

Black Studies and the Racial Mountain

Manning Marable

We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. . . . We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves.

—Langston Hughes, 1926

Black History cannot help but be politically oriented, for it tends towards the total redefinition of an experience which was highly political. Black History must be political, for it deals with the most political phenomenon of all, the struggle between the master and the slave, between the colonized and the colonizer, between the oppressed and the oppressor. And it recognizes that all histories of peoples participate in politics and are shaped by political and ideological views.

—Vincent Harding, 1970

Behind the concept of African American studies is essentially the black intellectual tradition, the critical thought and perspectives of intellectuals of African descent and scholars of black America and Africa and the black diaspora. That black intellectual tradition can be characterized by three great points of departure. First, the black intellectual tradition has always been descriptive, that is, presenting the reality of black life and experiences from the point of view of black people themselves. Instead of beginning the logic of intellectual inquiry standing on the outside of the lived experiences of the people, the black intellectual tradition at its best has always presumed the centrality of black life. The scholar

was a participant observer, who was challenged to undertake a thick description of cultural and social phenomena. Scholarship was therefore grounded in the very subjective truths of a people's collective experience. It is from that experience that historical knowledge can be constructed that accurately describes and defines the contours of consciousness and identity.

The black intellectual tradition has, second, been corrective. It has attempted to challenge and to critique the racism and stereotypes that have been ever present in the mainstream discourse of white academic institutions. Our intellectual tradition has vigorously condemned and disputed theories of



Big Man, Little Car. Photo by Kristen Clarke.

black people's genetic, biological, and cultural inferiority. It has attacked the distorted forms of representation of blackness found in the dominant culture. It has challenged Eurocentric notions of aesthetics and beauty that, all too often, are grounded in an implied, or even explicit, contempt for the standards of blackness.

And, finally, the black intellectual tradition has been prescriptive. Black scholars who have theorized from the black experience have often proposed practical steps for the empowerment of black people. In other words, there is a practical connection between scholarship and struggle, between social analysis and social transformation. The purpose of black scholarship is more than the restoration of identity and self-esteem; it is to use history and culture as tools through

which people interpret their collective experience, but for the purpose of transforming their actual conditions and the totality of the society all around them. This common recognition of the broad social purpose of intellectual work did not mean that black scholarship must be a kind of narrow advocacy or a partisan polemic with no genuine standards of objectivity. Black scholars in the classical tradition placed great emphasis on their methodologies and fostered rigorous approaches to the collection and interpretation of data. But the high standards they sought to maintain, despite their woefully inadequate research funding and material resources, did not contradict their belief that new knowledge could in some way serve and empower those people with whom they shared a common culture, heritage, and struggle. Thus,

black studies was never simply the scholarship of intellectuals who just happened to be black, nor was it the research about the black experience by just anyone of any random ethnic background and ideological bias. Black studies was never a subcategory of some race-based ideology, but a critical body of scholarship that sought over time to dismantle the powerful racist intellectual categories and white supremacy itself.

The intellectual currents of what would become African American studies first developed more than two centuries ago, in what James P. Garrett has termed the "nascent period" of the tradition. Under the early leadership of ministers such as Richard Allen, African Americans developed a network of "African Free Schools" and a number of church-supported educational institutions, including Wilberforce University in 1856. In the "conceptual period" of black studies, from Reconstruction through the Great Depression, more than one hundred public and private postsecondary institutions for African Americans were established.³ It was from these often underfunded and largely politically vulnerable segregated colleges that several generations of black intellectuals produced the classical body of scholarship that now defines the field.

Foremost of his group was the great scholar-activist W.E.B. Du Bois. Trained at both Fisk and Harvard, Du Bois was thoroughly familiar with what constituted the standards and norms of white scholarship. He deeply believed that studies on the black experience should be scientific and rigorous. But Du Bois also knew that to be a Negro, living in the age of Jim Crow segregation, required a different kind of commitment and approach to the study of social phenomena. Du Bois's 1899 study *The Philadelphia Negro*, notes Martin Kilson, "was one of the first urban sociological surveys in America and is a classic in the urban sociology of

blacks."⁴ For about fifteen years, Du Bois regularly sponsored research conferences at Atlanta University on topics relating to the black experience, producing a series of edited volumes that formed the modern foundations of black studies.

At Tuskegee Institute at the beginning of the twentieth century, Monroe Work initiated a massive study of the socioeconomic, educational, and political conditions of African-American people. Beginning in 1912, he edited and published the *Negro Yearbook*. This became a major source of data for scholars doing work on the contemporary African-American experience. More significant, Work also kept a massive clipping file on lynching and other forms of random racist violence against black people across the South. In nearby Nashville, Tennessee, the sociologist Charles S. Johnson conducted a series of scientific investigations into the social development and political economy of blacks in the South. In 1944, Johnson initiated the Race Relations Institute at Fisk University, attempting to put scholarship into public policy practice. Other influential research in the fields of sociology and anthropology was produced by African-American scholars such as Horace Mann Bond, author of *The Education of the Negro in Alabama: A Study in Cotton and Steel*, published in 1937; Alison Davis, whose 1941 book, *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class*, coauthored with Burleigh B. Gardner and Mary R. Gardner, was the best ethnographic survey of race relations under Jim Crow segregation published in the 1930s and 1940s; E. Franklin Frazier, author of *Negro Youth at Crossroads* in 1940 and many other influential studies; St. Clair Drake, who produced *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, in 1945; and Oliver Cromwell Cox, who in 1948 authored the most richly detailed theoretical study of black America and U.S. race relations produced in

the first half of the twentieth century, *Caste, Class and Race*. In the area of literature, there was the explosion of creative works during the Harlem Renaissance by artists such as Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Jean Toomer, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, and Nella Larsen. Literary criticism and what today is termed cultural studies was represented by Alain Locke's *The New Negro* in 1925 and J. Saunders Redding's *To Make a Poet Black*, published in 1939.⁵

In the field of history, the Harvard-trained historian Carter G. Woodson established in 1916 the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and founded the first academic journal devoted to the examination of the black experience, *The Journal of Negro History*. To reach thousands of black public school teachers and a general audience, Woodson launched *Negro History Bulletin* and initiated Associated Publishers. Rayford Logan, who succeeded Woodson as the editor of *The Journal of Negro History*, produced several influential volumes on the history of race relations, including *What the Negro Thinks* in 1944, and *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877-1901*, in 1954. John Hope Franklin's masterful saga of the historical sojourn of African-American people, *From Slavery to Freedom*, was published shortly after the Second World War, in 1947, and followed in 1956 by *The Militant South*, which presented a black interpretation of the significance of white supremacy in Southern culture and history.

