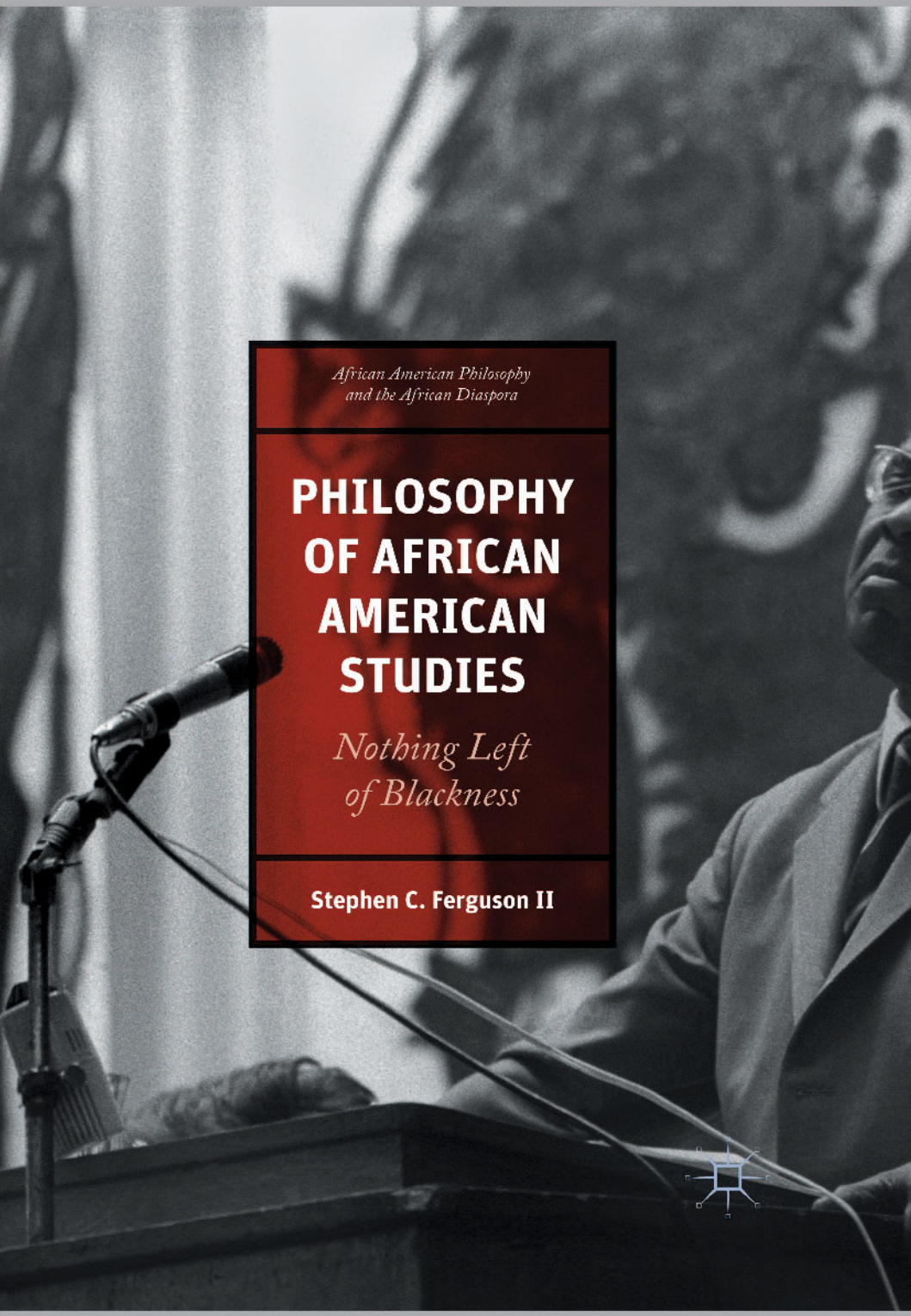
African American Philosophy
and the African Diaspora
PHILOSOPHY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES
Nothing Left of Blackness
Stephen C. Ferguson II

Philosophy of African American Studies

African American Philosophy and the African Diaspora

The *African American Philosophy and the African Diaspora* Series publishes high quality work that considers philosophically the experiences of African descendant peoples in the United States and the Americas. Featuring single-authored manuscripts and anthologies of original essays, this collection of books advance the philosophical understanding of the problems that black people have faced and continue to face in the Western Hemisphere. Building on the work of pioneering black intellectuals, the series explores the philosophical issues of race, ethnicity, identity, liberation, subjugation, political struggles, and socio-economic conditions as they pertain to black experiences throughout the Americas.

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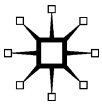

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Introduction

The dynamics of power shape public education, particularly the curriculum, politically and ideologically. As such, the educational curriculum is preeminently an interdisciplinary expression of contending class ideologies. Educational institutions function to reproduce capitalist social relations and the dominant values and beliefs of the ruling class. Public education—whether at the elementary, high school, or university level—plays a seminal ideological role in creating social consensus in bourgeois civil society. Ideas that do not conform to the dominant-class relations of production receive little or no support from the State or civil society.

With this in mind, it is difficult to understand how universities could be the basis for revolutionary change. Yet, in 1968, "The Year of Revolutions," the Black Studies movement became a *critical nodal point* in future battles over the values grounding the academy, and more generally, intellectual culture in the United States. The entrance of Black Studies into the ivory tower did not necessarily qualify it as a legitimate academic field of study. As Perry Hall has noted:

> The achievement of legitimate institutional status, like the initial formation of the field itself, has depended more on the actions and initiatives of Black Studies activists and scholars themselves than on the largess or enlightenment of the academic establishment.[1]

In fact, one of the perennial hurdles confronting African American Studies (AAS) is what Black philosopher William R. Jones describes as the problems of legitimacy and justification.

From the outset, conservative critics charged that Black Studies departments and programs would compromise the intellectual and professional standards of the university. It was saddled with the perception of being a collection of "soft courses" that were intellectually empty. This perception has not dissipated despite the explosion of Black Studies scholarship. In 2012 blogger Naomi Schaefer Riley, with *The Chronicle of Higher*

Education, penned a blog post, "The Most Persuasive Case for Eliminating Black Studies? Just Read the Dissertations."[2]

In 1977 Jones wrote "The Legitimacy and Necessity of Black Philosophy: Some Preliminary Considerations." He brings into sharp relief how issues of legitimacy and justification are the overriding principles in the defense of Black philosophy. Although Jones's lens is focused on the more specific problems associated with the academic discipline of philosophy, the general principles are equally relevant to Black Studies. Jones argues:

> In recent years the concept of an ethnic approach to a discipline has emerged. Central to this approach is the self-conscious concern to accent the characteristics of a given cultural, racial, religious, or national grouping and to establish its history, perspective, culture, the agenda, etc. as indispensable for the content and method of the various disciplines. Black philosophy is a representative of this development.[3]

Clearly, the substitution of "Black Studies" for "Black philosophy" would not alter the fundamental meaning of Jones's comments. He fully captures one of the primary theoretical questions confronting Black Studies: Is Black Studies a legitimate field of study? In his ensuing remarks, Jones insightfully declares:

> As a new entry in the philosophical marketplace, black philosophy finds that it must reply to questions not generally addressed to other neoteric developments. Other newcomers are asking to justify their adequacy and significance. Black philosophy, however, must respond to the prior question of its legitimacy; it must establish its right to exist as an appropriate philosophical position.[4]

Again, if we substitute "academic marketplace" for "philosophical marketplace" and "Black Studies" for "Black philosophy," Jones's assessment brings to the forefront the problem and principle of *legitimacy* for Black Studies. By establishing a distinction between *legitimacy* and *justification*, Jones provides a clear difference between Black Studies and the historical formation of other mainstream disciplines. Although all new disciplines are required to *justify* their existence, the demand for *legitimacy* is an imperative specifically focused on the politics surrounding the parturition of Black Studies. Jones makes perfectly clear that the entrance of Black Studies into the sacrosanct halls of academia is not merely the replication of how prior mainstream disciplines and areas of study have confronted and negotiated the issue of accessibility into academia via *justification*. Unfortunately, Jones's perceptive recognition of this historical fact escaped many academic commentators on Black Studies.

In a postracial period, when the Negro is officially human, what is left of Blackness? Should we be mourning the death of Blackness and Black Studies, when people identify as only *Black-ish*? Is there a need for Black Studies in the new millennium? Many recent academic scandals contingently associated with Black Studies offer circumstantial evidence against the necessity for Black Studies. In 2011, news reports began circulating that the chair of the African and African American Studies (AAAS) department at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Julius Nyang'oro and the department secretary Deborah Crowder orchestrated a "shadow curriculum" in order to primarily keep student-athletes eligible. Allegations brought forth by former basketball player Rashad McCants and former football player Michael McAdoo added fuel to the fire. Reportedly, student-athletes were steered to major in AAAS and to take no-show "paper classes" offered by Nyang'oro. Classes that were advertised as lectures were converted into "bogus independent studies." It would seem that Black Studies was a willing accomplice in an 18-year scheme of academic fraud involving at least 3,100 students, about half of them athletes, and a good number of them were Black students.[5]

The words written by Robert Allen in 1974 could easily apply today:

> Black Studies, one of the newest additions to the academic curriculum, is in deep trouble. The Black Studies movement that began with such enthusiasm and optimism in the late 1960s is now fighting a rearguard battle; its very survival on campus is in doubt. Wholesale cutbacks in operating budgets and student financial aid, coupled with intellectual ambushes by academic critics, have crippled or destroyed dozens of Black Studies departments and programs around the country.[6]

But the struggle continues. In 2013, students at City University of New York (CUNY) took to the streets to protest the closing of the Guillermo Morales/Assata Shakur Community and Student Center.[7] The university administration replaced the Student Center with a "Careers and Professional Development Institute." Prior to its shut down by the administration, students of the Morales/Shakur Center were organizing protests against the hiring of former general and former CIA director David Petraeus and the reemergence of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps at CUNY. These students cried out: "No War Criminals in CUNY!"[8] These students are the progeny of militant Black and Puerto Rican students who occupied City College (University of Harlem) in 1969. Today, more than ever, there is a need to establish the legitimacy of and justification for Black Studies. A critical task in this effort is the formulation of a philosophy of AAS.[9]

Toward a Philosophy of African American Studies

The eighteenth-century German philosopher Hegel once asked, what should be the proper beginning for philosophy? This question, I think, is a rather important one for a philosophy of AAS. This book is a call for a systematic inquiry into the methodological presuppositions, philosophical problems, and perspectives within AAS. Several questions are central to this project. What is the value of philosophy to AAS? What method and theory should guide African American scholars in their inquiry into the concrete processes of African American class formation that operate and shape racial, gender, urban, suburban, and rural experiences in the United States? What should be the role of the Black working-class in shaping the intellectual, cultural, political, and social agendas of AAS departments? What should be the philosophical basis of AAS? Is Blackness a particular philosophical perspective? Or is Blackness the object of investigation?[10]

Philosophical idealism and materialism represent divergent methodological and philosophical perspectives in Black Studies. Afrocentric idealism, for instance, argues that the appellations of African, Africana, African American, or Black constitute both the *subject matter* under investigation and the *method* of investigation. As Molefi Asante notes, "The chain of reasoning that leads to the denunciation of racism must start with your ultimate reality which is blackness, Africanness."[11] From a materialist perspective, Blackness cannot be attached to a description of the method or theory of AAS. A philosophy of AAS should not be seen as an attempt to develop a Black philosophical perspective. Rather, it is to highlight the necessity for a *philosophical comprehension of the Black experience*. It is not an issue of thinking in Black philosophical terms; rather it is an imperative to think philosophically about the Black experience.[12]

Cultural idealism is the methodological premise from which Afrocentrists begin. The multifariousness of traditional African culture is reduced to a single ahistorical worldview and made the touchstone of an authentic Black particularity. Afrocentricity seeks a philosophy of particularity that is grounded on the same grandeur and scope displayed by Greek culture in antiquity and modern European cultures. The proof of one's humanity rests in the existence of a civilized culture. The field of Black Studies becomes first and foremost the study of ancient African civilizations, the mummified fragments of ancient transcendental beliefs and values of the African nobility and priestly class, and an inert "stock of particularisms."[13] Rather than the study of the real material culture and history of Black indentured servants, slaves, sharecroppers, domestics, and steel workers, we have, as

Jennifer Jordan puts it, "a pristine paradise which could be as glorious as the imagination could make it."[14] We are left without any means of understanding the concrete processes of class formation in Africa and the Africana diaspora. African American history becomes a second-order enterprise vis-à-vis history of "Kemetic high culture," which is a first-order enterprise. From a methodological and philosophical standpoint, we should ask, why should AAS become *Africanus classicus*, that is, primarily an inquiry into the history and culture of ancient African civilizations?

The premise from which we must begin, I argue, are "real individuals, their activity and the material conditions of their life, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity"—not heavenly fantasies built on the lives and culture of Pharaohs in the holy land of Kemet.[15] Rather than start with an ideal (e.g., the Absolute Spirit) to be realized in the course of the historical process, we must start with the mode of production, the relations of production, and their dialectical interaction with the social forms of consciousness manifested as the ideological superstructure. We should point out that uncovering the material relations on which classes are formed and how their interests are fought out in class struggle is not merely a European concept, but is universally true. What this presupposition requires, by way of analysis, is defining sexism, racism, and national oppression, with due consideration given to the material context of social relations of production and the State as an instrument of the ruling class.

What is the value of philosophy? Here it is important to see that philosophy grounds the empirical investigations that provide the foundation for Black Studies. Some may cynically posit that the game of philosophy involves nothing more than making useless hair-splitting distinctions, unanswerable empty questions and brain-numbing controversies. It is not hard to imagine a demented philosophy professor who teases her first-year philosophy students with mind-twisting speculative questions in a desire to inculcate the wonders of philosophy. What color is the number nine? What does Thursday weigh? How many angels can dance on the head of a pin? How do we know the world didn't come into existence five minutes ago? Or my favorite, what does "it" refer to in the sentence, "It is raining." This hair-splitting notion of philosophy dates back to scholasticism and remains alive in the tradition of analytical philosophy. Here the value of philosophy rests in its speculative nature.

Beyond this view, in my estimation, the value of philosophy rests in its methodological imperative to critically examine and justify the grounds of our convictions, prejudices, and beliefs.[16] Philosophical inquiry involves subjecting our presuppositions and assumptions to the tribunal of reason. In contrast to religion and mythology, we don't question our basic

presumptions and presuppositions. Philosophy, however, thrives on mutual criticism in a culture of rational discourse.[17]

Philosophy is not preeminently an empirical discipline in the manner of, say, biology. Philosophers do not engage in experiments in some philosophical laboratory in the manner of scientists. As Theodor Oizerman notes, "Philosophy is armed with no techniques of experimentation, no instruments of observation, no chemical reagents; these and all its other deficiencies have to be replaced by the power of abstraction."[18] The end-result of theoretical abstractions is to identify the essential nature of reality that is often concealed from our immediate empirical observation of perceptual appearances. I contend that philosophy is a subject of inquiry that is preeminently conceptual rather than empirical in nature. Its nature consists of clarifying concepts, puzzles, and problems that are born of the fire of life.

Philosophy has a dialectical relationship to science in both its natural and social forms. Philosophy exists partially outside science, partially within it. The African philosopher Paulin Hountondji describes philosophy as "a theory of scientific practice, a theory whose development depends, and rightly, on the real development of scientific knowledge."[19] The history of philosophy details this fact. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, for example, was not only a philosopher but also a mathematician and natural scientist in his own right. While Karl Marx was trained as a philosopher, he is best known for his examination of the enigma of capital, that is, his critique of bourgeois political economy. Other philosophers confronted problems in the philosophy of science. The Black philosopher Eugene C. Holmes wrote three trailblazing articles on space and time from the vantage point of dialectical materialism.[20] Prior to Holmes, we find that there were philosophical debates over the theory of evolution in the pages of *The A.M.E. Church Review*.[21] The point is, as Althusser notes, "philosophy does not substitute itself for science: it intervenes, in order to clear a path, to open the space in which a correct line may then be drawn."[22]

I contend that the various forms and means of studying the African American experience are always linked, often in a mediated and implicit fashion, to broader philosophical questions about the nature of reality, epistemology, philosophy of history, political philosophy, and the meaning of life. When the literary or music critic explores the aesthetics of the African American experience, the historian seeks to interpret Black history, the anthropologist unravels the nature of cultural practices in African American life, the theologian examines aspects of the Black religious experience, the sociologist discusses how power shapes the living conditions of African Americans in Kansas City, and the economist studies the effects of gentrification on Black families, there are always what could be called "big picture" questions and presuppositions implicit to these studies. In a

sense, whenever we make use of philosophical analysis, we become involved in digging beneath the surface, going beyond the appearance, extending beyond the form to uncover the essence and content of the subject matter being examined.

Just as "big picture" questions inform specialized research in AAS, we must understand that AAS can also inform the practice of philosophical inquiry. Historically, the teaching of philosophy in the United States draws almost exclusively on the Anglo-European philosophical traditions and sociohistorical conditions. As a result, we find that most professional philosophers and philosophy departments in the academy are generally unaware of philosophical questions and problems that may have grown out of African American intellectual and material culture. Even so, AAS is a very rich—untapped—resource for philosophical inquiry. It can assist us in learning about many dimensions of philosophy.

While there are a host of philosophical perspectives in AAS, many of these philosophical perspectives fail to offer a correct understanding of the "big picture." I contend that a considerable number of misguided positions in AAS are grounded on philosophical idealism. In order to overcome the weaknesses, or rather defects, of philosophical idealism, it is necessary to understand them. I argue that philosophical materialism provides a fruitful way of overcoming the limitations of idealism in both social scientific research and social theory in AAS. *Philosophy of African American Studies* offers a materialist intervention via a critique of cultural idealism and its influence on a number of key thinkers in the field.

Marxism in Ebony

Materialist Philosophical Inquiry and Black Studies

In any academic discipline, there exist varying, oftentimes even conflicting, conceptual frameworks, theoretical approaches, and methods. Back Studies is no different. In light of the theoretical works prominent today, however, a number of students in AAS might easily conclude that philosophical idealism is the only school of thought.

To the contrary, Black Leftist activists were significant players during the early period of Black Studies. The first introductory textbooks in African American Studies were written by Marxist/socialist scholars and activists; for instance, Peoples College's *Introduction to Afro-American Studies* and Clarence Munford's *Production Relations, Class and Black Liberation: A Marxist Perspective in Afro-American Studies*. Communist like Jack O'Dell

and Robert Rhodes taught African American Studies courses at the Antioch College branch campus in Washington, D. C. And pioneering Black historian and "antibourgeois gadfly" Earl Thorpe – chair of the history department at North Carolina College – was recruited to teach courses on "Marxism and Black Liberation" for the Black Studies program at Duke University.[23] However, today, Leftist thought is marginal to the politics and philosophy of Black Studies.

Socialism and Marxism–Leninism are integral parts of African American history and culture. Of course, Marxist scholar/activists contributed to African American intellectual history and culture long before what is, in more formal terms, considered the advent of Black Studies during the late 1960s. In the tradition of Hubert Harrison, Susie Revels Cayton, Maude White Katz, Richard B. Moore, Paul Robeson, Oliver Cox, Eugene Holmes, Abram Harris, Claudia Jones, Walter Rodney, Angela Davis, and John McClendon, there is a need to bring the Black working-class—men and women—back into AAS.

A materialist philosophy inquiry into Black Studies is grounded on three presuppositions. A materialist conception of epistemology and ontology presumes that there is a reality independent of our consciousness. A materialist ontology asserts the primacy of material reality over consciousness. And a materialist epistemology posits that this reality is knowable and knowledge or what is cognitive (social consciousness) corresponds to and thus ideally approximates this material reality. Lastly, a materialist philosophy presupposes that the social world is a stratified ontology of which class relations (i.e., social relations of production) form the ground for understanding social processes.

The call for a materialist conception of science and epistemology should not be seen as a call for an essentialist ascription of AAS, wherein it is viewed only as a social scientific enterprise devoid of cultural studies. The current popularity of cultural studies, often in collaboration with various species of historicism and postmodernist trends, fosters a separation between cultural studies and social relations of production. As a school of thought, it gives less attention to the material conditions that give rise to African American culture and relativizes the objective character of the Black experience.

In my estimation, the Black working-class has become lost in the whirlwind of cultural idealism. Contemporary Black cultural theory—under the spell of poststructuralism and Afrocentricity—has declared: class is dead! All that exists is intersectionality and a "matrix of domination," in which everyone is oppressed—women, men, capitalist, workers, children, ad infinitum. And there is a tendency in Black Studies to transform the Black working-class into some obscure gray matter known as the consumer, the multitude, or—my favorite from the "friends of the poor"—the Black underclass.[24]

The relevance and importance of the Black working-class must be brought to the forefront of Black Studies.[25] This would entail discarding analytical notions such as "cultural deprivation," "human capital," "culture of poverty," "nihilism," "feminization of poverty," "intersectionality," "underclass," "cultural pathology," and "menticide" that have served to explain the contemporary and historical crisis that confronts the Black working-class. We must discard the cultural idealism of Maulana Karenga, Cornel West, Jawanza Kunjufu, Marimba Ani, Patricia Hill Collins, Molefi Asante, and William Julius Wilson who perceive the "Negro Question" as an ideological or axiological crisis, for example, as alienation from ancient African values, the loss of a "love ethic," or the lack of human capital. When we view the "Negro Question" as preeminently ideological, moral, or cultural, we ultimately discount the determinate role of material contradictions rooted in class contradictions. As Robert Allen astutely noted, "…the question is not politics or no politics; rather it is *which* politics? Whom will Black Studies serve? 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?"[26]

Black Studies and the Question of Western Civilization Revisited

C. L. R. James wrote what could be considered a Marxist manifesto for Black Studies in 1969. Speaking at Federal City College, James argues, at the level of theory, that Black Studies should be anti-racist and anti-imperialist in character, but not anti-white. From James's perspective, there is no intellectual space in Black Studies for philosophies of Blackness in which ancient African civilizations, values, and cultural perspectives constitute a "presuppositionless beginning" for Black Studies.[27] He parts company with Black nationalists and their contemporary progeny (e.g., Afrocentrists) who argue that every culture rests on a metaphysical, permanent substratum that gives rise to a particular system of thought. He cogently proclaims:

> We need a careful systematic building up of historical, economic, political, literary ideas, knowledge and information, on the Negro question…Because it is only where we have *Bolshevik* ideas, *Marxist* ideas, *Marxist* knowledge, *Marxist* history, *Marxist* perspectives, that you are certain to drive out *bourgeois* ideas, *bourgeois* history, *bourgeois* perspectives which are so powerful on the question of *the races* in the United States.[28] [Italics Added]

For James, the antithesis between bourgeois ideology and proletarian ideology is essential to the development, direction, and aim of Black Studies.

James is often viewed as someone who was head-over-heels in love with Western culture and/or civilization. Yet, it is important to note that dialectical and historical materialism (or Marxism–Leninism) constitutes the conceptual and theoretical framework for his assessment of "The Fate of Humanity." In a 1939 article, "Revolution and the Negro" James boldly avows, "What we as Marxists have to see is the tremendous role played by Negroes in *the transformation of Western civilization* from feudalism to capitalism. It is only from this vantage-point that we shall be able to appreciate (and prepare for) the still greater role they must of necessity play in the transition from capitalism to socialism."[29] James's classic works such as *The Black Jacobins* and *A History of Pan-African Revolt* are ardently attentive to the fact that slavery, colonialism, and imperialism are part and parcel of capitalism. Moreover, the revolutionary resistance of people of African descent ostensibly indicates the critical role of Black people as actors or subjects of history and the dialectical development of Western civilization. In unswerving disapproval of Hegel's views about Africans and their place outside of world history, James meticulously documents and effectively demonstrates that—far from being removed from world historical event—African people and their descendants in the diaspora transformed the landscape of world history in a monumental fashion.[30]

Yet, James's historiography is not some form of racial vindicationism, which claims that ancient African civilization is the real source of Black historic magnitude and ultimately collective identity. Rather James offers insights into the Black struggles against slavery and colonialism as manifestations of the antagonistic contradictions within the modern (bourgeois) stage of world history. Cultural idealism has no place within James's worldview and consequently his philosophy of history. James's philosophy of history is not anti-European, anti-Western, or anti-white; his philosophy of history is stridently anti-slavery, anti-imperialist, anti-racist, and anti-capitalist.[31]

James introduces a conceptual distinction between what is European and what is Eurocentrism. Moreover, he did not accept the abstract concept of the West as monolithic, devoid of internal class relations and contradictory class interests. Black sociologist Alex Dupuy points out that James's dialectical analysis takes into consideration the tremendous value of European culture and its influence on the African diaspora, and vice versa.[32] Dupuy argues, "James was redefining the meaning of Western culture away from its Eurocentric understanding. For [James], West Indians were a modern and Western people, though they were not European, a point [James] made in many of his writings, e.g., his semiautobiography, *Beyond a Boundary* (1963)."[33] James resolutely rejected any outlook that requires Black Studies to be grounded on a uniquely formulated Black perspective (e.g., Senghor's

Negritude or Karenga's Kawaida or Asante's Afrocentricity). Dupuy points out that James does not "reject African culture in favor of Western culture."[34] Rather, James's analysis is based on "a historical materialist understanding of culture" and the recognition that "the predominant influences in the Caribbean were those of Western Europe."[35] As Dupuy insightfully notes, "*The Black Jacobins* remains . . . one of the most succinct critiques of the barbarism of Western European imperialism but also of the promise of bourgeois civilization."[36] Any philosophy of AAS worth its salt should follow in the "Giant Steps" of C. L. R. James. Embracing an ethnophilosophy that is anti-European is as fruitful as masturbation. It may be pleasurable, perhaps even therapeutic, but it won't give birth to a scientific approach to Black Studies.

"And that Black Fist becomes a Red Spark"

Black Studies and Black Working-Class Studies[37]

In a post-Cold War world, the "spectre of communism" has apparently been exorcised and laid to rest. There is the widespread belief that we have witnessed the death-knell of Marxism. So, why argue for the legitimacy of and necessity for Marxism in Black Studies? No doubt this has been a hotly debated question both in the Black Liberation movement and in Black Studies for a considerable time. I tend to agree with Brian Lloyd: "I presume that we are witnessing, not the death of Marxism, but the end of the first period during which Marxists managed to seize and, for a time, wield state power. That it has fewer adherents at the end than during other phases of this period, and that as many of them can be found in universities as in factories or fields, is neither disheartening as is imaged by some of its proponents nor as amusing as is supposed by all of its detractors."[38]

It has become the custom to summarily dismiss Marxism as a viable methodological approach and philosophical perspective for Black Studies. Most of the adversarial postures toward Marxism–Leninism in Black Studies have discounted the value of a materialist dialectical philosophy of liberation, class analysis, class struggle, proletarian internationalism, and the scientific socialist principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Despite the sharp divergence of their political views, Harold Cruse, Cedric Robinson, Cornel West, Marimba Ani, Patricia Hill Collins, and Charles Mills have condemned Marx and Marxism for everything from economic determinism to class reductionism to historical teleology and any number of other "conceits." We even find Asante making such puerile statements such as the

following: "In fact, we have no history of a communist movement in the United States where communists put their bodies and lives on the line as African Americans did."[39]

Contrary to Asante's claim, scholars such as Mark Naison, Ted Vincent, Erik S. McDuffie, Gerald Horne, Carole Boyce Davies, Robin Kelley, Minkah Makalani, and Mark Solomon in addition to autobiographies by Harry Haywood, Hosea Hudson, and Michael Hamlin offer a much more nuanced picture of communism, socialism, and Marxism–Leninism in Black life and culture. Over the years, scholarship in labor studies and Black Studies has revealed the historical legacy of Black worker militancy. As we travel through the annals of Black history, we unearth Peter Clark's crucial involvement in the Great Railway Strike of 1877, Lucy Parsons's unflinching engagement in the Haymarket Square struggle, the heroic efforts of Ralph Gray, Tommy Gray, Eula Gray, Al Murphy, and scores of Black sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and agricultural laborers to organize the predominantly Black underground organization the Share Croppers Union, A. Philip Randolph's tireless efforts with the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Ferdinand Smith's vanguard role in the National Maritime Union and Paul Robeson's monumental efforts to use folk music to entertain Spanish Civil War loyalists and striking workers as he gave support to international socialist solidarity. We could mention the steadfast leadership of Velma Hopkins and Moranda Smith in the 1947 strike at the Reynolds Tobacco Company in Winston Salem, North Carolina. There were Black postal workers like Cleveland Morgan, a member of New York Branch 36 of the National Association of Letter Carriers, who played a seminal role in the nationwide 1970 postal wildcat strike. We could also mention the historic efforts of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers to organize wildcat strikes in Detroit, Michigan. And, in more recent times, we could mention working-class Black women who have fought against the attack on public services, such as public housing and welfare. We should not ignore the fact that many of these activists were socialists, and quite a few were Marxist–Leninist in their ideological outlook.

