and routine daily activities, such as talking and communicating, childrearing, cooking, dressing, and recreation. When these daily activities, values, and behavioral preferences are concentrated in a conscious process of creative expression, they become cultural forms of the highest order, what we will call the arts - music, literature, sculpture, painting, dance, photography, etc.[38]

It is on this basis that consciousness is shaped in form and meaning. Culture might be thought of as having a translation function by which our experiences are filtered into a common context of meaning. From within a culture, the

world is experienced through shared meaning. Things tend to mean the same things to people who are within the same culture.

One of the important tasks of the theoretical project in Black studies is to decodify the systems of meaning inherent in Afro-American culture. The study of the written work of educated elites is likely to have a middle class bias and therefore represent only a minority in the community. Our theoretical task should be extended and undertaken in direct relation to the experience of the masses of Black people, also.

The first and most pervasive aspect of culture is communication, the structure and process by which people actively share meaning. Language, a symbol system, is inseparable from consciousness itself. These symbols in action—i.e., the semantics of language usage—are a fundamental cultural product of a nation. Conversely, a nationality, the social community of a common culture, requires a common language. This has been empirically demonstrated for the Afro-American people. Dillard presents a useful historical account of Black language, while Brasch and Brasch present a comprehensive annotated bibliography.[39] As noted, communication is obviously more than the language itself, it is the style and social experiences associated with speech. Discussions of this dynamic aspect of communication have been presented, notably by Labov, Hymes, and Smitherman.[40]

Possibly the greatest arena of the Black community as a speech community is the Black church. It is in the Black church that communication reaches its greatest heights, even moving into private languages when people speak in tongues. Status in the church requires rhetorical skill and the cultural ability to effectively communicate with large numbers of people.

The rest of the cultural experience can be understood in two opposing categories, two contrasting structural dynamics at play: tradition and continuity versus innovation and change. Afro-American people have experienced this cultural contradiction at every stage since the slave trade, however there has been a general shift from tradition and continuity to innovation and change.

Tradition and continuity have been studied in several ways. The most difficult method has been to document African survivals, and to decodify the

meaning in surviving African symbols, values, and belief systems. Thompson has made a major breakthrough in analyzing material culture not only by documenting African survivals, but by doing it through five distinct cultural traditions, traced from Africa through the West Indies to the U.S.A.[41] It has been more difficult to identify African survivals and to decodify meanings with non-material culture, but some important ethno-musicological studies have been done. There is also a wealth of literature on the more general issue of the folklore of Afro-American people.[42]

Once again, as with cultural communication, the Afro-American church is the central cultural reservoir of tradition and continuity in the Black community. Within the context of a modern, technologically advanced society, the internal life of this Black social institution provides one of the few protective shields for the traditions of Black people.

Vincent Franklin contributes to our understanding of Afro-cultural tradition by identifying four core values: self-determination, resistance, education, and freedom. These core values have guided Afro-Americans throughout their history, and have permeated all aspects of cultural life. Franklin makes his position clear:

> This book examines the experiential basis for the development of the Afro-American cultural value system in the United States. It utilizes the testimony and narratives of enslaved and free Afro-Americans from the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 20th as well as Afro-American folk songs, beliefs, and religious practices, in an attempt to provide a viable explanation of the meaning and significance of self-determination, freedom, resistance, and education in the lives and experiences of Afro-Americans in this society.[43]

This is a crucial contribution because the concept of cultural tradition is often mistaken for a conservative orientation, a basis to resist change. However, in the case of Afro-Americans this has not really been true. These four core values demonstrate that Afro-American culture has been a reflection of the material interests of an oppressed people. The essence of this tradition and continuity has been to maintain a positive posture toward change and innovation.[44]

There also have been explicitly innovative movements, notably during the 20th century in the cities. The three main movements of Afro-American artistic innovation have been the Harlem Renaissance, the Chicago Renaissance, and

the Black Arts Movement. The most consistently innovative art form has been Black music, especially what has been called jazz and pop.[45]

Politics and Ideology of Struggle

There is one profound consistency in all fundamental modes of Black social thought: a focus on change. The key issue is changing the conditions that cause Black people's historical suffering, i.e., dealing effectively with the class exploitation, national oppression, and racist terror faced by Black people. Change is usually thought of in terms of power, at least dismantling or defeating the power of the oppressor if not building new forms of Black people's power. This makes a change-oriented consciousness a uniquely political aspect of the Black experience.

Change includes a range of possibilities, everything from reform to revolution. Being against change (or even worse being reactionary) places Black conservatives outside of the main traditions of Black social thought. At every point in Black history, those Black people who agreed with some white people that the status quo should remain were "thinking white and rich." This was/is false consciousness, a paradigmatic orientation of mental suicide, an acceptance of permanent suffering and degradation for the masses of Black people. This is an abnormal state of mind for any Black people to be in, one that is virtually a matter of bad mental health. It is the ultimate form of philosophical masochism.

Still, within this change orientation there is a great deal of difference and debate. In fact, these debates have set the existing modes of political ideology in sharp contrast. Through these debates, Black people have developed higher levels of consciousness and established the relative hegemony of specific modes of thought with sections of the politically active population. In rare circumstances in which the masses become conscious agents of change—such as in the emancipation experience, the migratory experience, and the Black power experience—the ideological debates are taken up by the masses themselves, and it is then that the most important advances are made.

One of the debates was over slavery. The debate was taken up in the Na-

tional Negro Convention Movement and involved three basic positions toward slavery: run from it, fight to destroy it, and submit to it. Bell makes these debates available for analysis, and several important works present interpretations of these debates.[46]

The contradiction between the rural tenant south and the urban north was expressed in ideological terms by the differences and debates between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois.[47] Several biographies have been done on both, and DuBois himself wrote three autobiographies. A continuation of this debate, one of great international significance, emerged from differences between Marcus Garvey and DuBois.[48]

The fundamental debate of the 1960s involved Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.[49] While a great deal has been written about both of them, only King's collected papers are being published at this time. The greatest problem currently facing the study of Black ideology is collecting, editing, and publishing the thought of Malcolm X. We need to have the collected speeches and writings of Malcolm X if the full debate is to be studied.

These debates set the parameters of the fundamental modes of Black thought: Religion, Pan-Africanism, Nationalism, and Socialism. Studying these modes of thought that represent the intellectual productivity of the past is a precondition to overcoming our current paradigmatic crisis. Each is inadequate in our new conditions; any new paradigm must meet the challenge of all of the current theoretical shortcomings. The forging of a new paradigm of unity in Black studies will take place as part of productive efforts in research, curriculum development, and policy formation. Otherwise, we would end up with blind articles of faith, and not a useful connection of theory and practice in actually "doing" Black studies.

1. In research, a mode of thought directs the researcher to create new data sets so that propositions can be tested empirically. The Black studies researcher must be guided by theory to probe inside the Black experience, identify a material record of the experience, and organize this into a data set available to the academic public domain.

2. In curriculum development, it is essential to have clarity around modes

of thought, even if there is no unity around one mode in particular. The fundamental modes set the basic structure of the introductory course in Black studies and the senior seminar course in the field. An overall framework for the main models of interpretation enables one to set up courses that root each student within a critical understanding of that experience. To be Black and to think for yourself it is essential to master all of the fundamental modes of thought about the Black experience.

3. Black studies also can contribute to the overall life of the university, but it can do so only after defining its role. As long as Black studies is an intellectual subordinate to the modes of thought within the existing academic organization of the university, it will make only very limited gains. Under these conditions its contribution will be limited to individuals who are administratively connected to Black studies, but whose achievements are in an established discipline. What is needed at this time is the theoretical development of the Black studies enterprise itself. In more global terms, every people must be self-conscious—have a clear theoretical grasp of its own experience—if there is ever to be an adequate understanding of the entire human family. Everyone has to speak, and everyone has to be heard!

4. On the question of policy, there are two major points. On the international level, Black people in the U.S.A. have to come to terms with their relationship with all other Black people in the world. This must involve advocacy for a positive U.S. foreign policy to support the road forward chosen by African peoples themselves. This would mean a fundamental change in U.S. foreign policy, if not the U.S.A. itself. A second point is that change must be sought by the independent action of Blacks, and the building of broad coalitions for a progressive transformation of the government. The task is to end hundreds of years of crippling exploitation and oppression. Racism denies the human and civil rights of Black people, and it is widespread. It is the government's responsibility to use affirmative action as its main tactic to fight racism. Government funding of positive social programs is essential, though in the final analysis, of course, the main task falls to Black people themselves.

Essays

This volume contains seven essays. Each of them contributes to an overall understanding of the fundamental modes of thought about the Black experience. Each of them should be analyzed, comprehended, understood on its own terms, as well as within the framework (or paradigm of unity) discussed in the first essay. Again, it is important to keep in mind that these essays should serve the purpose of providing an orientation towards theoretical work in Black studies.

I Abdul Alkalimat and Associates, *Toward a Paradigm of Unity*[50]

This was originally published as the first chapter in the text *Introduction to Afro-American Studies: A Peoples College Primer*. It proposes a paradigm of unity, an intellectual terrain for general discourse across different modes of thought in Black studies. The conceptual framework presented incorporates the Black experience and how change occurs.

The paradigm posits four universal categories for the human experience and corresponding particular categories for Black studies: biology — race, political economy — class, society — nationality, consciousness — ideology. Note that the three apparent "objective" elements are meaningful as reflected in corresponding modes of thought: (race — Pan-Africanism, nationality — nationalism, and class — socialism). Also note the psychological maxim: What people think is real, is real in its consequences.

The paradigm also includes a logic of structural change based on spatial location and structural integration. Each aspect of the Black experience has its own logic of change, but it fits into the general model of structural change. Structural change is conceived as a dialectical relationship between periods of social cohesion, in which all aspects of the Black experience are highly integrated, and periods of social disruption, in which each aspect of the Black experience changes in ways that lead to a redefinition of the overall pattern of structural integration.

All of this is laid out in a Cartesian grid which might give one the incorrect impression that the Black experience can fit into a neat little Newtonian world.

It is closer to reality to think in terms of continuity across the lines, with the lines blurred. If a picture of the historical dynamic of the Black experience were to be drawn, it would be inspired by video technology and would consist of a three dimensional painting—using computer graphics, bursts of light and laser beams, holograms in rainbow colors, with lots of red-black-green-and-gold—as well as music. But, as this is a first step in an analytic exercise, we are using the grid to suggest that while the location of a specific topic fits in one or more of the boxes, in the end one's understanding must include all of the other boxes. This is not the task of research, though it is based on all the research that has been done. Research probes smaller units (variables) and issues defined in precise limited terms, with the results expressed as statistical probabilities or in "lean" linguistic categories. Research deals with empirically measurable or manageable variables. The logic of the entire grid, with its inherent poetics of ambiguity, is a matter of theory.

II Robert Harris

Coming of Age: The Transformation of Afro-American Historiography[51]

Harris makes a significant contribution by discussing Afro-American historiography. He notes that the 1960s was a key turning point in Black intellectual history due to the emergence of mass politics (i.e., the Civil Rights Movement, urban uprisings, and the Black consciousness movement). He summarizes five approaches that have been taken to Black history, including revisionism (correcting errors of distortion and omission), hidden hand (describing God's plan), contributionism (how Blacks have helped make the U.S.A. great), cyclical (showing the alternative successes and failures), and liberalism (showing progress toward some utopian ideal). These different approaches have served four publics: the Black masses, Black activists, Black scholars, and whites.

His major proposal for our theoretical project is to affirm the usefulness of historical periodization for the study of Afro-American history. He puts it this way:

> Migration from Africa to America, from upper South to lower South, from predominantly white to predominantly Black counties, from rural to urban settings in both South and North, and from South to North and West (and in some instances South again) provides a conceptual framework to analyze the process by which

> Africans become Afro-Americans, Afro-American culture emerged and developed, the status of Black people became fixed in American society, Black labor was exploited, Black people coped and survived, and current problems surfaced....Afro-American history has evolved to the point that we are now able to sketch the conceptual and methodological issues that give it a coherence of its own.

This essay is a manifesto for the field, with relevance for all of Black studies.

III Houston Baker

General Shifts and the Recent Criticism of Afro-American Literature[52]

Baker's essay is a tour de force of critical insight. He combines philosophy and social science to provide an analysis of "generation shifts."

> A "generation shift" can be defined as an ideologically motivated movement overseen by young or newly emergent intellectuals who are dedicated to refuting the work of their intellectual predecessors and to establishing a new framework of intellectual inquiry.

His principal logic concerns the two main movements since the 1960s. The established view of the 1950s was what Baker calls the "poetics of integrationism." This was negated by the Black aesthetics school, which in turn was negated by the new reconstructionists. Baker, while more akin to the Black aesthetics school (which he likens to a romantic Marxism in which race is a proxy for class), criticizes both. His main contribution is to include all aspects of the Black experience in the critical study of art, to posit the need for a holistic approach.

He notes that the establishment of the Black aesthetics school was "...a bold act of the critical imagination - a unique literary tradition but it had no distinctive theoretical vocabulary with which to discuss this tradition." On the other hand, the reconstructionists provide no new solution:

> The emergent generation is fundamentally correct I feel, in its call for serious literary study of Afro-American literature. But it is mis-guided, I believe, in its wholesale adoption of terminology and implicit assumptions of white, "professional" critics.

Baker calls his alternative the Anthropology of Art, a "holistic, cultural-anthropological approach," an "interdisciplinary enterprise" that requires the insights of many disciplines.

Baker has made a significant contribution to developing critical tools for the Black studies theoretical project, especially the appropriation of knowledge

from philosophy, literary criticism, and cultural anthropology, and a broad reading of the Black studies literature. Also, he sets a standard for the rigorous self-criticism that is essential for theoretical progress.

IV Amiri Baraka, *Afro-American Literature and Class Struggle*[53]

As the leading literary figure to come out of the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s, Baraka complements Baker's discussion of literary criticism with a discussion of Black literature itself. This article is a historical sketch of what Baraka calls the "revolutionary" tradition of Afro-American literature. This tradition has been in constant conflict with its opposite, the capitulationist tradition that is always supportive of the status quo. The main criteria for revolutionary Afro-American literature include being "an ideological and emotional reflection of the majority of the Afro-American people," being "artistic and functional," and being aligned with progressive political movements of the people. He is a great example of this, and from his vantage point he evaluates his predecessors and contemporaries.

He begins by noting that an authentic history of Afro-American literature as genre must start with the slave narratives and not with the educated elite slaves like Phillis Wheatley. His survey covers several important figures from the pre-civil war Black nationalists of the National Negro Convention Movement, to the great contributions of W.E.B. DuBois. In Baraka's view the multidimensional *Souls of Black Folk* is one of the greatest models for Black studies because it incorporates diverse types of knowledge about the Black experience, including excellent scholarship, artistic expression of Black culture, and the humanistic passion of a committed activist.

Baraka, following convention, notes the contribution of the Harlem Renaissance and Langston Hughes as a particularly great militant internationalist. He goes on to mention the important work of Richard Wright, Ted Ward, and Margaret Walker. Baraka is innovative, and along with other recent work, contributes to conceptualizing Chicago as the key context for a renaissance in Black literature during the 1930s and 40s.[54] Baraka is at his best dealing with

Baldwin, Ellison, the 1960s and the 1970s. His main critical point is that while both form and content are significant, content is the more important. His challenge to his contemporaries is a call for continued productivity under new conditions, a call that must be placed beside Baker's call for a new generational shift in critical theory.

Baraka's great contribution is keeping our understanding of literature within the context of the political motion of Black people. This is a "return to the source," a rediscovery of the origins of Black studies. This posture is a necessary precondition for a new theoretical orientation of Black studies based on the dual goals of "academic excellence and social responsibility."

V Cornel West, *Black Theology and Marxist Thought*[55]

West's essay suggests that our theoretical task address two conflicting modes of thought: Black theology and Marxism. This is a theoretical task inspired by a similar discussion among Third World theologians. They are seeking a theory to explain their religious reflection rooted in the experiences of the people, and to guide their political struggles.

According to West, there are three great similarities between Black theology and Marxism: (1) dialectical method, (2) linking change to the condition of the most exploited masses, and (3) social criticism. Both Marxism, and Black theology attempt to "unmask falsehoods," but Marxism has focused on power while Black theology has concentrated on racism. West contends that Black theology needs a social theory to unmask the structures of oppression, and to replace utopian thinking with the kind of theory that produces a game plan for social change. This is a project that he and several vanguard Black theologians have embarked upon, and which has great potential. As mentioned, the Black church is a fundamental cultural institution. With a revolutionary social theory, the church could become the preeminent political institution of change as well.

West is attracted to the Marxism of Antonio Gramsci and his notion of cultural hegemony. With this theoretical tool, he develops a conceptual typology of class struggle in the realm of culture. He concludes by discussing the

historical contributions of the most renowned Black socialist preacher, George Washington Woodbey. The overall importance of this article by West is to demonstrate that what often seem like irreconcilable differences in modes of thought can be brought into a useful dialogue as part of our theoretical project in Black studies.

VI Manning Marable

Race, Class and Conflict: Intellectual Debates Since 1960[56]

Marable makes a useful bibliographical contribution to our project by chronicling the race/class debates, usually called the Marxist/Nationalist dialogue when it takes place within Black political discourse. Marable establishes the basis for this by examining what he calls the foundations of race relations research (W.E.B. DuBois, Charles Johnson, and E. Franklin Frazier, etc.), debates over slavery, and some of the early political debates over the politics of the Civil Rights Movement. Most of this has been well documented.

The innovative contribution is the bibliographical survey of what he calls the Black left, first as left nationalism or revolutionary nationalism, and then as the left within the established left trends—the Communist Party, Trotskyism, and Maoism. Many of his labels get in the way of our full understanding of the variations in the modes of thought involved. This is a polemical literature of the Black left in a period dominated by a right wing conservative paradigm. However, it is a very useful addition to our anthology since it opens up the recent literature of political ideology.

He notes that there have been four stages of revolutionary nationalism: (1) early 20th century figures who were the left wing of the Garvey movement (Hubert Harrison, W.A. Domingo, and Cyril Briggs); (2) the second wave dominated from 1930 - 1965 and included C.L.R. James, Paul Robeson, James Boggs, St. Clair Drake, Oliver Cox, and Harry Haywood; (3) the third generation (1965-1980) included the Panthers, Revolutionary Action Movement, League of Revolutionary Black Workers and the Black Workers Congress; and (4) recent writers like Damu Imara Smith, Bill Sales, Bob Allen,

and Adolph Reed. A full grasp of the theoretical project in Black studies requires a grasp of the Marxist/Nationalist debates over the course of the 20th century as the most important dynamic of Black political ideology.

VII Abdul Alkalimat, *Black Marxism in the White Academy*[57]

The final essay is a continuation of this introduction, in that it introduces to our theoretical project the contributions of the following six thinkers (three of which have essays in this volume): Cedric Robinson, Cornel West, Amiri Baraka, C.J. Munford, Manning Marable, and Lloyd Hogan. Each of these theoreticians makes significant contributions to the mode of thought referred to as Black Marxism, because they emerge from within the Black experience, and use Marxism to build a theory of the Black experience. This is not crude dogmatism, but a creative literature by committed Black studies theoreticians.

It is a fitting concluding essay because it directs the reader to more literature and to the theoretical task itself.

Conclusion

This introduction has attempted to clarify the task of developing theory in/for Black studies. This is an essential task if great gains are to be made in research, curriculum development, and social policy. An attempt has been made to argue strongly for theory, as well as to open this task up to many different influences so that all contributions can be fully evaluated and not prevented from being heard at the beginning of our theoretical project. As previously stated, this anthology is for the advanced student and scholar in the field. It is a first step, but one that we must take toward the full intellectual integrity of our field.

Notes

1. William Graham Sumner, *Folkways: A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores and Morals* (Boston: Ginn, and Co., 1940); Everett C. Hughes, ed., *Race and Culture: Volume 1 The Collected Papers of Robert Ezra Park* (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1950); W. Lloyd Warner, "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology* 42 (September 1936), pp. 234-237.

2. William Styron, *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (New York: Random House, 1966); John Henrik Clarke, ed., *William Styron's Nat Turner: 10 Black Writers Respond* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968).

3. Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1974); Herbert Gutman, *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of Time on the Cross* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975); and David, Gutman, Sutch, Temin, and Wright, *Reckoning with Slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

4. Lee Rainwater and William Yancey, eds., *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1967).

5. J.H. Turner and R. Singleton, "A Theory of Ethnic Oppression: Toward a Reintegration of Cultural and Structural Concepts in Ethnic Relations Theory," *Social Forces* 56 (June 1978), pp. 1001-1018.

6. G. Franklin Edwards, ed., *E. Franklin Frazier On Race Relations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

7. Thomas Pettigrew, ed., *The Sociology of Race Relations: Reflection and Reform* (New York: The Free Press, 1980); Stanford Lyman, *The Black American in Sociological Thought: A Failure of Perspective* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1972); Peter Rose, *The Subject is Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); Oliver C. Cox, *Caste, Class and Race: A Study in Social Dynamics* (New York: Monthly Review, 1959), also see Chapter 23 "An American Dilemma: A Mystical Approach to the Study of Race Relations," pp. 509-538.

8. Joyce Ladner, ed., *The Death of White Sociology* (New York: Random House, 1973).

9. Robert K. Merton, "Insiders and Outsiders: A Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge," *American Journal of Sociology* 78 (July 1972), pp. 9-47.

10. William J. Wilson, "The New Black Sociology: Reflections on the 'Insiders' and 'Outsiders' Controversy," in James Blackwell and Morris Janowitz, eds., *Black Sociologists: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 322-338. It is also useful to refer to an important critique by W.E.B. DuBois published as Chapter XVII "The Propaganda of History" of *The Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York: Atheneum, 1975, originally published 1935). DuBois also carefully lists his bibliography in sections based on the ideological orientation of the author, because otherwise, lurking behind academic credibility, racism would exist undetected.

11. Earl Thorpe, *Black Historians: A Critique* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1971); August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession 1915-1980* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Leonard Harris, *Philosophy Born of Struggle: Anthology of Afro-American Philosophy from 1917* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co. 1983); Robert V. Guthrie, *Even the Rat Was White: A Historical View of Psychology* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); St. Claire Drake, "Anthropology and the Black Experience," *Black Scholar* 11:7 (September/October 1980), pp. 2-31; and Drake, "Reflections on Anthropology and the Black Experience," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 9:2 (Summer 1978), pp. 85-109.

12. Support for this point can be found by referring to footnotes 6, 7, 8, and 10.

13. Robert Staples, *Introduction to Black Sociology* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1976).

14. Tuskegee Institute began publishing *The Negro Year Book* series in 1912. Monroe Work directed it from 1908 to 1938. It is the best source on yearly activity and publications by Black intellectuals. Alain Locke published an annual survey of articles and books by and about the Black experience in *Phylon* during the years 1947—1953.

15. This index is compiled by the staff of the Hallie Q. Brown Memorial Library, Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio.

16. Charles S. Johnson, *The Negro College Graduate* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1938); and Donald Deskins, *Minority Recruitment Data: An Analysis of Baccalaureate Degree Production in the United States* (Totowa: Roman and Allanhead, 1984).

17. Harry W. Greene, *Holders of Doctorates Among American Negroes: And Educational and Social Study of Negroes Who Have Earned Doctoral Degrees in Course, 1876-1943* (Newton, Mass: Crofton Publishing Corporation, 1974).

18. Horace Mann Bond, *Black American Scholars: A Study of Their Beginnings* (Detroit: Balamp Publishing, 1972).

19. Commission of Human Resources, *Summary Report of 1978 Doctorate Recepients from United States Universities* (Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences, published annually).

20. Carter G. Woodson, *The Negro Professional Man and the Community, With Special Emphasis On the Physician and the Lawyer* (Washington, DC: Associated Publishers, 1934); G. Franklin Edwards, *The Negro Professional Class* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1959).

21. James Blackwell, *Mainstreaming Outsiders: The Production of Black Professionals* (Bayside, NY: General Hall, 1981).

22. David McBride and Monroe Little, "The Afro-American Elite, 1930-1940: A Historical and Statistical Profile," *Phylon* 42:2 (June 1981), p.105-119; Charles Henry, "Ebony Elite: Americas Most Influential Blacks," *Phylon* 42:2 (June 1981):pp. 120-132; Elizabeth Mullins and Paul Sites, "The Origins of Contemporary Eminent Black Americans," *American Sociological Review* 49:5 (October 1984), pp. 672-685.

23. For specific references see footnote 11, McPherson, et al., *Blacks in America: Bibliographical Essays* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1972), and the *Afro Scholar Newsletter.*.

24. Prof. John Blassingame is directing the project to collect and edit the papers of Frederick Douglas. The project has plans to publish 15 volumes by Yale University Press. To date, three volumes have been released and two are currently in press.

25. Louis Harlan and Raymond Smock, eds., *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, 13 volumes (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

26. Robert Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983).

27. Herbert Aptheker has edited and published over 25 volumes of work by DuBois. The publisher is Kraus International, White Plains, New York (a complete brochure is available).

28. Clay Carson, associate professor of history at Stanford University has been hired to edit the collected works of Martin Luther King, Jr. More information is available from him about a future publication schedule.

29. Rayford W. Logan, *Howard University: The First Hundred Years, 1867-1967* (New York: New York University Press, 1969).

30. Clarence A. Bacote, *The Story of Atlanta University: A Century of Service, 1865-1965* (Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1969).

31. Jessie Carney Smith, *Black Academic Libraries and Research Collections: An Historical Survey* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977).

32. E. J. Josey, ed., *Black Librarians in America* (New York: Scarecrow Press, 1970).

33. R. Benjamin Johnson, *The Black Resource Guide* (available from Black Resource Guide, 501 Oneida Place N.W., Washington, DC 20011).

34. Donald F. Joyce, *Gatekeepers of Black Culture: Black Owned Book Publishing in the Untied States, 1817-1981* (West Port, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983).

35. A. Johnson and R. Johnson, *Propaganda and Aesthetics: The Literary Politics of Afro-American Magazines in the 20th Century* (Amherst: University of Massachsetts Press, 1979); and Gerald McWorter, *Guide to Scholarly Journals in Black Studies* (available from Twenty-first Century Books and Publications, Box 803351, Chicago, IL 60680).

36. *Focus: Monthly Newsletter of the Joint Center for Political Studies* (1301 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20004).

37. African American Museums Association (420 7th Street N.W., Washington, DC 20004). Also see Jacqueline Trescott, "Museums on the Move," *American Visions* (March/April 1986), pp. 24-34; Azade Ardali, *Black and Hispanic Art Museums: A Vibrant Cultural Resource* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1989).

38. Abdul Alkalimat, and Associates, *Introduction to Afro-American Studies: A Peoples College Primer* (Chicago: Twenty-First Century Books and Publications, 1986).

39. J. L. Dillard, *Black English: Its History and Usage in the United States* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972); I. Brasch and W. Brasch, *A Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography of American Black English* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1974).

40. Geneva Smitherman, *Talkin and Testifyin: the Language of Black America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977); William Labov, *Language in the Inner City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972); Dell Hymes, ed., *Pidginization and Creolization of Languages* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1971). One of the popular concepts in recent years has been Afrocentricity as developed by a scholar of rhetoric and language. See the following: Molefi K. Asante, *Afro-Centricity: The Theory of Social Change* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1980); Molefi K. Asante and Kariamu W. Asante, eds., *African Culture: The Rhythms of Unity* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1985, 1990); and Molefi Asante, *The Afro-Centric Idea* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

41. Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1983).

42. Norman Whitten and John Szwed, eds., *Afro-American Anthropology: Contemporary Perspectives* (New York: Collier-McMillan, Free Press, 1970); William Ferris, ed., *Afro-American Folk Art and Crafts* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1983).

43. Vincent Franklin, *Black Self-Determination: A Cultural History of the Faith of the Fathers* (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill, 1984), p.4.

44. Amilcar Cabral argues this point on a general level based on his concept of "return to the source" as a viable cultural program for national liberation movements in Africa. See Amilcar Cabral, *Return to the Source* (New York: Monthly Review, 1974).

45. Dominique-Rene De Lerma, *Bibliography of Black Music* 4 Volumes, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981, 82, 83); Rob Backus, *Fire Music: A Political History of Jazz* (Chicago: Vanguard Books, 1976); Valerie Wilmer, *As Serious As Your Life: The Story of the New Jazz* (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill, 1980); and Leroi Jones, *Black Music* (New York: William Morrow, 1967).

46. Howard Bell, ed., *Minutes of the Proceedings of the National Negro Conventions 1830-1864* (New York: Arno Press, 1969); idem, *A Survey of the Negro Convention Movement: 1830-1861* (New York: Arno Press, 1969). Also see Philip S. Foner and George E. Walker, eds., *Proceedings of the Black State Conventions 1840-1864*, 2 volumes (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979).

47. August Meier, *Negro Thought in America 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963); W.E.B. DuBois, "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others," in *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: New American Library, 1903, 1969). Also see footnotes 23 and 25.

48. See footnotes 26 and 27. Also, a very significant publication project is being directed by Tony Martin called "The New Marcus Garvey Library." He has published 8 volumes of previously unavailable material and new analyses. This is available from the Majority Press (Box 476, Canton, Mass: 02021 USA). Also see Theodore G. Vincent, *Black Power and the Garvey Movement* (San Fransisco: Ramparts Press, 1972).

49. John Henrik Clarke, ed., *Malcolm X: The Man and His Times* (New York: Collier Books, 1969); Peter Goldman, *The Death and Life of Malcolm X* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979); Davis Lewis, *King: A Biography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970, 1978); and Stephen B. Oates, *Let the Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: New American Library, 1982).

50. Abdul Alkalimat and Associates, *Introduction to Afro-American Studies.*

51. Robert L. Harris, Jr., "Coming of Age: The Transformation of Afro-American Historiography," *Journal of Negro History* vol. LXVII, no. 2 (Summer 1982), pp. 107-121. Professor Harris is Director of the Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

52. Houston Baker, "Generational Shifts and the Recent Criticism of Afro-American literature," *Black American Literature Forum* (Spring 1981), pp. 3-21. Baker is the Albert Greenfield Professor of Human Relations at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

53. Amiri Baraka, "Afro-American Literature and Class Struggle," *Black American Literature Forum* (Spring 1980). Baraka is Professor of Africana Studies at SUNY Stony Brook.

54. Robert Bone, "Richard Wright and the Chicago Renaissance," *Callaloo*, vol. 9, no. 3 (Summer 1986), pp. 446-468. Also see Alkalimat and Associates, *Introduction to Afro-American Studies*, chapter 9 "Black Culture and the Arts." This analysis labels the movement "The 30s and 40s: The WPA Artists and BeBop Musicians," but the term Chicago renaissance is a better fit for the writers.

55. Cornel West, "Black Theology and Marxist Thought," *Black Theology: A Documentary History, 1966-1979* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979), pp. 552-567. West is Professor of Black Theology at Princeton University.

56. Manning Marable, "Race, Class and Conflict: Intellectual Debates on Race Relations Research in the United States Since 1960, A Social Science Bibliographical Essay," *Sage Race Relations Abstracts* vol. 6, no. 4 (November 1981), pp. 1-38. Marable is Professor of Political Sociology at University of Colorado.

57. Abdul Alkalimat, "Black Marxism in the White Academy: The Contours and Contradictions of an Emerging School of Black Thought," *Sage Race Relations Abstracts*, vol. 13, no. 4, (November 1988), pp. 3-19.

Toward a Paradigm of Unity in Black Studies

Abdul Alkalimat and Associates

> You have to be careful, very careful, introducing the truth to the Black man who has never previously heard the truth about himself, his own kind, and the white man. . . . The Black brother is so brainwashed that he may even be repelled when he first hears the truth.
>
> Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 1965

Afro-American Studies is an academic field that combines general intellectual history, academic scholarship in the social sciences and the humanities, and a radical movement for fundamental educational reform.

Afro-American Studies: Who, What, Why, for Whom

Afro-American Studies covers the entire American hemisphere, including North, Central, and South America, the Caribbean, and northern countries like Newfoundland and Greenland. Our main focus will be on the United States, but it should always be kept in mind that there are nearly 103 million Black people of African descent throughout the Americas.

There is a great deal of diversity in this Black population spread throughout the hemisphere, but there is one general point of unity. All of these Black populations derive from an African origin. Black people come from Africa as compared to white people who come from Europe.

In the world experience of Africans, subjugation by hostile people and migration have led to great crises. First, as a result of their subjugation, their past has been distorted or simply omitted from the libraries and curricula. Second, the living descendents of Africans who live outside Africa are faced with an identity crisis because they have been stripped of their cultural heritage and forced to use languages which are not conducive to maintaining links with Africa.

In the United States today, there is also a crisis of identity in terms of what name to use for African descendents. It can be thought of as a naming crisis. We list eight names that have been used since the 18th century: African, colored, Negro, nonwhite, minority, Afro-American, African-American, and Black. Many have been omitted, especially the derogatory names like "nigger,"

"jig-a-boo," "spade," "coon," darky," "spook," "swartzes," "blackie," etc. These types of negative names can be found for all nationalities in the United States.

Rationales exist for these diverse names, although each must be viewed within its historical context. For example, the term "African" was used during the 18th century because slaves were still being brought from Africa itself. This was a direct form of naming. After the mid-twentieth century victorious struggles that liberated most African countries, some Black people in western countries chose to call themselves "Africans" to identify with both their origins and the contemporary politics of African liberation. It is the same term, but each historical context and the material condition of the people generated its own meaning.

The critical issue is the power to define. Some focus more on the practical character of names, the difficulty of making a change, and status recognition based on existing societal norms. A different focus makes naming a matter of political control, a critical principle of self-determination. The difference can be demonstrated with the name "Negro." DuBois, argued in the 1920s that the name "Negro" was acceptable as long as it was capitalized. Richard Moore, in his book *The Name Negro: Its Origin and Evil Use* (1960), condemns the name and argues that a preferred name is "Afro-American" (although he disagrees with the hyphen). His point is that Black people must name themselves, because "dogs and slaves are named by their masters; free men name themselves!"

In the 1960s, the issue of naming was one of the important struggles reflecting a cultural identity crisis. Faced with white racism, the Civil Rights Movement was an expression of "Negroes" fighting to integrate themselves into white society. By 1966, this struggle was transformed into a liberation movement for Black people. The Nation of Islam, mainly represented by Malcolm X, carried out widespread publicity to convince the "so called Negro" to become "Black." Black became popular, a positive affirmation of self. This was a symbolic victory for the masses of people, since for historical reasons the Black middle class was brown or tan in skin color. Black was a replacement for subordination to white that was reflected in the terms *non-white* and *minority*.

"Afro-American" and "African American" were more historically specific terms to describe a synthesis of Africa with America and to replace "Negro" and of course "colored." ("Colored" is really a misnomer since if you were not colored you'd be colorless and that means invisible. The issue has always been

what color!) This field of study thus is called Afro-American Studies. In the early campus struggle against white racism to set up programs, it was named Black Studies, and many programs retain their original name. Also in use are Africana Studies and Pan African Studies.

In addition to the general issue of who is being studied and what they are to be called, the issue of who is the constituency for an Afro-American Studies program should be considered. This is linked to the special purposes Afro-American Studies serves in the general academic curriculum. In general, Afro-American Studies has two main objectives: (1) to rewrite American history and reconceptualize the essential features of American society; (2) to establish the intellectual and academic space for Black people to tell their own story. Afro-American Studies is also important because of its impact on affirmative action. Blacks constitute only 4.3% of faculty and only 8.8% of students in U.S. higher education. The presence of an Afro-American Studies program encourages Black employment and attendance. On virtually every campus, the activities of Black faculty members are related to Afro-American Studies and Black students are likely to enroll in at least one course before they graduate. Black students need to be tied into scholarship on the basis of an anti-racist affirmation of their own experience as part of the overall human condition. Further, their study must be the basis for reinterpreting the overall American experience, especially correcting the centuries of racist distortions and omissions. White students, believing liberal generalities at best and racist stereotypes at worst, are the most ignorant of the Black experience. Their gain from Afro-American Studies is essential if recurring crises of racial ignorance and conflict are to be avoided.

Apart from students, there are many others who would benefit from Afro-American Studies. For instance, everyone who desires to work in government—whether it is making or implementing policy—should have knowledge of the Black experience. All future legislators, administrators, and most mayors should be required to take Afro-American Studies because much of their legislative and policy-implementing activities deal with Black people. Similarly, people in business or labor should take Afro-American Studies. Blacks constitute a growing market for business, and they are an essential component of the trade union movement (Blacks are even more unionized than whites when you compare them industry by industry).

This general text in Afro-American Studies is designed to meet people's

need to understand the Black experience. Before considering the specific content of that experience, one should have some grasp of the broad field of Afro-American Studies. We thus turn to a discussion of Afro-American intellectual history, Afro-American scholarship within the traditional academic disciplines, and the radical movement for Black Studies in the 1960s and 1970s. We will then discuss the conceptual framework that is used in this text to analyze the Black experience. The conceptual framework is both a model for unity in Afro-American Studies and the basic structure of the chapters the follow.

Intellectual History

Afro-American intellectual history in the U.S.A. is being written for the first time, and even now is only partially being given the academic attention that it deserves. It is the history of Black men and women fighting to establish professional careers as scholars, journalists, writers, etc. They had to fight against racism and discrimination. For these reasons this is a history that mainstream white scholarship has not included.

The institutional concentration of a Black intellectual tradition took place in graduate education and dissertation research. This was supplemented by newspapers, magazines and journals, and specialized organizations. Blacks who got higher degrees have been overwhelmingly in the social sciences, education, and the humanities. Further, most of their research has been on the Black experience. Harry Greene, in *Holders of Doctorates Among American Negroes* (1946), lists all Black doctorates between 1876 and 1943. Of 77 dissertations in the social sciences, 56% were on the Black experience; 67% out of 71 in education; 21% out of 43 in language and literature; and 15% out 26 in psychology and philosophy. This graduate research has been a point of tension between intellectual currents within the Black community and the academic mainstream. It is therefore one of the most intense and dynamic indicators of how important and deeply rooted is the desire of Black people to study the Black experience.

The overall written record of Black intellectual history is perhaps most easily traced in journals that specialize in some aspect of Afro-American Studies. This began with the *Journal of Negro History*, founded by Carter G. Woodson in 1916, and includes *Phylon*, founded by W. E. B. DuBois in 1940. The number of journals has expanded greatly since the 1960s, even though aspects of the Black experience have been increasingly integrated into mainstream journals. The growth of these journals is proof of a continuing commit-

ment to the field. Afro-American Studies is a field anchored in a professional journal literature, just as are all other recognized fields in the contemporary academic setting.

There are also a number of published bibliographies that give a codified view of the entire field. These range from *A Bibliography of the Negro in Africa and America* by Monroe Work (1928, 700 pages) to *Blacks in America: Bibliographical Essays* by James McPherson, et al. (1971, 430 pages). The most recent reference tool is *Black Access: A Bibliography of Afro-American Bibliographies* by Richard Newman.

We will highlight the contours of this intellectual history by briefly discussing four key individuals: W. E. B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson, E. Franklin Frazier, and Langston Hughes. DuBois and Woodson, both trained in history, were mainly broad generalists who focused on the role of race in history, especially for Black people in the United States. Hughes and Frazier, of a later generation, made outstanding intellectual contributions. Hughes was trained in the humanities and Frazier was in the social sciences. One of the critical similarities among these intellectuals is that they all produced a paradigmatic text of the Black experience. A paradigmatic text is a coherent survey of the main aspects of the Black experience throughout the dynamic historical stages, from Africa to the Afro-American present. It constitutes an overall treatment of the Black Experience.

William Edward Burghart DuBois (1868-1963)

W. E. B. DuBois was a first-class intellectual of the late 19th and first half of the 20th century, and clearly the most dominant Black intellectual of all time. He was educated at Fisk University and Harvard University, the best Black and white institutions of higher education. One example of the racism he faced was that Harvard admitted him as a college junior, only giving him two years credit for his four years of study at Fisk. After two years of study at the University of Berlin, he went on to be the first Black Ph.D. in the social sciences in the U.S.A.

His work is best exemplified by two sets of conferences that made a great impact in terms of both understanding the Black experience and changing the world for Black people. DuBois was a leading force in the five major Pan-African Congresses held to develop a world-wide movement for African liberation. He was also the leading figure in the Atlanta University Conferences held

between 1898 and 1930 to summarize research and public policy regarding the conditions of life for Black people in the U.S.A. during the early decades of the 20th century. The proceedings of each Atlanta University Conference were published, and together they constitute the beginning of modern applied research on the Black experience. This work was the early origin of Black Studies.

DuBois lived 95 years, and he published during 80 of those years. His contribution can be seen in the breadth of his research concerning the Black experience.[1] He had hoped to culminate all of his research in a major encyclopedia. He proposed an Encyclopedia Africana in 1909, but he could not secure funding. He planned an Encyclopedia of Colored People in 1934, but was only able to publish a preparatory volume by 1944. In 1959, he was invited by Kwame Nkrumah, President of Ghana (West Africa), to work on the Encyclopedia Africana. He was working on the project when he died in 1963. His entire dramatic story, nearly a century long, was recorded in two autobiographical volumes, *Dusk of Dawn* (1940) and *The Autobiography of W. E. B. DuBois* (1968).

Perhaps the most important contribution made by DuBois was his relentless search for truth and his untiring devotion to the cause of clarifying the meaning of his people's experience. In 1903, he published a major collection of essays, *The Souls of Black Folk.* From then on he was a critical interpreter of the Black experience. He went on to write several works of fiction, including a trilogy of novels called *The Black Flame* (1957, 1959, 1961).

DuBois led the life of an intellectual and an activist. He founded *Crisis*, the journal of the NAACP, and was its editor from November, 1910 to July, 1934. In 1940, he founded the academic journal *Phylon* (Greek for race) at Atlanta University and edited it from 1940 to 1944. His life epitomized academic excellence and political activism.

Carter Godwin Woodson (1875-1950)

Carter G. Woodson is known as the father of Black history. He not only made major contributions through his scholarly research, but he also was the key organizer in building a Black history movement. He was educated at Berea College, the University of Chicago, Harvard, and the Sorbonne (University of Paris), getting the Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1912. His parents were ex-slaves, and he didn't enter high school until he was twenty years old.

Woodson made great contributions to research about Blacks, both by creating new data sets and by analyzing existing data.[2] He wrote the first general history that became a standard reference, *The Negro in Our History* (1922). Woodson published nineteen editions of this work. He also published an extensive study guide, *The African Background Outlined* (1936), which included a focus on Africa as well as the Black experience in the United States. At the time of his death, he was writing a projected six-volume, comprehensive historical study of the Black race. He maintained a stubborn allegiance to the facts, to rigorous historical methods, and to a desire to expose racist lies and distortions in the scholarly study of the Black experience.

No one person has created an intellectual movement comparable to the Black history movement organized by Carter G. Woodson. In 1915, he organized the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. The following year, he began to publish a scholarly journal, *The Journal of Negro History*. He went on to found a publishing company, Associated Publishers, and by so doing completed the task of organizing professional resources for Black history. There was an organization, with a newsletter and an annual meeting; a professional journal for scholarly articles; and a publishing company for books.

He also took Black history out of the classroom into the Black community by founding Negro History Week, now Black History Month and Black Liberation Month. This was the major project that helped to spread an appreciation for Black history among the broad Black population, especially since the activity was based in schools and churches. Woodson combined academic scholarship with a broad commitment to community education. He fought against racism and for the development of a healthy Black consciousness rooted in a firm grasp of the historical record.

Edward Franklin Frazier (1894-1962)

E. Franklin Frazier was the most renowned Black social scientist of the 20th century. Further, he was elected president of the American Sociological Association (1948), indicating his white colleagues held him in the highest regard as well. He was educated at Howard University, Clark University, University of Copenhagen, and the University of Chicago where he earned a Ph.D. in sociology in 1931. Utilizing the most advanced research techniques of his time, he was a preeminent analyst of the changing patterns of race relations in both the United States and the world.

His books made strong contributions to many aspects of the Afro-American experience.[3] His major research was on the family. Frazier shared the puritanical values of his generation, and so his research is conditioned by a Black middle-class bias concerning proper behavior. While his work remains quite controversial, his analysis is comprehensive, historical, and based on the documentary testimony of Black people themselves.

The entire scholarly literature concerning Black people was summarized by Frazier in his major work, *The Negro in the United States* (1949). With the keen perception of a research social scientist, he brought together widely diverse information and organized a coherent pattern of structural change and institutional development, from the slave experience to the urban experience.

Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

Langston Hughes could justifiably be called the Afro-American poet laureate of the 20th century. He not only won critical acclaim for his writing in virtually every genre, but he also wrote a newspaper column that had great popular appeal among the masses of Black people.[4] Moreover, he translated other Black writers into English from Haitian French, Cuban Spanish, and Creole from New Orleans. Langston Hughes is known all over the world.

Langston Hughes was both a poet and a political voice in the Black community. His orientation is clear from this 1934 essay entitled "Cowards from the Colleges," in which he commented on the political weakness of the Negro college and how change must come from students:

> More recently, I see in our papers where Fisk University, that great (?) center of Negro education and of Jubilee fame has expelled Ishmael Flory, a graduate student from California on a special honor scholarship, because he dared organize a protest against the University singers appearing in a Nashville Jim-crow theatre where colored people must go up a back alley to sit in the gallery. Probably also the University resented his organizing, through the Denmark Vesey Forum, a silent protest parade denouncing the lynching of Cordie Cheek who was abducted almost at the very gates of the University.

Hughes then made a prediction that was to come true nearly thirty years later in the southern students' sit-in movement:

> Frankly, I see no hope for a new spirit today in the majority of the Negro schools of the South unless the students themselves put it there. . . . the younger teachers, knowing well the existing evils, are as yet too afraid of their jobs to speak out, or to dare attempt to reform campus conditions.

But Langston was also deeply mindful of the deep historical heritage that

could serve as the basis for a strong Black consciousness. This was true even in the very first poem that he published, which was in the *Crisis* edited by Du-Bois:

THE NEGRO SPEAKS OF RIVERS (1921)

I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of
human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down
to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all
golden in the sunset.

I've know rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

Langston Hughes wrote this poem when he was only nineteen years old. He went on to capture the essence of the hopes and dreams, as well as the trials and tribulations, of Black people.

The Movement

The current phase of Afro-American Studies has been nurtured by a radical social movement in opposition to institutional racism in U.S. higher education. But many people had called for it earlier. Arthur Schomburg, a collector of Black books after whom the famous collection of Black materials in New York is named, put it this way in 1913:

> We have chairs of almost everything, and believe we lack nothing, but we sadly need a chair of Negro history. The white institutions have their chair of history; it is the history of their people and whenever the Negro is mentioned in the text books it dwindles down to a foot note. . . .
>
> Where is our historian to give us, our side view and our chair of Negro History to teach our people our own history. We are at the mercy of the "flotsam and jetsam" of the white writers. . . .
>
> We need in the coming dawn the man, who will give us the background for our future, it matters not whether he comes from the cloisters of the university or from the rank and file of the fields. We await his coming. . . .

By 1915, Carter G. Woodson had his activities going. And by the mid-

1960s, a movement rising to meet this challenge was raging in the United States. Students had played a strong role in the Civil Rights Movement, and young activists were the main basis for the Black-consciousness developments. (See Edwards (1970), Gurin and Epps (1975), Orum (1972), and Tripp (1982).[5]

Emerging from this context, the Black studies movement has gone through four main stages of development:

Innovation — The origin of the movement came through social protest and disruption of the university. Blacks sought to attack and to change the policies and practices of institutional racism.

Experimentation — The initial actors in the protests for Black studies sought to bring the general rhetorical orientation of the national movement within local campus administrative and cultural style. Many different types of academic structures and programs were developed on a trial and error basis.

Crisis — When the post-1960s fiscal and demographical shift hit higher education (less money and fewer students) Afro-American studies was challenged for immediate results. It was faced with the prospects of diminished status and decreased resources (as was becoming common for all academic structures in the social sciences and the humanities).

Institutionalization — The strategic orientation for Afro-American Studies was developed in 1977 as "Academic Excellence and Social Responsibility." Under this banner, a set of professional standards began to put the field on a permanent academic foundation.

Innovation

Several case studies have been done that helps to shed light on the innovation phase of the movement. Orrick (1969) describes the context of the first Black Studies program at San Francisco State University.[6] Baraka (1984) sums this up:

> Nathan Hare was . . . at San Francisco State during that period and he and Jimmy Garrett helped put together the first Black Studies program in the country. Humanitarian California? No, some niggers with guns had just walked into the California legislature.

He is referring to the emergence of the Black Panther Party, which had a tremendous influence on the militancy of the Black student movement and its drive to create Black Studies on the campus. In this same context, Walton (1969)[7] presents a documentary case study of the emergence of Black Studies at

Merritt College in Oakland, California.

The case of Cornell University is described by Donald (1970) and Edwards (1980).[8] Edwards titles the chapter "Black Power and War Come to Cornell," because Black students were attacked by a cross-burning, Ku Klux Klan reign of terror and responded with an armed take-over of a campus building. This was the subject of a *Newsweek* cover story, which depicted armed Black students defending themselves against racist attacks and demanding Black Studies. This was not in a working-class community college; this was in the ivy league schools! Not the 1860s but the 1960s.

At the Black colleges, the situation was somewhat different because the Afro-American intellectual tradition had been based there. Here the contradiction expressed itself in generational terms and in challenging what was called the "predominantly Negro college" to become a Black university. Mays (1971)[9] tells his version of the struggle at Atlanta University. The essence of that struggle was contained in a statement the Trustees of Morehouse, Spelman, and Atlanta University signed after being held captive by a group of students and faculty for nearly thirty hours:

> We, the undersigned, resign from the Board of Trustees of the schools within the Atlanta University Center. Our purpose in resigning is to enable the black community to control their own education and toward this end an entirely new process of control must be established. We recognize and support the necessity of Black Power in education, and so we step aside. This act will release us from all responsibility and leaves the schools in the hands of an interim committee of alumni, faculty and students to be elected from those respective groups.

This phase of the Black Studies movement was summed up in two collections of articles. The *Negro Digest* (March 1967, March 1968, and March 1969) published three special issues under the guest editorship of Gerald McWorter. The articles in these issues presented a critique of institutional racism and a vision of what a Black university that would be in a position of providing an alternative might be like. The proceedings of a conference at Yale University, Robinson (1969),[10] was nationally significant because the Ford Foundation joined Yale in pulling together the leading activists of Black Studies with a leading group of white mainstream scholars. This conference resulted in greater mainstream legitimacy for Black Studies. It provided a useful critique of the mainstream and several examples of the types of scholarship to be developed in the field, and it led to a substantial investment in the field by the Ford Foundation.

Experimentation

The experimentation stage of Black Studies was marked by both its origins and the diversity of the academic mainstream. Most of the colleges and universities developed programs as a function of three things: (1) a demographical imperative (large Black student population or Black community that provided a demand); (2) a curriculum void (no courses being taught that dealt substantially with the Black experience); and (3) a protest movement (specific agitation to mobilize students to fight for Black courses). It follows that the nature of these three things, in conjunction with the overall local conditions, would produce a diversity of activity.

In general, Afro-American Studies includes the following variety of administrative structures: 1. Department: full academic units with academic majors, and a secure budget; 2. Institute/Center: a permanent, research-oriented special program with minimum financial support; 3. Program: formally organized program of activities with no permanent status; 4. Committee: informally organized program with no permanent security. Each of these types of structures must be evaluated in terms of how it meets the needs of the local campus. In general, however, the critical question is the extent to which there is some multi-year commitment so that Afro-American Studies is secure from immediate political pressures and can be focused mainly on the academic performance of its faculty and students.