There was also an influential group of what may be termed "organic intellectuals," drawing from Antonio Gramsci's concept—African Americans who were not formally trained in traditional universities, but who had a critical understanding of their world and communicated their ideas to black audiences. For decades, J. A. Rogers published a weekly newspaper column devoted to the examination of "little known facts" about black

history, which regularly reached hundreds of thousands of readers. Arthur Schomburg, a black Puerto Rican bibliophile, donated his vast personal collection of books and manuscripts to the New York Public Library, which led to the creation of the Schomburg Library in Harlem in 1940. The most brilliant among this group was Cyril Lionel Robert James, Trinidadian Marxist, Pan-Africanist, historian, and cricketer. There is no more powerful history in the English language, in my judgment, than James's classic study of the Haitian revolution, *The Black Jacobins*, first appearing in 1938. *Beyond a Boundary*, drawing on James's autobiographical reflections and thoughts about race, colonialism, and the game of cricket in the West Indies, was in many respects the first volume of modern cultural studies. What all of these black intellectuals shared was a passionate commitment to the equality and humanity of people of African descent. They knew that any intellectual investigations into the heart of black life and culture had to be interdisciplinary, that is, the tools of scholarship could not be narrowly confined by the parameters of so-called disciplines fostered by white intellectuals. The black intellectual tradition questioned and challenged disciplinary boundaries from the beginning, and of course the best example of this is the life and thought of Du Bois—trained as a historian, yet making vital contributions to the fields of sociology, political science, economics, literary criticism, and the creative arts.

The strong interest of these black intellectuals in linking their scholarly production to the lived experiences of black people says something about their understanding of the nature of knowledge. Who produces knowledge, and what is the social utility of certain types of knowledge? Can knowledge be a form of private property, or should it be freely disseminated? Such questions, especially for people who are oppressed, are not

abstractions. The classical scholarship in the black intellectual tradition suggests that knowledge exists to serve the social welfare of black people and, by extension, humanity as a whole. Therefore, knowledge should not be seen as a commodity, even in a capitalist environment. Access to learning and to educational institutions should be made universal. Thus, black studies must also be an oppositional critique of the existing power arrangements and relations that are responsible for the systemic exploitation of black people. In 1969, the anthropologist St. Clair Drake articulated this perspective:

The very use of the term Black Studies is by implication an indictment of American and Western European scholarship. It makes the bold assertion that what we have heretofore called "objective" intellectual activities were actually white studies in perspective and content; and that a corrective bias, a shift in emphasis, is needed, even if something called "truth" is set as the goal. To use a technical sociological term, the present body of knowledge has an ideological element in it, and a counterideology is needed. Black Studies supply that counterideology.⁶

In the quarter century following the end of the Second World War, African American studies was transformed from a discourse and body of scholarly work confined largely to racially segregated institutions to a vibrant curriculum and hundreds of programs fighting to change white higher education. One can identify at least five important factors that contributed to this transition. There was, perhaps foremost, the transformation of the global status of black and Third World people, in the United States and internationally. Anticolonial and independence movements erupted across Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. The newly formed United Nations created a forum for these emerging nations,

which had struggled for years against Western colonialism. These developments prompted the establishment in the United States between 1948 and 1971 of nine Title VI National Resource Centers in African Studies. Significantly, eight of these federally funded centers were located at white major institutions, including the University of California, Los Angeles; Northwestern University; and the University of Wisconsin—Madison.⁷ Many of the new political leaders of independent African states, such as Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah, and the theoreticians of Pan-Africanism, such as George Padmore, had been educated in black American universities and were widely known by African Americans. Dialogues across the black Atlantic grew more frequent, as symbolized by the 1956 Congress of Negro Writers and Artists held in Paris. Foreshadowing much of the political language of black studies, Frantz Fanon argued that Third World people have to reclaim the study of their own history and culture in order to emancipate themselves: "The plunge into the chasm of the past is the condition and the source of freedom."⁸

The rise of the Cold War and the global competition between two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States, contributed to the impetus for the new interest in black culture and history. The Soviet bloc astutely attacked U.S. credibility on issues of democracy and freedom by pointing to the American system of Jim Crow segregation at home and U.S. support for colonialism abroad. The United States Information Agency countered by subsidizing tours of black cultural groups and lectures by prominent black Americans throughout the Third World. Through programs such as the Peace Corps in the early 1960s, the U.S. government attempted to display altruism and benevolence in underdeveloped nations.

Within the United States, the preconditions for the growth of black studies were both demographic and political. Between 1945 and 1965, over 3 million Negroes left the South and migrated to the northeastern, north central, and western states. This vast migration changed the racial composition of major U.S. cities and gave greater political clout to the black electorate. Black elected officials and civil rights activists aggressively pushed for affirmative action policies and the opening of publicly funded colleges and universities to more African-American students. The black freedom movement, in both its civil rights phase, 1955–1965, and its black power phase, 1966–1975, championed the desegregation of white civil society and the empowerment of black people within previously all-white institutions. The change in the racial composition of U.S. colleges was very dramatic. In 1950, for example, only 75,000 Negroes were enrolled in American colleges and universities. In 1960, three-fourths of all black students attended historically black colleges. By 1970, nearly 700,000 African Americans were enrolled, three-fourths of whom were at white colleges. Most of these white institutions were ill prepared for the eruption of black student protest they would encounter between 1968 and 1972.

At San Francisco State University, the student strike of 1968–1969 forced the establishment of the Division of Ethnic Studies and full-fledged departments of black, Asian, Chicano, and Native American studies. San Francisco State's Black Student Union drafted a political statement, "The Justification for Black Studies," that would subsequently become "the seminal document for developing black studies departments at more than sixty universities." The objectives listed in the document included "to oppose the 'Liberal-Fascist' ideology rampant on campus whereby college administrations have at-

tempted to pacify Black Student Union demands for systemic curriculum by offering one or two courses in Black history and literature"; "to prepare Black students for direct participation in Black community struggles, and to define themselves as responsible to and for the future success of that community"; "to reinforce the position that Black people in Africa and the Diaspora have the right to democratic rights, Self Determination and Liberation"; and "to oppose the dominant ideology of capitalism, world imperialism and White supremacy."⁹ At Yale University in the spring of 1968, nervous administrators tried to get ahead of the protest curve by hosting a national symposium on black studies. Yale Provost Charles Taylor initiated the conference by posing a series of anachronistic questions: "Is the special study of the black experience intellectually valid? Is it educationally responsible? And, is it socially constructive for blacks and whites?"¹⁰ Student strikes and takeovers of administration buildings soon followed at Harvard, Northwestern, and dozens of other universities. In the most publicized campus conflict, black students seized control of the student union building at Cornell University and were widely depicted with firearms.¹¹

The struggles for black studies on white campuses soon extended to academic organizations. In October 1969, at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association (ASA) in Montreal, Canada, a group of black scholars and graduate students denounced the organization's "complexion," "activities," and "direction." In a well-publicized statement, the ASA was denounced for "perpetuat[ing] colonialism and neocolonialism. . . . African peoples will no longer permit our people to be raped culturally, economically, politically and intellectually merely to provide European scholars with intellectual status symbols of African artifacts hanging in their living

rooms and irrelevant and injurious lectures for their classrooms.”¹² In May 1970, at a conference at Howard University, the African Heritage Studies Association (AHSA) was formed, “dedicated to the preservation, interpretation and academic presentation of the historical and cultural heritage of African peoples both on the ancestral soil of Africa and in diaspora in the Americas and throughout the world.”