The scholarship of Clarence Lang, John Arena, Adolph Reed, Barbara Ransby, Rhonda Y. Williams, and Joe Trotter has demonstrated the historic importance of the Black working-class to African American history and culture. They bring to light the centrality of class struggle and conflict as determinate features of what makes up the Black working-class. World capitalism gave birth to the Black working-class. The initial accumulation of large sums of capital, which in turn, was invested in the exploitation of European workers, derived from the slave trade and the plantation system in the so-called New World. In volume one of *Capital*, Marx so famously wrote "capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with

blood and dirt."[40] The ruthless exploitation of Black bodies, in a manner of speaking, became the proverbial goose that lays golden eggs, possessing the magical ability to increase the magnitude of capital. Incidentally, the profitability of the "proverbial goose" prompted slaveholder Thomas Jefferson to remark, "it wou'd never do to destroy the goose."[41] Leaving the decks of the slave ship, "In the Name of Jesus," large numbers of Wolof, Mande, Fulani, and Mandingo were bound together by chains, from neck to neck and wrist to wrist.[42] Out of the diversity of African ethnic groups a new synthesis was formed under the brutal system of capitalist slavery, giving birth to African Americans. The incessant "demand for Black labor" by Northern industrial capital and the plantation bourgeoisie fueled world capitalist development. Black slaves toiled in textile mills, shipyards, sawmills, and coalmines from Virginia to Mississippi. Black women labored on tobacco fields in the Carolina piedmont and picked cotton on plantations along the coast of Georgia. Black men like Tom Molineaux and Black women like Sylvia DuBois were given release time from slave labor in order to engage in athletic labor (as boxers) to bring entertainment and profits to slaveholders and the larger white Southern community.[43] From the seventeenth century to the twenty-first century, from slave plantations to auto factories, Black women, men, and children labored under the hard times of capitalist exploitation. The brutal forces unleashed by the capitalist drive for surplus value laid the foundation for the development of African American life and culture, from religion to music.[44]

Presently, we are witnessing, from New York to North Carolina to Missouri to Wisconsin to California, concerted attacks on public sector workers in order to resolve the economic crisis ravaging US capitalism. We cannot ignore the fact that Black people are prominent in the leadership as well as in the rank and file in a great number of these mass demonstrations. In cities throughout the country, working-class men and women, Black, white, and Latino, are being blown away by police officers who are ultimately protected by the rule of law. In the aftermath of the murders of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Aiyanna Jones, Yvette Smith, Rekia Boyd, and Eric Garner, Black working people are not silently standing by while the "Lords of Capital" via their "special bodies of armed men"—with military weapons and tanks—confront them in the streets. This seminal point is lost on Black critics of Marxism during the past 90 years.

As numerous studies in AAS have demonstrated, the working-class is not one-dimensional, exclusively composed of white people. The working-class is composed of women, men, and children, in addition to being multinational in character. Marxist studies of Black working-class life and culture are needed now more than ever because in the souls of the Black working-class the grapes of wrath are filling and growing heavy. As Karl Marx so famously

put it, "The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism of the weapon, material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses."[45]

Philosophy of African American Studies, I hope, will serve a prolegomena to the Herculean task of developing a philosophy of AAS from the standpoint of materialism. How well I have backed up this reaffirmation of philosophical materialism and revolutionary socialism with good arguments I leave it to my readers to judge. But the attempt to do so provides an answer—satisfactory to me at least—to justify writing this book.

A Note

I capitalize the word, "Black," when making reference to Black Africans and people of African descent. As a proper noun, I capitalize it like *Negro* or *African American*. Over a number of generations, there was a consistent fight to capitalize the word, "Negro" as a way of establishing racial respect and dignity. Since the word, "Black," has now come to replace "Negro" as the contemporary convention, I follow in that tradition with the capitalization of "Black." As Robert S. Wachal observes: "The failure to capitalize Black when it is synonymous with African American is a matter of unintended racism, to put the best possible face on it."[46]

Chapter 1

Class Struggle in the Ivory Towers
Revisiting the Birth of Black Studies in '68

Introduction

In the fall of 1968 Antioch College (Yellow Springs, Ohio) gave birth to the Afro-American Studies Institute. This Marxist-led program was one of the first Black Studies programs in the country.[1] By the end of 1968, Yale University began the implementation of its Black Studies program, financed in large part by the Ford Foundation.[2] Nearly 20 years later, around 1988, the first doctoral program in AAS was established. It was not Harvard, Yale, Princeton, or Columbia that would have that honor; it was established at Temple University with Molefi Asante at the helm as chair of the department. The curriculum at Temple was designed to reflect an explicit philosophical and methodological commitment to Afrocentricity. In contrast to conventional wisdom, Afrocentricity—with its focus on reclaiming precolonial African civilizations and culture devoid of class contradictions—was not the predominant philosophical approach as Black Studies entered the ivory tower in 1968. By what strange assortment of events did Afrocentricity come to occupy an intellectual space in Black Studies? Was it the result of a convergence of cosmic accidents (such as Cleopatra's nose) that lead to its emergence as a school of thought in Black Studies?[3] Was it an instance of divine providence by the Egyptian god Osiris, Allah, or Yahweh? Was it the result of the "cunning of Reason" or just the "march of history?" Was it simply an act of pure genius on the part of Molefi Asante and other Afrocentrists?

In this chapter, I present a revisionist history of the origins of Black Studies and how Afrocentricity emerged as a dominant ideology and school of thought in Black Studies. The contemporary state of Black Studies can only be understood through a reconstruction of its historical and political context. Sifting through the ashes of past ideological debates, political conflicts and—in the last instance—economic conditions is an obligatory task for any student of history who wishes to understand the material and intellectual forces that shaped the world of Black Studies since 1968.[4] Marxist scholar/activists—at the level of political activism and ideology—made a considerable impact on the development of Black Studies. Despite the determinate role of Marxism in the historical development of Black Studies, it never developed an institutional niche. I argue that the rise of Afrocentricity was made possible by the political repression of Black left-radicalism/Marxism.

I offer a class analysis, with the aid of a historical materialist approach, which explains the dialectical unfolding of Black Studies. My analysis presupposes that each person's actions are constrained by social structures (the forces and relations of production), which divides them into classes with conflicting class interests. This does not preclude the real possibility of class conflict assuming other political forms. Social conflict is fought out between groups of people who are part of a given class, representing particular class interests, and expressing particular class ideologies. This presumption does not exclude the fact that protagonists in class conflict may be of a particular race or gender. As John Arena observes, "the experience of class is mediated through race, gender and other social relations and oppressions, and *vice versa*."[5] Michael Jordan, Assata Shakur, Condoleezza Rice, Malcolm X, Charlene Mitchell, Ella Baker, Oprah Winfrey, Booker T. Washington, Barack Obama, and Amiri Baraka are all representative of particular class relations and class interests.[6]

Looking Backward, 1988–1968

Problems of Historical Interpretation and Political Analysis[7]

It is not accidental that the historian is often depicted as Mr. Gradgrind, in Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*, screaming, "we want nothing but Facts…"[8] Contrary to the popular notion that facts speak for themselves, however, we must acknowledge that the interpretation of facts is the primary function of writing history; interpretation is the life-blood of history. Historical explanations function within a conceptual (philosophical) framework that

is, more often than not, implicit in the writing of history. In fact, to put it more strongly, as the Marxist historian C. L. R. James astutely observes, whether a writer knows it or not, all writing of history presupposes a philosophy of history.[9]

An examination of African American sports history confirms this observation. Few scholars have noted how frequently *methodological individualism* functions as a conceptual organizing principle for discourse about "Black firsts" in sports. Methodological individualism presupposes that historical change is fundamentally the outcome of great individual achievements, what is popularly called the great man theory of history. The power of the hero—the great Black athlete who is able to leap over racism or sexism in a single bound plus a somersault—is a cathartic trope in African American sports history. It reflects a generic American story of individual triumph over adversity. Furthermore, methodological individualism assumes that the structural composition of society is reducible to an aggregate of individuals. Hence, methodological individualism discounts any politics that challenges social structures, the social character of capitalist exploitation, and how the institutional (social) structure of racism and sexism are grounded on capitalist social relations of production. The fight against structural sexism and racism, from this perspective, becomes reduced to how individual achievements or contributions are pivotal to the historical advancement of Black people as a whole. Why is an individual athlete breaking through the "color-line" decisive for interpreting the African American experience in sports? In part the answer to this question rests in the definite and operative philosophy of history that conceptually guides the process of interpreting historical facts. How certain facts are weighed, in terms of their importance for a general understanding of historical events, is often a matter of philosophical presumptions about the very nature of history itself.[10]

The historian qua philosopher of history is preeminently involved in philosophical interpretation—undertaking a conceptual exercise, if you will, involving the task of philosophical definition and inquiry. African American historian Earl Thorpe argues, "Whenever the student of any discipline turns to systematic questioning of his discipline's nature, premises, methods, and relation to other species of knowledge he ceases to be a strict student of that discipline and is catapulted into the rank of philosopher."[11] The quest for meaning in history extends beyond merely empirical description (i.e., describing the facts of the case) and thus involves value judgments and definitions of what constitutes history. The philosopher of history, however, must acknowledge the limitations imposed by empirical facts in making generalizations concerning the meaning of history. In a nutshell, the meaning and definition of history is a philosophical problem.

When we go beyond the immediacy of empirical facts and descriptions, we have crossed into the realm of the philosophy of history. The philosophy of history subsequently is a second order or speculative inquiry into the very meaning of the subject matter of history itself. The philosopher of history addresses such questions as: What criteria should be considered so that good explanations can be separated from bad or spurious ones? Can history be a science? What is the substance and significance of history? How does the historian make sense of the mass of fortuitous events in history? Does history have internal mechanisms that govern its direction that is to say does it possess something tantamount to laws that regulate its movement? In effect does history have its own *telos*, purpose, or ends apart from the intentions of individuals and groups that are actors in history? Is the notion, "the march of history" or "the tide of history" a feasible concept that actually explains the process of history? Is the idea of progress in history a viable way of evaluating the past? Are there lessons to be learned from history? These questions are clearly philosophical in nature, being about general aspects of reality (or ontology), knowledge (or epistemology), and methodology.[12]

Philosophy of history is both speculative and practical. As a form of speculative inquiry, it seeks to attain the grand sweep and scope of history. And, in its practical dimension, the meaning of history is a reservoir of knowledge that can be applied to contemporary questions and problems. The study of history makes suggestions as to "what is to be done" based on considerations about the meaning and lessons of history. The statement "history often repeats itself, the first time as a tragedy and the second as a farce" is an example of how philosophy of history suggests to us that there are practical outcomes to speculatively comprehending history.[13]

When history is deemed as more than an accumulation of facts and events, we proceed beyond what practitioners may think is a strictly empirical description to value judgments. We are subsequently concerned with the substantive issue of what counts as historically relevant. The recognition of value assumptions is pertinent in two important ways: first, with respect to the interpretive dimension of the writing of empirical history, and, second, with respect to the philosophy of history. I tend to agree with E. H. Carr who observes that the writing of history is not possible without the interdependence and interaction of facts and values.[14] The interjection of value judgments does not make history a subjective enterprise without any concern for objective truth. To accent the role of value judgments in historical interpretation should not be taken to mean that objectivity is beyond the horizon of historical investigations or explanations.

Historical science, particularly in the tradition of Marxist historiography, provides a means to explain the seemingly chaotic jumble of facts and events

that constitute the historical process. As notable historian Howard Zinn notes: "The history of any country, presented as the history of a family, conceals fierce conflicts of interest (sometimes exploding, most often repressed) between conquerors and conquered, masters and slaves, capitalists and workers, dominators and dominated in race and sex. And in such a world of conflict, a world of victims and executioners, it is the job of thinking people, as Albert Camus suggested, not to be on the side of the executioners."[15] Rather than events and their main dramatis personae holding center stage, Marxist historians have attempted to write "history from below," from the perspective of the working-class. Marxism is an alternative to what is known as "drum and trumpet" history; it is an attempt to write history from a perspective other than that of monarchs, statesmen, presidents, generals, celebrities, and other so-called great men and women of history.[16] An excellent example of this Marxist approach to history writing is C. L. R. James's magisterial work *The Black Jacobins*, which tells the story of the Haitian Revolution "from below," from the point of view of the great mass of people who actually made the revolution.[17] To grasp the meaning of history—as Karl Marx put it—is to understand that "people make history" under "circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."[18]

I do not wish to lay claim to much original thinking. I do think it is important for interpreting the formation and institutionalization of AAS. The birth of Black Studies and its current shape are the result of "circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past." While a host of books, monographs, and articles have examined the history of Black Studies, I would argue that specific methodological and theoretical problems attached to its historical birth have often been bracketed from the empirical presentation of the aforementioned history.

Recent scholarship on Black Studies has meticulously combed through archival documentary sources (chronicles, oral interviews, newspaper accounts, and pamphlets) in order to provide a rather rich empirical description of the development of Black Studies, particularly as part of the Black Power movement.[19] Differing interpretive schools and clashing philosophy of histories have undertaken this work. Historian Peniel Joseph has written a narrative history of the Black Studies movement, primarily confined to a descriptive (empirical) account of what happened. As a narrative historian, Joseph merely wants to show how things actually happened, nothing more.[20] As Charles Darwin might say: "How odd it is that anyone should not see that all observation must be for or against some view if it is to be of any service!"[21]

Joseph's skillful approach to history is heavily indebted to historian Hayden White. The concept of history as narrative, which is developed in

White's influential contribution to historiography *Metahistory*, argues that the writing of history is constituted in general by the organization of the events or developments in sequential time and, then, the chronicle is given form by a narrative (or story) belonging to one of the genres of Romance, Comedy, Tragedy, and Satire.[22] All history writing is rhetorical and poetic by nature. For White, the interpretation of historical events and facts is made on grounds that are ultimately moral or aesthetic. As White explains:

> Placed before the alternative visions that history's interpreters offer for our consideration, and without any apodictically provided theoretical grounds for preferring one over another, we are driven back to moral and aesthetic reasons for the choice of one vision over another as the more "realistic." The aged Kant was right, in short: we are free to conceive "history" as we please, just as we are free to make of it what we will.[23]

One is inclined to ask, what is the political upshot of all this? White's version of narrativism is fundamentally an anti-realist philosophy of history. White's view of historical texts as literary artifacts, by implication, erases the determinate difference between history and literary fiction, between historical facts and figments of literary imagination.[24] Metahistory becomes similar to historical novellas. Against narrative history, to paraphrase Kant, we could say: historical narratives without analysis are empty, while historical analysis without narrative is blind.[25]

It is naïve to conclude that narrative historians such as Joseph offer nothing in the way of philosophical interpretation, political analysis, or historical explanation.[26] Rather, my point is simply that Joseph's approach to Black Studies and the larger Black Power movement "obscures and effaces as much as it reveals and illuminates."[27] It lacks explanatory power because, for Joseph, history is just a story. Prima facie, we could search endlessly through Joseph's historical works and never come to answer key historical and political questions pertaining to the dialectical history of Black Studies.[28] For instance, why were some Black Studies programs promoted and supported, both within and outside of their respective institutions and others were often kicked to the curb? How did Afrocentricity vis-à-vis Marxism come to be one of the major schools of thought in AAS? Why is the liberal economic work of William Julius Wilson a part of the canon in AAS as opposed to the work of Marxist political economist Abram Harris? Why are Black "public intellectuals" such as Cornel West, Henry Louis Gates, Manning Marable, and Molefi Asante remembered more than the critical mass of students who laid the bricks and mortars for Black Studies programs, institutes, and departments across the country?[29] What historical developments have led to the current state of theoretical inertia in Black Studies?

"And We Shall Have Power, or We Shall Perish in the Streets"

Black Studies in Historical Perspective[30]

To some extent revolutionary episodic moments that occurred only a generation ago are irretrievably lost or more appropriately thrown into George Orwell's memory hole.[31] The year 1968 was such an episodic moment in history, with a whirlwind of political motion engulfing the world. As Marx would say, it was a fight for the preservation or annihilation of the bourgeois order.[32] It was a nodal point in the world historic class struggle. From the United States to France to Germany to Africa to the Caribbean, revolutionary moments exploded like charges on a firecracker.[33]

We cannot fully examine a particular social movement without taking into account other social, political, and cultural movements of the time. Considered in this light, the call for Black Studies was very much a part of the spirit of '68; it was part of the wave of leftist popular insurgency sweeping the globe. In January 1968, Nathan Hare was hired as the first chair of Black Studies at San Francisco State.[34] During the early morning hours of January 31, 1968, soldiers of the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF) broke through the wall surrounding the United States' embassy in Saigon, marking the beginning of the Tet Offensive. NLF soldiers attacked the embassy with rockets and fought a six-hour battle with US military forces. This opening shot to imperialism marked a turning point in the Vietnam War, shaking the foundations of the US empire. The Tet Offensive came to symbolize that the empire was not indomitable. On March 19, 1968, students at Howard University seized the administration building for five days, proclaiming, in protest of the campus Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program, "America is the Black Man's Battleground!"[35] The students shut down the university, calling for the immediate resignation of President James Nabrit; demanding that Howard University be transformed into a "Black university" with programs relevant to aiding the Black community in its struggle against oppression and exploitation.[36] On April 11, 1968, in West Berlin, Germany, a young anti-communist, Josef Bachmann, shot socialist "Red" Rudi Dutschke—the face of the German student movement—in the head. In the aftermath of the assassination attempt against Dutschke, 1,500 people stormed through West Berlin. Prior to his assassination in April 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. led a protest march, supporting striking Black sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee. Between the evening of April 4, when Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot, and Easter

Sunday, April 14, 1968, cities in 36 states and the District of Columbia experienced arson, looting, and sniper fire; the streets in many major urban areas were literally on fire, an infernal of capitalist abyss! In May 1968, in the city of Detroit, a group of Black activists calling themselves the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) led the first wildcat strike in 14 years to close Detroit's Dodge main plant. Nearly 4,000 mainly Black and white autoworkers shut down the factory at Dodge Main for three days in protest against what they called "niggermation"—the combination of increased production levels (or "speed ups") and racism. Within weeks, hundreds of workers were attending rallies sponsored by DRUM, in opposition to the union bureaucracy of the United Auto Workers' leadership, and joining the newly formed Revolutionary Union Movement. Black and white workers formed organizations at other facilities such as the Ford Revolutionary Union Movement (FRUM) and the Eldon Avenue Revolutionary Movement (ELRUM). The RUMs would—in 1969—come together to form the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. With the working-class as the chief protagonist, revolutionary strikes and occupations broke out in France in May 1968. The student occupations and wildcat strikes, at the height of their fervor, nearly caused the collapse of Charles de Gaulle's government. On May 27, 1968, the Association of Senegalese Students and the Dakar Association of Students at the University of Dakar (Senegal) were joined by the National Union of Senegalese Workers (Union Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal—UNTS—who were led by Doudou Ngome) in a general strike against the regime of Leopold Senghor, the father of Negritude. Two days later, police occupied the university and, with the use of clubs and tear gas, removed students from occupied buildings. Senghor closed the University of Dakar, declaring a nationwide state of emergency. It was reported that 1 student was killed, 25 people were injured, and 900 Senegalese students and workers were arrested.[37] Ten days before the inauguration of the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City, Mexico, police and military troops violently repressed a student-led protest challenging the ruling State power, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), at La Plaza de las Tres Culturas. In what has come to be known as the Tlatelolco massacre, soldiers and riot police fired upon thousands of demonstrators, killing hundreds of Mexicans, mostly students. The Supreme Council for Sport in Africa—representing 32 African nations—proposed a boycott of the 1968 Olympic Games in protest of South Africa's participation.[38] And who could forget the proposed 1968 Olympic boycott organized by the Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR).[39] This proposed boycott, an "Olympics without black athletes," was designed to ally Black athletes with the nitty-gritty material struggles of oppressed and exploited people, particularly Black working-class people. Few could have imagined

the historical and symbolic significance of the "revolt of the Black athlete."[40] In October 1968, San Jose State University students Tommie Smith and John Carlos, after competing in the Olympic 200-meters, thrust Black-gloved fists skyward during the Olympic medal ceremony. On October 15, the so-called Rodney Riots erupted in Kingston, Jamaica, after the Jamaican government—under the rule of Hugh L. Shearer—banned the Guyanese Marxist historian and University of the West Indies (UWI) lecturer Walter Rodney from returning to the country because of his association with Communist countries. Rodney's influence was felt beyond the university campus, as students and workers took to the streets in protest. The Jamaican army and police quickly and violently suppressed the protest.[41] At San Francisco State, the Black Student Union in conjunction with a multiethnic coalition started the longest student strike in American history on November 6, 1968 for an autonomous Black Studies department; the strike would last nearly 5 months, with, roughly speaking, 800 arrests. By the end of 1968, the catchword, coined by the radio deejay Nathaniel "Magnificent" Montague, "burn, baby, burn" was heard in every major US city, coast to coast, north to south. In 1968 alone, it is estimated that approximately 289 riots occurred in the United States in which 66 people died, 5,302 were injured, and 31,680 were arrested.[42] What a wonderful world it was, when the working masses awakened to conscious struggle against the juggernaut of capital!

These seemingly chaotic and unconnected events greatly shaped the tortured birth of Black Studies. As the Black Studies movement came to fruition, there were a variety of possibilities in terms of its political goals and outcomes, ideologies, tactics, degree of mobilization, tempo, and so on. How do these empirical facts and historical events explain the process of development of Black Studies? What material (class) interests and class-ideologies influenced the birth of Black Studies? How did particular theories and ideologies come to be hegemonic and influence the direction of Black Studies? How did Afrocentricity as opposed to left-radicalism/Marxism come to establish an institutional niche in Black Studies?

The thunderous days when political struggle was foremost in the lives and hearts of African American students has disappeared—for now. As Adolph Reed has sadly noted: "opportunities to determine one's destiny are no greater now than before and, more importantly, the critique of life-as-it-is disappeared as a practical activity; i.e., an ethical and political commitment to emancipation seems no longer legitimate, reasonable or valid."[43] So, I want to begin by saying something that may be perplexing to a more recent generation of young African American students on today's campuses of higher education. *Contemporary Black studies programs, departments and centers owe a considerable debt to Black students*.[44]

It was Frantz Fanon who pronounced that every generation must find its own revolution, fulfill it, or betray it.[45] Students of that generation found their revolution. They had a sense that they could affect the course of history, and that 1968 was a significant turning point (or nodal point) in the worldwide class struggle. While many of the formal Black student leaders were male, we should not ignore the women—such as Sandra (Neely) Smith, Lynn C. Eusan, Gwendolyn M. Patton, and Eva Jefferson—who played a critical role. The vampire of sexism and male chauvinism was ever present among the Black studies movement. As Angela Yvonne Davis remarks, "I became acquainted very early with the widespread presence of an unfortunate syndrome among some Black male activists—namely to confuse their political activity with an assertion of their maleness."[46]

Consequently, while women were very active in the Black Studies movement, organizations such as Maulana Karenga's Us organization and the Nation of Islam looked down upon Black women who took initiative or didn't accept their traditional (bourgeois) gender roles. We only have to remember the infamous declaration of Stokely Carmichael that the proper place of women in the political struggle was "prone."[47] Or we could mention Eldridge Cleaver's idea that women had "pussy power," that is, "women's ability to withhold sex in order to compel men to political activism."[48] Black women were encouraged to take a secondary—if not subordinate—role, behind Black men, who were the natural leaders of the struggle for Black liberation. The idea that a male proxy could politically represent Black women definitely mirrors the assumed political authority of Black manhood that embodied the historical period.

There was a widespread link between student activism and left-radical/Marxist thought. Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, Mao's "Little Red Book," Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* and Gillo Pontecorvo's breathtaking 1966 film, *The Battle of Algiers*, which graphically chronicled the Algerian people's struggle against French colonialism, were elementary particles of the political world of the day. Every thought, every action, every situation was subjected to a political calculus in preparation for the revolutionary battlefield. From pool halls to dormitory rooms to cafeterias, Black students engaged in endless hours of ideological debate and political discussion. For instance, John McClendon, a student activist at Central State University, held study groups on campus and in the community on Kwame Nkrumah's *Consciencism*.[49]

During the latter half of the 1960s these heirs to Malcolm X's legacy donning Afros, dashikis, and Black leather jackets were the catalyst for demanding AAS courses, programs, and departments at predominantly white institutions such as Antioch College, University of California, San Diego, San Francisco State College, and Columbia University, and historically

Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) such as Howard University, Fiske University, and North Carolina A & T. It is worth noting that HBCUs did not escape the wrath of Black students. As Robert Allen has noted, HBCUs were considered to be nothing more than "white colleges in blackface."[50] Despite the contemporary petit bourgeois romanticism surrounding the "good ole days" of HBCUs these institutions have always been citadels of political quiescence and paternal authoritarianism.[51]

The explosion of student radicalism, in combination with the urban spectacle of riots in cities such as Detroit, Kansas City and Watts, created the material conditions for the birth of Black Studies in the bourgeois academy. Noliwe Rooks rightly observes that the establishment of Black Studies curricula at various college campuses across the United States was both fought for and feared.[52] In large part, the Black Studies movement was not given birth in a dean's conference room or a faculty senate chamber. Little by little, a field of study took shape, against the backdrop of Black student protest, demonstrations, strikes, and building seizures. Black students' confrontations with academic structures were often formidable, militant in spirit, and in some instances even downright violent. As historian Ibram Rogers recounts:

> In the final days of April [1968], Black campus activists received assurances that a Black Studies department at Long Island would be established, and students protested, usually successfully, for courses at Trinity (held trustees hostage), Boston University (12-h building takeover), New York City Technical (6-h negotiation with president), and Ohio State (building seizure with hostages). In early May, Northwestern students, after camping in the Finance Building for 36 h, were granted a department, among other demands.[53]

The university became a theater of war, an "active site of political and ideological struggle."[54]

Far from being liberal and democratic institutions, the universities were firmly under the control of representatives of the ruling class via the board of trustees in addition to financial donors, particularly in the form of military contracts and corporate capital.[55] Campus administrators would react to any challenge to their power in higher education with expulsions, the courts and—if necessary—the repressive power of the State.[56] After Tuskegee Institute students locked college president L. H. Foster and 12 trustees in a guesthouse for 12 hours, nearly 300 National Guardsmen and 70 state troopers stormed the campus. After the school reopened, 50 students were suspended and nearly 100 students were placed on probation.[57] One of the most tragic examples occurred in Orangeburg, South Carolina, where police killed three Black students—Samuel Hammond, Henry Smith, and Delano Middleton—during a protest at South Carolina State College;

28 people—including activist Cleveland Sellers—were injured by gunfire from South Carolina Highway Patrol officers.[58] The 1968 Orangeburg Massacre foreshadowed the Kent State shootings (also known as the May 4th massacre) and Jackson State killings, both of which occurred in 1970. On May 4, 1970, the Ohio National Guard shot and killed four white student protesters at Kent State—Jeffrey Glenn Miller, Allison B. Krause, William Knox Schroeder, and Sandra Lee Scheuer—demonstrating against the United States invasion of Cambodia during the Vietnam War. And, 11 days later, at Jackson State, an HBCU, after students were protesting the invasion of Cambodia, Mississippi police and the state highway patrol opened fire, killing 2 Black students—Phillip Lafayette Gibbs and James Earl Green—and injuring 12 other students.