Three key works summed up this experimentation stage of Black Studies: Ford (1973), Blassingame (1971), and Cortada (1974).[11] These works were reactions to the diversity and apparent loss of academic quality that many attached to Black Studies because of its political origins. Each attempts to define a program that would be acceptable to the mainstream. At the same time, new forms of organization were developing to further develop the movement into something new, something that might help to transform all of higher education in the United States. An example of this is the Institute of the Black World, led by Vincent Harding. Black Studies scholars also were beginning to develop a professional literature discussing the character and future of the field (e.g., Frye (1976), Butler (1981), and Sims (1978).[12]

Institutionalization

The institutionalization of the field is the current stage of Afro-American Studies, one likely to carry into the 21st century. This involves the issues of curricu-

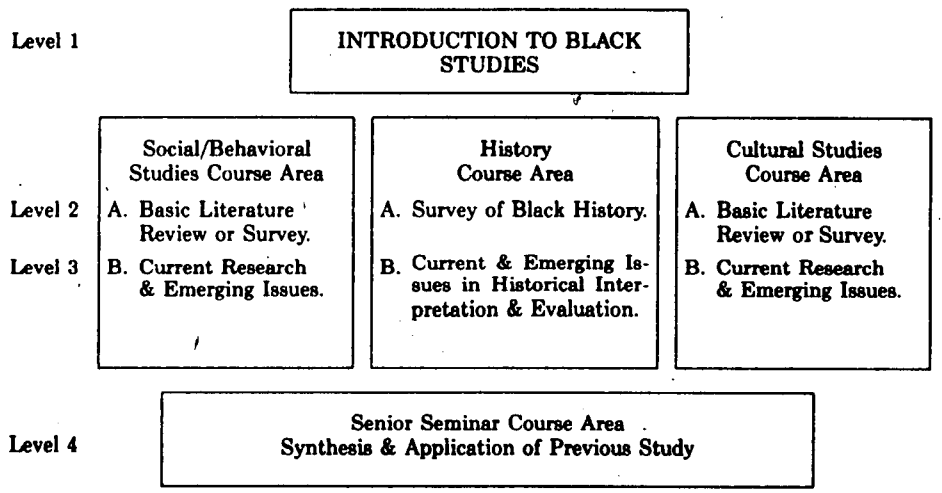
lum, program, professional standards, and theoretical coherence to the field.

Curriculum — A core curriculum model has been widely adopted as the academic foundation of the field.

Figure A

CORE CURRICULUM FOR BLACK STUDIES

(Adopted at 4th Annual Conference by National Council for Black Studies March 26-29, 1980)



This curriculum model is designed to provide a coherent framework for major and minor programs of study. As a field it covers the social sciences, historical analysis, and the humanities. There are several levels: an introductory course, survey and advanced courses in the substantive areas, and an integrative senior seminar in which the many aspects of Afro-American studies are pulled together in a review of the current research in the field.

Program — Many activities have developed as regular features of Afro-American Studies at most colleges. One of the most important ones is the expansion of Negro History Week into Black Liberation Month. Carter G. Woodson founded Negro History Week in 1926 in the context of a virtually total racist denial of the contributions of Black people to world history. As a result of the 1960s, the issue was popularized and Negro History Week was turned into Black History Month. This was carried even further by the national television production of "Roots" by Alex Haley watched by millions of people. The question became, history for what? This led to the origin of Black Liberation Month. Here is the explanation developed by Peoples College:

Black Liberation Month is our attempt to unite with the founders and supporters of Negro History Week, and join their emphasis on study with our emphasis on struggle. Moreover, the concept of Black Liberation Month more accurately reflects the needs of our movement, particularly the need to build on the massive participation of people in the upsurge of struggle during the 1960's.

Carter G. Woodson, noted Afro-American nationalist historian, founded Negro History Week in 1926. In addition to the newspaper column of J. A. Rodgers, this was the major source of information that Black people had about their history. Every year in schools, churches, civic and political organizations, Negro History Week has been a time for historical reading and discussion.

We believe that Negro History Week has made a great contribution to mass awareness of Black History. Moreover, the recognition of Negro History Week has caught on, and has become an intellectual tradition in the 20th century Afro-American experience. However, times have changed considerably since 1926. In political and cultural terms, the time has come to transform our orientation : from Negro to *BLACK*, from History to *LIBERATION*, from Week to *MONTH*.

The revolutionary upsurge of the 1960's is our most recent historical experience of massive militant protest. It continues to be a rich source of lessons for current and future struggles. *BLACK LIBERATION MONTH* unites with Woodson's effort, but does so by raising it to a higher level based on the lessons of the 1960's.

In sum, our study of history must be linked with the revolutionary history of the Black liberation movement. Our goal is not simply to symbolically institutionalize a change in our yearly calendar of events, but to use this month as one more way to raise the consciousness of the masses of people about the historical nature of exploitation and oppression, to unite people around a correct political line, and to mobilize people to actively take up the struggle for Black liberation.

Professionalism — The development of Black Studies has been mainly a reaction to the racism and conflict Blacks have experienced in other disciplines and areas of the university. So it is particularly important to indicate the affirmative action taken by Black scholars to impose high quality professional standards on Black Studies. Professional achievement is a function mainly of research and publication, acceptance and approval of one's work in professional organizations that decide future developments, and productive organization of graduate level programs of study. In short, Black Studies is consolidating around professional journals, professional organizations, and graduate programs. Achievement is being judged on the basis of a shared value-orientation in the field. This is clearly spelled out in a 1981 study by McWorter, "The Professionalization of Achievement: Ranking of Black Studies Programs."

Theory — Another aspect of the development of Black Studies is the theoretical coherence of the field. Alternative theoretical models that serve to organize ideas and guide research have been clarified. George (1984)[13] deals with four models of race relations theory, including the ethnic group model, the caste model, the colonial model, and the Marxist model.

Different theories are most clearly found in the alternative texts that have

developed in the field. Each text is an expression of a basic position in Afro-American Studies. There are three fundamental points of unity: the central theme of Black Studies is "ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY;" Afro-American intellectual history is the foundation of the field; and Africa remains an important reference for the historical origin of the Afro-American experience and for comparative analysis as well. But some differences do exist.

Karenga (1982)[14] provided a text based on his nationalist theory of Kawaida:

> The seven basic subject areas of Black Studies then are: Black History; Black Religion; Black Social Organization; Black Politics; Black Economics; Black Creative Production (Black Art, Music and Literature) and Black Psychology. . . . this conceptual framework is taken from *Kawaida* theory, a theory of cultural and social change.

Asante (1980) put forward a theory called "Afrocentricity," which consciously attempts to build on Kawaida.[15] Munford (1978) presented a Marxist analysis.[16] He focuses on making historical analysis of class and class struggle the basis for understanding the Black experience. His analysis especially concentrates on slavery, the lumpenproletariat, racism, and Africa.

Our text is based on a paradigm of unity for Black Studies, a framework in which all points of view can have the most useful coexistence. While maintaining a dynamic process of debate, everyone involved can remain united and committed to the field. This includes Marxists, nationalists, pan-Africanists, and old-fashioned civil rights integrationists as well. Further, our specific orientation is anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-capitalist. We are basing our analysis on most of our Black intellectual tradition and that leads us, as it did Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, and W. E. B. DuBois, to a progressive socialist position. This text, therefore, has a definite point of view, but it presents the basis for clarity, understanding, and dialogue between different schools of thought and different disciplines.

The Text

This section is designed to introduce you to the specific conceptual framework of this text. A conceptual framework involves the clarification of theoretical ideas on the basis of which one proceeds to do an analysis. In a text that introduces the entire field of Afro-American Studies, it is necessary to have a conceptual framework that is inclusive of the entire subject matter. The concep-

tual framework focuses on two questions: What is the Black experience? How does it change?

The Black experience is the sum total of the content of Black peoples lives. There are four main levels of this experience, as can be seen in Table 1:

Table 1
Basic Aspects of the Black Experience

Level of Human Reality	Key Black Studies Concept
BIOLOGY	RACE
POLITICAL ECONOMY	CLASS
SOCIETY	NATIONALITY
CONSCIOUSNESS	IDEOLOGY

Biology and Race

On the biological level, the overall key variables are race, age, and gender. All biological traits are controlled by a genetic code found in every cell of a person's body. This genetic code is inherited from one's biological parents. A race or gender group is defined as a human population sharing specific physical traits (e.g., sexual organs for gender and skin color for race). A great controversy continues to rage in scientific circles regarding the relative importance of the view that human behavior is biologically determined versus the view that people become who they are as a result of socio-historical forces. This is known as the "nature versus nurture" debate.

There is little convincing evidence that biological differences between races make a social or historical difference. Racial differences almost always are put forward to explain inequality, where one racial group has a lower standard of living and less power. An argument of biological inferiority rationalizes the group's being on the bottom. The logic is that they are inferior, and they therefore belong on the bottom. This is not a scientific discussion of race, but RACISM, which is an ideology of racial inferiority. White racism is the overall position that Blacks are inferior and whites are superior. An example of how silly this is can be seen in South Africa, the most racist country in the world. The South African government restricts the freedom of everyone who isn't white. However, when the Japanese became economically powerful (as they are now in the automobile, steel, electronics, and computer fields), the racist white South Africans reconsidered. They wanted excellent trade relations with Japan so they decided to make the Japanese honorary white people!

Political Economy and Class

On the level of political economy, the central concept is class. Economic activities involve the production, distribution, and consumption of scarce material things needed for human survival and that otherwise serve human wants. Class is a historical relationship between groups of people. It is a relationship of power that determines who works, what they get from it, and what impact they can have on the society at large. There is a ruling class in every society, although different types of societies are not organized in the same way. In feudal Europe royal families made up the ruling class. In traditional African society, this was often the case as well. This is class rule based on heredity. In a capitalist society, heredity is much less important. Some mobility in and out of the ruling class occurs despite the status of one's family by birth.

The overwhelming majority of adults in the U.S.A. get up every morning and go to work. They have to do this because only by doing so will they earn an income necessary for their families' survival. Therefore, political economy is a universal feature of the human experience and a necessary aspect of Afro-American Studies.

Society and Nationality

There are two major aspects of society: culture and social institutions. Culture refers to values and life style, whereas social institutions refer to roles and collective forms of social interaction. These are not temporary phenomena, but are permanent features of a society that are reproduced and transmitted across generations. Nationality (sometimes called ethnicity) is the particular identity of a group based on its culture and social institutions. Historically, such identity is correlated with economic interdependence and a common language. The issue of nationality is one of the key issues of the Afro-American experience in the U.S.A.

Ideology and Consciousness

How each of these three aspects of the human experience is known, thought about, and discussed is the focus of consciousness. This is the experience of the abstract, mental images that enable one to make choices and realize human freedom regarding the physical and social worlds. While the "brain" is a physical reality, it works as a "mind" full of ideas, conceptions, imagination, opinions, beliefs, etc. There can be no "mind" without a "brain," although it is

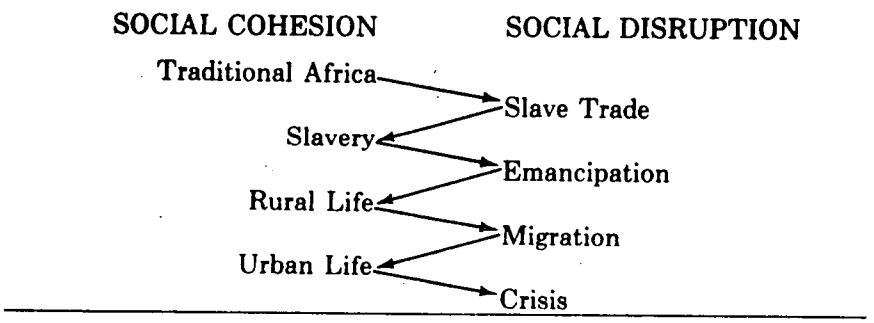
possible to have a damaged brain or be mentally ill and to be what people call "out of your mind."

The most formal organization of one's consciousness is the realm of ideology. Ideology is a set of beliefs that serve to define physical, social, mental, and spiritual reality. Everyone in society has an ideological orientation, but only trained and disciplined thinkers have a comprehensive and coherent ideological orientation.

The Black experience is the complex sum total of all aspects of the human experience as lived by Black people. The Afro-American experience has a beginning and a definite logic of change, as can be seen in Figure B.

Figure B

Historical Change and the Black Experience



Historical change in the Afro-American experience has alternatively represented social cohesion and social disruption. Social cohesion is an established and relatively stable pattern of social life that is transmitted across generations. This is not social life without conflict, but rather social life that can be taught to the next generation. Social disruption occurs when these patterns are broken and people have to adjust to a new environment, to a new set of relations, to a new way of life. Of course, out of every experience of disruption emerges a new form of social cohesion. This dynamic pattern of change, historical periodization, is universal for all Black people in the U.S.A. Every person and family can locate their own experience within this pattern.

The overall framework constitutes a paradigm of unity in Afro-American Studies. This chart defines a logical space for the entire field of Afro-American

Toward a Paradigm of Unity in Afro-American Studies

LOGIC OF CHANGE	*Social Cohesion*	Traditional Africa	—	Slavery	—	Rural Life	—	Urban Life
	Social Disruption	—	Slave Trade	—	Emanci-pation	—	Migrations	—
UNITS OF ANALYSIS	Ideology	A1	B1	C1	D1	E1	F1	G1
	Nation-ality	A2	B2	C2	D2	E2	F2	G2
	Class	A3	B3	C3	D3	E3	F3	G3
	Race	A4	B4	C4	D4	E4	F4	G4

Studies. The columns are historical stages marked with letters, and the rows are aspects of the Black experience marked with numbers. Each box (e.g., A-1 or G-4) is a logical connection of experience within a specific historical context. With this analytical tool, it is possible to have a conception of the entire field and begin to identify boxes and sets of boxes to codify and sum up existing research, as well as to chart the path for additional new research.

The field of Afro-American Studies is an exciting Intellectual Adventure, an experience that will open new worlds of knowledge to both Blacks and whites.

Notes

1. Selected Works by DuBois: on Africa, *The World and Africa* (1947); on slavery, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870* (1896), *John Brown* (1909), *Black Reconstruction In America* (1935); on the rural experience, *The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia* (1898), *The Negro Landholder of Georgia* (1901), *The Negro Farmer* (1906); on the urban experience, *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899).

2. Selected Works by Woodson: on Africa, *African Heroes and Heroines* (1939); on slavery, *Free Negro Owners of Slaves* (1924), *Free Negro Heads of Families* (1925), *The Mind of the Negro As Reflected in Letters Written During The Crisis 1800-1860* (1926), *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (1915); on the rural experience, *The Rural Negro* (1930); on the urban experience, *A Century of Negro Migration* (1918), *The Negro as a Businessman* (1929), *The Negro Wage Earner* (1930) with Lorenzo Greene, *The Negro Professional Man and the Community* (1934); on institutions, *The History of the Negro Church* (1921), and *The Miseducation of the Negro* (1923).

3. Selected Works by Frazier: on Africa *Race and Culture Contacts in the Modern World* (1957); on slavery, *The Free Negro Family* (1932); on the urban experience, *The Negro Family in Chicago* (1932), *Negro Youth at the Crossways* (1940), *Black Bourgeoisie* (1955); on institutions, *The Negro Family in the United States* (1939), and *The Negro Church in America* (1964)

4. Selected Works by Hughes: autobiographical works, *I Wonder As I Wander* (1956), *The Big Sea* (1940); general work, *The Book of Negro Folklore* (1958) with Arna Bontemps, *A Pictorial History of the Negro in America* (1956) with Milton Meltzer, *The Poetry of the Negro* 1746-1949 (1949) with Arna Bontemps; poetry, *The Weary Blues* (1926), *Shakespeare in Harlem* (1942), *Montage of a Dream Deferred* (1951), *The Panther and the Lash* (1967); plays, *Mulatto* (1935), *Tambourines to Glory* (1963); novels, *Not Without Laughter* (1930), *Simple Speaks His Mind* (1950), *Simple's Uncle Sam* (1965); short stories, *The Ways of White Folks* (1934), *Something in Common and Other Stories* (1963).

5. Patricia Gurin and Edgar Epps, *Black Consciousness, Identity, and Achievement: A Study of Students in Historically Black Colleges* (New York: Wiley, 1975); Harry Edwards, *The Struggle that Must Be: An Autobiography* (New York: Macmillan, 1980); Luke Tripp *Black Students, Ideology, and Class* (Urbana: Afro Scholar Working Papers, no. 9, University of Illinois, 1982).

6. William Orrick, "Shut it Down! A College in Crisis: San Francisco State College, October 1968 - April 1969" *A report to the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969).

7. Sidney F. Walton, Jr., *The Black Curriculum: Developing a Program in Afro-American Studies* (East Palo Alto: Black Liberation Publishers, 1969).

8. Cleveland Donald, Jr., "Cornell: Confrontation in Black and White" in *Divided We Stand:" Reflections on the Crisis at Cornell*, ed. Cushing Strout and David I. Grossvogel (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970); Edwards, *The Struggle that Must Be*.

9. Benjamin E. Mays, *Born to Rebel: An Autobiography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971).

10. Armstead Robinson et al., eds. *Black Studies in the University: A Symposium* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).

11. John W. Blassingame, ed., *New Perspectives on Black Studies* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971); Rafael L. Cortada, *Black Studies: An Urban and Comparative Curriculum* (Lexington, Mass.: Xerox College Publishing, 1974); Nick Aaron Ford, *Black Studies: threat-or-Challenge* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1973).

12. Charles A. Frye, *The Impact of Black Studies on the Curricula of Three Universities* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1976); William E. Sims, *Black Studies: Pitfalls and Potential* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1978).

13. Hermon George, Jr., *American Race Relations Theory: A Review of Four Models* (New York: University Press of America, 1984).

14. Maulana Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies* (Inglewood, Calif: Kawaida Publications, 1982).

15. Molefi Kete Asante, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* (Buffalo: Amulefi, 1980).

16. Clarence J. Munford, *Production Relations, Class and Black Liberation: A Marxist Perspective in Afro-American Studies* (Amsterdam: B. R. Brüner, 1978).

Coming of Age:
The Transformation of Afro-American Historiography

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As a field of inquiry with its own conceptual and methodological concerns, Afro-American historiography came of age during the past two decades. Prior to the 1960s, the writing of Afro-American History was dominated by an effort to achieve the notice and respect of White America. It was bound in Jay Saunders Redding's words to "...the angle of vision, the perceptions, the insights, and the interpretations - once all too frequently questionable - of white historians and chroniclers."[1] White historians generally ignored black people in their treatment of American History. When they did consider them, the work was usually impaired by white supremacy.[2] Black historians, therefore, wrote Afro-American History primarily to correct the errors, omissions, and distortions that had been generated about black people.[3] Because of the drive to make the black experience and integral part of the American saga, Afro-American historiography did not have a framework or approach of its own.

Three major developments converged during the 1960s to intensify interest in the Afro-American past and to change dramatically the writing of Afro-American History. The civil rights struggle, urban uprisings, and the Black consciousness movement forced a reassessment of the Black experience in America. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders reported in 1968 that "most Americans know little of the origins of the racial schism separating our white and Negro Citizens."[4] There had been previous studies of the race problem in America, most notably the Myrdal Report during the Second World War when the Afro-American plight became more national in scope for the first time due to massive migration from the South.[5] But these earlier studies did not stimulate the type of response that appeared during the late 1960's. In many respects, the media, which had become such an important element in shaping American popular culture, triggered interest in the Afro-American past.

Americans were anxious to know why black people, apparently passive before, were now demanding equality. The Columbia Broadcasting System

televised an excellent seven-part series "Of Black America" with its first segment "Black History: Lost, Stolen, or Strayed." Public Television stations aired a thirty-part lecture series, designed by Edgar A. Toppin "Americans From Africa: A History."[6] John Hope Franklin developed four weekly installments for *Life Magazine*, "Search for a Black Past." In his introduction to the essays, Roger Butterfield wrote that "...when Independence was won, black Americans had to start their own separate struggle for freedom and equality." He continued that Americans, however, "...know too little about it. Today, when the struggle has become the critical social issue of our time, there is an urgent attempt to understand its background."[7]

This groundswell of interest in the Afro-American past permeated practically every sector of American society. Government on both national and state levels, and generally at the insistence of an aroused black public, sought to create greater awareness of the black historical experience. The National Endowment for the Humanities, in August, 1968, sponsored seven workshops on college campuses across the country to discuss materials for courses on Afro-Americans and their contributions to American culture.[8] Several states, among them California, Connecticut, Michigan, New Jersey, and Oklahoma, required public school instruction in Afro-American History.[9] United States Senate and House sub-committees held hearings on an ill-fated bill to establish a national commission on Negro History and Culture. The hearings broadened familiarity with the significance of Afro-American History. The sub-committees also sensitized federal agencies to the importance of including material on black historical contributions in their programs.[10]

Book publishers recognized this trend and printed or reissued hundreds of volumes on Afro-American History. Textbook houses, in particular, revised their works to reflect the black presence in America. Frances FitzGerald has noted that "By the early seventies, most of the (school) books had been rewritten to include the history of blacks in America."[11] This departure from omission to the inclusion of black people in the writing of American History reflected the issues raised by the civil rights struggle and urban unrest more than the Black Consciousness Movement. Most of the books that appeared during the late 1960s and early 1970s explored the status of black people in American society, the nature of white racism in determining that status, and the role that Afro-Americans played in the drive for freedom and equality.[12] These works were written in the main by white scholars for whom the presence of black

people in the United States was a means to greater understanding of American society. Black historians, with few exceptions, were still wed to interpreting the black past as a theme in American History.

One volume stood apart from the rest and foreshadowed some of the lines of inquiry that would propel Afro-American historiography into its own during the mid and late 1970s. That was Harold Cruse's *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual.* Cruse recognized the centrality of Afro-American culture for understanding the contours of Afro-American History.[13] Moreover, it was the Black Consciousness Movement, with Malcolm X as its most symbolic proponent, that broke with the traditional interpretation of Afro-American History which had sought entry into the mainstream of American History. Malcolm X stressed identification with Africa and ascendant "peoples of color" throughout the world. He questioned the desirability of Afro-Americans trying to adopt the standards of a society that had historically rejected their worth as human beings. He proposed a different perspective whereby Afro-Americans conceived themselves as part of a strong world majority with more compassionate values rather than as a weak minority that could only imitate bankrupt American values.[14]

The Black Consciousness Movement generated considerable tension within the historical profession. White historians, who were still the gatekeepers in graduate training, research funding, and publication, sought to defend the discipline from what they saw as the danger of Black Nationalism. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., for example, dismissed Black Nationalism as emotionalism with no place in the rational discipline of history. He opined that "...as we proceed to widen our range and bring the neglected variety and grandeur of our national life into the forefront of historical understanding, we historians will do everything we can to preserve the integrity of the historical discipline."[15] In a similar but more indirect vein, C. Vann Woodward cautioned against creating myths, exaggerating the past, or celebrating the obscure for contemporary purposes.[16] These reservations seemed to emanate more from the fear of losing hegemony over Afro-American historiography than from a real understanding of Black Nationalism.

The Black Consciousness Movement, especially as it influenced the wave of young black historians who received their graduate education during the late 1960s, helped to extricate Afro-American historiography from the mainstream of American History. Many white historians also became sensitive to new directions for writing Afro-American History. August Meier has recently

observed that a different paradigm for Afro-American historiography developed during the 1960s. It did not emphasize black contributions to the general course of American History nor overly concern itself with black and white relations.[17] Afro-American historiography after the 1960s was no longer an appendage to the main currents of American History. It expressed a distinctiveness that would not be overwhelmed by or submerged to the American saga.

The recognition, growing out of the Black Consciousness Movement, that Afro-Americans had created and sustained a viable culture undergirded the new approach to Afro-American History. Many scholars, both black and white, had heretofore denied the existence of a concrete Afro-American culture, or they reluctantly acknowledged the possibility that a sub-culture might exist which was at best an aberration of the dominant American culture. They had rejected the idea of cultural transmission from Africa. Moreover, they had not seen anything significant enough in the African background to assist transplanted Africans in their adjustment to American society. The passage of time, acculturation, and the dynamics of racial oppression, in their estimation, had obliterated any traces of African culture and prevented the emergence of an Afro-American culture.[18] This conceptualization of the Afro-American past ignored the focus of cultural interaction, excluded any African component, or dismissed cultural retention without the identical material base that originally fostered it.

Most black historians approached the Afro-American past as inextricably bound with the growth of American society. They did not criticize the structure of American society except in its exclusion of black people. As Vincent Harding has noted, they did not analyze the systemic barriers to black equality or incisively critique a racist America.[19] John Hope Franklin, for example, in his preface to the first edition of *From Slavery to Freedom*, the standard survey of Afro-American History, explained that "the task here [is] to tell the story of the process by which the Negro has sought to cast his lot with an evolving American civilization."[20] With the major exception of W. E. B. DuBois, few black historians sought the lineaments of an Afro-Amercian culture, its origin, trajectory, and importance.

To understand the content, methodology, and interpretation of Afro-American History for the post-1960s, it is necessary to survey the prior concerns and approaches of black historians. *Three broad topics* have dominated Afro-American historiography and heretofore preoccupied black historians. The *African background*, *Slavery*, and *Reconstruction* have been the primary areas

of investigation. The interpretation of those topics has been through revisionist, hidden-hand, contributionist, cyclical, and liberal methodologies. Revisionism has been the overarching mode of writing about Afro-Americans to correct the misconceptions of Americans in general and white historians in particular. The hidden-hand was basically the approach of pre-twentieth century black historians to discern the work of God in human affairs. Contributionism has been a way to demonstrate black participation in the development of America. The cyclical approach to the black experience has sought to explain successes and failures as similar to the rhythm of nature. Liberalism on the other hand has been a more linear means of examining the Afro-American past as a march almost without detour to freedom and equality.

James W. C. Pennington, who published the first general work on Afro-American History in 1841, challenged prevailing theories of racial inferiority. He used the Bible as his major source to prove that black people belonged to the human family and to refute the alleged curses of Cain and Ham. Cain's descendants perished in the Flood and therefore could not sustain a curse. And The Biblical injunction against Ham, according to Pennington, applied only to Ham's son Canaan. Ethiopians, defined broadly as black people, were the progeny of Ham's son Cush. With that matter settled, Pennington exalted the history of ancient Egypt and Ethiopia as lands of black people. He explained the slave trade and slavery in America as a result of divine displeasure with Africans for adopting polytheistic beliefs. Slavery, he argued, grew out of the American colonists' need for labor rather than from racial inferiority.[21] Pennington had sought to revise popular notions about black people and to discover God's plan in transplanting Africans to America.

Other early black historians wrote in a similar vein to Pennington, but with greater emphasis on what black people had given to civilization as a means of proving their equality. Robert Benjamin Lewis used the Bible and classical sources to describe Egyptian contributions to world progress in literature, music, science, architecture, and mathematics. He also singled out famous men in world history who had African ancestry...[22] William Wells Brown employed biographical portraits to show what black people could accomplish when given the opportunity.[23] The example of black participation in the Revolutionary War was William C. Nell's way to affirm the ability to black men to become loyal citizens.[24] These early writers of Afro-American History stressed accomplishment in Africa, throughout the known world, and in America. By demonstrat-

ing black achievement, they hoped to change American attitudes about black people. Moreover, their work might also inspire Afro-Americans to lead exemplary lives and therefore eliminate any grounds for criticism by their enemies. Their historiography was limited by selection of sources and by the frameworks within which they studied the past.

But even George Washington Williams, whom John Hope Franklin has designated the father of modern Afro-American historiography, suffered from a comparable limitation. To his credit, Williams revolutionized Afro-American historiography through the systematic use of source materials. He employed newspapers, black organizational records, statistics, archival materials, and interviews.[25] Despite introducing a more scientific approach to the Afro-American past, Williams concluded his impressive two-volume work with these words: "In the interpretation of *History* the plans of God must be discerned..."[26]

In a much neglected work, W. E. B. DuBois came closer than any other black historian to defining the essential content of Afro-American History. He sought, in the *Gift of Black Folk*, the fundamental meaning of the Afro-American past. In an incomparable manner, he waxed poetic while reciting the material, cultural, and spiritual landmarks that Afro-Americans created as slaves, freemen, and citizens. Vastly ahead of his time, he wrote about the liberation of women, their struggle for equality, and the role of black women in such a movement. He capsulized the Afro-American experience with these lines: "...the slave became master, the bond servant became free and the meek not only inherited the earth but made that heritage a thing of questing for eternal youth, of fruitful labor, of joy and music, of the free spirit and of the ministering hand, of wide and poignant sympathy with men in their struggle to live and love which is, after all, the end of being."[27]

DuBois sketched areas of research about Afro-Americans that might have changed the course of Afro-American historiography as much or even more than Williams' systematic use of sources. But, DuBois also worked within a revisionist context and could not escape the pressure to emphasize black contributions to American life. For him as for other black historians, the race problem existed primarily because whites did not know the important contributions made by Afro-Americans. Knowledge was, therefore, the best instrument to eliminate racial inequality. Carter G. Woodson institutionalized this approach to the Afro-American past and established a foundation for popularizing Afro-

American History.

There had been other efforts before Woodson, but they were generally local in scope. Afro-Americans in Philadelphia organized the Banneker Institute in the 1850's and the Negro Historical Society in 1892. The American Negro Academy of Washington, D.C., 1897, and New York's Negro Society for Historical Research, 1911, were two other examples of earlier attempts to preserve and to propagate knowledge about the Afro-American past.[28] Arthur A.Schomburg, spearhead of the latter group, appealed for a "...course of study in Negro history and achievements..." He asked: "Where is our historian to give us our side view and our chair of Negro history to teach our people our own history?"[29] The Association for the Study of Afro-American (formerly Negro) Life and History [ASALH] that Woodson and several other black men formed in 1915 became the closest answer to Schomburg's question. Through *The Journal of Negro History* started in 1916; the national observance of Negro History Week, begun in 1924; sponsorship of numerous monographs, and publication of the *Negro History Bulletin* in 1933, the ASALH became the central organization for stimulating interest in the Afro-American past. It, however, was steeped in Woodson's approach to Afro-American historiography as expressed in the first edition of his *The Negro In Our History*. He wrote that the purpose of his book was "...to demonstrate how the Negro has been influenced by contact with the caucasian and to emphasize what the former has contributed to civilization."[30]

At the ASALH's 1936 annual meeting, Lawrence D. Reddick urged a new approach to Afro-American historiography. He identified the prevailing principle a "liberalism," faith in human progress by dint of individual application, endurance, and piety.[31] Reddick sought a broader frame of reference, attention to the common folk, and recognition of the interplay of economic forces, especially capitalist development and expansion. He called for a more materialist conception of Afro-American History that would examine the concrete experiences of black people and their relationship to the production and distribution of wealth. The traditional approach to the Afro- American past was more idealistic in considering the legal and ideological bases for racial inequality. As C. Vann Woodward wrote in the mid-1960s, "The first half-century of Negro freedom in America happened to coincide with the dominance of racism in Western thought generally and in American social theory in particular."[32]

In Redding's words, race relations was the paradigm and "practically a

synonym for Afro-American history."[33] Prior to the 1960s, black historians have been preoccupied with racist thought and unsympathetic race relations as barriers to equality. They have written for a white audience to convince it of a worthy Afro-American past and hopefully of accepting black people into American society. Concomitantly, they have also appealed to a black audience, to promote pride its heritage and to inspire the will to struggle for equality.

Standing in the way of that objective was the prevalent interpretation of Reconstruction. Many white historians characterized the period as a "Tragic Era".[34] They depicted black people as having been rushed into freedom and hastily involved in politics as Republican officeholders, whose supposed ignorance, corruption, and misfeasance in state and local offices practically crippled the South with huge debts. White Democrats therefore had to seize control of southern government, disfranchise the freed men, and segregate them in most areas of public life to rescue the South. Reconstruction became the compelling arena of historical investigation for black historians during the first half of the twentieth century, much as the African background had been a dominant theme before the Civil War. Black historians had to expose misconceptions about Reconstruction to remove the props for disfranchisement and segregation.

W.E.B. DuBois, in his classic book, *Black Reconstruction*, refuted the three major myths about black people during the era. In school textbooks especially, the nation's youth learned that all black people were "ignorant", "lazy, dishonest, and extravagant", and "responsible for bad government during Reconstruction". DuBois' chapter "The Propaganda of History" revealed how American History had been abused to oppress black people. He wrote that "The treatment of the period of Reconstruction reflects small credit upon American historians as scientists. We have too often a deliberate attempt so as to change the facts of history that the story will make pleasant reading for Americans."[35] Since DuBois' work, there has been a gradual change in the interpretation of Reconstruction. Franklin's *Reconstruction: After the Civil War* marked the triumphant shift begun by DuBois, Alrutheus A. Taylor, and other black historians.[36]

Many black historians approached the Reconstruction myths indirectly by studying those blacks who were free before the Civil War. If black people could care for themselves, acquire education, and accumulate property before the Reconstruction era, there were certainly capable black men to function effectively in post-emancipation politics. Moreover, Afro-Americans even when free before the Civil War lived under handicaps. Their accomplishment was all

the more impressive and therefore disproved the traditional image of blacks after slavery, when they had greater opportunity.[37]

The African background and Reconstruction received more attention than slavery, except as written from what Okon E. Uya has labeled a catastrophic perspective.[38] This approach focused almost exclusively on black suffering under slavery. It described black people as being stripped of their African culture, brutalized on the plantations, and reduced in self-esteem. It emphasized what slavery did to Afro-Americans and rarely traced how slaves sought to preserve their integrity as a people. There was little effort to understand the internal lives of the slaves. Afro-Americans in bondage were actors only in the narrow range of slave uprisings and flight from slavery. In many respects, the fugitive slave became the prototype for studying bondage. This was probably because the narratives and autobiographies of former slaves who had escaped formed the major sources for probing the topic. Even when these sources were employed, the story was one of infinite horror and final flight from bondage. Miles Mark Fisher made one of the few departures in analyzing slave songs, but his work also existed in the context of oppression and the desire to be free.[39]

Slavery took on greater proportion as a topic of inquiry after Stanley M. Elkins' *Slavery* appeared in 1959. As white scholars progressively eschewed theories of racial inferiority to explain Afro-American inequality, they turned increasingly to the legacy of slavery interpretation. In the *Mark of Oppression*, Abram Kardiner and Lionel Ovesey hypothesized that Afro-Americans emerged from slavery without a culture, with "...no intrapsychic defenses — no pride, no group solidarity, no tradition." They concluded that "The marks of his previous status were still upon him — socially, psychologically, and emotionally. And from these he has never since freed himself."[40] Elkins elaborated this hypothesis by using the analogy of infantilization as derived from the behavior of Nazi concentration camp inmates. He suggested that slavery produced a dominant personality type "Sambo", who was childish, lazy, irresponsible, and dependent. "Sambos" were made, not born, through the process of shock in their initial capture, detachment from their homeland and culture, and infantilization in attachment to the absolute authority of the slavemaster, their most "significant other". The slavemaster, as primary role model, held their destiny in his hands. He was the patriarch and they his children, not merely in role playing but in reality over time as they internalized this behavior and instilled it in their

progeny.[41]

Elkins' analysis became all the more insidious as white social scientists, in particular, tried to explain the persistence of black inequality. Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan attributed Afro-American status to the absence of middle-class values and norms among black people in general.[42] Moynihan later wrote that "Three centuries of injustice have brought about deep-seated structural distortions in the life of the Negro American." "At this point," he continued, "the present tangle of pathology is capable of perpetuating itself without assistance from the white world. The cycle can be broken only if these distortions are set right."[43] Edward C. Banfield boldly mused that "If there is something about Jewish culture that makes Jews tend to be upwardly mobile, there may be something about Negro culture that makes the Negro tend not to be."[44]

As the African background was acutely important for black historians before the Civil War and Reconstruction dominated the early twentieth century, Slavery became the central issue during the 1960s. The work of black historians was again primarily revisionist as white historians in the main had defined the topic. Kenneth Stampp, in one of the sounder interpretations of slavery nevertheless opened his work with the statement that "...innately Negroes are, after all, only white men with black skins, nothing more, nothing less.[45] Robert Fogeland Stanley Engerman attempted a statistical analysis to prove that slaves, indeed, shared middle-class values of duty, hard work, and upward mobility.[46] They erred, however, by subjecting slave behavior to rational economic motivation within a coercive system. Eugene Genovese tried to strip Ulrich B. Phillips' idea of paternalism from its racism to describe the "world the slaves made".[47] His model of paternalism, however, still viewed slavery through the slavemasters' lens. It did not adequately define the contours of Afro-American culture as it emanated from the slave quarters. Too many white historians have been absorbed in building historical models that ultimately provide greater insight into white society. John W. Blassingame has noted that "Traditionally, white scholars have studied the Negro only to amplify their knowledge of white men and white institutions."[48] The work of black historians such as Blassingame, Vincent Harding, Nathan I. Huggins, Leslie H. Owens, Albert Raboteau, and Sterling Stuckey, together with white historians Herbert G. Gutman, Lawrence Levine, Thomas L. Webber, and Peter Wood, has begun to penetrate the interior lives of the slaves and to outline a distinct Afro-American culture."[49]

These historians have undercut the legacy of slavery argument as the prime explanation of black inequality. Their studies have demonstrated how black people produced a viable culture to cope with slavery and to retain their integrity. Afro-Americans developed a concrete culture with African antecedents in their family ties, institutional life, religious values, and worldview.

The legacy of slavery and the persistence of Afro-American oppression are now being examined against a backdrop of the South's political economy. Economic historians, in particular, have recently studied the South's underdevelopment, its plantation economy, and its repressive political system that represented the interests of large white landholders.[50] Black people, of whom 86.6% lived in rural sections of twelve southern states in 1860 and 83.3% in 1910,[51] were caught in a lattice of socio-economic and political circumstances that prevented the broad capital formation, property-holding, political participation, and skill acquisition that might have enabled them to rise above the status they occupied as slaves.

For the post 1960s era, the African background, Slavery, and Reconstruction will probably not loom as large as specific topics in Afro-American historiography. The hidden-hand, revisionist, contributionist, cyclical, and liberal interpretations have lost their urgency. The hidden-hand approach has basically been discarded as a historical methodology. Revisionism has receded especially as black historians themselves increasingly define the terrain of Afro-American historiography. There will probably always be a need to correct myths, distortions, and omissions about black people, but hopefully it will no longer preoccupy Afro-American historians. Revisionism is a confining methodology because it operates within a paradigm established by others. They pose the questions, determine the issues, and in large measure define the framework for debate. Revisionists react to premises that often dictate the line of argument. Toni Cade Bambara, in a passage from her novel *The Salt Eaters*, graphically elucidates this danger. One of her characters reasons that "...the Negro people were *fours* (emphasis added) and so long as they paid more attention to folks trying to pen them in, hem them in, box them in on all four sides thinking they had them in prison than to the work at hand, why then they would never get a spare moment to look up at the sun and build."[52]

The contributionist approach no longer retains its saliency, especially in proving that black people have been an integral part of the American landscape. This approach has generally concentrated on individual rather than group

dynamics. It has neglected the interaction of different forces that have affected the black historical experience. Benjamin Quarles has reminded us, however, that Afro-American history benefits a number of publics. It addresses the black masses to provide a sense of heritage, pride in the past, and challenge for the future. The emphasis here, in large measure, is on the great personality, although with some attention to group achievement. In its exploration of past problems and solutions, Afro-American History offers background information for black activists. It serves black academicians, and for them, it has "...a reflective judicial tone, taking its cue from the careful winnowing and sifting that preceded it." Finally, it informs a white audience about the real nature of this country's past.[53]

These four publics present an awesome challenge to Afro-American historians. It will take exceptional individuals to speak to them all simultaneously. There will probably have to be some division of labor among Afro-American historians. Many will engage in primary research, the miners, seeking new information and ways to interpret the past. Others, the refiners, will relate this knowledge to broader audiences. Ideally, the same practitioners might function in different arenas, i.e. scholarly publications, the popular media, and public forums. Afro-American historians, above all, can not cloister themselves in ivory towers and become minutiae experts, so withdrawn from reality that they can only converse with other specialists in the field. Afro-American historiography must be more utilitarian than aesthetic, as the Afro-American historian's purpose should be to examine the past as it relates specifically to black people for greater understanding of the present and for informed decisions about the future.

There will probably continue to be a place for contributionism especially for black youth. They need didactic symbols for growth and development. The masses, moreover, are more apt to gain insight into the Afro-American past through biography. Too much has been made of the dangers that Afro-American historiography might fall into myth making and hero worship. C. Vann Woodward, in his 1969 Organization of American Historians' presidential address, warned against exaggeration or celebration of the obscure.[54] Nathan I. Huggins cautioned against creating a fantasy of the impossible by imagining invincible black heroes. He opined that "it is far better for blacks to understand their past realistically, so that they will know where they stand in relation to power and be able to judge the probable effects of their action."[55] It depends on

whose vantage is used to determine their position. For too long, it was the oppressor's point of view that made black struggle and victory seem impossible. Black youngsters do require heroic images to lift their sights beyond their immediate environment. There are more than enough examples of black struggle, failure and achievement for this purpose. They do not have to be invented.

Black historians, in the main, have abandoned liberalism in their writing. They do not perceive the Afro-American past as an inexorable procession toward freedom and equality. Moreover, the notion of an American melting pot wherein different peoples have become an ideal type has lost its worth as a means of examining the past. There is a greater tendency to criticize the American socio-political and economic system not solely for its exclusion of black people but also for its structural imperfections that have allowed racism and class oppression to thrive. Mary F. Berry and A. Leon Higginbotham have indicted the American legal system for its conscious abuse of black people.[56] Huggins, with the type of insight that black historians can not avoid as they read the records, has now concluded that America was born in tyranny.[57] Lerone Bennett Jr., has systematically explored the structural and functional barriers to black equality in the emerging American nation.[58] Many black historians have heeded Sterling Stuckey's injunction that "It is the system itself which needs to be investigated, the system whose jails and prisons are almost bursting at the seams with black prisoners..." He suggested that "It is not the victim who is most in need of study — it is the executioner."[59]

Shorn of its reliance on divine providence, the cyclical interpretation of the Afro-American past has some heuristic value. Historical events do not flow in a forward unbroken line. Nor, do they ever return to the same point. A spiralling or coiling configuration might be a more appropriate analogy. The civil rights era, for example, has often been labeled the "Second Reconstruction" in comparison with the Reconstruction epoch from 1865 to 1877.[60] Both periods were times of intense efforts to incorporate Afro-Americans into American society. Each also became fragmented as the nation turned to other issues such as the economy, women's rights, Indian claims, and foreign affairs to mention a few. Afro-Americans during the twentieth century, moreover, have enjoyed higher rates of employment when the nation is at war, only to be pushed out of the primary labor market when peace is restored. In each of these instances, there has been the rhythm of gain, consolidation, and loss. The events have not been identical although the processes have been similar. Black people have

never returned to the same position as in the rotation of an object around a set path. There has been absolute change in their status, although relative change has been muted by the advances of the society as a whole.

The post-1960s challenge for Afro-American historiography is how to balance what Bennett has called the dialectical tension between the inner detail and the whole, the internal and external variables that have influenced the black historical experience.[61] Afro-American history has taken place within the context of American history, but it should not be overwhelmed by that fact. It is much broader than the activities of the American nation. Events on the African continent and in the African diaspora have profoundly affected Afro-American thought and action. The Haitian Revolution and British abolition of slavery in the Caribbean touched Afro-Americans more substantially than Jacksonian Democracy. While Andrew Jackson broadened political participation for white Americans, the Haitian Revolt gave courage to Afro-Americans. They constantly invoked this example of black people rising up, throwing off their bondage, and demonstrating their capacity for self-government. Martin R. Delany, the antebellum black nationalist, named one of his sons after the famed Haitian leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, as did other Afro-American parents.[62] The Haitian precedent inspired Denmark Vesey's plans for the 1822 aborted revolt in Charleston, South Carolina.[63]

Throughout the North, early Afro-Americans observed August 1st, the date of West Indian emancipation, as a special day. July 4th held little significance for them.[64] There has been a mutual relationship with Africa from Paul Cuffe's early voyage with thirty- eight emigrants, through the antebellum emigration movement. Bishop Henry McNeal Turner's and the Black Church's activities, the Pan-African Congresses, Marcus Garvey, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, and African liberation. It has been reciprocal with Africans and Afro-Americans influencing each other over time.[65] As African independence, beginning with Ghana in 1957, inspired the Black Consciousness Movement, it in turn activated black people in the Caribbean and in Southern Africa.

The web of Afro-American history radiates beyond the United States' borders. It exists within the core of two intersecting circles, one this country and the other the African world. Pivotal points for examining the Afro-American past can not, therefore, be confined to the standard divisions of American history, e.g. territorial expansion, wars, presidential administrations, or reform movements. A more sound appraisal of the Afro-American past must look

specifically at migration and urbanization to understand the internal dynamics of the Afro-American historical experience without losing sight of its external dimensions. Migration from Africa to America, from upper South to lower South, from predominantly white to predominantly black counties, from rural to urban settings in both South and North, and from South to North and West (and in some instances South again) provides a conceptual framework to analyze the process by which Africans become Afro-Americans, Afro-American culture emerged and developed, the status of black people became fixed in American society, black labor was exploited, black people coped and survived, and current problems surfaced.

Earl E. Thorpe has reflected that "Each generation, depending on its problems and needs, must select and arrange the specific facts which form the best system for its own inspiration and guidance." He has suggested further that "It is because the past is a guide with roads pointing in many directions that each generation and epoch must make its own studies of history."[66] The writing of Afro-American History has evolved to the point that we are now able to sketch the conceptual and methodological issues that give it a coherence of its own. Moreover, the place of Afro-Americans in American society and in a global context differs dramatically from beforehand and therefore dictates a fresh appraisal. As the presence of a viable Afro-American culture has become essential to understanding our past, we need to give greater attention to its content during different eras and in different locations.

Although Harold Cruse has correctly criticized the failure of black intellectuals to appreciate the dimensions of Afro-American culture, he has also noted that "...Black social development of real historical consequence has been urban development (whether North or South.)"[67] This is a noteworthy, concept, especially for the mid-twentieth century, but it ignores the rural base of Afro-American social development that prevailed much longer than the more contemporary urban setting. Ira Berlin has recently explored the complexities and diversities of black life before the nineteenth century in different times and places.[68] He reveals the dynamic interactions as Africans coalesced into Afro-Americans. The various disruptions of the black population provided the opportunity for shaping, modifying, and consolidating shared values and practices. A conceptualization of Afro-American History as an area of inquiry with its own concerns emphasizes this process. It examines the Afro-American past from the inside out, with the black population, its thought and actions, as the independ-

ent variable. The intervening variable are those events within the United States and the African diaspora. And the dependent variable is the manner in which those two vectors converge.

Nell Painter has applied this approach with excellent results in the *Exodusters*,[69] while Leon Litwack in *Been in the Storm So Long* has expertly probed the contradictions between the freedmen's desires and the planters' expectations after the Civil War.[70] These prototypical works which reflect the maturation of Afro-American historiography employ a conceptualization whose starting point is the black population. They demand a methodology that is sensitive to the thoughts and actions of Afro-Americans. This means examining the records of the masses of black people as well as what Painter has called the "representative men of color." The imprints that the masses have left upon the past take a variety of forms, both literary and nonliterary. It is therefore essential to be familiar with Afro-American music and folklore and to understand the temperament of the black masses.

Afro-American historiography, with its own conceptual and methodological concerns, is now poised to illuminate the Afro-American past in a manner that will broaden and deepen our knowledge of black people in this country. The writing of Afro-American History is no longer undertaken principally to revise the work of wrongheaded white historians, to discern divine providence, to show black participation in the nation's growth and development, to prove the inevitability of black equality, or to demonstrate the inexorable progress made by Afro-Americans. It is conducted as a distinct area of inquiry, within the discipline of history, with black people as its primary focus to reveal their thought and activities over time and place.

Notes

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2. John W.Blassingame, "The Afro-Americans: From Mythology to Reality," in William H. Cartwright and Richard L. Watson, Jr., ed., *The Reinterpretation of American History and Culture* (Washington, D.C., 1973), pp. 53-54, 72.

3. John Hope Franklin, "The Future of Negro American History," First Annual Martin Luther King Jr., Memorial Lecture, New School for Social Research, New York City, 1969.

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5. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, 2 vols. (New York, 1944). This work set the tone in large measure for the "race relations" approach to Afro-American History.

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8. Herbert McArthur, "National Endowment for the Humanities Workshops in the Materials of Negro History and Culture," *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 43:4 (December, 1968), p. 353.

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13. Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York, 1967).

14. *Malcolm X On Afro-American History* (New York, 1967).

15. Arthur Schlesinger Jr., "Nationalism and History," *The Journal of Negro History*, 54:1 (January, 1969), pp. 21, 29-30.

16. C. Vann Woodward, "Clio With Soul," *The Journal of American History*, 56:1 (June, 1969), p. 18.

17. August Meier, "Benjamin Quarles and the Historiography of Black America," *Civil War History*, 26:2 (June, 1980), p. 115.

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Generational Shifts and the Recent Criticism of Afro-American Literature

Houston A. Baker, Jr.

I

There exist any number of possible ways to describe changes that have occurred in Afro-American literary criticism during the past four decades. If one assumes a philosophical orientation, one can trace a movement from democratic pluralism ("integrationist poetics") through romantic Marxism (the "Black Aesthetic") to a version of Aristotelian metaphysics (the "Reconstruction of Instruction"). From another perspective, one can describe the ascendant class interests that have characterized Afro-America since World War II, forcing scholars, in one instance, to assess Afro-American expressive culture at a mass level and, in another instance, to engage in a kind of critical "professionalism" that seems contrary to mass interests. One can survey, on yet another level, transformations in the recent criticism of Afro-American literature from a perspective in the philosophy of science; from this vantage point, one can explore conceptual, or "paradigm," changes that have marked the critical enterprise in recent years. These various levels of analysis can be combined, I think, in the notion of the "generational shift."

A "generational shift" can be defined as an ideologically motivated movement overseen by young or newly-emergent intellectuals who are dedicated to refuting the work of their intellectual predecessors and to establishing a new framework of intellectual inquiry. The affective component of such shifts is described by Lewis Feuer: "Every birth or revival of an ideology is borne by a new generational wave: in its experience, each such new intellectual generation feels everything is being born anew, that the past is meaningless, or irrelevant, or nonexistent."[1] The new generation's break with the past is normally signaled by its adoption of what the philosopher of science Thomas S. Kuhn (to whose work I shall return later) designates a new "paradigm"; i.e., a new set of guiding assumptions that unifies the intellectual community.[2]

In the recent criticism of Afro-American literature, there have been two

distinct generational shifts. Both have involved ideological and aesthetic reorientations, and both have been accompanied by shifts in literary-critical and literary-theoretical paradigms. The first such shift occurred during the mid-1960s. It led to the displacement of what might be described as integrationist poetics and gave birth to a new object of scholarly investigation.

II

The dominant critical perspective on Afro-American literature during the late 1950s and early 1960 might be called the poetics of integrationism. Richard Wright's essay, "The Literature of the Negro in the United States," which appears in his 1957 collection entitled *White Man, Listen!*, offers an illustration of integrationist poetics.[3] Wright optimistically predicts that Afro-American literature may soon be indistinguishable from the mainstream of American arts and letters. The basis for his optimism is the Supreme Court's decision in Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education (1954), in which the Court ruled that the doctrine "separate but equal" was inherently unequal. According to Wright, this ruling ensures a future "equality" in the experiences of Black and white Americans, and this equality of *social* experience will translate in the literary domain as a homogeneity of *represented* experience (pp. 103-105). When Afro-American writers have achieved such equality and homogeneity, they will stand at one with the majority culture in a relationship that Wright terms "entity" (p. 72).