The black studies scholar Milfred Fierce recalled that the audience was “electrified . . . with chants of ‘It’s Nation Time’, and ‘We Are an African People.’” For Fierce, the founding of the AHSA “ranks among the most significant and eloquent expressions of Pan-African unity at an intellectual gathering to take place on U.S. soil.”¹³

The principal architects of these new black studies programs were frequently young men and women in their twenties and thirties. Many were doctoral students, some of whom would never complete their terminal degrees. Most had been involved in black cultural and political protest activities and organizations. Although the “cultural nationalists,” represented by intellectuals like Maulana Karenga and for a time Amiri Baraka, and the “revolutionary nationalists,” who identified with black radicals like George Jackson and militant formations such as the Black Panther Party, were constantly at odds, there was also a remarkable degree of consensus across ideological boundaries. At the Yale University symposium in 1968, Karenga declared that the university “is not basically an educational institution—it’s a political institution . . . it is basically a political thing, and it provides

identity, purpose, and direction within an American context.”¹⁴ To Karenga’s ideological left, Robert L. Allen, author of the influ-

ential 1969 study *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, made the same point. The American university, Allen observed in 1974, was a “political institution” that functions as a “servant of the bourgeois order, preparing an academic and professional elite that can ‘manage’

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America in behalf of the white power-holding classes.”¹⁵ The immediate challenge thus was the construction of a militant black institution inside a conservative white institution that was for all practical purposes hostile to the former’s existence. The urgent tasks of the institution building required blacks to conceive of their curricula and research paradigms in new ways. In 1970, the political scientist Ronald Walters insisted that “Black life has been distinctive enough and separate enough to constitute its own uniqueness that the ideology and the methodology of Black Social Science rests.”¹⁶ Black studies was a useful “tool” for the maintenance of “black identity,” noted the educators James R. Rosser and E. Thomas Copeland in 1973:

The educational ideology, goals, and objectives of Black Studies must be illustrative, not only of emphasis on the revitalization of the black intellectual tradition, but also of a commitment to the eradication of weak egos, perceptions of incompetence and educational skill problems in general. If such is not possible within predominantly white schools, then maybe Black Studies should not exist at such schools.¹⁷

Like the historically black colleges, the successful black studies program should endeavor to cultivate and maintain an intimate relationship with the African-American community. Nathan Hare, a faculty leader of the black studies revolt at San Francisco State and cofounder of the journal *The Black Scholar*, emphasized in 1978 that black educational institutions must draw their strength from the black masses. "We must take our skills to the black community," Hare insisted:

We must wed the black community and the educational process. We must transform the black community and make it relevant to the educational endeavor at the same time as we make education relevant to the black community. We must bring the community to the campus and the campus to the community. Because education belongs to the people and the idea is to give it back to them.¹⁸

In the span of three short years, from 1968 to 1971, hundreds of black studies departments and programs were initiated, many espousing the blend of black nationalist militancy and idealism outlined above. It is not clear exactly how many programs were established. Robert L. Allen estimates there were approximately 500 colleges and universities that "provided full-scale Black Studies programs" by 1971. Up to 1,300 institutions as of 1974 offered at least one course in black studies.¹⁹ Another estimate has the number of black studies programs peaking at 800 in the early 1970s and declining to about 375 by the mid-1990s.²⁰ Yet, opposition to the institutionalization of African American studies pro-

grams, as well as black cultural centers and offices of minority affairs, never entirely disappeared. For example, Columbia University, which is located near the heart of Harlem, recruited Charles V. Hamilton, coauthor with Stokely Carmichael of the militant manifesto *Black Power*, to its political science department in the late 1960s. Hamilton was hired as a noted proponent of black studies.²¹ But Columbia, for whatever reasons, failed to establish a formal program and core faculty in African American studies until 1993. The black studies scholar James Jennings cites two other examples from the early 1970s. At Brooklyn College, part of the City University of New York, "students were *physically assaulted* [Jennings's emphasis] by racist whites in a cafeteria because these Black and Puerto Rican students had chosen the Studies program as their major." At Hunter College, "there was major resistance by the administration to the demand for Black and Puerto Rican Studies. Professors would discourage their students from any connection with Black and Puerto Rican Studies."²²

There were also several prominent

African-American scholars who vigorously opposed the creation of such departments. Perhaps the most vocal critic was the Harvard political scientist Martin Kilson. In a 1973 article published in *The Journal of Black Studies*, Kilson raised a series of concerns. Black studies frequently fostered

racial separation and, in Kilson's view, "in the white colleges, both private and state, where now over seventy percent of all Afro-Americans in college are in attendance, the exclusion of whites from Black Studies is un-

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justified." Kilson felt that it was "doubtful" that a "large segment—perhaps the majority—of black students who become school teachers should major in Black Studies." Kilson criticized African American studies departments that permitted black undergraduate students to administer curricula: "Quite frankly, this is utter nonsense." Faculty appointments, Kilson insisted, "should never be made in black studies *without the curricular control of an established discipline* [Kilson's emphasis]." Black studies faculty without such disciplinary-based credentials "will be dilettantes at best, and charlatans at worst."²³ Even St. Clair Drake, a strong defender of black studies, worried about the "anti-intellectual bias among some of the most committed students. . . . There are intellectual tasks associated with the Black Revolution just as there are with any revolution; and these tasks are important as the 'street tasks.'"²⁴

There is a tendency for some veterans of the African American studies departments and black cultural centers to mythologize the actual origins of the majority of these programs, placing their development somewhere in the long sweep of black revolution, perhaps between Angela Davis's firing from UCLA for being a member of the Communist Party and the prisoners' uprising at Attica. In truth, the militant student confrontations at Cornell, Harvard, Berkeley, and other major research universities that initiated black studies departments was not always the norm. At many private liberal arts colleges and smaller state universities, modest African American studies interdisciplinary programs were frequently started without controversy or conflict. Most liberal white faculty in the late 1960s and early 1970s were prepared to accept black studies as a legitimate part of the college curriculum. They opposed the notion that the black experience could only be researched or taught by African Americans or that whites should be excluded from black

studies classes or black cultural centers, however. They rejected what they felt was the highly political content of black studies and sought to steer the new programs toward traditional standards of white scholarship. A 1974 study by Elias Blake Jr. and Henry Cobb reviewed twenty-nine black studies departments and programs and found that most were "academically oriented," with one-third of those queried identifying "the development of tools of inquiry for research and publication" as their "major objective." Only three programs included the goal "to fashion a black identity" in their curricula. Most of these programs were structurally weak and underfunded, with few tenured faculty or administrators who possessed experience in academic management. Blake and Cobb found that "nearly all the programs surveyed . . . did not [have] the stability that might have been expected. . . . The inability to operate on the basis of long-term plans created an atmosphere of impermanence."²⁵

The vast majority of black studies units in the 1970s were interdisciplinary programs, not formal departments. They lacked the ability to tenure their own faculty in most institutions. Their curricula were based largely on an eclectic menu of courses initiated by faculty who were hired or tenured in traditional, disciplinary-based departments. The director or chair of the African American studies major was often a faculty member tenured or appointed in a traditional department, who was subsequently given release time to coordinate the interdisciplinary program. By the mid-1970s, some of the early radicals and cultural nationalists who had initiated some programs were being eased out, replaced by black academics with more mainstream credentials. In 1974, Robert L. Allen warned that the black studies movement was "now fighting a rear-guard battle; its very survival on campus is in doubt." Part of the problem was that "some schools simply took all their courses touching

upon race relations and minority groups, lumped them together and called this potpourri Black Studies." But Allen also identified the growing interest of foundations and the federal government as a threat to the integrity of African American studies:

By selecting certain programs for funding while denying support to others, government agencies and foundations could manipulate the political orientation of these programs and the direction of academic research. With hundreds of such programs competing for limited funds, effective control of the future of Black Studies was thereby shifted away from black scholars and students, and instead . . . to the funding agencies—college administrations, government and foundations. Departments which were thought by the establishment to be dangerously independent or radical could thus be crippled or destroyed without the necessity of resorting to violent repression.²⁶

The standard for what a "responsible" black studies unit should look like in the 1970s and early 1980s, from the vantage point of liberals in higher education, was Yale University's Afro-American Studies Program. Yale had been the first elite university to adopt black studies, in December 1968, but developed the new program along traditionally liberal norms. The major required students to concentrate in a traditional discipline relevant to black studies. The Ford Foundation applauded Yale's "high faculty standards" and its focus on "serious academic study and teaching."²⁷ Harvard's "radical" black studies department, which was led by Ewart Guinier, was largely boycotted and isolated by the university's administration and other departments. In 1980, the historian Nathan Huggins was appointed to chair Harvard's Afro-American Studies department, moving it rapidly away from the militant program created by Guinier. The Ford Foundation soon provided funding for the development of

the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Studies at Harvard. By 1982, Ford was generously supporting two senior scholars and residents for postdoctorates and a major lecture series at the Du Bois Institute. That same year, Huggins was invited by the Ford Foundation to write a comprehensive survey of the entire field of black studies. Published in July 1985, the Huggins report reflected the triumph of the liberal reformist version of black studies. With confidence, Huggins observed, "Since the decline of interest in black studies in the mid-seventies, supporters have seldom talked of autonomy. . . . Most of those that started with separatist notions either expired or moderated their positions."²⁸ Huggins's administrative and ideological interventions laid the groundwork for the appointment of Henry Louis Gates Jr. as head of Afro-American Studies at Harvard in 1989.

One is tempted to say that the decline of militancy and radicalism in black studies programs was inevitable, given the nature of conservative academic institutions. Such an interpretation would ignore the changing political context in which African American studies programs functioned by the late 1970s. The 1978 *Bakke* decision was the first decisive legal step away from affirmative action and race-based "quotas"; the urban rebellions of the late sixties had been quelled; many prominent black rebels had exchanged their dashikis for polyester suits and were either running for public office or employed by corporations or the government. With the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, the ideological and political environment for African American studies specifically, and for black people in general, became far more repressive. The Reagan administration inspired or directed attacks on black higher education at nearly every level. The programs and policies that quickly fell under assault included minority scholarship programs, financial aid for low-income students, and culturally diverse curricula. Federal courts

challenged the existence of historically black colleges and universities for their racial composition. The number of African Americans who were enrolling in doctoral programs across the country began to decline significantly. Many institutions no longer aggressively enforced equal opportunity or affirmative action measures. By the early 1990s, the far right had begun to aggressively attack the concept "political correctness" to undermine nearly all of the multicultural initiatives for reform within higher education.

Moreover, despite the decade-long hegemony of Black Power, this recent renaissance of black nationalism was the exception, rather than the rule, in expressing the core ideology of the black middle class. Throughout the twentieth century, with some important exceptions, the bulk of the African-American middle class has been inclusionist or integrationist. The inclusionists always assumed that blacks had to succeed in the context of white institutions and Euro-American standards. They perceived academic training as a prerequisite to the goal of managerial, technical, and professional advancement. The inclusionists were generally against all forms of racial separatism, such as the establishment of separate all-black dormitories and cultural centers and the creation of black studies departments. They bitterly opposed the argument that African American studies could not be taught by white Americans. And they insisted that "academic standards" should not be held hostage to political agendas.

Although this ideological current seemed to disappear during the height of the black power movement, a significant number of black educators who completed doctoral programs during these years generally supported these views. Even in the context of black studies programs, a number of integrationist-oriented black teachers and scholars were employed, especially at white private liberal arts institutions and smaller state colleges. At

dozens of these institutions, black studies curricula and programs did not reflect the militancy of black nationalism. These kinds of African American studies programs easily coexisted with well-established and traditionalist white academic departments. Conversely, the inclusionist interdisciplinary programs often lacked any academic coherence or intellectual integrity. The curricula were often eclectically organized, relying on faculty who had little academic relationship with each other. One recurrent problem was that disciplinary-based departments always recruit, promote, and tenure their faculty on their internal set of criteria, which might have little relationship with the interdisciplinary scholarship, publications, and research of African American, Latino, or ethnic studies.

Those black studies programs that maintained an ideological orientation toward black nationalism, in both its cultural and revolutionary nationalist tendencies, also underwent profound institutional change. As early as 1970, a twenty-eight-year-old scholar at UCLA, Molefi Asante, initiated *The Journal of Black Studies*, which quickly became the major publication of the field. The African Heritage Studies Association was largely superseded by the National Council of Black Studies (NCBS), founded in 1975. By 1990, NCBS claimed more than 2,000 individual members and over 100 institutional members. Its members were actively involved in multicultural curriculum reform "from elementary school grades through graduate school."²⁹ For Abdul Alkalimat, a leading radical social theorist and political activist, however, both *The Journal of Black Studies* and NCBS "were not created as part of the radical negation of the mainstream or through direct active struggle." Both were, in Alkalimat's view, "insulated . . . from the dynamics of the Black liberation movement. They fell into idealism, ideological dogmatism and a careerist machine of circulating