College campuses became battlegrounds, and the presence of police in riot gear and the National Guard on campuses (especially at historically Black institutions) proved to be more than isolated occurrences. And the ruling class responded with a sledgehammer. At Texas Southern University in Houston, 489 students were arrested following a gun battle with 650 police. After the smoke cleared, 2 police officers and 1 student were wounded; one police officer was killed, as a result of "friendly fire." According to newspaper reports, the police fired between 3,000 and 5,000 rounds of ammunition at a student dormitory.[59]

The recruitment of substantial numbers of Black students—substantial at least when compared with past enrollment—during the latter half of the 1960s to white colleges and universities was a major factor in the demand for more Black faculty, in addition to Black Studies courses, programs, and departments. Quantitative growth (increased numbers) and qualitative development (heightened political and ideological consciousness in conjunction with cultural awareness) combined to form the spark that gave life to the Black Studies movement.

Many of these Black students were first-generation college students who refused to leave behind their working-class backgrounds. They did not see white (bourgeois) civil society as the best of all possible worlds. These students were not "children of the bourgeoisie"; rather they were the sons and daughters of postal workers, sharecroppers, domestic workers, and factory workers. Some of these students were involved in the various struggles for desegregation and community control of Black public schools that began to sweep across the country in the mid-1960s. Consequently, a few of them had first-hand experience as activists, knowledge of community organizing and valuable practical political experience. Coming into the halls of the white academy, the political conscience of these students was not *tabula rasa*; the "souls" of Black students had been stained by the "Color-Line," sexism, and the brutality of capitalist exploitation.[60] It is important to understand that

they possessed a certain level of political *savoir-faire*. Moreover, they had definite outlooks about the kind of education that would serve them best. Education, for these students, was more than a golden ticket to personal wealth; it had a value beyond its future monetary price. The value of education was seen as preparation for future community involvement and service. Education's relevancy, for these students, was to be measured by whether it aided in the development of the necessary knowledge and skills that would advance and improve Black people's lives and future in the United States and throughout the world.

In the context of bourgeois academic education, the struggle revolved around what principles or ideas should be embodied by canonical texts and which texts should be taught in the curriculum, that is, canon revision and curricular reformation. In addition to gaining control of departments and transforming the curriculum, students moved to turn college campuses into political bases for organizing the surrounding Black communities. These efforts also included tutorial programs, liberation schools, and draft resistance centers. This was a time when students loudly yelled: "Academic Excellence and Social Responsibility" and "Education for Liberation!"

The Black students' cry for "relevant education" was rooted in their vision of the unity of gown and town. As Nathan Hare insisted, "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."[61] Theory was not an arid abstraction reserved for polite social gatherings. They took seriously the words of the African statesman and philosopher Kwame Nkrumah: "Practice without thought is blind; thought without practice is empty."[62] For instance, when cafeteria workers at North Carolina A & T went on strike on March 13, 1969, they were supported by a student boycott of the dining hall. Over 2,500 students marched to President Lewis C. Dowdy's home and rallied in support of better wages and working conditions for the cafeteria workers. After marching to the president's house, Cohen Greene, an A & T student, noted:

> The students then marched to East Market Street where cars were stoned, traffic was held up, and windows were broken. The rock-throwing crowd concentrated at Sid's Curb Market until the police arrived later. George Bain, owner of the curb market, was confronted earlier on Wednesday and asked to contribute food during the strike, but refused . . . this curb market was probably singled out because "it is the only white owned business in that area and most students feel it shouldn't be there."[63]

Students wholeheartedly believed that they have a political obligation to join in the Black community's fight for survival and set in motion the ultimate aim of gaining liberation from white (bourgeois) control.[64]

The doors of the white academy may have been opened to Black students, but these students were often faced with an alien, if not an unwelcoming, social and cultural environment. Consequently, they formed and joined student unions and organizations to give collective expression to their needs and interests. For example, the budding activist Angela Davis joined the Che-Lumumba Club, an all-Black branch of the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA), committed to introducing Marxism–Leninism to the Black community and students. From Maryland to North Carolina to Texas, Black students sought to change "Negro" institutions of higher learning, controlled by white Board of Trustees, into "Black" universities, working in the interest of the African American community and students.[65] And from New York to Ohio to California, they fought to establish Black universities within the larger universities at predominantly white institutions. As a Black student leader at Columbia University declared, "We're only after one thing—a black society on this campus."[66] The establishment of Black Studies was seen as central to this political goal. The political struggle embedded in these conflicts was to acquire power over and against the bourgeois class interest dominating the academy. In late April 1968, at Columbia University, by way of illustration, student protest, and occupation of Hamilton Hall grew out of the university's involvement in Department of Defense contracts and its attempts to expand its gymnastic facilities in an adjoining Harlem park by evicting local Black people from their homes.[67]

As a result of the convergence of political and economic forces, hundreds of Black Studies programs, departments, and institutes were organized at various colleges and universities between 1968 and 1971. Demands for "Third World colleges" were made at the University of California, Berkeley, Oberlin College, and Brown University among other colleges and universities. Black and Chicano students at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) campus screamed the battlecry: "Lumumba-Zapata College. Now!" Student leaders like graduate student Angela Davis proposed a Lumumba-Zapata College—named after the assassinated Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba and Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata—devoted to the theory and practice of revolution, "communities of resistance," and socialist education. Carlos Blanco—a UCSD literature professor—insightfully notes, "Lumumba-Zapata was not conceived as a 'coalition' to train Black and Chicano aspirants to their own bourgeoisies."[68] As Davis later recounted, "Lumumba-Zapata College, in our theoretical formulation, was to be a place where our peoples could acquire the knowledge and skill we needed in order to more effectively wage our liberation struggles."[69] Students—with support from faculty such as Herbert Marcuse and Carlos

Blanco—wanted a "Third World college" devoted to the needs and class interests of "students from oppressed social groups," that is, working-class Black students, Chicano students, and white students.[70]

Public debate focused on how the Black students' demand of "Education for Liberation" clashed with the ruling (bourgeois) intellectual culture enshrined in the halls of academia. These debates clearly demonstrated that the university curriculum was—and still is—an interdisciplinary expression of the dominant (bourgeois) ideology. In their call for Black Studies, these students grappled with how ideology is manifested in educational curricula.

In some cases, these innovative Black students—guided by the principle of self-determination and community empowerment—established autonomous institutions such as Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU) in Durham, North Carolina.[71] MXLU was open in October 1969, with community organizer Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller) serving as the director, until its closing in 1973.[72] Independent Black educational institutions such as the Center for Black Education (CBE) (Washington, DC), the EAST (Brooklyn, New York), and Nairobi College (East Palo Alto, California) were conceived as left-radical alternatives to bourgeois institutions of higher learning. They were dedicated to serving the political, cultural, and material needs of the Black community free from white political control.[73] In opposition to the integrationist ethics of the civil rights movement, they sought to make self-determination a reality by building the new future society within the old.

Despite the successes of the integrationist ethics of the Civil Rights movement, as witnessed with the passage of the 1965 Voters Right Act, no mortal blow was struck against the dictatorship of capital. The persistence and growth of concentrated Black poverty, particularly in urban cities, did not magically disappear with the granting of civil rights.[74] Hence, the mere act of African American integration into and assimilation of Anglo-American culture and values was thought to be untenable. Some Black students thought it was imperative for Black Studies to develop a Black perspective that articulated the particularity of Black material and intellectual culture. These ideas were shaped—in large part—by the ideology of Black Power. Students were deeply dissatisfied with an integrationist ethics that implied that Black people were essentially white Americans in Black skin. In his noteworthy article, "The Challenge of Blackness," the historian Lerone Bennett, Jr. clearly gives voice to this view: "It is necessary for us to develop a new frame of reference which transcends the limits of white concepts. It is necessary for us to develop and maintain a total intellectual offensive against the false universality of white concepts."[75]

The Legitimation Crisis in Black Studies

In the aftermath of the racial and class fault lines that erupted in 1968, an intense ideological struggle emerged over the legitimacy and necessity of Black Studies. As the Black Studies movement gained momentum, the movement split into progressive and reactionary trends. Both Black and white conservatives fought relentlessly against the establishment of Black Studies. Ernest Kaiser, the distinguished bibliographer and Black Studies scholar, perceptively observed how fierce and intense the assault was during the initial formation of Black Studies. Kaiser critically cautioned:

> Everywhere we look today, there are attacks by conservative and liberal critics on both the idea of Black Studies and the beginning attempts of many colleges and universities to set up courses in schools in the Black Studies fields. These attacks reveal guilt feelings about the criminal neglect for decades by American academics of these fields and a fear that the Studies, mostly under Black auspices, may succeed thus taking away from liberal white scholars what they thought was, despite the work of black scholars, their plum.[76]

Members of the Black petit bourgeoisie such as Martin Kilson, Bayard Rustin, Kenneth Clark, Thomas Sowell, Andrew Brimmer, and Roy Wilkins attacked the legitimacy and even necessity of Black Studies.[77] Black conservatives like Wilkins opposed Black Studies, claiming that it was nothing more than a demand for "black Jim Crow Studies."[78] Wilkins pointed out that the call for Black Studies by Black students was destined to open "the door to a dungeon"—the dungeon of "racial breast-beating," self-imposed segregation, prejudice, and inequality. Kenneth Clark, the eminent Black psychologist, saw Black Studies as a bulwark to the cause of racial integration; the establishment of Black Studies was believed to be nothing short of a "black separatist policy." Clark claimed that the existence of Black Studies and the all-Black dormitory Nyambi Umoja Unity House on the campus of Antioch College in 1968 was tantamount to institutionalizing the "irrational."[79] Clark, as a member of the Antioch Board of Trustees, far from accusing the Marxist–Leninist led, Black Studies program of failing to account for race and racism, argued that the Antioch program stood for reverse racism and self-segregation.[80] In a similar tone, Bayard Rustin, the executive director of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute, fulminated, "these students are seeking to impose upon themselves the very conditions of separatism and inequality against which black Americans have struggled since the era of Reconstruction."[81] And, Harvard professor Martin Kilson took the reactionary position that AAS departments should not permit Black undergraduate students to organize or administer curricula. "Quite frankly," he vehemently

asserted, "this is utter nonsense."[82] Moreover, Kilson was opposed to Black Studies existing as an autonomous department; its curriculum should be controlled by what he termed an "established discipline." As Kilson argued: "A Black Studies curriculum, like other interdisciplinary curricula (American Studies, Asian Studies) cannot stand alone; it must, so to speak, be clothed in the tested scholarly and technical garment of an established discipline."[83] Kilson's views would later play a seminal role in viewing Black Studies as "inclusive scholarship" and the dominant policy of joint academic appointments for Black Studies scholars in "established departments."[84]

In contrast to this conservative backlash, a faction of the (primarily white) liberal bourgeoisie hesitantly envisioned the institutionalization of Black studies as a mechanism for managing the racial and class fault lines ripping the United States apart. As urban cities in the United States continued to burn into the turbulent decades of the 1970s and stagflation—a pattern of high unemployment and high inflation—set in, many among the white liberal bourgeoisie searched for political stability and economic panaceas. Through private philanthropy and government funding agencies, the liberal bourgeoisie hoped that Black Studies would produce political stability via liberal public policy. Black Studies programs and departments, primarily housed at Ivy League institutions, would be instrumental in developing liberal public policy reforms to address the "Negro Question." Under the tutelage of McGeorge Bundy, the former national security advisor in both the Kennedy and Johnson administration, the Ford Foundation, for example, sought to influence the character of Black Studies through "strategic grant-making."[85] As Robert Allen perceptively noted:

> Just as Slavic Studies rose to prominence following World War II when the United States was seeking ways of opposing the communist thrust in Eastern Europe, it soon became apparent that Asian Studies, African Studies and Black Studies were to become new focal points of government and private foundation interest. 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.[86]

The "strategic-grant making" of the Ford Foundation was not the first—nor will it be the last—effort to bring together bourgeois philanthropy and Black higher education.[87] Nonetheless, with hundreds of burgeoning programs competing for limited funds, programs that hinted of nationalist or leftist political agendas were left in the cold. In the long term, the vast majority of Black Studies programs and departments were crippled financially, and ultimately reliant on the "good will" of university administrators and/or state funding.

As N. M. Rooks and Fabio Rojas have documented, the Ford Foundation provided a substantial amount of funding to programs and departments supporting an integrationist ethics and/or liberal public policy agendas.[88] Between 1969 and 1971, the Ford Foundation awarded approximately $10 million in grants to HBCUs, as well as a handful of predominantly white elite research institutions.[89] Grants for Black Studies initiatives at HBCUs were awarded to Howard University, Lincoln University, Morgan State University, Fisk University, Jackson State, Tuskegee Institute, and Atlanta University. The white elite institutions were Princeton University, Rutgers University, Yale University, Stanford University, New York University, Duke University, and Boston University.[90] The Ford Foundation's support was primarily focused on promoting racial integration and institutional diversity, not for the development of Black Studies as an academic field of study.

Over the next 30 years, the "strategic funding" of key Black Studies departments and programs would continue. The W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research at Harvard University under the radical leadership of Ewart Guinier, from 1969 until 1976, received no financial support from the Ford Foundation. Nor did the department receive, during this time, any institutional support from presidents Nathan M. Pusey and Derek C. Bok. From its birth until 1979, Guinier was the only full-time tenured professor in the department. It has been claimed that Guinier's "assertive style" and "thin academic credentials" hindered the department from attracting not only financial support, but also the leading scholars in the growing field of Black Studies.[91] Despite being housed at the premier institution of higher learning in the US, Harvard's Black Studies department was treated as little more than a second-class citizen.[92] This was surely the consequence of Guinier's principled leftist politics.[93] Perhaps, in a veiled attack on Guinier, conservative Harvard professor Harvey Mansfield would later claim: "There used to be a great deal of compulsory radicalism, Marxism, and neo-Marxism which did not do much credit to the scholarly possibilities" of Black Studies.[94] Most importantly, Guinier sought an independent Black Studies department with a governing role for students in curriculum development and faculty hiring. Martin Kilson along with Black sociologist Orlando Patterson and Black administrator Archie Epps were relentless critics of the newly constituted department and the "thin academic credentials" of Guinier. Kilson called Guinier's appointment as chair "an intellectual and academic disgrace."[95] Kilson argued that Black Studies should be a joint major with an established discipline, students should not have any role in the governance of the department, and Black Studies faculty should have joint appointments in other departments. Kilson, who—at one point—self-described himself as "an old-fashioned integrationist," pragmatically supported a Black Studies institute that was "suited to the

needs of governmental agencies and of pressure groups that seek to influence such agencies."[96] On many occasions, Guinier accused Kilson of playing "plantation politics" and seeking "to put the study of the history and culture of black people into the hands of white folks who have been keeping that study out or distorting it or lying about it."[97]

We should keep in mind that those who pay the cost are rarely those who reap the benefits. Although Guinier and Harvard students laid the foundation for Black Studies, it was only after Guinier was pushed into semi-retirement that the department began receiving funding from the Ford Foundation and institutional support from Harvard administrators. Kilson would later play a seminal role in the hiring of the "academic entrepreneur" Henry Louis Gates as chair of Harvard's department in 1991. Harvard's Black Studies department with its new philosophy of "inclusive scholarship" raised nearly $6 million from philanthropic foundations, and private individuals by 1995; $2.25 million was set aside as part of an unrestricted endowment. By the late 1990s, Gates would lure William Julius Wilson to join the so-called Harvard "Dream Team" of Black scholars and "public intellectuals" such as Cornel West, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Evelyn Higginbotham, and Orlando Patterson.

Robert Allen, in his magisterial work *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, contends that the allure of corporate capital was a major strategy for eliminating Black insurgency. Through a combination of political incorporation, corporate liberalism, and political repression, the institutionalization of Black Studies and the demobilization of the Black liberation movement went hand-in-glove with the rise of moderate Black politicians and a new strata of Black petit bourgeois managers, technicians, and entrepreneurs. Using militant Black Power rhetoric, this new stratum, which was tied to corporate capitalism, was able to generate ideological influence over the Black working-class in support of their capitalist aspirations and policy agendas that reproduced a pattern of racial and class inequality. Ultimately, the Black liberation struggle collapsed into the politics of recognition, the ratification of corporate-driven agendas and the politics of racial custodianship; grassroots political struggles were transformed into electoral campaigns tied to government institutions and public policy. By the late 1970s, the working-class character of the Black liberation struggle was dialectically transformed as the Black petit bourgeoisie established political hegemony over Black politics.[98]

Black Power was a powder keg of militant boldness and bravado; something that the nonviolent rhetoric of the Rights movement did not possess. It was a household name from Harlem to the Mississippi Delta to Watts. The term "Black Power" came into prominence during the Meredith March in the summer of 1966. The grassroots activists Stokely Carmichael and

Willie Ricks made the concept of Black Power popular, largely through their use of the term while organizing with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and later with the book *Black Power*, which Black political scientist Charles Hamilton co-authored with Carmichael.[99] The Black Power concept was based on the presupposition that there was a coherent Black community agenda devoid of conflicting class interests. Because Black Power communitarian premises reified group identity and could not accommodate class differentiation among African Americans, it ultimately came to embody everything to everybody.[100] The concept of Black Power covered a plethora of ideologies, ranging from the left-nationalism of the Black Panthers to the "black capitalism" of Nathan Wright, Roy Innis, and Floyd McKissick.[101]

The various interpretations of Black Power were a clear expression of class struggle at the level of ideas. This can be seen with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). From the Freedom Rides to the "Freedom Summer" of 1964, CORE had played a pivotal role in the Civil Rights movement.[102] Against the dying philosophy of nonviolence and integrationist ethics, CORE moved to adopt Black Power at its 1968 convention, in Columbus, Ohio—a dramatic shift from its interracial origins. This resolution was earth-shattering because CORE was one of the "Big Four" liberal civil rights organizations, along with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the SNCC, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Yet, CORE's brand of Black Power was a marriage of Black conservatism and Black capitalism.[103] Under the direction of Roy Innis, the national director of CORE, Black Power would be used to champion one reactionary cause after another. In the hands of Innis, Black Power would become "nothing but the economic and political philosophy of Booker T. Washington given a 1960s shot in the arm and brought up to date."[104]

The great tragedy of CORE's brand of Black Power came with Innis's support of South Africa's policies in Africa and right-wing political forces in Africa such as Idi Amin, Holden Roberto, and Joseph Savimbi in addition to guerrilla groups such as the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).[105] In the 1970s, he was busily recruiting former Black Vietnam veterans to become "soldiers of fortune" to fight in the service of US imperialism and apartheid South Africa. Innis devised a rather bizarre plan to enlist 1,000 Black mercenaries or "Black patriots" to fight in Angola's civil war in support of anti-Communist forces and, ultimately, on the side of the racist, white minority regime and against progressive leftist forces such as People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).[106]

The paradox of Black Power can also be seen graphically with Atlanta's first Black mayor Maynard Jackson's political assault on Black public

workers in the 1970s. The Black sanitation workers, as members of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees union (AFSCME), campaigned for Jackson's mayoral election in 1974.[107] Yet, during the first three years of Jackson's term, their average salary stagnated. After negotiations failed, the public employees went on strike in 1977. Despite Martin Luther King, Jr.'s last fight to unionize Black sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, "Daddy" King advised Maynard Jackson to fire the hell out of them![108] Jackson—to the delight of the predominantly white businessmen who made up Atlanta's Chamber of Commerce—fired 2,000 sanitation workers, nearly all of them Black, who refused to go back to work; a move that Ronald Reagan would duplicate in 1981 when air traffic controllers went on strike. But there is more. "Daddy" King, Lyndon Wade (of the Urban League) and Thomas K. Hamall (executive vice president of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce) came out in support of Jackson in his efforts to marshal the repressive forces of bourgeois civil society against the self-activity of Black workers. The civil rights establishment miraculously found convenient allies with corporate capital (i.e., white businessmen and civic leaders); the same people whom—a few years earlier—openly supported Jim and Jane Crow segregation. They were united by their common class interest to smash the sanitation workers' strike by any means necessary. (A similar phenomenon took place in the conflict in the 1980s between Philadelphia's first Black mayor Wilson Goode and the Black workers, who supported his 1983 election.)[109] This "new regime of race relations management" would not only become hegemonic, but the model followed by Marc Morial and Ray Nagin in New Orleans, Coleman Young and Kwame Kilpatrick in Detroit, Harvey Gantt, Anthony Foxx and Patrick D. Cannon in Charlotte, Walter Washington,Marion Barry and Adrian Fenty in Washington, DC, Wilson Goode in Philadelphia, and Emmanuel Cleaver and Sylvester "Sly" Jackson in Kansas City.[110] As Marx would say, history repeats itself: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce—and I might add—the third time is a charm.

And yet, against both liberal and conservative forces, Black students waged a tireless political, intellectual, and cultural struggle to make Black Studies a bastion of "relevant education" that would advance and improve Black people's lives and future in the United States and throughout the world. At the end of the day, as Amiri Baraka forcefully observes, at both HBCUs and predominantly white institutions:

> The inclusion of Black Studies on these campuses came only as a result of student struggles, and if some of the rhetoric which accompanied the struggles was overblown, even metaphysical and idealistic, the revolutionary core of the struggles was correct. Black Studies would not yet be beyond these campuses,

> nor will it remain, if it had to depend solely on the efforts of Redding-type of intellectuals and their pleas for "moral uplift" among the bourgeoisie. Black Studies came only as a result of struggle and confrontation.[111]

What Direction Black Studies?

The foregoing sections provide a considerable amount of the material context that propelled Black students to intensify their resolve to bring AAS to life. Within a decade after 1968, however, the revolutionary potential of Black Studies evaporated into thin air. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, most Black students became either politically demoralized or conservative. In the early 1980s, the major ideological forces behind the institutionalization of Black Studies became cultural nationalism (as found in the work of John Henrik Clarke, Maulana Karenga, Leonard Jefferies, Francis Cress Welsing, and Molefi Asante) and liberal (bourgeois) cosmopolitanism (as found in the work of Henry Louis Gates, William Julius Wilson, Cornel West, bell hooks, and Anthony Appiah).

Why were the Black left and other progressive sectors of the Black Freedom movement unable to establish an institutional niche in Black Studies in the 1980s? The repression of the Black left and other progressive sectors of the movement—that embraced New Left ideology or "Third World internationalism"—by the bourgeois State in the United States in the 1970s greatly impacted the future direction of Black Studies. The Cold War state repression faced by the Black left in conjunction with left-sectarianism and anti-communism within the Black liberation movement opened the door of opportunity to cultural nationalists and bourgeois liberals who slowly took control over the ideological and theoretical direction of Black Studies.[112] In less than a decade, the tremendous enthusiasm and political mobilization that led to the formation of Black Studies, across the country, did not translate into mechanisms and institutions of popular political control from below. Rather, Black Studies was turned into a bureaucratic cog in the academic wheel controlled by administrators, with virtually no democratic input from students or the Black working-class community. As historian Martha Biondi notes: "To the extent that there was a Black revolution on campus, it was often followed by a counterrevolution, an administrative attempt to contain or delimit the expansive vision of student activists and their faculty allies."[113]

One factor in the takeover of Black Studies was the repression of student activism on many college campuses. Police murdered at least 11 Black students and one community activist on or near college campuses between 1966 and 1972.[114] When campus activists weren't being harassed, suspended, expelled,

beaten by campus police or the National Guard, thousands were suspended, expelled, or arrested and jailed. For instance, Cecil Raysor and Alvin Evans, student activists, were expelled, arrested and, then, given a sentence of two years in jail for their role in the armed student occupation of the school administration building at Voorhees College (a private, historically black college, affiliated with the Episcopal Church, in Denmark, South Carolina) in April 1969.[115] Historian Ibram Rogers reports: "Black students, in the late spring of 1969, were also arrested at Memphis State (109), South Carolina's Voorhees-C (25), Howard (21), Brooklyn's Pratt (11), and Alabama State (365), where they were hauled away like cargo in three trucks for demonstrating at the state capitol for the termination of their president."[116]

Leftist professors were not immune from state repression. In the spring of 1969, Angela Davis was hired to teach philosophy at the University of California, Los Angeles.[117] Strongly supported by then-governor Ronald Reagan, the Board of Regents—under the auspices of anti-communism—denied Davis's reappointment to a second year because of her membership in the Communist Party and her radical political activism. In response to the decision by the Regents, Davis responded: "Yes, I am a Communist. And I will not take the Fifth Amendment against self-incrimination because my political beliefs do not incriminate me; they incriminate the Nixons, Agnews and Reagans."[118] The repression of student activism and their faculty allies contributed to a decline in open student resistance to the bureaucratic governance and administration of universities.

Consequently, by the early 1970s, as a result of Black student's political experience with confronting the white power structure on university campuses, many students began to see the limitations of campus politics. Increasingly, they wanted to make their university education relevant to "community empowerment." As Robert Allen observes, students

> began to understand that despite all the talk about developing a critical intellect, higher education in practice served also to inculcate bourgeois cultural values and behavior patterns and to channel young people into professional slots in the economy. In short, higher education served to strengthen and conserve the prevailing social order.[119]

In the wake of the demise of the SNCC, some students joined nascent national organizations such as the National Association of Black Students (NABS) and Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU).[120]

On the basis of an ideological commitment to Pan-Africanism, SOBU aimed to bridge the wall separating students and the Black community, both in the United States and Africa.[121] Just as former SNCC activists had developed the Pan-African Skills Project in addition to the Drum and Spear

Bookstore, which built links with progressive (leftist) African governments, SOBU established a Pan-African Medical Program providing Southern African liberation movements, as well as community health centers in the United States, with vitally needed medical supplies, tools, and money.[122]

Formed on May 9, 1969 in Greensboro, North Carolina, on the campus of North Carolina A & T, SOBU—from the ashes of SNCC—became one of the central organizations in the Black student movement. It held its first national convention in October 1969 at North Carolina Central University in Durham, with an anti-imperialist agenda committed to building a "revolutionary Pan-African youth movement," as part of the movement of international solidarity against white settler regimes in Southern Africa, such as Rhodesia and Namibia.[123] Six hundred students from across the country attended the national convention. Its newspaper *The African World*, with Milton Coleman as the editor, was the leading political organ of the Black student movement with a circulation including 49 states and 30 countries.[124] Later, inspired by the left-wing of the African independence movements and left-wing African leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, Samora Machel, Eduardo Mondlane, and Amilcar Cabral, SOBU developed a "Pan-African Socialist orientation" and would play a seminal role in the introduction of socialist/Marxist–Leninist ideas into the Black student movement in particular and the Black liberation movement in general. Reflective of its changing ideological and political commitments, SOBU changed its name in August 1972 to Youth Organization for Black Unity (YOBU). By this time, as the leading anti-imperialist Black student organization, it had chapters from Greensboro, North Carolina to Houston, Texas. Some of the key members included former student activists such as Nelson N. Johnson (North Carolina A&T State University), Tim Thomas (George Washington and Howard University), Milton Coleman (University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee), Sandra (Neely) Smith (North Carolina A & T), John McClendon (Central State University), Mark Smith (Harvard University), Alvin Evans (Voorhees College), John Mendez (Shaw University), Terry Day (Howard University), Victor Bond (Harvard University), Kenneth Ford (Howard University), Gene Locke (University of Houston), William Avon Drake (North Carolina A & T State University), Cleveland Sellers (Howard University), Willie Ricks, Roderick Bush (Howard University and Kansas University), Edward Whitfield (Cornell University), Ronald "Slim" Washington (University of Kansas), and Jerry Walker (North Carolina Central University)As a result of the influence of SOBU, many Black students became increasingly committed to the "politics of class struggle," that is, community and labor organizing. Students were transformed from activists for educational democracy to "professional revolutionaries" concerned with revolution in the traditional sense of seizing state power.

With articles such as "The Ford Foundation: Undermining the African Revolution," "Uganda Backslides into Capitalism," "African Athletes Show Solidarity at Olympics," "Mississippi Poultry Workers Win Strike," "Hunger is not Lack of Food, Hunger is Lack of Money," "Vietnam and Black Liberation," "Howard Students Protest Role of Corporate Exploiters on Campus," "Detroit Auto Plants Racked By Wildcat Worker Strikes," "Black Television: Reality or Myth?," "D.C. Hospital Workers Organize for Union," and "The Point of Production" editorial, *The African World* played a seminal role in building socialist consciousness among Black students.