But the foregoing stipulations apply only to what Wright calls the "Narcissistic Level" i.e., the self-consciously literate level of Afro-American culture (pp. 84-85). At the folk, or mass, level the relationship between Afro-American and the majority culture has always been one of "identity" (as in "the black person's quest for identity"), or separateness (p. 72). And though Wright argues that the self-consciously literate products of Afro-America that signify a division between cultures (e.g., "protest" poems and novels) may disappear relatively quickly under the influence of the Brown decision, he is not so optimistic with regard to the "Forms of Things Unknown" (p. 83) i.e., the expressive products of the Black American masses. For blues, jazz, work songs, and verbal forms such as folktales, boasts, toasts, and dozens are functions of the black masses' relationship of "identity" with the mainstream culture. They signal, that is to say, *an absence of equality* and represent a *sensualization* of the masses' ongoing suffering (p. 83). They are, according to Wright, improv-

isational forms filled "with a content wrung from a bleak and barren environment, an environment that stung, crushed, all but killed" (p. 84). Only when the "Forms of Things Unknown" have disappeared altogether, or when conditions have been realized that enable them to be raised to a level of self-conscious art, will one be able to argue that an egalitarian ideal has been achieved in American life and art. The only course leading to such a positive goal, Wright implies, is momentous social action like that represented by the 1954 Supreme Court decision.

Hence, the black spokesman who champions a poetics of integrationism is constantly in search of social indicators (such as the Brown decision) that signal a democratic pluralism in American life. The implicit goal of this philosophical orientation is a raceless, classless community of men and women living in perfect harmony (p. 105). The integrationist critic, as Wright demonstrates, founds his predictions of a future homogeneous body of American creative expression on such social *evidence* as the Emancipation Proclamation, Constitutional amendments, Supreme Court decisions, or any one of many other documented claims that suggest that American is moving toward a pluralistic ideal. The tone that such critics adopt is always one of optimism.

Arthur P. Davis offers a striking example of an Afro-American critic who has repeatedly sought to discover evidence to support his arguments that a noneness of all Americans and a harmonious merger of disparate forms of American creative expression are impending American social realities. What seems implicit in Davis's critical formulations is a call for Afro-American writers to speed the emergence of such realities by offering genuine, *artistic* contributions to the kind of classless, raceless literature that he and other integrationist critics assume will carry the future. An injunction of this type can be inferred, for example, from the 1941 Introduction to *The Negro Caravan*, the influential anthology of Afro-American expression that Davis coedited with Sterling Brown and Ulysses Lee:

> The editors...do not believe that the expression "Negro literature" is an accurate one, and in spite of its convenient brevity, they have avoided using it. "Negro literature" has no application if it means *structural peculiarity*, or a Negro school of writing. The Negro writes in the forms evolved in English and American literature...The editors consider Negro writers to be American writers, and literature by American Negroes to be a segment of American literature...The chief cause for objection to the term is that "Negro literature" is too easily placed by certain critics, white and Negro, in an alcove apart. The next step is a double standard of judgment, which is dangerous for the future of Negro writers.[4] (my italics)

In the 1950s and 1960s, Davis continued to champion the poetics implicit in such earlier work as *The Negro Caravan*. His essay "Integration and Race Literature," which he presented to the first conference of Afro-American writers sponsored by the American Society of African Culture in 1959, states:

> The course of Negro American literature has been highlighted by a series of social and political crises over the Negro's position in America. The Abolition Movement, the Civil War, Reconstruction, World War I, and the riot-lynching period of the twenties all radically influenced Negro writing. Each crisis in turn produced a new tradition in our literature; and as each crisis has passed, the Negro writer has dropped the social tradition which the occasion demanded and moved towards the mainstream of American literature. The integration controversy is another crisis, and from it we hope that the Negro will move permanently into full participation in American social, economic, political, and literary.[5]

The stirring drama implied here of black writers finding their way through various "little" traditions to the glory of the "great" mainstream is a function of Davis's solid faith in American pluralistic ideals. He regards history and society from a specific philosophical and ideological standpoint: Afro-Americans and their expressive traditions, like other minority cultures, have always moved unceasingly toward a unity with American majority culture. He thus predicts, like Wright, the eventual disappearance of social conditions that produce literary works of art that are identifiable (in terms of "structural peculiarity") as "Negro" or "Afro-American" literature.

Wright, and Davis represent a generation whose philosophy, ideology, and attendant poetics support the vanishing of Afro-American literature qua *Afro-American* literature. I shall examine this proposition at greater length in the next section. At this point, I simply want to suggest that the consequences of this generational position for literary-critical axiology can be inferred from the "Introduction" to *The Negro Caravan*. The editors of that work assert: "They [Afro-American writers] must ask that their books be judged as books, without sentimental allowances. In their own defense they must demand a single standard of criticism" (p. 7). This assertion suggests that black writers should construct their works in ways that make them acceptable in the sight of those who mold a "single standard of criticism" in America. These standard bearers were for many years, however, a small, exclusive community of individuals labeled by black spokesmen of the sixties as the "white, literary-critical establishment." And only a poetics buttressed by a philosophical viewpoint that argued the eventual unification of *all* talented creative men and women as judges could have prompted such able spokesmen as Wright, Brown, and Davis to consider

that works of Afro-American literature and verbal art be subjected to a "single standard" of American literary-critical judgment.

III

The generational shift that displaced the integrationist poetics just described brought forth a group of intellectuals most clearly distinguished from its predecessors by its different ideological and philosophical posture vis-à-vis American egalitarian ideals. After the arrests, bombings, and assassinations that comprised the white South's reaction to non-violent, direct-action protests by hundreds of thousands of civil rights workers from the late fifties to the mid-sixties, it was difficult for even the most committed optimist to feel that integration was an impending American social reality.[6] Rather than searching for documentary evidence and the indelible faith necessary to argue for the undemonstrated American egalitarianism, the emerging generation set itself the task of analyzing the nature, aims, ends, and arts of those hundreds of thousands of their own people who were assaulting America's manifest structures of exclusion.

The Afro-American masses demonstrated through their violent acts ("urban riots") in Harlem, Watts, and other communities throughout the nation that they were intent on black social and political sovereignty in America. Their acts signaled the birth of a new ideology, one that received its proper name in 1966, when Stokely Carmichael designated it "Black Power":[7]

> [Black Power] is a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support those organizations. It is a call to reject the racist institutions and values of [American] society.[8]

This definition, drawn from Carmichael and Charles Hamilton's work entitled, *Black Power*, expresses a clear imperative for Afro-Americans to focus their social efforts and political vision on their *own* self-interests. This particularity of Black Power, its sharper emphasis on the immediate concerns of Afro-American themselves, was a direct counterthrust by an emergent generation to the call for a general, raceless, classless community of men and women central to an earlier integrationist framework. The community that was of interest to the emergent generation was not a future generation of integrated Americans, but rather a present, vibrant group of men and women who constituted the heart of Afro-America. The Afro-American masses became, in the later sixties and

early seventies, both subject and audience for the utterances of black political spokesmen moved by a new ideology.

The poetics accompanying the new ideological orientation were first suggested by Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) in an address entitled "The Myth of a 'Negro Literature,'" which he presented to the American Society of African Culture in 1962:

> Where is the Negro-ness of a literature written in imitation of the meanest of social intelligences to be found in American culture, i.e., the white middle class? How can it even begin to express the emotional predicament of black Western man? Such a literature, even if its "characters" *are* black, takes on the emotional barrenness of its model, and the blackness of the characters is like the blackness of Al Jolson, an unconvincing device. It is like using black checkers instead of white. They are still checkers.[9]

At the self-consciously literate level of Afro-American expression, the passage implies, black spokesmen have deserted the genuine emotional referents and the authentic experiential categories of black life in America. The homogeneity between their representations of experience and those of the white mainstream are a cause for disgust rather than an occasion for rejoicing. Finally, the quoted passage implies that the enervating merger of black and white expression at the "Narcissistic" level (to use Wright's phrase) of Afro-American life is a result of the black writer's acceptance of a "single standard of criticism" molded by white America. Baraka, thus, inverts the literary-critical optimism and axiology of an earlier generation, rejecting entirely the notion that "Negro Literature" should not stand apart as a unique body of expression. It is precisely the desertion by black writers of those aspects of Afro-American life that foster the uniqueness and authenticity of black expression that Baraka condemns most severely in his essay.

But where, then, does one discover in Afro-American genuine reflections of the true emotional referents and experiential categories of black life if not in its self-consciously literate works of art? Like the more avowedly political spokesmen of his day, Baraka turned to the world of the masses, and there he discovered the "forms of things unknown" (Wright's designation for black, folk expressive forms):

> Negro music alone, because it drew its strengths and beauties out of the depth of the black man's soul, and because to a large extent its traditions could be carried on by the lowest classes of Negroes, has been able to survive the constant and willful dilutions of the black middle class. Blues and jazz have been the only consistent exhibitors of "Negritude" in formal American culture simply because the bearers of its tradition maintained their essential identities as Negroes; in no other art (and I will persist in calling Negro music Art) has this been possible. (p. 107)

In this statement, Baraka seems to parallel the Richard Wright of an earlier generation. But while Wright felt that the disappearance of the "forms of things unknown" would signal a positive stage in the integration of American life and art, Baraka established the Harlem Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School in 1965 as an enterprise devoted to the continuance, development, and strengthening of the "coon shout," blues, jazz, holler, and other expressive forms of the "lowest classes of Negroes."[10] He, and other artists who contributed to the establishment of the school, felt that the perpetuation of such forms would help give birth to a new black nation. Larry Neal, who worked with Baraka during the mid-sixties, delineates both the complementarity of the Black Arts and Black Power movements and the affective component of a generational shift in his often-quoted essay "The Black Arts Movement":

> Black Art is the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept. As such, it envisions an art that speaks directly to the needs and aspirations of Black America. In order to perform this task, the Black Arts Movement proposes a radical reordering of the western cultural aesthetic. It proposes a separate symbolism, mythology, critique, and iconology.[11]

The Black Arts Movement, therefore, like its ideological counterpart Black Power, was concerned with the articulation of experience (and the satisfaction of audience demands) that found their essential character among the black urban masses. The guiding assumption of the movement was that if a literary-critical investigator looked to the characteristic musical and verbal forms of the masses, he would discover unique aspects of Afro-American creative expression — aspects of form and performance — that lay closest to the veritable emotional referents and experiential categories of Afro-American culture. The result of such critical investigations, according to Neal and other spokesmen such as Baraka and Addison Gayle, Jr. (to name but three prominent advocates for the Black Arts), would be the discovery of a "Black Aesthetic" i.e., a distinctive code for the creation and evaluation of black art. From an assumed "structural peculiarity" of Afro-American expressive culture, the emergent generation of intellectuals proceeded to assert a *sui generis* tradition of Afro-American art and a unique "standard of criticism" suitable for its elucidation.

Stephen Henderson's essay entitled "The Forms of Things Unknown," which stands as the introduction to his anthology *Understanding the New Black Poetry*, offers one of the most suggestive illustrations of this discovery process at work.[12] Henderson's formulations mark a high point in the first generational shift in the recent criticism of Afro-American literature because he is a spokes-

man *par excellence* for what emerged from his generation as a new object of literary-critical and literary-theoretical investigation. Before turning to the specifics of his arguments, however, I want to focus for a moment on the work of Thomas Kuhn to clarify what I mean by a "new object" of investigation.

IV

In his work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn sets out to define the nature of a scientific "revolution," or shift in the fundamental ways in which the scientific community perceives and accounts for phenomena. He first postulates that the guiding construct in the practice of normal science is what he defines as the "paradigm"; i.e., a constellation of "beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community."[13] He further defines a paradigm as the "universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners [of normal science]" (p. viii). A paradigm, thus, sets the parameters of scholarly investigation, constraining both the boundaries of an investigator's perception and the degree of legitimacy attributed to various problems and methodologies. A forceful example of a scientific revolution and its enabling paradigm shift was the displacement of geocentricism by a Copernican cosmology. Kuhn writes: "The Copernicans who denied its traditional title 'planet' to the sun were not only learning what 'planet' meant or what the sun was. Instead, they were changing the meaning of 'planet' so that it could continue to make useful distinctions in a world where all celestial bodies, not just the sun, were seen differently from the way they had been seen before" (pp. 128-29).

The effects of this kind of paradigmatic shift on the assumptions and higher-order rules of a scholarly community are additionally clarified when Kuhn says:

> Led by a new paradigm, scientists adopt new instruments and look in new places. Even more important, during revolutions scientists see new and different things when looking with familiar instruments in places they have looked before. It is rather as if the professional community had been suddenly transported to another planet where *familiar objects are seen in a different light and are joined by unfamiliar ones as well*...paradigm changes...cause scientists to see the world of their research-engagement differently. In so far as their only recourse to that world is through what they see and do, we may want to say that after a revolution scientists are responding to a different world. (my italics, p. 111)

Kuhn cites as an experimental instance of such changes in perception the classic work of George M. Stratton. Stratton fitted his subjects with goggles that contained inverting lenses. Initially, these subjects was the world upside down and

existed in a state of extreme disorientation. Eventually, though, their entire visual field flipped over, and:

> Thereafter, objects are again seen as they had been before the goggles were put on. The assimilation of a previously anomalous visual field...reacted upon and changed the field itself. Literally as well as metaphorically...[the subject] accustomed to inverting lenses...[underwent] *a revolutionary transformation of vision.* (my italics, p. 112)

In terms of the present discussion of Afro-American literary criticism, I want to suggest that Stephen Henderson and other Afro-American intellectuals of his generation fomented a change in the perceptual field of Afro-American literary study that amounted, finally, to a "revolutionary transformation" of literary-critical and literary-theoretical vision vis-à-vis black expressive culture. Before the mid-sixties scholars were led by an integrationist paradigm that permitted them to perceive a "literature" or "art" only those Afro-American expressive works that approached or conformed to the "single standard of criticism" advocated by the editors of *The Negro Caravan.* In adopting such a "standard," an integrationist poetics bound its perceptual field and constrained its domain of legitimate investigative problems to Afro-American expressive objects and events that came nearest this standard. Under the old paradigm, therefore, a scholar could not *see* that "Negro music" qua "*Negro* music" or "Negro Poetry" qua "*Negro* poetry" constituted *art.* For "Negro-ness" was viewed by the old paradigm as a condition (a set of properties of "structural peculiarities") that excluded such a phenomenon as "*Negro* poetry" from the artworld.[14] The integrationists held it as a first law that *art* was an American area of achievement in which race and class did not comprise significant variables. To discover, assert, or label the "Negro-ness" or Blackness: of an expressive work as a fundamental condition of its "artistic-ness" was, thus, for the new generation to "flip over" the integrationist field of vision. And this revised perceptual orientation is precisely what Henderson and his contemporaries achieved. Their efforts made it possible for literary-critical and literary-theoretical investigators to see "familiar objects" in a different light and to include previously "unfamiliar" objects in an expanded (and sharply modified) American art world. In "The Forms of Things Unknown," Henderson masterfully outlines the hypotheses, boundaries, and legitimate problems of the new paradigmatic framework called the "Black Aesthetic."

V

Henderson's assumption is that in literature there exists "such a commodity as 'blackness'" (p. 3). He further argues that this "commodity" should be most easily located in poetry "since poetry is the most concentrated and the most allusive of the verbal arts" (p. 3). Implicit in these statements is Henderson's claim that an enabling condition for art (and particularly for "poetry") in Afro-American culture is the possession of *blackness* by an expressive object or event. The ontological status — the very condition of being — of *Afro-American* poetic expression is, in fact, a function of this commodity of blackness. The most legitimate paradigmatic question that a literary-critical investigator or a literary theorist can pose, therefore, is: In what place and by what means does the commodity "blackness" achieve form and substance?

The title of Henderson's essay suggests the answer he provides to this question. He states that blackness must be defined, at a *structural* level of expressive objects and events, as an "interior dynamism" that derives its force from the "inner life" of the Afro-American folk (pp. 5-6). And he is quite explicit that what he intends by "inner life" is, in fact, the constellation of cultural values and beliefs that characterizes what the philosopher Albert Hofstadter calls a "reference public." Hofstadter writes:

> Predication of "good" . . . tends to lose meaningful direction when the public whose valuations are considered in judging the object is not specified. I do not see how we can hope to speak sensibly about the aesthetic goodness of objects unless we think of them in the context of reception and valuation by persons, the so-called "context of consumption." Properties by virtue of which we value objects aesthetically—e.g., beauty, grace, charm, the tragic, the comic, balance, proportion, expressive symbolism, verisimilitude, propriety—always require some reference to the apprehending and valuing person....Any public taken as the public referred to in a normative esthetic judgment I shall call the judgment's *reference public*. The reference public is the group whose appreciations or valuations are used as data on which to base the judgment. It is the group to which universality of appeal may or may not appertain.[15]

Henderson says that the existence of black poetry is a function of a black audience's concurrence that a particular verbal performance (whether written or oral) by some person of "known Black African ancestry" is, in fact, poetry (p. 7). The array of values and beliefs — the cultural codes — that allows a black reference public to make such a normative judgment constitutes the inner life of the folk. "Inner life," then — on the assumption that the operative codes of a culture are historically conditioned and are maintained at a level of interacting cultural systems — is translated as "ethnic roots." Questions of the ontology

and valuation of a black poem, according to Henderson, "can not be resolved without considering the ethnic roots of Black poetry, which I insist are ultimately understood only by Black people themselves: (pp. 7-8). What he seeks to establish, or to support, with this claim, I think, is a kind of cultural holism — an interconnectedness (temporally determined) of a cultural discourse — that can be successfully apprehended through a set of theoretical concepts and critical categories arrived at by in-depth investigation of the fundamental expressive manifestations of a culture.

In order to achieve such apprehension, the literary investigator (like the cultural anthropologist) must go to the best available informants; i.e., to natives of the culture, or to the "reference public." "One must not consider the poem in isolation," writes Henderson, "but in relationship to the reader/audience, and the reader to the wider context of the phenomenon which we call, for the sake of convenience, the Black Experience" (p. 62). His tone approximates even more closely that of cultural anthropology in the following stipulations on literary-critical axiology:

> . . . the recognition of Blackness in poetry is a value judgment which on certain levels and in certain instances, notably in matters of meanings that go beyond questions of structure and theme, must rest upon one's immersion in the totality of the Black Experience. It means that the ultimate criteria for critical evaluation must be found in the sources of the creation, that is, in the Black Community itself. (pp. 65-66)

The notion that a conditioning cultural holism is a necessary consideration in the investigation of a culture's works of verbal art receives yet another designation that has anthropological parallels when Henderson talks of a "Soul Field." Field theory in anthropology stresses the continuous nature of conceptual structures that make up various areas, or "fields," of a culture, e.g., kinship or color terms and their attendant *connotations* or *sense*. For Henderson, the "Soul Field" of Afro-American culture is "the complex galaxy of personal, social, institutional, historical, religious, and mythical meanings that affect everything we say, or do as Black people sharing a common heritage" (p. 41). In this definition, "meanings" is the operative term, and it situates the author's designation of "field" decisively within the realm of semantics. Henderson's "Soul Field: is, thus, similar to J. Trier's *Sinnfeld*, or conceptual field; i.e., the area of a culture's linguistic system that contains the encyclopedia or mappings of various "senses" of lexical items drawn from the same culture's *Wortfeld*, or lexicon.[16]

The theoretical concepts and critical categories for analyzing black poetry that Henderson sets forth in "The Forms of Things Unknown" are coextensive with the case he makes for the holism and continuity of Afro-American culture. His three major categories are theme, structure, and saturation. And in dividing each category into analytic subsets, he never loses sight of the "inner life" of the folk, of that interconnected "field" of uniquely black meanings and values that he postulates as the essential determinants of these subsets. He, thus, seeks to ensure a relationship of identity between his own critical categories and the "real," experiential categories of Afro-American life. For example, he identifies "theme" with what he perceives as the *actual* guiding concern of the collective, evolving consciousness of Afro-American.

He finds that the most significant concern of that consciousness has always been "the idea of liberation" (p. 18) and suggests that the "old word, 'freedom,'" might be substituted for this phrase to denote the overriding theme (i.e., that which is "being spoken of") of Afro-American expressive culture. Hence, a "real" lexical category ("freedom") and its complex conceptual mappings in Afro-American culture are identified as one subset of the critical category 'theme." Similarly, the *actual* speech and music of Afro-American culture and their various forms, techniques, devices, nuances, rules, and so on are identified as fundamental structural referents in the continuum of black expressive culture:

> Structurally speaking ... whenever Black poetry is most distinctively and effectively *Black*, it derives its form from two basic sources. Black speech and Black music .... By Black speech I mean the speech of the majority of Black people in this country.... This includes the techniques and timbres of the sermon and other forms of oratory, the dozens, the rap, the signifying, and the oral folktale.... By Black music I mean essentially the vast fluid body of Black song — spirituals, shouts, jubilees, gospel songs, field cries, blues, pop songs by Blacks, and, in addition, jazz (by whatever name one calls it) and non-jazz by Black composers who *consciously or unconsciously* draw upon the Black musical tradition. (pp. 30-31)

Here, Henderson effectively delineates a continuum of Afro-American verbal and musical expressive behavior that begins with everyday speech and popular music and extends to works of "high art."

Finally, "saturation" is a category in harmony with the assumed uniqueness of both the Afro-American *Sinnfeld* and *Wortfeld*. For Henderson insists that "saturation" is a perceptual category that has to do with a distinctive semantics:

> Certain words and construction [e.g., *roch, jelly, jook*] seem to carry an inordinate charge of emotional and psychological weight [in Afro-American culture], so that

> whenever they are used they set all kinds of bells ringing, all kinds of synapses snapping, on all kinds of levels....I call such words 'mascon' words...to mean *a massive concentration of Black experiential energy* which powerfully affects the meaning of Black speech, Black song, and Black poetry — if one, indeed, has to make such distinctions. (p. 43)

From an assumed "particularity," wholeness, and continuity of Afro-American culture — characteristics that manifest themselves most clearly among the Afro-American folk or masses — Henderson, thus, moves to the articulation of theoretical concepts and critical categories that provide what he calls "a way of speaking about all kinds of Black poetry despite the kinds of questions that can be raised" (p. 10). He proposes, in short, a theory to account for the continuity — the unity in theme, structure, and semantics — of black speech, music, and poetry (both oral and written). He refuses, from the outset to follow a traditional literary-critical path; i.e., predicating this continuity on history or chronology alone. Instead, he observes the contemporary scene in Afro-American poetry (i.e., the state of the art of black poetry in the 1960s and early 1970s) and realizes that the oral tradition of the urban masses is the dominant force shaping the work of Afro-American poets. From this modern instantiation of the reciprocity between expressive folk culture and self-conscious, literary expression, he purposes that *all* black "poetic" expression can be understood in terms of such a reciprocal pattern. "Understanding" the "new black poetry" in its relationship to black urban folk culture, therefore, provides direction and definition in the larger enterprise of understanding the artistic codes — or the cultural system that is "art" — in black American culture. A comprehension of the "forms of things unknown" and the cultural anthropological assumptions that it presupposes lead to the discovery of a unique artistic tradition, one embodying peculiar themes, structure, and meanings.

The "Black Aesthetic" signaled for Henderson and his contemporaries the codes that determine this tradition as well as the theoretical standpoint (one marked by appropriate categories) that would enable one to see, to "speak about," this tradition. And like all new paradigms, the "Black Aesthetic" had distinctive perceptual and semantic ramifications. It changed the meaning of both "black" and "aesthetic" in the American literary-critical universe of discourse so that these terms could continue to make "useful distinctions" in a world where works of Afro-American expressive art had come to be seen quite differently from the manner in which they were viewed by an older integrationist paradigm.

VI

Earlier, I referred to the philosophical orientation of the Black Aesthetic as romantic Marxism. Having discussed Henderson's work, perhaps I can now clarify this designation. For me, the fact that the aesthetics of the Black Arts movement were idealistically centered in the imagination of the black critical observer makes them "romantic."[17] This critical centrality of the Afro-American mind is illustrated by Henderson's assumption that "Blackness" is not a theoretical reification, but a reality, accessible only to those who can "imagine" in uniquely black ways. From this perspective, the word "understanding" in the title of his anthology is a sign for spiritual journey in which what the *black* imagination seizes upon as *black* must be *black*, whether it existed before or not.

The notion of a "reference public" gives way, therefore, at a lower level of the Black Aesthetic's argument, to a kind of impressionistic chauvinism. For it is, finally, *only* the black imagination that can experience blackness, in poetry, or in life. As a result, the creative and critical framework suggested by Henderson resembles, at times, a closed circle:

> ...for one who is totally immersed, as it were, or saturated in the Black Experience the slightest formulation of the typical or true-to-life [Black] experience, whether positive or negative, is enough to bring on at least subliminal recognition [of the "formulation" of the experience as "Black"]....I have tried to postulate a concept that would be useful in talking about what Black people feel is their distinctiveness, without being presumptuous enough to attempt a description or definition of it. This quality of condition of Black awareness I call *saturation*. I intend it as a sign, like the mathematical symbol *infinity*, or the term "Soul." It allows us to talk about the thing [a "distinctive" feeling of "Blackness"], even to some extent to use it, though we can't, thank God! ultimately abstract and analyze it: it must be experience. (p. 63, 68)

"Saturation" also gives way, then, at a lower level of the argument to cultural xenophobia. Rather than an indicator for a *sue genesis* semantics, it becomes a mysterious trait of consciousness. In "Saturation: Progress Report on a Theory of Black Poetry," an article that appeared two years after his anthology, Henderson comments on the critical reactions that his romantic specifications evoked:

> Some people—critical, white and Black—have difficult with this last standard [i.e., the critical standard of "intuition" for judging the successful rendering of "Black poetic structure"]. They call it mysterious, mystical, chauvinistic, and even (in a slightly different context) a "curious metaphysical argument" (Saunders Redding). I call it *saturation*. I authenticate it from personal experience. To those critics I

> say: Remember Keats did the same, proving poetic experience by his pulse and the "holiness of the imagination."'[18]

But if Henderson's romanticism led him to chauvinistically posit an "intuitive sense," a "condition" of "Blackness" that can only be grasped by the "saturated" or "immersed" black imagination, it also led him to suggest the kind of higher-order, cultural-anthropological argument that I have extrapolated from his work and discussed in the preceding section. I think the romanticism of Henderson and his contemporaries—like that of romantics gone before who believed they were compelled to "create a system or be enslav'd by another Man's"—lay in their metaphysical rebelliousness, their willingness to postulate a positive and distinctive category of existence ("Blackness") and then to read the universe in terms of that category.[19] The prediction of such a category was not only a radical political act designed to effect the liberation struggles of Afro-America, but also a bold critical act designed to break the interpretive monopoly on Afro-American expressive culture that had been held from time immemorial by a white, literary-critical establishment that set a "single standard of criticism":

> If the critic is half worth his salt, then he would attempt to describe what occurs in the poem and to *explain*—to the extent that it is possible—how the "action" takes place, i.e., how the elements of the work interact with one another to produce its effect. And if one of those elements is "Blackness"—as value, as theme, or as structure, especially the latter—then he is remiss in his duty if he does not attempt to deal with it in some logical, orderly manner.[20]

Given Henderson's arguments for the black person's own intuitive sense of experience as the only valid guide to the recognition of "Blackness" as an "element," it seems unlikely that many white critics would prove "worth their salt" vis-à-vis Afro-American literature and criticism. And there is a kind of implicit antinomianism in the following assertion from his essay "The Question of Form and Judgment in Contemporary Black American Poetry: 1962-1977": "Historically, the question of what constitutes a Black poem or how to judge one does not really come to a head until the 1960s and the promulgation of the Black Aesthetic in literature and the other arts. In a special sense...'Black' poetry was invented in the 1960s along with the radicalization of the word 'Black' and the emergence of the Black Power philosophy."[21] Here, the faith that postulated "Blackness" as a distinctive category of existence is seen as the generative source of a new art, politics, and criticism nullifying the interpretive authority of a white, critical orthodoxy.

The rebelliousness that seemed to close the circle of Afro-American criti-

cism to white participants, however, was not only romantic, it was also Marxist. Henderson and his contemporaries attempted to base their arguments for an Afro-American intuitive sense of "Blackness" on the notion that such a sense was a function of the continuity of Afro-American culture. The distinctive cultural circumstances that comprised the material bases of Afro-American culture—i.e., the means and instrumentalities of production, distribution, and consumption that marked the formation and growth of an African culture in America—were always seen by spokesmen for the Black Aesthetic as determinants of a *consciousness* that was distinctively "Black." And the most accurate reflection of the economics of slavery (and their subsequent forms) in the American economy was held to take place at a mass or folk level. hence, the expressive forms of black folk consciousness were defined by Black Aestheticians as underdetermined by material circumstances that vary within a narrow range. To take up such forms is to find oneself involved with the "authentic" or basic (as in the "material base") categories of Afro-American existence. "Culture determines consciousness" became a watchword for the Black Aesthetic, and by "culture" its spokesmen meant a complex of material and expressive components that could only be discovered at a mass level of Afro-American experience. It was their emphasis on this level—an emphasis motivated by a paradoxical desire to ground an idealistic rebelliousness in a materialist reading of history—that led to a deepened scholarly interest during the sixties and early seventies in both Afro-American folklore and other black expressive forms that had long been (in Henderson's words) "under siege" by "white critical condescension and snobbery, and more recently, outright pathological ignorance and fear."[22] And through their investigation of the "forms of things unknown" in recent years, some white critics were able to reenter the critical circle.[23] They reentered, however, not as superordinate authorities, but as serious scholars working in harmony with some of the fundamental postulates of the Black Aesthetic.

There is also a more cliched sense in which the Black Aesthetic was Marxist, and it finds its best illustration in the insistence by spokesmen for the new paradigm that expressive culture has a "social function." Black Aestheticians were quick to assert that works of verbal art have direct effects in the solution of social problems and in the shaping of social consciousness. The prescriptive formulations of a spokesman like Ron Karenga demonstrate this aspect of the Black Aesthetic: "All black art, irregardless of any technical requirements,

must have three basic characteristics which make it revolutionary. In brief, it must be functional, collective and committing."[24] Like Mao Tse-Tung, whom he is paraphrasing, Karenga and other spokesmen for the Black Arts felt that poems and novels could (and *should*) be designed to move audiences to revolutionary action.

It should be clear at this point that there were blatant weaknesses in the critical framework that actually accompanied the postulates of the Black Aesthetic. Too often in their attempts to locate the parameters of Afro-American culture, spokesmen for the new paradigm settled instead for a romantically-conceived domain of "race." And their claims to have achieved a scholarly consensus on "culture" sometimes revealed themselves as function of a defensive chauvinism on the part of spokesmen who had gained the limelight. What is encouraging, though in any evaluation of the Afro-American intellectual milieu during the later stages of the Black Arts movement is that Black Aesthetic spokesmen *themselves* first pointed out (and suggested ways beyond) such critical and theoretical weaknesses.

In his essay "The Black Contribution to American Letters: The Writer as Activist—1960 and After," Larry Neal identifies the Black Aesthetic's interest in an African past and in African-American folklore as a species of Herderian nationalism and goes on to say: "Nationalism, wherever it occurs in the modern world, must legitimize itself by evoking the must of history. This is an especially necessary step where the nation or group feels that its social oppression is inextricably bound up with the destruction of its traditional culture and with the suppression of that culture's achievements in the intellectual sphere."[25] A social group's reaction in such nationalistic instances, according to Neal, is understandably (though also, regrettably) one of total introspection—i.e., drawing in unto itself and labeling the historically oppressive culture as "the enemy" (p. 782). A fear of the destruction of Afro-American culture by an "aggressive and alien" West, for example, prompted Black Aesthetic spokesmen to think on only in racial terms and to speak only in "strident" tones as a means of defending their culture against what they perceived as threats from the West. Such a strategy, however, in Neal's view, represents a confusion of politics and art, an undesirable conflation of the "public" domain of social activism and the "private" field of language reserved for artistic creation and literary-theoretical investigation.

Such a response is, in his estimation, finally a form of distorted "Marxist

literary theory in which the concept of race is substituted for the Marxist idea of class" (p. 783). The attempt to apply the "ideology of race to artistic creation" (p. 784), he says, is simply a contemporary manifestation of Afro-American literature's (and, by implication, literary criticism's) historical dilemma:

> The historical problem of black literature is that it has in a sense been perpetually hamstrung by its need to address itself to the questions of racism in America. Unlike black music, it has rarely been allowed to exist on its own terms, but rather [has] been utilized as a means of public relations in the struggle for human rights. Literature can indeed make excellent propaganda, but through propaganda alone the black writer can never perform the highest function of his art: that of revealing to man his most enduring human possibilities and limitations. (p. 784)

In order to perform the "highest function" of artistic creation and criticism the black spokesman must concentrate his attention and efforts on "method"—on "form, structure, and genre"—rather than on "experience" or "content" (pp. 783-84). Neal, therefore, who called in the sixties for a literature and a criticism that spoke "directly to the needs and aspirations of black people," ends his later essay by calling for a creativity that projects "the accumulated weight of the world's aesthetic, intellectual and historical experience" as a function of its mastery of "form." His revised formalist position leads not only to a condemnation of the critical weaknesses of former allies in the Black Aesthetic camp, but also to a valorization of the theoretical formulations of such celebrated "Western" theoreticians as Northrop Frye and Kenneth Burke (pp. 783-84).

A new order of literary-critical and literary-theoretical thought—one that sought to situate the higher-order rules of the Black Aesthetic within a contemporary universe of literary-theoretical discourse—was signaled during the mid-seventies not only by Neal's essay, but also by symposia and conferences on Black Arts that occurred throughout the United States.[26] It was at one such symposium that Henderson presented his essay "The Question of Form and Judgment," which I have previously cited.[27] Like Neal, Henderson is drawn to a more formalist critique in his 1977 essay. For example, he implicitly rejects an intuitive "saturation" in favor of a more empirical approach to literary study: "in criticism, intuition, though vital, is not enough. The canons, the categories, the dynamics must be as clear and reasoned as possible. These must rest on a sound empirical base" (p. 36). The "sound empirical base" is, in the final analysis, a *data base* acquired through the kind of culture-anthropological

investigation that I suggested when discussing "The Forms of Things Unknown." "Black poetry," Henderson continues, "can and should be judged by the same standards that any other poetry is judged by—by those standards which validly arise out of the culture" (p. 33). And the primary and secondary sources that he takes up in his 1977 discussion indicate that he has a very clear notion of "culture" as a category in literary study.

I think it would be incorrect to assert that the mid-and later-seventies witnessed to a total revisionism on the part of the former advocates for the Black Aesthetic. It seems fair, however, to say that some early spokesmen had by this time begun to point out weaknesses of the structure they had raised on the ideological foundations of Black Power. The defensive inwardness of the Black Aesthetic—its manifest appeal to the racially-conditioned, revolutionary, and intuitive standard of critical judgment—made the new paradigm an ideal instrument of vision for those who wished to usher into the world new and *sui genesis* Afro-American objects of investigation. Ultimately, though, such introspection could not answer the kinds of theoretical questions occasioned by the entry of these objects into the world. In a sense, the Afro-American literary-critical investigator had been given—through a bold act of the critical imagination—a unique literary tradition but no distinctive theoretical vocabulary with which to discuss this tradition. He had been given linguistic forms of power and beauty, but the language meted out by Karenga and others of his ilk was, sometimes, little more than a curse. A new paradigm (one coextensive with a contemporary universe whose participants were attempting to formulate adequate, theoretical ways of discussing art) was in order.

VII

Discussing the manner of progression of a new philosophical posture born of a generational shift, Feuer comments:

> ...from its point of origin with an insurgent generational group, the new emotional standpoint, the new perspective, the new imagery, the new metaphors and idioms spread to the more conventional sections of their own generation, then to their slightly older opponents and their relative elders. Thus, by the time that conservative Americans spoke of themselves as 'pragmatic,' and virtually every American politician defined himself as a 'pragmatist,' the word 'pragmatist' had become a cliche, and its span as a movement was done. A new insurgent generation would perforce have to explore novel emotions, images, and idioms in order to define its own independent character, its own 'revolutionary' aims against the elders.[28]

One might substitute "Black Aesthetic" and "Black Aesthetician" for the implied "pragmatism" and the explicit "pragmatist" of the foregoing remarks. For by the end of the 1970s, the notion of a uniquely Afro- American field of aesthetic experience marked by unique works of verbal and literary art had become a commonplace in American literary criticism. The philosophical tenets that supported early manifestations of this notion, however, had been discredited by the failure of revolutionary black social and political groups to achieve their desired ends. "Black Power," that is to say, as a motivation philosophy for the Black Aesthetic, was deemed an ideological failure by the mid- seventies because it had failed to give birth to a sovereign Afro-American state within the United States. Hence, those who adopted fundamental postulates of the Black Aesthetic as given in the late seventies did so without a corresponding acceptance of its initial philosophical buttresses.

The "imagery" of a new and resplendent nation of Afro-Americans invested with Black Power, like the "emotional standpoint" which insisted that this hypothetical nation should have a collective and functional literature and criticism, gave way in the late seventies to a new idiom. In defining its independent character, a new group of intellectuals found it *de rigueur* to separate the language of criticism from the vocabulary of political ideology. Their supporting philosophical posture for this separation was a dualism predicated on a distinction between "literary" and "extraliterary" realms of human behavior. Their proclaimed mission was to "reconstruct" the pedagogy and study of Afro-American literature so that it would reflect the most advanced thinking of a contemporary universe of literary-theoretical discourse. This goal was similar in some respects to the revisionist efforts of Neal and Henderson discussed in the preceding section. Like their immediate forerunners, the "reconstructionists" were interested in establishing a sound theoretical framework for the future study of Afro-American literature. In their attempts to achieve this goal, however, some spokesmen for the new generation (whose work I shall discuss shortly) were hampered by a literary-critical "professionalism" that was a function of their emergent class interest.

At the outset of the present essay, I implied that the notion "generational shifts" was sufficient to offer some account of the "ascendant class interest that have characterized Afro-America since World War II." The emergence of a mass, black audience, which was so important for the Black Power and Black Arts movements, was the first instance that I had in mind.[29] But the vertical

mobility of Afro-Americans prompted by black political activism during the sixties and early seventies also resulted in the emergence during the 1970s of what has been called a "new black middle class."[30] The opening of the doors, personnel rosters, and coffers of the white academy to minority groups effected by the radical politics of the past two decades provided the conditions of possibility for the appearance of Afro-American critics who have adopted postures, standards, and vocabularies of their white compeers. The disappearance of a mass black audience for both literary-critical and revolutionary-political discourse brought about by the billions of dollars and countless man-hours spent to suppress the American radical left in recent years has been ironically accompanied, therefore, by the emergence of Afro-American spokesmen whose class status (new, black middle-class) and privileges are, in fact, contingent upon their adherence to accepted (i.e., white) standards of their profession. Bernard Anderson's reflections on the situation of black corporate middle-managers who assumed positions in the late sixties and early seventies serve as well to describe the situation of a new group of Afro-American literary critics:

> As pioneers in a career-development process, these [black] managers face challenges and uncertainties unknown to most white managers. Many feel an extra responsibility to maintain high performance levels, and most recognize an environment of competition that will tolerate only slight failure....Some black middle managers feel the need to conform to a value system alien to the experience of most black Americans but essential for success in professional management.[31]

One result of a class-oriented professionalism among Afro-American literary critics has been a sometimes uncritical imposition upon Afro-American culture of literary of literary theories borrowed from prominent white scholars.

When such borrowings have occurred among the generation that displaced the Black Aesthetic, the outcome has sometimes been disastrous for the course of Afro-American literary study. For instead of developing the mode of analysis suggested by the higher-order arguments of a previous generation, the emergent generation has chosen to distinguish Afro-American literature as an autonomous cultural domain and to criticize it in terms "alien" to the implied cultural-anthropological approach of the Black Aesthetic. Rather than attempting to assess the merits of the Black Aesthetic's methodological assumptions, that is to say, the new generation has adopted the "professional" assumptions (and attendant jargon) that mark the world of white academic literary critics. A positive outcome to the emergent generation's endeavors has been a strong and continuing emphasis on the necessity for an adequate theoretical framework for

the study of Afro-American literature. The negative results of their efforts have been an unfortunate burdening of the universe of discourse surrounding Afro-American culture with meaningless jargon and the articulation of a variety of lamentably confused utterances on language, literature, and culture. The emergent generation is fundamentally correct, I feel, in its call for serious literary study of Afro-American literature. But is misguided, I believe, in its wholesale adoption of terminology and implicit assumptions of white, "professional" critics. A view of essays by principal spokesmen for the new theoretical prospect will serve to clarify these judgments. The essays appear in the handbook of the new generation entitled *Afro-American Literature: the Reconstruction of Instruction* (1979).[32]

Edited by Dexter Fisher and Robert B. Stepto, *Afro-American Literature* "grew out of the lectures and course design workshops of the 1977 Modern Language Association/National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar on Afro-American Literature" (p. 1). The volume sets forth basic tenets of a new paradigm. The guiding assumption—i.e., that a literature known as "Afro-American" exists in the world—is states as follows by Stepto in his "Introduction": "[Afro-American] literature fills bookstore shelves and, increasingly, the stacks of libraries; symposia and seminars on the literature are regularly held; prominent contemporary black writers give scores of readings; and so the question of the literature's existence, at this juncture in literary studies, is not at issue" (p. 1). The second, fundamental assumption—i.e., that literature consists in "written art" (p. 3)—is implied by Stepto later in the same "Introduction" when he is describing the unit of *Afro-American Literature* devoted to "Afro-American folklore *and* Afro-American literature as well as Afro-American folklore *in* Afro-American literature" (pp. 3-4). According to the editor, folklore can be transformed into a "written art" that may in turn comprise "fiction" (p. 4). Further, he suggests that the "folk" roots of a work like Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* are to be distinguished from its "literary roots" (p. 5). The condition signaled by "written" seems at first glance, therefore, a necessary one for "literary" and "literature" in Stepto's thinking.

There is, however, some indication in the "Introduction: that the new generation does not wish to confine its definition of the "literary" exclusively to what is "written." At the midpoint of his opening remarks, Stepto asserts that there are "discrete literary texts that are inherently interdisciplinary (e.g.,

blues) and often multigeneric (dialect voicings in all written art forms)" (p. 3). If "blues" and "dialect voicings" constitute, respectively, a literary text and a genre, then it would appear to follow that *any distinctly Afro-American expressive form* (not merely *written* ones) can be encompassed by the "literary" domain. The boundaries of the new generation's theoretical inquiries, therefore, can apparently be expanded at will to include whatever seems distinctly expressive in Afro-America. Stepto suggests, for example, that "a methodology for an integrated study of *Afro-American folklore* and literature" (my italics, p. 4) should form part of the scholar-teacher's tools. And he goes on to propose that there are "various way in which an instructor...can present *a collection of art forms* and still respond to the literary qualities of many of these forms in the course of the presentation" (my italics, p. 3). On one hand, then, the new prospect implies a rejection of modes of inquiry that are sociological in character or that seek to explore ranges of experience lying beyond the transactions of an exclusive sphere of written art: "central...to this volume as a whole" is a rejection of "extraliterary values, ideas, and pedagogical constructions that have plagued the teaching of . . . [Afro-American] literature" (p. 2). On the other hand, the new prospect attempts to preserve a concern for the "forms of things unknown" (e.g., blues) by reading them under the aspect of a Procrustean definition of "literary." Similarly, it attempts to maintain certain manifestations of Afro-American ordinary discourse (e.g., dialect voicings) as legitimate areas of study by reading them as literary genre. Finally, the new prospect, as defined by Stepto, implies that the entire realm of the Afro-American arts can be subsumed by the "literary" since any collection of black art forms can be explicated in terms of its "literary qualities." Such qualities, under the terms of the new prospect, take on the character of sacrosanct, cultural universals (a point to which I shall return shortly).

Kuhn points out that a paradigmatic shift in a community's conception of the physical world results in "the whole conceptual web whose stands are space, time, matter, force and so on" being shifted and "laid down again on nature whole" (p. 149). While the earlier Black Aesthetic was concerned to determine how the commodity of "blackness" shaped the Afro-American artistic domain, the emergent theoretical prospect attempts to discover how the qualities of a "literary" domain shape Afro-American life as a whole. There is, thus, a movement from the whole of culture to the part signaled by the most recent generational shift in Afro-American literary criticism. For what the new

group seeks to specify is a new "literary" conceptual scheme for apprehending Afro-American culture. This project constitutes its main theoretical goal. Two of *Afro-American Literature's* most important essays—Stepto's "Teaching: Afro- American Literature: Survey or Tradition: The Reconstruction of Instruction" and Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s "Preface to Blackness: Text and Pretext"—are devoted to this goal.

Stepto's basic premise in "Teaching Afro-American Literature" is that the typical (i.e., normative) teach of Afro-American is a harried, irresponsible pedagogue ignorant of the "inner" workings of the Afro-American literary domain. It follows from this proposition that pedagogy surrounding the literature must be reconstructed on a sound basis by someone familiar with the "myriad cultural metaphors," "coded structures," and "poetic rhetoric"of Afro-America (p. 9). Stepto asserts that only a person who has learned *to read* the discrete literary texts of Afro-America in ways that ensure a proximity and "intimacy, with writers and texts outside the normal boundaries of nonliterary structures" (p. 16) can achieve this required familiarity. According to the author, moreover, it is a specific form of "literacy"—of proficient reading—that leads to the reconstruction of instruction.

Understandably, given the author's earlier claims, this literacy is not based on a comprehension or study of "extraliterary" structures. It's epistemological foundation is, instead, the instructor's apprehension and comprehension of what Stepto calls the "Afro-American literary tradition, and the Afro-American landscape or *genius loci*" (p. 18). This "pregeneric myth," according to Stepto, is "the quest for freedom *and* literacy" (p. 18), and he further asserts that the myth is an "aesthetic and rhetorical principle" that can serve as the basis for constructing a proper course in Afro-American literature (p. 17). The Afro-American "pregeneric myth" is, therefore, (at one and the same instant) somehow a prelinguistic reality, a quest, and a pedagogical discovery principle.

It is at this point in Stepto's specifications that what I earlier referred to as an "unfortunate burdening" of the universe of discourse surrounding Afro-American culture with jargon become apparent. For the author's formulations on a "pregeneric myth" reflect his metaphysical leanings far more clearly than they project a desirable methodological competence. they signal, in fact, what I called at the outset of this essay a "version of Aristotelian metaphysics." Stepto's pregeneric myth has the character of prime matter capable of assuming an unceasing variety of forms. Just as for Aristotle "the elements are the simplest

physical things, and within them the distinction of matter and form can only be made by an abstraction of thought,"[33] so for Stepto the pregeneric myth is *informed matter* that serves as the core and essence of that which is "literary" in Afro-America. It is the substance out of which all black expression molds itself: "The quest for freedom and literacy is found in every major text . . ." (p. 18). Further: "If an Afro-American literary tradition exists, it does so not because there is a sizable chronology of authors and texts but because those authors and texts seek collectively their own literary forms—their own admixture of genre—bound historically and linguistically to a shared pregeneric myth" (p. 19).

A simplified statement of the conceptual scheme implied by Stepto's notion of cultural evolution would be: The various *structures* of a culture derive from the informed matter of myth. The principal difficulty with this notion is that the author fails to make clear the mode of being a "myth" that is not only *pregeneric*, but also, it would seem, *prelinguistic*. "Nonliterary structures," Stepto tells us, evolve "almost exclusively from freedom myths devoid of linguistic properties" (p. 18). Such structures, we are further told, "speak rarely to questions of freedom *and* literacy" (p. 18). The question one must pose in light of such assertions is: Are "nonliterary structures" indeed devoid of linguistic properties? If so, then "literacy" and "freedom" can scarcely function as dependent variables in a single, generative myth. For under conditions of mutual inclusiveness (where the variables are, *ab initio*, functions of one another) the structures generated from the myth could not logically be devoid of that which is essential to literacy; i.e., *linguistic properties*. It is important to note, for example, the "nonliterary" structure known as the *African Methodist Episcopal Church* preserves in its name, and particularly in the linguistic sign "African," a marker of the structure's cultural origin and orientation. And it is difficult to imagine the king of cognition that would be required to summon to consciousness *cultural structures* devoid of all linguistic properties such as a name, a written history, or a controlling interest in the semantic field or a culture's language. But, perhaps, what Stepto actually meant to suggest by his statement was the "freedom myths" are devoid of linguistic properties. Under this interpretation of his statements, however, one would have to adopt a philosophically idealistic conception of myth that seems contrary to the larger enterprise of the reconstructionists. For Stepto insists that the "reconstruction" of Afro-American literary instruction is in contingent upon the discoverability

through "literacy" (a process of *linguistic* transaction) of the Afro-American pregeneric myth. And how could such a goal be achieved if myths existed only as *prelinguistic*, philosophical ideals? In sum, Stepto seems to have adopted a critical rhetoric that plays him false. Having assumed some intrinsic merit and inherent clarity in the notion "pregeneric myth," he fails to analytically delineate the mode of existence of such a myth or to clarify the manner in which it is capable of generating two *distinct kinds* of cultural structures.

One sign of the problematical status of this myth in Stepto's formulations is the apparent "agentlessness" of its operations. According to the author, the pregeneric myth is simply "set in motion" (p. 20), and one can observe its "motion through both chronological and linguistic time" (p. 19). Yet, the efficacy of motion suggested here seems to have no historically based community of agents or agencies for its origination or perpetuation. The myth and its operations, therefore, are finally reduced in Stepto's thinking to an aberrant version of Aristotle's "unmoved mover." For Aristotle specifies that the force which moves the "first heaven" has "no contingency; it is not subject even to minimal change (spatial motion in a circle), since that is what it originates."[34] Stepto, however, wants both to posit an "unmoved" substance as his pregeneric myth *and* to claim that this myth *moves* as "literary history." In fact, he designates the shape of its literary-historical movement as a circle—a "magic circle" or *temenos*—representing one kind of ideal harmony, or perfection of motion.

At this point in his description, Stepto (not surprisingly) feels compelled to illustrate his formulations with examples drawn from the Afro-American literary tradition. He first asserts that the phrase "the black belt" is one of Afro-America's metaphors for the *genius loci* (a term borrowed from Geoffrey Hartman signifying "spirit of place") that resides within the interior of the "magic circle" previously mentioned (p. 20). Employing this metaphor, the late-nineteenth-century founder and president of Tuskegee Institute, Booker T. Washington, wrote:

> So far as I can learn the term was first used to designate a part of the country which was distinguished by the colour of the soil. The part of the country possessing this thick, dark soil was, of course, the part of the south where the slaves were most profitable, and consequently they were taken there in the largest numbers. Later, and especially since the war, the term seems to be used wholly in a political sense—that is, to designate the counties where the black people out number the white.[35]

Stepto feels that this description comprises an act of disingenuity of Washing-

ton's part. However, when he proceeds to demonstrate that Washington's statement is a "literary offense" (something akin to a sin of shallowness in the reading of metaphor) vis-à-vis the metaphor "the black belt," Stepto does not summon logical, rhetorical, or linguistic criteria. In condemning Washington for describing only geological and political dimensions of the black belt rather than historical and symbolic dimensions, Stepto summons "extraliterary" criteria, insisting that the turn-of-the-century black leader's "offense" was committed in order to insure his success in soliciting philanthropic funds for Tuskegee. The author of *Up From Slavery*, in Stepto's view, merely glossed the metaphor "the black belt" in order to keep his white, potential benefactors happy.