leadership posts and awards among a small group of loyalists."³⁰

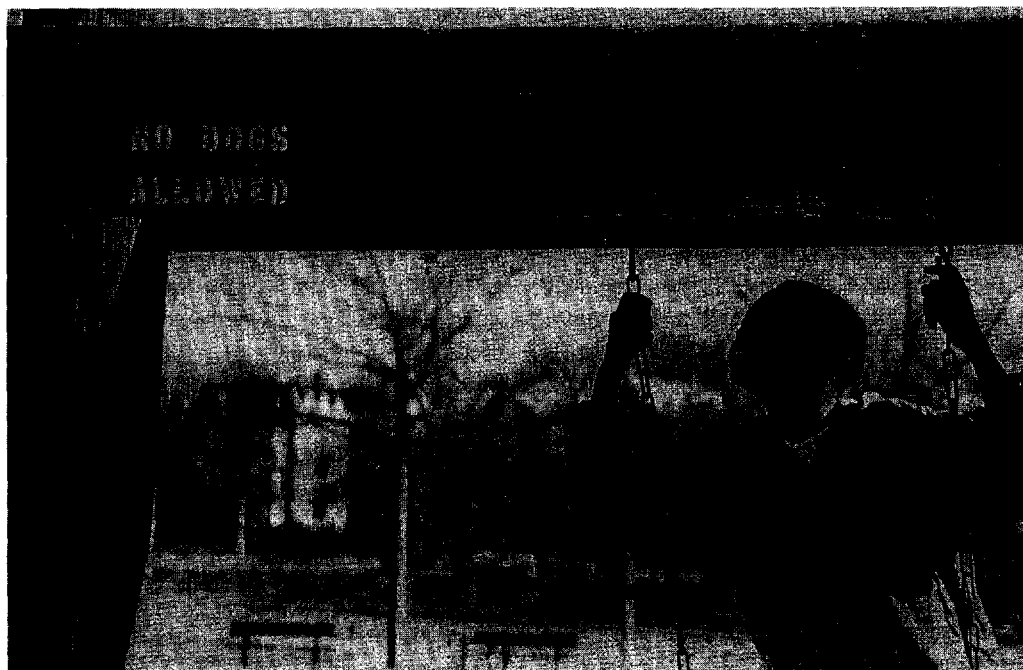
The nationalist-oriented African American studies group included a number of the field's most prominent and influential intellectuals. A short list of them would include James Turner, longtime director of Cornell's Africana Studies and Research Center; Ivan Van Seritma, professor of African Studies at Rutgers University, founding editor of the *Journal of African Civilizations* and the author of *They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America* (1976); Asa G. Hilliard, professor of education at Georgia State University and author of many books, including *Testing African American Students* (1987); Tony Martin, history professor at Wellesley College since 1973, well-known for his 1976 major study *Race First: The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association* and, more recently, for his highly publicized and controversial pamphlet *The Jewish Onslaught: Dispatches from the Wellesley Battlefield*; the University of Maryland political scientist Ronald Walters, a key interpreter of African-American politics and adviser to Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition; and the late John Henrik Clarke, professor of black studies at Hunter College and author of many volumes in black history and culture. Unquestionably, however, two intellectuals in this group have been most pivotal as interpreters and political forces in the development of black studies—Maulana Karenga and Molefi Asante.

Karenga was the principal proponent of black cultural nationalism in the 1960s, the creator of Kwanzaa, the Afrocentric cultural ritual and celebration that has been adopted by millions of African Americans. Karenga's first major intervention in the field was his *Introduction to Black Studies*, which in the 1970s and 1980s was perhaps the most

widely used text of its kind. He was a frequent contributor to *The Black Scholar*, *The Journal of Black Studies*, and the other academic publications. Karenga denounced Huggins's 1985 report, claiming that "for all its pretensions and in spite of his previous scholarship, [it] is little more than European hagiography masquerading as history, and an unscholarly melange of personal preferences posing as meaningful analysis." In his 1988 essay "Black Studies and the Problematic of Paradigm," Karenga identified seven key "contributions" that African American studies makes:

- (1) to humanity's understanding of itself, using the African experience as a paradigmatic human struggle and achievement; (2) to the university's realizing its claim of universality . . . ; (3) to U.S. society's understanding itself by critically measuring its claims against its performance and its variance with a paradigmatic just society; (4) to the rescue and reconstruction of Black history and humanity from alien hands, and the restoration of African classical culture on and through which we can build a new body of human sciences and humanities; (5) to the creation of a new social science, more critical, corrective, holistic, and ethical . . . ; (6) to the creation of a body of conscious, capable, and committed Black intellectuals who self-consciously choose to use their knowledge and skills in the service of the Black community . . . ; [and (7) to make a] contribution to the critique, resistance, and reversal of the progressive Westernization of human consciousness, which is one of the major problems of our times."³¹

Molefi Asante built and chaired for nearly fifteen years what became the largest African American studies department in the United States, at Temple University. He authored and edited more than three dozen books and 250



"I'm Not Gonna Fall." Photo by Kristen Clarke.

articles and edited *The Journal of Black Studies*. But Asante's greatest impact was ideological. In his 1980 book *Afro-Centricity: The Theory of Social Change*, Asante proposed a philosophical construct for the development of the entire field of African American studies. "Afrocentricity," at its most simple expression, is the intellectual perspective that begins "from the standpoint of the agency of African people and the centrality of Africa in its own story."³² Thus, Asante's critique of the Huggins report begins with the observation, "Black Studies is not merely the study of Black people," but a philosophical and cultural approach to the interpretation of social reality that takes as its starting point the perspectives and interests of people of African descent.³³ "The Afrocentrist will not question the idea of the centrality of African ideals and values but

will argue over what constitutes those ideals and values," Asante explained in 1990. "The Afrocentrist seeks to uncover and use codes, paradigms, symbols, motifs, myths, and circles of discussion that reinforce the centrality of African ideals and values as a valid frame of reference for acquiring and examining data."³⁴ In hundreds of public lectures at universities and within black communities, Asante and his growing constituency of educators pushed the view that "African Americans should be viewed not as objects or victims, but as actors and subjects of history."³⁵ Textbooks and curricula developed around Afrocentric themes were implemented in hundreds of schools. In 1991, the Baltimore public school system began "infusing Afrocentric studies throughout all courses in kindergarten through fifth grade." In Detroit that same year, several all-black male acade-

mies were established, using an explicitly "Afrocentric curriculum."³⁶ New academic publications such as *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, initiated by the Pan African Studies Department of California State University, Northridge, in 1998, were dedicated to the pursuit of "Afrocentric theory, methodology, and analysis."³⁷

As the debate about "multiculturalism" and cultural diversity erupted in both higher education and public school systems, the theory of Afrocentricity—more commonly called by some supporters and many detractors "Afrocentrism"—began to generate intense criticism. The liberal historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. denounced Afrocentricity as reverse racism: "If a Kleeagle of the Ku Klux Klan wanted to use the schools to disable and handicap black Americans, he could hardly come up with anything more effective than the Afrocentric curriculum." Diane Ravitch, the Bush administration's assistant secretary of education, attacked the Afrocentric curriculum, making the ridiculous (and racist) assertion that "part of what school is for is studying the society in which you are going to live. You don't study your own race."³⁸ One major newspaper editorialized that "Afrocentrism betrays the very clientele it claims to serve . . . it hucksters shoddy goods that burden the maltutored with lifelong grievance against the supposedly racist refusal of whites to see gold where, in fact, there is only dross."³⁹ One *San Diego Union Tribune* black columnist complained in 1995 that "Afrocentrism, which is a disguised name for reverse racism, is attempting to overtake the black community. Even many of our African American churches have brought the lie that for self-esteem, we must have Afrocentric-based principles."⁴⁰ These shrill attacks only had the effect of greatly enhancing Afrocentricity among millions of black people.

But frequently even the proponents of Afrocentricity argued about the definition and meaning of the concept. The Howard

University Medical School professor Keith Crawford defines "pure Afrocentricity" as a "philosophy which has evolved as African peoples began to understand their relationship with God and Nature, and the experiences of human existence."⁴¹ The editors of *The Journal of Pan African Studies* suggested that "Afrocentrism is not yet a scientific based paradigm, nor yet a set of associated theories. Its adherents and advocates simply need to rein in the rhetoric, muzzle the egos, and do the hard core research."⁴² Karenga has candidly recognized several frequent criticisms about Afrocentricity, including charges of its "dogmatic" character, its denial of the genuine diversity and pluralism within African cultures and societies, and its "static" and "monolithic" categories of historical and social analysis.⁴³ Other criticisms of Afrocentricity focus primarily on its tendencies toward racial essentialism, or what might be termed a racist pseudoscience of the black experience. Political controversies surrounding the black studies department of the City College of New York, chaired by Leonard Jeffries, led some to unfairly associate Afrocentrism with anti-Semitism.⁴⁴ Afrocentric scholarship rarely came into constructive dialogue with new bodies of research—women and gender studies, queer studies, postcolonial studies, postmodernism—and was hostile toward radical interpretations of social reality, most specifically, Marxism.