One of the most important contributions of SOBU/YOBU to the Black student movement was the realization that the leading and most revolutionary force in the Black liberation movement was the working-class. John McClendon, in his role as ideological coordinator of SOBU, worked tirelessly to move the organization away from "Utopian African Socialism" toward a "more Marxist oriented Scientific African Socialism."[125] As Ronald "Slim" Washington perspicaciously observes:

> This development came about as a result of 1) the black working-class itself becoming a powerful force in the struggle and 2) a fierce ideological and political struggle over which class and social forces are capable of leading the movement through to the end. The question of which class could or should lead the black liberation struggle is a recurring historical debate because it is a manifestation of the struggle between the different classes in the black community.[126]

As a result of the efforts by SOBU/YOBU and other "New Communist Movements," many students shifted their attention away from the ivory tower toward the class struggle whelming the urban working-class. They, in turn, left the halls of academia and went to work on factory floors and other "points of production" in an attempt to build a revolutionary worker's movement in the United States. Sandra (Neely) Smith, a graduate of the HBCU Bennett College and daughter of a textile worker from Piedmont, South Carolina, went to work at the Cone Mills Revolution textile plant (in Greensboro, North Carolina) where she formed, with other workers, the Revolution Organizing Committee to unionize workers at the factory. As Washington further observes:

> We went through an intense period of "proletarianization" attempting to transform our formation from student based to work (factory, office, etc.) placed organizing. We were of the opinion that in order to put theory (grasping the leading role of the working class in the socialist transformation of society) into practice (the necessity to focus our main energy on integrating with and learning from the working class movement) word had to become deed.

He continues:

> Thus the main character of our work changed and we become (*sic*) part of the new international communist movement. Of course many mistakes were made in forcing and persuading many of the future doctors, lawyers, and other professionals to give up their potential careers to join the working class movement, but most agreed due to their revolutionary commitment to the black freedom struggle and working class movements.[127]

Similar to Washington and Smith, many students graduated from college (and some dropped out of college) and joined the movement full time as "professional revolutionaries."[128] They went through a period of "proletarianization," becoming a powerful force in the formation of groups such as the Communist Workers Party, the Black Workers Congress, the Black Workers Organizing Committee, Black Workers for Justice, League of Revolutionary Black Workers, Revolutionary Communist League (M-L-M), Freedom Road Socialist Organization, the October League (ML), Workers Viewpoint Organization and dozens of rank-and-file caucuses that fought against reactionary and corrupt union leadership, racism, and sexism on the shop floor of many factories throughout the United States in the long 1970s.[129] They literally became students of socialist/Marxist theorist and activists such as C. L. R. James, Harry Haywood, James Jackson, George Murphy, Robert Rhodes, Linda Rae Murray, Harold Rogers, Ishmael Flory, Charlene Mitchell, in addition to James and Grace Boggs.[130]

Many have referred to the 1970s as the decade of the rank-and-file worker. In 1970 alone there were 5,716 strikes involving more than 3 million workers. In the coming years, rank-and-file workers fought against "business unionism" by means of wildcat strikes, rejected contracts and forced official strikes.[131] They no longer accepted the idea that their class interests were identical with the bosses and managers of capitalist firms. In March 1970, more than 200,000 postal workers—many of them African American—walked off the job in and went on strike, shutting down the US Postal Service in more than 200 cities. This strike was not only the largest strike against the federal government, but also the largest wildcat strike in US history.[132]

Worker militancy—involving coal miners, longshoremen, autoworkers, teachers, railroad workers, transit workers, and construction workers—was center stage in the United States.[133] Prior to the passage of the 1974 Health Care amendment to the National Labor Relations Act, health care workers at private, nonprofit hospitals such as Duke University could be fired for supporting a union and had no right to vote for union representation. In 1974, John Mendez, a former member of SOBU/YOBU and graduate of the historic Shaw University, along with Howard Fuller (Owusu

Sadaukai)—now members of the Revolutionary Workers League—took part in efforts to organize clerical, service, and technical workers—both men and women—in unionizing Duke University Medical Center. These workers fought for better working conditions, higher wages, and medical benefits on what many in the Durham Black community referred to as the plantation system at Duke. While the majority of hospital workers were Black, there was a concerted effort to build working-class unity between Black and white workers.[134]

As students endeavored to carry the campus struggle into the broader Black community, they were faced with a politico-economic crisis ravaging the US polity. White liberals were retreating from supporting Civil Rights legislation and stood steadfast with their conservative counterparts against affirmative action in the post-Bakke era. The Nixon administration prevailed over state power and issued the clarion call to "fight crime in the street" and established stringent and reactionary policies aimed at "law and order."[135] Nixon's call for "law and order" was born out of the necessities of class warfare engulfing the US polity and the world. It presaged the bourgeois State's wholesale *blitzkrieg* on Black insurgency with the intent being defeat through a decisive *vernichtungsschlacht* (battle of annihilation).

Repressive, covert government programs such as COINTELPRO (which was designed to "disrupt, discredit and destroy" political dissidents) sanctioned attacks on Black left-radicals. Although the Left was not the sole target of COINTELPRO, it was by a large measure the primary causality of the COINTELPRO.[136] These programs purged the Black liberation movement of some of its more militant and progressive members and organizations, including the Black Panther Party, National Black Feminist Organization, the National Welfare Rights Organization, League of Revolutionary Black Workers, and the Third World Women's Alliance.[137] In some instances, they were literally blown away by State repression. Recall that on December 4, 1969, Fred Hampton along with Mark Clark, members of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party, were murdered in cold blood in a predawn Gestapo-style police raid by a tactical unit of the Cook County, Illinois State's Attorney's Office (SAO), the Chicago Police Department (CPD), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). COINTELPRO was simply a violent continuation of McCarthyism and Cold War anticommunism.[138]

The "legitimate" violence of the bourgeois State was adjoined with general acts of police brutality and random acts of violence on the part of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and other white supremacist groups. Here we should remember the great tragedy that occurred in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1979, when five members of the Communist Workers Party were brutally murdered—in broad daylight—by members of the KKK and the American Nazi Party. A "Death to the Klan" rally and march organized

by the Communist Workers Party was planned to occur in the predominantly Black housing projects of Morningside Home on November 3, 1979. Two days prior to the march, a police informant and member of the Klan obtained a map of the march route with the intention of violently confronting the demonstration. During the rally, a caravan of cars and trucks—containing Klansmen and members of the American Nazi Party—drove through the Morningside Home projects and began shooting into the crowd of protesters. When the smoke cleared, four members of the Communist Workers Party laid dead: Sandra (Neely) Smith, a graduate of the HBCU Bennett College, union organizer and founding member of SOBU; Dr. James Waller, president of a local textile workers union who ceased medical practice to organize workers; Bill Sampson, a graduate of the Harvard Divinity School; Cesar Cauce, a Cuban immigrant who graduated *magna cum laude* from Duke University; and Dr. Michael Nathan, chief of pediatrics at Lincoln Community Health Center in Durham, North Carolina, a clinic committed to helping children from low-income families. However, in the aftermath of the Greensboro Massacre, despite having video footage of the deadly shooting taken by television news cameramen, two criminal trials resulted in the acquittal of the white defendants by all-white juries.[139]

The effectiveness of COINTELPRO and other forms of government repression explains the growing influence of various forms of right-wing nationalism among certain sectors in the Black community. As historian Gerald Horne astutely observes:

> Elites in the United States and elsewhere have found it easy to choose between various forms of nationalism on the one hand and progressive leftism on the other. Presumably, the former could present a threat to life, whereas the latter—more important—presents a challenge to property relations.

He adds:

> Equally important is the fact that even when xenophobic nationalist forces build strength among blacks, the effect at times is to deflect the attention of potentially militant blacks away from the political debate about, for example, spending the public treasury on education and toward the separate debate about dipping into one's own pocket after paying taxes to support an alternative black school system. Right-wing elites in particular appreciate fewer participants' sitting at the table to debate the expenditure of millions.[140]

Horne's observations are extremely pertinent to future developments in Black Studies. In juxtaposition to liberalism, Black nationalism took on the appearance of "Black radicalism." The silencing of the Black left in the

post-McCarthy era created an ideological vacuum filled by Black nationalist ideology. For university administrators, Cold War fears of the invasion of the Left and/or Marxism within the academy provided a sufficient condition for the cautious tolerance of various forms of nationalist ideology in Black Studies—until a more suitable alternative, supportive of the status quo, could be found.

We should not ignore the fact that the student movement that gave birth to Black Studies occurred within the context of an intense ideological struggle over the direction of the Black liberation movement. Students and their allies were divided over the ideological orientation, philosophical framework and political goals of many newly established Black Studies programs, departments, and centers. As Robert Allen chronicles in his classic work *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, a pivotal debate ensued between the warring ideologies of bourgeois Black nationalism and left-radicalism/Marxism–Leninism over the philosophy of Black Studies, political meaning of Black Power, and the prospects for achieving national unity in light of growing class divisions within the Black community.[141]

One striking example of this ideological struggle—in the context of the Black Studies movement—can be seen with the political struggle between members of the left-radical Black Panther Party and Maulana Karenga's cultural nationalist Us organization over the future direction of the Black Studies program at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), which eventually turned violent. While Karenga, a community advisor appointed by university administrators, supported one candidate for director of the new center, Charles Thomas, a psychologist and the education director of the Watts Health Center; the students supported by the Black Panther Party wanted an increased role for UCLA's Black students in the decision-making process and, ultimately, opposed Karenga's candidate. As Floyd Hayes and Francis A. Kiene comment: "As the relative influence of the Panthers on the UCLA campus increased in proportion to that of US, the ongoing tension between these two organizations exploded into an unrelenting power struggle."[142] The "power struggle" came to a head, on January 17, 1969, when Black Panther Party members Alprentice "Bunchy" Carter and John Huggins, who were also students at UCLA, engaged in a shootout of sorts with George Ali-Stiner, Larry Watani-S, Harold Jones-Tawala, and Claude Hubert-Gaidi, members of the US organization. In the aftermath, Carter shot in the chest and Huggins in the back laid dead; US member Larry Watani-Stiner suffered a gunshot wound to the shoulder. Some have argued that Claude Hubert-Gaidi, who reportedly shot both Carter and Huggins, was an FBI agent working in the Los Angeles office.[143]

Many subsequent accounts of this event have highlighted the role of the FBI in fermenting the political and ideological conflict between Us

organization and the Panthers, through COINTELPRO.[144] However, we should take note of the long-term political and institutional implications of this conflict for Black Studies. The year after the cold-bloodied murder of Carter and Huggins, the cultural nationalist Arthur Smith, who would later change his name to Molefi Asante, became the director of the UCLA Center for Afro-American Studies, where he remained until 1973, after which he taught at the State University of New York at Buffalo. In 1969, Asante in collaboration with Robert Singleton started the *Journal of Black Studies*, published by SAGE Publications. He would go on to play a key role in the formation of the first doctoral program in African American Studies at Temple University under the direction of Afrocentricity. After receiving his doctorate in political science in 1976, from United States International University (San Diego, California) Maulana Karenga would later go on to enjoy a long academic career and eventually assume the chair of the Africana Studies Department at California State University, Long Beach. I am not aware of any instance in which a member of the Black Panther Party was able to obtain an academic position as director or chair of a Black Studies program, institute, or department.

In the coming years, cultural nationalism established an institutional niche at the following institutions: University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, Temple University, California State University, Long Beach, City College of New York, California State University, Northridge, Hunter College, San Diego State University, Howard University, Georgia State University, University of Nebraska, Eastern Michigan University, California State University, Chico and Cornell's Africana Studies and Research Center.

In addition, the establishment of an institutional niche for cultural nationalism marked the emergence of a "cultural turn" in AAS that would later lump bell hooks, Cornel West, Henry Louis Gates, Robin Kelley together with Molefi Asante, Maulana Karenga, Reiland Rabaka, Ruth Reviere, James B. Stewart, and Marimba Ani, for instance.[145] This interpretive orientation—with its emphasis on cultural criticism—has its origins in Harold Cruse's *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*.[146] This orientation has also had a propensity to fundamentally interpret African American material and intellectual history in an idealist and apolitical manner. By apolitical I mean the view persists that a change in consciousness (or textuality or discourse) trumps revolutionary transformation in material reality. In the case of the bourgeois cosmopolitanism of hooks, Gates, West, and others, "cultural politics," "infrapolitics," "cultural criticism," "cultural discourse," and the "politics of recognition" would come to define political struggle. Causal pluralism replaced the primacy of class.[147] Adolph Reed points to the fact that this intellectual tendency tends to inflate political language and depoliticize African American culture and life by devaluing "discourse

and action directed toward intervening either specifically in the exercise of public authority or more generally on the reproduction of given patterns of social relations."[148] As historian E. P. Thompson has astutely observed, the "cultural turn" has "a tendency to assert the absolute autonomy of cultural phenomena without reference to the context of class power: and a shame-faced evasion of that impolite, historical concept—class struggle."[149]

The debate between cultural nationalism and Marxism–Leninism reached its high water mark at the historic first national conference of the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) in May 1974 at Howard University.[150] Between 700 and 800 people attended the conference organized under the slogan: "Black workers take the lead." Under the theme, "Which Road Against Racism and Imperialism for the Black Liberation Movement?," delegates of various ideological stripes from a host of Black organizations debated what has come to be known as the "two-line struggle" between the leftist position that "the chief enemy of black people in the United States (and Africa) is monopoly capitalism and imperialism" and the nationalist position that "racism (or European society) is the primary enemy and that capitalism and imperialism are secondary."[151] Some of the notable participants were Nelson Johnson (SOBU), Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller) (MXLU), Kwadwo Akpan (Pan-African Congress, USA), Amiri Baraka (Congress of African People), Courtland Cox (Center for Black Education), Abdul Alkalimat (People's College), Modibo Kadalie (League of Revolutionary Black Workers), Henry Winston (CPUSA), Abner Winston Berry (Baba Sufu) (All-African People's Party), and Stokely Carmichael (All-African People's Revolutionary Party). Phil Hutchings observed, in the pages of *The Black Scholar*: "What is important and one of the historic points of the conference is that for the first time before a mass black assemblage the language and methodology of Marxism-Leninism became legitimate within the black liberation movement."[152] The debates in ALSC were parallel to the ideological debates surrounding the organization and convening of the Sixth Pan-African Congress (Sixth PAC) held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 1974.[153]

This intense ideological debate (between right-wing cultural nationalism and left-radicalism) even spread to the pages of *The Black Scholar*. In 1975 Nathan Hare abruptly left the magazine in the hands of Robert Chrisman and Robert Allen amidst charges that the journal had begun to lean too far to the Left.[154] The leftward turn was reflective of a similar process in Asian Studies, Latin American Studies, and African Studies. In the early 1970s the formation of the Union of Radical Latin Americanists led to the launch of the leftist journal *Latin American Perspectives*. Marxist political economy made a deep impression on African Studies and led to the creation of the leftist journal *Review of African Political Economy*. Marxist and/or radical

caucuses, though minorities, invaded the disciplines of political science, sociology, psychology, anthropology, geography, economics, and history.

The leftward swing of *The Black Scholar*, however, did not go unanswered by right-wing nationalist. In the September 1974 issue of *The Black Scholar*, Haki Madhubuti penned the polemical article, "The Latest Purge: The Attack on Black Nationalism and Pan-Afrikanism by the New Left, the Sons and Daughters of the Old Left."[155] Madhubuti saw the Black liberation struggle as essentially a struggle against the white race. He attacked the "infiltration" of Marxism in the Congress of Afrikan People, ALSC, and the Pan-Africanist movement in general on the grounds that Marxism is a "white ideology," and "anti-Afrikan." Mark Smith, a member of SOBU and ALSC, mounted a thorough analysis of Madhubuti's anti-Marxist diatribe and, most importantly, a powerful defense of Marxism–Leninism.[156] The October 1974 issue of *Black Scholar* published an anti-Marxist response from Alonzo 4X (Cannady), the news editor of *Muhammad Speaks*. Throughout 1975, anti-Marxist responses in support of Madhubuti would be published in the *Black Scholar*.[157] In early 1975, Maulana Karenga, in his article, "Ideology and Struggle: Some Preliminary Notes," would articulate a form of Pan-African petit-bourgeois socialism as a compromise ideological formation composed of a synthesis of nationalism, pan-Africanism, and socialist thought.[158]

As Black students went through this period of "proletarianization," we should note that it was not necessarily followed by a "culture of critical discourse" but rather a culture infused with voluntarism and ultra-leftism.[159] This led to a tendency to prefer party building vis-à-vis mass political education and the development of Marxist theory. Overall, while this period was marked by intense ideological debates, there was more of an emphasis on doctrinal rigidity and the "right" organizational line on the part of many Black leftists during this period.[160] Little attention—ironically—was paid to Marxist philosophical and theoretical issues by Black leftists. Quite a number of people with very little, and even a total lack of theoretical grounding in socialist and/or Marxist theory, joined the "New Communist movement" because of its practical significance and success. Some of these people assumed positions of leadership when they were only acquainted with fragments of Marxism, particularly in the form of Maoism. Marxist theory was accepted as an *article of faith*, but not as a form of *theoretical knowledge* that could guide political action. The failure to give serious attention to mass political education in combination with the overall anti-intellectualism within the movement would later give rise to ultra-leftism and, ultimately, ideological capitulation to the "Black Marxism" of Cedric Robinson, that is, Marxism without Karl Marx. Moreover, these theoretical deficiencies would actually lead to the political and ideological shift from

ultra-leftism to a rightist social democratic viewpoint on Marxism (found in Cornel West, Robin Kelly, Abdul Alkalimat, and others) that capitulated to Harold Cruse's anti-Marxist in the disguise of "Black Marxism" by Cedric Robinson.[161]

Through Black scholarly publications such as the *Black Scholar* and the *New England Journal of Black Studies*, research institutes and think-tanks such as the Atlanta-based Institute for the Black World, professional organizations such as Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (ASALH) and the National Council for Black Studies (NCBS), scholars, intellectuals, and activists engaged in an intense ideological struggle over the academic mission, definition, and curriculum of AAS as a field of study. Established in 1975, NCBS was pivotal in laying the foundation for a standardized curriculum for Black Studies departments, institutes, and programs across the country, alongside of accreditation procedures for departments and programs, tenure reviews, and grievance procedures. The primary task of NCBS was "to insure the survival, expansion, and continued acceptance of black studies at a time of declining enrollments, fiscal stringency, and emergent policies of benign neglect towards minorities in institutions of higher education."[162]

One of the decisive moments in the institutionalization of cultural nationalism in Black Studies was the retroactive ouster of the Black leftist Abdul Alkalimat (Gerald McWorter) as chair of NCBS in 1982. Initially, Alkalimat was democratically elected to chair the organization. However, after several members of the organization's board expressed reservations about the results, a new election was called for the following year to determine whether Alkalimat's election was legitimate. After a new election, Alkalimat subsequently was voted out. In turn, the board adopted new voting rules, making the results retroactive, and, consequently, denying Alkalimat his post as chair of the organization. As a result of the coup, Rhett Jones argues:

> The careful work and unity that had created a strong NCBS was shattered by the board's action. Some abandoned organized Black Studies entirely, others left the national organization—now viewed as nationalist controlled—and concentrated their energies at the state level or on individual African-American Studies units.[163]

Consequently, Alkalimat—in a last ditch effort to compromise with the cultural nationalist faction in NCBS—offered a "paradigm of unity."[164] He hoped that a "paradigm of unity" would provide a framework in which all ideological positions could peacefully coexist in Black Studies. In Alkalimat's fanaticism for conciliation or "peaceful coexistence,"

a miserable compromise was concluded, according to which, an eclectic mixture of individuals—including, for instance, neo-Gramscian social democrat Manning Marable and Christian social democrat and neopragmatist Cornel West—came to constitute "Black Marxism" as opposed to "Marxism in Ebony."[165] Alkalimat's "paradigm of unity" fostered the notion that all forms of explicit attacks on the capitalist system (anti-capitalism tout court) are in some manner "Marxist." Perhaps, Nkrumah was right: "One can compromise over programme, but not over principle. Any compromise over principle is the same as the abandonment of it."[166]

The shift to "Black Marxism" should be seen as a compromise formation, that is, the revision of Marxist revolutionary doctrine into a canon for social (gradualist) reformism.[167] This ideological capitulation to Cedric Robinson's "Black Marxism" was reflective of the internal contradictions of the Black left discussed earlier. "Black Marxism" as formulated by Cedric Robinson is Marxism without Marx. It has no interest in or allegiance to "Eurocentric" Marxism. Instead, "Black Marxism" draws from an indigenous Black intellectual and political tradition. By the 1980s, "Black Marxism" found a consensus or point of agreement with cultural nationalism. Ultimately, Marxists such as Alkalimat and Anthony Monteiro, a leading figure in the CPUSA in the 1970s and 1980s, agreed with nationalist such as Asante, Ani, and Nah Dove that Marxism was Eurocentric.[168]

The acceptance of the premises of "Black Marxism" has definite political (practical) implications that should not be overlooked. In one of the most bizarre twists, Anthony Monteiro, a Black member of the CPUSA, agreed to teach in Temple's "African-centered" Department of AAS in the fall of 2003. He was hired as a full-time, nontenured instructor; Nathaniel Norment, then chair of AAS, hired Monteiro at the rank of associate professor without tenure. (Nontenured track faculty member are reappointed year to year by the Dean, based on the recommendation of the chair of the department.)[169] Now, prior to Monteiro's arrival, "the father of Afrocentricity," Molefi Asante was removed as chair of the AAS department because of allegations of academic fraud and misconduct.[170] Yet, several years after his hiring, Monteiro was put in the position of indirectly supporting Asante's efforts to regain the chair of the AAS department.[171] According to Eric Draitser:

> The events which led to the dismissal or, as Temple University Dean of the College of Liberal Arts Teresa Soufas lovingly refers to it, [Monteiro's] "non-renewal," have their roots in the struggle over the Chair of the African-American Studies department. In 2012, Soufas attempted to assert her control over the historic African-American Studies program (the first in the country to offer a PhD in Black Studies), by appointing her colleague and ideological ally Dr. Jayne Drake as interim Chair of the program. Dr. Drake, a white

> professor of American literature, was installed over the vociferous objections of many in the department and the campus community—objections voiced perhaps most strongly by Dr. Monteiro.

Arguably, Monteiro's commitment to "Black Marxism" and racial solidarity vis-à-vis class analysis, proletarian internationalism and class struggle played a considerable role in assisting Asante in his efforts to regain the chair. Monteiro organized a coalition of Temple students and Philadelphia working-class folks in opposition to the "white professor of American literature" and in support of the Afrocentric Asante. No sooner had the battle been won when, Teresa Soufas, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, in collaboration with Asante, terminated Monteiro's contract with the AAS department. Soufas claimed that the decision to terminate Monteiro's contract was solely made by Asante.[172] Later, Asante engaged in red baiting Monteiro; attacking—in words "spoken like a dashiki-wearing J. Edgar Hoover"—Monteiro as an opportunist and a "low level purveyor of Marxism" and "anti-African ideas."[173] How could the "Marxist" Monteiro fall prey to the political opportunism of Asante, Ama Mazama, and other Afrocentrists in the department at Temple?

Alkalimat and Monteiro were not the only prominent Marxists/socialists of the 1970s to later give up their theoretical and practical commitment to Marxism. Eldridge Cleaver, one of the most prominent members of the Black Panther Party, underwent a curious transformation from left-nationalism to joining the Christian evangelical movement and running for political office on the Republican ticket.[174] And the founder of MXLU, Howard Fuller (Owusu Sadaukai), went from a leftist Black Power activist to being a right-wing educational reformer, financially funded by conservative foundations such as the American Education Reform Council, Walton Family Foundation, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation. He currently engages in open-class warfare against teachers' unions and supports tax-funded school voucher programs, promotes for-profit school management firms, tuition tax credits, charter schools along with being an advocate for public/private partnerships in public education. Beginning in 1999, he served as a special education advisor to George W. Bush.[175]

Similarly, Clarence Munford, after earning bachelor's and master's at Western Reserve University, finished his doctorate at Karl Marx University in communist East Germany in 1962. Munford would later publish a groundbreaking effort at a Marxist approach to AAS, *Production Relations, Class, and Black Liberation: A Marxist Perspective in Afro-American Studies* in 1978.[176] Yet, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European Socialist bloc, Munford traded in his "class analysis" for a Black nationalist perspective with his books: *The Black Ordeal of Slavery and*

Slave Trading in the French West Indies 1625–1715, *Race and Civilization: The Rebirth of Black Centrality* and *Race and Reparations: A Black Perspective for the Twenty-First Century*. Munford proposed that race and civilization had more historical and explanatory power than class and class struggle.[177] A similar "red shift" is exhibited in the work of Charles Mills.[178]

The retreat from a class analysis by proponents of "Black Marxism" was part of a broader "Post-Marxist" trend.[179] The "retreat from class" opened the doors of political opportunism for "public intellectuals" like Cornel West. West's eclecticism and syncretism sets the stage for the merger of non-Marxist and even anti-Marxist ideologies with aspects of Marxist ideology. West's political opportunism is best illustrated by the fact that the critically acclaimed *Monthly Review* (a leftist journal and press) not only published West's anti-Marxist book *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought* in 1991, but later devoted a special issue of the journal to the text in 1993. In this work, West reads Marx as a radical historicist or more accurately a neopragmatist.[180] Later, West would go so far as to claim that there have been no real theoretical contributions or leadership from Black socialists to the socialist movement. West informs us:

> This does not mean that there have been no noteworthy blacks socialists—yet none have had the will, vision, and imagination to Afro-Americanized socialist thought and practice. Yet, recently, rudimentary efforts have been made-such as Manning Marable's *Black Water*, Maulana Karenga's *Kawaida Theory*, my own *Prophesy Deliverance*! and Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism*.[181]

It is because of these turn of events—but primarily as a result of state-sponsored repression and anti-communism—that Black left-radicalism/Marxism was unable to secure an institutional niche and sustained theoretical influence in Black Studies. In order to maintain hegemony, the ruling class will deploy defensive strategies, which can involve both accommodation and repression. As Alf Gunvald Nilsen and Laurence Cox observe, "A defensive strategy focused on accommodation typically revolves around granting concessions to the claims and demands of movements from below with the aim of appeasing and defusing a force that might otherwise threaten the existing social formation."[182] As the left-radical movements of the 1960s and 1970s were defused through state repression, political concessions provided fertile ground for right-wing ideologies to surge forward such as the Kawaida philosophy of Maulana Karenga and the Afrocentricity of Molefi Asante. As Antonio Gramsci astutely noted, the dictatorship of capital is the result of "hegemony protected by the armour of coercion."[183] While the left-radical wing of the Black liberation movement played a significant role in opening the doors of the bourgeois

academy, right-wing cultural nationalists were able to establish a default stronghold on university campuses. Retrospectively, it can be argued that the space for the advent of Afrocentricity as a form of bourgeois cultural nationalism was opened by the repression of Black left-radicalism and/or Marxism–Leninism. Consequently, as the "politics of class struggle" were replaced by the "politics of recognition," cultural nationalism came to take deep roots within Black Studies, espousing a reactionary-populist social discourse. And, as such, the radical dreams of Black students were dialectically transformed into the reactionary fantasies of cultural nationalism and the "inclusive scholarship" of liberal cosmopolitanism. Just as Louis Bonaparte stole France and Joseph-Desiré Mobutu stole Zaire, bourgeois liberals and cultural nationalists stole Black Studies. Without giving up their mutual rivalry, both liberals and nationalists were united in their common class interest, against Marxism and left-radicalism.[184]

Things Fall Apart

From the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott to the 1972 African Liberation Day demonstration, a tidal wave of political motion by Black people produced seismic change in the US polity. Yet, with the arrival of the turbulent decade of the 1970s, Black students, once at the vanguard of the movement, increasingly became demoralized, and, subsequently, they were "as quiet as the bricks of the buildings and as quiet as the grass growing beside the buildings."[185]

There were still episodic, though noticeable, moments of political unrest. On September 9, 1971, enraged by the tragic murder-assassination of political prisoner and Black Panther Party member George Jackson at San Quentin prison, nearly half of Attica's prison population—an estimated 2,200 inmates—were crying a "Blues for Brother George Jackson."[186] Prisoners rioted and seized control of the prison, taking 42 staff hostage. The "Attica Blues" would play a seminal role in garnering support for political prisoners, prisoner's rights, and the right of prisoners to form unions.[187]

The analyses of imperialism that grew from African American support for African liberation stimulated protests, study groups and Pan-African perspectives that jelled into the ALSC. On May 26, 1973, the ALSC held the largest demonstration of Pan-African unity called African Liberation Day (ALD) in order to reveal the "twin evils of racism and imperialism"—the marches and rallies across the world were the largest demonstration of their kind since those organized by Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in the 1920s. It is estimated that over

100,000 people participated in over 30 cities in the United States, in addition to cities in Canada and throughout the Caribbean.[188] The ALSC was for the 1970s what the Paul Robeson and W. E. B. Du Bois-led Council on African Affairs had been during the 1937–1955 period.[189] Yet, by the late 1970s, the mass movement in the Black community, particularly among the Black working-class, was in a state of political demobilization.