We, thus, find ourselves thrust into the historical dust and heat of turn-of-the-century white philanthropy in America. And what Stepto calls a "geographical metaphor" (i.e., "the black belt") becomes, in his own reading, simply a sign for one American region where such philanthropy had its greatest impact. Contrary to his earlier injunction, therefore, Stepto allows a "nonliterary structure" to become central to his own "reading of art" (p. 20). He assumes, however, that he has achieved his interpretation of Washington solely on the basis of his own "literacy" in regards to the black leader's employment of metaphor. He further assumes that when he contrasts W.E.B. DuBois's employment of "the black belt" with Washington's usage that he is engaged in a purely "literary" act of "reading within tradition" (p. 21). But if the "tradition" that he has in mind requires a comprehension of turn-of-the-century white philanthropy where Washington is concerned, then surely Stepto does his reader a disservice when he fails to reveal that DuBois's "rhetorical journey into the soul of a race" (p. 21) in fact curtailed white philanthropy to Atlanta University, costs DuBois his teaching position at the same university, and led the author of *The Souls of Black Folk* to an even deeper engagement with the metaphor "the black belt."

In his attempt to maintain the exclusively "literary" affiliations of a pregeneric myth and its operations, Stepto introduces historical and sociological structures into his reading only where they will not seem to conflict dramatically with his claim that all necessary keys for literacy in the tradition generated by the pregeneric myth are linguistically situated within the texts of black authors themselves. Such reading is, at best, an exercise in the positioning of cultural metaphors followed by attempts to fit such metaphors into a needlessly narrow framework of interpretation. Yet, Stepto asserts "it is reading of this

sort that our instructor's new pedagogy should both emulate and promote" (p. 21).

Rather than offering additional examples of such reading, Stepto turns to a consideration of what one early-twentieth-century critic called the relationship between "tradition and the individual talent."[36] For Stepto, this relationship is described as the tension between "Genius and *genius loci*" and between *temenos* and *genius loci*. And the mediation between these facets of Afro-American culture constitutes what the author calls "modal improvisation." Although his borrowed terminology is almost hopelessly confusing here, what Stepto seems to suggest is that the Afro-American literature instructor must engage in "literate" communion with the inner dynamics of the region of Afro-American comprised by a pregeneric myth and its myriad forms and operations. The instructor's pedagogical "genius" consists in his ability to comprehend the "eternal landscape" (p. 22) that is the pregeneric myth—i.e., the sacred domain of the "literary" in Afro-American culture.

An "eternal landscape" (without beginning or end and agentless in its creation and motions) is but another means of denoting for Stepto what he describes earlier in his essay as the "various dimensions of literacy achieved within the *deeper recesses* of the art form: (my italics, p. 13). At another point in "Teaching Afro-American Literature," the author speaks of an "*immersion* in the multiple images and landscapes of employment of images of metaphor" (my italics, p. 150). This cumulative employment of images of a sacred interiority seems to suggest that Stepto believes there is an inner sanctum of pregeneric, mythic, literary "intimacy" resident in works of Afro-American art. Further, he seems to feel that entrance to this sanctum can be gained only by the initiated. One might posit, therefore, that what is presented by "Teaching Afro-American literature" is a scheme of mystical literacy that finally comprises what might be called a *theology of literacy*. For the "conceptual web" laid upon Afro-America by Stepto's essay asserts the primacy and sacredness among cultural activities of the literary-critical and literary theoretical enterprise. The argument of the essay is, in the end, a religious interpretation *manqué*, complete with an unmoved mover, a priestly class of "literate" initiates, and an eternal landscape of cultural metaphor that can be obtained by those who are free to literary "offense." And the "qualities" that derive from such a landscape (since they are coextensive with the generation of cultural structure) operate as "universals."

The articulation of such a literary-critical orthodoxy is scarcely a new departure in the history of literary criticism. In his "General Introduction" to *The English Poets* published in 1880. Matthew Arnold wrote: "More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry."[37] As a function of this conceptualization of the "higher uses" of poetry, Arnold confidently proclaimed: "In poetry, which is thought and art in one, it is the glory, the eternal honour, that charlatanism shall have not entrance; that this noble sphere be kept inviolate and inviolable" (p. 3). Stepto's assumption that his "reconstructed" scheme for teaching Afro-American literature may "nurture literacy in the academy" (p. 23) is certainly akin to Arnold's formulations on the exalted mission of poetry. And his zeal in preserving "inviolable" the sacred domain of the literary surely constitutes a modern, Arnoldian instance of a theology of literacy. As a function of this zeal, Stepto condemns with fierce self-righteousness any pedagogical contextualization of Afro-American literature that might lead a student to ascribe to, say, a Langston Hughes poem, a use-value, or meaning, in opposition to the kind of linguistic and rhetorical values made available by the reconstruction of instruction.

The author of "Teaching Afro-American Literature" emerges as a person incapable of acknowledging that the decision to investigate the material bases of the society that provided enabling conditions for Hughes's metaphors is a sound literary-theoretical decision. Semantic and pragmatic considerations of metaphor suggest that the information communicated by metaphor is hardly localized in a given image on a given page, (or. exclusively within the confines of a "magical" literary circle). Rather, the communication process is a function of myriad factors; e.g., a native speaker's ability to recognize ungrammatical sentences, the vast store of encyclopedic knowledge of objects and concepts, relevant information supplied by the verbal context of a specific metaphoric text, and, finally, the relevant knowledge brought to bear by an "introjecting" listener or reader.[38] Conceived under these terms, metaphoric communication may actually be more fittingly comprehended by an investigation of the material bases of society than by an initiate's passage "from metaphor to metaphor and from image to image of the same metaphor in order to locate the Afro-American *genius loci*" (p. 21). Hughes is, perhaps, more comprehensible, for exam-

ple, within the framework of Afro-American verbal and musical *performance* than within the borrowed framework for the description of *writer* inscriptions of cultural metaphor adduced by Stepto. Only a full investigation of Afro-American metaphor—an analysis based on the best theoretical models available—will enable a student to decide.

The zeal that forced Stepto to adopt a narrow, "literary" conception of metaphor should not be totally condemned. For it is correct (and fair) to point out that a kind of sacred crusade did seem in order by the mid-seventies to modify or "reconstruct" the instruction and study of Afro-American literature that were not then based on sound theoretical foundations. While I do not think the type of mediocre instruction and misguided criticism that Stepto describes were, in fact, as prevalent as he assumes, I do feel that there were enough charlatans about in the mid-seventies to justify renewed vigilance and effort. But though one comes away from "Teaching Afro-American Literature" with a fine sense of these villains, one does not depart the essay (or others in *Afro-American Literature*) with a sense that the reconstructionists are either broad-minded or well-informed in their preachments. In fact, I think the instructor who seeks to model his course on the formulations of Stepto might find himself as nonplused as the critic who attempts to pattern his investigative strategies on the model implicit in Gates' "Preface to Blackness: Text and Pretext."

Just as Stepto's work begins with the assumption that the pedagogy surrounding Afro-American literature rests on a mistake, so Gates' essay commences with the notion that the criticism of Afro-American literature (prior to 1974) rested upon a mistake. This mistake, according to Gates, consisted in the assumption by past critics that a "determining formal relation" exists between "literature" and "social institutions."

> The idea of a determining formal relation between literature and social institutions does not in itself explain the sense of urgency that has, at least since the publication in 1760 of *A Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings and Surprising Deliverance of Briton Hammon, a Negro Man*, characterized nearly the whole of Afro-American writing. This idea has often encouraged a posture that belabors the social and documentary status of black art, and indeed the earliest discrete examples of written discourse by slave and ex-slave came under a scrutiny not primarily literary. (p. 44)

For Gates, "social institutions" is a omnibus category equivalent to Stepto's "nonliterary structures." Such institutions include: the philosophical musings of the Enlightenment on the "African Mind," eighteenth-century debates concerning the African's place in the great chain of being, the politics of abolition-

ism, or (more recently) the economics, politics, and sociology of the Afro-American liberation struggle in the twentieth century. Gates contends that Afro-American literature has repeatedly been interpreted and evaluated according to criteria derived from such "institutions."

As a case in point, he surveys the critical response that marked the publication of Phillis Wheatley's *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, discovering that "almost immediately after its publication in London in 1773," the black Boston poet's collection became "the international antislavery movement's most salient argument for the African's innate mental equality" (p. 46). Gates goes on to point out that "literally scores of public figures" provided prefatory signatures, polemical reviews, or "authenticating" remarks dedicated to proving that Wheatley's verse was (or was not, as the case may be) truly the product of an African imagination. Such responses were useless in the office of criticism, however, because "virtually no one," according to Gates, "discusses...[Wheatley's collection] as poetry" (p. 46). Hence: "The documentary status of black art assumed priority over mere literary judgment; criticism rehearsed content to justify one notion of origins or another" (p. 46).

Thomas Jefferson's condemnation (on "extra-literary" grounds) of Wheatley and of the black eighteenth-century epistler Ignatius Sancho set an influential model for the discussion of Afro-American literature that, in Gates's view, "exerted a prescriptive influence over the criticism of the writings of blacks for the next 150 years" (p. 46). Jefferson's recourse to philosophical, political, religious, economic and other cultural systems for descriptive and evaluative terms in which to discuss black writing was, in short, a *mistake* that has been replicated through the debates by both whites and Afro-American commentators. William Dean Howells, the writers of the Harlem Renaissance, and, most recently, according to Gates, spokesmen for the Black Aesthetic have repeated the critical offense of Jefferson. They have assumed that there is, in fact, a determining formal relation between literature and other cultural institutions and that various dimensions of these other institutions constitute areas of knowledge relevant to literary criticism. Gates says, "No," in thunder, to such assumptions. For as he reviews the "prefaces" affixed to various Afro-American texts through the decades, he finds no useful criteria for the practice of literary criticism. He discovers only introductory remarks that are "pretexts" for discussing African humanity, or for displaying "artifacts of the sable mind" (p. 49), or for chronicling the prefacer's own "attitude toward being black in

white America" (p. 65).

Like Larry Neal,[39] Gates concludes that such "pretexts" and the lamentable critical situation that they imply are functions of the powerful influence of "race" as a variable in all spheres of American intellectual endeavor related to Afro-America. And like Neal, he states that racial considerations have been those who have attempted to criticize Afro-American literature, resulting in what he calls "race and super-structure" criticism. For these writers have shaped their work on polemical, documentary lines designed to prove the equality of Afro-Americans or to argue a case for their humanity. And in the process, they have neglected the "literary" engagement that results in true art.

What, then, is the path that leads beyond the critical and creative failings of the past? According to Gates, it lies in a semiotic understanding of literature as a "system" of signs that stand in an "arbitrary" relationship to social reality (pp. 64-68). Having drawn rapidly to disclaim the notion that literature as a "system" is radically distinct from other domains of culture:

> It is not, of course, that literature is unrelated to culture, to other disciplines, or even to other arts; it is not that words and usage somehow exist in a vacuum or that the literary work of art occupies an ideal or reified, privileged status, the province of some elite cult of culture. It is just that the literary work of art is a system of signs that may be decoded with various methods, all of which assume the fundamental unity of form and content with all of which demand close reading. (p. 64)

The epistemology on which this description rests is stated as follows:

> ...perceptions of reality are in no sense absolute; reality is a function of our senses. Writers present models of reality, rather than a description of it, though obviously the two may be related variously. In fact, fiction often contributes to cognition by providing models that highlight the nature of things precisely by their failure to coincide with it. Such certainly is the case in science fiction. (p. 66)

The semiotic notion of literature and culture implied by Gates seems to combine empiricism (reality as a "function of our senses") with an ontology of the sign that suggests that signs are somehow "natural" or "inherent" to human beings. For if "reality" is, indeed, a function of our senses, then observation and study of these physiological capacities should yield some comprehension of a subject's "reality." In truth, however, it is not these physiological processes in themselves that interest Gates, but rather the operation of such processes under the conditions of "models" of cognition, which, of course, is a very different thing. For if one begins not with the senses, but with "models" of cognition conceived, articulated, and transmitted in human cultures? Certainly,

one of the obvious answers here is *not* that human beings are endowed at birth with a "system of signs," but rather that *models of cognition are conceived in, articulated through, and transmitted by language*. And like other systems of culture, language *is* a social institution." Hence, if cognitive "models" of "fiction" differ from those of other spheres of human behavior, they do not do so because fiction is somehow discontinuous with social institutions. In fact, it is the attempt to understand the coextensiveness of language *as a social institution* and literature *as a system within it* that constitutes what is, perhaps, the defining process of literary-theoretical study in our day.

When, therefore, Gates proposes metaphysical and behavioral models that suggest that a literature, or even a single text (p. 67), exists as a structured "world" ("a system of signs") that can be comprehended without reference to "social institutions," he hended without reference to "social institutions," he seems misguided in his claims and only vaguely aware of recent developments in literary study, symbolic anthropology, linguistics, the psychology of perception, and other related areas of intellectual inquiry. He seems, in fact, to have adopted, without qualification, a theory of the literary sign (of the "word" in a literary text) that presupposes a privileged status for the creative writer: "The black writer is the point of consciousness of his language" (p. 67). What this assertion means to Gates is that a writer is more capable than others in society of producing a "complex structure of meaning"—a linguistic structure that (presumably) corresponds more closely than those produced by non-writers—to the organizing principles by which a group's world view operates in consciousness (p. 67).

One might be at a loss to understand how a writer can achieve this end unless he is fully aware of language *as a social institution* and of the relationship that language bears to other institutions that create, shape, maintain, and transmit a society's "organizing principles." Surely, Gates does not mean to suggest that the mind of the writer is an autonomous semantic domain where complex structures are conceived and maintained "non-linguistically." On the other hand, if such structure of meaning are, in fact, "complex" *because* they are linguistically maintained, then so, too, are similar structures that are conceived by non-writers.

That is to say, Gates renders but small service to the office of theoretical distinction when he states that "a poem is above all atemporal and must cohere at a symbolic level, if it coheres at all" (p. 60), or when he posits that "litera-

ture approaches its richest development when its 'presentational symbolism' (as opposed by Suzanne Langer to its 'literal discourse') cannot be reduced to the form of a literal proposition" (p. 66). The reason such sober generalities contribute little to our understanding of literature, of course, is that Gates provides no just notion of the nature of "literal discourse," failing to admit both its social-institutional status and its fundamental existence as a symbolic system. On what basis, then, except a somewhat naive belief in the explanatory power of semiotics can he suggest a radical disjunction between literature and other modes of linguistic behavior in a culture? The critic who attempted to pattern his work on Gates' model would find himself confronted by a theory of language, literature, and culture that suggests that "literary" meanings are conceived in a non-social, non-institutional manner by the "point of consciousness" of a language and are maintained and transmitted in an agentless fashion within a closed circle of "intertextuality" (p. 68). It does seem, therefore, that despite his disclaimer, Gates feels that "literature is unrelated to culture." For culture consists in the interplay of various human symbolic systems, an interplay that is essential to the production and comprehension of meaning. Gates's independent literary domain, which produces meanings from some mysteriously non-social, non-instutional medium, bears no relationship to such a process.

One reason Gates fails to articulate an adequate theory of literary semantics in his essay, I think, is that he allots an inordinate amount of space to the castigation of his critical forebears. And his attacks are often restatements of shortcomings that his predecessors had recognized and discussed by the later seventies. Yet Gates provides elaborate detail in, for example, his analysis of the Black Aesthetic.

Among the many charges that he levels against Stephen Henderson, Addison Gayle, Jr., and the present author is the accusation that the spokesmen for a Black Aesthetic assumed they could "achieve an intimate knowledge of a literary text by recreating it from the inside: Critical thought must become the thought criticized" (p. 66). Though Gates employs familiar terminology here,[40] what he seems to object to in the work of Black Aesthetic spokesmen is their treatment of the text as subject. He levels the charge, in short, that these spokesmen postulated a tautological, literary- critical circle, assuming that the thought of an Afro-American literary text was "black thought" and, hence, could be "re-thought" only by a black critic. And while there is some merit in this change (as Henderson's and Neal's previously mentioned re-considerations

of their initial critical postures make clear), it is scarcely true, as Gates argues, that Black Aestheticians did nothing in their work but reiterate presuppositions about "black thought" and then interpret Afro-American writing in accord with the entailments of such presuppositions. For the insular vision that would have resulted the from this strategy would not have enabled Black Aestheticians to discuss and interpret Afro-American verbal behavior in the holistic ways conceived by Henderson, Neal, Gayle, and the present author. Spokesmen of the Black Aesthetic seldom conceived of the "text" as a *closed* enterprise. Instead, they normally thought (at the higher level of their arguments) of the text as an occasion for transactions between writer and reader, between performer and audience. And far from insisting that the written text is, in itself, a repository of inviolable "black thought" to be preserved at all costs, they called for the "destruction of the text"—for an open-endedness of performance and response that created conditions of possibility for the emergence of both new meanings and new strategies of verbal transaction.[41] True, such spokesmen never saw the text as discontinuous with its social origins but then they also never conceived of these "origins" as somehow divorced from the semantics of the metaphorical instances represented in black "artistic" texts. In short, they never thought of culture under the terms of a semiotic analysis that restricted its formulations to the literary domain alone.

On the other hand, they were certainly never so innocent as Gates would have one believe. Their semantics were never so crude as to permit them to accept the notion that the words of a literary text stand in a one-to-one relationship to the "things" of discovering the full dimensions of the artistic "word" that they attempted to situate its various manifestations within a continuum of verbal behavior in Afro-American culture as a whole. Further they sought to understand this continuum within the complex webs of interacting cultural systems that ultimately gave meaning to such words.

Rather than a referential semantics, therefore, what was implicit in the higher-order arguments of Black Aesthetic spokesment (as I have attempted to demonstrate in my earlier discussions) was an anthropological approach to Afro-American art. I think, in fact, that Gates recognizes this and is, finally, unwilling to accept the kind of critical responsibilities signaled by such an enterprise. For though he spends a great deal of energy arguing with Henderson's and my own assumptions on Afro-American culture, he refuses (not without some disingenuity) to acknowledge our *actual readings of Afro-Ameri-*

can texts. The reason for this refusal, I think, is that our readings bring together, in what one hopes are useful ways, our knowledge of various social institutions, or cultural systems (including language), in our attempts to reveal the *sui generis* character of Afro-American artistic texts. Gates's formulations, however, imply an ideal critic whose readings would summon knowledge *only* from the literary system of Afro-America. The semantics endorsed by his ideal critic would *not* be those of a culture. They would constitute, instead, the specially consecrated meanings of an intertextual world of "written art."

The emphasis on "close reading" (p. 64) in Gates's formulations, therefore, might justifiably be designated a call for a "closed" reading of selected Afro-American written texts. In fact, the author implies that the very defining criteria of a culture may be extrapolated from selected writter, literary texts rather than vice-versa (p. 62). For example, if any Afro-American literary artist has entertained the notion of "frontier," then Gates feels the notion must have defining force in Afro-American culture (pp. 63-64). Only by ignoring the mass level of Afro-America and holding up the "message" of literary works of art by Ralph Ellison and Ishmael Reed as "normative" utterances in Afro-American culture can Gates support such a claim. His claim is, thus, a function of the privileged status he grants to the writer and the elitist status that he bestows on "literary used of language" (p. 62).

But if it is true that scholarly investigations of an Afro-American expressive tradition must begin at a mass level—at the level of the "forms of things unknown"—then Gate's claim that the notion of "frontier" has defining force in Afro-America would have to be supported by the testimony of, say, the blues, work songs, or early folktales of Afro-America. And I think that an emphasis on frontier, is scarcely to be discerned in these cultural manifests.

Gates, however, is interested only in what *writers* (as "points of consciousness") have to say, and he seems to feel no obligation to turn to Afro-American folklore. In fact, when he comments on Henderson's formulations on Afro-American folk language, or vernacular, he reveals not only a lack of interest in folk processes, but also some profound misconceptions about the nature of Afro-American language.

Henderson attempts to establish a verbal and musical continuum of expressive behavior in Afro-American culture as an analytical category. In this process, he encounters certain verbal items that seem to claim (through usage) expansive territory in the Afro-American "sign field." Gates mistakenly

assumes that Henderson is setting such items (e.g., "jook" "jelly") apart from a canon of "ordinary" usage as "poetic discourse." This assumption is a function of Gates's critical methodology, which is predicated on a distinction between ordinary and poetic discourse. And the assumption compels him to cast aspersions on the originality of Henderson's work by asserting that "practical critics" since the 1920s (p. 61) have been engaged in actions similar to those of the Black Aesthetic spokesman.

The fault here is that Gates fails to recognize that Henderson is *not* seeking to isolate a lexicon of Afro-American "poetic" usages, nor to demonstrate how such usages "superimpose" a "grammar" (Gates's notion) on "nonliterary discourse" (p. 61). Henderson is concerned, instead, to demonstrate that Afro-American ordinary discourse is, in fact, continuous with Afro-American artistic discourse and that an investigation of the black oral tradition would finally concern itself not simply with a lexicon, but also with a "grammar" adequate to describe the syntax and phonology of *all* Afro-American speech.

Gates is incapable of understanding this notion, however, because he believes that the artistic domain is unrelated to ordinary, "social" modes of behavior. Hence, he is enamored of the written, literary work suggesting that a mere dictionary of black "poetic" words and their "specific signification" would lead to an understanding of how "Black English" departs from "general usage" (p. 61). This view of language is coextensive with his views of literature and culture. For it concentrates solely on words as "artistic" words and ignores the complexities of the syntax and phonology that give resonance to such words. "A literary text," Gates writes, "is a linguistic event; its explication must be an activity of close textual analysis" (p. 68).

It is not, however, the "text" that constitutes an "event" (if by this Gates means a process of linguistic transaction). It is rather the reading or performance by human beings of a kind of score, or graphemic record, it you will, that constitutes *the event* and, in the process, produces (or reproduces) the meaningful text. And the observer or critic who wishes to "analyze" such a text must have a knowledge of far more than the mere words of the performers. He should, it seems to me, have some theoretically adequate notions of the entire array of cultural forces which shape the performers' or readers' cognition and allow them to actualize the text as an instance of a distinctive cultural semantics. Gates has no such notions to bring to bear. And his later essay in *Afro-American Literature* entitled "Dis and Date: Dialect and the Descent" reveals

some confusion on issues of both language and culture.

Briefly, we are told by Gates that "culture is imprisoned in a linguistic contour that no longer matches...the changing landscape of fact" (p. 92). This appears a mild form of Whorfianism [42] until one asks: How do "facts" achieve a non-linguistic existence? the answer is that *they do not achieve such an existence*. Placed in proper perspective, Gate's statement simply means that different communities of speakers of the same language have differential access to "modern" ideas. But in his efforts to preserve language apart from other social institutions, Gates ignores agents or speakers until he wishes to add further mystery and distinctiveness to his own conceptions of language. When he finally comes to reflect on speakers, he invokes the notion of "privacy," insisting that lying remaining silent both offer instances of the employment of a "personal" thesaurus by a speaker (p. 93). Now, this conception stands in contrast to Gates's earlier Whorfianism.[43] And, to my knowledge, it possesses little support in the literature of linguistics or semiotics.

The notions that Gates advocates presuppose uniquely "personal" meanings for lexical items that form part of a culture's "public discourse." But what is unique, or personal, about these items is surely their difference from public discourse; their very identity, that is to say, is a function of public discourse. Further, the ability to use such lexical items to lie, or to misinform, scarcely constitutes an argument for privacy. Umberto Eco, for example, writes:

> A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else. This something else does not necessarily have to exist or to actually be somewhere at the moment in which a sign stands for it. Thus *semiotics is in principle the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie*. If something cannot be used to tell a lie, conversely it cannot be used to tell the truth: it cannot be used "to tell" at all.[44]

The *word*, in short, becomes a sign by being able *to tell*, and unless Gates means to propose the idealistic notion that each human mind generates its own system of meaningful, non-public signs, it is difficult to understand how he conceives of sign usage in lying as an instance of "private" usage of language. His goal in "Dis and Date" (an unfortunate choice of lexical items for his title since the phonological feature *d* for *th* is not unique to Black English Vernacular, but rather can be found in other non-standard language varieties) is to define Afro-American "dialect" as a kind of "private" subconscious code signifying a "hermetic closed world" (p. 94). The problem with this very suggestive

notion, however, is that Gates not only seems to misunderstand the issue of privacy in language and philosophy, but also seems to fail to comprehend the nature of Black English Vernacular as a natural language.

He bases his understanding of this language on a nineteenth- century magazine article by a writer names James A. Harrison, who asserted that "the poetic and multiform messages which nature sends him [the Afro-American] through his auditory nerve" are reproduced, in words, by the Afro-American (p. 95). Gates takes Harrison's claims seriously, assuming that there is a fundamental physiological difference between the linguistic behavior of Afro-Americans and other human beings: "One did not believe one's eyes, where one black; one believed [presumably on the basis of the Afro-American's direct auditory contact with nature]...one's ears" (p. 109). On the basis of such problematical linguistic and cultural assumptions as the foregoing, Gates proposes that Black English Vernacular was essentially musical, poetical, spoken discourse generated by means other than those employed to generate standard English and maintained by Afro-Americans as a code of symbolic inversion.

There are reasons for studying the process of symbolic, linguistic inversion in Afro-American culture, and, indeed, for studying the relationship between the tonal characteristics of African languages (which is what both Harrison and Gates have in mind when they say "musical") in relationship to Afro-American speech. Such study, however, should not be grounded on the assertions of Wole Soyinka, Derek Walcott, or James A. Harrison (Gates's sources). It should be a matter of careful, holistic cultural analysis that summons as evidence a large, historical body of informed comment and scholarship on Black English Vernacular. A beginning has been made in this direction by Henderson in his previously-mentioned essay "The Question of Form and Judgment," which commences with the assumption that a discussion of Afro-American poetry (whether written in "dialect" or in standard English) must be based on sound historical notions of Black English Vernacular resulting from detailed research.[45]

Neither Gates nor Stepto, who are the principal spokesmen for the new theoretical prospect in *Afro-American Literature*, has undertaken the detailed research in various domains of Afro-American culture that leads to adequate theoretical formulations. Stepto's stipulations on the ontology of a pregeneric myth from which all Afro-American cultural "structures" originate are just as problematical as Gates's notions of a generative, artistic "point of consciousness" whose "literary uses of language" are independent of "social institutions."

The narrowness of Stepto's conception of the "literary" forces him to adapt "nonliterary" criteria in his reading of *Up From Slavery*. And the instability of Gates's views of language and culture forces him to relinquish his advocacy for a synchronic, close reading of literary utterances when he comes to discuss Afro-American dialect poetry. Social institutions, and far more than "literary" criteria, are implied when he asserts:

> When using a word we wake into resonance, as it were, its entire previous history. A text is embedded in specific historical time; it has what linguists call a diachronic structure. To read fully is to restore all that one can of the immediacies of value and intent in which speech actually occurs. (p. 114)

Here, contextualization, rethinking the "intent" of the speaker, and "institutional" considerations are all advocated in a way that hardly seems opposed to the critical strategies of the Black Aesthetic.

To concentrate exclusively on the shortcomings and contradictions of Stepto and Gates, however, is to minimize their achievements. For both writers have suggested, in stimulating ways, that Afro-American literature can be incorporated into a contemporary universe of literary-theoretical discourse. True, the terms on which they propose incorporation amount in one instance to a theology of literacy and, in another, to a mysterious semiotics of literary consciousness. Nonetheless, the very act of proposing that a sound, theoretical orientation toward an Afro-American literary tradition is necessary constitutes a logical second step after the paradigmatic establishment of that tradition by the Black Aesthetic.

Furthermore, Stepto and Gates are both better critics than theoreticians. Hence, they provide interpretations of texts that are, at times, quite striking. (Gates's reflections on structuralism and his structuralist reading of the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* are quite provocative.) In addition, neither is so imprisoned by his theoretical claims that he refuses to acknowledge the claims of radically competing theories. For example, the essay by Sherley Anne Williams entitled "The Blues Roots of Contemporary Afro-American Poetry" (pp. 72-87) that appears in *Afro-American Literature* is based on the work of Henderson and stands in direct contrast in its methodology to the stipulations on written, non-institutional, literary art adduced by Stepto and Gates. And although Robert Hemenway, in his fine essay on Zora Neale Hurston's relationship to Afro-American folk processed (pp. 122-52), makes a gallant attempt to join the camp of Stepto and Gates, his work finally suggests the type

of linguistic, expressive continuum implied by Henderson, rather than the segmented model of Gates. Finally, Robert O'Meally's brilliant essay on Frederick Douglass's *Narrative* (pp. 192-211); is antithetical at every turn to Stepto's notion that critical "literacy" is a function of the reader's understanding of written "metaphor," or inscribed instances of "poetic rhetoric *in isolation*" (p. 9). for it is O'Meally's agile contextualizing of Douglass's work within the continuum of Afro-American verbal behavior that enables him to provide a reading of the work that suggest "intertextual" possibilities that are far more engaging than those suggested by Stepto's own reading of the *Narrative* (pp. 178-91).

In his editorial capacity, therefore, Stepto has rendered a service to the scholarly community, by refusing to allow his theory of the "literary" to foreclose the inclusion of essays that contradict, or sharply qualify, his own explicit claims. Unfortunately, he and his coeditor did not work as effectively in their choice of course designs—the models of "reconstructed" instruction toward which the whole of *Afro-American Literature* is directed (if we are to believe the volume's title). Briefly, the section entitled "Afro-American Literature Course Designs" reflects all of the theoretical confusions that have been surveyed heretofore. There are models for courses based on weak distinctions between "literary" and "socio-historical" principles (p. 237); the assumption that literature is an "act of language (p. 234); the notion that the "oral tradition is...a language with a grammar, a syntax, and standards of eloquence of its own" (p. 237); the idea that folk forms are "literary" genres (p. 246); and, finally, the assumption that "interdisciplinary" status can be achieved merely by bringing together different forms of art rather than by summoning methods and models from an array of intellectual disciplines (pp. 250-55). The concluding course designs, thus, capture the novelty and promise, as well as the shortcomings, of the new theoretical prospect. The types of distinctions, concerns, and endeavors they suggest are, indeed, significant for the future study of Afro-American literature and verbal art. What they lack—i.e., sound theories of ordinary and literary discourse, an adequate theory of semantics, and a comprehensive theory of reading—will, one hopes, be provided in time by scholars of Afro-American literature who are as persuaded as the reconstructionists that the Afro-American literary tradition can, indeed, withstand sharp critical scrutiny and can survive (as a subject of study) the limitations of early attempts at its literary-theoretical comprehension.

VIII

In *Ideology and Utopia*, Karl Mannheim writes:

> To-day we have arrived at the point where we can see clearly that there are differences in modes of thought, not only in different historical periods but also in different cultures. Slowly it dawns upon us that not only does the content of thought change but also its categorical structure. Only very recently has it become possible to investigate the hypothesis that, in the past as well as the present, the dominant modes of thought are supplanted by new categories when the social basis of the group of which these thought-forms are characteristic disintegrates or is transformed under the impact of social change.[46]

The generational shifts discuss in the preceding pages attest the accuracy of Mannheim's observation. The notion of "generational shift," as I have defined it, begins with the assumption that changes in the "categorical structure" of thought are coextensive with social change. The literary-theoretical goal of an analysis deriving from the concept of generation shifts is a "systematic and total formulation" of problems of Afro-American literary study. For only by investigating the guiding assumptions (the "categories" of thought, as it were) of recent Afro-American literary criticism can one gain a sense of the virtues and limitations of what have stood during the past four decades as opposing generational paradigms. What emerges from such an investigation is, first, a realization of the socially-and generationally-conditioned selectivity, or partiality, of such paradigms. They can be as meetly defined by their exclusions as by their manifest content. The quasi-political rhetoric of the Black Aesthetic seems to compete (at its weakest points) with the quasi-religious and semiotic jargon of the reconstructionists for a kind of flawed critical ascendancy.

Yet what also emerges from an investigation of generational shifts in recent Afro-American literary criticism is the sense that this criticism has progressed during the past forty years to a point where some "systematic" formulation of theoretical problems is possible. The extremism and shortsightedness of recent generations have been counterbalanced, that is to say, by their serious dedication to the analysis of an object that did not even exist in the world prior to the mid-sixties. The perceptual reorientations of recent generations have served as enabling conditions for a "mode of thought" that takes the theoretical investigation of a unique tradition of *Afro-American literature* as a normative enterprise.

Given the foregoing discussion, it is perhaps clear that my own preference where such theoretical investigation is concerned is the kind of holistic, cultural-anthropological approach that is implicit in the work of Henderson and other

spokesmen for the Black Aesthetic. This does not mean, however, that I seek to minimize the importance of the necessary and forceful call that the reconstructionists have issued for serious literary-theoretical endeavors on the part of Afro-Americanists. Still, I am persuaded that at this juncture in the progress of critical generations the theoretical prospect that I call the "anthropology of art" is the most realistic and fruitful approach to the future study of Afro-American literature and culture.[47] The guiding assumption of the anthropology of art is coextensive with basic tenets of the Black Aesthetic insofar as both prospects assert that works of Afro-American literature and verbal art can not be adequately understood unless they are contextualized within the interdependent systems of Afro-American culture. But the anthropology of art *departs from both the Black Aesthetic and the reconstructionist prospects in its assumption that art can not be studied without serious attention to the methods and models of many disciplines*. The contextualization of a work of literary or verbal art, from the perspective of the anthropology of art, is an "interdisciplinary" enterprise in the most contemporary sense of that word. Rather than ignoring (or denigrating) the research and insights of scholars in the nature, social, and behavioral sciences, the anthropology of art views such efforts as positive, rational attempts to comprehend the full dimensions of human behavior. And such efforts serve the literary-theoretical investigator as guides and contributions to an understanding of the symbolic dimensions of human behavior that comprise Afro-American literature and verbal art.

In his essay "Ideology as a Cultural System," Clifford Geertz writes: "The sociology of knowledge ought to be called the sociology of meaning, for what is socially determined is not the nature of conception but the vehicles of conception."[48] I think the anthropology of art stands today not only as a "vehicle of conception" rich in theoretical possibilities, but also as a "categorical structure" that may signal a next generational shift in the criticism of Afro-American literature.

Notes

1. Lewis S. Feuer, *Ideology and Ideologists* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975). p. 70. Professor Chester Fontenot was kind enough to remind me that T.S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* also offer approaches to questions of the relationships between old and new generations of intellectuals or writers.

2. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

3. Richard Wright, "The Literature of the Negro in the United States," in *White Man, Listen!* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1964), pp. 69-105. All citations from Wright's essay refer to this edition and are hereafter marked by pages numbers in parentheses.

4. Brown, Davis, and Lee, eds., *The Negro Caravan* (New York: Bryden Press, 1941; Arno repr 1969), p. 7. All citations from the work refer to this edition and are hereafter marked by page numbers in parentheses.

5. In *The American Negro Writer And His Roots, Selected Papers From the First Conference of Negro Writers, March, 1959* (New York: American Society of African Culture, 1960), pp. 39-40.

6. For historical details on the events of this period, the reader may wish to consult John Hope Franklin, "A Brief History," in *The Black American Reference Book*, ed. Mabel M. Smythe (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976), pp. 1-89.

7. The phrase was originally uttered as part of a call-and-response chant between Carmichael and his audience during the course of a several-day protest march in Mississippi.

8. From Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Vintage, 1967) pp. 43-44.

9. In *Home, Social Essays* (New York: Morrow, 1966), p. 110. All citations of the essay refer to this edition and are hereafter marked by page numbers in parentheses.

10. For an account of this enterprise, the reader may consult Theodore R. Hudson, *From LeRoi Jones to Amiri Baraka: The Literary Works* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1973), pp. 20-25.

11. In *The Black Aesthetic*, ed. Addison Gayle, Jr. (New York: Doubleday, 1971), p. 272.

12. *Understanding the New Black Poetry: Black Speech and Black Music as Poetic References* (New York: Morrow, 1973), pp. 1- 69. All citations refer to this edition and are hereafter marked by page numbers in parentheses.

13. Kuhn, Thomas S. *Structure* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 175. All citations refer to this edition and are hereafter marked by page numbers in parentheses.

14. In "The Artworld," in *Philosophy Looks at the Arts*, ed. Joseph Margolis (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), pp. 132-45, Arthur Danto writes, "terrain in constituted artistic in virtue of artistic theories, so that one use of theories, in addition to helping us discriminate art from the rest, consists in making art possible." The *theoretical* constraints of the integrationist paradigm excluded "Negro" expressive works from the American, literary artworld.

15. Albert Hofstadter, "On the Grounds of Aesthetic Judgment," in *Contemporary Aesthetics*, ed. Matthew Lipman (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1973), pp. 473-74. In both the concept "artworld" and "reference public," I have interpreted the Black Aesthetic as an institutional theory of art. For a recent critique of such theories, the reader may consult Marx W. Wartofsky, "Art, Artworlds, and Ideology," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 38 (1980), 239-47. In contrast to the "institutional" dimensions of the Black Aesthetic are its idealistic assumptions.

16. For reflections on field theory and on the work of Trier, see John Lyons, *Semantics*, I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 250-61.

17. I have discussed the romantic idealism of the Black Aesthetic in "The Black Spokesman as Critic: Reflections on the Black Aesthetic," the fifth chapter of my book entitled *The Journey Back: Issues in Black Literature and Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 132-43.

18. Stephen Henderson, "Saturation: Progress Report on a Theory of Black Poetry," *Black World*, 24 (1975), 14.

19. The words on the creation of system are, of course, those of William Blake's Los, drawn from *Jerusalem*. Los, like the Black Aestheticians, also refused at points to "reason" or "compare," feeling that the imperative "business" was "to create."

20. Henderson, "Saturation," p. 9.

21. Henderson, "The Question of Form," in *A Dark and Sudden Beauty: Two Essays in*

Black American Poetry by George Kent and Stephen Henderson, ed. Houston A. Baker, Jr. (Philadelphia: Afro-American Studies Program of the University of Pennsylvania, 1977), p. 24.

22. Henderson, "Question of Form," p. 32.

23. I have in mind Robert E. Hemenway, author of the superb scholarly effort *Zora Neale Hurston: A literary Biography* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1977) and Lawrence W. Levine, author of the important book *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

24. "Black Cultural Nationalism," in *The Black Aesthetic*, p. 33.

25. Neal, "The Black Contribution to American Letters: Part II, The Writer as Activist 1960 and After," in *The Black American Reference Book*, ed. Mabel M. Smythe, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976), p. 781-82. All citations refer to this edition and are hereafter marked by page numbers in parentheses.

26. I have in mind the conferences of black writers sponsored by the Howard University Institute for the Arts and the Humanities. Also important, I think, were the symposia held at the University of Pennsylvania in 1975 and 1977. Proceedings of these national gatherings can be found in *The Image of Black Folk in American Literature* (Washington, DC: Howard University Institute for the Arts and the Humanities, 1976) and in *Reading Black: Essays in the Criticism of African, Caribbean, and Afro-American Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, African Studies and Research Center, Monograph Series No. 4, 1976).

27. The symposium was entitled "The Function of Black American Poetry, 1760-1977," and it was sponsored by the Afro-American Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania, March 24-26, 1977. Selected proceedings of this symposium appeared in *A Dark and Sudden Beauty*.

28. Feuer, *Ideology and Ideologists* , p. 57.

29. I have discussed this phenomenon at length in *The Journey Back*, pp. 126-31.

30. It is difficult to date the first, contemporary usage of this term. Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard Scammon's article entitled, "Black Progress and Liberal Rhetoric" (*Commentary*, April 1973, pp. 35-44), which proclaimed that 52 percent of Black American could be defined as "middle class," certainly gave life to ongoing attempts to define what E. Franklin Frazier designated the "Black Bourgeoisie" in his seminal study "Black Bourgeoisie" (1957). The special issue of *Ebony* magazine entitled "The Black Middle Class" (August 1973) seems to have been prompted as much by the necessity to answer Wattenberg and Scammon as by a desire to "update" Frazier at a time when (between 1960 and 1970) the number of black employed in professional and technical operations had increased by 131 percent and the number of blacks in the clerical force had grown by 121 percent. Some of the major investigative issues that are signaled by the employment of the term "new black middle class" are addressed by William Julius Wilson in his study *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). In 1979 and 1980, the Afro-American Studies Program of the University of Pennsylvania took up the issues raised by Wilson and by the concept of a "new black middle class" in its annual spring symposia. The proceedings of those symposia can be found in: *The Declining Significance of Race?: A Dialogue Among Black and White Social Scientists*, ed. Joseph R. Washington, Jr. (Philadelphia: Afro-American Studies Program of the University of Pennsylvania, 1979) and *Dilemmas of the New Black Middle Class*, ed. Joseph R. Washington, Jr., in manuscript. Essentially, the term "new black middle class" seems to denote a stratum of Afro-American professionals whose education, occupations, and income place them on a level near that of their similarly-employed white counterparts.

31. Quoted from William Julius Wilson, "The Declining Significance of Race: Myth or Reality," in *The Declining Significance of Race?* ed., Joseph R. Washington, Jr., p. 15.

32. Dexter Fisher and Robert B. Stepto, eds., *Afro-American Literature: The Reconstruction of Instruction* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1979). All citations refer to this edition and are hereafter marked by page numbers in parentheses.

33. Sir David Ross, *Aristotle* (London: Methuen, 1923), pp. 73-74. "Prime" matter is unlike "secondary matter" since the latter can not only "exist apart" (e.g., "tissues" may or may not be combined into organs) but can also be severed in reality (i.e., organs may be broken up into their component tissues). It is the inseparability of "forms" and "matter" where Stepto is concerned (his "myth" is both structured and structuring) that gives his pregeneric myth the character of "prime" or "informed" matter (See Rose, p. 71).

34. *Metaphysics*, in *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, ed. John Warrington (London: J. M. Dent, 1956), p. 346. When Aristotle discusses "The Prime Mover" in one of the books of the *Metaphysics*, he sets forth what according to Sir David Ross is his only "systemic essay in theology" (Warrington, p. 331). Stepto, in adducing the agentless operation of his pregeneric myth, is on similar theological ground, attempting to find some thing that is "eternal, substance, and actuality" (Warrington, p. 345) to move the great sphere of Afro-American literary lights.

35. Quoted from *Afro-American Literature*, pp. 20-21.

36. T. S. Elliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," In *Selected Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1950), pp. 3-11. According to Elliot, the poet can not know what valuable poetic "work" is to be done "unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living" (p. 11).

37. Matthew Arnold, "The Study of Poetry," in *The Works of Matthew Arnold* ,IV (New York: AMS Press, 1970), p. 2. All citations refer to this edition and are hereafter marked by page numbers in parentheses.

38. These "factors" are treated in detail by Samuel R. Levin in *The Semantics of Metaphor* (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977) and by Robert Rogers in *Metaphor: A Psychoanalytic View* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). Additional theoretical discussion of metaphor can be found in the stimulating issue of *Critical Inquiry*, 5 (Autumn 1978) devoted to the subject.

39. I refer to Neal's "The Black Contribution to American Letters," which I discussed in an earlier section of this essay.

40. Gerard Genette defines the text as "subject" in *Figures* (Paris: *Editions due Seuil*, 1966). Georges Poulet and Paul Ricoeur have also entered reflections on the process whereby "critical thought *becomes* the thought criticized." The quotation here is from Maria Corti's *An Introduction to Literary Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 43.

41. I have discussed the concept of "the destruction of the text" in *The Journey Back*, pp. 127-28. In his essay "And Shine Swam On," which serves as the "Afterword" for the anthology *Black Fire*, eds. Larry Neal and LeRoi Jones (New York: Morrow, 1968), Neal say that true Afro-American poetry lies in verbal and musical performance, not in *written* texts: "The text could be destroyed and no one would be hurt in the least by it" (p. 653).

42. By "Whorfianism" I mean the scholarly position assumed by Benjamin Lee Whorf. Whorf, in his studies of the Hopi Indians, emphasized the interpenetration of language and reality; the worldview of the Hopi, according to Whorf, is coded into their language, Hence, language and worldview are coextensive (mild Whorfianism) or coterminous (strong Whorfianism), and this makes for a kind of linguistic determinism in human affairs. For a more detailed view of Whorf's thought, consult *Language, Thought and Reality*, ed. John B. Carroll, a collection of Whorf's essays published by the MIT Press in 1956.

43. Instead of language determining worldview, the individual worldview (under the aspect of "privacy") determines, or fashions, its own peculiar language.

44. Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), pp. 6-7.

45. This is not, however, an injunction to regard Henderson as an expert on Black English Vernacular as a subject of study *in itself*. For such expert testimony one must turn to the work of Geneva Smitherman, William Labov, and others. A good beginning, of course, is Lorenzo Turner's pioneering study *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

46. *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1936), pp. 82-83. My reading in "ideology" and the "sociology of knowledge" prompted this essay on generational shifts. It seemed appropriate to situate the discussion within its proper ambit as a means of concluding.

47. In *The Journey Back: Issues in Black Literature and Criticism*, I discuss the assumptions and methodology of this approach to literary study.

48. In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays by Clifford Geertz* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 212.

Afro-American Literature and Class Struggle

Amiri Baraka

In an essay published in a prose and drama reader by William Morrow Publishers in the Fall of 1979, I put forward the idea that there is a revolutionary tradition in Afro-American literature.[1] I also implied, and to a certain extent discussed, the obvious capitulationist tradition[2] in that literature—obvious, because the dialectic would automatically suggest that if there were a revolutionary tradition, then its opposite would also be present. I think it should be added that probably the majority of Afro-American writers fall somewhere between those two poles, as "middle forces" that are swayed, guided, directed, or influenced, given their peculiar individual experiences, by one of those stances or the other. But the genuinely major Afro-American writers have been part of the revolutionary tradition, and there is a preponderance of patriots as opposed to copouts among Black writers.

It occurred to me that these traditions existed, very clearly, when I went to teach at Yale, and witnessed the teaching of Afro-American literature. The positive and negative could be shoveled together under the national rubric, and given the bias of the American super-structure, very little would get to the students about what these writers and their writing actually represented in the living, breathing, real world. Charles Davis, the head of the Afro-American Studies Department at Yale, pointed out that Jupiter Hammon and Phillis Wheatley were not really representative of the beginnings of Afro-American literature as a *genre*, that Black literature as a body of work precisely reflecting a particular people begins with the Slave Narratives. My recognition of this fact was positive enough, but it was accompanied by the further understanding that here was an obvious case of two *ideologically opposite* reflections of society emanating from the same people, or national group.

There are other extenuating circumstances here that should be noted. Wheatley and Hammon are 18th-Century Blacks, and privileged house-slaves. Writing by Blacks, or reading, was outlawed in the general U.S. society, so for these two to have written meant they were pets of the slaveholding society, and

their generally favorable accounts of that society were reflective of pet-nigger house-servants isolated from the masses of Black people.

The 19th Century was a century of struggle in this country which led to the end of slavery. The intensification of slavery in the early part of that century (which was the result of cotton becoming an international commodity and the Black slaves' condition being transformed so that they were not only tied to the land for life as patriarchal slaves, but had the "civilized horrors" of capitalism added to their humps, since they now had to produce cotton not just for a domestic market but an international one) led to an intensification of resistance, which culminated in the Civil War.

The Slave Narratives are an ideological and emotional reflection of the great majority of the Afro-American people as well as a stunningly incisive portrait of Slave America. They are the voice of the *majority* of Black people, as literally as that can be taken. They are also a *genre*, a distinctive *body* of work, that indicates a way of living an thinking in the society. They are anti-slavery: fierce indictments of U.S. slave society, the exact opposite of Wheatley-Hammon. When the various teachers of Afro-American literature scramble the Narratives and Wheatley-Hammon together, they scramble the history and the ideology (i.e., perception of reality) contained in each. What is hidden is just where these writers are coming from seen *in the context of real life*—who and what they really are; their *use*, finally, to the Afro-American people and to the society as a whole (and to the world)!

I know when I mention historical (and with that social, political, &c.) context, the structuralists and neo-New-Critic types get their dander up. Good! This essay is meant to jump all over them. "New Critics," as Bruce Franklin points out in *The Victim as Artist and Criminal*—or one branch of "New Critics," the Southern Agrarians (John Crowe Ransome, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, &c.)—, actually upheld slavery, which they euphemized as a necessary "defect" in order to create the Great Southern Culture (as Allen Tate said, "a fine, elegant and lasting culture"). Ironically, when one looks for that Great Southern Culture, especially for what is "lasting," one finds it is largely Afro-American, whether it is food, music, or literature! Compare Frederick Douglass with Stephen Longstreet and Gilmore Simms, or compare slave authors H. "Box" Brown, Linda Brent, the Crafts and Henry Bibb, with Hugh Legaré George Fitzhugh (author of *Cannibals All!*), or the other hopeless justifiers and sentimentalizers of the slavemaster class.

The "New Criticism," with its stress on literature as self- contained artifact removed from real life, was actually part of the McCarthyism and reaction of the '50s. These reactionary writers—Tate's 1st book of criticism was called *Reactionary Essays* wrote some of these backward ideas in the '30s, but the period was too progressive and they could not get much attention until the '50s. The '50s upsurge of reaction was aimed at removing all traces of '30s-'40s racialism. It accompanied the overall cold war that U.S. imperialism was waging to try to take over a world market after World War II (during which it was forced to make a united front with the U.S.S.R. against fascism). The emphasis, necessarily, was on technique, on *how* something was said, not *what* was being said. The bourgeoisie must always emphasize formalism, form over content, because if people check out what's being said they will not give too much of a shit how; or they will at least reject what and try to learn from how, but not suck it in wholesale.

The most important personalities and trend-setters of the revolutionary tradition (which is anti-slave, anti-capitulationist, anti-imperialists, &c., given the particular epoch and conditions of its existence) are the Slave Narrators (e.g., Douglas, "Box" Brown, Bibb, Moses, Roper, Brent, Austin Steward, among many others)—though these differ individually as to the degree of their consciousness, obviously ... Frederick Douglass remaining perhaps the most moving, poignant, and revolutionary. These are the beginnings of Afro-American literature, as genre.

Then come the pre-Civil-War nationalists: David Walker, Henry Highland Garnet, C.H. Langston, and Charles Lenox Redmond are among the best. I would also include Nat Turner's "Confessions," as classic Black autobiography, and also psychological and mystical reportage as a matrix of the times. One can add William Wells Brown as the "transitional figure," showing the transition to come from the purely functional to "art." But all this revolutionary writing is artistic, and functional; its functionalism is anti-oppression, and the art is in how it lays it out. Mrs. Francis Watkins Harper should also be mentioned as a strong anti-slavery poet. DuBois is the great link between the 19th and 20th Centuries. His *Souls of Black Folk*, and indeed DuBois's constant *forward movement* ideologically, from isolated democrat to Black capitalist and yea-sayer for the "talented tenth" and the emerging Black bourgeoisie (its militant national wing, as opposed to the comprador wing of Booker T. Washington) to Pan-Africanist and Socialist, and, finally, Marxist-Communist, is the underly-

ing dynamic of our entire intellectual and political journey—but *Souls of Black Folk* is the connection to the Harlem Renaissance. Its multiple forms and omnisensitivity, from music and cultural history and criticism to polemic ("Of Mr. Booker T. Washington & Others") to short fiction, prepares a whole artistic and ideological palate for the young urban intelligentsia of the Harlem Renaissance. Langston Hughes' seminal "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" is impossible without *Souls of Black Folk*, which essay not only defends the Black artist but identifies his truest sources, the Black masses, the souls of Black folk. And Hughes audaciously sets the lines for attacking the anti-Black intellectual reactionaries and compradors who deny the beauty and strength of the Black experience and thereby try to limit Black life itself.

(Interestingly enough, even today, 'cause that's where it all leads, and on past to tomorrow, there is a sector of the Black artist-intelligentsia that continues to identify with the objects of the ire of DuBois's and Hughes's righteous patriotic national consciousness—i.e., B.T.W. and shrimps like George Schuyler—, but we will come back to them, as the objects of our own ire—update on de struggle!)