In everyday language, "Afrocentrism" has come to mean a positive black consciousness that is anchored in the knowledge of African culture and history. Afrocentrism can be expressed in rituals, styles of dress, values, and kinship relations. It can be equated with certain kinds of political mobilization, such as the Million Man March in October 1995. But in some black studies departments, efforts to systematize Afrocentricity as a comprehensive philosophical system, based on a "shallow, non-scientific homogenizing of dis-

parate African cultures," in the words of James P. Garrett, have served as ideological cover for what is basically an extremely conservative, middle-class approach toward black education. Garrett accuses the "culturalists," or proponents of black cultural nationalism, with turning some departments into "quasi-feudal enclaves which refuse entry to non-black students and faculty as well as to 'ideologically impure' sectors of the Black community." These programs "graduate acolytes and sycophants, while simultaneously and consistently trying to discourage and isolate those students who wish to pursue an independently critical, analytical scholarship."⁴⁵

Abdul Alkalimat has suggested that the conflict between the two dominant currents in African American studies, the inclusionist, liberal integrationists and the Afrocentrists, is more illusory than real. Focusing on the work of both Gates and Asante, Alkalimat argues,

What unites both of these approaches is that they are not interested in the relationship between their ideas and the historical context of social and political conflicts in which they live and work. Gates wants us to examine the text and not the context and Asante wants us to primarily concern ourselves with ancient Egypt for our orientation. Neither of these approaches helps us to clarify the crisis facing Africa nor that facing the American people. Both represent an ideological retreat by a new Black middle class that has been unable to find the courage to link up with the masses of Black people fighting to survive.⁴⁶

Throughout the twentieth century and into the present, there has also been a third ideological tendency within black public discourse and inside the struggles to define the African-American community. Leith Mullings and I have characterized this tendency as "transformation," the collective efforts of black people

neither to integrate nor self-segregate, but to transform the existing power relationships and the racist institutions of the state, the economy, and society. This transformationist or radical perspective begins with the assumption that racism exists not merely at the ideological level, but has become an integral factor in the construction of the U.S. political economy and the social class hierarchy of the country. Thus, to dismantle institutional racism will require much more than simply assimilating the values and interests of the white professional and managerial classes within African-American life and social organization; it cannot be achieved by flights of fantasy to ancient Egypt. It necessitates the building of a powerful protest movement, based largely among the most oppressed classes and social groups, to demand the fundamental restructuring of the basic institutions and patterns of ownership within society. Toward this larger goal, the building of black institutions is an essential process, in providing the resources for African-American people to survive and resist. Black intellectuals therefore have a special obligation to utilize their skills and resources to contribute to the liberation of their people.

These radical ideas were consistently expressed in the political life and scholarly work of W.E.B. Du Bois. Many of the central scholars in the black intellectual tradition shared these views as well, including C.L.R. James, St. Clair Drake, Oliver Cromwell Cox, and E. Franklin Frazier. A radical black perspective on issues of gender was developed through the writings of Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Claudia Jones, Ella Baker, Angela Davis, and Barbara Ransby. The black radical perspective on internationalism and Pan Africanism is reflected in the thought and political activities of Du Bois, James, Paul Robeson, Walter Rodney, and Amilcar Cabral. A radical analysis of black spirituality and faith extends

from George Washington Woodbey to James Cone and Cornel West. Within the most radical tendency of black nationalism, similar ideas found expression through the militant activism of Cyril V. Briggs, Malcolm X, and Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael). And among the writings of lesbian, gay, and bisexual intellectuals, a black radical perspective is expressed through the powerful writings of Audre Lorde and Barbara Smith.

Within African American studies, the radical or transformationist perspective was represented in the late 1960s by the Institute of the Black World (IBW). IBW was originally conceived as an "Institute for Advanced Afro-American Studies" in which "the work of Du Bois could find a renaissance," according to the historian Vincent Harding. In the summer of 1968, the Institute for Advanced Afro-American Studies was planned to be part of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center. A nucleus of progressive black scholars joined Harding in this process, including the political scientist Bill Strickland, Stephen Henderson, Council Taylor, A. B. Spellman, Lawrence Rushing, and Gerald McWorter (Abdul Alkalimat). Within a year, the renamed Institute of the Black World had come into increasing conflict with the King Center, and divisions developed among the original planning group. McWorter, Spellman, and Rushing left the institute, and by the fall of 1969 a core senior research staff was developed that included Harding, Strickland, the historians Lerone Bennett and Sterling Stuckey, the sociologist Joyce Ladner, and the education scholar Chester Davis. In November 1969, IBW hosted a national working conference on black studies, inviting the directors of thirty-five major departments and programs to discuss models "towards an education appropriate to our struggle."⁴⁷

Throughout the 1970s, IBW represented the most progressive model of what African American studies could have been. Breaking

its affiliation with the King Center, IBW faced a continuous struggle to finance its researchers and staff. Given its limited budget, the range of activities and public programs it initiated was truly remarkable. IBW's "Black-World-View" news column was widely distributed to black media, schools, prisons, and community groups. IBW's massive library of audiotaped lectures and manuscripts documented the ideas and research of several generations of scholar-activists. Harding and Strickland were influential in helping to draft the National Black Political Convention's Preamble and Black Agenda, adopted at the Gary Black Convention in March 1972. IBW established ongoing contacts with Vietnamese, Cuban, and other Third World groups. It conducted summer institutes and seminars for teacher training and educational programs that reached prisoners' study groups, housing projects, and black caucuses in religious denominations. IBW's international network of associated scholars included Walter Rodney; C.L.R. James; and Robert Hill, the editor of the definitive study of the collected papers of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association. Howard Dodson, who was for a number of years the director of IBW's administrative staff, later became the head of Harlem's Schomburg Center. Harding's magnificently crafted history of the black freedom movement in the nineteenth-century United States, *There Is a River*, published in 1981, has become a standard text in both African American studies and American history.⁴⁸ Alkalimat became the founder of People's College at Fisk University and the author of a widely read introductory text in African American studies. He served as the director of black studies programs at the University of Illinois and later at the University of Toledo and was a leading figure in black activist organizations and movements, from the African Liberation Support Committee in the 1970s to

the Black Radical Congress. But by the early 1980s, IBW could no longer sustain itself financially, and the center was forced to close.