While all political struggles entail victories and defeats, the intensity of state repression, the loss of lives, personal animosities, political opportunism and betrayals, ideological rivalries, and political exhaustion were dialectically transformed into *demoralization*. This translated into an attitude (or social psychology) of "why fight and struggle against the system?" since the omnipotence of capitalism far outweighs the power of the oppositional forces. Leftist critiques of capitalism were met with a quick retort: We shouldn't bother to challenge capitalism because "there is no alternative." In turn, most students abandoned political struggle in return for a career in the corporate world. The ideological upshot was the return of careerism, political conservatism, and cultural idealism among many Black students.

When the Black liberation movement went into a state of demoralization, the question became how to jumpstart a mass Black political movement that had stalled. Consequently, some left-radical organizations such as the Black Panther Party retreated into the arena of bourgeois reformist politics. Members of the Black Panthers ran for offices on the community development boards and model cities programs in Oakland. On May 20, 1972, the Party announced that it was running Bobby Seale for mayor of Oakland, and Elaine Brown for a seat on the Oakland City Council.[190] As Mike Davis notes:

> A dismaying, inverse law seemed to prevail between the collapse of grassroots mobilization in the ghettoes and the rise of the first wave of Black political patronage in the inner cities. While Black revolutionaries and nationalists were being decimated by J. Edgar Hoover's COINTELPRO program of preemptive repression and infiltration, Black community organization was being reshaped into a passive clientelism manipulated by the human-services bureaucracy and the Democratic Party.[191]

Perhaps no single event better exemplifies this dialectical process than the National Black Political Convention held in March 1972, in Gary, Indiana. The Gary Convention was nothing more than a "shotgun wedding" of the radical left wing of Black power and elite brokerage politics.[192] This "shotgun wedding" was foreshadowed by Stokely Carmichael's opaque articulation of Black Power as "the coming together of black people to elect representatives and to force those representatives to speak to their needs."[193]

While many civil rights leaders criticized Black Power rhetoric, others repackaged and resold Black Power for their own political agendas.[194] Black public officials—sporting Afros and red, black, and green liberation jumpsuits (just joking)—offered elite brokerage politics under the guise of Black Power. With the skillful manipulation of Black Power rhetoric, between 1970 and 1977, the number of Black mayors, on the one hand, increased from 48 to 178. Yet, during the same period, Black unemployment surged from 8 percent in 1970 to nearly 14 percent in 1977. The net result of the rise of moderate Black politicians alongside the expansion of the Black petit bourgeoisie exerted a demobilizing effect on Black politics.

The Black petit bourgeoisie projected onto the Black working-class, a class ideology that claimed the class interests of the Black petit bourgeoisie were synonymous with the racial vision of the group as a whole. And this political strategy worked. In 1964, there were only 103 Black elected officials in the entire United States, 5 of which were holding office in Congress. By 1983, the number of Black elected officials had ballooned to more than 5,600 with 21 holding Congressional seats.

Beginning with the mayoral victory of Robert C. Henry, in Springfield, Ohio, in 1966, Black mayors won mayoral races in Los Angeles, Newark, New Orleans, Charlotte, Richmond, and over 200 other cities. Two years after the passage of the Voting Rights Act, Carl Stokes was elected mayor in Cleveland, Ohio, and Richard Hatcher in Gary, Indiana. In 1969, Kenneth Gibson was elected mayor of Newark, New Jersey; four years afterward, Tom Bradley of Los Angeles, Clarence Lightner of Raleigh, North Carolina, Doris A. Davis of Compton, California, Coleman Young of Detroit, Michigan, Maynard Jackson of Atlanta, Georgia, and Walter Washington of Washington, DC.

Despite the symbolic meaning of mayoral victories, the conditions of Black working-class lives and neighborhoods did not qualitatively change. During the 1970s, the unemployment rate for African Americans was as low as 9.4 percent (1973) and as high as 14 percent (1976 and 1977).[195] It was just another "Winter in America" and Black working-class people were lucky to have "Good Times."[196]

This "new regime of race relations management" functioned as an effective means of political co-optation and demobilization. "Securing patronage appointments for elite blacks," Adolph Reed observes, "appeared as generic gains for the race partly because of the premise that elevating the best men advanced the group as a whole."[197] The "new regime of race relations management" was effective because of

> its capacities for delivering benefits and, perhaps more important, for defining what benefits political action can legitimately be used to pursue. Ease in

> voting and in producing desired electoral outcomes legitimizes that form as the primary means of political participation, which naturally seems attractive compared to others that require more extensive and intensive commitment of attention and effort. One result is to narrow the operative conception of political engagement to one form, and the most passive one at that.[198]

In a further effort to court the Black vote and with the help of some shuffling of cards, in 1968, Richard "Tricky Dicky" Nixon would come out in support of Black Power, that is, the necessity for Black people to get a "fair share" of American capitalism. Through government and private sector programs, Nixon hoped to turn Black power into green power, that is, Black capitalism.[199] Between 1970 and 1975, the Nixon administration with the assistance of finance capital (via larger white-owned financial establishments such as Chase-Manhattan Bank) played a seminal role in increasing the number of Black-owned banks from 21 to 45. This occurred despite the fact that Black capital earned only 1.7 percent of gross receipts recorded by American multinational corporations.[200] In fact, Floyd McKissick, a moderate-cum-militant Black civil rights activist and the former national director of the Congress on Racial Equality, was able to secure a $14 million bond (from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)) to start "Soul City," a model city project near Warren County, North Carolina, on 3,000 acres of land. The State of North Carolina also donated $1.7 million. In exchange, McKissick gave his support to Nixon's re-election in 1972.[201] McKissick was not alone in his support of Nixon. In addition to basketball legend Wilt Chamberlain, baseball legend Jackie Robinson, "Soul Brother Number 1" James Brown, football player and actor Jim Brown, Charles Hurst, president of Malcolm X College, among others, expressed support for Nixon. As Joshua D. Farrington details, Nixon garnered the endorsement of 30 percent of the country's African American newspapers and magazines, including the *Cleveland Call and Post*, *Atlanta Daily World*, *Oakland Post*, and *Black Business Digest*.[202]

The start of the 1980s was symbolized, in the United States, by the wholesale assault by Ronald "Welfare Queen" Reagan and George "Willie Horton" Bush on New Deal welfare-state liberalism. The supply-side economics of the Reagan revolution—with its emphasis on strict monetary controls, savings and investments, private entrepreneurship, and a rollback of state regulations—represented the expression of a coherent and explicit conservative ideology often described as the New Right; it was touted as the new panacea that would arrest and reverse the cyclical crisis of capitalism. This rightist backlash not only challenged existing state-sponsored social programs, but also questioned the very premises of welfare-state liberalism.[203]

University presidents, government leaders in conjunction with "captains of industry" would begin restructuring the university in order to completely subordinate it systematically to corporate and finance capital. The capitalist restructuring of universities meant that each department was to become a "revenue center," each university course a consumer product, each student a customer, each professor an academic entrepreneur, each administrator a manager, all stakeholders in promoting the university in its never-ending search for profits. A "new" free-market vocabulary of customers and stakeholders, shared faculty governance, massive open online courses (MOOCs), niche marketing, technology and curriculum innovation, assessments and branding would become the governing mantras on college campus. The shift away from student grants to loans forced many students to work long hours to support themselves. In the process, students were increasingly saddled with the "white elephant" of student loan debt. Priorities in higher education became increasingly determined by the bottom line.[204]

The restructuring of universities had a direct impact on Black Studies. Its continued survival was placed overwhelmingly in the hands of faculty who have joint appointments with established departments, and whose tenure was ultimately decided by established department. Oftentimes, when joint appointments are considered, the non-AAS departments favored African American scholars with little or no background in AAS. In the best of all possible worlds, as Norman Harris observes, "a faculty member with a joint appointment in AAS and another discipline may find Sisyphus the clearest companion and role model."[205] On the other hand, Black Studies on the campuses of HBCUs were limited to a collage of Black Studies courses. And the struggles of the Black working-class were lost in the storm of debates about whether race mattered.[206] The vast majority of scholarship and research reinforced liberal policy agendas. For example, the works of William Julius Wilson came to define the parameters for the discussion of the immiseration of Black working-class life and culture. In the wake of Wilson's award-winning book *The Declining Significance of Race*, first published in 1978, analytical notions such as "cultural deprivation," "human capital," "culture of poverty," and "underclass" came to explain the historical and contemporary crisis that confronts the Black working-class.[207]

This occurred in the same context in which the Reagan administration's macroeconomic policies (or "trickle down economics") left working-class people, particularly the Black working- class, to the untrammeled forces of the marketplace. Suffice it to say that Reaganomics greatly diminished the living standards of the Black working-class. As Luke Tripp observes: "…from 1976 to 1984, the gap between overall African American and white unemployment grew from 5.1% to 8.8% for men; and from 5% to 8.2% for women…A long-term shift from manufacturing to service

industries which continued in the early part of the 1980s resulted in the structural unemployment of 5.1 million workers, many of whom were African American, who lost jobs between 1979 and 1983 because of plant closings, relocations, or the cancellation of positions or shifts."[208]

With the Black working-class being assaulted by Reagan's "voodoo economics," blown away or imprisoned by police repression under the guise of a War on Drugs and disillusioned by Black petit bourgeois politicians, ironically a militant Black conservatism gained a foothold in African American politics. This ideological response to Reaganomics took cultural deprivation as the starting-point for analyzing the immiseration of the Black working-class life. As Adolph Reed observes, this militant Black conservatism offered a "safely contained catharsis," that is, "a visceral rebellion without dangerous consequences, an instant, painless inversion of power and status relations."[209] Perhaps the best illustration of the phenomenal resurrection of bourgeois nationalism a la militant conservatism was the Phoenix-like appearance of Louis Farrakhan during the 1980s, particularly among Black college students.[210]

Parallel to these developments, Black cultural nationalist ideology, particularly in the form of Afrocentricity, established an institutional niche in Black Studies and ideological influence on many campuses. During the 1980s, we witnessed, for instance, the loquacious bravado of Leonard Jeffries, Francis Cress Welsing and other so-called melanists promoting the idea of biological determinism as an explanation for racism. Jeffries argued—based on the pseudoscientific doctrine of melanin theory—that Black people were inherently superior to white people because they possess greater quantities of melanin. Conversely, the lack of melanin demonstrates the alleged inhumanity and inferiority of white people.[211]

Although the academy experienced a political crisis in 1968 with the birth of Black Studies, the bureaucratic structure of the academic was able to undermine and ultimately reverse the victories and concessions won by Black students and ultimately restoring the class power of capital. The ascendency of cultural nationalist ideology in the Black Studies movement ushered in the quest for African particularity and an emphasis on Black Studies as civilization studies. The historic role of the Black working-class was quickly replaced by a spurious search for an authentic Blackness that was lost in the ancient holy land of Kemet. A class analysis of racism and sexism was dismissed as Eurocentric and class reductionist. Real class *politiks* was traded in for an ersatz politics of recognition. Ensconced in the halls of academia, Afrocentrists bellowed: "Revolutionaries put down your roscoe, the Saturday night special, the nine-millimeter, and encase them in glass, the weapon of culture has become our new battlefield!"[212] Political struggle waged against the State or at the "point of production," we were told, did not guarantee liberation. Cultural politics became the primary means of resistance.

Conclusion

I have taken this historical excursion to underscore the manner in which cultural idealism became a default (naturalized) position in Black Studies. It was not based on its theoretical superiority or intellectual sagacity. It became hegemonic because of the determine role of corporate capitalism and corporate philanthropy in forcing the decline of Black radicalism, particularly of a Marxist character, in Black Studies. In juxtaposition to liberalism, Black nationalism took on the appearance of "Black radicalism." The silencing of the Black left in the post-McCarthy era created an ideological vacuum filled by Black nationalist ideology. For university administrators, Cold War fears of the "spectre of Communism" within the academy provided a sufficient condition for the cautious tolerance of various forms of nationalist ideology in Black Studies. Now, let's turn to an examination of Afrocentricity as a philosophy of AAS.

Chapter 2

The Afrocentric Problematic
The Quest for Particularity and the Negation of Objectivity

Introduction

Eurocentrism as a subspecies of ethnocentrism is based on a master narrative about (Western) Europe and the rest of the world. According to this story, African societies are naturally primitive societies with barbarous tribes in need of European civilization. In the late nineteenth century disciplines such as sociology, biology, and psychology attempted to give a scientific veneer to this racist ideology.[1] Eventually, it became commonsense that Black people were the "lady among the races."[2]

African American laypersons, "stepladder radicals," and "street scholars" wrote and talked about African American history and culture to counter the racist propaganda spewed throughout US books, newspapers, magazines, and even universities at that time.[3] Most African American intellectuals who are scholars of the Black experience share a *common denominator* in their dismissal and rejection of racist omission and distortions of the Black experience. Once we go beyond this lowest common denominator of challenging false universality, we can see a distinctive move on the part of proponents of Afrocentricity. Molefi Asante and other Afrocentrists make an explicit commitment to a philosophy of particularity, the formulation and elaboration of a distinctive worldview that is exclusively African. At both an ontological and sociopolitical plane, the accent on African particularity (i.e., African uniqueness and difference) becomes paramount for AAS.

In order to refute the Eurocentric argument that Black people have made no contribution to world culture and civilization, the Afrocentric move is to demonstrate the uniqueness (or particularity) of the African worldview and African civilization, that is, African particularity. Consequently, what becomes critical is erecting a metaphysical divide between the African and European experience. Here the quest for African particularity—on the part of Afrocentricity—not only expresses an affirmation of difference, but, most importantly, an ontological principle of incommensurability between the African and European experience.

In this chapter, I argue that the Afrocentric quest for African particularity deems universality (and its epistemological corollary, objectivity) *tout court* as false. The movement from the critique of false universality to the negation of universality constitutes the basis for the Afrocentric problematic. It is here that Afrocentricity—in fact—intersects with Eurocentricity. Since an African-centered perspective is committed to a centrist paradigm, it is a species of enthnocentrism, and is subject to the same fundamental flaws of Eurocentrism, namely disvaluing that which is not African. Ethnocentrism (what the Afrocentric project aims to critique and correct) is the logical consequence of a centrist perspective. In effect, we are left with two species of ethnocentrism. The chief limitation of Afrocentricity is its failure to recognize a dialectical relationship between the particular and the universal. Moreover, it fails to recognize that particularity finds its objective content in the concrete universal, that is, true objective knowledge.

An Intellectual Genealogy of Afrocentricity

What characterizes Afrocentricity when we embark on a scholarly investigation of African American experience? The theoretical development of the concept of Afrocentricity is usually credited to Molefi Asante and an array of scholars (directly and indirectly) associated with the AAS department at Temple University. In fact, Asante has self-described himself as the father of Afrocentricity. This seems appropriate, since he published *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* in 1980, a rather short book written with the tone of an impassioned ideologue with little concern for explicit arguments or standards of accepted scholarship, for example, citations of sources. In this manifesto of sorts, Asante argues that Afrocentricity as a mode of thought and action means placing African interests, values, and perspectives at the center of any analysis of African phenomena and the world in general.[4] In his later works, he provides a somewhat fuller picture of Afrocentricity, arguing that one of the primary goals of Black Studies is to establish "the

centrality of the ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) civilization and the Nile Valley cultural complex as points of reference for an African perspective in much the same way as Greece and Rome serve as reference points for the European world."[5] We are left to believe that only Afrocentricity can bring back to life the spiritual consciousness of Africa in the "lost souls" of Black folks.

Despite Asante's numerous claims to be the "father of Afrocentricity," there is a long and rich history of the concept prior to Asante's usage. We find Black scholars such as John Henrik Clarke, Carlos Russell, Clovis Semmes, and Anderson Thompson utilizing the concept years before Asante. It would seem, however, that the first to use the term "Afrocentric," was Du Bois. In his efforts to unveil Africa's gifts to the world, Du Bois wrote such works as *Black Folk Then and Now* and *The Gift of Black Folk* in addition to *The World and Africa*. Between 1961 and 1962, the eminent scholar utilized the term, "Afro-centric," to describe his *Encyclopedia Africana* project.[6] Du Bois hoped to pull together a scientific compendium—similar to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*—that would serve as a reference guide to African societies, culture, and history. He argues that this project should be "unashamedly Afro-centric, but not indifferent to the impact of the outside world upon Africa or to the impact of Africa upon the outside world."[7] Du Bois, in my estimation, was calling for a systematic, objective study of the internal development of African societies and cultures, written primarily by Black scholars. We should take note of the fact that a Black epistemological framework did not govern the "unashamedly Afro-centric" approach of Du Bois. Unlike Asante, Du Bois's scholarship was not simply focused on finding an outstanding monument in Africa to measure against every Roman aqueduct or Gothic cathedral. Du Bois's approach to Africa did not fixate on Egyptian pyramids or the Sphinx as the full measure and meaning of African history. He was concerned with reconstructing African history, relatively independent of its connection with Europe. Most importantly, African history would not be written as an extension of European history.

It should come as no surprise that Asante contends that Du Bois was not an Afrocentrist. Asante childishly asserts, "While Du Bois never did overthrow Eurocentric icons, he remains the major pre-Afrocentric figure in the philosophical and intellectual history of African people."[8] He claims that Du Bois employed "Eurocentric methods" to analyze and study black people by drawing upon an assortment of European intellectuals and thinkers in social scientific studies like *The Philadelphia Negro*.[9] On the basis of Asante's assessment, Du Bois's classic works such as *Black Folk Then and Now* or *Black Reconstruction* could plausibly be excluded from the AAS canon.[10]

During the late 1960s and early 1970s we witness the formative development of Afrocentricity as an epistemological and methodological framework.[11] The work of Chancellor Williams, Yosef ben-Jochannan, Jacob

Carruthers, John Henrik Clarke, and Anderson Thompson gives expression to an Afrocentric social epistemology. As early as 1969, the African Heritage Studies Association called for the "Reconstruction of African history and cultural studies along Afrocentric lines."[12] John Henrik Clarke took the lead role in the formation of an Afrocentric approach to history. In the introduction to the second volume of J. A. Roger's *World's Great Men of Color*, Clarke writes:

> There is now an international struggle on the part of people of African descent against racism and for a more honest look at their history. On university campuses and in international conferences they are demanding that their history be looked at from a black perspective or from an *Afro-centric point of view*. This has taken the struggle against racism to the world's intellectual centers, where the theoretical basis of racism started . . . After reclaiming their own humanity, I think [Black people] will make a contribution toward the reclamation of the history of [all humanity].[13]

In February 1971 Clarke penned an article, "The Meaning of Black History," for the *Black World*. Clarke maintains that an "*Afro-centric* view of history" means telling history from "the point of view of the victims."[14] The *Black World* contained numerous articles calling for an Afrocentric perspective when looking at world history and culture. In 1971, P. Chike Onwuachi, who was then the director of the African Studies Research Program at Howard University, writing about Negritude, concluded:

> The essence of Negritude must be articulated in *Afrocentrism*, the perspective in which the Black man is objectively translated in his true essence of being a WHOLE MAN and not as a pathological adjunct of the white man, nor as the invisible man in the white dominated world.[15]

Numerous institutions, publications, and Black scholars also utilized the term, "Afrocentric."[16] For instance, Anderson Thompson stated, in the 1973 inaugural issue of *The Afrocentric World Review*:

> Putting Black interests first, the view of *Afrocentricity*, is the plateau from which we launch our dialogues with those who are dedicated to the establishment of power among African peoples. Afrocentrism strives for reinforcing the New African Frame of Reference being forged all over the world. It seeks for a collective identity founded on Black ideas, rather than the ideas of non-Blacks.[17]

The point I want to make is that—prior to the publication of Asante's *Afrocentricity* in 1980—there was already a common usage and understanding

of the term Afrocentricity (or Afrocentrism or African-centered or Afrocentric) before Asante became the "father of Afrocentricity." At best, we can conclude that Asante's "Afrocentric Idea" is the continuation of a long tradition of Black cultural nationalism. It was part of an idea—in the air if you will—that argued for the establishment of a Black epistemology or frame of reference that would usher in the revision of knowledge about Africana history, culture, and experience. The historian Lerone Bennett, Jr. offers a summary of this nationalist ethos: "It is necessary for us to develop a new frame of reference which transcends the limits of white concepts. It is necessary for us to develop and maintain a total intellectual offensive against the false universality of white concepts."[18]

What Is the Afrocentric Project?

As the field of Black Studies approached maturity in the 1980s, it developed the institutional structure associated with departments and programs within the academic infrastructure. Research institutes like the Institute of the Black World (IBW) were formed. Professional organizations and caucuses such as NCBS, the American Philosophy Association's Subcommittee on Blacks in Philosophy, and the African Heritage Studies Association came into existence. A series of new journals were established—between 1970 and 1990—such as *The Journal of Black Studies*, *Contributions in Black Studies*, *The Black Scholar*, *Studia Africana*, *The Western Journal of Black Studies*, *The Afrocentric World Review*, the *New England Journal of Black Studies*, and *Africanology*.[19] Throughout Black scholarly publications, scholars, intellectuals, and activists began to engage in an intense ideological struggle over the academic mission, definition, and curriculum of AAS as a field of study.[20]

At the center of these ideological struggles were primordial questions that constituted the formulation of comprehensive intellectual tasks for Black studies. These tasks were comprised in a number of salient questions about how to conceptualize the nature and function of African American culture and history as an academic undertaking. What should be the philosophical basis of AAS? Is AAS an educational reform or a forum for ideological indoctrination? Will the educational function of Black Studies be subordinated to its political and ideological goals? What role will ideology play in the formation of AAS? Ought AAS be guided by a distinct ideology? And if so, what would compose this Black ideology? What should constitute the AAS' curriculum? Will the curriculum be interdisciplinary? Or is AAS an independent discipline? Will AAS compromise the academic standards and intellectual integrity of the university? Who should be hired as AAS faculty?

Are Black Studies programs conceived as a strategic means to diversify faculty at predominantly white universities and colleges? Are whites qualified to teach in AAS?[21] Does the existence of Black Studies relieve other academic departments from having to teach topics that relate to the African American experience? What structure ought AAS assume in the academy? Is AAS a "pretext for separatism"?[22] What should be AAS connection to the Black community and the Black struggle? More generally, how ought the academy address the Black experience, Black culture, and the Black community in its conditions of oppression and exploitation?

Since the publication of *Afrocentricity: Theory of Social Change* in 1980, Asante wrote *The Afrocentric Idea* (1987), *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (1992), and most recently *An Afrocentric Manifesto* (2007) to provide answers to these primordial questions from an African-centered perspective. He claims to have written over 70 books and 400 articles in defense of Afrocentricity, over the last 40 years.[23]

The fundamental goal of the Afrocentric project is to call into question the academy's canon, that is, the prescribed corpus of literature, which is foundational to academic intellectual culture. Asante and his fellow travelers are engaged in a cultural war over the attendant presuppositions undergirding the bourgeois academic canon. Afrocentricity is a theoretical and methodological framework for the examination and interpretation of all human phenomena from an African-centered perspective. Asante defines an African-centered perspective as "a frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African person."[24] The Afrocentric project seeks to replace Eurocentrism with a "new human ethic" based on "Kemetic texts and civilization," "a peaceful agrarian mythology," and "a spiritual exploration of beauty, order and harmony."[25]

Over the years, a host of various works by Afrocentrists—of varying degrees of intellectual substance—have sought to outline the ideological, philosophical, theoretical, and methodological significance of Afrocentricity.[26] In 1982, Maulana Karenga published *Introduction to Black Studies*, which outlines an African-centered philosophy of AASAAS. In 1994, Marimba Ani published her spirited 636-page defense of the African-centered perspective, *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior*. In 2003, Ama Mazama edited *The Afrocentric Paradigm*, one of the most definitive collections of writings in defense of Afrocentricity. Karenga and Asante edited the *Handbook of Black Studies*, in 2006, with contributions from Ama Mazama, Norman Harris, Delores P. Alridge, Mark Christian, Reiland Rabaka, and James B. Stewart. This is only a small sampling of books and articles by Afrocentrists in the past 30 years; this does not even include the scores of doctoral dissertations written about Afrocentricity or from an African-centered perspective.[27]

Perhaps, Asante's greatest fait accompli is the implementation of the first doctoral program in AAS in 1988 at Temple University. The expressed aim of this doctoral program was the creation and reproduction of a new breed of African American scholars and future university professors with an ideological anchor in an African-centered philosophy. Afrocentricity is seen as the only conceptual framework for the future development of AAS.[28] Once doctoral students are trained in the discipline of Afrocentricity, Asante argues:

> This new group of scholars will set the pace for a neo-Kemetic revolution that will change the way we think of science, history, religion, fashion, architecture, music, and ethics. It will be a renaissance more powerful than anything a neo-Greek revival could imagine. When the results of our reflection on a neo-Kemetic reality captures the continental imagination in Africa we will see the beginning of a new world.[29]

Ama Mazama makes a similar point. The establishment of the Temple School of Afrocentricity was a "milestone" because an "army of scholars" would be developed to challenge "white supremacy."[30] This new "army of scholars" will commit "discipline suicide" in order to foster a new method of investigation and conceptual framework consistent with an African-centered worldview. Without Afrocentricity, Asante warns us, AAS scholars would have been left with "a series of intellectual adventures in Eurocentric perspectives about Africans and African Americans."[31]

Afrocentricity is a theoretical and methodological framework for the examination and interpretation of all human phenomena from an African-centered perspective. What defines the "African person" for Asante? Here Asante is referring to what he calls a "composite African" not limited to "a specific discrete African ethnicity."[32] Asante's concept of a "composite African" entails that continental Africans and people of African descent—whether in Cuba, Brazil, the United States, England, or Africa—respond to "the same rhythms of the universe, the same cosmological sensibilities, the same general historical reality."[33]

Strong and Weak Afrocentricity

A Typology

In the case of Afrocentricity, we are dealing with a self-defined grouping of scholars who are, more or less self-consciously, pursing a common research

agenda based on certain methodological presuppositions and theoretical assumptions. On the basis of the heterogeneous nature of Afrocentricity, we need an *intensional* definition of Afrocentricity that captures the common ground that they all occupy, despite their different approaches, disciplinary backgrounds, and discursive practices. An intensional definition gives the meaning of a term by specifying all the properties required to come to that definition, that is, the necessary and sufficient conditions for belonging to the set being defined. An *extensional* definition, on the contrary, lists everything that falls under that definition—for example, an extensional definition of bachelor would be a listing of all the unmarried men in the world.[34]

All adherents to Afrocentricity share a common *weltanschauung* (worldview), that is the existential affirmation of an abstract Africanity (or African-ness) that entails determinate idealist ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions and implications. They seek to demonstrate the uniqueness (or particularity) of the African worldview and African civilization. Given this common *weltanschauung*, however, we should not be under the illusion that Afrocentricity represents a monolithic school of thought.[35]

How do we account for the mosaic character of Afrocentricity? How do we account for the differences between, say, Bobby Wright, John Henrik Clarke, Lucius Outlaw, Greg Carr, Reiland Rabaka, Francis Cress Welsing, and Molefi Asante? How do we differentiate between the different schools of thought within Afrocentricity? The African American philosopher John H. McClendon, in my estimation, offers the most useful heuristic method for understanding the diversity within Afrocentric thought.[36] McClendon suggests that Afrocentricity can be divided into strong and weak variants. The terms weak and strong are used merely as heuristic devices to formulate a typology for identifying the differences within Afrocentric thought.[37] The differentia specifica between strong and weak Afrocentricity centers on how their commitment to *metaphysical exclusivism* is formulated. Metaphysical exclusivism points to the fundamental ontological reality that separates the European and African cultural matrix.