To continue the historical perspective, the Harlem Renaissance is the maturation of an urban Afro-American intelligentsia, symbolizing the movement of large numbers of the Black masses out of the Afro-American nation in the old Black Belt South into the rest of the United States, as an oppressed national minority; transforming from largely Southern, rural, and agricultural, a peasant people, to the present day when almost half of the Black masses live in the North, Midwest, and West, in urban centers, as part of an industrial working class (96% of the Black masses are part of that multi-national working class in the U.S.). The development of this intelligentsia identified with the Harlem Renaissance replicates parallel developments all over the Third (i.e., colonial) World, but the Harlem Renaissance was a leading and influential force on Black artists and intellectuals all over the world, whether it was the "Indigisme" of Haiti, the "Negrismo" of Puerto Rico and Cuba, or the "Negritude" of the African and West Indian intellectuals living in Paris, like Aimé Césaire, Leopold Senghor, and Leon Damas; they all claimed the Harlem Renaissance as their chief influence, especially writers Langston Hughes and Claude McKay.

Hughes and McKay stand out in my mind as the chief forces of that period, though for sure there were many others. (Technical innovators like Jean Toomer, with *Cane*, fell off into mysticism, even repudiation of Blackness, and

Zora Neale Hurston ended up writing articles against voting rights for Blacks, the F.E.P.C., and integration of schools, among other things.) Hughes's early work is classic "Black is Beautiful"—"We are an African People" writing, which is the revolutionary nationalism of the oppressed people whose first utterances are defense against the cultural aggression of imperialism, which says those it oppresses are stupid, ugly, and have no history! The two McKay novels I've read, *Home to Harlem* and *Banjo*, are classics of a muscular, graphically descriptive, beautiful prose. His poetry, probably because of the irrelevant, stiff sonnet form he was wont to impose on himself, is much less interesting, though, for sure, its content makes it so strong it still fights through.

The '30s and '40s brought changes to Langston Hughes's work, and perhaps his strongest writing is collected in the volume *Good Morning, Revolution.* Here we see a distinctive move into a militant internationalism, embracing the struggle of the majority of the world's peoples for liberation with a stirring and conscious anti- imperialism. Richard Wright, of course, is one of the most impressive Afro-American writers, one the the most important American writers of the period. *Uncle Tom's Children* is, for me, Wright's most powerful work. There is nothing else of his so sustained in its description of the oppression of the Afro-American nation in the Black Belt South as *Uncle Tom's Children. Black Boy* and *American Hunger*, taken together, as they were written, before the repression of *American Hunger* by Harper for thirty years, is a powerful work, a novel of ideas in the strongest sense of the term, an accomplishment of tremendous dimension. I am only touching highlights to make a case for these writers in the revolutionary tradition. (For further discussion, see my essay in the Morrow anthology.) Obviously, there is no monolithic anything; everything splits in half, must be looked at dialectically, separated into its positive and negative aspects, in order to be understood and learned from. Then we can pick up the good and run with it, discarding the negative.

Richard Wright was a creature of contradiction. It is obvious in his work that he never quite integrated himself with reality; his depictions of Black women are, frankly, usually demeaning or absent. Wright, in his own words, in *American Hunger*, lived in the unreal book world too much and never even really "got down" with Black people. But the hot sensitivity and resistance to the greater evil are clear in the books I mention and, to various degrees, in much of his work.

Wright's break with the Communist Party is wonderfully documented in

Hunger, and honestly so. The petty bourgeois individualism he acquired with his reading and aspirant intellectualism was his undoing, though, for the record, the Communist Party USA was committing grave errors as well, and the two passed one another like trains in the night.

Another important writer of the late '30s and '40s is Theodore Ward, whose *Big White Fog* is one of the finest plays written in this country, with an ideological scope and precision that forced the powers that be to block the performances of *Fog* in the Federal Theatre, and heap mountains of obscurity on Ward ever since. His later works like *Our Lan'* and *John Brown* have been equally neglected, but Ward is a giant!

Margaret Walker is another giant, abused by the vagaries of white racist "scholarship," white racist "criticism," and white racist paternalism and self-esteem. (Yale University Press has even let *For My People* go out of print!) Margaret Walker's form and content come straight out of the genuine roots of Afro-American life and speech. And as for her great work *Jubilee*, there is as much basis for her plagiarism suit against Alex Haley (*Roots*) as Harold Courlander's, but his publisher, Crown, joined in the suit; Walker's, Houghton Mifflin, would not, so it was only her lawyer-son vs. ABC and Doubleday.

As I pointed out, the '50s was a period of reaction, not only in the sense of the cold war, the Korean War, McCarthyism, and the New Criticism, but also the once-revolutionary Communist Party USA began to come apart at the seams and, by 1957, declared that Socialism could be gained through the ballot, rather than by revolution, which is revisionist nonsense. For Blacks, the defection was visible earlier, as the white, chauvinist, opportunist element of the Party emerged more clearly as its leadership. By the '50s the CP USA had renounced its correct line of self-determination for the Afro-American nation in the Black Belt South and declared that Black people had already achieved self-determination under imperialism, which is a racist insult! If we have already achieved self-determination, in means that we are in charge of these slums and death-holes we are forced to live in as well as unemployment, substandard education, hospital closings, and police brutality, which is a flat-out lie! Certain Negro intellectuals began to talk about how the national aspect of Afro-American writing had to be cooled out, lessened; that Black writers wrote too much about Black people, which sounds like the straight-out bourgeoisie. Did anyone ever run that on O'Casey or Joyce, that they leaned on Irishmen too much, or get to Dostoevsky and his Russian self?

Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin arrive on the scene now putting down Richard Wright ("Richard's Blues," "Alas, Poor Richard," "Everybody's Protest Novel"), which was part of the McCarthy-type cleanup of all radical ideas and persons left from the turbulent '30s. Richard Wright had left the U.S. in 1947, just after the Communist Party USA had declared itself a "Political Association" dedicated to "20th-Century Americanism," like Paine, Jefferson, &c. In France Wright took up with Stein and Sartre and existentialism. (The whole of Wright's life is a metaphor for flight...from the South, from whites, from Blacks, from the Communist Party, and from the U.S., finally from reality, though obviously the last was mitigated by his ability to record his experience accurately.)

Fortunately for us all, Baldwin grew much wiser than those early essays and got involved with the civil rights movement. *The Fire Next Time* is an eloquent reflection of his involvement, but even more, when he wrote *Blues for Mr. Charlie*, he openly questioned non-violence. Once *Charlie* appeared, Baldwin was removed as *the* Black writer vis-à-vis the white bourgeois press, and Ellison was pumped up. A difficult job, since Bro. Ralph only has that one book, but it is touted up a storm by the academies and officialdom because of its content. Ellison puts down both nationalism and Marxism, and opts for individualism—which is, like they say, right on the money!

The Black Arts Movement of the '60s was certainly a rebellion against the bourgeoisie's and revisionists' '50s liquidation of the Afro-American national question, and the rise of conservative, reformist, capitulationist as well as comprador writing as "Negro Writing"—just as Malcolm X emerged to forcefully oppose the Black bourgeoisie's domination of the Black Liberation Movement, as well as the reformist and even outright comprador lines that dominated the Movement in the '50s. The "Blackness" of the Black Arts Movement was the attempt to restore the national priorities of the Afro-American nation and oppressed nationality to the art of the Black artists. The art had to be an extension of the people themselves, involved with them, expressing their lives and minds with the collective fire of actual life committed to the necessary struggle and revolutionary transformation that we need in the real world!

The writing actually accompanied and reflected and exhorted rebellion. When the chump judge that sentenced me to three years without parole for alleged gun-carrying during the Newark rebellion read that sentence, he quoted

my poetry(!) as one of the reasons he knew I was guilty. Askia M. Toure (Rolland Snellings), Larry Neal, Clarence Reed, Charles and William Patterson, Harold Cruse, Marvin X, Ed Bullins, Sonia Sanchez, Welton Smith, Mari Evans, David Henderson, Sun Ra, Carolyn Rodgers, Clarence Franklin, Carol Freeman, Don L. Lee, Ted Wilson, Reginald Lockett, Ron Milner, Ben Caldwell (and Trane and Albert!)...and so many more put out strong Black art in the turbulent '60s, as part of the breadth and scope of that movement...not just in literature, but in all the arts, as part of the sweeping upsurge of the Black Liberation Movement itself! It was a broad united from of creativity and struggle.

The Black Arts Movement had an impact similar to the Harlem Renaissance; it influenced a whole generation of artists around the world. And not just Black and Third World artists, but European and Euro-American artists. The emphasis on a people shaped highly oral, intensely direct statements, in various media. The function of art was to reach and educate and move and unify and organize people, not to mystify them or offer dazzling support of the status quo! The mainstream of the Black Arts Movement was rooted in the revolutionary tradition of Afro-American literature and in the revolutionary traditions of the Afro-American people. It spoke to the Afro-American people because it was consciously aimed at them. As Mao Zedong in the "Yenan Forum on Literature and Art" pointed out, the artist's audience is one key shaper of the artist's work; i.e., who it is for helps make it what it is.

But, of course, at the same time, the Black Arts Movement emerged nationally, its opposite already existed, and was developed to a certain extent as an answer to the BAM. In the '60s the literature of the capitulationists and the compradors was left in the dust by the roaring surge of what life itself was, and the struggle and unity of the BLM itself. The various capitulationists and compradors could only sit in the dust and bide their time (like the Southern Agrarians in the '30s), occasionally pipsqueaking something supportive of people's enemies. Rocky and the Fords began to toss around some bucks, as they had in the early part of the 20th Century when they saw a generation rise up to oppose Booker T.'s capitulationist and finally comprador philosophies. When DuBois and Trotter organized the Niagara Movement, Carnegie coopted it with the N.A.A.C.P., to urge system-stifled legal reform. It was the imperialist bourgeoisie consciously blocking struggle with treadmill reforms and turning potential strugglers into reform freaks rather than radicals, or outright agents.

But the '60s upsurge drew many of the middle forces and even some "conservatives" into positive motion. Artists, even Black ones, still predominantly come from the petty bourgeoisie. The intellectuals are, in the main, a sector of the petty bourgeoisie. The petty bourgeoisie ("middle class") is a vacillating, flip-flopping class, because that is where they are in capitalist society's production process—neither absolutely flattened underfoot by the bourgeosie nor are they, despite the sickies who serve them and big-wish-it, the b's themselves. The petty bourgeoisie attach themselves to one class or the other, either the rulers or the ruled. They either serve the people or serve the owners.

In the rebellious '60s most of the Black artists and intellectuals aligned themselves with the people, drawn by the revolutionary upsurge. Even a writer like Calvin Hernton, who is often identified with the "conservative" sector of Afro-American literature and with people like Ishmael Reed, in the '60s could write violently anti-imperialist essays like "Dynamite Growing Out of Their Skulls" (in *Black Fire*). Yes, the tide was so strong that even some of the "conservatives" wrote work that took the people's side. (The metaphysical slide of the later BAM even allowed Reed to adopt a rebellious tone with his "Black Power Poem" and "Sermonette" in *catechism of neoamerican hoodoo church*, 1970, in which he saw the struggle of Blacks against national oppression as a struggle between two churches: e.g., "may the best church win. shake hands now and come/out conjuring." But even during the heat and heart of the BAM, Reed would call that very upsurge and the BAM "a goon squad aesthetic" and say that the revolutionary writers were "fascists" or that the taking up of African culture by Black artists indicted such artists were "tribalists.")

The bourgeoisie opened Negro Ensembles as defense against Black Arts and opened up assorted colored cool-out canteens which would lessen the fire and divert the attack. They funded a Negro theater, a skin thing, so that what was hot and revolutionary would be over-shadowed—a N.A.A.C.P. theater as opposed to a revolutionary nationalist theater. And even some of the folks who were associated with the BAM legitimately got caught up in a bogus "professionalism" which put Broadway *modus operandi* and a minute's worth of prosperity over the needs of the Black masses for revolution! By the time the heat had cooled in the middle '70s, not because the source of the oppression or the resistance had disappeared, but only because of the very spontaneity of *any* mass people's movement unguided by a revolutionary party and a scientific ideology, the bourgeoisie had not only set up a whole series of counters to the

heat of the BAM, but later on could even begin to dismiss and close down these counters because the heat was off for a minute! But there were enough middle-class Blacks who had gained from the '60s upsurge of the people—some with small gains, some outright bribed—that it also offered a pimple of socio-economic "verticality" (to paraphrase Cabral in "The Weapon of Theory") which could continuously lend prais to the reforms that the '60s had brought about. Kenneth Gibson, in Newark, now functions as a straight-out comprador, agent, of the imperialists. His twofold task to fake democracy, since he got into office in the rush of Black motion for political rights, and, at the same time, to carry out the grim bullshit white faces would cause immediate rebellions by doing.

This is also manifest in the arts, and for the same *political* reasons. The brief flurry of Black publishing by the major bourgeois presses in the '60s cooled right out once the fire cooled. Like the Harlem Renaissance (its exotic and commercial aspect created by the bourgeoisie, in contra-distinction to the genuine emergence of an urban and national Black intelligentsia in the '20s), it was simply *turned off*. This writer must struggle intensely to get the large presses to publish anything, after they blanked out for almost eight years between 1971 and '78. Major magazines simply refuse to publish my work, and even pseudo-controversial sheets like the *Village Voice* try to edit and delay published Letters-to-the-Editor of mine!

What is being done in the late '70s is to emphasize the conservatives, capitulationists, and outright compradors who lurked around the edges of the '60s pipsqueaking opposition to the Black Liberation Movement's mass upsurge as reflected in the arts. (Just like they attach '60s-gained Affirmative Action with the Bakke decision!) People like Ishmael Reed and the rhythmless Michael Harper are at the one point of this. The bourgeoisie also raises up new voices whose content is not advanced or is confused, like Michelle Wallace (the former) and Ntozake Shange (the latter). What's so grim is that they can push this group and others under the rubric of *Feminism*, and even distort the real questions: E.g., What is the cause of women's oppression? Answer: Class society, and in this epoch that means monopoly capitalism. Question: What will end it? Answer: Socialist revolution, which destroys the material base of women's oppression; i.e., no one can then make money off it, which is why it is around now, and thus the conditions will be set for eventually eradicating it. What is cool about the bourgeoisie is that they can push misinformation, divi-

sion, and confusion as *radicalism*, obscuring the real nature of problems and the real solution, which is revolution, but still get over pretending to deal with mass questions like women's oppression...Black national oppression in the '60s!

The bourgeoisie makes Ralph Ellison the patron saint of these folk for obvious reasons: They can always use individualism and need a model of the "kept" intellectual individualizing off the mass pain. Once Jimmy Baldwin came out with *Blues for Mr. Charlie*, which questioned non-violence, he was finished with "*The New York Times* and *The New York Review of Books* crowd, the bourgeoisie's intellectuals.

Another outpost of this later '70s *odeur* is the Ivy structuralists, as I mentioned, who with publications like *The Massachusetts Review* (see 18, Nos. 3-4, "A Chant of Saints," edited by Michael Harper and Robert B. Stepto) want to distort Afro-American literary history and Mandrake up a tradition of elegant (?) copout as the heavy mainstream of Afro-American literature! Their group runs from Ellison, with his embarrassingly corny "story" "Backwacking" and an interview continuing to patronize Richard Wright, to folks like James Alan McPherson, the recent Pulitzer-Prize winner, aconstitutional democrat who believes, so he said in an interview in *The Washington Post*, that all the bourgeoisie need do is implement the Constitution (goddamit implement the Constitution!); Robert Hayden, who has always been disturbed by the loudness and blood of conflict; and Derek Walcott, whose play *Remembrance* will send the hair on the back of your neck straight up as his hero mourns the passing of a white woman from his life and warns his son not to make the same mistake, as his backward Black wife lolls around in the background being West Indian! Ellison and Stepto talk about the "Black Aesthetic" crowd, though they both are comfortable enough apparently with the "white aesthetic" crowd. (Ellison quotes Burke, James, and Hawthorne, who are among the most backward writer extant.)

Critics like Stanley Crouch and Clifford Mason's chains are rattled, and they dance fantastically for a few pennies. Crouch, in the *Village Voice*, makes a specialty of rendering Afro-American art as primitive posturing for the general delectation of the "white aesthetic" crowd who thought that all the time. Mason raises Joe Papp (Shange and Walcott's mentor) as the *founder* of a New Black Theatre (*New York Times Magazine*, 22 July 1979) to do Shakespeare-with-the-Darks — which Papp needs in order that he receive the government

grants that used to be reserved for Black folks, under the guise that he is the white officer for the charging Black volunteers. Papp keeps folks like Bullins around as in-residence, and does most Black and Latino plays as workshop presentations, but the big stuff, the regular productions, are reserved for the good stuff-white folks (you guessed it?)!

The "white aesthetic" is bourgeois art—like the "national interest" of the U.S. at this late date when the U.S. is an imperialist superpower. Ellison says of the "Black Aesthetic" crowd that they "buy the idea of total cultural separation between blacks and whites, suggesting that we've been left out of the mainstream. But when we examine American music and literature in terms of its themes, symbolism, rhythms, tonalities, idioms and images it is obvious that those rejected 'Negroes' have been a vital part of the mainstream and were from the beginning." This is the N.A.A.C.P.'s argument. We know we have been exploited, Mr. Ralph, sir; what we's arguing about is that we's been exploited! To *use* us is the term of our stay in this joint, but left out of the mainstream means that Bird died of scag, Jellyroll had to play in a whorehouse, Duke played one-night stands till he died, the Beatles make millions and cite some Blood running an elevator in Jackson.

In terms of separation, there *is* an Afro-American culture...impossible without the American experience, but it is a *specific* culture, used, like the Black people themselves, to make superprofits, mainly for the white bourgeoisie; but there *are* some Blacks who do get some big-sized crumbs—chairs, grants, fame, &c.—, some of whom think they are actually in that mainstream, and some of whom actually are (in the sense that they will defend what this means and is), for their bribe. It is the questions of this use, the exploitation, the oppression, that we take issue with and, from the first batch of slaves, have sworn to annihilate. We take issue with the comfortable commentator used with his own permission who seeks no connection with the mass pain except to get rich and famous off it.

In *The Massachusetts Review* interview Ellison defends the book *Time on the Cross*, which implies that ahhh, slavery wasn' as bad as y'all say. And he even pipes up his own little mitigator (a constant tone from the backward sector of the Black petty bourgeoisie) that it wasn't that bad; it's just you niggers that think so, you poor niggers, you working-class niggers, you dark niggers, you majority of niggers. Ellison says (in defending *Time on the Cross*) that "perhaps we have too damn much of a wound-worshipping investment in the notion that

the slaves were brutalized beyond the point of exercising their human will to survive" and further, again *Time on the Cross*, "...the slaves were *not* reduced to a gas-oven state of docility, a view that would see each and every slave master as a Hitler and American slavery as a preview of the Holocaust." Wow, we'll analyze that Bro. But even further Ellison says, "After all I did see my grandaddy and he was no beaten-down 'Sambo.' Rather he was a courageous, ingenious old guy who *owned property* [my emphasis], engaged in Reconstruction politics of South Carolina, and who stood up to a mob after they had lynched his best friend....I also knew one of his friends who, after years of operating a printing business for a white man, came north and set up his own printing shop in Harlem."

Does this mean that everybody who didn't own property or become a small politician was "a beaten-down 'Sambo'"? Ishmael Reed and Stanley Crouch both make the same kind of rah-rah speeches for the Black middle class. Reed, in fact, says that those of us who uphold Black working people are backwards (see *Shrovetide in Old New Orleans*, pp. 136-37) or, as he says, "the field nigger got all the play in the '60s." Focus on the middle class, the property owners and music teachers, not the Black masses, Ellison tells us. This is the *Roots* crowd giving us a history of the BLM as a rags-to-riches, Horatio Alger tale in brownface going off into the sunset and straight for Carter's Cabinet or the National Book Award. No, slavery was not as bad for house-Negroes, nor is national oppression as grim for the petty bourgeoisie-not bad at all for the tiny bribed element among us. But for most of us it is hell, and we want it destroyed! We even want to use our poetry and song as yet another means to effect the destruction of this national oppression and its material base, monopoly capitalism. The bourgeoisie, and the intellectual sector that serves them, tells us we cannot. We say, Fuck you!

And, get to this, we do not think that slavery made Black people "beaten-down 'Sambo[es]'"; it is the "white aesthetic" crowd that thinks that. There has been resistance ever since there was oppression. Ellison and the capitulationist wing of Afro-American literature are the ones who try to reduce the methods by which we can oppose it, who usually get paid well for opposing our resistance, albeit *aesthetically*! The slavemasters *were* our Hitlers. You think slavery is different in its essence from fascism? And even after slavery, after the destruction of the Reconstruction governments, that fascism was resumed, with peonage, sharecropping, the Black Codes, segregation, discrimination, Jim

Crow, lynching, &c. (Check out Wright's *Uncle Tom's Children*, which is a far more accurate and powerful version of Black life in the South than Ellison has produced.)

Ellison's line repeatedly is, We are a part of this, we are a part of it and it ain't half bad! (Reed says, and I am not making this up, "Did you know that the woman who runs the computer controlling five or so missile carriers is black?" [*Shrovetide*, p.136].) This is the cry of the N.A.A.C.P. leadership.

Where I differ with the bourgeois nationalists who are identified with the "Black Aesthetic" is illuminated by a statement of Addison Gayle's: "An aesthetic based upon economic and class determinism is one which has minimal value for Black people. For Black writers and critics the starting point must be the proposition that the history of Black people in American is the history of the struggle against racism" ("Blueprint for Black Criticism," *First World*, Jan.-Feb. 1977, p. 43). But what is the basis for racism: i.e., exploitation because of one's physical characteristics? Does it drop out of the sky? Is it, as Welsing and others suggest, some metaphysical racial archetype, the same way the white racists claim that "Black inferiority" is? Black people suffer from national oppression: We are an oppressed nation, a nation oppressed by U.S. imperialism. Racism is an even more demonic aspect of this national oppression, since the oppressed nationality is identifiable anywhere as that, *regardless* of class. But we know even racism is mitigated, cooled out somewhat, if someone is living in a Chicago condominium, or in some exclusive suburb, than it is, say, for a Black worker, or small farmer, or migrant worker, or unemployed worker.

The material base of racism, which allows it to exist as other than a "bad idea," is monopoly capitalism. Its material base before the Civil War was the slave system and developing capitalism. The destruction of monopoly capitalism will allow the conditions to exist in which we can begin to destroy racism and chauvinism, but no such conditions can ever exist under capitalism.

Our struggle against racism must be our struggle against national oppression, and the fundamental answer to that is the revolutionary struggle for self-determination! But against who and what must that struggle be waged? Who and what now have the power to keep us powerless? We see that ultimately it is monopoly capitalism, the private ownership of the land, mineral wealth, machines, factories, transportation, communication—the means of production—by a white, racist, corporate class, itself comprising only 6/10ths of 1

percent of the U.S. population, that must be destroyed if Black people or the other people in this society are to be totally liberated.

I understand that Afro-American culture has absorbed all the elements it came in contact with, but it is still a specific entity in itself. It is particular, yet interrelated with the whole of U.S. culture. It is impossible without the overall U.S. culture, and likewise the overall U.S. culture, as it is, and has been for 300 years, is impossible without Afro-American culture. The "Black Aesthetic" is the form, content, style, history, and psychological development of a particular nationality, the Afro-American. There is, in the U.S., however, an Afro-American nation, in the Black Belt South...what Ellison mentions Richard Wright as upholding at one point...a historically-constituted, stable community of people based on a common language, land, economic life, and common psychological development manifest as a common culture. This is a paraphrase of Joseph Stalin's scientific definition of nation. The Afro-American nation is an oppressed nation, born in the South after the destruction of the Reconstruction governments by the resurgent planter class in the South, but paid for and made possible by the big bourgeoisie on Wall Street, who after the Civil War completely dominated U.S. politics and economics, controlled the ex-planters, and turned them into their compradors.

It is a complicated picture...a nation within a nation, whose land base is the whole lower South, where even today 52% of the Afro-American people live, and where 8 out of 10 of us were born. (Get a U.S. Department of Commerce map and look at the concentration...outside of the Black Belt we exist in any numbers in about 20 cities!) But the point is that our basic demand must always be self-determination for the Afro-American nation in the Black Belt, and equal rights-democratic rights for the Black oppressed nationality everywhere else they be!

We are not denying that we are linked together with the overall U.S. political state (up under it, is more precise) and U.S. life in general, but Black people want *self-determination*, not just to be told that everything in the U.S. bears their mark. We know that. We know we helped build it, *free*. But in order to get self-determination, there is a revolutionary process that must be followed, and a tiny minority of Blacks living in kept elegance will not dissuade us from carrying this process out to the end.

I am focusing on Ellison's most recent interview because he is the Godfather of the "anti-struggle crowd" that the bourgeoisie has tried to re-prop up as

Afro-American literature. Ellison says, in the same interview, "After all, given a decade of emphasis upon 'blackness' and 'militancy' how many writers of Wright's stature are there to conjure with. " One of the basic weapons imperialism uses is absorption, to absorb sections of the oppressed, usually bourgeoisie, so that they uphold the oppressor culture, and therefore the ideas of the oppressor, a central one of which is that the oppressed need to be oppressed! The cries of "Blackness," at their most revolutionary, were opposition to this absorption and agentry. The metaphysics and narrowness of some of these cries (some of my own included) were lamentable, but the essence of them was resistance. (Shit, Ralph, Hawthorne was pro-slavery!)

Ellison says, "How many writers of Wright's stature are there to conjure with?" Well, let's begin with Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, David Walker, Henry Highland Garnet, W.E.B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Margaret Walker, Theordore Ward, to drop a few names. One task that confronts us is that we must go beyond the stale "histories" and anthological chauvinism, especially those the would-be educated Blacks have been shaped by, and investigate Afro-American literature with a fresh eye, with an eye to discovering the hidden riches that are there. In an early and somewhat confused essay I wrote called "The Myth of a Negro Literature," I dismissed Afro-American literature because I was put off by the whited-out Negro literature that was merely a brown imitation of the dull parts of Euro-American literature. Even white literature is distorted in this terrible capitalist land to hold up the conservatives, the backward, to trumpet the Henry Jameses and Hawthornes over the Melvilles and Mark Twains and Jack Londons and Theodore Dreisers and Mike Golds! And certainly in official U.S. literary history, they usually raise the most conservative, the backward, or so mix them with the progressives that the radical or revolutionary trend is obscured. And the Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, Asians, and women are in distorted minority if they are represented at all.

Recently, the bourgeoisie has been pushing Ishmael Reed very hard, and to see why let's look at his most recent book, *Shrovetide in Old New Orleans*. In essay after essay Reed stumps for individualism, and asserts ubiquitously that the leadership of Black folks is the Black middle class, rather than the working class, but it gets even farther out than that. Reed actually resurrects the old, whited-out "conservative" George Schuyler, the man who once wrote an essay (which Hughes blasted) called "The Negro Art Hokum," in which, of course,

he asserted that there was no such thing. There's Irish literature, Spanish literature, Russian literature, French literature...but no, no Afro-American literature or painting. Schuyler, the man who supported Portuguese colonialism, and agreed that the Portuguese were doing a civilizing job over in Africa. Schuyler, the man who makes even some of the straight-out agents of the N.A.A.C.P. leadership look rational. Dig this conversation between Reed and Schuyler:

Reed: Why do you think the people who are more into the collectivist type of poetry and "for the people" have a bigger reputation than those who are independents?

[Obviously he was talking about the '60s—AB]

Schuyler: Because they've been played up and built up.

Reed: Who builds them up?

Schuyler: Well, people who are interested in building them up. It's a clique. Who would every think of Malcolm X as a leader?

Cannon: Really

Schuyler: Lead what?

Cannon: Every time we talk about that, we get shouted down.

Reed: You can't say that. He's a holiday now.

This is straight-out agentry, and in certain circumstances could easily get these dudes iced. But this is the level of anti-Black the straight-out agents of the oppressor run with. In the '60s, obviously neither Reed nor Cannon would make such statements. But in the recent climate of celebration of capitulation and upholding of the compradors, the real garbage in the brains of these traitors comes out. And this is what their aesthetic is built on.

Reed also upholds the feudal-capitalist dictatorship of Baby Doc Duvalier in Haiti, which he and a woman-painter acquaintance describe as "clean poverty," unlike that in the rest of the Third World.

Like Jesse Jackson, poet Michael Harper went to racist South Africa and even wrote a poem about it, so disconnected is he from the international Black Power struggle. (Reed says in *Shrovetide*,..."'Black Power' might have begun from talk circulating at cocktail parties in Paris in the 1940s. Brian Gysin wrote a book about it called *The Process*." I would suggest this household read C.H. Langston during the Negro Convention Movement of the 1940s and '50s.) This is from the minuted of the Cleveland Negro Convention, 1854: "...man cannot be independent without *possessing* the land on which he resides." And

further,"...under no circumstances, let the consequences be as they may, will we ever submit to enslavement, let the power that attempt it, emanate from whatever source it will." But Harper, in his poem, seems most to lament that the white-supremacists South African authorities who arrested him momentarily did not differentiate him from the general, run-of-the-mill Blood in Azania-to-be.

Michele Wallace attacks the Black Liberation Movement with bourgeois Feminism. Her fundamental problem is that she wasn't there and doesn't know. She has some genuine frustration, and the issue of women's oppression is real: Third World women in this country suffer a triple oppression, if they are working women, as workers under capitalism class oppression, national oppression, and oppression because of their sex. But because Wallace does not have a scientific method of analysis she can be used by the bourgeois Feminists at MS magazine, who just want to get in on the oppression, not to smash the system that fosters it; and she is also used by the bourgeoisie not only to suggest that there was nothing of value in the rebellious '60s but that bourgeois Feminism can accurately sum up history, which it can't. She also drops the same old chauvinist line on Black women, while at it, suggesting that Black women were too backward to struggle against the male chauvinism of myself and others in the BLM, some of whom even made a *doctrine* of it. But to say, "The riots..., during the Black Movement days, were spontaneous and largely ineffective outbursts of rage that we directed inward and hurt the ghetto dweller most," or to see Malcolm X as merely "patriarchal Black macho," or to say that the BLM was merely "a big Afro, a rifle, and a penis in good working order" is to take the side of our oppressors.

Shange deals in effects but not causes in *Colored Girls*. This is only one-sidedness and lack of information. But obviously if she raised the *cause* of women's oppression—class society, and in this epoch, monopoly capitalism-imperialism—, no such play would get on the Great White Way. Like they hurried up and bashed *Zoot Suit* because of its militancy, and even put the badmouth on the movie *Wiz*, 'cause it was much too hip. Shange must go deeper into her material and get to the root causes of things in the real world if she is truly to be honored by the masses in the long run. Removing parts of her plays offensive to white-racist critics and producers, as she did with the "anti-white woman" sequence in *spell no. 7*, is a motion toward the ocean, as a drownee sponsored by Imp. Productions, not toward communion with the

people.

But have no fear, the fire is still bubbling and hot and ready to raise up ag'in. Poets like Askia M. Toure and Jayne Cortez are at the top of their number right now! I'm sure Toure's "John Wayne Poem" helped that worthy "book." Jayne Cortez's *Mouth on Paper* is dynamite, connecting up, as Mao indicated in the "Yenan Forum," that our works be aesthetically powerful and politically revolutionary! That is the combination we seek, the dialectical matrix that includes both form and content. We cannot be one-sided, though it must be obvious that *content is principal*! What you are *saying*. We must learn to say that content which unifies the people, identifies the enemy, that content that is in itself a form of struggle and is an aspect of victory as it tells us about the need for unity, struggle, victory; we must shape that content so powerfully, so beautifully, that its message, like our struggle itself, like the people themselves, is invincible!

The endless, acrobatic "avant-gardists" many times go through such rigamarole because they have *nothing* to say—except that they have nothing to say. Some of the *concrete* boredom makers, various miniscule-content typewriter freaks, and even more generally the various *formalists*, for whom form is principal or form is everything, generally uphold bourgeois aesthetics. We get offered nothing, really, except subjectivism, elitism, solipsism—the world-erasing, super "I" over everything. Bourgeois aesthetics are a reflection of a bourgeois ideology or world view, generally. A small class rules everything, benefits absolutely, while the rest of us go through horrible changes. So art is only for the sanctified few—who are so great because they are so hip because they are so sensitive, so sensitive, in fact, that they can bang out meaningless bullshit on typewriters while most of humanity is in pain.

Obviously we are not putting down legitimate scientific experiment. Scientific experiment plus the struggle for production and class struggle are the three fundamental struggles that push history forward though ultimately the people are the makers of history! But we want higher levels of understanding, from higher levels of communication; we want more information, more development—mass development, not less. And our scientific experiments should be so aimed.

Poets like Toure need new books. Their in-person work is very hot—like the music. Also, they're new poets about, like Pili (Michael L. Humphrey), whose yet unpublished work *Black Blood Runs Red* is a major contribution to

the new wave of anti-imperialist poetry coming back clearly into view. Ditto *Songs for the Masses* by Sylvia Jones, grounded in the Black working class, and focused on revolution. These poets are carriers of the tradition of struggle of the BLM, though they will probably never be run up the flagpole of bourgeois celebration—they started talking bad about the capitalist hell too young, so the rulers and their colored and white henchpersons saw them coming. We must celebrate them and publish them, as we must shore up and put back into the field with a thousand times more strength older, proven warrior-poets and writers and artists, and rebuild a network of struggle-oriented art institutions—theater companies, magazines, mass organizations focused on arts and culture—because the more intense the struggle gets the less likely the bourgeoisie is to publish us. But we must always try to win those middle forces who are not opposed to art based on struggle.

Sonia Sanchez's new book, *I Been A Woman*, is a very solid and a welcome event because it demonstrates the genuinely strong and beautiful poetry poets like Sonia were making in the '60s, and have continued to make, and puts the lie to the brainwashed line that claims that the poetry of the '60s was somehow "technically deficient." The masses dug it, I suppose, because they were backward? Also, we need new works from Lance Jeffers,[3] David Henderson, Lorenzo Thomas, Larry Neal (whose play *The Glorious Monster in the Bell of the Horn* is, I hope, an announcement that he is back on the scene), Welton Smith. Dig Marvin X's beautiful and moving "Palestine" (*Black Scholar*, Nov.-Dec. '78). X, for all his weird Cleaver-related preaching activities, remains a dynamite poet. He needs a book.

The people published in the anthology *Black Fire* are all due new works—Lindsay Barrett, James T. Stewart, Dingane (Joe Goncalves), Keorapetse Kgositsile, Reggie Lockett, Sam Anderson, Clarence Franklin, Clarence Reed (one of the most lyrical singers and one of the most unsung of the BAM!). Some of these have never even had a first book, yet they are beautiful and strong, and we must see that they get into print to help struggle against imperialism and its intellectual lackies. Where is Yusef Rahman? Has Norman Jordan recovered? Poets like Gaston Neal have needed books for the last decade, and Ahmed Alhamisi and Rudy Bee Graham. What about Bad Bobb Hamilton and Charles Patterson or Ronald Drayton or Carol Freeman? What is Julia Fields doing or Jacques Wakefield? Yusef Iman's poetry is now at a much higher level, able to do so many more of the things that he could always do in person.

And why no new poetry from Ted Wilson or Richard Thomas (who was focused on the working class even back in *Black Fire*? Are Al Haynes and Jimmy Garrett still ready to get in print on the heavy side? And Charlie Cobb and Charlie Fuller and Joe White or Jay Wright? What's their new work look like?

We know that poets like Mari Evans are still producing good work; and Carolyn Rodgers, although she has gone heavy into the church, and the obscurity that promotes, is still capable of stunning poetry. She was one of the truly underpublicized doers of the'60s. The whole generation of fighting Black artists did not disappear, was not assassinated or bought off. Most of us have not turned into Eldridge Cleaver or Nikki Giovanni (another South African traveler). June Jordan's work has gotten progressively stronger since the earliest volumes. Kalamu Ya Salaam shows signs of broadening past our '60s narrowness; if he could only drag his man Haki Madhubuti a little farther out in the open it would help us all. Certainly Haki's works were among the most popular of the BAM works among the masses.

Younger poets like Sekou Sundiata and B.J. Ashanti are new forces turned in the right direction. Aishah Rahman's play *Transcendental Blues* signaled she could write works of the necessary clarity. Let's hope Joe Papp don't do her too much damage in the meantime. Verta Mae Grosvenor's poetry and prose will be a real surprise to some; she has some valuable insights on the Black women's struggle. Quincy Troupe has a couple of strong poems in *Snake Back*, the "Up Sun..." and "Neruda." And, of course, Margaret Walker is very much with us, working away down in Jackson. Theodore Ward, another old master, remains in Chicago, until we can get ourselves together enough to produce his masterworks. James Baldwin's recent statements (in *The New York Times* and at San Diego State University) could portend a new breakthrough in the pattern of *The Fire Next Time* or *Blues for Mr. Charlie* as opposed to the other, less mass-oriented side of his works.

Nathan Heard's new prison novel will reveal a much more developed ideological stance. And there are strong playwrights like Oyamo, Ben Caldwell, Clay Goss, (Ron Milner's still doin' it), Martie Charles, Richard Wesley, Paul Carter Harrison, and so many others. All this work is generally focused against Black national oppression, to varying degrees, depending on the consciousness and skill of the writers, but the resistance is there, and so is the art.

Henry Dumas is one name many of the capitulationists try to conjure with

because his work is so highly stylized and myth-conscious, as if, because of these things, Dumas were a capitulationist. But Dumas's works generally, and in the main, openly oppose national oppression. Great works like "Fon" and "Will the Circle Remain Unbroken" are not only beautiful, but *fighting* works aimed squarely into the sour hearts of our enemies. Dumas's book of poetry is called *Poetry for My People*. Toni Morrison is also hooked up with these capitulationsits, they try to mislead us into believing, but *Sula* and especially *The Bluest Eye* give the lie to such b.s. (I have not read *Song of Solomon* yet.)

It is obvious that the bourgeoisie will push anti-struggle art over art based on and focused on the need for struggle. But straight-out racism will trim even a few of those anti-struggle people out of the select few and may even make their jaws tight enough to understand that the entire system must be destroyed and that being kept literary whatnots under the bell jar of some capitulationist aesthetic will only make them enemies of the majority (not only of Blacks but of everybody else). In the early '70s, to try to turn the tide of the BAM around, the bourgeoisie pushed projects like the Negro Ensemble Company and even gave out big prizes theretofore reserved strictly for white folks' works to its select because of their content, to say, "Hey y'all, later for that black stuff; here's what we want." And saying thus, gave a Pulitzer Prize in drama to Flash Gordone, who has trouble even writing a recognizable play, much less one of any merit. But because Gordone would openly kill off Black militancy once a night on the stage and come out in drag to drag us back to outright gay minstrelsy, he could cop.

In the '60s Clifford Mason had to hide his capitulationist rap under the cover of a play about Gabriel Prosser, militant cover but capitulationist essence. In the recent '70s he can come out and openly proclaim from the pages of *The New York Times* that Joe Papp and Shakespeare are New Black Theater. In the '60s we spoke up loud and clear about the need for independent Black institutions of every imaginable kind. . . a clear thrust for self-determination and democracy. In the '70s people flock around Joe Papp and the downtown-New York Lincoln Center or do the Broadway minstrelsy, or don't work too regularly. And the Black Theater Alliance squashes criticism of Lincoln Center for not appointing any Black director in its new junta of directors, in exchange for 3 or 4 thousand dollars to put on a "black theater festival" that was patently and openly anti-struggle.

The late '70s the bourgeoisie has tried to turn into open sell-out time.

Economism is trying to rule the airwaves. Militant poets of the '60s show up really funny-haha in the '70s—flip and cute and slightly dadaistic, all for the bucks and to bump up the careers. Or they are just "influenced" by this trend instead of the militant one. This has affected not only Black artists but every other kind of artist as well. Strong poets like Pedro Pietri and Jose Angel Figueroa, for instance (see *Puerto Rican Obituary* and *East 110th Street*), wrote hot books aimed dead at setting imperialism's ass ablaze. But their recent works give the imps more slack by not being so focused on it. But Miguel Algarin's translation of Neruda's *Song of Protest* is dynamite, and Louis Reyes Rivera is really someone to watch, ditto Raoul Santiago, Sandi Esteves, Amina Muniz, Tato Laviera, Miguel Loparena, and Lucky Cienfuegos. Miguel Pinero, who is one of the most impressive of the Latin writers, is in Hollywood, so we must wait to see how this affects his work...though one *Barretta* story, in which he also played a lead, was *no bueno*.

We could go on and on, but the main line is that class struggle is as much a part of the arts as it is anyplace else. (And criticism especially, as Mao instructed us in the "Yenan Forum," is one place where open class struggle always rages.) The struggle-oriented artists, the artists who consciously or in practice, see their works as "for the people," as weapons to help in transforming society, must regroup and, given the bloody experiences of the '60s and early '70s, raise the level of struggle on up even higher. We must try to get even clearer on the meaning of class stand, attitude, audience, and study, and their relationship to our work. E.g., what is our class stand; i.e., whose side are we on? What is our attitude toward various things? From one's attitude—whether we condemn a thing or praise it—can be told what our class stand is. Despite middle-class vacillation, one *cannot* be in the middle. Whether we say it or not, our practice, our acts objectively place us on one side or the other.

Who is our audience; for whom do we write? That is key. Who do we want to reach or impress? Are we educating or titillating? Audience is one large shaper of content, and content is principal. Finally, what is it we are saying?

Study, also, is a shaper of content. What we study, and what we do, shows very clearly in our work. We must study society carefully and with passionate interest, and history. As Mao said, we must study "the various classes in society, their mutual relations and respective conditions, their physiognomy and their

psychology." But we must represent the working class, even as members of an oppressed nationality; 96% of the Afro-American people are members of the working class. And they are the most advanced force of the nation. We are members of an oppressed nationality representing the working class, because, at the same time, we struggle for alliance of the multi-national working class and the Black nation, for the alliance of the multi-national working class and all of the oppressed nationalities. Their mutual freedom can only be gained by the destruction of U.S. monopoly capitalism—the same enemy!

Our art—literature—must embody this; it must be as hot as fire and as relentless as history. People always say, "Well what's Baraka doing now? He keep on changing." I am a Marxist- Leninist, because that is the most scientific approach to making revolution. But for a long time most of y'all knew I wanted to be a revolutionary; I'm still committed to that. Most of us, regardless of what we call ourselves, are still committed to change, complete social change. We just got to get back on it.

Notes

1. "The Revolutionary Tradition in Afro-American Literature," in *Selected Plays and Prose of Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones* (New York: Morrow, 1979), pp. 242-51.

2. *Capitulationist* here equals general submission to the U.S. status quo of Black national oppression and racism; "Tom" would spell it out in classic Black cultural terms. I also use the scientific term *comparador*, which means literally an agent of the oppressor nation (in this case, a Black agent); "house nigger" we have traditionally called them, with some accuracy.

3. Since writing this, I was sent two Jeffers books, *O Africa, Where I Baked My Bread!* and *Grandsire*, from Lotus Press. But, unfortunately, they enjoy very tiny distribution.

Black Theology and Marxist Thought

Cornel West

Black theologians and Marxist thinkers are strangers. They steer clear of one another, each content to express concerns to their respective audiences. Needless to say, their concerns overlap. Both focus on the plight of the exploited, oppressed and degraded peoples of the world, their relative powerlessness and possible empowerment. I believe this common focus warrants a serious dialogue between Black theologians and Marxist thinkers. This dialogue should not be a mere academic chat that separates religionists and secularists, theists and atheists. Instead it ought to be an earnest encounter that specifies clearly the different sources of their praxis of faith, yet accents the possibility of mutually arrived-at political action.

The aim of this encounter is to change the world, not each other's faith, to put both groups on the offensive for structural social change, not put Black Christians on the defensive; and to enhance the quality of life of the dispossessed, not expose the empty Marxist meaning of death. In short, Black theologians and Marxist thinkers must preserve their own existential and intellectual integrity and explore the possibility of promoting fundamental social amelioration together.

Black theology and Marxist thought are not monolithic bodies of thought; each contains different perspectives, distinct viewpoints and diverse conclusions. Therefore it is necessary to identify the particular claims put forward by Black Theology and Marxist thought, those claims that distinguish both as discernible schools of thought. Black Theology claims that (1) the historical experience of Black people and the readings of the biblical texts that emerge from there are the centers around which reflection about God evolves; and that (2) this reflection is related, in some way, to the liberation of Black people, to the creation of a more abundant life definable in existential, economic, social and political terms.

Marxist thought contains two specific elements: A theory of history and an understanding of capitalism, Both are inextricably interlinked, but it may be

helpful to characterize them separately. The *Marxist theory of history* claims: (1) The history of human societies is the history of their transitional stages. (2) The transitional stages of human societies are discernible owing to their systems of production, or their organizational arrangements in which people produce goods and services for their survival. (3) Conflict within systems of production of human societies ultimately results in fundamental social change, or transitions from one historical stage to another. (4) Conflict within systems of production of human societies consists of cleavages between social classes (in those systems of production). (5) Social classes are historically transient, rooted in a particular set of socioeconomic conditions. (6) Therefore, the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

The *Marxist theory of capitalist society* claims: Capitalism is a historically transient system of production which requires human beings to produce commodities for the purpose of maximizing surplus value (profits). This production presupposes a fundamental social relation between the purchasers and sellers of a particular commodity, namely the labor-power (time, skill and expertise) of producers. This crucial commodity is bought by capitalists who own the land, instruments and capital necessary for production; it is sold by producers, whose labor-power is needed for production. The aim of the former is to maximize profits; that of the latter, to insure their own survival.

I shall claim that Black Theology and Marxist thought share three characteristics. (1) Both adhere to a similar methodology, the same way of approaching their respective subject matter and arriving at conclusions. (2) Both link some notion of liberation to the future socioeconomic conditions of the downtrodden. (3) And this is most important, both attempt to put forward trenchant critiques of liberal capitalist America. I will try to show that these three traits provide a springboard for a meaningful dialogue between Black theologians and Marxist thinkers and possibly spearhead a unifying effort for structural social change in liberal capitalist America.

Dialectical Methodology: Unmasking Falsehoods

Black theologians have either consciously or unconsciously employed a dialectical methodology in approaching their subject matter. This methodology consists of a three-step procedure of negation, preservation, and transformation; their subject matter, of White interpretations of the Christian gospel and their own circumstances. Dialectical methodology is critical in character and herme-

neutic in content.[1] For Black theologians it is highly critical of dogmatic viewpoints of the gospel, questioning whether certain unjustifiable prejudgments are operative. It is hermeneutic in that it is concerned with unearthing assumptions of particular interpretations and presenting an understanding of the gospel that extends and expands its ever unfolding truth.

Black theologians have, for the most part, been compelled to adopt a dialectical methodology. They have refused to accept what has been given to them by White theologians: they have claimed that all reflection about God by Whites must be digested, decoded and deciphered. The first theological formulations by Afro-Americans based on biblical texts tried to come to terms with their White owners' viewpoints and their own servitude. Since its inception, Black theologians have been forced to reduce White deception and distortion of the gospel and make the Christian story meaningful in light of their oppressive conditions.

Black theological reflection begins by negating White interpretations of the gospel, continues by preserving its own perceived truths of the biblical texts, and ends by transforming past understandings of the gospel into new and novel ones. These three steps embody an awareness of the social context of theologizing, the need to accent the historical experience of Black people and the insights of the Bible, and the ever evolving task of recovering, regaining and repeating the gospel.

Black theologians underscore the importance of the social context of theological reflection.[2] Their dialectical methodology makes them sensitive to the hidden agendas of theological formulations they negate, agendas often guided by social interests. Their penchant for revealing distortions leads them to adopt a sociology of knowledge-approach that stresses the way in which particular viewpoints endorse and encourage ulterior aims.

An interpretation of the Black historical experience and the readings of the biblical texts that emerge out of this experience constitute the raw ingredients for the second step of Black theological reflection. By trying to understand the plight of Black people in light of the Bible, Black theologians claim to preserve the biblical truth that God sides with the oppressed and acts on their behalf.[3] Subsequently, the Black historical experience and the biblical texts form a symbiotic relationship, each illuminating the other.

Since Black theologians believe in the living presence of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, they acknowledge the constant unfolding process of the

gospel. Paradoxically, the gospel is unchanging, yet it is deepened by embracing and encompassing new human realities and experiences. The gospel must speak to every age. Therefore it must be recovered and repeated, often sounding different, but, in substance, remaining the same. For Black theologians, it sounds different because it addresses various contexts of oppression; it remains the same because it is essentially a gospel of liberation.

Marxist thinkers, like Black theologians, employ a dialectical methodology in approaching their subject matter. But they do so consciously and their subject matter is bourgeois theories about capitalist society. The primary theoretical task of Marxist thinkers is to uncover the systematic misunderstanding of capitalist society by bourgeois thinkers; to show how this misunderstanding, whether deliberate or not, supports and sanctions exploitation and oppression in this society; and to put forward the correct understanding of this society in order to change it.

Marxist social theory is first and foremost a critique of inadequate theories of capitalist society and subsequently a critique of capitalist society itself. The subtitle of Marx's magnum opus, *Capital*, is "A Critique of Political Economy," not "A Critique of Capitalism." This work takes bourgeois economists to task for perpetuating falsehoods, and results in revealing the internal dynamics of capitalism and their inhumane consequences. For Marx, a correct understanding of capitalist society is possible only by overcoming present mystifications of it; and this correct understanding is requisite for a propitious political praxis.

Marxist thought stresses the conflict-laden unfolding of history, the conflict-producing nature of social processes. Therefore it is not surprising that Marxist thinkers employ a dialectical methodology, a methodology deeply suspicious of stasis and stability, and highly skeptical of equilibrium and equipoise. This methodology, like that of Black theologians, is critical in character and hermeneutic in content. It is critical of perspectives presented by bourgeois social scientists, questioning whether certain ideological biases are operative. It is hermeneutic in that it is obsessed with discovering correct understanding underneath wrong interpretations, disclosing latent truths behind manifest distortions. For Marx, to be scientific is to be dialectical and to be dialectical is to unmask, unearth, bring to light.[4]

This conception of science, derived from Hegel, attempts to discern the hidden kernel of an evolving truth becoming manifest by bursting through a

visible husk. The husk, once a hidden kernel, dissolves, leaving its indelible imprint upon the new emerging kernel. This idea of inquiry highlights the moments of negation, preservation and transformation. By presenting his theory of history and society from this perspective, Marx provided the most powerful and penetrating social criticism in modern times. Dialectical methodology enabled him to create a whole mode of inquiry distinctively his own, though often appearing hermetic and rigid to the untutored and fanatic.

Despite the similar procedure Black theologians and Marxist thinkers share, there has been little discussion about it between them. This is so primarily because a dialectical methodology is implicit, undeveloped and often unnoticed in Black Theology. This failure to examine the methodological stance embodied in Black theological reflection obscures its similarity with that of Marxist thought.

Liberation: Its Constitutive Elements

Black theologians all agree that Black liberation has something to do with ameliorating the socioeconomic conditions of Black people. But it is not clear what this amelioration amounts to. There is little discussion in their writings about what the liberating society will look like. The notion and process of liberation is often mentioned, but, surprisingly, one is hard put to find a sketch of what liberation would actually mean in the everyday lives of Black people, what power they would possess, and what resources they would have access to.

There are two main reasons for this neglect among Black theologians. First, a dialectical methodology discourages discussions about the ideal society and simply what ought to be. Instead, it encourages criticizing and overcoming existing society, negating and opposing what is.