The history of IBW provides the exception as well as the rule regarding radical black studies. When IBW's radical research agenda and political activities became clear, most foundations and other external funders rejected overtures for support. The center lacked permanent connections with major research universities, which could have subsidized graduate fellowships and resident scholars. IBW's accomplishments are also exceptional, because most parallel efforts to construct radical African American studies programs have not succeeded. The reasons offered by progressive black scholars for this failure are varied. The majority of black socialists and Marxists are not logically drawn into academic careers in universities. Some are involved in trade union and labor organizing; many can be found doing community-based work around police brutality, public education, health care, and women's issues. Their involvement in a wide variety of local and national formations, from Brooklyn's Audre Lorde Center to the Black Radical Congress, often takes priority over other concerns. Many are social workers, teachers, or public employees or work in nonprofit organizations. When black leftists do manage to circumvent the various political road blocks in graduate school and gain employment at colleges and universities, they are rarely tenured. Even tenured and productive research scholars have been subjected to political harassment. Angela Y. Davis, one of the most influential and prolific black feminist scholars, has only recently been the object of a right-wing campaign to remove her from the University of California, Santa Cruz. There are several important academic journals of the black left, notably *The Black Scholar* and *Race and Class*, but most university presses would not

aggressively solicit manuscripts from black leftists.

A more complicated factor lies in the nature of black studies as an intellectual project. Marxists believe that there is a close relationship between knowledge and power. As C.L.R. James observed, "All political power presents itself to the world within a certain framework of ideas."⁴⁹ Those who exercise state power and control society's resources would be truly foolish to encourage and support a kind of scholarship that seeks their removal from power. Black socialist intellectuals strive to place the voices and struggles of black people at the center of our interpretations of history and social reality. But to "correct" history requires more than "black" history. It also requires the insights drawn from critical interpretations of gender, sexuality, class, and ethnicity. African American studies, like most black formations and institutions, is constructed along the terrain of society's racial mountain. That special vantage point yields important truths and insights black people have learned about the American experience that many white Americans refuse to accept or acknowledge to this day. But an intellectual project that deliberately confines the parameters of its inquiry to the racial mountain alone will be of little value in the larger effort to transform the society. This careful balance between the particular and the universal is what distinguishes the work of scholars like W.E.B. Du Bois and Anna Julia Cooper and public leaders such as Robeson and King. They uncompromisingly fought for the perceived interests of black people, but in a language that addressed the totality of society's concerns. As Vincent Harding once declared, "Negro History Week becomes passe, for we move toward controlling the total definition of society."⁵⁰

As we enter a new century, African American studies is experiencing a new wave of

popularity. Most major universities now recommend as part of their core curricula or distribution requirements a menu of multicultural courses that usually includes black studies. The most prominent program today is Harvard's W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Studies, chaired by Henry Louis Gates Jr. With the recruitment of the social theorist Cornel West from Princeton University in 1994 and the appointments of the prominent sociologists William Julius Wilson and Larry Bobo several years later, Gates constructed a formidable intellectual enterprise. Wilson is widely considered the most influential social scientist of his generation, the author of several important works, including *The Declining Significance of Race* in 1978 and *The Truly Disadvantaged* in 1987. West's popular 1992 collection of essays, *Race Matters*, became a standard text in hundreds of colleges. Gates established his reputation with the publication in 1988 of *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism*, which was followed by a constant stream of anthologies, collections of essays, and the autobiographical *Colored People*. With the Harvard philosopher and cultural studies scholar K. Anthony Appiah, Gates edits *Transition*, a lively intellectual journal. Gates's commentaries appear regularly in the *New Yorker* and the *New York Times*. Like most prominent public figures, Gates has his share of critics. He has been criticized for his public celebrity image—"more like that of a movie star than an academic"—and for several controversial essays he has written, such as a 1992 attack against "black anti-Semitism" published in the *New York Times*.⁵¹

To paraphrase Martin, however, "Where do we go from here?" Perhaps in the quest for public acceptance and influence within the academic and political mainstream, we have lost our way. Fundamental social change is usually achieved at the boundaries of society

and not from the center. The classical black intellectual tradition was largely constructed at the margins of white society, in segregated black institutions, in close proximity to the daily struggles of African-American people. It was no accident that the character of black intellectual work was frequently passionate, informed by the urgent tasks of black survival and resistance. This was true throughout Africa and the black diaspora. Walter Rodney was a rigorous, careful scholar and historian of West Africa and the Caribbean, but he was also a major revolutionary political leader in his native Guyana before he was assassinated at the age of thirty-eight. Eric Williams wrote *Capitalism and Slavery* in 1944 and assumed the leadership of the independence movement in Trinidad and Tobago a decade later. Even after Julius Nyerere was named prime minister of independent Tanganyika in 1961, he continued to write and publish works on popular education and culture that were adopted into curricula and community development programs worldwide. The real meaning of Du Bois's life and thought is that there must be an active, dynamic link between serious scholarship and the concerns of the black community.

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More than a quarter century ago, Robert L. Allen posed a series of questions confronting the future of African American studies. "The critics are right," Allen admitted, "when they note that politics is a fundamental problem for the development of Black Studies. But the question is not politics or no politics, but rather it is *which* politics? Whom will Black

Studies serve?" Allen suggested two basic choices ahead for the field. "Will it be truly democratic in its intellectual and political vision, or will it become 'apolitical' and acquiesce to a narrow, elitist and bourgeois view of education?"⁵² The scholarship of African American studies must reflect the full diversity and conflict of theoretical perspectives that currently exist. No voices should be suppressed in the pursuit of knowledge. But debates should not occupy a space utterly detached from the lived experiences of the African-American people. Black studies will continue to be challenged to become once again not merely another methodology for interpreting the black world but an intellectual project that seeks its transformation.

Notes

A version of this essay was published originally in Manning Marable, *Dispatches from the Ebony Tower: Intellectuals Confront the African American Experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 1-28. Several students at the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University were largely responsible for the background research essential in preparing this essay. John McMillian, a doctoral candidate in history, identified a number of important sources. Sherell Daniels and Patrick Gurassi also significantly contributed to this work. As frequently occurs in my work, some of the key ideas expressed here come from the anthropologist Leith Mullings.

1. Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," *Nation*, Vol. 122 (June 23, 1926), pp. 18-22.

2. Vincent Harding, *Beyond Chaos: Black History and the Search for the New Land*, Black Paper No. 2 (Atlanta: Institute of the Black World, August 1970), p. 21.

3. James P. Garrett, "Black/Africana/African Studies: From Radical to Reaction to Reform?—Its Role and Relevance in the Era of Global Capitalism in the New Millennium," *Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 1998-1999), pp. 150-151.

4. Martin Kilson, "Reflections on Structure and Content in Black Studies," *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 3, no. 3 (March 1973), p. 298.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 298-299. In this essay, Kilson mentions many of these works, as well as others that established the modern black intellectual tradition.

6. St. Clair Drake, lecture at Brooklyn College, September 23, 1969, cited in Ronald Bailey, "Black Studies

in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 29, no. 1 (1973), p. 104.

7. Milfred C. Fierce, *Africana Studies Outside the United States: Africa, Brazil, the Caribbean*, Monograph Series No. 7 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University, 1991), pp. 5-6. The report was also copyrighted by the Ford Foundation, 1991.

8. Fanon, quoted in Harding, *Beyond Chaos*, p. 14.

9. Garrett, "Black/Africana/African Studies," pp. 160-162.

10. Amstead L. Robinson, Craig C. Foster, and Donald H. Ogilvie, eds., *Black Studies in the University: A Symposium* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 3.