Strong Afrocentricity is a form of pseudoscience and shares many attributes with "scientific creationism."[38] For the strong Afrocentrists, the formulation of metaphysical exclusivism is rooted in either *environmental determinism* (e.g., the sun vs ice people thesis) or a *biogenetic causal theory* in which melanin (or the lack there of) is said to have generated social, cultural, and psychological contradictions and/or antagonisms, namely white supremacy or Eurocentrism.[39] As a form of social explanation, it is reductionist in nature such that "the arrows of causality" run from genes to humans and from humans to individuals. Moreover, as Richard Lewontin

comments, the political implications of such an approach are quite self-defeating: "If inequalities are the direct consequence of our biologies, then, except for some gigantic program of genetic engineering, no practice can make a significant alteration of social structures or individuals or groups within it. What we are is natural and therefore fixed."[40]

Perhaps the most notorious advocates of strong Afrocentricity are Frances Cress Welsing, Leonard Jefferies, Wade Nobles, and Richard King.[41] Building upon the known scientific properties of melanin, these "melanin scholars" claim that melanin bestows supernatural abilities upon people with greater quantities of melanin. While melanin is a pigment found in all human beings, there is a higher concentration of melanin in people of African descent. On the basis of these premises, Welsing, for example, reaches a rather bizarre conclusion: the African American botanist George Washington Carver's success was attributable to his ability "to communicate with the energy frequencies emanating from plants."[42] Yet, there is no empirical evidence to support the claim that superior intelligence and supposed extra-sensory perception is caused by melanin.

Welsing's controversial *The Isis Papers: The Keys to the Colors*, was one of the underground classics within Afrocentric circles during the early 1990s. For Welsing white supremacy is inherent in the genetic make-up of white people; it essentially predated capitalism. The "Cress Theory of Color Confrontation" offers a biogenetic causal explanation for white supremacy. Through neo-Freudian lenses, Welsing argues that unconscious "motivational force" can account for white supremacy at both an individual and social level. She contends that the "motivational force" for white supremacy is rooted in a "neurotic drive for superiority and supremacy" that is grounded in a "pervading sense of inadequacy and inferiority." White supremacy exists as a purely unconscious pyschosexual reaction (or as she puts it, "psychological defensive maneuvers or defensive mechanism") to the inability of Europeans to produce melanin. From Welsing's perspective, white supremacy therefore is a response to the genetic (and, ultimately, sexual) inferiority of whites. As V. N. Volosinov observes: "The unconscious turns out to be, if we follow Freud, a vivid and diverse world where all presentations and images correspond with perfect accuracy to specific referents, where all desires are specifically oriented and all feelings retain their entire wealth of nuances and delicate transitions."[43] Welsing's unveiling of the unconscious motivation of whites (or Europeans) reveals that their survival depends on the reproduction of white supremacy. As such, she informs us:

> The quality of whiteness is indeed a genetic inadequacy or a relative genetic deficiency state or disease based upon the genetic inability to produce the skin pigments of melanin which are responsible for all skin coloration.[44]

So, white supremacy becomes wholly and exclusively determined by the sex drives of white people. She puts forth three Freudian defense mechanisms—repression, reaction formation, and projection—as explanations for how Europeans continue to oppress and exploit people of color, and particularly African peoples and people of African descent. So, we could infer that the solution to white supremacy, from Welsing's standpoint, is either a strong dose of psychoanalysis or the total annihilation of all whites!

White supremacy is basically seen as a function of white male penis envy; white males envy Black penises and balls. In point of fact, Welsing argues, her account of white supremacy "sheds light on the fact that the body area attacked during most lynchings of black males by white males is the area of the genitals where the powerful color producing genetic material is stored in the testicles."[45]

Despite the widespread influence of Welsing's psychoanalytical explanation of white supremacy, it is important to note that it is not based on credible scientific evidence.[46] She derives the large part of her "evidence" from the analysis and meaning of cultural symbols. For instance, she claims:

> In the game of billiards or pool, there are eight colored balls, a white ball and a long dark stick placed on a table. The object of the game is to use the long stick in causing the white ball to knock all of the colored balls under the table. The last colored ball knocked under the table is the black ball. When the game is over, the white ball is the only ball that remains on top of the table with the long dark stick. Then the game starts again.[47]

Throughout *The Isis Papers* she provides an extensive interpretation of symbolic objects and their function in Western/American/European culture, for instance, how the Christian cross is a symbol of Black male genitalia, as are the Christmas tree, guns, footballs, baseballs, and cigars.

On the other hand, weak Afrocentricity designates the point of contention between Africans and Europeans in sociocultural structures and/or ideologies. Weak Afrocentricity takes on the character of cultural determinism as opposed to environmental or biological determinism. Here the best examples of weak Afrocentricity are Molefi Asante, Linda James Myers, Greg Carr, and Marimba Ani.[48] Following in the tradition of Leopold Senghor's petit bourgeois ideology of Negritude, Ani—in *Yurugu*—argues at length that African thought differs qualitatively from European thought by being essentially idealist, intuitive, and nonlinear, as opposed to the materialism and rationalism of Europe. I will reserve my comments on Ani's argument for chapter 3, where I will provide a more in-depth analysis of her book *Yurugu*.

The Afrocentric Idea

Philosophical Idealism, Black Particularity and African American Studies

In the field of AAS, to identify with Afrocentricity entails a particular mode of academic inquiry, a mode of intellectual discourse, a style of intellectual discursive practices, and a philosophy of history. It is an idealist philosophical trend that argues that the reclaiming of African heritage, consciousness, and values along with the vindication of classical African civilizations are central to Black Studies and Black liberation. Consequently, African American history and culture are seen as a second-order enterprise vis-a-vis history of "Kemetic high culture," which is a first-order enterprise. As Asante notes, the main object of investigation for AAS scholars is "our pre-slavery, indeed, our pre-American heritage."[49]

Afrocentrists are opposed to the West (or Europe) because it is grounded in a "rather materialist conception of reality."[50] Afrocentrist Linda James Myers argues: "Adhering to the Eurocentric conceptual system, with its material ontology as primary, inherently means destruction, because by definition materiality is finite and limited."[51] Despite their stated opposition to philosophical materialism, more often than not, the Afrocentrists have a rather quotidian conception of materialism. Norman Harris offers the following:

> The Eurocentric notion of individualism rests on the assumption that being determines consciousness, and it is this assumption which infuses materialism with a spirit it could never have. A new or better job, more income, a car, an outfit, etc. are all assumed to carry intrinsic meaning that will at the level of consciousness create a new person.

Here we have a popular (mis)conception of materialism. To be a materialist means that you want to possess material objects such as "a new or better job," "more income," or "a car." After repudiating this caricature of philosophical materialism, Harris affirms an idealist Afrocentric framework. Harris continues,

> an Afrocentric orientation is one which asserts that *consciousness determines being*. Consciousness in this sense means the way an individual (or people) thinks about relationships with self, others, with nature, and with some superior idea of Being . . . For example, the ancient Egyptian assertion, "Man Know Thy Self," indicates that the way one sees (thinks about and conceptualizes) the world precedes and determines life chances more so than exposure to or deprivation from various material conditions.[52]

Here we have the classical idealist argument that "life chances" are primarily determined by "the way one sees" or thinks about the world. In response to such subjective idealism via the Young Hegelians, Karl Marx was prompted to respond:

> Once upon a time a valiant fellow had the idea that men were drowned in water only because they were possessed with the idea of gravity. If they were to knock this notion out of their heads, say by stating it to be a superstition, a religious concept, they would be sublimely proof against any danger from water. His whole life long he fought against the illusion of gravity.[53]

From the idealism of Harris, it would follow that continental Africans, African Americans, and people of African descent have been oppressed and exploited by the *idea* of imperialism, capitalist exploitation, and white supremacy. They only need to be liberated from the rule of such ideas. I contend that imperialism, capitalist exploitation, sexism, and racism cannot be divorced from the ensemble of material (social) relations and institutions, which lend *material* support to racist or sexist beliefs by the actual suppression of the supposed inferior group (race, nationality, or gender).[54] The cultural idealism of Afrocentricity ignores the primary role of material structures in determining the life chances of Black people throughout the world, particularly working-class Black people.[55] By implication, it points us in the direction of the conservative ideology that the problems facing primarily working-class Black people in the United States are the result of a "culture of poverty" or "cultural pathology," albeit of an Afrocentric sort. This line of argument casts political and economic problems in psychological and cultural terms. Injustice takes on the appearance of a tug of war over cultural representations rather a class struggle against private ownership of the means of production and the dictatorship of capital. My argument is not to deny the role of ideas—for instance, "scientific racism" and religious ideology—in the reproduction of oppression and exploitation. Rather, in its blindness to political economy and structural determinates such as social relations of production, the cultural idealism of Afrocentricity substitutes a "politics of recognition" and self-esteem therapy for real *politicks*. At the end of the day, for our Afrocentric idealists, Black people only need to "Know They Self" rather than engage in a political struggle against the dictatorship of capital.

So, in opposition to materialism, the Afrocentrists have wholeheartedly and boldly embraced philosophical idealism. What are the implications of adopting idealism? The Black philosopher John McClendon observes:

> From the standpoint of philosophical idealism, non-material things such as consciousness, ideas, values, culture, as well as ideal entities such as minds,

> spirits, and souls constitute the fundamental basis of reality…In terms of social analysis, idealism emphasizes the primary (if not absolute) role of consciousness, ideas, values, myths, and culture, in their connection to social relations and practices, for understanding social reality.[56]

The commitment to idealism stems from the presupposition that all African people—throughout space and time—have been and are essentially spiritual, that is, committed to a belief in god(s) in some form or other.[57] An Afrocentric worldview, in turn, can only be spiritual (or idealist) by nature. For example, the Afrocentric scholar Marimba Ani (Dona Richards) claims that the "essence of the African cosmos is spiritual reality; that is its fundamental nature, its primary essence."[58] Ani declares that all Europeans are essentially philosophical materialists and by implication all Africans are essentially committed to philosophical idealism. She even claims that Plato is foundational to the European philosophical tradition of materialism and its ancillary propensity for rationalism. This is a rather audacious and misplaced assertion in as much as Plato is an archetype of objective idealism in Western philosophy; a point we will return to in chapter 3.

The Afrocentric line of argument mirrors assertions made by scholars such as John S. Mbiti who claim that traditional African life is intensely religious or spiritual. According to Mbiti, every element of African culture, particularly morality, is bound up with religion.[59] The Ghanaian philosopher Kwasi Wiredu offers an important rejoinder against this alleged intense religiosity. He states:

> One of the ways in which African culture has been misunderstood has been through exaggerations of the role of religion in African life…The familiar notion of the dependency of morality on religion in African society involves misconceptions about the nature of morality and religion in general. It involves, furthermore, confusions about the relationship between metaphysical suppositions and practical norms, in addition to some straight-out mistakes in the description of indigenous moral life.[60]

Wiredu argues that the centrality of god is not paramount to ethical considerations and practices with respect to the Akan. In a similar tone, the Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Gyekye argues, "what constitutes the good [for the Akan] is determined not by spiritual beings but human beings."[61] Rather, Gyekye makes the case that "the sole criterion of goodness is the welfare or well-being of the community."[62] For both Wiredu and Gyekye, Akan morality is grounded on humanism. By implication, morality in Akan culture is not ultimately of supernatural or divine origin.

Here I do want to give a cautionary suggestion. The Afrocentrists must stay alert to the fact that a common culture, or shared experiences, and

even the enduring heritage of having the same language is not a *sufficient* condition for claiming there exists, among all Black people, some kind of spontaneously arrived at common ontology or worldview.

Yet, Asante proposes a theory of identity based on a conception of an African essence, based in spirituality; an identity that embraces all people of African descent wherever they may be in the world. According to Asante:

> We have one African Cultural System manifested in diversity. Nevertheless to speak of the Arab in Algeria as my brother is quite different from speaking so of the African-Brazilian, Cuban or Nigerian. We respond to the same rhythms of the universe, the same cosmological sensibilities, the same general historical reality as the African descended people.[63]

Here African particularity is grounded on a theory of identity frozen in time that conveniently ignores dialectical change. The essence of identity, for Asante, is not seen as a process of *becoming* rather it is a fixed, natural, state of *being*.

We should take note that Asante's claim is presented as a self-evident fact or apodictic. Rather than grant truth to his claim, I maintain that we have the obligation to question its factual merits. Is it the case that the experience of Africans in Ghana or Afro-Cubans has the "general historical reality" of African Americans in the United States? To answer this question would mandate us to engage in an empirical investigation into concrete (material) history. And, yet, Asante would suggest that we make a leap of faith and accept this assertion on the grounds of intuition rather than reason and empirical verification. At the end of the day, Asante rejects any rational basis in logic for his claim about the substance of this universal African identity and relies instead on the mysterious—and rather irrational—notion of collective "cosmological sensibilities" and "rhythms of the universe." Asante's notion of "cosmological sensibilities" has about as much reality as midi-chlorian from the *Star Wars* movies.[64] When present in sufficient numbers, midi-chlorian could allow their host to detect the pervasive energy field known as the Force. At least, the Jedi Order used blood tests to locate Force-sensitive children such as Anakin Skywalker. But, one speculative notion is just as good as another.

Asante's metaphysical notion of collective "cosmological sensibilities" is an example of what the Beninois philosopher Paulin Hountondji has called "unanimism." Unanimism is the illusion that all men and women in a particular society speak with one voice and share the same opinion about all fundamental issues. In other words, all people in a given society share a common worldview that is immutable, spontaneous; it may even be an unconscious system of beliefs, common to all persons. Similar to his fellow ethnophilosophers on the African continent, Asante has no time

to seriously reflect upon the linguistic, ethnic, and class heterogeneity of contemporary Africa and its diaspora.[65] While there are a multitude of attitudes, languages, peoples, and cosmologies in Africa, for Asante, there is "one African Cultural System manifested in diversity" with the same "rhythms of the universe" and "cosmological sensibilities."[66] The "tyranny of unanimism" has been subjected to a devastasting critique by scores of continental African philosophers, particularly Hountondji, Marcien Towa, and Peter O. Bodunrin.[67] But, little sign of these philosophical debates among continental Africans appear in Asante's body of work.[68] Rather than examine real, living African people, the Afrocentrists are concerned with a transcendental African subject with the "same cosmological sensibilities" and "rhythms of the universe," which belongs to no class, no gender, and has no reality except in the misty realm of speculative fantasy.

From Asante's perspective, we can infer that there is no qualitative difference between Condeleeza Rice and Lucy Parsons, Jonas Savimbi and Chris Hani, or Barack Obama and Malcolm X. As Barbara Ransby brings to our attention, it is easy to view continental Africans as one "monolithic mass" without regard to class or politics, when one is concerned primarily with speculative idealist notions such as "rhythms of the universe" and "cosmological sensibilities."[69] Walter Rodney astutely notes:

> When the task of evaluating African social thought and practice is left to bourgeois theoreticians, they find it convenient to place all ideological strands into one amorphous mystifying whole, which includes utterances by Tubman as well as Nkrumah, by Mboya as well as Sekou Touré, by Senghor as well as Nyerere…The superficial and confused nature of such a conclusion is a consequence of the authors not being involved in making revolution, for whoever is involved in the actuality of revolutionary transformation will not fail to perceive the differences between form and substance.[70]

In the context of concrete political struggle, it is very important to understand the determinate difference between Chris Hani of South Africa and Jonas Savimbi of Angola. Hani was a socialist freedom fighter committed to the liberation of African people; Savimbi was responsible for the massacre of thousands of African people in the service of imperialism. Both men are African, but they respond to very different rhythms of the universe and sensibilities![71] A dialectical materialist philosophical perspective—in contrast to Asante's speculative idealism—demands that we examine the nitty-gritty material realities of people's day-to-day lives—in all its dialectical complexities.[72] It also demands that we not judge our political allies and enemies on the basis of the color of their skin or mystical properties such as "cosmological sensibilities" or "rhythms of the universe."

Asante gives us another example of Afrocentric idealism when he asserts: "My objective has always been a critique that propounds a cultural theory of society *by the very act of criticism*. In other words, to provide a radical assessment of a given society is to create, among other things, another society."[73] From Asante's perspective, we are to assume that criticism alone, without the force of actual material practice, is a sufficient condition for the creation of a new society. This presupposition (viz., that in and of itself the critique of ideas can create a new society) is fundamentally idealist. In fact, Asante pointedly remarks, "There can be no freedom until there is freedom of the mind" because "freedom is a mental state."[74] Oh, how Hegel would be happy! Asante seems to suggest that a change in behavior or consciousness will magically lead to a transformation in power relations. Rather than see structural (social) relations as determinate of consciousness, Asante leaves us "dancing between circles and lines," focused on the seizure of discursive space.[75] In contrast to Asante's assertion, I would argue that revolution cannot be brought about "by the very act of criticism" alone. Revolutionary change is brought about by a transformation in the social and historical conditions of a society, particularly the social relations of production. As Karl Marx so aptly put it, "The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism of the weapon, material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses."[76]

The adoption of philosophical idealism for Afrocentrists follows from the premise that there is a metaphysical (ontological) difference between Europeans and Africans. Usually, this "clash of civilizations" is expressed as a clash between philosophical materialism and idealism. Philosophical idealism is the only weapon against the encroachment of Western materialism and European barbarism we are told. Afrocentric thinkers such as Ani, Asante, Dixon, Johnson, and Mazama, among others, identify philosophical idealism with the African worldview and philosophical materialism with the European worldview. As Adisa A. Ajamu claims:

> In the West, scientific notions of what constitutes truth and, by extension, evidence are invariably connected to the Western epistemological assumption of ontological corporeality, or the belief in material reality. Hence, theory and methodology are both derived from and informed by this cultural view.[77]

Here so-called Western materialism (i.e., "the belief in material reality") is the philosophical ground for the promotion of the European myth of universality and the illusion of objectivity. Yet, the student of the history of philosophy after a perfunctory examination will discover that idealism is a tradition with a rather long history in Europe and this point is not lost

on seminal African philosophers such as Hountoundji and Kwasi Wiredu or African American philosophers such as Charles Leander Hill, Eugene Holmes, or W. E. B. Du Bois.[78]

Our Afrocentrists posit that all Africans and their descendants throughout the world believe that spirit—as opposed to matter—endow all things, all creation. Hence, we are told that the African cosmology is animistic. Or the African by nature is religious or spiritual. Thus, authentic African culture and thought has characteristics such as vital force (Father Placid Tempels), intuitiveness (Leopold Senghor), and spirituality (Marimba Ani). This identification with traditional beliefs, customs, taboos, and practices is contrasted to a materialist or scientific European worldview.

This claim ignores the fact that many Europeans and Euro-Americans still explain many phenomena by appealing to spirits and mysticism, for example, astrology, creationism, and the Tooth Fairy. More fundamentally, the emphasis on traditional Africa restricts the African worldview to "a pre-scientific mode of perceiving reality, explaining events and seeking to effect change through subjective (often magical) impulses uncorrected by rational enquiry."[79] By restricting materialism and science to the European worldview, being authentically African means worshipping the gods, pouring libation for the ancestors and treating disease with herbs and/or witchcraft. This approach ignores the democratic struggle for science to alleviate the overwhelming disparity between the urgent needs of African people (e.g., to deal with the AIDS and/or Ebola crisis) and the limited material and intellectual resources to meet them. A democratic struggle for science is necessary in order to make advancements in agriculture, public health, environmental pollution, and resource management in the interests of working-class African people.

Asante's speculative idealism stands opposed to a scientific (materialist) comprehension of the world. Asante's view that "God-consciousness" is the motive force of history parallels creationism. The viewpoint that a supernatural being (through a conscious act of creation) is responsible for the origins of nature is popularly known as creationism. It is a mythological construction that seeks to explain how nature came into existence by extending the attribute of human agency to a supernatural being. It stands opposed to a materialist (scientific) account of nature. Materialism holds that nature is composed of matter and its properties. Consequently nature is sui generis (self-generating) and does not require some kind of supernatural being(s) for its origins or continued existence, progression, or development.[80] Indeed, as Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Gyekye and Paulin Hountondji have posited, supernatural and mystical explanations have been obstacles to the growth of scientific knowledge.[81]

Despite the wishful thinking of Afrocentrists, philosophical materialism is no stranger to Africa and African philosophers. Kwame Nkrumah's

Consciencism demonstrates that philosophical materialism is a living tradition in Africa.[82] Nkrumah argues that a commitment to philosophical materialism entails the view that matter is the primary stuff of the world.[83] In addition, materialism upholds the view that our knowledge, concepts, categories, and ideas are approximate reflections of objective reality.[84]

Let's turn to another source to further make the argument. Théophile Obenga in his *African Philosophy: The Pharaonic Period, 2780–330 B. C.* discusses the Egyptian Pyramid Texts—the oldest known mythological texts dated between 2400 and 2300 BC Obenga offers the following commentary about the Pyramid Texts:

> At the origin of the universe . . . the ancient Egyptians posited matter in the form of an abyss of water. In time this matter would gain consciousness of itself, then manifest itself as creation, a multiform figure of all that was, is, and will be.[85]

What is this, but, philosophical materialism? He continues,

> In the beginning there is Matter, in the form of water, apparently inchoate, obscure, abyssal. Yet it is potentially powerful, dynamic, creative, innovative, the generative source of the divinities themselves, as well as of all remaining creation . . . For right from the start, it posits neither God nor Chaos-as-Darkness, but Matter, in the form of primal water.[86]

For the reader modestly familiar with the history of Greek philosophy, it might be remembered that the pre-Socratic philosopher Thales maintained that everything that existed originated in water. Thales proposed a naturalistic metaphysics where nature's origin rested not in the supernatural but in nature itself. He provided the foundation for philosophical materialism that culminated in the atomistic materialism of Leucippus and Democritus. With Thales, knowledge was jettisoned from the constraints of mythology, where wisdom was a property of the gods and human knowledge was subservient to faith in the gods. As Nkrumah brings to our attention, Thales's materialist philosophy ushered in an intellectual revolution by insisting that the unity of nature consisted in its materiality, not in its being.[87] Afrocentrists from Molefi Asante to Marimba Ani ignore the fact that Thales's materialism, as Obenga, George G. M. James, and Henry Olela show, is arguably consistent with Egyptian philosophy. The argument that materialism is only to be found in European philosophy and thus alien to Africa—and by implication AAS—is not supported by historical evidence.[88] European thought is not de facto simply a matter of a singular tradition of philosophical materialism. To make such an assertion is to ignore a

long history of philosophical discourse from Thales to Marx, from Plato to Hegel in which both materialism and idealism have been prominent voices. Moreover, a careful examination of African thought—both precolonial and postcolonial—reveals both idealist and materialist philosophical trends.[89]

The Afrocentric Critique of Eurocentrism

From Cultural Pluralism to Cultural Relativism

The previous section outlined the Afrocentric commitment to philosophical idealism. In this section, drawing exclusively on the work of Asante, I examine the idealist critique of Eurocentrism by Afrocentrists. I argue that the Afrocentric critique of Eurocentrism poses as a form of cultural pluralism. But, in truth, the critique of Eurocentrism as false universality is grounded on a cultural relativist stance, which in turn, gives up the possibility of ascertaining universality per se. Universality, for the Afrocentric project, is a false proposition and hence is seen as an illusion. This ontological dismissal of universality has an epistemological implication, namely, the negation of any notion of objectivity beyond the confines of one's cultural center. The only epistemologically valid realm of inquiry for Afrocentricity, it is argued, is the African (and its attendant diasporian) experience. Additionally, a corollary claim is made for Eurocentrism; it can only have epistemological validity within the terrain of the European (Western) experience. Hence, Afrocentricity argues that not only is Eurocentrism a false universality, but universality (i.e., objectivity) is false. I further demonstrate that—by rejecting universality (objectivity)—Afrocentricity intersects with Eurocentrism because both uphold centrism (subjectivism). In effect, we are left with two species of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism, in my estimation, is flawed because it centers reality on a particular ethnic group. Such centering, by inference, disvalues all other groups by virtue of their nonmembership in the central group.

Does the recognition of Eurocentrism as a false universality necessarily entail the negation of universality? In contrast to Asante, I argue that AAS can be committed to a philosophy of particularity without lapsing into metaphysical exclusivism. While AAS has as its point of departure the recognition of the particularity of the African American experience, it has to also recognize that particularity finds its objective content in the concrete universal, that is, true objective knowledge. The quest for Black particularity must be grounded on the dialectical relationship between the particular and the universal.

Let's examine the Afrocentric argument in detail. There are four claims that make up the Afrocentric argument against Eurocentrism. First,

Asante observes, "all the experiences discussed in American classrooms are approached from the standpoint of White perspectives and history."[90] Asante presents AAS as part of the general social movement for multicultural education and canon reformation. Thus, from the standpoint of Afrocentricity, AAS is a "human science," focused on the African experience as part of the human experience. As Asante eloquently puts it, the aim of Afrocentricity is to "humanize education, to democratize the curriculum, to advance the understanding of humanity."[91] Asante contends:

> Multiculturalism in education is a *nonhierarchical* approach that respects and celebrates a variety of cultural perspectives on world phenomena. The multicultural approach holds that although European culture is the majority culture in the United States, that is not sufficient reason for it to be imposed on diverse student populations as "universal." *Multiculturalists assert that education, to have integrity, must begin with the proposition that all humans have contributed to world development and the flow of knowledge and information, and that most human achievements are the result of mutually interactive, international effort*.[92]

A genuinely multicultural curriculum cannot be grounded on European diffusionism because it is "an arrogant imposition of a particular view as if it is a universal view."[93] The Afrocentric critique of Eurocentrism provides for "the possibility of a post-Eurocentric idea where true transcultural analyses become possible."[94]

Second, the Eurocentric claim to universalism is antithetical to any commitment to cultural pluralism.[95] A truly multicultural education cannot have as its focus the idea that "the best that has been thought and known in the world" came solely from Europe.[96] The defender of Eurocentrism wants "Africans and other non-Whites to remain on the mental and psychological plantation of Western civilization."[97]

Third, Asante claims that the Afrocentric perspective is designed to be one of many "centrisms" in dialogue with other cultural equals. Asante suggests "Afrocentricity, as an aspect of centrism, is groundedness which allows the student of human culture investigating African phenomena to view the world from the standpoint of the African."[98] Afrocentricity is as a form of multicultural education because it is a "nonhierarchical approach" and "nonhegemonic perspective" that respects and celebrates a variety of cultural perspectives on world phenomena.[99] Asante explains the full implications of an African-centered perspective in the following passage:

> Centrism, the groundedness of observation and behavior in one's own historical experiences, shapes the concepts, paradigms, theories, and methods of Africalogy. In this way Africalogy secures its place alongside the other *centric*

> *pluralism without hierarchy* and by a commitment to centering the study of African Phenomenon and events in the particular cultural voice of the composite African people. *But it does not promote such a view as universal.*[100]

We should take note that Asante defines cultural pluralism as "centric pluralism without hierarchy." Consequently, a commitment to centrism is not problematic so long as it is not hierarchical or promotes universality. Afrocentricity is one among many cultures committed to centrism, that is, centering reality on one's own historical and cultural experiences.

So, on the one hand, we have a critique of Eurocentrism as a false universal. And, on the other, Afrocentricity proposes the negation of any concept of universality. Asante gives the following example:

> Understand clearly that there is no *classical* music to you other than that which comes out of your culture. When a brother or sister says that Beethoven or Bach or Mozart is classical they use it to refer to the highest of their art forms. To me, because of Afrocentricity, what they refer to is European Concert Music because the only classical music I know is the polyrhythms and syncopated eights or Ellington, Coltrane, Eubie Blake, Charlie Parker, Mingus, and Gillespie. I cannot deny the possibility of others speaking of classics within their contexts; I applaud their nationalism. I do not have to share in it when my tradition is so rich and varied. *Universal* is another of those words that has been used to hold the enemy in our brains.[101]

So, there is no such thing as a universal concept of classical music. From the African-centered perspective, all that exist are particular types of classical music. Here we can see that Asante's concept of centrism functions to negate any notion of universality. We are lead to believe that Afrocentricity in its quest for "centric pluralism without hierarchy" is a necessary stepping-stone in the development of an authentic multiculturalism. From Asante's perspective, Afrocentricity is not attempting to mimic Eurocentrism with claims of universalism but challenges educational systems (from the pre-K level to the university level) to recognize all human contributions and achievements within their curriculums.