The second reason, the one with which we shall be concerned in this section, is the failure of Black theologians to talk specifically about the way in which the existing system of production and social structure relates to Black oppression and exploitation. Without focusing on this relation, it becomes extremely difficult to present an idea of liberation with socioeconomic content. In short, the lack of a clear-cut social theory prevents the emergence of any substantive political program or social vision.

Except for the latest writings of James Cone, Black theologians remain uncritical of America's imperialist presence in Third World countries, its capitalist system of production, and its grossly unequal distribution of wealth.

Therefore we may assume they find this acceptable. If this is so, then the political and socioeconomic components of Black liberation amount to racial equality before the law; equal opportunities in employment, education and business; and economic parity with Whites in median income.

Surely this situation would be better than the current dismal one. But it hardly can be viewed as Black liberation. It roughly equates liberation with American middle-class status, leaving the unequal distribution of wealth relatively untouched and the capitalist system of production, along with its imperialist ventures, intact. Liberation would consist of including Black people within the mainstream of liberal capitalist America. If this is the social vision of Black theologians, they should drop the meretricious and flamboyant term "liberation" and adopt the more accurate and sober word "inclusion."

Marxist thought, like Black Theology, does not elaborate on the ideal society. As we noted earlier, a dialectical methodology does not permit this elaboration. But the brief sketch Marxist thinkers provide requires a particular system of production and political arrangement: namely, participatory democracy in each. Human liberation occurs only when people participate substantively in the decision-making processes in the major institutions that regulate their lives. Democratic control over the institutions in the productive and political processes in order for them to satisfy human needs and protect personal liberties of the populace constitutes human liberation.

Marxist thinkers are able to present this sketch of human liberation primarily because they stress what people must liberate themselves *from*. They suggest what liberation is for only after understanding the internal dynamics of the society people must be liberated from. Without this clear-cut social theory about what *is*, it is difficult to say anything significant about what *can be*. The possibility of liberation is found only within the depths of the actuality of oppression. Without an adequate social theory, this possibility is precluded.

Social Criticism: Class, Race, and Culture

Black Theology puts forward a vehement, often vociferous, critique of liberal capitalist America. One of its most attractive and alluring characteristics is its theological indictment of racist American society. An undisputable claim of Black Theology is America's unfair treatment of Black people. What is less apparent is the way in which Black theologians understand the internal dynamics of liberal capitalist America, how it functions, why it operates the way it

does, who possesses substantive power, and where it is headed. As noted earlier, Black theologians do not utilize a social theory that relates the oppression of Black people to the overall make-up of America's system of production, foreign policy, political arrangement, and cultural practices.

Black theologians hardly mention the wealth, power, and influence of multinational corporations that monopolize production in the marketplace and prosper partially owing to their dependence on public support in the form of government subsidies, free technological equipment, lucrative contracts and sometimes even direct-transfer payments. Black theologians do not stress the way in which corporate interests and the government intermesh, usually resulting in policies favorable to the former. Black theologians fail to highlight the fact that in liberal capitalist America one-half of 1 percent own 22 percent of the wealth, 1 percent own 33 percent of the wealth, the lower 61 percent own only 7 percent of the wealth, and the bottom 45 percent own only 2 percent of the wealth.[5] Lastly, Black theologians do not emphasize sufficiently the way in which the racist interpretations of the gospel they reject encourage and support the capitalist system of production, its grossly unequal distribution of wealth and its closely connected political arrangements.

Instead of focusing on these matters, Black theologians draw attention to the racist practices in American society. Since these practices constitute the most visible and vicious form of oppression in America, Black theologians justifiably do so. Like the Black Power proponents of the sixties, they call for the empowerment of Black people, the need for Black people to gain significant control over their lives. But neither Black Power proponents nor Black theologians have made it sufficiently clear as to what constitutes this Black control, the real power to direct institutions such that Black people can live free of excessive exploitation and oppression. The tendency is to assume that middle-class status is equivalent to such control, that a well-paying job amounts to such power. And surely this assumption is fallacious.

The important point here is not that racist practices should be stressed less by Black theologians, for such practices deeply affect Black people and shape their perceptions of American society. What is crucial is that these practices must be linked to the role they play in buttressing the current mode of production, concealing the unequal distribution of wealth, and portraying the lethargy of the political system. Black theologians are correct to relate racist practices to degrees of Black powerlessness, but they obscure this relation by failing to

provide a lucid definition of what power is in American society. Subsequently, they often fall into the trap of assuming power in American society to be synonymous with receiving high wages.

Marxist social criticism can be quite helpful at this point. For Marx, power in modern industrial society consists of a group's participation in the decision-making processes of the major institutions that affect their destinies. Since institutions of production, such as multinational corporations, play an important role in people's lives, these institutions should be significantly accountable to the populace. In short, they should be democratically controlled by the citizenry; people should participate in their decision-making processes. Only collective control over the major institutions of society constitutes genuine power on behalf of the people.

For Marx, power in modern industrial society is closely related to a group's say over what happens to products produced in the work situation, to a group's input into decisions that direct the production flow of goods and services. The most powerful group in society has the most say and input into decisions over this production flow; the least powerful group does not participate at all in such decisions. In liberal capitalist America, the former consists of multiple corporate owners who dictate policies concerning the mass production of a variety of products produced by white- and blue-collar workers who receive wages in return. The latter consists of the so-called underclass, the perennially unemployed, who are totally removed from the work situation, precluded from any kind of input affecting the production flow, including negotiation and strikes available to white- and blue-collar workers.

Racist practices intensify the degree of powerlessness among Black people. This is illustrated by the high rates of Black unemployment, the heavy Black concentration in low-paying jobs, and inferior housing, education, police protection and health care. But it is important to note that this powerlessness differs from that of white- and blue-collar workers in degree, not in kind. In human terms, this difference is immense, incalculable; in structural terms, this difference is negligible, trifling. In other words, most Americans are, to a significant degree, powerless. They have no substantive control over their lives, little participation in the decision-making process of the major institutions that regulate their lives. Among Afro-Americans, this powerlessness is exacerbated, creating an apparent qualitative difference in oppression.

This contrast of the social criticism of Black theologians and Marxist think-

ers raises the age-old question as to whether class position or racial status is the major determinant of Black oppression in America. This question should be formulated in the following way: Does class position or racial status contribute more to the fundamental form of powerlessness in America?

Racial status contributes greatly to Black oppression. But Black middle-class people are essentially well-paid white- or blue-collar workers who have little control over their lives primarily owing to their class position, not racial status. This is so because the same limited control is held by White middle-class people, despite the fact that a higher percentage of whites are well-paid white- and blue-collar workers than Blacks. Significant degrees of powerlessness pertain to most Americans and this could be so only if class position determines such powerlessness. Therefore, class position contributes more than racial status to the basic form of powerlessness in America.

I am suggesting that the more Black theologians discard or overlook Marxist social criticism, the further they distance themselves from the fundamental determinant of Black oppression and any effective strategy to alleviate it.[6] This distancing also obscures the direct relation of Black oppression in America to Black and Brown oppression in Third World countries. The most powerful group in America, those multiple corporate owners who dictate crucial corporate policies over a variety of production flows, are intimately and inextricably linked (through their highly paid American and Third World white-collar workers and grossly underpaid Third World blue-collar workers) to the economies and governments of Third World countries, including the most repressive ones. Marxist social criticism permits this relation to come to light in an extremely clear and convincing way.

The social criticism of Black theologians reflects the peculiar phenomenon of American liberal and radical criticism. This criticism rarely has viewed class position as a major determinant of oppression primarily owing to America's lack of a feudal past, the heterogeneity of its population, the many and disparate regions of its geography, and the ever increasing levels of productivity and growth. These facts make it difficult to see class divisions; indeed, along with other forms of oppression, they make it almost impossible to see the divisions. But, like protons leaving vapor trails in a cloud chamber, one is forced to posit these class divisions in light of the overwhelming evidence for their existence. Only class divisions can explain the gross disparity between rich and poor, the immense benefits accruing to the former and the depravity of the latter.

Region, sex, age, ethnicity, and race often have been considered the only worthy candidates as determinants of oppression. This has been so primarily because American liberal and radical criticism usually has presupposed the existing system of production, assumed class divisions and attempted to include only marginal groups in the mainstream of liberal capitalist America. This criticism has fostered a petit-bourgeois viewpoint that clamors for a bigger piece of the ever growing American pie, rarely asking fundamental questions such as why it never gets recut more equally or how it gets baked in the first place. In short, this criticism remains silent about class divisions, the crucial role they play in maintaining the unequal distribution of goods and services, and how they undergird discrimination against regions; impose ceilings on upward social mobility and foster racism, sexism and ageism. With the exception of the most recent writings of James Cone, contemporary Black theologians suffer from this general myopia of American liberal and radical criticism.

Despite this shortsightedness, Black theologians have performed an important service for Marxist thinkers, namely emphasizing the ways in which culture and religion resist oppression. They have been admirably sensitive to the Black cultural buffers against oppression, especially the Black religious sources of struggle and strength, vitality and vigor. They also have stressed the indispensable contribution the Black churches have made toward the survival, dignity and self-worth of Black people.

Contrary to Marxist thinkers, Black theologians recognize that cultural and religious attitudes, values, and sensibilities have a life and logic of their own, not fully accountable in terms of a class analysis. Subsequently, racist practices are not reducible to a mere clever and successful strategy of divide-and-conquer promoted by the ruling class to prevent proletarian unity. Rather, racism is an integral element within the very fabric of American culture and society. It is embedded in the country's first collective self-definition; enunciated in its subsequent laws; and imbued in its dominant way of life.

The orthodox Marxist analysis of culture and religion that simply relates racist practices to misconceived material interest is only partially true, hence deceptive and misleading. These practices are fully comprehensible only if one conceives of culture, not as a mere hoax played by the ruling class on workers, but as the tradition that informs one's conception of tradition, as social practices that shape one's idea of social practice.

The major objection to the orthodox Marxist analysis of culture and religion

is not that it is wrong, but that it is too narrow, rigid and dogmatic. It views popular culture and religion only as instruments of domination, vehicles of pacification. It sees only their negative and repressive elements. On this view, only enlightenment, reason, or clarity imposed from the outside can break through the cultural layers of popular false consciousness.[7] Therefore, the orthodox Marxist analysis refuses to acknowledge the positive, liberating aspects of popular culture and religion, and their potential for fostering structural social change.

This issue is at the heart of the heated debate over the adequacy of a Marxist analysis between Black theologians and Latin American liberation theologians. The latter tend to adopt the orthodox Marxist view, paying little attention to the positive, liberating aspects of popular culture and religion.[8] They display a contempt for popular culture and religion, a kind of tacit condescension that reeks of paternalism and elitism. They often speak of the poor possessing a privileged access to truth and reality, but rarely do they take seriously the prevailing beliefs, values or outlooks of the poor. Instead, Latin American liberation theologians stress the discontinuity and radical rupture of progressive consciousness with popular culture and religion, suggesting a desire to wipe the cultural slate clean and begin anew.

To the contrary, Black theologians recognize the positive and negative elements, the liberating and repressive possibilities, of popular culture and religion. To no one's surprise, they devote much attention to the armors of survival, forms of reaction, and products of response created by Black people in order to preserve their dignity and self-respect.[9] Black theologians view themselves as working within a tradition of political struggle and cultural and religious resistance to oppression. They emphasize their continuity with this tradition.

It is possible to account for this important difference between Black theologians and Latin American liberation theologians by appealing to the different histories of the particular countries about which they theorize. But there is possibly a deeper reason for this disagreement. It relates directly to the composition of the two groups of theologians.

For the most part, Latin American liberation theologians belong to the dominant cultural group in their respective countries. As intellectuals educated in either European schools or Europeanized Latin American universities and seminaries, they adopt cosmopolitan habits and outlooks.[10] Like their theo-

retical master, Karl Marx, a true cosmopolitan far removed from his indigenous Jewish culture, they tend to see popular culture and religion as provincial and parochial. It is something to be shed and ultimately discarded, replaced by something qualitatively different and better. They do not seem to have encountered frequently situations in which they were forced to rely on their own indigenous cultural and religious resources in an alien and hostile environment. So their own experiences often limit their capacity to see the existential richness and radical potential of popular culture and religion.

In contrast to this, Black theologians belong to the degraded cultural group in the United States. As intellectuals trained in American colleges, universities and seminaries, they have first-hand experiences of cultural condescension, arrogance and haughtiness. They know what it is like to be a part of a culture considered to be provincial and parochial. Hence they view Black culture and religion as something to be preserved and promoted, improved and enhanced, not erased and replaced. In short, Black theologians acknowledge their personal debts to Black culture and religion, and incorporate its fecundity and fertility in their understanding of American society.

Latin American liberation theologians and Black theologians can learn from each other on this matter. The former must be more sensitive to the complexities and ambiguities of popular culture and religion; the latter should more closely relate their view of Black culture and religion to a sophisticated notion of power in liberal capitalist America. And both can learn from the most penetrating Marxist theorist of culture in this century, Antonio Gramsci.[11]

Gramsci provides a valuable framework in which to understand culture, its autonomous activity and status, while preserving its indirect yet crucial link with power in society. Unlike the Latin American liberation theologians, he does not downplay the importance of popular culture; unlike the Black theologians, he does not minimize the significance of class. Instead, he views the systems of production and culture in a symbiotic relationship with one another, each containing intense tension, struggle and even warfare. Class struggle is not simply the battle between capitalists and proletariat, owners and producers, in the work situation. It also takes the form of cultural and religious conflict over which attitudes, values and beliefs will dominate the thought and behavior of people. For Gramsci, this incessant conflict is crucial. It contains the key to structural social change; it is the springboard for a revolutionary political praxis.

According to Gramsci, no state and society can be sustained by force alone. It must put forward convincing and persuasive reasons, arguments, ideologies or propaganda for its continued existence. A state and society require not only military protection, but also principled legitimation. This legitimation takes place in the cultural and religious spheres, in those arenas where the immediacy of everyday life is felt, outlooks are formed, and self-images adopted.

Gramsci deepens Marx's understanding of the legitimation process by replacing the notion of ideology with his central concept of hegemony. For Marx, ideology is the set of formal ideas and beliefs promoted by the ruling class for the purpose of preserving its privileged position in society; for Gramsci, hegemony is the set of formal ideas and beliefs and informal modes of behavior, habits, manners, sensibilities and outlooks that support and sanction the existing order.

In Gramsci's view, culture is both tradition and current practices. Tradition is understood, not as the mere remnants of the past or the lingering, inert elements in the present but, rather, as active formative and transformative modalities of a society. Current practices are viewed as actualizations of particular modalities, creating new habits, sensibilities and world-views against the pressures and limits of the dominant ones.

A hegemonic culture subtly and effectively encourages people to identify themselves with the habits, sensibilities, and world-views supportive of the status quo and the class interests that dominate it. It is a culture successful in persuading people to "consent" to their oppression and exploitation. A hegemonic culture survives and thrives as long as it convinces people to adopt its preferred formative modality, its favored socialization process. It begins to crumble when people start to opt for a transformative modality, a socialization process that opposes the dominant one. The latter constitutes a counter-hegemonic culture, the deeply embedded oppositional elements within a society. It is these elements that the hegemonic culture seeks to contain and control.

Based on the insights of Gramsci, along with those of the distinguished English cultural critic Raymond Williams, I shall present a theoretical framework that may be quite serviceable to Black theologians, Latin American liberation theologians, and Marxist thinkers.[12] Cultural processes can be understood in light of four categories: hegemonic, pre-hegemonic, neo-hegemonic, and counter-hegemonic.

Hegemonic culture is to be viewed as the effectively operative dominant

world-views, sensibilities, and habits that sanction the established order. Pre-hegemonic culture consists of those residual elements of the past which continue to shape and mold thought and behavior in the present; it often criticizes hegemonic culture, harking back to a golden age in the pristine past. Neo-hegemonic culture constitutes a new phase of hegemonic culture; it postures as an oppositional force, but, in substance, is a new manifestation of people's allegiance and loyalty to the status quo. Counter-hegemonic culture represents genuine opposition to the hegemonic culture; it fosters an alternative set of habits, sensibilities, and world-views that cannot possibly be realized within the perimeters of the established order.

This framework presupposes three major points. First, it accents the equivocal character of culture and religion, their capacity to be instruments of freedom or domination, vehicles of liberation or pacification. Second, it focuses on the ideological function of culture and religion, the necessity of their being either forces for freedom or forces for domination, for liberation or for pacification. Third, it views the struggle between these two forces as open-ended. The only guarantee of freedom rests upon the contingencies of human practice; the only assurance of liberation relies on the transformative modalities of a society. No matter how wide the scope of hegemonic culture may be, it never encompasses or exhausts all human practice or every transformative modality in a society. Human struggle is always a possibility in any society and culture.

In order to clarify further my four categories, I shall identify them crudely with particular elements in contemporary American society. Hegemonic culture can be seen as the prevailing Horatio Alger mystique, the widespread hopes and dreams for social upward mobility among Americans. This mystique nourishes the values, outlooks, and lifestyles of achievement, careerism, leisurism, and consumerism that pervade American culture. Pre-hegemonic culture is negligible owing to the country's peculiar inception, namely, that it was "born liberal." Subsequently, American conservatives and reactionaries find themselves in the ironic position of quarreling with liberals by defending early versions of liberalism. Neo-hegemonic culture is best illustrated by the counter-cultural movement of the sixties, specifically the protests of White middle-class youth (spin-offs of the Black political struggles) which, with few exceptions, was effectively absorbed by the mainstream of liberal capitalist America. The continuous creation of a counter-hegemonic culture is manifest in the multifarious, though disparate, radical grass-roots organizations; elements of the social-

ist feminist groups; and aspects of Afro-American culture and religion.

A present challenge confronting Black theologians is to discover and discern what aspects of Afro-American culture and religion can contribute to a counter-hegemonic culture in American society. They may find Gramsci's conception of organic intellectuals helpful on this matter.[13] Gramsci views organic intellectuals as leaders and thinkers directly tied to a particular cultural group primarily by means of institutional affiliations. Organic intellectuals combine theory and action, and relate popular culture and religion to structural social change.

Black religious leadership can make an enormous contribution to a counter-hegemonic culture and structural social change in American society. Black preachers and pastors are in charge of the most numerous and continuous gatherings of Black people, those who are the worst victims of liberal capitalist America and whose churches are financially, culturally and politically independent of corporate influence.[14] This freedom of Black preachers and pastors, unlike that of most Black professionals, is immense. They are the leaders of the only major institutions in the Black community that are not accountable to the status quo. Needless to say, many abuse this freedom. But what is important to note is that the contribution of Black religious leaders can be prodigious, as exemplified by the great luminaries of the past, including Nat Turner, Martin Delany, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X.

An Alliance of Black Theology and Marxist Thought: The Case of Reverend George Washington Woodbey

The best example of a Black religious thinker and leader who combined the insights of Black theological reflection and Marxist social theory was the Rev. George Washington Woodbey.[15] He devoted his life to promoting structural social change and creating a counter-hegemonic culture in liberal capitalist America.

Rev. Mr. Woodbey was a Baptist preacher, for many years pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church in San Diego, California, and a major socialist leader in the first few decades of this century. He was uncompromising in his religious faith, unyielding in his confidence in the radical potential of Black culture and religion, and unrelenting in his devotion to fundamental social change. Widely known in California during his day as "The Great Negro Socialist Orator," Woodbey delivered poignant yet incisive lectures across the country, including his famous reply to Booker T. Washington's "Capitalist Argument for the

Negro." Woodbey also wrote books such as *The Bible and Socialism: A Conversation between Two Preachers* (1904) and *The Distribution of Wealth* (1910), and such essays as "Why the Negro Should Vote Socialist Ticket" (1908) and "Why the Socialists Must Reach the Churches with Their Message" (1915).[16]

Woodbey's most influential work, *What to Do and How to Do It or Socialism vs. Capitalism* (1903) was translated into three languages. It was often compared to Robert Blatchford's *Merrie England*, the most widely read Socialist educational publication at the turn of the century.

Woodbey's important work consists of a conversation between himself and his mother, taking place after a long separation. She begins with the question, "Have you given up the Bible and the ministry and gone into politics?" He replies that he became a socialist precisely because of his strict adherence to principles put forward in the bible. She then points out that many of his comrades do not believe in God or in biblical truths. He reminds her that other political parties, such as the Republican and Democratic parties, have their equal portion of nonbelievers. He assures her that he does not fully agree with some his comrades on religious matters, but since Socialism is "a scheme for bettering things here first," he can be a Socialist without giving up his religious beliefs. He then states that, under Socialism, religious freedom will be guaranteed.

Later on, the mother asks, "Like all other women, I want to know where are we to come in?" He answers that it is in the interest of "the women, more than the men, if possible, to be Socialists because they suffer more from capitalism than anyone else." Under Socialism, each woman will receive her own income and be an equal shareholder in the industries of the country. Under these conditions, there will be no need for a woman to "sell herself through a so-called marriage to someone she did not love, in order to get a living"; instead, she could marry for genuine love. In capitalist society, a working man is a slave, "and his wife is the slave of a slave." Therefore liberation of both would enhance the position of women more than that of men. This conversation ends with the mother's conversion to Socialism, and she comments,

> Well, you have convinced me that I am about as much a slave now as I was in the south, and I am ready to accept any way out of this drudgery.

Rev. Mr. Woodbey was the only Black delegate to the Socialist Party conventions of 1904 and 1908. In the latter convention, he was nominated as Eugene Debs's running mate in the presidential election of 1908. He was once described as "the greatest living negro in America. . . .his style is simple and his logic invincible. He knows the race question, and one of his most popular lectures relates to the settlement of this vexed question under Socialism."

Jailed frequently, hospitalized more than once owing to police brutality, barely escaping murder during the famous 1912 Free Speech fight in San Diego, Rev. Mr. Woodbey was a devoted Christian who sacrificed greatly for fostering a counter-hegemonic culture and promoting structural social change in liberal capitalist America. He was a man of inexorable Christian faith, anchored deep in the best of Black culture and religion, and of intransigent Socialist conviction. His life and writings best exemplify the point at which Black theologians and Marxist thinkers are no longer strangers.

Notes

1. Dialectical methodology is a complex procedure useful for grasping, comprehending, interpreting, explaining or predicting phenomena. Aside from the foundation laid by Plato, this procedure was first fully developed by Hegel and deepened by Marx. Hegel's most succinct discussions of this approach can be found in his *Logic* (Part 1, *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*), trans. William Wallace (Oxford, 1975), no. 81, pp. 115-119, and *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York, 1967), pp. 80ff. For Marx's brief formal presentation of this approach as it relates to his social theory, see *The Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York, 1973), pp. 83-111.

2. The most explicit and extensive treatment of this matter by a Black theologian is found in James Cone's *God of the Oppressed* (New York, 1975), chap. 3, pp. 39-61.

3. The most sophisticated dialogue among Black theologians has focused on the status of this biblical truth. William Jones has claimed that Black theologians do not provide sufficient empirical evidence to warrant this truth. He suggests that Black theologians have not taken seriously the possibility of a malevolent deity. For Jones, an acceptable Black Theology must deal adequately with the problem of theodicy. James Cone has responded to Jones's argument by claiming that Jesus' victory over suffering and death constitutes the necessary and sufficient evidence for the belief that God sides with the oppressed and acts on their behalf. In short, Cone holds that empirical evidence is never a reliable basis of a biblical truth; the problem of theodicy is never solved in a theoretical manner, only defeated by one's faith in Jesus Christ. For Jones's incisive and insightful discussion, see his *Is God a White Racist?* (Garden City, N.Y., 1973). For Cone's reply, see his *God of the Oppressed*, op. cit., pp. 187-194.

4. This conception of science pervades Marx's mature writings. For example, he states, "But all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided;" *Capital*, ed. Friedrich Engels (New York, 1967), vol. 3, p. 817. Notice also the demystifying aim of theory in the first few paragraphs of the famous section 4, entitled, "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof" of chap. 1 in *Capital*, vol. 1, pp. 71ff.

5. These figures come from the nearest thing to an official survey on the maldistribution of wealth in America, conducted by the Federal Reserve Board in 1962. As one of its authors, Herman Miller, noted, "the figures were so striking as to obviate the need to search for trends." For further exposition and elaboration on this study, see "The Other Economy: America's Working Poor," Gus Tyler, *The New Leader* (Special Issue), May 8, 1978, pp. 20-24.

6. I have tried to give persuasive reasons as to why this is so for any viewpoint which overlooks class oppression, in my paper, "Institutional Racism, Liberalism, and Self-Determination" (to be published in the Fall 1979 issue of *The Journal of Religious Ethics*).

7. This point illustrates the undeniable link of the orthodox Marxist view to the Enlightenment. More specifically, it portrays the inherent elitism and paternalism of such a view. We need only recall Lenin's well-known claim (in *What Is to Be Done?*) that the working class can achieve only trade-union consciousness on its own, thereby requiring a vanguard party to elevate it to revolutionary consciousness. For Lenin, this party brings enlightenment to the benighted proletariat.

8. This view is illustrated clearly in an essay by José Míguez Bonino, a leading Latin American liberation theologian, entitled, "Popular Piety in Latin America," in which he states, "From a theological as well as a political perspective the popular piety that used to exist and that still predominates in Latin America can only be considered as a profoundly alienated and alienating piety, a manifestation of an enslaved consciousness and, at the same time, a ready instrument for the continuation and consolidation of oppression. The intent to transform the mobilizing power of that piety to goals of transformation without radically altering the very content of the religious consciousness seems psychologically impossible and theologically unacceptable." This essay appeared in *Cristianismo y Sociedad* (Buenos Aires), no .47 (first issue, 1976), pp. 31-38, trans. James and Margaret Goff. Gustavo Gutiérrez, another prominent Latin American liberation theologian understands popular culture and religion in a more subtle and sophisticated way. I base this judgment on my cordial and provocative discussions with him during his visiting professorship at Union Theological Seminary in the fall of 1977. It seems to me his own cultural roots and his serious study of cultural Marxist thinkers, especially Antonio Gramsci and Jose Carlos Mariátegui (the father of Latin American Marxism) principally account for his sensitivity to popular culture and religion.

9. This serious concern of Black theologians and religious scholars is exemplified best by Charles H. Long's highly suggestive essay, "Perspectives for a Study of Afro-American Religion in the United States," *History of Religions*, vol. 2, no. 1 (August 1977), pp. 54-66; Gayraud S. Wilmore's solid study, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism* (Garden City, N.Y., 1972), esp. pp. 298-306; and James Cone's speculative work, *The Spirituals and the Blues* (New York, 1972). The "armors, forms, and products" of Afro-American culture I have in mind here are the spirituals, blues, gospels, jazz, folktales and sermons. What is not sufficiently emphasized by Black theologians, religious scholars or cultural critics is the radical potential embedded within the style of these art-forms. The most important aspect of them is not what is conveyed, but *how* this "what" is conveyed. It is this "how" which bears the imprint of struggle and constitutes the distinctive imposition of order on chaos by Black people. It is this "how," or style, that contains the real message or genuine content of these works of art. To my knowledge, only the essays of Ralph Ellison and Albert Murray explore this frontier of Afro-American art-forms.

10. This point is best illustrated by the words of Hugo Assmann, one of the most radical Latin American theologians. "In my opening address I was sometimes aggressive because, as a Westernized Latin American, I don't feel at ease with my colour, my 'gringo' face, my German origin. I don't feel happy with the fact that my theological dissertation was written in German. I have a psychological necessity to say to you in Western Language that I am not Western. We Latin Americans are still in the early stages of our search for a Latin American identity. If you look in my library you will find books by German authors, French authors, Italian authors, Marx, Moltmann, etc. There is something false in this,...something which is not Latin

American." This quote is from the publication *Risk*, which is based on the Symposium on Black Theology and Latin American Theology of Liberation, May 1973 at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva, Switzerland, p. 62; see Document 47 above.

11. It is not surprising that Gramsci comes from a degraded cultural region in Italy, namely Sardinia, and had intense experiences of ostracism owing to his hunchback, poor health and short height (he was barely five feet tall). A sample of his writings can be found in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. and ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York, 1971).

12. The book by Raymond Williams I have in mind is his *Marxism and Literature* (London, 1977), esp. chap. 2, pp. 75-141.

13. Gramsci discusses this conception in his seminal essay, "The Intellectuals," *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, op. cit., pp. 5-23. Although he completely misunderstands the nature of the radical potential of Afro-American culture and Afro-American intellectuals, this does not harm his theoretical formulation of the notion of organic intellectuals.

14. I should add that this also holds to an important degree for White poor and Hispanic Pentecostal churches.

15. My information about this fascinating Black preacher comes directly from Philip Foner's timely essay, "Reverend George Washington Woodbey: Early Twentieth Century California Black Socialist," *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. 61, no. 2 (April 1976). For Foner's treatment of Woodbey along with other Black Socialist preachers in the United States, including the work, *American Socialism and Black Americans: From the Age of Jackson to World War II* (Westport, Conn., 1977), chap. 7, pp. 151-181.

16. It is interesting to note that the first book mentioned here was dedicated to "the Preachers and Members of the Churches, and all others who are interested in knowing what the Bible teaches on the question at issue between the Socialists and the Capitalists, by one who began preaching twenty-nine years ago, and still continues."

Race, Class and Conflict:
Intellectual Debates on Race Relations Research In the United States Since 1960, A Social Science Bibliographical Essay

Manning Marable

The study of the history of national liberation struggles shows that generally these struggles are preceded by an increase in expression of culture, consolidated progressively into a successful attempt to affirm the cultural personality of the dominated people, as a means of negating the oppressor culture. It is generally within the culture that we find the seed of opposition, which leads to the structuring and development of the liberation movement.—Amilcar Cabral *Return to the Source* (New York: Africa Information Service, 1973).

I

There has always been something "scholastic" about the political struggles waged within black America. Wars over the public policy implications of social science research have long been an established fact in U.S. black politics and race relations. The fractious pattern began with the historic controversy between Booker T. Washington, conservative black politician and founder of Tuskegee Institute in 1881, and W. E. B. DuBois, noted black sociologist, historian and leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Washington advocated the creation of centers for industrial and manual training for blacks in the Post-Reconstruction era. DuBois championed the pursuit of the arts and humanities, and urged the development of a "talented tenth" of black intellectuals who could serve as a kind of vanguard in the struggle for civil and human rights. Washington succeeded in gathering substantial fiscal support for his educational programs from white philanthropists and major industrialists, while DuBois became the center of a social reform movement, advocating the total desegregation of American civil society. The terrain of education and, more generally, of the social sciences, charted the course for American race relations and social protests for decades to come.

Nothing in recent years suggests that the correlation of intellectual debate-political transformation has come to a close. If anything, the centrality of ideological discourse serving as a lever for political practice has become even more firmly entrenched, as thousands of Afro-American scholars have become part of the broader American intelligentsia and several millions have been trained in college, professional and graduate schools. Since 1965, a generation of Black Studies-trained academicians has been produced, creating new directions on assessing the black experience. Issues relating race or ethnicity to the general patterns of white American political economy or class were redefined and in some instances overturned.

This paper will consider three major disciplines in black social science research published during the decades 1960-1980 — sociology, history, and politics. To treat each theme adequately, the paper first briefly reviews the foundations of race relations research in the first half of the twentieth century. Although the major themes in contemporary black social science are discussed, particularly those papers or monographs that have shaped public policies, I am also equally concerned with the writings of black scholar/activists who have emerged from the various tendencies within the black struggle. In the last analysis, it is politics — Marxism, black nationalism, liberalism — that informs the final direction of all social science research. This paper, which is in no way definitive, attempts only to chart the broad outlines of social science research in the field of race relations and its relationship to the current political and economic order in the U.S.

II

The modern foundations of the Afro-American sociology were primarily the products of three black men: DuBois, Charles S. Johnson, and E. Franklin Frazier. DuBois' *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study: Publications of the University of Pennsylvania: Series in Political Economy and Public Law* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967) was an empirical study of urban life within a black community, first published in 1897. *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg and Company, 1903), perhaps DuBois' most famous work, included a detailed critique of Booker T. Washington's programs of industrial education for black youth and political accommodation to racism. *The Negro* (New York: Henry Holt, 1915), was one of the earliest "Pan-Africanist" works published in the U.S., relating the common social and

political interest of black people in Africa, the West Indies, Latin America and the U.S. *The Negro American Family* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1970), originally printed at Atlanta University in 1908, was DuBois' overview of Afro-American social organization during the nadir of Jim Crow.

Charles S. Johnson's career provides curious parallels with that of DuBois. Johnson was the primary social science researcher for the National Urban League, a social reform agency established in 1911 by white philanthropists close to Booker T. Washington. During the Great Depression, Johnson accepted a position at Fisk University and in 1946 became the first black president of that institution. DuBois, Fisk's most prominent alumnus, did not like Johnson personally — the antipathy was mutual. Johnson was the graduate of the University of Chicago's rather conservative, orthodox school of sociology. His mentor, Robert E. Park, had been a prominent white adviser and "ghostwriter" for Booker T. Washington. Yet Johnson's research on the Black Belt South, including *Shadow of the Plantation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966) and *Growing up in the Black Belt: Negro Youth in the Rural South* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), would influence post-World War II scholarship on black life and labor as much as DuBois' earlier works.

E. Franklin Frazier taught at Atlanta University (where he was dismissed for political reasons) and Fisk University during the early 1930s before he accepted a position at Washington D.C.'s Howard University. Like Johnson, Frazier concentrated on the disruptive factors within black social and family life, rather than the continuity and stability of Afro-American civil society from slavery to the period of monopoly capitalism. His major works, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), *The Free Negro Family* (New York: Arno Press, 1968) and *Black Bourgeoisie* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), characterized the black experience as moving towards matriarchy, illegitimacy, and general instability. The Negro was becoming "marginal" to the general forces of American life and political economy.

The scholarly works on blacks in the period 1940-1965 were largely conditioned by the analysis proposed by Frazier and Johnson. Some of the major studies of the era prominently include: Allison Davis and John Dollard, *Children of Bondage: The Personality Development of Negro Youth in the Urban South* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962); Kenneth B. Clark, *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967); and Gunnar

Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Schocken Books, 1944). The majority of American sociologists and social psychologists concurred to a greater or lesser extent with the Frazier-Johnson interpretation. The practical political implications for American public policy were devastating: blacks were being destroyed by a powerful system of racial isolations, political disenfranchisement, cultural deprivation and economic exploitation. The federal government had to take the necessary steps to insure the inclusion of the Negro into the "Great American Melting Pot" via assimilation and Civil Rights legislation. Desegregation, as pursued by the NAACP and Urban League, was the logical goal of the struggle.

As the urban rebellions of the mid-1960s and the Vietnam War divided the Civil Rights Movement, the terrain for intellectual work on the black social experience began to be affected. Harvard University sociologist Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a neoconservative ideologue with political ambitions, drafted a memo on the black family for the Johnson Administration that would send major shock waves across black America. Moynihan's *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Washington, D.C.: U.S.Department of Labor, Office of Policy Planning and Research, 1965), was on the surface a restatement of Frazier's research three decades before. Unlike Frazier, however, Moynihan concluded that there was "a tangle of pathology" within the black community. Black husbands were something less than men, and the welfare state had helped create a host of emasculating, matriarchal black females. Moynihan subsequently addressed these issues in "Employment, Income, and the Ordeal of the Negro Family," *Daedalus*, XCIV (Fall, 1965), pp. 745-770.

The "Moynihan Thesis," as it was later termed, generated a surge of counter-arguments by Black Power-oriented sociologists. Lee Rainwater and William L. Yancey's *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1967) provides sections of the report and a section of responses from black intellectuals. Subsequent research that contradicts Moynihan includes: Jessie Bernard, *Marriage and Family Among Negroes* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966); Andrew Billingsley, *Black Families in White America* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968); David Schulz, "Variations in the Father Role in Complete Families of the Negro Lower Class," *Social Science Quarterly*, XLIX (December 1968), pp. 651-659; Warren TenHouten, "The Black Family: Myth and Reality," *Psychiatry* XXXIII (May 1970), pp. 145-173; Herbert H.

Hyman and John Shelton Reed, "Black Matriarchy Reconsidered: Evidence from Secondary Analysis of Sample Surveys," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, XXXIII (Fall 1969), pp. 346-354; Robert Staples, "The Black Family in Evolutionary Perspective," *Black Scholar*, V (June 1974), pp. 2- 9; L. Alex Swan, "A Methodological Critique of the Moynihan Report," *Black Scholar*, V (June 1974), pp. 18-24; and Lee Rainwater, "Crucible of identity: The Negro Lower-Class Family," *Daedalus*, XCV (Winter 1966), pp. 172-216. Moynihan's rejoinder to his critics was published in "The President and the Negro: The Moment Lost," *Commentary*, XLIII (February 1967), pp. 31-45.

III

The Moynihan controversy was simply the opening salvo in the intellectual war between black and white American scholars during the 1960s. Other more bitter polemics were to be exchanged over the question of slavery.

Again, as always, we must return to the works of W.E.B. DuBois. In *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1896), DuBois isolated the political and economic dimensions of the Americas' demand for black labor throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. DuBois' revisionist study of the great white abolitionist *John Brown* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs and Company, 1909), examined slavery and black rebellion from the perspective of the oppressed. DuBois' greatest work, *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935), was a landmark in historical writing and research on the U.S. black slave experience. DuBois argued in favor of the inherent humanity of black workers, both slave and free.

With the exception of outstanding U.S. Marxist historians such as Herbert Aptheker, DuBois' historical interpretation of slavery was relegated to the backwaters of American social science research and thought by white scholars. In the age of Jim Crow, slavery historiography reproduced the political dynamics of an unequal society. American historians, as a rule, started with the thesis that the Negro was an inferior. Racist historians rewrote the past to deliberately exclude blacks from playing any meaningful or positive role in the evolution of American democracy and culture. Liberal historians would include "acceptable Negro spokesmen" such as Booker T. Washington in the panoply of Great

Americans. Yet even they argued that black labor was distinctly inferior to that of whites.

The assumption of the inferiority of Negro labor begins with slavery, U.B. Phillips, the dean of American historiography before World War II, made numerous assertions of such inferiority in a series of influential studies. First, Phillips believed that blacks were somehow innately slaves. In *Life and Labor in the Old South* (New York: Little, Brown, 1929), he argued:

> Not all Negroes in America were at any time slaves, nor were all slaves Negroes; yet...slavery was Negro slavery and none other. The reason lay partly in the traits and customs of the Negroes themselves. In Africa slavery, along with polygamy, human sacrifice, cannibalism and other primitive institutions prevailed widely; and millions were habituated to slave status.
>
> They were more or less contentedly slaves, with grievances from time to time but not ambition. With "Hazy pasts and reckless futures", they lived in each moment as it flew, and left "Old Massa" to take such thought as the morrow might need.

In another paragraph, Phillips refined this critique to a specific observation; that Black slavery was, in the last analysis, the demand for involuntary labor. This demand for labor set the parameters for cultural and social life, as well as economic development:

> In their home lands they had lived naked, observed fetish(es), been bound by tribal law, and practiced primitive crafts. In America, none of these things were of service or sanction. The Africans were thralls, wanted only for their brawn, required to take things as they found them and to do as they were told, coerced into self-obliterating humility, and encouraged to respond only to the teachings and preachings of their masters, and adapt themselves to the white men's ways...The plantation was of course a factory, in which robust laborers were essential to profits.

Since these lines were written fifty years ago, white Americans have come to repudiate the casual racist language characteristic of Phillips' generation. But the myth of black incompetence has remained a part of American slavery historiography. The myth is common to both conservative and liberal historians alike. In *The Peculiar Institution* (New York: Vintage, 1956), Kenneth Stampp argued that slaves could not have been the equal to free men in the efficiency of productivity or labor. Slave productivity was "sharply reduced by the slave's customary attitude of indifference toward his work, together with the numerous methods he devised to resist his enslavement." Masters attempted to instill in the Negro "a paralyzing fear of white men" to "impress upon him his innate inferiority" and to "instill in him a sense of complete dependence." Despite Stampp's liberal credentials, he helped to establish the foundations for the belief in black worker inferiority for the modern era.

Following Stampp, historian Stanley Elkins drew the logical conclusions. Any system as cruel as the one described by Stampp must have had a devastating impact on the personalities of slaves. No one could live under so brutal a regime without succumbing to it. What emerged from the process was "Sambo", the typical plantation slave. Elkins describes "Sambo" as "docile but irresponsible, loyal but lazy, humble but chronically given to lying and stealing. His behavior was full of infantile silliness and childlike exaggeration." His relationship with his master was one of utter dependence and childlike attachment. Thus, the "Sambo" could scarcely mount any serious resistance to the white slavemasters, and much less create any significant servile revolts. His conclusions were published in *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1959). Elkins' "Sambo Thesis" was derived to a degree from the sociology of Frazier, and in turn was a major intellectual factor in the works of Moynihan.

Elkins' study of slavery went largely unnoticed for several years. The controversy surrounding Moynihan, however, forced the debate from the field of sociology to history. One of the earliest critical reviews to appear was by a Marxist historian, Eugene D. Genovese, "Problems in Nineteenth Century American History," *Science and Society*, XXV (Fall 1961). Other critical assessments of the Sambo Thesis include: Earle Thorpe, "Chattel Slavery and Concentration Camps," *Negro History Bulletin*, XXV (May 1962), pp. 171-176; Eugene D. Genovese, "Rebelliousness and Docility in the Negro Slave: A Critique of the Elkins Thesis," *Civil War History*, XIII (December 1967), pp. 293-314; Mary A. Lewis, "Slavery and Personality: A Further Comment," *American Quarterly*, XIX (Spring 1967), pp. 114-121; and George M. Fredrickson and Christopher Lasch, "Resistance to Slavery," *Civil War History*, XII (December 1967), pp. 315-329.

The political demands of Black Power and contemporary black nationalism forced the weight of slavery historiography into retreat. Blacks listening to Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael were in no mood to accept the standard dogmas of the racist past. Black intellectuals, shifting through the contradictory ruins of white scholarship, perceived a political duty to begin setting the record straight. Historical events assumed a burning relevancy to the demands of the Black Power struggle. Thus, when a liberal white historian, Richard C. Wade, questioned whether the 1822 black slave conspiracy of Denmark Vesey ever really existed in "The Vesey Plot: A Reconsideration," *Journal of Southern*

History, XXX (May 1964), pp. 143-161, black nationalist historian Sterling Stuckey countered the argument in "Remembering Denmark Vesey," *Negro Digest*, XV (February 1966), pp. 28-41. New left historian Robert S. Starobin provided tactical support for Stuckey with his collection of documents and historical records in *Denmark Vesey: The Slave Conspiracy of 1822* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1970). Another excellent source on the Denmark Vesey rebellion is John Oliver Killens, ed., *The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey* (Boston: Beacon, 1970).

The 1966 publication of William Styron's novel, *Confessions of Nat Turner* (New York: Random House, 1966), created yet another intellectual outcry. Styron admitted that his study was neither an accurate account of the 1831 slave rebellion, nor a precise sketch of the most famous black militant of the antebellum South, Nat Turner. The novel described the black folk hero as having a homosexual experience, and devoid of any positive race consciousness. Styron's Turner rejects relations with black women, and instead falls in love with a white woman. For Black Power intellectual/activists, such undocumented characterizations were tantamount to a declaration of war against the Black Movement. Compounding the dilemma were a host of glowing reviews written by white liberal academicians, including C. Vann Woodward, "Confession of a Rebel: 1831," *New Republic*, CLVII (7 October 1967), pp. 25-28, and Wilfred Sheed, "The Slave Who Became a Man," *New York Times Book Review* (8 October 1967), pp. 1-3.

Black nationalist historian John Henrik Clarke collected a series of essays in early 1968 that were published under the title, *William Styron's Nat Turner: Ten Black Writers Respond* (Boston: Beacon, 1968). The volume included responses from what were at the time the most prominent scholar-activists within the Black Power Movement, including Lerone Bennett, Senior Editor of *Ebony* magazine and author of numerous black studies; Charles V. Hamilton, political scientist and author of *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Vintage, 1967); Ernest Kaiser, black historian of Harlem's Schomburg Library; and Vincent Harding, then director of the Martin Luther King Center and professor of history at Spelman College. In Harding's words, black scholars must "capture Nat Turner from the hands of those who seem to think that entrance into black skin is achieved as easily as Styron-Turner's penetration of invisible white flesh. At that moment, as possessors of our own past, we shall have claimed the right to go on with fear and the trem-

bling of joy into whatever divine fury lies ahead on these white and maddening shores. Only then shall common history — and common destiny — begin." Other earlier monographs that largely share the positions of these black writers include Herbert Aptheker, *Nat Turner's Slave Rebellion* (New York: Humanities Press, 1966) and F. Ray Johnson, *The Nat Turner Slave Insurrection* (Murfreesboro, North Carolina: Johnson Publishing Company, 1966).

Styron and his defenders were not silent in the face of black opposition. When Aptheker challenged Styron's interpretation of Nat Turner in "A Note on the History," *Nation*, CCVI (6 October 1967), pp. 375-376, Styron quickly responded. The exchange between Aptheker and Styron appeared as "Truth and Nat Turner: An Exchange," *Nation*, CCVI (22 April 1968), pp. 543-547. Curiously, Genovese not only defended Sytron's novel, but launched a vigorous and biting polemic against the black historians, writers and sociologists who opposed it. "What is at issue here," Genovese wrote in the *New York Review of Books*, "is the ferocity and hysteria of the attack, which claims Styron to be a racist, a liar, an apologist for slavery, and a man who displays 'moral cowardice' and 'moral senility'." Genovese criticized blacks for arguing that "Styron insults black men by suggesting that they hanker after white chicks." He concluded, "*William Styron's Nat Turner: Ten Black Writers Respond* shows the extent to which the American intelligentsia is splitting along racial, rather than ideological, lines. As such, the book needs to be taken with alarmed seriousness, no matter how absurd most of the contributions are." See Genovese, "The Nat Turner Case," *New York Review of Books*, XI (12 September 1968), pp. 34-37. Also see Martin Duberman, "Historical Fictions," *New York Times Book Review* (11 August 1968), pp. 1, 26-27.

The late 1960s produced a number of major revisionist works in slavery historiography that not only overturned Phillips, Stampp, Elkins, and other pre-1960 white researchers but simultaneously restored the politically-conscious scholarship of DuBois to the mainstream of intellectual work. Gilbert Osofsky, ed., *Puttin' On Ole Massa: The Slave Narratives of Henry Bibb, William Wells Brown and Solomon Northup* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), argued that black slaves historically rejected the will of their masters, "putting on" publicly but privately seeking to resist at every opportunity. David Brian Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1967) and *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1975), documented that white

abolitionists pursued the goal of ending the slave trade for economic as well as moral reasons. Richard Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820-1860* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964), explores the hardships and diversity of black slaves in urban areas. A more radical interpretation of the urban political economy of black slaves, particularly in industrial sectors, is found in the works of Robert S. Starobin, especially "Disciplining Industrial Slaves in the Old South," *Journal of Negro History*, LIII (April 1968), pp. 111-128, and "The Economics of Industrial Slavery in the Old South," *Business History Review*, XLIV (Summer 1970), pp. 131-174. Gerald W. Mullin argues that the tradition of black militant protest and social unrest was forged in the 1600s in *Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth Century Virginia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972). The Elkins-Stampp thesis suggesting reasons for the relative "absence" of black slave revolts in the U.S. is critiqued in George Rawick, "The Historical Roots of Black Liberation," *Radical America*, II (July-August 1968), pp. 1-13; Marion D. DeB. Kilson, "Towards Freedom: An Analysis of Slave Revolts in the United States," *Phylon*, XXV (Summer 1964), pp. 175-187; Robert S. Starobin and Dale Tamich, "Black Liberation Historiography," *Radical America*, II (September-October 1968), pp. 24-28.

As the decade closed, however, the dialogue between black and white intellectuals reached a stalemate. White liberal and many Marxist sociologists, historians and psychologists could not comprehend the meaning and implications of Black Power and black nationalism. Committed as they were to the pursuit of integration and civil rights, they could not understand the depths of hostility and outrage which black students in universities across the country and a growing stratum of black intellectuals expressed. In his third revised edition of *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), C. Vann Woodward explains the situation with some anguish:

> Not all at once, but with swiftness unparalleled by other shifts in the history of Negro thought, a great change overwhelmed the movement in midcourse...whites disappeared from front ranks, and white paternalism in any department became anathema. Less was heard about civil rights and more about economic demands; less about integration and assimilation and more about liberation and separatism. Rhetoric exploded with violence: Burn, baby, burn!

Woodward's lament for the *ancien regime* of "We Shall Overcome" and racial assimilation as the highest expression of black culture speaks to the bankruptcy

of liberal white scholarship and thought. The "White Man's Burden" was at an end.

After 1969, much black social science research shifted from focusing on "race relations" toward a total redefinition of black scholarship. In October 1969, a group of African and Afro-American historians walked out the Montreal conference of the African Studies Association. Declaring the ASA's work "fundamentally invalid and illegitimate," they established an all-black African Heritage Studies Association. A leader of the revolt, John Henrik Clarke, later explained that all black history and cultural studies must be "reconstructed along Afrocentric lines while effecting an intellectual union among black scholars the world over." See John Henrik Clarke, "The Fight to Reclaim African History," *Negro Digest*, XIX (February 1970), pp. 10-16, 59-64. A series of new black studies journals appeared to provide black nationalist scholars with forums for discussion and debate — *Black Scholar, Black Books Bulletin, Journal of Black Studies,* and *Western Journal of Black Studies*. An older social science and humanities journal, *Negro Digest*, was renamed *Black World*. The best and the most creative research on the black U.S. and African experience published after 1970 would not be found in the pages of white social science journals.

In "Beyond Chaos: Black History and the Search for the New Land," published in John A. Williams and Charles Harris, eds., *Amistad I: Writings on Black History and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1970), pp. 267-292, Vincent Harding closed the door of an entire era of black historiography and pointed toward the new directions that black research might assume in the 1970s:

> Black History...is the facing of the chasm, the hard and unromantic reading of the experiences of black people in America. It is the groans, the tears, the chains, the songs, the prayers, the institutions...Black History is refusal to give over our lives, our creativity, our history, our future into the hands of white America, for they have proved themselves totally inadequate and ultimately dangerous. So we demand hegemony over our institutions.

IV

Unlike the majority of nations, the United States has always possessed a very primitive notion of politics. American political writers James and Grace Lee Boggs discuss the evolution of U.S. politics in *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1974). Political science has commonly been defined in terms of electoral political

phenomena — voting, registering, campaigning for public office. "Most people think of politics as a 'thing'. What we must understand first," they write, "is that politics is a process, the process by which the political and social decisions involving the organization of society are made." Using the "standard" definition, Afro-Americans were only marginally involved in U.S. politics between the demise of the Populist Movement through the Great Depression. A series of legal devices, from the infamous Grandfather Clause to literacy tests, denied the overwhelming majority of blacks the right to vote or run for public office. It would be grossly misleading, however, to assume that blacks were apolitical simply because their ballots were not counted for a half century. Indeed, it was precisely because blacks were perhaps the most systematically exploited group in the U.S. that they had become "political" in the Boggs' definition — the most politically conscious sector of American civil society.