11. See Ernest Dunbar, "The Black Studies Thing," *New York Times Magazine* (April 6, 1969), p. 25.

12. "Statement" and "Statement of the Black Caucus," dated October 15, 1969, "The African Heritage Studies Association," *Black World*, Vol. 19, no. 9 (July 1970), pp. 20-21.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-24; and Fierce, *Africana Studies Outside the United States*, p. 7.

14. Maulana Ron Karenga, "The Black Community and the University: A Community Organizer's Perspective," in Robinson, Foster, and Ogilvie, eds., *Black Studies in the University*, pp. 37-38.

15. Robert L. Allen, "Politics of the Attack on Black Studies," *Black Scholar*, Vol. 6 (September 1974), p. 6.

16. Ronald Walters, quoted in Bailey, "Black Studies in Historical Perspective," p. 107.

17. James R. Rosser and E. Thomas Copeland, "Reflections: Black Studies—Black Education?" *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 3, no. 3 (March 1973), p. 290. Also see Herman Hudson, "The Black Studies Program: Strategy and Structure," *Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 41, no. 4 (Fall 1972), pp. 294-298.

18. Nathan Hare, "War on Black Colleges," *Black Scholar*, Vol. 9 (May/June 1978), p. 18.

19. Allen, "Politics of the Attack on Black Studies," pp. 2, 5.

20. See Thomas J. LaBelle and Christopher Ward, *Ethnic Studies and Multiculturalism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 78.

21. In the late 1960s, Hamilton reviewed about forty black studies proposals for departments and programs at a number of universities. He reached various conclusions about the value of African American studies to the pursuit of excellence in higher education. "Black studies, some proposals state, will bring about a new spirit of cooperation between blacks and whites," Hamilton noted. "Black studies will instill a sense of pride in black students who will study and learn about their heritage and history. They will develop a sense of identity." Curiously, none of these proposals would be implemented at Columbia University for more than twenty years. See Charles V. Hamilton, "The Challenge of Black Studies," *Social Policy*, Vol. 1, no. 2 (1970), p. 16.

22. Interview with James Jennings, "A Look at Black Studies Today," *Forward Motion*, Vol. 4, no. 4 (February-March 1985), p. 10.

23. Kilson, "Reflections on Structure and Content in Black Studies," pp. 300, 303, 306-309.
24. St. Clair Drake, quoted in Bailey, "Black Studies in Historical Perspective," p. 103.
25. Elias Blake Jr. and Henry Cobb, *Black Studies: Issues in Their Institutional Survival* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1974), pp. 3, 9.
26. Allen, "Politics of the Attack on Black Studies," pp. 2, 5.
27. Jack Bass, *Widening the Mainstream of American Culture: A Ford Foundation Report on Ethnic Studies* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1978), p. 8. Also see John W. Blassingame, ed., *New Perspectives on Black Studies* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971).
28. Nathan Huggins, *Afro-American Studies: A Report to the Ford Foundation* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1985), p. 45.
29. Fierce, *Africana Studies Outside the United States*, p. 8.
30. Abdul Alkalimat, "Black Power in U.S. Education: Ideology, Academic Activism and the Politics of Black Liberation," *Africa World Review* [London], (May-October 1992), p. 15.
31. Maulana Karenga, "Black Studies and the Problematic of Paradigm: The Philosophical Dimension," *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 18, no. 4 (June 1988), pp. 396, 406-407.
32. Molefi Asante, review of Microsoft *Encarta Africana*, edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and K. Anthony Appiah, H-NET Discussion List for African American Studies, February 3, 1999, [H-AFRO-AM@H-NET.MSU.EDU].
33. Molefi Asante, unpublished manuscript, "A Note on Nathan Huggins," quoted in Karenga, "Black Studies and the Problematic of Paradigm," p. 403.
34. See Molefi Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1990).
35. From speech by Molefi Asante at Alabama State University, quoted in Monique Fields, "Founder of Afrocentricity Aims to Dispel Myths," *Montgomery Advertiser*, April 10, 1996.
36. Dennis Kelly, "Afrocentric Studies: A Concept Rooted in Controversy," *USA Today*, January 28, 1992.
37. See the premier issue of *The Journal of Pan African Studies: A Journal of Africentric Theory, Methodology, and Analysis*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (Fall-Winter, 1998-1999).
38. Kelly, "Afrocentric Studies: A Concept Rooted in Controversy."
39. Tom Teepen, "By Distorting Black History, Afrocentrism Just Tarnishes Its Legacy," Editorial, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, February 27, 1996.
40. Carlotta Morrow, "This Afrocentrism Is Reverse Racism," Op-Editorial, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, November 12, 1995.
41. Keith Crawford, "Defining Afrocentrism: One Perspective," *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 1998-1999), p. 30.
42. "Africentricity: What It Is, What It's Not, and What It Yet May Be," Editorial, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol. 1, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 1998-1999), p. 18.
43. See the second revised edition of Maulana Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies* (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 1993).
44. "A Is for Ashanti, B Is for Black . . .," *Newsweek* (September 23, 1991).
45. Garrett, "Black/Africana/Pan African Studies," p. 169. Garrett continues: "During the past 20 years, the culturalists have repeatedly used Black Studies as a platform to declare themselves national and international cultural analysts and icons. They have adopted traditional African rituals, male dominated elder-chair/worship, created artificial hierarchies, employed redundancies and catechisms, promoted festivals and conferences (while supporting a cottage industry of African clothing and attire, cosmetics, drum performances and book displays), all of which have been critical in cultivating and nurturing the high level of influence they claim and maintain. Self-praise and self-aggrandisement have become characteristic of many such departments and programs. However, the main role the culturalists have played has been to deflect Black Studies from confronting the established American social order, that is, to focus seriously and relentlessly on the rapidly deteriorating social/economic conditions the masses of Black people face domestically and globally" (pp. 169-170).
46. Alkalimat, "Black Power in U.S. Education," p. 15.
47. Vincent Harding, "Introduction," in Institute of the Black World, ed., *IBW and Education for Liberation* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1973), pp. iii-ix.
48. For a generational overview of the political activities and research projects of IBW, see Institute of the Black World, ed., *Education and Black Struggle: Notes from the Colonized World*, *Harvard Educational Review*, Monograph No. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard Educational Review, 1974).
49. C.L.R. James, "African Independence and the Myth of African Inferiority," in Institute of the Black World, ed., *Education and Black Struggle*, p. 34.
50. Harding, *Beyond Chaos*, p. 27.
51. See Cheryl Bentsent, "Head Negro in Charge," April 1997, <<http://www.bostonmagazine.com>>; and Franklin Foer, "Henry Louis Gates Jr.: The Academic as Entrepreneur," April 11, 1997, <<http://www.slatemag.com>>. The most recent controversy involving Gates was generated by the publication, with co-editor K. Anthony Appiah, of *Encarta Africana*, a "comprehensive encyclopedia of black history and culture." Critics such as Asante questioned its selection of topics, its "uneven scholarship," and the exclusion of a number of contemporary black scholars and writers who reflected a different "perspective or orientation" than that of the editors. See Asante, review of Microsoft *Encarta Africana*.
52. Allen, "Politics of the Attack on Black Studies," p. 7.