Fourth, hiding behind the clouds of cultural pluralism, we find the monster of relativism. Asante claims that Eurocentrism has epistemological validity if and only if it is restricted to a European (Western) domain. Over and over again, throughout his corpus of writings, Asante "dancing between circles and lines,"—like a dervish—chants the mantra: "I am not questioning the validity of the Eurocentric tradition within its context."[102] The Afrocentric critique, on the surface, does not question the legitimacy of Eurocentrism for Europe. We could infer—on the flip side—that Afrocentricity is only valid within its own cultural matrix.

Although Asante is committed to cultural pluralism, he is also a strident critic of Eurocentrism. Can Afrocentricity be committed to cultural pluralism and reject Eurocentrism? Can Afrocentricity be committed to both centrism and "pluralism without hierarchy"? Is it possible to affirm cultural pluralism and centrism in the same breath, without contradiction? Or is the attempt to bring together centrism and "pluralism without hierarchy" like some sort of Frankenstein concoction? It is my contention that the Afrocentric argument only makes sense if we see that Asante is conflating cultural pluralism with cultural relativism. Yet, it is imperative to see that cultural relativism is not identical to cultural pluralism.

On Cultural Relativism

Let me briefly say a few words about cultural relativism before we examine Asante's adoption of cultural relativism. The philosopher James Rachel has identified seven key components of cultural relativism. Here are the seven components in a slightly modified form:

1. Different societies and cultures have different beliefs, values and practices.
   a. Beliefs about what is right and wrong differ across cultures. [Cultural Diversity Thesis]
2. The moral code of a culture determines what is right within that particular culture; that is, if the moral code of a culture says that a certain action is right, then that action is right, at least within that culture.
3. There are no objective (universal) standards that can be used to judge one cultural norm better than another.
4. To assert a "universal truth" for all cultures is an act of ethnocentrism.
5. Different cultures have incommensurable fundamental moral principles or incommensurable perspectives. [Mutual Exclusion Thesis]
   a. To say they are incommensurable is to say that each culture's principles or perspectives are sui generis and not susceptible to evaluation by any other principles.
   b. Only insiders can make reliable judgments about the internal norms of a culture.
6. What is right and wrong is dependent on, or relative to, each culture. [Cultural Relativism Thesis]
7. It is mere arrogance for us to try to judge the conduct of other peoples or cultures. We should adopt an attitude of tolerance toward the practices and beliefs of other cultures.[103]

As Rachel notes, although these seven propositions constitute the core of the cultural relativist argument, it is necessary to see them as independent of one. While some of the claims made by cultural relativists are true, others are false. Asante would have us believe that the mutual exclusion thesis is true. I will argue that the mutual exclusion thesis is false.

According to Asante, Afrocentricity and Eurocentricity are mutually exclusive, incommensurable perspectives. For instance, Asante argues, with regard to objectivity:

> The Afrocentricist does not accept the European concept of objectivity because it is invalid operationally. Dona Richards is correct to evaluate the conception of "objectivity" negatively in her brilliant essay. I have argued that what often passes for objectivity is a sort of collective European subjectivity. Therefore, it may not serve any useful purpose to speak of objectivity and subjectivity as this division is artificial in and of itself. The Afrocentricist speaks of research that is ultimately verifiable in the experiences of human beings, the final empirical authority . . . What is unconscionable is the idea that when a person makes any decision that the decision is "objective"; every decision, even one's choice of software for her or his word processor, is human and consequently "subjective."[104]

Here we have a clear rejection by Asante of any notion of objectivity or objective knowledge. This is a classic statement of subjectivism, that is, all knowledge is subjective. In fact, we have a clear statement of Protagorean relativism; man is the measure of all things. The truth of a judgment is relative to either a particular group or the person judging. If Asante is correct, then objective truth never acts as a constraint to explain why specific scientific—both natural and social—claims become accepted. We will return to the veracity and validity of Asante's claim in chapter 5. However, Asante argues that such incommensurability does not cut him off from offering a *rational* (we might say, objective) assessment of Eurocentrism from an Afrocentric standpoint. Clearly, we have violated the principle of tolerance (point 7): we should stop condemning other cultures merely because they are different.

The acceptance of the mutual exclusion thesis has implications that extend not only to ontology, but epistemology, ethics, and value theory. The irksome problem for all relativists, and specifically Afrocentricity, is the paradox of incommensurability. This gets at the heart of why relativism is self-refuting or logically inconsistent. In the instance of Afrocentricity, if one claims what is true for Africa, may be false for Europe and vice versa, then on what grounds do we ascertain what is true as opposed to false. Because we are forever trapped by our culture-boundness or centrism, the Afrocentric position inevitably strangles us epistemologically, ontologically, and axiologically. By discarding any notion of universal (objective) truth,

the critique of Eurocentrism falls apart. The irony, of it all, is that the very critique of false universality is undermined because if false universality is a value for Eurocentrism then it is not to be false from the standpoint of Eurocentrism. Relative to Eurocentrism, it is a true universality. Likewise, it may be, relative to Afrocentricity, viewed as a false universality. All we have are the "contingent, community-specific agreements" people make in relation to particular norms and objectives. These "contingent, community-specific agreements" are not subject to rational justification or universal obligation.[105] As a result, there are no *objective* grounds to claim false universality; we only have *relative* grounds that ultimately makes it an either/or proposition. Truth and falsity are determined by one's cultural reference point. The problem of false universality cannot be resolved with a philosophy of AAS grounded on a subjectivist idealist ontology which, in turn, gives affirmation to a plurality of particularities that have no objective connection beyond their limited cultural spheres. The critique of European absolutism, or false universality, by Afrocentricity, is undermined once they advocate the negation of the category of objectivity.

Asante's Cultural Relativism

Let's examine Asante's argument closer. First of all, Asante acknowledges that there are many different cultures with differing cultural beliefs, values, and practices. This is a clear statement of cultural pluralism. As the cultural pluralist or multiculturalist might say, we have to celebrate the rich diversity within the United States polity, that is, African American, Latino, Asian, Native American, and Anglo-European cultures. Or as the multiculturalist might say celebrate harmony in a world of difference. The cultural pluralist is motivated to avoid the arrogance of ethnocentrism. In this vain, on many occasions, Asante cautions us to avoid ethnocentrism. He writes, for instance, "Afrocentricity does not condone ethnocentric valorization at the expense of degrading other groups' perspectives."[106] We are falling victim to Eurocentrism and/or ethnocentrism when we judge other cultures according to our cultural standards or perspective. We simply can't fault another culture for being different from us. We simply have to learn to respect or at least tolerate the different ways of different folks, so the argument goes. In line with cultural pluralism, Asante observes:

> One can see the Golden Temple in Bangkok and claim that its elaborateness is unlike anything in Western culture, but one cannot say that it is better or not; this is really a question of difference, not of good or bad.[107]

Here Asante is attempting to unseat the view that one could rank societies and civilizations as more and less advanced, as higher and lower, as civilized and barbarian.

As Asante's statement seems to imply, cultural pluralism allows us to tolerate other cultures despite their differences from our own particular culture. Here he is implicitly asserting cultural pluralism as an empirical (or descriptive) claim: Beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and bad, differ across cultures and/or societies. I do not disagree—in principle—with Asante or any other Afrocentrists on this point. However, we should note the fact that the values and practices of societies differ does not imply that there are no universal principles that all societies ought to accept. In fact, the Afrocentric project is motivated by a *universal* imperative, that is, to prove the falsity of Eurocentrism.

And, so, it would appear that Afrocentricity is an instance of cultural pluralism, or what Asante terms, "centric pluralism without hierarchy." All Asante wants is an academic world in which Africa "secures its place alongside other centric pluralisms without hierarchy and without seeking hegemony."[108] Yet, as Walter Ben Michaels rightly points out:

> Asserting that races are different from each other without being either better or worse, the pluralist can prefer his own race only on the grounds that it is his. . . . The particular contribution of pluralism to racism is to make racial identity into its own justification.[109]

Here I would argue that cultural pluralism is not the stopping point for Afrocentricity. The adoption of "centric pluralism without hierarchy" functions as a smoke-screen for the justification of the subjective particularity of Afrocentricity. Cultural pluralism merely serves as a Trojan Horse for a full-blown cultural relativism.

Asante's second move takes us beyond the descriptive (empirical) claim that there are many different cultures and cultural practices. He wants to argue that there are no universal principles that people are subject to. Here Asante makes three important presumptions. First, he presumes that cultures are autonomous centers, islands in themselves, or what we might call Leibnizian monads in self-containment with a closed system of values. Asante defines culture as "shared perceptions, attitudes, and predispositions that allow people to organize experience" in a particular way.[110] While there are various cultures, each culture has sharply defined boundaries or perspectives. Asante's concept of culture is grounded on the general concept of centrism. Here Asante argues that *centricity* or *centrism* means that one is rooted in one's own historical or cultural experiences.[111] Because we can only have immediate knowledge of our own culture, then one is culturally dislocated if they are grounded in

another culture. As Asante would have it, "If you are an African person and you are thinking from a Serbian or German location, you have serious problem."[112] Second, Asante presupposes a view of African culture as essentially petrified, that is, then contrasted with other cultures that are also stripped of their dialectical development, historical depth, and internal contradictions.[113] Third, there is no ontological basis for the interaction of different cultures. In effect, we have Leibnizian monads without any preestablished harmony.

While asserting cultural pluralism as a descriptive claim, Asante also asserts, "I am not questioning the validity of the Eurocentric tradition within its context."[114] Eurocentrism has epistemological validity if and only if it is restricted to a European (Western) domain. As the old adage goes, "When in Rome do as the Romans do." More importantly, the value of tolerance is implicitly being offered as an *objective* moral principle that is universally binding. It is important to bring to Asante's attention that it is a logical contradiction to maintain the *relativity* (or diversity) of all cultural values and moral principles and then proclaim the moral principle of tolerance as a *universal* principle. By exercising tolerance, we are—by default—taking a stance, that is, tolerating the status quo.

By implying that all cultural beliefs and practices are of equal value *and* equally valid, Asante is in the uncomfortable position of having to tolerate Eurocentrism—within its own context. The principle of tolerance is problematic because to tolerate something or someone is to abstain from acting against what one may find unacceptable or intolerable. One exhibits tolerance, therefore, by according equal respect to all cultures and abstaining from condemning the practices of other cultures. Are the Afrocentrists willing to tolerate the false universalism of Eurocentrism? If Eurocentrism is valid within its own context, why bother wasting time and paper criticizing Eurocentrism? Is the Afrocentric scholar willing to tolerate its critics who argue that Afrocentricity is nothing more than therapeutic? Are the Afrocentrists willing to tolerate—and suspend judgment against—opponents of Afrocentricity? Of course not. (In fact, I personally find their lack of tolerance intolerable!)[115]

Yet, we should take a moment to pause and reflect on another implication of Asante's position. It would appear that Asante is assuming that there is a *universal* consensus on all cultural beliefs and practices *within* a particular culture. However, if we start off with the presupposition that all societies and cultures are divided into classes, then, we have to see that within each society or culture there are antagonistic class interests and ideologies. In this respect, V. I. Lenin observes:

> The *elements* of democratic and socialist culture are present, if only in rudimentary form, in *every* national culture, since in *every* nation there are toiling and exploited masses, whose conditions of life inevitably give rise to the

> ideology of democracy and socialism. But *every* nation also possesses a bourgeois culture (and most nations a reactionary and clerical culture as well) in the form, not merely of "elements," but of the *dominant* culture.[116]

While the ruling ideas are those of the ruling class (i.e., the ruling class in any given culture or society exercises a preponderant influence in shaping the beliefs and practices of a particular culture or society), working-class culture develops in constant opposition against the culture of the ruling class. This can be seen in the constant struggle between working-class (or folk) culture, popular culture, and the culture of the ruling class historically.[117]

In far too many societies, violence and rape against women is accepted as a cultural norm or justified by way of the dominant-class ideology, that is, sexism. Are we to believe that *all* women give their consent to sexism, rape, or domestic violence? In modern-day Ghana, African women found guilty of witchcraft are forced to live in prison camps. Are we to believe that these women consent to their arrest, detention, and exile? Do these women have a *universal* human right to be free from arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile?[118] In Somalia, in 2008, a Somali girl, age 13, named Aisha Ibrahim Duhulow was stoned to death—according to Islamic Sharia law—for adultery; she had in fact been raped by three men. (The sad tragedy is that she was executed in a football stadium in the southern port of Kismayu, in front of about 1,000 spectators.)[119] Did Duhulow have the human right to be protected from a cruel and inhumane punishment by stoning? Are there not universal human rights that transcend all cultures? Does the Universal Declaration of Human Rights not operate in an Afrocentric world?

Of course, the Afrocentrists could argue that these are in fact sexist practices and not acceptable from an African-centered perspective. Asante claims, for instance, that the "liberation of women" is a fundamental part of the Afrocentric project; the Afrocentrist must be aware of sexist language, terminology, and perspectives when conducting research.[120] However, Maulana Karenga, Asante's comrade-in-arms, offers a different perspective. Despite its democratic veneer, Karenga's Nguzo Saba principles did not view sexism, male chauvinism, or the exploitation of women as necessarily wrong. A glance at *The Quotable Karenga* suggests that according to our Master Teacher Karenga:

> Equality is false; it's the devil's concept. Our concept is complementary. Complementary means you complete or make perfect that which is imperfect.

It follows from this that,

> What makes a woman appealing is femininity and she can't be feminine without being submissive.

Or better yet,

> The role of the woman is to inspire her man, educate their children and participate in social development.

Or how about this gem,

> The man has any right that does not destroy the collective needs of his family.[121]

Instead of practicing social and political equality of men and women, Karenga's Nguzo Saba subordinates women and provides at most for the equality of all men. We should mention that—to the author's knowledge—Asante has never criticized Karenga's position on women.[122] Angela Davis provides the following trenchant observation:

> During the late 1960s, when cultural nationalist movements rose to prominence in black communities, women were relegated to subsidiary and decidedly inferior positions, both ideologically and organizationally. In this context, male dominance was considered a necessary prerequisite for black liberation.

She continues,

> Similarly, the abstract emphasis on African heritage in contemporary cultural representation often invokes a heroic, masculinist past situated in an African imaginary which tends to displace the era of slavery as the formative historical period for Americans of African descent. In hip-hop culture, for example, black women are often portrayed as "African queens," to be accorded respect by men. What is frequently implied by evocations of "queens," however, is that the ultimate authority rests with the "kings." Along with the oppression associated with slavery, this imagined masculinist past erases the relative equality of women characteristic of the slave community.[123]

So, we can conclude that the abstract principles of Nguzo Saba unfortunately replicate bourgeois society's gender roles and, moreover, reinforce reactionary views about the proper role of Black women in civil society, family, and political struggle.[124] But, the question still remains: are there *universal* human rights that transcend particular cultures or societies? Are there universal rights that should be respected in a multinational-state with a variety of cultures, nationalities, and/or ethnic groups?

It would appear that, for Asante, to appeal to any universal claims that all cultures must accept points us in the direction of ethnocentrism. At this point, it should be clear that Asante has pulled a fast one on us. There is no

logical entailment from the *empirical* observation of cultural diversity to the prescriptive (and *relativist*) claim that those values or beliefs that prevail in any one culture are necessarily right. While starting from a cultural pluralist standpoint, Asante has quickly moved to cultural relativism and eschews the possibility of ascertaining universality because if we adopt a universal standpoint or perspective, then the outcome is ethnocentrism.

The adoption of cultural relativism and the ontological dismissal of universality have an epistemological counterpart, namely the negation of any notion of objectivity beyond the confines of one's cultural matrix. There are no objective (universal) claims, on the one hand, about right and wrong, just and unjust, good and bad. Yet, rival claims or judgments, on the other hand, can be both right and equally valid. The Afrocentrist Adisa A. Ajamu clearly articulates this:

> There can only be *worldview specific* theories and methodologies, which are rooted in *culturally derived* epistemologies. Moreover, it should be clear that what is authenticated as truth in one culture may not be perceived as such in another. Thus, truth would have little, if any, authenticity, relevancy, or saliency when applied in a different cultural sphere other than to perpetuate cultural domination and epistemological hegemony. Therefore, the theoretical and methodological demands for authenticating truth must be developed within a given culture and they must be consistent with that culture's epistemological orientation, if they are to reveal truths to and about that culture.[125]

This lands us in the boat of subjectivism without a paddle. If all we have are "culturally derived epistemologies," it is not possible to arrive at objective truths about the world. This is the case, for the Afrocentrists, because, as Ajamu asserts in the previous quotation, "truth would have little, if any, authenticity, relevancy, or saliency when applied in a different cultural sphere other than to perpetuate cultural domination and epistemological hegemony." Are Einstein's theory of relativity, Marx's law of value, Bernoulli's principle, Boyle's law, or Hubble's law merely subjective expressions of "culturally derived epistemologies" without any relevance to the African world?[126] Are these scientific laws only true in the European world? Subjectivism of this sort rightly prompted the scientist Richard Dawkins to say: "Show me a cultural relativist at thirty thousand feet and I'll show you a hypocrite."[127] The law of gravity and Einstein's theory of relativity are objective phenomena that do not depend on whether a person is European or African.

The irksome problem for all relativists, and specifically Afrocentricity, is the paradox of incommensurability. If one claims what is true for Africa, may be false for Europe and vice versa, then on what grounds do we ascertain what is a justified true belief (i.e., knowledge) as opposed to a false belief.

Because we are forever trapped by our culture-boundness or centrism, the Afrocentric position inevitably strangles us epistemologically, ontologically, and axiologically without any notion of universal (objective) truth. The critique of European absolutism, or false universality, by Afrocentricity, is undermined once they advocate the negation of the category of objectivity. All philosophies of particularity, enshrined in a centrist shell, will lead to a theoretical roadblock once we fail to recognize that the truth of particularity resides in its dialectical relationship to universality.

Let me offer a different perspective. I would contend, following John McClendon, that Eurocentrism is a species of ethnocentrism because the center is Europe and thus all groups outside the European matrix are inferentially disvalued. The danger of Eurocentrism is necessarily its commitment to centrism. If we follow my line of reasoning, Afrocentricity, by way of its commitment to a centrist paradigm, is also a species of ethnocentrism, and subject to the same fundamental flaws of Eurocentrism, namely disvaluing that which is not African. False universality (what the Afrocentric project sought to critique and correct) logically follows from centrism, that is, the centering of a given group. Centrism presupposes that all other groups are at best satellites in a cultural orbit around the central group. Consequently, I argue that Europe per se is value neutral. By that I mean sociocultural phenomenon emanating out of Europe, by virtue of their genesis, are neither endemically nor intrinsically good or bad, progressive or reactionary, beautiful or ugly.[128]

It is my view that ethnocentrism is flawed because reality is centered on a given ethnic group. The Afrocentric critique of Eurocentrism (as a form of ethnocentrism) fails precisely because it does not establish a determinate difference between what is European vis-à-vis Eurocentrism. A substantive critique of Eurocentrism cannot be anti-Europe or anti-Western. Rather it must be focused on the centrist perspective that relegates all others to a lesser status and place in the world. The danger in Eurocentrism is necessarily its centrist casting, not Europe per se (as a category). Just as Asante argues to be African is not necessarily to be committed to Afrocentricity, to be European is not necessarily to be Eurocentric.[129] Just because a theory, belief, or idea has its origin in Europe, this in no way logically entails that it is Eurocentric.

Black Particularity Reconsidered

The Problem of the Particular and the Universal

Afrocentricity rests on a concept of African *particularity* that rejects the principle of universality, which *grounds* human rights. This kind of particularity,

which we will call *subjective particularity*, has as its outcome cultural relativism.[130] On the basis of the subjective particularity of mutual exclusion, *cultural relativism* presupposes that African and European cultures are *incommensurate*. As I have argued in the previous section, this *incommensurability* subsequently nullifies any claim about *universality* in human culture and social existence. Moreover, the commitment to cultural relativism provides little ground for a critique of European imperialism and its negation of Black humanity.

To better understand the problem of universality and particularity, let's turn to the political philosophy of Malcolm X. After his "epistemological break" from Elijah Muhammad's millennial Black nationalism, Malcolm sought to expand the civil rights struggle to the level of a human rights struggle. Malcolm came to progressively see that the national oppression and class exploitation faced by African Americans was not a problem to be addressed within the United States, but a problem for humanity.[131] Speaking before the Organization of African Unity, in Cairo, Egypt, Malcolm eloquently argued:

> If South Africa is guilty of violating the human rights of Africans here on the mother continent, then America is guilty of worse violations of the 22 million Africans on the American continent. And if South African racism is not a domestic issue, then American racism also is not a domestic issue.[132]

The African American liberation struggle was a human rights struggle. This change in Malcolm's political philosophy was reflected in his efforts to bring the oppression and exploitation of African Americans before the United Nations, charging the United States government with genocide.

In the initial stage of Malcolm's transformation, the principle of universality was expressed through orthodox Sunni Islam. While in Egypt, Malcolm declared:

> The common goal of 22 million Afro-Americans is respect as human beings, the God-given right to be a human being. Our common goal is to obtain the human rights that America has been denying us. We can never get civil rights in America until our human rights are first restored. We will never be recognized as citizens there until we are first recognized as humans.[133]

Here Malcolm X appeals to a conception of natural rights as a justification for equality among various racial groups throughout the world. He would later embrace a secular view that went beyond the framework of orthodox (Sunni) Islam. Concurrently, he championed the view that African American people needed to elevate their struggle from a battle for bourgeois civil rights to a human rights movement. In political terms,

Malcolm's petition against the United States parallels the previous efforts of the Black communist William Patterson, a decade earlier. In 1951, the Civil Rights Congress, under the leadership of Patterson, published *We Charge Genocide: The Historic Petition to the United Nations for Relief from a Crime of the United States Government against the Negro People*.[134]

Malcolm's internationalism and human rights campaign prominently emerged as the centerpiece of his political philosophy. Malcolm eventually ceased to make blanket condemnations of white people as devils, based on the presumption of mutual exclusion. Malcolm's metamorphosis was reflective of a transition at the level of philosophical anthropology, from the Nation of Islam's incommensurability of mutual *exclusion* of races to the principle of universality and mutual *inclusion*.[135] We should not make the mistake and infer that Malcolm moved from nationalism to the abstract universality of bourgeois liberalism. Rather, Malcolm's political trajectory was from nationalism to left-radicalism.[136]

Most importantly, Malcolm's critique of imperialism moved from being grounded on a principle of subjective particularity. In June 1964 Malcolm expressed his growing hostility to the vulture-like character of racist capitalist society:

> Why should we do the dirtiest jobs for the lowest pay? Why should we do the hardest work for the lowest pay? Why should we pay the most money for the worst kind of food and the most money for the worst kind of place to live in? I'm telling you we do it because we live in one of the rottenest countries that has ever existed on this earth. It's the system that is rotten; we have a rotten system. It's a system of exploitation, a political and economic system of exploitation, of outright humiliation, degradation, discrimination.[137]

Malcolm's evolving position reflects a critique of the universal capitalist imperative for surplus value and, furthermore, the recognition of the particularity of Black oppression and exploitation. I am not arguing that Malcolm adopted a form of scientific socialism or communism. Malcolm had not progressed to the point of recognizing that the Black working-class and the Black bourgeoisie had mutually exclusive class interests. For instance, Malcolm's construction of the difference between the "house Negro" and the "field Negro" was not reflective of a class analysis.[138] Rather, we should note that Malcolm had shed the anti-communism of his previous Nation of Islam (NOI) period and openly espoused an anti-imperialist critique. Malcolm explained, in December 1964:

> You can't operate a capitalistic system unless you are vulturistic; you have to have someone else's blood to suck to be a capitalist. You show me a capitalist, I'll show you a bloodsucker. He cannot be anything but a bloodsucker if he's

> going to be a capitalist. He's got to get it from somewhere other than himself, and that's where he gets it—from somewhere or someone other than himself. So, when we look at the African continent, when we look at the trouble that's going on between East and West, we find that the nations in Africa are developing socialistic systems to solve their problems.[139]

As our brief foray into Malcolm's political philosophy demonstrates, the principle of universality philosophically grounds the claim for human rights. However, if one holds to a principle of mutual exclusion—as our Afrocentrists do—then all efforts toward the espousal of human rights are undermined. This stands to reason because the principle of mutual exclusion overrides universality, which in turn is the ground for human rights claims. One cannot consistently be a human rights advocate and at the same moment uphold a philosophical anthropology of mutual exclusion, that is, contend that people of African and European descent are essentially different as human beings. Human rights qua universal principles are incompatible with philosophical anthropologies and political philosophies that uphold metaphysical exclusivism qua subjective particularity. If cultures are incommensurate, then differences are viewed in absolute terms. In other words, *absolute differences* between races cannot be *mutually inclusive* of human beings.

In distinction from the absolute difference of mutual exclusion, I argue that concrete universality can grant that cultural *diversity* is a reality of human existence. By granting the existence of diversity (cultural difference) we need not override the universal grounds on which human rights stands. This presupposition is based on the justification that the categories *universality* and *particularity* (particular differences between groups) are not mutually exclusive but instead are *mutually inclusive*. Given the mutual inclusion of particularity and universality, differences resulting from particularity do not nullify the universality of human rights.

The categories universality and particularity, I argue, are not mutually exclusive. They are *correlative categories*. The defining feature of *correlative categories* is the condition and relation of *mutual dependence*; you cannot have one category without the other. Aristotle offers the following explanation:

> All relatives, then, if properly defined, have a correlative. I add this condition because, if that to which they are related is stated haphazard and not accurately, the two [categories] are not found to be interdependent . . . The term "slave," if defined as related, not to a master, but to a man, or a biped, or anything of that sort, is not reciprocally connected with that in relation to which it is defined, for the statement is not exact . . . [For] it is of a master that a slave is said to be the slave.[140]

When universality and particularity are seen as categories that stand apart from each other, we discover that they are not *self-subsistent* in their *singularity*.[141]

Just as there can be no form without content or appearance without essence, we cannot have universality without particularity. The basis for the correlative status of particularity (mutual relation and dependence on universality) is due to the fact that particularity is an *instantiation of universality*. It is immediately clear that particularity as a category is something different from universality. Nevertheless, particularity in its *difference* from universality is concomitantly in dialectical *unity* with universality. The tendency to view the categories of particularity and universality in mutually exclusive terms has engendered intense debates around questions of whether philosophy is universal or particular in substance and method. This has salient importance to discussions centered on the nature of African and African American philosophy in terms of both scope and substance.[142]

By claiming that particularity is grounded by universality, it should be noted that the notion of ground has a dual meaning. Ground in this dual sense means that universality is both the *foundation* on which particularity stands and it imposes a *limitation* on particularity. The fact that universality is the ground for particularity implies that universality as content dictates or limits the scope of form as a particular instance. In other words to be a particular instance (form) of something mandates that there is a *something* (the grounds of which are provided by the more general—universal—category) to be "a particular instance of" in each and every case.[143]

Universality without the specific content provided by particularity becomes an arid (empty) abstraction. Consequently, what results when universality is separated from particularity is *abstract universality*. It becomes especially important to make note of this fact about *abstract universality* when human beings come under discussion in philosophical anthropology.[144] When humans are seen as devoid of particularity (particular races, genders, and national identities, for example) then abstract universalism is the result. The often-heard proposition, "I do not see you as Black, I view you as a human being" or the argument, "I do not want to be identified as a woman but rather as human" or the claim, "there is only one race, the human race" are all instances of *abstract universality*.[145] The reason why we end up with *abstract universality* follows from the stipulation that one's Blackness or gender is a *particular instantiation* and *constituent expression* of the universal category—humanity.[146]

Nkrumah offers us a profound dialectical argument for the unity of particularity and universality in *Consciencism*. For Nkrumah, particularity functions as an instantiation of the universal. Nkrumah firmly argues that Blackness as a *particular instantiation* and *constituent expression* of the

universal category "humanity" is blatantly ignored when the *color-blind thesis* or *liberal symmetry thesis* is employed as an argument on behalf of universality.[147] Thus Nkrumah argues: "The emancipation of the African continent is the emancipation of man."[148] Here the universality of humanity is a *concrete universality* that embodies the particularity of Blackness. Nkrumah argues that Black people as a *particular instantiation* are a *constituent expression* of humanity in its concreteness. The concrete universality of humanity is made up of the various social groups inclusive of different races such as Black people. Without the particular instance of Black people, humanity is deprived of a constituent part and hence loses its status as a *concrete universality*. The Afrocentric quest for particularity and authenticity leads us to the quicksand of *nominalism*. Only particulars exist. There are no universals.