The studies appearing on black politics immediately before and even during modern Civil Rights Movements mirrored the lack of originality and research characteristic of American politics (and political science) in general. In a series of simplistic essays and monographs, the NAACP's Henry Lee Moon advanced the notion that electoral power could be achieved if the black voters remained noncommitted between the Republican and Democratic parties. See Moon, "The Negro Break-away from the Democrats," *New Republic*, CXXXV (3 December 1956), p. 17, and "How We Voted and Why?", *Crisis*, LXXII (January 1965), pp. 26-31. Monographs and articles that examine the electoral behavior of blacks in the South include Everett Carll Ladd, Jr., *Negro Political Leadership in the South* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966); Donald Matthews and James W. Prothro, "Social and Economic Factors and Negro Voter Registration in the South," *American Political Science Review*, LVII (March 1963), pp. 355-367; Harry A. Holloway, "The Negro and the Vote: The Case of Texas," *Journal of Politics*, XXIII (August 1961), pp. 526-566; M. Elaine Burgess, *Negro Leadership in a Southern City* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962); Andrew Buni, *The Negro in Virginia Politics, 1902-1965* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 1967). Almost all of these studies examine black involvement in politics as an exclusively electoral or legislative struggle. The "goal of black politics was the inclusion of blacks within the American electoral system. None of these early works criticized the implicitly integrationist worldview and reformist mentality of black petty bourgeois politicians."

The modern Civil Rights Movement broke sharply from the narrowly legalistic strategy of the NAACP and Urban League. New activist organizations emerged — the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (1957) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (1960) — whose philosophy of passive resistance, street demonstrations and sit-ins changed the face of the Jim Crow South. The critically important bus boycott of blacks in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955-56 is analyzed in Preston Valien, "The Montgomery Bus Protest as a Social Movement," in Jitsuichi Masuoka and Preston Valien, eds., *Race Relations: Problems and Theory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), pp. 112-127; and in a series of articles by Norman W. Walton, "The Walking City, A History of the Montgomery Boycott," *Negro History Bulletin*, , XX (October, November 1956; February, April 1957), pp. 17-27, 27-33, 102-104, 147-152, 166; XXI (January 1958), pp. 75-76, 81. On the SCLC and the role of black religion as a factor in social and political protest in the early 1960s, see Nat Hentoff, "A Peaceful Army, " *Commonweal*, LXXII (10 June 1960), pp. 275-278; James Q. Wilson, "The Strategy of Protest: Problems of Negro Civic Action," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, V (September 1961), pp. 291-303; Bayard Rustin, "The Meaning of the March on Washington," *Liberator*, VIII (October 1963), pp. 11-13; C. A. Green, "The Negro Church: A Power Institution," *Negro History Bulletin*, XXVI (October 1962), pp. 20-22; Gary T. Marx, "Religion: Opiate or Inspiration of Civil Rights Militancy Among Negroes?," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXXII (February 1967), pp. 64-72.

There are a number of secondary sources on or by the leaders of the older, reformist Civil Rights organizations. Primary sources on political and economic issues written by the integrationist, "Old Guard" includes Ralph David Abernathy, "Some International Dimensions of the Peace Movement," *Freedomways*, XI (Third Quarter 1971), pp. 237-240; James Farmer, *Freedom, When?* (New York: Random House, 1966); Bayard Rustin, *Down the Line: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971); Rustin, *Strategies for Freedom: The Changing Patterns of Black Protest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976); Ralph Bunche, "Why I Went to Jackson," *The Crisis*, LXX (June-July 1963), pp. 327-332; Floyd McKissick, *Three-Fifths of a Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1969). There are also several monographs detailing the various organizational histories of Civil Rights groups: Inge Powell Bell, *CORE and the Strategy of Nonviolence* (New York:

Random House, 1968); William Gellerman, *My CORE Program Experience and Some Ideas About Training with Civil Rights Organizations* (Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1965); August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Langston Hughes, *Fight for Freedom: The Story of the NAACP* (New York: Norton, 1962); Charles Flint Kellogg, *NAACP, A History of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967): Wilson Record, *Race and Radicalism: The NAACP and the Communist Party in Conflict* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966); Warren D. St. James, *The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: A Case Study in Pressure Groups* (New York: Exposition Press, 1958); Daniel Webster Wynn, *The NAACP Versus Negro Revolutionary Protest* (New York: Exposition Press, 1955); Jesse Thomas Moore, "The Urban League and the Black Revolution, 1941-1961: Its Philosophy and its Policies," PhD dissertation, Pennsylvania State University. Microfilm (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1971).

Biographies and collected works on contemporary Civil Rights leaders include Eddie Stone, *Jesse Jackson: Biography of an Ambitious Man* (Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1979); Barbara A. Reynolds, *Jesse Jackson, The Man, The Movement, The Myth* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1975); Lee Clement, ed., *Andrew Young at the United Nations* (Salisbury, North Carolina: Documentary Publication, 1978); Carl Gardner, *Andrew Young, A Biography* (New York: Drake, 1978); Joseph Howard Holland, "Toward the Just Society: The Ideological Heritage of Andrew Young," MA Thesis, Cornell University, 1979; Eddie Stone, *Andrew Young: Biography of a Realist* (Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1979).

Martin Luther King, Jr., was the personification of an entire Movement. King's importance was derived primarily from two factors: his ability to articulate within the conservative, black Baptist mode a powerful moral philosophy of political change and human transformation, and his central position as leader of SCLC between the left and rightist factions of the Civil Rights coalition. General biographies of King include Mithrapuram K. Alexander, *Martin Luther King: Martyr for Freedom* (New Delhi: New Light Publishers, 1968); Lerone Bennett, *What Manner of Man; A Biography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1964); James Alonzo Bishop, *The Days of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Putnam, 1971); Lenwood G. Davis, *I*

Have a Dream; The Life and Times of Martin Luther King, Jr. (Westport, Connecticut: Negro University Press, 1973); Hubert Gerbeau, *Martin Luther King* (Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1968); Rolf Italigander, *Martin Luther King* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1968); Coretta Scott King, *My Life With Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969); David L. Lewis, *King: A Critical Biography* (New York: Praeger, 1970); Lionel Lokos, *House Divided; The Life and Legacy of Martin Luther King* (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1968); Lee Augustus McGriggs,*The Odyssey of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1978); Laurence Dunbar Reddick, *Crusader Without Violence; A Biography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959); John A. Williams, *The King God Didn't Save; Reflections on the Life and Death of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1970). Also see David J. Garrow, *Protest at Selma: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Voting Rights Act of 1965* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

There have been a number of monographs written concerning the assassination of King. The most widely read sources on the Memphis assassination are Mark Lane and Dick Gregory's speculative study, *Code Name Zorro: The Murder of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1977), and United States Congress, House Select Committee on Assassinations, *Hearings Before the Select Committee on Assassinations, Ninety-fifth Congress, second session* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979). Some of the other secondary literature on King's death includes Michael Newton, *A Case of Conspiracy: A Step-by-Step Reconstruction of the Martin Luther King Assassination and the Aftermath* (Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1980); Gerald Frank, *An American Death: The True Story of the Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Greatest Manhunt of Our Time* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1972); William Bradford Huie, *Did the F.B.I. Kill Martin Luther King?* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1977); Louis E. Lomax, *To Kill a Black Man* (Los Angeles: Holloway House, 1968); Harold Weisberg, *Frame-up; The Martin Luther King/James Earl Ray Case, Containing Suppressed Evidence* (New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, 1971).

The Freedom Struggle in the years of the Kennedy Administration was primarily the creation of a generation of idealistic youth, black and white. Born in the late 1930s or during World War II, they were outraged by the apparent contradiction between the growing material affluence of white Ameri-

ca and the oppressive conditions of black life and labor, particularly in the segregationist South. Research on the early sit-in movement includes Ruth Searles and J. Allen Williams, Jr., "Negro College Students' Participation in Sit-ins," *Social Forces*, XL (March 1962), pp. 215-220 and Charles U. Smith, "The Sit-Ins and the New Negro Student;" on SNCC and the uneasy "united front" that existed between the various desegregation coalitions includes Bayard Rustin, "From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement," *Commentary*, XXXIX (February 1965), pp. 25-31; Lerone Bennett, "SNCC: Rebels with a Cause," *Ebony*, XX (July 1965), pp. 146-153; Gene Roberts, "The Story of Snick: From 'Freedom Rides' to 'Black Power'," *New York Times Magazine* (25 September 1966), pp. 27-29; Anne Braden, "The SNCC Trends: Challenge to White America," *Southern Patriot*, XXIV (May 1966), pp. 1-3; and Robert L. Zangrando, "From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: The Unsettled 1960's," *Current History*, LVII (November 1969), pp. 281-286, 299.

Only two years after the August 1963, march on Washington, D.C., the Movement had begun to rapidly fall apart. Disillusionment with the Johnson Administration's failure to protect the lives of civil rights workers, and to vigorously prosecute racists forced SNCC activists to reevaluate their strategies and goals. The U.S. government's illegal and vicious conduct in the Vietnam War was denounced by the left wing of the integrationist united front — SNCC and CORE — but was supported by moderate leaders of the NAACP and the Urban League, as well as most white liberals and trade unionists. Even before the march on Washington, white liberal intellectuals had grown uncomfortable with the militancy of many desegregation activists. For example, colonial historian Oscar Handlin denounced integration as "a false issue" in his monograph, *Fire-Bell in the Night: The Crisis in Civil Rights* (Boston: Beacon, 1964). In a series of influential social science articles, August Meier criticized many of the tactics and even personalities of the Civil Rights Movement. Meier's "The Revolution Against the NAACP," *Journal of Negro Education*, XXXII (Spring 1963), pp. 146-152, and "Negro Protest Movements and Organizations," *Journal of Negro Education*, XXXII (Fall 1963), pp. 437-450 argue that no united front of black social protest and reform groups even exists. The movement was characterized by self-seeking "power struggles" between black organizations, devoid of any coherent philosophy of social change. Meier's most devastating critique, "On the Role of Martin Luther King," *New Politics*,

IV (Winter 1965), pp. 52-59, attempts to minimize the critical role of King by comparing him to Booker T. Washington. With historian Elliott Rudwick as coauthor, Meier's "Organizational Structure and Goal Succession: A Comparative Analysis of the NAACP and CORE, 1964-1968," *Social Science Quarterly*, LI (June 1970), pp. 9-41, finds major shortcomings in both the reformist and activist agencies of the Movement. In "What Happened to the Civil Rights Movement?" *Harper's*, CCXXXIV (January 1967), pp. 29-37, historian C. Vann Woodward expresses a profound sense of loss with the coming of Black Power.

The great majority of political scientists and social critics who wrote the history of the Freedom Struggle were white liberals. When newly elected SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael condemned integration as the Movement's raison d'être in his brief but powerful polemic, "What We Want," *New York Review of Books*, VII (22 September 1966), pp. 5-6,8, a new phase of black political scholarship had begun. The most influential statement on the meaning of Black Power and its relationship to the Civil Rights Movement was Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: vintage, 1967). Carmichael and Hamilton did not explicitly denounce the idea of eventual political coalitions between black and white progressives. They stressed, however, that any political movement was, in essence, the struggle for power, and that white America had not revealed throughout its history any real potential to meet black intellectuals/workers/activists on the terms of real equality.

The political science literature produced on Black Power between the years 1966-1969 is nothing short of remarkable. A short list of essential readings would include: Bayard Rustin, "'Black Power' and Coalition Politics," *Commentary*, XLII (September 1966), pp. 35-40; Roy Wilkins, "Whither 'Black Power'?" *Crisis*, LXXIII (August-September 1966), pp. 353-354; Hugh D. Graham, "The Storm over Black Power," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, XLIII (Autumn 1967), pp. 545-565; Raymond S. Franklin, "The Political Economy of Black Power," *Social Problems*, XVI (Winter 1969), pp. 286-301; Joyce Ladner, "What 'Black Power' Means to Negroes in Mississippi," *Trans-action*, V (November 1967), pp. 7-15; Paul Feldman, "The Pathos of 'Black Power'," *Dissent*, XIV (January-February 1967), pp. 69-79; James Boggs, "Black Power — A Scientific Concept Whose Time Has Come," *Liberator*, VII (April 1967), pp. 4-7; Martin Kilson, "Black Power: Anatomy of a Paradox,"

Harvard Journal of Negro Affairs, II (1968), pp. 30-34; Christopher Lasch, "The Trouble with Black Power," *New York Review of Books*, X (29 February 1968), pp. 4-14; Harold Cruse, "Behind the Black Power Slogan," in Cruse, *Rebellion or Revolution?* (New York: William Morrow, 1968).

The reemergence of black nationalism caught white intellectuals off guard. Never before in U.S. history had the perceptions and popular ideology of black-white relations, social history and culture been so severely shaken. Black politics moved from the low terrain of accommodation and electoral participation to the heights of collective power. Black elected officials, whose numbers increased from 100 in 1964 to over 1,400 by 1970, articulated to a great extent the black nationalist and militant rhetoric of total social transformation. That the social sciences reflected this transition from black moderate reform to black revolt should not be surprising. What happened in the 1970s, as the scholarship of Black Power collapsed from the weight of its own contradictions, can be understood as a logical byproduct of the social and intellectual ruptures of the previous turbulent decade.

V

The black nationalist renaissance was no uniform movement, whether one refers to its ideological development, organizations or leading personalities. Geographically, the focus of black protest shifted from the rural South to the urban North and West; demographically and socially, the change moved from the small black rural petty bourgeoisie, farm workers and skilled laborers toward "the wretched of the earth." Semiskilled and unskilled operatives, youth, the permanently unemployed, prisoners, and those whom Marx termed the "lumpen-proletariat," were now at the foci of national political attention. The black intellectual leadership of these social strata tended to be petty bourgeois in origin, but who had along the way committed a kind of class and cultural suicide. The rhetorical delivery of such young men was deliberately angry and uncompromising in tone. Certainly there was much to be uncompromising about. Nevertheless, at times rage for its own sake consumed analysis; political dogma was often elevated above common sense; hubris overcame political patience and realism born of hard experience.

Generally, one can identify several basic themes expressed by the Black radical intelligentsia after 1965. In the context of cultural and social organization, the bulk of the new intellectuals spoke in the historic currents of black

nationalism, which finds its origins in the life and works of pre-Civil War activists: Martin R. Delany, Henry Highland Garnet, David Walker, Theodore Holly, and H. Ford Douglas. Closely related to this political and cultural impulse was the smaller yet more complex tradition of cultural pluralism - best expressed in the works of DuBois, and especially in the first chapter of *The Souls of Black Folk*. Cultural pluralists have long eschewed any direct identification with the nationalist tradition, since their long-term vision of human culture and social institutions leads toward internationalism and the disappearance of racial barriers. Yet both are distinctly separate from the mainstream, petty bourgeois integrationism of a Roy Wilkins or Vernon Jordan. Tendencies within the militant black intelligentsia since the mid-1960s can be categorized into two overlapping categories, cultural nationalism and revolutionary nationalism, the later current moving largely into the Marxist-Leninist and/or neo-Marxian tradition in the 1970s. The historical background to black nationalism, which largely set the tone for the political dialogue of the more recent past, is found in Howard Bell, "The Negro Emigration Movement, 1849- 1854: A Phase of Negro Nationalism," *Phylon*, XX (Summer 1959), pp. 132-142; Bell, "Expressions of Negro Militancy in the North," *Journal of Negro History*, XLV (January 1960), pp. 11-20; Bell, "Negro Nationalism," *Journal of Negro History*, XLVII (January 1962), pp. 42-53; August Meier, "The Emergence of Negro Nationalism: A Study in Ideologies from the American Revolution to the First World War," MA Thesis, Columbia University, 1949; St. Clair Drake, "Negro Americans and the African Interest," in John P. Davis, ed., *American Negro Reference Book* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965), pp. 662-705; George Shepperson, "Notes on Negro-American Influences on the Emergence of African Nationalism," *Journal of African History*, 1 (1960), pp. 299-312; George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* (New York: Roy Publishers, 1956); Edwin S. Redkey, "Bishop Turner's African Dream," *Journal of American History*, LIV (September 1967), pp. 271-290; William Bittle and Gilbert Geis, *The Longest Way Home* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1964); Eugene D. Genovese, "The Legacy of Slavery and the Roots of Black Nationalism" and "Black Nationalism and American Socialism," in *In Red and Black: Marxian Explorations in Southern and Afro-American History* (New York: Vintage, 1971), pp. 129-157, 188-199; Harold Cruse, "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American," *Studies on the Left*, II (1962), pp. 12-25; James Weinstein, ed., "Black Nationalism: The

Early Debate," *Studies on the Left*, IV (1964), pp. 50-58; A. James Gregor, "Black Nationalism: A Preliminary Analysis of Negro Radicalism," *Science and Society*, XXVI (Fall 1963), pp. 415-432.

The decisive factor in the evolution of modern black nationalism was unquestionably the activities of Marcus Garvey. Born in 1887 in Jamaica, Garvey was the creator of the largest mass movement of Blacks in the Western hemisphere. Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, founded in 1914, spawned a series of black self-help programs and economic institutions - the Negro Factories Corporation, Black Star Line, the African Legion, and a host of other activities. Garvey's charismatic rhetoric, his appeals to Pan-Africanism and racial pride, and his complete rejection of integration as a cultural philosophy were echoed by many of the Black Power activists a generation later. The two most influential Garvey scholars in recent years are Tony Martin and Robert A. Hill. Martin's *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976) is a sympathetic account of Garvey's programs and ideological orientation. Since *Race First*, Martin has written a number of shorter monographs on Garveyism, including *Literary Garveyism: Garvey, Black Arts and the Harlem Renaissance* (Dover, Mass.: Majority Press, 1983); *The Poetical Works of Marcus Garvey* (Dover, Mass.: Majority Press, 1983); and *Marcus Garvey, Hero: A First Biography* (Dover, Mass.: Majority Press, 1983). Hill is currently the director of the Marcus Garvey Papers Project at the University of California-Los Angeles, and has collected tens of thousands of archival documents and original manuscripts on Garveyism for a major ten volume study. The initial two volumes in the series are available under the title *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers*, Volumes I and II (Los Angeles: University of California press, 1983). Other secondary sources on Garvey include Randall K. Burkett, *Black Redemption; Churchmen Speak for the Garvey Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978); Adolph Edwards, *Marcus Garvey, 1887-1940* (Port of Spain: New Beacon Books, 1967); Elton C. Fax, *Garvey: The Story of a Pioneer Black Nationalist* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1972); Theodore G. Vincent, *Black Power and the Garvey Movement* (Berkeley: Ramparts Press, 1971); Randall K. Burkett, *Garveyism as a Religious Movement: The Institutionalism of a Black Civil Religion* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 198). One particularly helpful resource which lists hundreds of books

and articles on Garveyism is Lenwood G. Davis, *Marcus Garvey: An Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980).

Cultural nationalism was the most romantic and chauvinistic of all the dominant ideological tendencies. Petty bourgeois in class origin and parochial in outlook, cultural nationalism presented to its constituents a strictly skin-color analysis of political events. All whites, due to either genetic or socio-cultural reasons, were the enemies of all peoples of African descent. Blacks had to reject in no uncertain terms any intellectual frame of reference which drew its rationale from any previous white social, aesthetic, political or economic studies. Part of the cultural nationalist impulse was undoubtedly aimed at the preemption of white academicians from the field of Black Studies. This not only involved the replacement of white instructors for blacks, but the eradication of white symbols and methods of discourse. Holidays (from Christmas to Kwanzaa), language (the rapid popularity of Kiswahili and to a lesser extent Yoruba), family patterns (recreation of African polygynous social institutions) and names (rechristening oneself and others in Arabic, Swahili or West African languages) were transformed. An "Afrocentric" or "black worldview" was juxtaposed to Western values and ideologies. Most cultural nationalists were bitterly critical of Marxism, and advanced an eclectical idealism of African socialism gleaned from the material realities of the fifteenth century Sudan. In the view of one leading cultural nationalist, Askia Muhammad Toure (Rolland Snellings), any black revolution had to reject the "sterile Marxist jargon" of "Lenin, Trotsky, Castro, etc.", and "restore the mind and soul of the black man to his Ancestral Rhythms and Ancient Spirituality." Toure believed that too many Black Power advocates were "still under Western control," ready to "seek an integrated, Marxist-socialist America which has always been within Western radical tradition, as an ultimate solution for American social development." See Toure, "Jihad! Toward a Black National Credo," *Negro Digest*, XVIII (July 1969), pp. 10-17; "The Crises in Black Culture," *Journal of Black Poetry*, I (Spring 1968), pp. 2-10.

Representative of the writings of the most dogmatic and anti- white cultural nationalists was the work of Don L. Lee (Haki R. Madhubuti): "The Death Walk Against Afrika," *Black World*, XXII (October 1973), pp. 28-36; "The Survival of Black People: Is It Possible?" *Black Books Bulletin*, I (Summer/Fall 1973), pp. 32- 33; "Enemy: From the White Left, White Right and In-Between," *Black World*, XXIII (October 1974), pp. 36-47; "The Latest

Purge," *Black Scholar*, VI (September 1974), pp. 43-56; "The Decision Is To Fight," *Black World*, XXV (March 1976), pp. 26-31, 92-97; *From Plan to Planet: Life Studies* (Detroit: Broadside Press, 1973); *Enemies: The Clash of Races* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1978). Ironically, the one substantive critique of Lee's poetry and other polemical writings is by a white author, Marlene Mosher, *New Directions From Don L. Lee* (Hicksville, New York: Exposition Press, 1975). The most prolific cultural nationalist was the chair of Hunter College's (New York) Black and Puerto Rican Studies Department, John Henrik Clarke. Clarke's essays and edited volumes include: "The Rise of Racism in the West," *Black World*, XIX (October 1970), pp. 4-10; Clarke, ed., *Harlem, A Community in Transition* (New York: Citadel Press, 1964); Clarke, ed., *Malcolm X; The Man and His Times* (New York: Macmillan, 1969); Clarke and Vincent Harding, eds., *What's It All About?* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1969); Clarke, ed., *Black Titan: W.E.B. DuBois* (Boston: Beacon, 1970); Clarke ed., *Marcus Garvey and the Vision of Africa* (New York: Vintage, 1974). Social psychologist Nathan Hare, a West Coast-based cultural nationalist, became the co-founder (with Marxist aesthetician Robert Chrisman) of one of the two most influential Black Studies journals in the country, the *Black Scholar*. Hare's important works include *The Black Anglo-Saxons* (London: Collier Books, 1970); Hare and Chrisman, eds., *Pan-Africanism* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1974); Hare, "Revolution Without a Revolution: The Psychosociology of Sex and Race," *Black Scholar*, IX (April 1978), pp. 2-7. Other social science research that is representative of the cultural nationalist frame of reference is Bobby Wright, "Psychopathic Racial Personality," *Black Books Bulletin*, II (Fall 1974), pp. 24-31; Shawna Maglangbayan, *Garvey, Lumumba, Malcolm* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1973); Kalamu ya Salaam, "A Response to Haki Madhubuti," *Black Scholar*, VI (January-February 1975), pp. 40-41; Frances Cress Welsing, "The Cress Theory of Color Confrontation," *Black Scholar*, V (May 1974), pp. 32-40; Johari Amini, "Re-Definition: Concept As Being," *Black World*, XXI (May 1972), pp. 4-12; Dudley Randall, *After the Killing* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1973); Chancellor Williams, *The Destruction of Black Civilization* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1976).

There were hundreds of cultural nationalist organizations that were created across the U.S. during the late 1960s. One prominent group founded on 31 March 1968 in Detroit was the Republic of New Afrika (RNA). The goal of

the organization, which was led by Imari A. Obadele, was to seize political control of five southern states and to obtain international recognition for their all-black provisional government. The U.S. government responded to the initial gains of RNA by unleashing massive FBI arrests and raids against the nationalists. Literature by or about the Republic of New Afrika includes Imari A. Obadele, "The Struggle Is For Land," *Black Scholar*, III (February 1972), pp. 24-36; Obadele, "The Struggle of the Republic of New Africa," *Black Scholar*, V (June 1974), pp. 32-41; Obadele, "National Black Elections Held by Republic of New Africa," *Black Scholar*, VII (October 1975), pp. 27-30, 35-38; Obadele, "Getting Ready for the United Nations," *Black Scholar*, VIII (April 1977), pp. 35-45; Obadele, "People's Revolt Against Poverty: An Appeal and Challenge," *Black Scholar*, IX (May/June 1978), pp. 35-39; Obadele, "Republic of New Africa: The Struggle for Land In Mississippi," *Black World*, XXII (February 1973), pp. 66-73; Chokwe Lumumba, "Short History of the U.S. War On The R.N.A," *Black Scholar*, XII (January/February 1981), pp. 72- 81. The RNA and other nationalist formations raised the old question of developing a black land base in the U.S. South as a major political objective of the freedom movement. Non-cultural nationalist writings on the "land question" include Louis C. Green, "Some Economic Considerations for a Black Separatist State in the United States," *Review of Black Political Economy*, VIII (Spring 1978), pp. 229- 252; William E. Nelson, Jr., "Black Political Power and the Decline of Black Land Ownership," *Review of Black Political Economy*, VIII (Spring 1978), pp. 253-265; June Maning Thomas, "Effects of Land Development on Black Land Ownership in the Sea Islands of South Carolina," *Review of Black Political Economy*, VIII (Spring 1978), pp. 266-276; Manning Marable, "The Land Question in Historical Perspective," in Leo McGee and Robert Boone, eds., *The Black Rural Landowner* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979), pp. 3-24.

Three prolific and influential cultural nationalists merit special note: Harold Cruse, Maulana Ron Karenga and Imamu Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones). Cruse, the eldest of the three, was the product of the social milieu of pre-World War II Harlem and the Communist Party of Richard Wright. Rejecting Communism during the Cold War period, Cruse literally receded from meaningful political life. Locking himself away in a New York City flat, he attempted to outline a definitive social and cultural study of black life since the 1920s. The product of his fifteen years of research, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York:

William Morrow, 1967), remains despite (or perhaps because of) its errors the monumental cultural work on black thought produced in the 1960s and 1970s. Other writings by Cruse include *Rebellion or Revolution?* (New York: William Morrow, 1968); "The Little Rock National Black Convention," *Black World*, XXIII (October 1974), pp. 10-17, 82-88; "The Methodology of Pan-Africanism," *Black World*, XXIV (January 1975), pp. 4-20; "Black and White: Outlines of the Next Stage," *Black World*, XX (January 1971), pp. 19-41, 66-71. Cruse serves as a kind of reluctant savant for the formation of the National Black Political Assembly, an independent black public policies and political pressure group which was active from 1972-1980. Cruse's major limitations as a writer and social theorist, however, seem to have been permanently set through his troubled experiences in the Communist Party and Harlem-orientation (to the exclusion of virtually every other black U.S. community). For a generally favorable assessment of Cruse's writing, see Romona Hoage Edelin, "A Vindication of Harold Cruse," *Black World*, XXV (March 1976), pp. 51-52, 85-89.

Karenga was the only major cultural nationalist to emerge on the U.S. West Coast after the death of Malcolm X. He created the Kwanzaa holiday ceremony in 1965, and developed what was termed the "black values system," the nguzo saba, and the philosophy of Kawaida. Karenga's cultural nationalist grouping, called US, attracted the attention of Baraka, who in turn spread the teachings of Karenga to the East Coast. US gained national attention for its controversial confrontations with the Black Panther Party and local police. At one point, Karenga was viewed by many left nationalists as the "new house nigger" and most dangerous "pork-chop nationalist." Jonathan Jackson, the young man-child/martyr and brother of prison rebel George Jackson, denounced Karenga and Baraka "as right-wing blacks (who) are intelligent enough to know what they are doing. Every time I think of these murderous turncoat idiots, my trigger finger fairly itches!" [See George Jackson, *Blood In My Eye* (New York: Random House, 1972), pp. 31-32.] Karenga was imprisoned for four and one half years in California during the early 1970s, and within that period he radically transformed his cultural nationalist position towards a more historical materialist analysis. Evidence of this startling metamorphosis was first apparent in Karenga's essay, "Overturning Ourselves: From Mystification to Meaningful Struggle", published in the October 1972 issue of *Black Scholar*. Other writings by Karenga include *Essays on Struggle: Position and Analysis*

(San Diego: Kawaida Publications, 1978); "Prisons and Law: Punitive Politics," *Black Collegian*, VI (January-February 1976), p. 27; *Beyond Connections: Liberation in Love and Struggle* (New Orleans: Ahidiana, 1977); "Afro-American Nationalism: Beyond Mystification and Misconception," *Black Books Bulletin*, VI (Spring 1978), pp. 7- 12; "Black Art: A Rhythmic Reality of Revolution," *Negro Digest*, XVII (January 1968), pp. 5-9; "Which Road: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, Socialism?" *Black Scholar*, VI (October 1974), pp. 6-14; "Ideology and Struggle: Some Preliminary Notes," *Black Scholar*, VI (January-February 1975), pp. 23-30.

Baraka was the most influential black social critic, playwright, poet. Baraka's entire work can be summarized into three distinct phases: his Greenwich Village, integrationist-oriented "beatnik" period, 1958-1963; Pan-Africanism, and black nationalism, 1964-1974; Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung thought, 1975-present. Most of Baraka's published works deal with literature, literary criticism and aesthetics. His published writings on politics and social criticism alone constitute a virtual life's work for any other scholar. What follows is a representative sample: Baraka, ed., *African Congress* (New York: William Morrow, 1972); *Afrikan Revolution* (Newark: Jihad Publishers, 1973); *Home: Social Essays* (New York: William Morrow, 1966); *It's Nation Time* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1970); *Kawaida Studies: The New Nationalism* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1972); *Raise Race Rays Raze: Essays Since 1965* (New York: Random House, 1971). Articles on black politics by Baraka include: "A Black Value System," *Black Scholar*, I (November 1969), pp. 54-60; "Toward the Creation of Political Institutions for all African Peoples," *Black World*, XI (October 1972), pp. 54-78; "What Does Non-Violence Mean?" *Negro Digest*, IV (November 1964), pp. 4-19; "The Congress of Afrikan People: A Position Paper," *Black Scholar*, VI (January-February 1975), pp. 2-15; "Needed: A Revolutionary Strategy," *Black Scholar*, VII (October 1975), pp. 42-45; Baraka Interviews on black politics, dated 19 February 1974 and 7 July 1974, published in *Black Books Bulletin*, II (Fall 1974) pp. 33-43; "The National Black Assembly and the Black Liberation Movement," *Black World*, XXIV (March 1975), pp. 22-27; "Why I Changed My Ideology: Black Nationalism and Socialist Revolution," *Black World*, XXIV (July 1975), pp. 30-42.

The bulk of critical literature on Baraka relates primarily to his work as a playwright and poet. Studies that assess his political activities, social essays

and books, as well as his literary output, include: Letitia Dace, *LeRoi Jones: A Checklist of Works by and about Him* (London: Neither Press, 1971); Donald B. Gibson, ed., *Five Black Writers* (New York: New York University Press, 1970); Theodore R. Hudson, *From LeRoi Jones to Amiri Baraka* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1973); Vivian Gornick, "The Press of Freedom: An Ofay's Indirect Address to LeRoi Jones," *Village Voice* (4 March 1965), pp. 5-6, 16-17; Esther M. Jackson, "LeRoi Jones (Imamu Amiri Baraka): Form and the Progression of Consciousness," *CLA Journal*, XVII (September 1973), pp. 33-56; Kathryn Jackson, "LeRoi Jones and the New Black Writers of the Sixties," *Freedomways*, IX (Third Quarter 1969), pp. 232-247; Stanley Kauffmann, "LeRoi Jones and the Tradition of the Fake," *Dissent*, XII (Spring 1965), pp. 207- 212; C. Lynn Munro, "LeRoi Jones: A Man in Transition," *CLA Journal*, XVII (September 1973), pp. 58-78; Mary D. Dippold, "LeRoi Jones: Tramp with Connections," PhD dissertation, University of Maryland-College Park, 1971; Clenora F. Hudson, "The Political Implications in the Works of Imamu Amiri Baraka [LeRoi Jones]," MA Thesis, Atlanta University, 1971; Lloyd Brown, *Amiri Baraka* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980); Kimberly W. Benston, *Baraka: The Renegade and the Mask* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); Werner Sollors, *Amiri Baraka/LeRoi Jones: The Quest for a Populist Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).

Left nationalism, or revolutionary black nationalism, refers to a political tradition which is over three generations old. Left nationalism is a product of the urbanization and proletarianization of the black experience in the United States. During and immediately following World War I, its earliest proponents — Hubert Harrison, W.A. Domingo, Cyril Briggs — were all newly arrived immigrants in Harlem. Like cultural nationalism, it advances the goals of black self-determination and self-sufficiency. Politically, left nationalism supports the idea of an independent black party within the United States, and advocates solidarity with progressive revolutions in Africa and other Third World areas. Economically, left and cultural nationalists have supported the buildings of all black producer and consumer cooperatives. The critical distinction between the two tendencies is that left nationalists are materialists, and cultural nationalists are idealists. "Racism" for the left nationalist is a product of history and, as such, is sustained ideologically and culturally by the inherent inequality between blacks and whites at the point of production. Revolutionary nationalists

have been and are today proponents of socialism — whether Marxism, Leninism, Trotskyism, Maoism, Social Democracy, or some other leftist tradition. Left nationalists have emphasized the necessity for a "race/class" analysis of America's political economy, and isolate the class stratification within the U.S. black community as a factor in the political reformism or backwardness among some blacks. Any American revolution at some point must involve a transitional strategy, wherein economic and social demands are raised that cannot be achieved within the existing structural framework of American capitalism and white civil society. Often unstated but implied in left nationalist writings is the belief that a broad-based coalition of blacks, Hispanics and progressive whites will be necessary to transfer state power from the capitalist class to the working classes and oppressed racial or national minority groups. Wilfred D. Samuels', "Hubert H. Harrison and 'The New Negro Manhood Movement'," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, V (January 1981), pp. 29-41, provides an excellent overview of a little-known but critical predecessor to Malcolm X.

The second generation of left nationalists matured during a period (1930-1965) where the absence of any profound nationalist movement greatly dampened both theoretical and practical work. The Garvey Movement had collapsed; the Nation of Islam, which was not leftist, remained until the late 1950s an obscure religious sect. The major black intellectuals inclined toward nationalism could not establish any organic institutional links within the black working class by themselves. As a result their political practice and theoretical horizons were set by largely white political formations, on the left, that also were seeking some sort of entry within the national black community. These relationships clouded the left nationalists' abilities to relate to their own primary constituents — black people. Nevertheless, the organizing skills learned and the materialist analysis acquired assisted the general interests of the black freedom struggle.

The key left nationalists within this second generation of black radicals were C. L. R. James, Paul Robeson, James Boggs, St. Clair Drake, Harry Haywood, and Oliver Cromwell Cox. All of these men were radically different in political affiliation, temperament and personality. James and Boggs had spent decades within the international Trotskyist movement; Cox and Drake were independent, unorthodox socialist academicians; Robeson's affinity toward Stalinism had been firmly established even before his legendary trip to Republi-

can Spain during that country's bloody civil war; Haywood was born in South Omaha, Nebraska, and became a militant Marxist organizer after the racial riots of 1919. What all of these men had in common was a deep intellectual commitment to the necessity of socialism as the critical economic and political demand to improve the lot of the Negro, and an unqualified belief in the necessity for autonomous action on behalf of black people in the cause of their own liberation. All of these men, either in their writings or practical political work, left monumental legacies for future black generations of researchers and activists.

The greatest intellectual of this group was C.L. R. James. His most influential works were histories: *The Black Jacobins* (New York: Vintage, 1963); *A History of Pan-African Revolt* (Washington, D.C.: Drum and Spear Press, 1969); *World Revolution, 1917-1936, The Rise and Fall of the Communist International* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1937); *Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution* (Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill, 1977). James' studies on political theory and social criticism include *Notes on Dialectics: Hegel, Marx, Lenin* (Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill, 1980); *The Future In the Present* (Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill, 1980); "The Revolutionary Solution to the Negro Problem in the United States," *Radical America*, IV (May 1970), pp. 12- 18; "Kwame Nkrumah: Founder of African Nationalism," *Black World*, XXI (July 1927), pp. 4-10.

In 1951, during the height of the Cold War, James was arrested for his socialist organizing activities and was deported. Others within his generation, notably Robeson, were financially and politically destroyed. Robeson's centrality as an advocate of African liberation movements, Pan-Africanism and domestic black radicalism is usually underestimated by most historians. General works by Paul Robeson or about his fascinating public career include: Paul Robeson, *For Peace and Freedom* (New York: Council on African Affairs, 1949); Robeson, *Forge Negro-Labor Unity for Peace and Jobs* (New York: Harlem Trade Union Council, 1950); Robeson, *Here I Stand* (London: Dobson, 1958); Lloyd Louis Brown, *Paul Robeson Rediscovered* (New York: American Institute for Marxist Studies, 1976); Shirley Graham DuBois, *Paul Robeson, Citizen of the World* (New York: J. Messner, 1946); Dorothy Butler Gilliam, *Paul Robeson, All-American* (Washington, D.C.: New Republic Books, 1976); Eslanda Robeson, *Paul Robeson, Negro* (London: Gollancz, 1930); Marie Seton, *Paul Robeson* (London: Dobson, 1958); Philip S. Foner, ed.,

Paul Robeson Speaks: Writings, Speeches, Interviews, 1918-1974 (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1978); Virginia Hamilton, ed., *Paul Robeson: The Life and Times of a Free Black Man* (New York: Dell Publishers, 1975); John Henrik Clarke, "Paul Robeson: The Great Fore-Runner," *First World*, II (Spring 1978), pp. 22-26, 31; W.E.B. DuBois, "Paul Robeson: Right or Wrong?" *Negro Digest*, VII (March 1950), pp. 8, 10-14.

Boggs and his wife Grace Lee Boggs, are currently leaders of a multi-racial, socialist political group, National Organization Toward an American Revolution (NOAR). Both were intellectual followers of James in the late 1930s and 1940s, when he formed the Trotskyist Workers Party with white socialists Max Shachtman and Martin Abern. Breaking with James finally in 1962, the Boggs have pursued an independent socialist course since. The major works of Boggs include: James Boggs, *The American Revolution: Pages From a Negro Worker's Notebook* (New York: Monthly Review, 1963); Boggs, *Manifesto For a Black Revolutionary Party* (Philadelphia, Pacesetters Publishers, 1969); Boggs, Racism and the Class Struggle (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970); James and Grace Lee Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974); James Boggs and Grace Lee Boggs, Lyman Payne and Freddy Paine, *Conversations in Maine: Exploring our Nation's Future* (Boston: South End Press, 1978); Harry Haywood, *Black Bolshevik: Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist* (Chicago: Liberator Press, 1978). Works by Haywood, Cox and Drake include: Oliver Cromwell Cox, "The Leadership of Booker T. Washington," *Social Forces*, XXX (October 1951), pp. 91-97; Cox, *Caste, Class and Race* (New York: Monthly Review, 1972); St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York: Harper and Row, 1945); Drake, "The Social and Economic Status of the Negro in the United States," in Talcott Parsons and Kenneth B. Clark, eds., *The Negro American* (Boston: Beacon, 1966), pp. 3-46; Drake, "Anthropology and the Black Experience," *Black Scholar*, XI (September/October 1980), pp. 2-31.

The most important organizational bridge between the Garvey Movement of the 1920s and Black Power for all nationalists was the Nation of Islam, or the Black Muslims. Founded in the depths of depression in the Midwestern cities of Chicago and Detroit, the culturally conservative Nation of Islam rapidly gained supporters. Elijah Poole, a Georgia sharecropper's son, assumed the leadership of the religious sect in the mid-1930s from W. D. Fard. Recruiting

criminals, prostitutes, and that strata of black society which was most oppressed, Elijah Muhammad was able to build an efficient business and religious empire within virtually every major black urban center in the U.S. General secondary sources by or about Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam are Walter Dan Abilla, "A Study of Black Muslims: An Analysis of Commitment." Microfilm (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1972); Elijah Muhammad, *Message to the Black Man in America* (Chicago: Muhammad Mosque of Islam, No. 2, 1965); John Robert Howard, "Becoming A Black Muslim: A Study of Commitment in a Deviant Political Organization." Thesis, Stanford University. Microfilm (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1966); C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America* (Boston: Beacon, 1973); Louis E. Lomax, *When the Word is Given: A Report on Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, and the Black Muslim World* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1963); Lawrence L. Tyler, "The Black Muslim Identity as Viewed by Non-Muslim Blacks." Thesis, University of Missouri, 1970. Microfilm (Ann Arbor, Michigan, University Microfilms, 1970); Bernard Cushmeer, *This is the One: Messenger Elijah Muhammad, We Need Not Look for Another* (Phoenix: Truth Publications, 1971); Daniel T. Williams and Carolyn L. Redden, *The Black Muslims in the United States: A Selected Bibliography* (Tuskegee, Alabama: Hollis Burke Frissell Library, Tuskegee Institute, 1964). A major area of research interest has concerned the private school system established by Muslim families for their children. Many black social scientists have noted that part of the massive popularity of the Nation of Islam had less to do with the specific tenets of their faith and racial ideology than with the productive and creative educational institutions which they established within the ghetto. See Harry Edwards, "The Black Muslim Family: A Comparative Study," MA Thesis, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, June 1966; William A. Marshall, "Education in the Nation of Islam During the Leadership of Elijah Muhammad, 1935-1975." Microfilm (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1977); Ayesha Nadirah Rashed, "The Role of the Muslim School as an Alternative to Special Education for Bilalian Children Labeled as Deviants," Thesis, University of Michigan. Microfilm (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1977); Vivian Hudson Ross, "Black Muslim Schools: Institutionalization of Black Nationalism; Implications for the Altering of Self-Concept in Ghetto Schools," Thesis, University of Michigan. Microfilm (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1976); Ibrahim

Mahmond Shalaby, "The Role of the School in Cultural Renewal and Identity Development in the Nation of Islam in America," Thesis, University of Arizona. Microfilm (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1967).

The political and social space essential for the rebirth of left nationalism was forged with the collapse of Jim Crow segregation and the reduced tensions of the Cold War. Nationalism returned from the historical shadows into the center of black political discourse. The person most responsible for the resurgence of black pride and revolutionary national identity was, of course, Malcolm X. Emerging from the Nation of Islam, Malcolm formed the prototype for radical black nationalist organizations of the 1960s — the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU). Malcolm's own published works consist primarily of speeches collected after his assassination, or works drafted by white leftists or black authors with Malcolm's approval: Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Grove Press, 1965); Malcolm X, *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* (New York: Young Socialist Alliance, 1969); Malcolm X, *Two Speeches* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1965); Malcolm X, *Malcolm X on Afro-American History* (New York: Pathfinders Press, 1970); George Breitman, ed., *By Any Means Necessary* (New York: Pathfinders Press, 1970); Breitman, ed., *Malcolm X Speaks* (New York, Grove Press, 1966); Archie Epps, ed., *Malcolm X and the Negro Revolution* (London: Owen, 1969); Epps, ed., *The Speeches of Malcolm X At Harvard* (New York: William Morrow, 1968); Benjamin Goodman, ed., *The End of White World Supremacy* (New York: Merlin House, 1971). Interpretations of Malcolm's version of black nationalism were controversial and remain so today. The Trotskyist claim on Malcolm X resides chiefly in the fact that Malcolm spoke at several Socialist Workers Party forums and that much of the friendly press he received on the white left prior to his murder was from them. Anti-Marxist nationalists contend that Malcolm's views did not change fundamentally during the eleven month period between his departure from the nation of Islam in March 1964, until his assassination. Literature on Malcolm X's late ideological development includes George Breitman, *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1967); Breitman, *Malcolm X: The Man and His Ideas* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1965); Albert B. Cleage and George Breitman, *Myths About Malcolm X: Two Views* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1968); Peter L. Goldman, *The Death and Life of Malcolm X* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973); Hakim A. Jamal, *From the*

Dead Level: Malcolm X and Me (New York: Random House, 1972); Shawna Maglanaboyan, *Garvey, Lumumba and Malcolm: National Separatists* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1972). There are also several sources on the unresolved controversies and the possible role of the U.S. government surrounding Malcolm's assassination. See George Breitman, Herman Porter and Baxter Smith, eds., *The Assassination of Malcolm X* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1976) and William Seraile, "The Assassination of Malcolm X: The View From Home and Abroad, " *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, V (January 1981), pp. 43-58. Other general secondary sources on various aspects of Malcolm X's ideological and political development include: Steppingstones (ed.), *Malcolm X: A Tribute* (New York: Steppingstones Press, 1983); R. Rodgers and J. N. Rogers, "The Evolution of the Attitude of Malcolm X Toward Whites," *Phylon* XLIV (June 1983), pp. 108-115; William Seraile, "The Assassination of Malcolm X: The View from Home and Abroad," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, V (January 1981), pp. 43-58; Eugene V. Wolfenstein, *The Victims of Democracy: Malcolm X and the Black Revolution* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981); Acklyn Lynch, "America: The Meaning of Malcolm X," *Black Collegian*, XXXV (December 1980), pp. 38-40; Butch White, "Remembrance: Malcolm X," *Black World*, XXIV (May 1975), pp. 88-89; Charles Winfrey, "The Evolution of Malcolm X," *Mazungumzo*, II (1972), pp. 74-82; Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, "St. Malcolm and the Black Revolutionists," *Negro Digest*, XVII (November 1967), pp. 4-11; Frederick D. Harper, "A Reconstruction of Malcolm X's Personality," *Afro-American Studies*, III (June 1972), pp. 1-6; John Illo, "The Rhetoric of Malcolm X," *Columbia University Forum* (Spring 1966), pp. 5-12; Cedric J. Robinson, "Malcolm Little as a Charismatic Leader," *Afro-American Studies*, III (September 1972), pp. 81-96; and John Henrik Clarke, "Malcolm X: The Man and His Times," *Negro Digest* XVIII (May 1969), pp. 23-27, 60-65. Dissertations on Malcolm X include: David E. Luellen, "Ministers and Martyrs: Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.," Doctoral Dissertation, Ball State University, 1972; James C. Wood, "Humor as a Form of Political Action: The Case of Malcolm X," Doctoral Dissertation, Arizona State University, 1975; Brygida I. Rydzka-Ostyn, "The oratory of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X," Doctoral Dissertation, University of Rochester, 1972; and Chukwuemeka Onwubu, "Black Ideologies and the Sociology of Knowledge: The Public Response to the Protest Thoughts and Teaching of Martin Luther king, Jr. and Malcolm X," Doctoral

Dissertation, Florida State University, 1970.

The third generation of left nationalists (1965-1980) were, in Julius Lester's words, "the children of Malcolm X." Born during the Great Depression and World War II, these black youths were the products of urbanization, social unrest and political transition. Most had little direct contact with the earlier nationalist trends of Garveyism, and did not find the morally conservative, politically tepid Nation of Islam an acceptable alternative to advance radical social change for oppressed blacks. They were the builders of new campus or community based, nationalist-oriented groups, from Black Student Unions to militant guerrilla factions like the Revolutionary Action Movement. Within the urban industrial working class, these young black men formed aggressive, nationalist labor caucuses — the Black Workers Congress and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. Internationally, they identified themselves with black revolutionists throughout the African Diaspora: Amilcar Cabral, Guyana's Walter Rodney, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, Angola's Agostinho Neto. The most influential non-U.S. black intellectual within the Black Power set was certainly Frantz Fanon. References to Fanon were quite common among the most incompatible black nationalist groups. See Irene L. Gendzier, *Frantz Fanon: A Critical Study* (New York: Vintage, 1974), especially pp. 44, 265; David Caute, *Frantz Fanon* (New York: Viking, 1970), especially pp. 103-107.

The major revolutionary nationalist political organization of the late 1960s-early 1970s was the Black Panther Party. Born in an anti-poverty agency office in the East Oakland ghetto in October, 1966, the Panthers soon achieved nationwide attention by confronting police patrols and for parading with a cachet of guns on the floor of the California legislature. The founders of the Panthers, Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newton, were joined within a year by an ex-rapist and Folsom prison inmate, Eldridge Cleaver. At one point in 1968, SNCC leaders Stokely Carmichael, James Forman and H. Rap Brown, were also members of the Panther Party. Even at its zenith, the Panthers probably had less than 500 members. But not since the African Blood Brotherhood of the early 1920s had black nationalism and socialism been combined theoretically and organizationally to create a force perceived by the U.S. state as a "vital threat to its internal security."

The literature on the Black Panther Party is substantial and still growing. Primary sources and documents by leading Black Panther members include:

Huey P. Newton, *Huey P. Newton Talks to The Movement About the Black Panther Party, Cultural Nationalism, SNCC, Liberals and White Revolutionaries* (New York: Random House, 1972); Bobby Seale, *Seize the Time; The Story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton* (New York: Random House, 1970); Seale, *A Lonely Rage: The Autobiography of Bobby Seale* (New York: Times Books, 1978); Eldridge Cleaver; *Soul On Ice* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967); Cleaver, *Eldridge Cleaver; Post-Prison Writings and Speeches* (New York: Random House, 1969); Cleaver, *Revolution in the Congo* (London: The Revolutionary Peoples' Communications Network, 1971); Cleaver, "On Lumpen Ideology," *Black Scholar*, IV (November-December 1972), pp. 2-10; Cleaver, *Soul On Fire* (Texas: Word Books, 1978).

General secondary sources providing the history, goals and basic political ideology of the Panthers include Earl Anthony, *Picking Up the Gun: A Report on the Black Panthers* (New York: Dial press, 1970); Philip S. Foner, ed., *The Black Panthers Speak* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970); G. Louis Heath, ed., *The Black Panther Leaders Speak: Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver and Company Speak Out Through the Black Panther's Official Newspaper* (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1976); Heath, *Off the Pigs!: The History and Literature of the Black Panther Party* (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1976); Edward M. Keating, *Free Huey!* (Berkeley, California: Ramparts Press, 1971); Reginald Major, *A Panther Is a Black Cat* (New York: William Morrow, 1971); Gene Marine, *The Black Panthers* (New York: New American Library, 1969); Don A. Schanche, *The Panther Paradox: A Liberal's Dilemma* (New York: D. McKay Company, 1970); Gail Sheehy, *Panthermania; The Clash of Black Against Black in One American City* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).

Sources on the turbulent relations between the Black Panther Party, the U.S. criminal justice system and the police comprise the majority of secondary source literature in print. The following works also include documents on individual court cases involving the Panthers: Michael J. Arlen, *An American Verdict* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1973); Kuwasi Balagoon et al., *Look for Me in the Whirlwind: The Collective Autobiography of the New York 21* (New York: Random House, 1971); Donald Freed, *Agony in New Haven: The Trial of Bobby Seale, Ericka Huggins and the Black Panther Party* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973); Edwin Kennebeck, *Juror Number Four; The*

Trial of Thirteen Black Panthers as Seen from the Jury Box (New York: Dalton, 1973); U.S. Congress, House Committee on Internal Security, *Gun-Barrel Politics: The Black Party, 1966-1971*. Report, Ninety-Second Congress (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971); Philip V. White, *Democratic Regime Violence, The Case of the Police and the Panthers* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University, 1972); Peter L. Zimroth, *Perversions of Justice: The Prosecution and Acquittal of the Panther 21* (New York: Viking Press, 1974).

The most prominent left nationalist political scientists and social historians of the Black Power and Pan-Africanist era included Ron Daniels, "The National Black Political Assembly: Its Position, Its Future," *Black World*, XXIV (October 1975), pp. 28-41; Daniels, "Revitalizing Independent Black Politics: Toward A Strategy for 1980 and Beyond," *First World*, II (1979), pp. 2-3, 59-61; Vincent Harding, "Black Students and the Impossible Revolution," *Journal of Black Studies*, I (September 1970), pp. 75-100; Harding,"Black Struggle and the International Crisis: Where Do We Go From Here?" *Black Books Bulletin*, II (spring 1975), pp. 14-21; Harding, "The Black Wedge in America: Struggle, Crisis and Hope, 1955-1975," *Black Scholar*, VII (December 1975), pp. 28-46; Mack H. Jones, "Black Officeholding and Political Development in the Rural South," *Review of Black Political Economy*, VI (Summer 1976), pp. 375-407; Jones, "The Bakke Case: The Logical Legacy of Atheoretical Protest Politics," *Freedomways*, XVIII (Winter 1978), pp. 16-20; William Strickland, "The Gary Convention and the Crisis of American Politics," *Black World*, XXI (October 1972), pp. 18-26; Strickland, "Whatever Happened to the Politics of Black Liberation?" *Black Scholar*, VII (October 1975), pp. 20-26; Strickland, "Black Intellectuals and the American Social Scene," *Black World*, XXV (November 1975), pp. 4-10; Strickland, "The Road Since Brown: The Americanization of the Race," *Black Scholar*, XI (September-October 1979), pp. 2-8; James E. Turner, "Implications of Class Conflict and Racial Cleavage for the U.S. Black Community," *Review of Black Political Economy*, VI (Winter 1976), pp. 133- 144; Turner, "Historical Dialects of Black Nationalist Movements in America," *Western Journal of Black Studies*, I (September 1977), pp. 164-183; Earl Ofari, *The Myth of Black Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970): Ofari, *Let Your Motto Be Resistance; The Life and Thought of Henry Highland Garnet* (Boston: Beacon, 1972); Ofari, "Black Labor: Powerful Force for Liberation," *Black World*, XXII (October 1973),

pp. 42-47; Ofari, "W.E.B. DuBois and Black Power," *Black World*, XIX (August 1970), pp. 26-28.

Other influential revolutionary nationalist political writers of this period include Max Stanford, "The Pan-African Party," *Black Scholar*, II (February 1971), pp. 26-31; Herb Boyd, "Blacks and the Police State: A Case Study of Detroit," *Black Scholar*, XII (January/February 1981), pp. 58-61; M. Frank Wright, "Frantz Fanon: His Work In Historical Perspective," *Black Scholar*, VI (July- August 1975), pp. 19-29; Ernie Mkalimoto, "Dying From the Inside: The Decline of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers," in Dick Cluster, ed., *They Should Have Served That Cup of Coffee: Seven Radicals Remember the Sixties* (Boston: South End Press, 1979), pp.71-109; Mkalimoto, "The Cultural Arm of Revolutionary Black Nationalism," *Negro Digest*, XIX (December 1969), pp. 11-18; Robert C. Smith, "Fanon and The Concept of Colonial Violence," *Black World*, XXII (May 1973), pp. 23-33; Clarence J. Munford, "Imperialism and the Third World Economy," *Black Scholar*, XI (May 1975), pp. 52-55; James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (New York: Macmillan, 1972).

Since the early 1970s, a fourth generation of left nationalists has begun to publish what may become a substantial body of literature in politics, history and the social sciences. This newest wave was not in the political or intellectual leadership of the 1960s, and as such were able to judge the relative strengths and internal contradictions of Black Power and Pan-Africanism with some degree of objectivity. Like the first generation of revolutionary nationalists, these activists more clearly define themselves as Marxists, or historical materialists. They tend to be active in all-black political movements or have used social science research to describe solutions for urban economic problems of underdevelopment or police brutality. Like most of the second generation of radical nationalists, these scholar/activists tend to be critical of the political history of the CPUSA, but simultaneously reject any romantic idealist analysis or anticommunism of the cultural nationalists. They are deeply concerned about the relationship between sexism and black nationalism, and emphasize the political importance of class stratification within the black community. Part of this generation of social scientists/activists includes Damu Imara Smith, William W. Sales, Robert L. Allen, Adolph Reed and Manning Marable. A representative sample of their work in black social science would include: Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* (New York: Doubleday, 1969); Allen,

Reluctant Reformers: Racism and Social Reform Movements in the United States (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1974); Sales, "New York City: Prototype of the Urban Crisis," *Black Scholar*, VII (November 1975), pp. 20-39; Smith, "The Upsurge of Police Repression: An Analysis," *Black Scholar*, XII (January/February 1981), pp. 35-57; Reed, "Pan-Africanism: Ideology for Liberation?" in Robert Chrisman and Nathan Hare, eds., *Pan-Africanism* (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1974); Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy and Society* (Boston: South End Press, 1983), and *Race, Reform and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945-1982* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1984).

A final historiographical note: if recent efforts to find the theoretical nexus between race and class within the black movement succeed, such attempts are based upon the impressive foundations of scholarship and political leadership personified in the work of DuBois. His pioneering study of the African heritage of the black American, *The Negro* (New York: Holt, 1915), draw the relationship between racial prejudice, imperialism and slavery. DuBois' *Darkwater: Voices From Within the Veil* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1920), *The Gift of Black Folk* (Boston: Stratford, 1924), *Black Folk Then and Now: An Essay in the History and Sociology of the Negro Race* (New York: Holt, 1939), *Color and Democracy: Colonies and Peace* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1945), and *The World and Africa: An Inquiry Into the Part which Africa Has Played in World History* (New York: Viking, 1947), all set the basic theoretical and research guidelines in the areas of Pan-Africanism, race relations, international black politics, African and Afro-American social history and class struggles. A brief selection of recent secondary sources on DuBois' thought include: Dan S. Green, "W.E.B. DuBois: His Journalistic Career," *Negro History Bulletin*, XL (March-April, 1977), pp. 672-677; Joseph P. DeMarco, "The Rationale and Foundation of DuBois' Theory of Economic Cooperation," *Phylon*, XXXV (March 1974), pp. 5-15; Vivian W. Henderson, "Race, Economics, and Public Policy with Reflections on W.E.B. DuBois," *Phylon*, XXXVII (March 1976), pp. 1-11; Dan S. Green and Edwin D. Driver, "W.E.B. DuBois: A Case in the Sociology of Sociological Negation," *Phylon* XXXVII (December 1976), pp. 308-333; Michael Martin and Lamont Yeakey, "Pan African-Asian Solidarity: A Central theme in DuBois' Conception of Racial Stratification and Struggle on a World Scale," *Phylon*, XLIII (September 1982) pp. 202-217; Joseph P.

DeMarco, *The Social Thought of W.E.B. DuBois* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1983); Manning Marable, "Alain Locke, W.E.B. DuBois and the Crisis of Black Education," in Russell J. Linnemann, ed., *Alain Locke* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), pp. 63-76; and Marable, "Peace and Black Liberation: The Contributions of W.E.B. DuBois," *Science and Society*, XLVII (Winter 1983-1984), pp. 385-405.

VI

The Marxist critique of society has of course been expressed most clearly by the American Communist Party. Despite its ambiguous relationship with both black nationalism and the more reformist, integrationist leaders of the black community, the Party has always been able to attract a number of key black intellectuals, from Cyril Briggs and Paul Robeson. Major black Communist intellectuals since 1960 include Tony Monteiro, "The Sixth Pan-African Congress," *Freedomways*, XIV (Fourth Quarter 1974), pp. 295-302; Henry Winston, *Strategy for a Black Agenda* (New York: International Publishers, 1971); Winston, "1980: Time for Unity and Advance," *Political Affairs*, LIX (January 1980), pp. 1-2; Winston, "Reagan's Election, The Black Vote and the Struggle for Equality," *Political Affairs*, LX (February 1981), pp. 1-6; James E. Jackson, *Revolutionary Tracings in World Politics and Black Liberation* (New York: International Publishers, 1974); Jackson, "October's Child in Humanity's Champion," *Political Affairs*, LIX (November 1980), pp. 1-3; Jackson, CPSU Congress Highlights Peace Now For People's Progress," *Political Affairs* LX (April 1981), pp. 4-9; Claude M. Lightfoot, *Ghetto Rebellion to Black Liberation* (New York: International Publishers, 1968). The most dynamic black spokesperson for Marxism-Leninism during the past decade has been a former political prisoner and social philosopher, Angela Davis. Studies by or about Davis include: Davis, *Angela Davis: An Autobiography* (New York: Random House, 1974); Davis, *If They Come in the Morning* (New York: New American Library, 1971); Bettina Aptheker, ed., *The Morning Breaks: The Trial of Angela Davis* (New York: International Publishers, 1975); Reginald Major, *Justice in the Round: The Trial of Angela Davis* (New York: Third Press, 1976); Regina Nadelson, *Who is Angela Davis?* (New York: Peter H. Wyden, 1972); J.A. Parker, *Angela Davis: The Making of a Revolutionary* (New York: Arlington House, 1973); Davis, "Rape, Racism and the Capitalist Setting," *Black Scholar*, IX (April 1978), pp. 24-30.

Apart from the Marxist-Leninist tradition of the Communist Party yet identified within the left is the tradition of Trotskyism. Since C.L.R. James' lengthy discussions with Trotsky in the late 1930s in Coyoacan, Mexico, on the race question in the United States, white and black Trotskyists have been inclined to favor many nationalist positions, including the creating of an all-black political party. Black Trotskyist political essayists since 1970 include Baxter Smith, "The Resurgence of the KKK," *Black Scholar*, XII (January/February 1981), pp. 25-30; Smith, "New Evidence of FBI 'Disruption' Program," *Black Scholar*, VI (July- August 1975), pp. 43-48; Cathy Sedwick and Reba Williams, "Black Women and the Equal Rights Amendment," *Black Scholar*, VII (July-August 1976), pp. 24-29; Derrick Morrison "The Combined Character of the Coming American Revolution," Tony Thomas, "Leninism, Stalinism, and Black Nationalism," and Maxine Williams, "Why Women's Liberation Is Important to Black Women," in Tony Thomas, ed., *Black Liberation and Socialism* (New York: Pathfinder, 1974); Tony Thomas, *In Defense of Black Nationalism* (New York: Pathfinder Press Pamphlet, 1971); Thomas, "Socialists and the Struggle Against Racism," and "The Fight for Black Liberation: The Current Stage and Its Tasks," in Jack Barnes et al., eds., *Prospects for Socialism in America* (New York: Pathfinder, 1976). Matthew Ward, a black socialist autoworker, is a former Trotskyist whose book *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* (Boston: South End Press, 1978), details forty years of black labor history in Detroit. Also see Leon Trotsky, *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination* [Conversations with C.L.R. James] (New York and Toronto: Pathfinder, 1978).

In the mid-1970s, a small black Maoist tendency had surfaced within the nationalist community, often if not primarily among cultural nationalists who had begun to question their ideology in the face of growing class contradictions within the black political economy. One representative piece by a former nationalist-turned- Maoist was by Mark Smith, "A Response to Haki Madhubuti," *Black Scholar*, VI (January/February 1975), pp. 44-53. Other black intellectuals influenced by the Chinese Revolution and/or Maoism were Abdul Alkalimat (Gerald McWorter), co-author of a widely used research guide to black research, *Introduction to Black Studies* (Chicago: Peoples College, 1975); black nationalist activists in the South such as Nelson Johnson, Imamu Amiri Baraka, and James Boggs. See "Report From National Planning Conference: Year to Pull the Covers Off Imperialism," *Black Scholar*, VI (January-

February 1975), pp. 54-56; Philadelphia Workers' Organizing Committee, *Racism and the Workers' Movement* (Philadelphia: PWOC, 1978(?)); "The Chinese Revolution: Putting Politics in Command," in James and Grace Lee Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 47-80. The Communist Workers Party, a Maoist sect with a substantial black membership, was particularly active in black nationalist political activities in the late 1970s. See "Nelson Johnson: Leader Who Makes The Bourgeoisie Tremble, From Black Power to Communist," *Workers Viewpoint* (26 April 1980), pp. 7-10. On the Chinese Communist position of the U.S. black movement, see Mao Tse-Tung, *Statement in Support of the Afro-American Struggle Against Violent Repression* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1968).

There is also a body of literature on the black political experience that largely escapes easy categorization. Neither cultural nor left nationalist in orientation, these studies are essentially contemporary narratives of major electoral and institutional advances achieved by blacks since 1964. At best, these monographs or articles assume a moderately reformist or Social Democratic posture, advancing the necessity for social, economic or educational reforms within the existing unequal power relationships of U.S. society. "Social change- oriented" essays include works by black politicians such as U.S. Representative John Conyers, "Toward Black Political Empowerment: Can the System be Transformed?" *Black Scholar*, VII (October 1975), pp. 2-7; Conyers, "The Politics of Unemployment: Lost—Another Generation of Black Youth," *Freedomways*, XV (Third Quarter 1975), pp. 153-160; Conyers, "The Economy Is The Issue, Planning For Full Employment," *Freedomways*, XVII (Second Quarter 1977), pp. 71-78; Conyers, "Views on Impeachment," *Freedomways*, XIV (Fourth Quarter 1974), pp. 303-315; Conyers, "Police Violence and Riots," *Black Scholar*, XII (January/February 1981), pp. 2-5; U.S. Senator Edward Brooke, "Black Business, Problems and Prospects," *Black Scholar*, VI (April 1975), pp. 2-7; U.S. Representative Charles B. Rangel, "Charitable Giving and the Gross National Product," *Black Scholar*, VII (March 1976), pp. 2-4; U.S. Representative William L. Clay, "Emerging New Black Politics," *Black World*, XXI (October 1972), pp. 32-39; U.S. Representative Ronald V. Dellums, "The Coalition's the Thing," *Freedomways*, XII (First Quarter 1972), pp. 7-16; Dellums, "Black Leadership: For Change or For Status Quo?" *Black Scholar*, VIII (January-February1977), pp. 2-5; Dellums, "The Responsibility of Black Politics," *Black Scholar*, X (January-February 1979), pp. 38-44.

Material by or about Georgia State Senator Julian Bond includes Bond, "Nonviolence: An Interpretation," *Freedomways*, III (Spring 1963), pp. 159-162; Bond, *Black Candidates: Southern Campaign Experiences* (Atlanta: Voter Education Project, Southern Regional Council, 1969); Bond, *A Time to Speak, A Time to Act* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972); Kenneth Bancroft Clark, ed., *The Black Man in American Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Metropolitan Applied Research Center for the Institute for Black Elected Officials, 1969); John Neale, *Julian Bond: Black Rebel* (New York: William Morrow, 1971).

Some political scientists within the black community devoted their entire research activities to the post-1960 period but never committed their work to anything more than descriptive categories of analysis. Typical of this substantial yet unfocused body of literature were the works of Chuck Stone, *Black Political Power in America* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1970); and Hanes Walton, *Black Political Parties: An Historical and Political Analysis* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972); Walton, *Black Republicans: The Politics of the Black and Tans* (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1975); Walton, *The Negro in Third Party Politics* (Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1969); Walton, *The Study and Analysis of Black Politics* (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1973). Other important recent works on black politics and particularly on the prospects for black socioeconomic development include: Michele Wallace,*Black Macho and the Myth of the Super Woman* (New York: Dial, 1979), a controversial best-seller that attacks black activist males for their "sexism"; Greta McCullom Hawthorne, *Black Holocaust in 1984: An Alternative* (New York: Carlton Press, 1980), which predicts race war and the creation of a U.S. fascist state; Hardy T. Frye, *Black Parties and Political Power: A Case Study* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980); Kay Lehman Scholozman and Sidney Verba, *Injury to Insult: Unemployment, Class, and Political Response* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); Phyllis A. Wallace, *Black Women in the Labor Force* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1980); James Button, *Black Violence: Political Impact of the 1960's Riots* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Edward Ransford, *Race and Class in American Society* (Cambridge: Schenkman, 1976); Harrell R. Rodgers, Jr., ed., *Racism and Inequality* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1975); Michael Reich, *Racial Inequality: A Political-Economic Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1981).

As class divisions within the black U.S. community multiply in the 1980s,

with the growth of "Black Reaganism" at the top of the income ladder and with the destruction of industrial and agricultural labor jobs for blacks at the bottom, new interpretations of black society will emerge. The "Negro Question", once relegated safely to the fields of anthropology and human relations, assumes pivotal importance to the future of America's civil society and political stability as a whole. The cutting edge of American historiography, political theory, sociology and political economy will for the future continue to be the issue of race. Whether this social science research is translated eventually into newer and more egalitarian political and material conditions for blacks within a racist society and capitalist state remains to be seen.

Black Marxism in the White Academy:
The Contours and Contradictions of an Emerging School of Black Thought

Abdul Alkalimat

The Nationalist/Marxist dialogue has often been staged as a polemical slugfest in which adversarial combat took place with great bravado and energy. There has been an unfortunate assumption that each position was to be dealt with as an ideal configuration and not as concrete, historical, and necessary developments. Nothing new would be possible; it would always be the same debate. This review simply holds that out of the Black revolt has emerged a new Black Marxism of the 1980s, which deserves careful review and serious criticism.

A significant mandate comes from the current positive relationship between Black liberation theologians and Black Marxists. For instance, James Cone, one of the early theologians who articulated the new radical Black power consciousness as critical Black Christian thought, has now declared that Marxism is necessary for a theory, indeed theology, of Black liberation. He stresses the use of Marx to analyze class exploitation in *For My People: Black Theology and the Black Church:* "Marxism as a tool of social analysis can disclose the gap between appearance and reality, and thereby help Christians to see how things really are." (p. 187) He goes on to make it clear that culture will affect the use of Marxism and Christianity: "Things are in a state of flux. Nothing is nailed down. Christianity and Marxism must be redefined in the light of their origins and of the history and culture of oppressed peoples in their current liberation struggles." (p. 187)

The Black church is the organized expression of an ideology that has been the most hostile to Marxism. However, a serious dialogue has begun. We are learning from the great religious leaders in South Africa and Nicaragua. To enter a new stage of theoretical development, intellectuals and policy makers in the Black community can broaden their scope by joining this dialogue.

Rooted in the recent generation of Black revolt, a new school of thought is developing: a Black Marxism. What is a school of thought? It is collective, intellectual production, a rational coherence forged through the collective prac-

tice of individuals who share a common approach, point of view, and purpose. A school of thought is made possible by the structural tension in the material, cultural, and ideological forces of the situation, i.e., a school of thought meets a historical necessity. But a school of thought must be consciously developed. This review is written as a call to action, a challenge to mobilize Black intellectuals to follow the road of a new school of Black Marxism, or at least a challenge to understand Black Marxism as a legitimate intellectual activity existing in tension with the two distinct traditions, Marxism and the Black nationalist revolt.

This essay focuses on the recent work of six Black scholars which is beginning to define the contours of the school and the contradictions within it: Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983); Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance! An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (1982); Amiri Baraka, *Daggers and Javelins: Essays 1974-1979* (1984); C. J. Munford, *Production Relations, Class and Black Liberation: A Marxist Perspective in Afro-American Studies* (1978); Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy and Society* (1983); and Lloyd Hogan, *Principles of Black Political Economy* (1984).

Earlier in this volume a paradigm of unity, an intellectual terrain of discourse, was presented. One explicit purpose of this framework was to facilitate the Nationalist/Marxist dialogue in a self-affirming and mutually sharing way. This is possible because the paradigm includes the main content of Black intellectual history and the current state of scientific knowledge.

By way of review, the paradigm deals with two central questions: (1) What is the basic content of the Black experience? This is answered by considering the four basic categories of human experience in general: biology, political economy, society, and consciousness. The principle aspects of the Black experience are contained in the sub categories of race, class, nationality, and ideology. The course of human history has been a development of causal linkages in just that order, from the biological to the ideological. Now is the epoch for a decisive turn, the era of conscious revolutionary change, the age in which we consciously overcome fundamental material problems of the human experience that have plagued us: oppression and exploitation based on nationality, class, age, sex, and race.

(2) How does this experience change? The logic of this change is captured

by two categories, social cohesion and social disruption. The central focus in on the reproduction of social life with continuity, the transmission of useful and relevant knowledge (habits, custom, tradition, etc.) from one generation to the next. The historical materialist approach to this is based on political economy, but materialism in general has to take into consideration all concrete and specific aspects of the human experience. The Afro-American experience has gone through three main stages of social cohesion — slavery, rural tenancy, and the urban ghetto — and three critical transitional social disruptions — enslavement, emancipation, and urbanization. Africa must always be acknowledged as the historical origins out of which we came, but we always remember (1) that all human beings first developed in Africa and (2) that human civilization for the entire world began there as well. In the end, humanity is one.

This paradigm provides a clear picture of analytic relationships, a prism through which we can see logical order in the complex historical improvisation of the Black experience, both freedom and necessity. The plan now is (1) to analyze six recent major works of the Black Marxism School; and (2) to use the paradigm for summing up unities and controversies.

Cedric Robinson[1]

In *Black Marxism*, Robinson sets out to articulate "an ideologically based or epistemologically coherent historical tradition of Black radicalism." (p. 95. This is no mere academic exercise for he states that given the fundamental flaws in western civilization, Black unity in revolt is necessary.

> ...a civilization maddened by its own perverse assumptions and contradictions is loose in the world. A Black radical tradition formed in opposition to that civilization and conscious of itself is one part of the solution. Whether the other oppositions generated from within Western society and without will mature remains problematical. But for now we must be as one. (p. 452)

Robinson sets his goal as "primarily a theoretical discourse." Further, he argues that this has a specific, historically constituted character:

> ...the practice of theory is informed by struggle. Here the points of combat were threefold: an opposition to the ideas purporting to situate African peoples which have dominated European literature; a critique of a socialist intellectual tradition which, too infrequently, or casually, has interrogated its own bases for being; and a consideration of the import of the ambivalences with which Westernized Black radical intelligentsia first began the formulation of Black radical theory. The terrain was not made by choice but dictated by historical inheritance. (p. 441)

Robinson's analysis initially develops a historical periodization of oppres-

sion and exploitation, the material basis for changing forms of European racism:

> 1. The racial ordering of European society from its formative period which extends into the medieval and feudal ages as "blood" and racial beliefs and legends.
> 2. The Islamic, i.e. Arab, Persian, Turkish and African, domination of Mediterranean civilization and the consequent retarding of European social and cultural life: the Dark Ages.
> 3. The incorporation of African, Asian and peoples of the New World into the world system emerging from late feudalism and merchant capitalism.
> 4. The dialectic of colonialism, plantocratic slavery and resistance from the 16th Century forwards and the formations of industrial labour and labour reserves. (p. 83.

A periodization scheme is a necessary objective of analysis, but it is frequently misused, as Robinson makes clear:

> ...the construction of periods of time is only a sort of catchment for events. Their limited utility, though, is often abused when we turn from the *ordering* of things, that is chronological sequencings, to the *order* of things, that is the arrangement of their significances, meanings and relations. Increments of time contoured to abstract measure rarely match the rhythms of human action. It is important to bear this in mind as we seek to come to terms with the Black theorists whose writings and thoughts have appeared primarily in the 20th Century. Their era began with the endings of slavery. They were, it might be said, the children of the slaves. (p. 253)

Robinson's main thesis is that the materialist forces of class struggle set the stage on which actors—real, live, multidimensional human beings—act out the drama of history. He argues for a historically-derived, ideological, cultural basis for Black Marxism.

> For those African men and women whose lives were interrupted by enslavement and transportation, it was reasonable to expect that they would attempt, and in some ways realize, the recreation of their lives. It was not, however, an understanding of the Europeans which preserved those Africans in the grasp of slavers, planters, merchants and colonizers. Rather, it was the ability to conserve their native consciousness of the world from alien intrusion, the ability to imaginatively recreate a precedent metaphysic while being subjected to enslavement, racial domination and repression. This was *the raw material of the Black radical tradition,* the values, ideas, conceptions and constructions of reality from which resistance was manufactured. And in each instance of resistance, the social and psychological dynamics which are shared by human communities in long-term crises resolved for the rebels the particular moment, the collective and personal chemistries which congealed into social movement. But it was the materials constructed from a shared philosophy developed in the African past and transmitted as culture, from which revolutionary consciousness was realized and the ideology of struggle formed. (p. 443, emphasis added)

He argues that the slave trade was the historical result of the development of European political economies. This led to two seemingly opposite aspects of essentially the same historical process: (1) The increase in racism against

Blacks: "...the more that Africans and their descendants assimilated cultural materials from colonial society, the less human they became in the minds of the colonialists." (p. 164) (2) The increase in class exploitation of whites: "The greed of the English and European merchants easily overran their racial and national sympathies. Thus it was that the crews of their slaving ships died at rates perhaps even higher than their human cargoes." (p. 162)

Robinson advances what he calls a "Historical Archaeology of the Black Radical Tradition." (p. 173) This process of massive resettlement of Africans under brutal forms of European domination resulted in a worldwide struggle of Africans in revolt. This was a struggle for group survival based on non-European peoples' common bonds of identity against their adversary. He finds common behavior in the Black revolt of Palmares, slave revolts in the U.S.A., the Haitian revolution, resistance in Brazil and the British West Indies, and African Revolts in the 19th century.

Robinson articulates the actual substance of the Black radical tradition in its 20th century formative stage through an analysis of the work of DuBois, C. L. R. James, and Richard Wright. DuBois and James are the petty bourgeois intellectuals who find their way to Marxism by negating the bourgeois intellectual traditions of the U.S.A. and England; Wright is the son of a sharecropper who voices their interests on his sojourn through the ideological influences of western civilization.

DuBois and James made major contributions by dealing with the transition from slavery to freedom. DuBois in his work *Black Reconstruction* laid down a basically Marxist analysis. He focused on how class struggle for democracy was the essence of Reconstruction, an experience where Black people were not only the main issue, but also some of the main actors who made history. James took from Europe some insights about democratic revolutions, especially the writing of Marx on the fight for democracy as a class struggle. He placed the Black radical tradition in the heart of the world system of capitalist development. Wright drew on the Black folk tradition to articulate a native consciousness that expressed the class realities in an inherently American form. It is a form shaped and motivated by the cultural complexities of Black history, from tenant sharecropper through the migration north to the industrial city.

Robinson has made a great contribution to Black Marxism by providing the major work so far on the issues of class and race in European ideological development, the Black radical tradition, and the emergence of a Black Marx-

ism as the greatest extension of the Black radical tradition.

Cornel West[2]

Robinson focuses on the spontaneous dynamic of Black historical culture and its impact on the development of a self-conscious Black radical tradition, especially as it has developed as a variant of Marxism (i.e., Black Marxism). West is concerned with a parallel project: the dialectical relationship of Black Christian thought with Marxism, and the emergence of what he calls Afro-American critical thought (his version of what I am calling the new school of Black Marxism). In his major work, *Prophesy Deliverance: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity,* he states:

> I shall define Afro-American critical thought as an interpretation of Afro-American history, especially its cultural heritage and political struggles, which provides norms for responding to challenges presently confronting black Americans...It attempts to make theoretically explicit what is implicit in history, to describe and demystify cultural and social practices and offer solutions to urgent problems besetting black Americans. (p. 22)

West is concerned with bringing coherence to his analysis and therefore begins by positing a historical periodization of what he calls an "overarching interpretive framework" for African Americans in conflict:

> 1. Modernity, colonial provinciality, localism (1688-1789)
> 2. Heyday of modernity, postcolonial provinciality, Christian practices (1789-1871)
> 3. Decline of modernity, industrial provinciality, inclusionary practices (1871-1950)
> 4. End of modernity, postindustrial cosmopolitanism, dispersive practices (1951-now) (pp. 27-44)

He attempts to define the hostile environment using a materialist approach to culture and political economy. In a serious effort to avoid a simplistic reductionism, he discusses racism:

> ...without simply appealing to the objective demands of the prevailing mode of production, the political interests of the slaveholding class, or the psychological needs of the dominant white racial group. (p. 47)

His discussion of racism is trenchant because it argues that racism is not a deviation but a logical manifestation of the best of western civilization:

> To put it crudely, my argument is that the authority of science, undergirded by a modern philosophical discourse guided by Greek ocular metaphors and Cartesian notions, promotes and encourages the activities of observing, comparing, measuring, and ordering the physical characteristics of human bodies. Given the renewed appreciation and appropriation of classical antiquity, these activities are regulated by classical aesthetic and cultural norms. The creative fusion of scientific investiga-

tion, Cartesian epistomology, and classical ideals produced forms of rationality, scientificity, and objectivity which, though efficacious in the quest for truth and knowledge, prohibited the intelligibility and legitimacy of the idea of black equality in beauty, culture, and intellectual capacity. In fact, to "think" such an idea was to be deemed irrational, barbaric, or mad. (p. 48)

In sum, West goes on to develop a four-part typology of cultural relations of domination and resistance.

Cultural processes can be understood in the light of four categories: hegemonic, pre-hegemonic, neo-hegemonic, and counter-hegemonic.

Hegemonic culture is to be viewed as the effectively operative dominant world views, sensibilities, and habits that sanction the established order. *Pre-hegemonic culture* consists of those residual elements of the past which continue to shape and mold thought and behavior in the present; it often criticizes hegemonic culture, harking back to a golden age in the pristine past. *Neo-hegemonic culture* constitutes a new phase of hegemonic culture; it postures as an oppositional force, but, in substance, is a new manifestation of people's allegiance and loyalty to the status quo. *Counter-hegemonic culture* represents genuine opposition to hegemonic culture; it fosters an alternative set of habits, sensibilities, and world views that cannot possibly be realized within the perimeters of the established order. (p. 120, emphasis added)

On the side of resistance, West develops a model of four traditions of Black response to the North American scene and identifies the literary figure who best embodies that tradition:

1. The exceptionalist tradition (W.E.B. DuBois)
2. The assimilationist tradition (E. Franklin Frazier)
3. The marginalist tradition (Richard Wright)
4. The humanist tradition (Ralph Ellison)

West argues that the most advanced position is the counter-hegemonic culture as expressed by the Afro-American humanist tradition.

As a theologian, West focuses primarily on a Black theology of liberation, placing the religious tradition of Blacks within the more general humanist tradition. He develops a historical periodization of Black liberation theology:

1. Critique of slavery (1650-1863)
2. Critique of institutional racism (1864-1969)
3. Critique of white North American theology (1969-1977)
4. Critique of U.S. capitalism (1977-present)

Marxism and Black liberation theology, according to West, share the following characteristics: (1) a methodology of exposure, an oppositional search for truth, which reveals a dialectic of negation, preservation, and transformation; (2) linking liberation with a new socio-economic order, though neither spells this out in any detail (the classless society and/or heaven on earth); (3) a critique of liberal capitalist America. Although he thinks Marxism has severe

shortcomings, he clearly believes that Marxism is needed by Black liberation theologians:

> I am suggesting that the more black theologians discard or overlook Marxist social criticism, the farther they distance themselves from the fundamental determinant of black oppression and any effective strategy to alleviate it. (p. 115)

According to West, Marxism contributes to Black liberation theology as follows:

> Revolutionary Christian perspective and praxis must remain anchored in the prophetic Christian tradition in the Afro-American experience which provides the norms of individuality and democracy; guided by the cultural outlook of the Afro-American humanist tradition which promotes the vitality and vigor of black life; and informed by the social theory and political praxis of progressive Marxism which proposes to approximate as close as is humanly possible the precious values of individuality and democracy as soon as God's will be done [that is, revolutionary change]. (p. 146)

From within the heart of the ideological cauldron in which that vast majority of Black people find themselves, West has made an important leap toward revolutionary thought. Up to this point, with some important exceptions (e.g. George Woodbury), Black religious thinkers have not been open to Marxism. Now we have young theoreticians who are making the leap, daring to speak out against the taboo. This is a fundamental contribution to Black Marxism.

Amiri Baraka[3]

Baraka's recent work, *Daggers and Javelins*, contains six essays which provide basic insights that if developed would be a major theoretical contribution of Black Marxism to literature: a political cultural analysis. He begins with a materialist view of culture and literature:

> The development of a *specifically* Afro-American culture must wait for the emergence of the Afro-American people, the particular nationality composed of Africans transformed by the fact and processes of slavery into an American people of African descent.
>
> The most practical artifacts of the culture are the tools and environment of day-to-day living. In these practical pursuits are found the earliest Afro-American art—artifactual reflections of the life of that people. Music, because it is most abstract and could not therefore be so severely limited and checked by slave culture, must be the earliest of the "non-practical" arts to emerge (although a work song is to help one work!): the work song, chants, hollers, the spiritual, eventually the blues.
>
> Afro-American literature rises as a reflection of the self-conscious self-expression of the Afro-American people, but to be an Afro-American literature, truly, it must reflect, in the main, the ideological and socio-cultural portrait of that people! (p. 140)

Baraka is arguing for a modal definition that roots the parameters of an

Afro-American literature in the material "socio-cultural portrait" of the Afro-American people. The main thrust of his analysis results in some important insights into the historical periodization of Afro-American literature. The beginning of the literature is not from Wheatley or Hammon, but the slave narratives:

> The slave narratives are an ideological and emotional reflection of the great majority of the Afro-American people as well as a stunningly incisive portrait of slave America. They are the voice of the *majority* of black people, as literally as that can be taken. They are also a *genre*, a distinctive *body* of work, that indicate a way of living and thinking in the society. They are antislavery, fierce indictments of American slave society, the exact opposite of Wheatley-Hammon. When the various teachers of Afro-American literature scramble the narratives and Wheatley-Hammon together, they scramble the history and ideology (i.e., perception of reality) contained in each. So that what is hidden is just where these writers are coming from *seen in the context of real life*—who and what they really are and their *use*, finally, to the Afro-American people and to American society as a whole (and to the entire world!). (p. 311)

This literature of the slave experience is important, but it is not the only literary expression. Baraka points to religious works, especially sermons, and to the pre-civil war, Black nationalist protest writings as well.

DuBois is put forward as the main literary figure linking Reconstruction to the early 20th century movements:

> DuBois is the great link between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His *Souls of Black Folk*, and indeed DuBois's constant *forward movement* ideologically, from isolated democrat to black capitalist and yeasayer for the "talented tenth" and the emerging black bourgeoisie (its militant national wing as opposed to the comprador wing of Booker T. Washington) to Pan-Africanist and socialist and finally to Marxist communist, is the underlying dynamic of all of our intellectual and political journey. But *SOBF* is the connection to the Harlem Renaissance. Its multiple forms and omnisensitivity, from music and cultural history and criticism to polemic ("Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others") to short fiction, prepares a whole artistic and ideological pallet for the young urban intelligentsia of the Harlem Renaissance. (p. 313)

Baraka goes on to Langston Hughes and Richard Wright as the main literary figures of the paradigmatic migration in which the Black masses were torn from the bosom of rural intimacy and down-home action, and moved to the fast-paced metropolis, whose heartbeat was the factory and where the commodification of culture functioned to make everyone the same. This migration led to the Harlem Renaissance, a cultural explosion that announced Black people had an ideological expression of their new identity.

What was the basis of this cultural movement?

> ...the Harlem Renaissance is the maturation of an urban, Afro-American intelli-

gentsia, symbolizing the movement of large numbers of the black masses out of the Afro-American nation in the old black-belt South into the rest of the United States, as an oppressed national minority, transforming from a largely Southern, rural and agricultural, peasant people, to the present day: almost half of the black masses live in the North, Midwest, and West, in urban centers, as part of an industrial working class; ninety-six percent of the black masses are part of that multinational working class in the United States. (pp. 313-314)

What was the role of Langston Hughes?

Hughes's early work is classic "Black Is Beautiful—We Are an African People" writing, which is the revolutionary nationalism of the oppressed people whose first utterances are defense against the cultural aggression of imperialism, which says those it oppresses are stupid, ugly, and have no history! ...The 1930's and 1940's brought changes to Langston Hughes's work, and perhaps the strongest work is collected in the volume *Good Morning, Revolution.* There we see a distinctive move into a militant internationalism, embracing the struggle of the majority of the world's peoples for liberation with a stirring and conscious anti-imperialism. (p. 314)

And what was the role of Richard Wright? Baraka reveals this in a discussion of *Black Boy.*

Black Boy is about transition, the literal movement of the Afro-American people, and their ideas and whole spiritual life, from a peasant people grappling with the weight of the post-Reconstruction reaction to a people moving toward a new consciousness that would come from the cities, from nonfarm work, from travel, from growing involvement with industrial labor, from education. Wright represents the Afro-American consciousness broadening past mere reflex reaction to oppression—from reflex to reflects. (p. 176)

Writing in the urban context, and as one of the major literary figures of the Black Arts Movement, Baraka is clear that his Black Marxism requires him to understand history in order to become actively engaged in making history. This leads to definite ideas about the role of art in making the future:

Art must fight for the progress of society; it must identify with the most advanced forces in society and reflect their struggle to perfect humanity consciously. To back away from this commitment is to commit oneself to the maintenance of the backward and the reactionary. (p. 165)

He substantiates this with a political analysis of more conservative approaches to Black literature. For Baraka, the role of art he proposes is not an esoteric claim, but an assessment made by all progressive forces in the Black movement, including Afro-American Studies:

. . .Afro-American Studies will . . . continue to develop as a summation of the lives of the Afro-American people on the one hand, and one catalyst for further struggle to transform those lives on the other. And in the best of these programs of Afro-American Studies will be seen the clear and irreducible motion of the black masses for self-determination and democratic rights. (p. 284)

Baraka is an interesting barometer for Black intellectual developments—as

are all major figures who have been on the front lines, close enough to the dynamic of our history to be part of each new and important trend. Black Marxism will be enhanced by this development, especially if his insights are systematized by himself and others into a full theoretical and empirical historical periodization of Afro-American literature and art.

Clarence J. Munford[4]

C. J. Munford is an important but little-known Black political economist. He presents a more orthodox approach rooted in an exegeses of Marx and the application of this Marxism to the Afro-American experience. His approach is comparative, always contrasting the Afro-American experience with some other experience in world history.

His analysis of Afro-Americans is rooted in a historical periodization of class relations:

1. Slavery: Using formal political economy, he demonstrates that antebellum slavery was part of the world capitalist system and therefore quite distinct from the slavery of antiquity. It is precisely its relationship to the capitalist system that makes this modern slavery more vicious and barbaric than the patriarchal slavery of ancient Greece, Egypt, or Rome.

2. Transformation of social structure: The underlying class dynamic of the 20th century Black community is the complex transformation from a relatively homogeneous community to a more complex one. The majority was transformed from agrarian peons to an urban proletariat:

> In 1890, at the height of the era of agrarian peonage, ninety per cent of toiling Blacks worked in agriculture and in the tertiary sector of the U.S. economy as agricultural producers and domestic and personal service labourers. Fifty years later, migration, urbanization and proletarianization had dramatically reduced the percentage of Blacks in farming and domestic and personal service by forty-five per cent. As early as 1917—the year of the October Revolution which ushered in a new era in human history—the Great Migration in America had progressed to the point where W. E. B. DuBois could talk of "teeming thousands, if not millions, of Black proletarians" concentrated in urban centers. Thirty years before, the only large class in the Black community were the comparatively dispersed and often isolated peons of the rural towns, villages, hamlets and back-country farmsteads of the old South and Southwest. Thus the class composition of Black America was completely transformed in the generations from 1890 to 1940. The urban proletariat became the *decisive class* in the Black community ousting agrarian peons, most of whom, either personally or in the persons of their children, donned a new social guise by deserting the farms and plantations for the factories, slums and ghettos of the cities. That is, when they were lucky enough to find factory jobs replacing former European immigrants. (pp. 61-62)

3. Lumpen theory: Munford is critical of the popular use of the category

lumpenproletariat to describe the mass of Blacks dislocated from productive work. Most of these people are not the classical vipers who have degenerated into a dangerous scum. Most of them are what Munford calls a "ghetto subproletariat."

Out of this analysis of economic forces, Munford attacks racism as false—incorrect and essentially political—thinking. His approach uses the scientific evidence of human evolution—biological and sociological—to refute racism. He sums up this position:

> Marxism-Leninism has proven conclusively that there is no basis in natural science for racist fabrications about the biological inequality of the races. At certain stages in their historical development all peoples share certain basic features regardless of their racial specifics. Marxism shows that *labour* was the determining factor in the origin of man and society. Its discoveries about the role of production in social development refute racist lies. Regardless of race, man develops in accordance with universal social laws. (p. 222)

Munford relies heavily on Soviet scholarship; however, his orientation and central concerns, in addition to his willingness to make a new and if necessary novel analysis, place him in the Black Marxist school.

Manning Marable[5]

In *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America* Marable presents an economic analysis that is explicitly a descriptive critique of classes and the field of battle for the class struggle.

> All social transformations begin with a criticism of existing social forces, the material and ideological components which comprise social reality. The liberation of historically oppressed and underdeveloped peoples takes as its point of departure a revolutionary critique of the integral social classes which constitute that national minority or nation. (p. 19)

Marable takes his ideological and methodological questions from DuBois and Walter Rodney. He argues that DuBois put forward five basic propositions: (1) According to DuBois, "'The first and fundamental and inescapable problem of American democracy is Justice to the American Negro.'" (p.11) (2) ". . . no real democracy has ever existed in the United States." (p. 11) (3) The fight for democracy must be based on a broad front of diverse interests. (pp. 14-16) (4) "...socialism had to become that central vision for the Black liberation movement." (p. 16) (5) The U.S.A. will go forward toward democracy and socialism or degenerate into "authoritarianism, racial barbarism and militarization of the

work force." (p. 18) He quotes DuBois from a speech in 1951:

> Either in some way or to some degree, we must socialize our economy, restore the New Deal and inaugurate the welfare state, or we descend into military fascism which will kill all dreams of democracy, or the abolition of poverty and ignorance, or of peace instead of war. (p. 18)

Marable accepts Rodney's thesis on Africa and applies it to the U.S.A.:

> With Rodney I have argued the thesis that Black economic, political and social development is possible "only on the basis of a radical break with . . . the capitalist system, which has been the principal agency of underdevelopment." (p. 256)

He makes his strongest theoretical point in establishing the specific historicity of the Afro-American:

> Black people in the U.S. are the direct product of massive economic and social forces . . . In the proverbial bowels of the capitalist leviathan, the slaves forged a new world culture that was in its origin African, but in its creative forms, something entirely new. The Afro-American agricultural worker was one of the world's first proletarians, in the construction of his/her culture, social structures, labor and world view. (p. 24)

Marable also argues that while Blacks are a common people in the U.S.A., there is "a clear division," a fundamental difference within the Afro-American people:

> But from the first generation of this new national minority group in America, there was a clear division in that world view. The *Black majority* were those Afro-Americans who experienced and hated the lash; who labored in the cane fields of the Carolina coast; who detested the daily exploitation of their parents, spouses and children; who dreamed or plotted their flight to freedom, their passage across "the River Jordan;" who understood that their masters' political system of bourgeois democracy was a lie; who endeavored to struggle for land and education, once the chains of chattel slavery were smashed; who took pride in their African heritage, their Black skin, their uniquely rhythmic language and culture, their special love of God. There was, simultaneously, a *Black elite*, that was also a product of that disruptive social and material process. The elite was a privileged social stratum, who were often distinguished by color and caste; who praised the master publicly if not privately; who fashioned its religious rituals, educational norms, and social structures on those of the West; who sought to accumulate petty amounts of capital at the expense of their Black sisters and brothers; whose dream of freedom was one of acceptance into the inner sanctum of white economic and political power.(p. 24)

The chapters in Marable's book reflect this basic structure. In dealing with the majority, he considers the working class, poverty, women, and the police/penal forms of social control; in dealing with the elites, he examines business, politics, church, and education.

Each chapter is grounded in the paradigm of historical periodization. To this extent, his work has theoretical clarity, and gives force to the pages of a people marching through history. But Marable's forte, careful attention to journalistic

detail, the codification of criticisms emanating from diverse and conflicting sectors of the movement, and relentless criticisms of the Black elite, is suggestive like a painter using dots to create an image. His materialism is non-dogmatic, eclectic and empiricist, but broadly useful. Marable is the town crier—a muckraking journalist of the Black Marxist school.

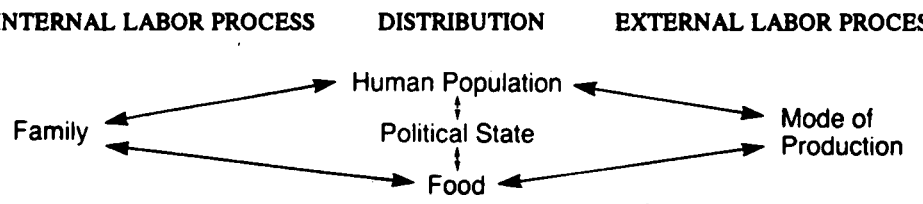
Lloyd Hogan[6]

The last book to be considered is the text by Lloyd Hogan, *Principles of Black Political Economy.* This is a major work, the first theoretical text in Black Studies to deal with political economy. It is a straightforward attempt to posit an analytical/historical model as a framework for the codification of the existing literature, and as a guide to new empirical research. This is a barometer of how well Black Studies is doing, a good start that has to be picked up and carried to its logical conclusion by others. This book should be the basis for conference panels, faculty seminars, and several master's theses.

He begins his work by reinterpreting the definition of political economy put forward by Adam Smith:

> *We define the science of political economy as the study of "a human population undergoing the act of social reproduction, over a protracted period of time, under a set of rules promulgated and enforced by a political state, within a bounded geographical domain."*
>
> This definition suggests that there are at least *six* parameters, taken together as a unity, which form the basis for a complete description of a political economy in the real world. These parameters are (a) the *geographical space* within which the political economy functions, (b) the *human population* whose social reproduction is the underlying motive force of the political economy, (c) the *institutional mechanisms* which are the instrumentalities of social reproduction, (d) the *historical period* during which the people are being reproduced, (e) the *political state* which oversees the political economy, and (f) the *geographical domains outside* of the political economy in question. (pp. 12-13 emphasis added)

Hogan goes further to specify the nature of the institutional mechanisms. The production of goods and services takes place in the "external labor process," and the reproduction of people in the society is the "internal labor process" as carried out through family structures. Between these two there is an exchange that is regulated by the political state.



His analytical tools are devised to carry out an analysis of the concrete historical experiences of the Afro-American people. His historical periodization focuses on the three historical stages of social cohesion identified in the paradigm of unity.

> It will first study the origins of blacks in the many and varied societies in Africa prior to the Atlantic slaving operations and the centuries preceding the formal colonization of Africa by the Europeans.
>
> The succeeding phase of the study will concern itself with black slavery in the so-called "new world." The Atlantic slaving operations will be viewed as an essential External Labor sector of British capitalism which played a most fundamental role in the process of primitive capital accumulation. The exploitation of black slave labor in the British North American tobacco colonies will be analyzed for its role in fueling the rapid and sustained growth of British capitalism. Finally, the exploitation of black slave labor in the cotton growing states of the south will be analyzed for its critical contribution to the primitive capital accumulation in New England and the Middle Atlantic states.
>
> The study continues with an analysis of the system of black sharecropping in the black belt counties of the south from the end of the Civil War to the end of the 1960s. The conditions under which the system was put into place, the mechanics of black sharecropping labor exploitation, the specific channels of expropriation of black labor for ultimate accumulation in the northern capitalist coffers, the great migration as social revolution against the system, and the ultimate destruction of sharecropping as an economic reality—all of these topics will come in for detailed analysis. The stage will then be set for a look at the present system under which black laborers now toil.
>
> The direct exploitation of black wage laborers under the capitalist system will form an important area of study. Black unpaid labor as a significant basis for the extent of capital wealth formation will be the key issue. (pp. 76-77)

The daring and fresh character of this "heady" theoretical work is the bold refusal to hide behind reformism. Hogan is clear about this for Black people:

> In short, the future programme for black Americans requires the demise of the capitalist form of exploitation of their labor. It also entails the construction of a new social order based on personal freedom, equal opportunity and the inalienable right to participate in the creation of the material means of survival, and the effective right to acquire quantities and types of the material means of survival based purely on individual need. (p. 166)

And he doesn't fail to put this in a global framework:

> In sum, black Americans stand at the threshold of a worldwide social revolution. Their unique history of suffering and struggle for survival places them in an unparalleled position to be exemplars to the rest of exploited peoples of how a new social order can be consciously fashioned to reflect the perfectibility of the human condition on earth. (p. 171)

This is a scholar daring to uphold the twin values of "academic excellence and social responsibility."

Conclusion

The most profound and yet simple point to make is that the school of Black Marxism represents Blacks who come out of the Black revolt, have worked toward a universally valid philosophical position, and continue to fight for a revolutionary analysis (i.e., a creative analysis that builds out of the popular Black revolt that produced them). This is not "white" politics, but a universal position rooted in the Black experience that is being validated in the fight for an American revolution.

The main elements of unity are ideological, though it seems fairly clear that there are some political points of unity as well.

1. The Black experience is historical. Each of these writers focuses on Black people as a people definable by their concrete experiences, the cumulation of their past as objectivized in their cultural heritage, the objective forces that they confront in their workplaces and communities, and their behavior as they adapt to and revolt against their environment. This is the "what" of the Black experience, and it is a material basis for Black Studies.

2. This history passes through stages. There are periods of social development, each with different characteristics, and each requiring a new analysis and a new set of politics for social change. The slave trade redefined the world and set entirely new forces in motion, not only in one region of the world but in the entire world. Further, the emancipation of the slaves followed by their migration into the metropole has been worldwide in significance as well. The point is that these scholars are arguing that each of these stages must be analyzed on its own terms.

Together these two unities now can be the basis for the greatest unity and development of Black intellectual history. In fact, these are the two parameters that constitute the Paradigm of Unity in Black Studies.

3. The third unity involves a commitment to some form of social practice.

The theory of stages allows one to confront the future with knowledge that the world can change. A desire to make it better leads one to both a theoretical understanding that a new form of socio-economic order is necessary, and some form of commitment to make it come about.

In general, what we have here is the beginning of ideological unity, tentative as it may be at this time. It is not a conservative, homogeneous, stifling type of unity, but a free, dynamic process whereby very different forces have converged on the same theoretical foundation. This is going to provide the basis for greater stimulation and sharing.

But let me quickly add that this unity is by no means the entire story, for in fact there are great ideological and political differences. The main ideological problem is that no matter how close Marxism and Christianity get they will never be the same thing. God to a Marxist is an illusion; believers in God are not an illusion, but are real live people who need a solid analysis of the world in order to change it.

On a material level, there is a great difference between those who identify with Gramsci, the Italian theorist who holds that culture is the most important aspect of a people because it is through that "stuff" that class consciousness is forged and rebellions made, and those who identify with Lenin, holding that the superstructure and culture is a reflection of an economic base but not simply reducible to it. This sets the difference between West and Marable on the one hand and Munford and Baraka on the other. This is a difference over the primacy of culture in relation to the economic base. Lastly, there is a difference over strategy and tactics for making a revolution.

But even with these differences, it is important to point out that if we think of the past Black Nationalist/Marxist debates and slugfests, then these six people are in fact representative of something new, a new school of thought that is in its infancy at this historical moment. These six thinkers are representative of work being done by Black intellectuals who are emerging out of Black revolt, and who are clinging to their Black humanity while fashioning a weapon for understanding and change. These are some of the fruits of a nationalist-oriented revolt, a polemical Black Nationalist/Marxist debate, and now serious intellectual productivity and revolutionary practice.

These books should be read by Marxists and Black Nationalists alike, because this Black Marxism is new, it's fresh, it's diverse, and for Black social thought, it's the best we've got. The resounding cry of DuBois rings true today:

"Would it not be wise for American Negroes themselves to read a few books and do a little thinking for themselves? It is not that I would persuade Negroes to become communists, capitalists or holy rollers; but whatever belief they reach, let it for God's sake be a matter of reason and not of ignorance, fear, and selling their souls to the devil." [7]

Notes

1. Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (London: Zed Press, 1983).
2. Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance! An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982).
3. Amiri Baraka, *Daggers and Javelins: Essays 1974-1979* (New York: Quill, 1984).
4. Clarence J. Munford, *Production Relations, Class and Black Liberation: A Marxist Perspective in Afro-American Studies* (Amsterdam: B. R. Gruner Publishing Co., 1978).
5. Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy and Society* (Boston: South End Press, 1983).
6. Lloyd Hogan, *Principles of Black Political Economy* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).
7. W. E. Burghardt DuBois, *The World and Africa: An Inquiry into the Part Which Africa Has Played in World History* (New York: International Publishers, 1965) p. 338.

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