Unlike Afrocentrists and African ethnophilosophers, Nkrumah does not discard universality as false. Nkrumah upholds Black particularity without lapsing into African metaphysical exclusivism. The affirmation of Black particularity, for Nkrumah, is a historical necessity in light of imperialism, "scientific racism" and efforts to dehumanize Black people. We should take note that he does not see the need to formulate a distinctive, metaphysically exclusive African philosophy. For our Afrocentrists, the relationship of particularity to universality is an either/or proposition. When universality is divorced from particularity then we are left with metaphysical exclusivism. However, it does not follow that all philosophies of particularity—by virtue of their particularity—lead us to metaphysical exclusivism. The necessity for Black particularity should not come by way of the rejection of universality.

Black particularity is also negated when it is subsumed under or reduced to a strictly white or Euro-American representation. I have in mind the move on the part of Wynton Marsalis and Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter to subsume the particularity of African American music under white or Euro-American musical forms. Both Marsalis and Carter argue that Black music is imitative of Anglo-American music. Consequently, the difference between African-American music and Euro-American music is indiscernible.[149]

Here I think Paul Robeson's philosophy of the music is of great significance.[150] His theory of music was shaped by proletarian internationalism, historical materialism, and class solidarity. Similar to V. I. Lenin, Robeson understood that the culture of any society is divided into antagonistic classes and does not form an integrated whole.[151] Robeson's commitment to and passion for singing "Negro Spirituals," work songs, and world folk songs was part of his expressed socialist political ideology and international class solidarity. Robeson argues: "These songs, ballads and poetic church hymns are similar to the songs of the bards of the Scottish Hebrides, the Welsh bards of

the Druid tradition and the Irish bards which inspired Sean O'Casey. They are similar to the unknown singers of the Russian folktales, the bards of the Icelandic and Finnish sagas, singers of the American Indians, the bards of the Veda hymns in India, the Chinese poet singers, the Hassidic sects and the bards of our African forebears."[152] Here Robeson offers us an instance of working-class music as a concrete universality. Working-class music has no reality apart from the concrete particular instances that are its self-differentiation or specification. In his autobiography *Here I Stand*, Robeson writes about the commonality of the pentatonic scales he found in folk music from Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. Robeson argues:

> Continued study and research into the origins of the folk music of various peoples in many parts of the world revealed that there is a world body—a universal body—of folk music based upon a universal pentatonic (five-tone) scale. Interested as I am in the universality of mankind—in the fundamental relationship of all peoples to one another—this idea of a universal body of music intrigued me, and I pursued it along many fascinating paths.[153]

Robeson's focus on folk music grew out of his recognition that "the fight of my Negro people in America and the fight of the oppressed worker everywhere" is the same struggle.[154] Furthermore, working-class culture, "folk culture," particularly music, was "closely wedded to life."[155] Robeson argues, "Folk songs are, in fact, a poetic expression of a people's innermost nature, of the distinctive and multifaceted conditions of its life and culture, of the sublime wisdom that reflects that people's great historical journey and experience."[156]

Robeson does not subordinate African American music to Euro-American music. Nor does Robeson identify African American music as Anglo-American music. In fact, Robeson offers the following critique of this thesis. Robeson argues that the "song culture" of African American people is not "imitative" of Anglo-American culture. Robeson observes:

> In trying to explain this "miracle," some American musicologists are ready to ascribe the phenomenon of Negro Spirituals to the influence of English church music, Puritans psalms, etc. The unscientific nature and falsity of such explanations are easily demonstrated by pointing out that the white population among which the mass of Negroes has lived in the American South has never—not in the past, not at present—had a musical culture of song (including church singing) that is in the slightest way comparable in artistic merit to the Negro Spirituals.[157]

While Robeson does not ignore the influence of church psalms or European immigrant folk songs on the development of the "Negro Spirituals," he is

proud to accent the particularity of African American music. Moreover, he does not need to subscribe or appeal to the idealist notion of metaphysical exclusivism. Robeson notes: "Black folk songs exerted a particularly strong influence on American music. The musical culture of the Afro-American originated in the old culture of Africa. The blacks brought with them out of Africa an individual and rich inheritance, numerous beautiful and inspired songs, profoundly unique rhythms and freedom of expression."[158] Robeson's dialectical conception does not negate the particularity of Black music. Robeson saw "folk music" as composed of a diversity of peoples and cultures with a common humanity. His vision of class solidarity in his aesthetic politics was perhaps his most profound—yet often ignored—contribution to AAS. As the African philosopher Ernest Wamba-Dia-Wamba astutely notes, "He or she who builds a cult of the *particular*, raised to the status of a static monument, and who thereby refuses to the African people access to the *authentic universal*, is an oppressor as well… Every *universal* must contain (or must be incarnated in) a *particular* and vice versa."[159]

Conclusion

The Afrocentric project is a quest for the affirmation of African particularity vis-à-vis the false universalism of Eurocentrism. I have shown that the Afrocentrists embark on a critique of Eurocentrism from the standpoint of idealism. Yet, as I have demonstrated, their critique of Eurocentrism lands them in the same boat as Eurocentrism. Most importantly, their critique fails because of its commitment to cultural relativism and rejection of objectivity. The solution to the problem of false universality cannot have as its foundation an ontology that gives affirmation to a plurality of particularities that have no objective support beyond their limited individual spheres or what Asante would term "centrisms." The critique of Eurocentism, or false universality, by Afrocentricity is undermined by the very act of its negating the category of objectivity. All particularities, enshrined in a centrist shell, will find their quest unfulfilled by negating the very basis that makes true particularity a reality.

The truth of particularity resides in its dialectical relationship to universality. The universal as the true universality, over and against false universality, must of logical necessity take into account what it is that makes for the commensurability of differing cultural or social formations. The need for a category signifying commensurability among different cultural matrixes axiomatically requires a notion of universality and objectivity.

If our starting point is Afrocentricity, we will not move one inch closer to a substantial critique of Eurocentrism. Outside of understanding

Eurocentrism as a false universality, what is the line of demarcation between what is simply European from Eurocentrism? Is one's engagement in the European intellectual tradition a sufficient condition for making the charge of Eurocentrism? Perhaps, Marimba Ani, Asante's comrade-in-arms, can point us in the right direction. Let's now turn to an examination of Ani's book *Yurugu: An African-centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior*.

Chapter 3

New Wine in an Old Bottle?
The Critique of Eurocentrism in Marimba Ani's *Yurugu*

Introduction

The Afrocentric critique of Eurocentrism initiated by Molefi Asante is greatly expanded by Marimba Ani (Dona Richards). Her monumental work *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* offers a systematic African-centered critique of Eurocentrism. It is—by far—the most prodigious presentation of the Afrocentric worldview. To say the least, *Yurugu* is a massive undertaking with ten chapters covering close to 600 pages. Since its publication in January 1994 by Africa World Press, it is probably to date one of the most widely read tomes among Afrocentrists; it is considered to be an underground bible for the Afrocentric movement. Ani engages in a guerilla raid on the fortress of European Reason. She presents what appears to be a comprehensive critique of Western (European) intellectual history and culture.[1] Ani seeks to formulate a counter-hegemonic discourse, which will liberate Africana people from "European intellectual imperialism" and lead to "authentic self-determination."[2]

The main thrust of *Yurugu* is to spell out the fundamental metaphysical differences between an African-centered and European-centered worldview. She argues that Europe's imperial dominance is due to the weapon of culture, not military or any form of class power. Since Ani employs culture as an overriding principle for demarcating the African from the European

worldview, *Yurugu* is an example of weak Afrocentricity from the standpoint of McClendon's typology. As the reader might recall, from the previous chapter, weak Afrocentricity designates the point of contention between Africans and Europeans in sociocultural structures and/or ideologies. Weak Afrocentricity takes on the character of cultural determinism as opposed to environmental or biological determinism.

In this chapter, I begin by providing an intellectual context for Ani's book. Here I discuss the significance of George G. M. James's chef-d'oeuvre *Stolen Legacy* for Ani's defense of Afrocentricity. Next, I offer an overview of the main arguments of Ani's book. Finally, I turn to critically examine what I take to be Ani's central thesis, namely, the source of the European imperialist worldview (Eurocentrism) is to be found in Plato's philosophical architectonic. Platonic thought is Ani's point of departure in the critique of Eurocentrism because embedded within Platonic thought is a kind of epistemic will-to-power. I demonstrate that Ani's foundational claim for African particularity (in the form of metaphysical exclusivism) is irredeemably flawed.

On the "Stolen Legacy" Thesis

From George G. M. James to Marimba Ani

Ani's work is part of an intellectual trend associated with George G. M. James, Cheikh Anta Diop, Henry Olela, Théophile Obenga, Jacob Carruthers, and Martin Bernal among others. Each of these thinkers sought to establish the determinate influence of ancient Egyptian culture on scientific and philosophical developments in Greek culture and society. The primordial origin of Western civilization is actually the result of "theft of the African legacy by the Greeks." The overall project of these thinkers is focused on dismantling European diffusionism.

Let's examine the "Stolen Legacy Thesis" as formulated by George G. M. James.[3] James published his groundbreaking book *Stolen Legacy* in 1954, the same year as the *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. James's work has racial vindicationism as its *raison d'ètre*. Many African American scholars such as William Leo Hansberry, Carter G. Woodson, and St. Clair Drake focused on setting the historical record straight. As the African American journalist Pauline Hopkins observes, continental Africans and people of African descent are "the people whose posterity has been denied a rank among the human race, and has been degraded into a species of talking baboons!"[4] Racial vindicationism (or contributionism) as a school of Black historiography sought to tell the truth about "Black

firsts" and their historical accomplishments in order to promote "harmony between the races by acquainting the one with the other."[5]

In *Stolen Legacy*, James presents a radical departure from the dominant narrative in the historiography of Western philosophical thought. At its core, James's work calls into question the originality of Greek philosophical thought from Thales to Plato to Aristotle. Rather than Greece being the *fons et origo* of philosophical thought, James argues that Egypt and, by extension, Africa was the prime mover in the development of world philosophy. The true authors of Greek philosophy were not the Greeks, but the Egyptians priests and hierophants. Consequently, James argues that Greek philosophy is a plagiarized version of classical Egyptian philosophy and religion, which he takes as representative of African thought as a whole. The theft of the African philosophical legacy by the Greeks has led to the mistaken view that the African continent has not made any intellectual contribution to world civilization. He hoped that his work would demonstrate the "theft of the African legacy by the Greeks" and consequently establish "better race relations in the world, by revealing a fundamental truth concerning the contributions of the African Continent to civilization."[6] Since James's scholarship calls into question the presumed originality of Greek philosophy, many contemporary critics of his work (e.g., the classicist Mary Lefkowitz) have primarily attacked his empirical errors and the overall utilitarian motivations of *Stolen Legacy*.[7] While there are certainly historical (empirical) inaccuracies and flawed reasoning in his overall argument, in my estimation, we should not overlook its import for a revisionist philosophical historiography. There is the strong probability that many ideas in Africa, particularly Egypt, found their way to Greece and the wider Hellenistic world. The political ecology of a slave-owning society—whether in Greece, China, India, or Egypt—produced a continuity of philosophical doctrines.

James makes a number of arguments in *Stolen Legacy* to support his case. Many of James's arguments have been copied or plagiarized by Afrocentrists in their works. In *Afrocentricity* Asante observes—without citation from James—the following:

> We understand white hegemony; we know because of our Afrocentric consciousness that only one ancient civilization could be considered European in origin, Greece. And Greece itself is a product of its interaction with African civilizations. Among ancient civilizations Africans gave the world, Ethiopia, Nubia, Egypt, Cush, Axum, Ghana, Mali, and Songhay. These ancient civilizations are responsible for medicine, science, the concept of monarchies and divine-kingships, and an almighty God.[8]

Asante—on too many accounts to quote—asserts that the Greeks were "intellectual children of Africans" or my favorite—"what has paraded as

Greece derived is actually African derived."[9] Asante claims that the "basis of science, art, ethical teachings, religion, dance, monarchy, and ritual drama" are to be found in Ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) civilization.[10]

Let me provide an outline of James's main argument. I will not fully examine the validity or veracity of James's position. James provides five main arguments to support his position concerning the originality of Greek philosophical thought. First, James argues that the Greek were not the actual authors of what has come to be known as Greek philosophy. Greek philosophers (from Thales to Aristotle) stole from or, more specifically, plagiarized the teachings of the Egyptian Mystery System. Consequently, the "unwritten philosophy of the Egyptians" has been attributed to Greek philosophers and met the "unhappy fate" of being a "legacy stolen by the Greeks."[11] Socrates's concepts of the Supreme Good and self-knowledge, and his cosmological views are derived directly from the Egyptian Mysteries, that is, Egyptian philosophy and theology. Plato's doctrines, especially the theory of Forms, the cardinal virtues and that of the ideal State, also originated in Egypt. In fact, James contends that Plato was not the author of the majority of the dialogues attributed to him, including the well-known *Republic*.

James also indicts Aristotle, who—he argues—accompanied Alexander and ransacked the Royal Library of Alexandria in Egypt, considered as one of the largest and most significant libraries of the ancient world.[12] He claims that it is impossible for Aristotle to have authored the "extraordinary number of books" ascribed to him.[13] Rather, James contends that the works attributed to Aristotle are actually the stolen works of the Egyptian Mystery System. James writes:

> The Greeks (i.e., Alexander the Great, Aristotle's school and the succeeding Ptolemies) converted the Royal Library of Alexandria into a research centre, by transferring Aristotle's school and pupils from Athens to this great Egyptian Library, and therefore the students who studied there received instructions from Egyptian priests and teachers, until they died out. The difficulty of language and interpretation made it imperative for the Greeks to use Egyptian teachers.[14]

There is no evidence supporting the claim that Aristotle himself actually stole books from the library at Alexandria. This is because it was not built until after Aristotle's death in 322 bc. The library at Alexandria was opened under the patronage of the Ptolemaic dynasty in the third-century bc—either during the reign of Ptolemy I Soter (323–283 bc) or during the reign of his son Ptolemy II (283–246 bc). I should note that scholars acknowledge that the very organization of Aristotle's corpus is post facto. For example, we discover the books under the title of 'Metaphysics' are actually a redaction on the part of students within Aristotle's school, thus signifying the books

organized after the Physics. Consequently, one charitable reading of James's argument is that Aristotle's students attributed the "extraordinary number of books" to Aristotle after his death.

Second, James contends that the development of philosophical thought requires a social environment that is free from "disturbance" and "worries."[15] James claims: "History supports the fact that from the time of Thales to the time of Aristotle, the Greeks were victims of internal disunion, on the one hand, while on the other, they lived in constant fear of invasion from the Persians who were a common enemy to the city states."[16] Philosophical thought cannot materialize under conditions of social and political instability James contends. Because of internal civil wars and Persian aggression, it was virtually impossible for philosophy to have emerged in Greece.

Here James does not recognize any division between intellectual and manual labor. The pursuit of philosophy was the free man's occupation, whether in Greece or Egypt. The juxtaposition between intellectual and manual labor arose progressively in the conditions of ancient slave societies, that is, pre-capitalist societies based principally on slave labor. Mental labor, in its most highly developed form, that is, the theoretical, arises as freedom from manual (productive) labor. As George Thomson astutely observes:

> The development of theoretical and abstract reasoning was dependent on the division between mental and manual labour, and that in turn on the division of society into classes; and even after these conditions had been created, it was retarded for a long time by the survival in distorted forms of primitive modes of thought, which served to disguise the realities of class exploitation.[17]

Moreover, the dialectical relationship between political context and philosophical text is a prominent feature in the history of philosophy. As Nkrumah notes, the birth of philosophy is always a product of a particular social milieu. We cannot ignore the social context that produced particular philosophical systems and views. Philosophy cannot be abstracted from the social and political conflicts of the day. For instance, political conditions in the Athenian city-state form the backdrop for Plato's philosophical works. While the *Republic* and *Laws* are obviously political in nature, Plato's endeavors in ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics are not far removed from political aims. Platonism, in many respects, is a philosophical response to Athenian political and social conflicts and adjoining efforts at social transformation. In Plato's judgment, such political changes were necessarily detrimental to sustaining the traditional (aristocratic) way of life.

As we move forward in time, the antithesis between reason and faith casts a lengthening shadow over the birth of modern Western philosophy. Cartesian methodic doubt aspires to make room for both rationalism and a belief in god. From the standpoint of the proponents of Christianity, this

problem persists right up to the nineteenth century as Hegel tries to sort out, in his *Philosophy of Right*, how ought civil society, the state, and church execute their social functions as Germany enters into the capitalist era. The competitive ethos enveloping and dividing civil society, Hegel argues, needs to be resolved if a sense of political community (or "Ethical Life") is to prevail. The way out of this social contradiction, where privately held interests are paramount, is a dialectical resolution culminating in political supremacy of the state as guarantor of society's collective and civic interests.[18] And finally the political context of imperialism serves as the ecology for the emergence of Leopold Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah, John S. Mbiti, Peter Bodunrin, D. A. Masolo, V. Y. Mudimbe, H. Odera Oruka, Marcein Towa, and Paulin Hountondji's philosophical adventures in African philosophy. For instance, Nkrumah's *Consciencism* is not only a response to imperialism and neocolonialism but it was written in the throes of revolutionary change sweeping Ghana and Africa in general. So, contrary to James's contention, philosophical thought can materialize under conditions of social and political instability.

Third, James argues that Greek cosmological and philosophical doctrines are *identical* to the teachings of the Egyptian intellectual elite as contained within the Egyptian Mystery System. James argues:

> Parmenides introduced no new teaching when he spoke of Being (*To on*) as that which exists; and Non-Being (*To mē on*) as that which does not exist. He only reemphasized the doctrine of opposites as a principle of nature: a doctrine taught not only by the Pythagoreans, but also the Athenian philosophers, chiefly Socrates. But the doctrine of opposites owes its origin to the Egyptian Mysteries which take us back to 4000 B. C. when it was demonstrated not only by the double pillars in front of temples, but also by the pairs of Gods in the Mystery System, representing male and female, positive and negative principles of nature. It is also clear that the Eleatic Philosophers drew teachings from Egyptian sources.[19]

Since the Egyptian Mystery System antedated the teachings of Greek philosophers, and given the similarity of thought, James infers that individual Greek philosophers learned their philosophical teachings from the Egyptians.

And, lastly, James argues that ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato were subject to relentless persecution at the hands of the Athenian government because they were teaching foreign ideas to the Greek populace. He writes:

> The Greeks rejected and persecuted philosophy owing to the fact that it came from an outside and foreign source and contained strange ideas with which

> they were unacquainted. This prejudice led to the policy of persecution. Hence Anaxagoras was indicted and escaped from prison and fled to Ionia in exile. Socrates was executed; Plato fled to Megara to the rescue of Euclid; and Aristotle was indicted and escaped into exile. This policy of the Greeks would be meaningless, if it did not indicate that philosophy was alien to Greek mentality.[20]

If the so-called Greek philosophy was actually rejected by Greek society as foreign ideas, then how can we assign ownership or authorship of these ideas to Greece? It should be noted that James provides only circumstantial evidence to support this claim. Yet, James concludes that the Greek philosophers were actually teaching foreign philosophical ideas that had their origins in Egypt and the Egyptian Mystery system.[21]

Similar arguments for the Egyptian influence on Plato—of varying intellectual quality—are found in the works of Cheikh Anta Diop, Henry Olela, Molefi Asante, and Martin Bernal.[22] Cheek Anta Diop argues that Greece owes its scientific as well as philosophical development to Black Egyptians. Martin Bernal's three-volume *tour de force* titled *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* proposes a departure from the "Aryan Model" and a return to the "Ancient Model" based on Herodotus's notion that the Greeks derived their religious and philosophical thought from their African and Asiatic neighbors, particularly ancient Egyptians and Phoenicians.

Suffice it to say, Ani's *Yurugu* is a continuation of this racial vindicationist tradition. Following in this intellectual tradition, Ani accepts the general thesis that Western civilization was influenced by African (Egyptian) civilizations. Yet, as we shall see, Ani also departs in an essential way from the aforementioned tradition. She does not contend that Greek cosmological and philosophical doctrines are *identical* to the African metaphysical worldview. She argues that there is a qualitative difference between Western (European) thought and African thought. Her departure rests on the foundational assumption that Greek philosophy, and in particular Plato's philosophical architectonic, is foundational to Eurocentrism, that is, European (cultural) imperialism. Our task in this chapter is to subject her theoretical presuppositions and foundational assumptions to a critical examination.

An Overview of *Yurugu*

The Main Argument

Marimba Ani (Dona Richards) received her BA degree from the University of Chicago in 1963 with a philosophy major. From 1963 to 1966, Richards

served as a field secretary for the SNCC and director of the Freedom Summer Project. During her SNCC days, she was known as a "whip-smart, slightly bohemian black philosophy student."[23] In 1964, the Afro-Caribbean actor and singer Harry Belafonte invited Richards along with her husband Robert Moses and nine other members of SNCC to visit Guinea, West Africa, as official guest of President Sekou Touré.[24] Prior to going to Africa, we should note that—during her involvement with SNCC—Ani (or Dona Moses as she was known as then) thought that the teaching of African history to Black children in Mississippi was tantamount to teaching ideological "propaganda."[25] Askia Touré—who co-wrote along with Donald Stone and William Ware the infamous "Black Power Papers," for SNCC in 1966—was involved with SNCC's community-based "Freedom School." The curriculum focused on normal academic subjects in addition to African and African American history, contemporary issues, leadership training, and the history of Black liberation and civil rights movement.[26] Touré reports:

> We had some real struggles with Bob Moses and his wife, Donna (*sic*) Moses, who said that we were teaching propaganda. Bob Moses denounced us at the SNCC conference in Greenfield, the regional Mississippi conference on the Delta, as being infiltrators, teaching propaganda rather than history and so forth. His wife, Donna (*sic*) Moses, later became Dr. Marimba Ani, who studied under Dr. John Henrik Clarke in the Africana Studies Program at Hunter College. Only after she had gone to Africa and come back when I met her in Atlanta around 1991 or 1992, right after she had written *Yurugu*, that she ran up to me screaming and hugged me and said something like you all were right. You all were right. I had to go all the way to Africa to come back to see it. But you all were so far ahead. Some of the stuff you were talking about we could not conceive of then.[27]

Later, Richards attended the New School for Social Research and received a doctorate in anthropology in 1975, writing a dissertation titled, "The Dominant Modes of Western Thought and Behavior: An Ethnological Critique." She spent her academic career teaching in the Department of Black and Puerto Rican Studies at Hunter College in New York City.[28]

The title of Ani's book is taken from a creation myth associated with the Dogon people, an ethnic group living primarily in the central plateau region of Mali near the famous Bandiagara Cliffs. As the story goes:

> In the beginning, the world egg was shaken by seven huge stirrings of the universe. It divided into two birth sacs, each containing a set of twins who were fathered by the supreme being, Amma, on the maternal egg. In each placenta was a male and a female twin, but each twin contained both the

> male and female essence. The twins are known as Nummo. By some fluke, a male twin called Yorugu broke out of one of the placentas before the proper time, and the piece of the sac from which he broke forth became the earth. When he tried to go back to the egg to retrieve his twin, she had disappeared. In fact, she had been placed in the other placenta with the other set of twins. Yorugu went back down to the new earth and copulated with it—his own maternal placenta—but did not succeed in creating people. Seeing this, Amma sent the other twins down to procreate, and so it is that humans came from the original joining of brother, sister, and cousin twins.[29]

It has been suggested that this myth is an incest story attempting to offer support for the Dogon kinship system. According to Ani, Ogo-Yurugu is one of a set of primordial twins who rebels against the High God, Amma. Ogo-Yurugu is a doomed, destructive, impure, and incomplete being, the rejected offspring of the Creator. Interestingly, we find that Ani's knowledge of the Dogon mythology is derived from a secondary *European* ethnological source, Marcel Griaule's *Conversations with Ogotemmêli; An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas*.[30] Unfortunately, she never raises questions about the accuracy of this European scholar's ethnological account and interpretation of an African sage.[31]

More importantly, the story of Ogo-Yurugu is used as a mythological explanation for the actual historical development of European material and intellectual culture. Why does Ani resort to such mythological explanations to explain the real movement of history? Are we to infer that Europeans are incestuous by nature? In many respects, it could be argued, Ani's starting point parallels Hegel's objective idealism. Hegel posits the existence of a trans-historical mind or consciousness (the Absolute) of which nature and history are mere semblances of its development toward self-realization. Hegel's teleological perspective furnishes the basis for the presupposition that reason as transcendent mind governs all motion and activity in the material realm.[32]

The African-centered critique of Eurocentrism is seen as a necessary condition for "intellectual decolonization" and "cultural regeneration." The critique of the European cultural matrix will provide the groundwork for the articulation of an Afrocentric worldview. Ani declares:

> To be truly liberated, African people must come to know the nature of European thought and behavior in order to understand the effect that Europe has had on our ability to think victoriously. We must be able to separate our thought from European thought, so as to visualize a future that is not dominated by Europe. This is demanded by an African-centered view because we are Africans, and because the future towards which Europe leads us is genocidal.[33]

Only by way of an ideological critique of the European tradition, Ani contends, can scholars in AAS develop an indigenous, autonomous method and theory of social scientific investigation that can assist in the process of intellectual decolonization. Ani sees herself, therefore, as undertaking "a critical study of the totality that is European culture."[34] She hopes to uncover the inner workings and ideological underpinnings of European/Eurocentric ideology. To what purpose we might ask? Asante suggests that the study of Eurocentrism is necessary in order to unveil "the pathology which drives Europeans toward avarice and exploitation in relationship to others."[35]

We could, accordingly, characterize her fundamental intellectual project as exposing the "crisis of European sciences." For Ani, the European sciences are based on a body of putatively objective, scientific knowledge and a conception of human beings as exclusively European. The distinctive feature of (European) man is to be both an object in the world and the knowing subject through which there exists a world of objects. Here Ani's primary concern is to show how the European body of knowledge—particularly modern social sciences—is inextricably interwoven with techniques of social control.

Ani offers an idealist critique of European intellectual culture. In true idealist fashion, Ani begins with the following: "Europe's political imperialistic success can be accredited not so much to superior military might, as to the weapon of culture."[36] This presupposes that European behavior and institutions are determined by and products of ideas. As she puts it, in order to uncover the essential nature of Eurocentrism, we must explain "the European experience as a product of European culture and to explain the culture (thought, behavior, institutions) as a product of its ideological core."[37]

Ani's African-centered critique focuses on Europe's seminal intellectuals, philosophers, and theorists in order to demonstrate how epistemology, axiology, iconography, and behavior all link together in such a way as to form "an impressively solid and supportive network, girding the quest for European power."[38] It is important to note that Ani does not distinguish between Eurocentrism and European. So, we are led to infer that if a given author is European, then, by implication, they are Eurocentric. She even goes to great lengths to separate European writers from African writers in her bibliography.

The book is divided into four sections: (1) "Thought and Iconography," outlines the epistemological, ontological, and axiological assumptions and principles that ground European thought in order to establish a context in which to understand Eurocentrism; (2) "Image and National Consciousness," examines the self-image of Europeans as revealed in its

general behavior, literature, and other cultural expressions that proved ideological support for its cultural imperialism; (3) "Behavior and Ethics," examines what Ani terms, rhetorical ethics (e.g., hypocrisy) as a determinate of European cultural nationalism; and lastly, (4) "Ideology," examines how the ideologies of progress and universalism function in the reproduction of Eurocentrism.

Since it would be a mammoth task for any writer to examine the totality of European thought, Ani applies a methodological scalpel to judge which texts and authors warrant being placed on the Afrocentric examination table. Ani develops a model of cultural evolution based on what Ani calls *asili*, the explanatory principle of a culture. In order to understand the essential ideas that govern European behavior and institutions, we have to start with the asili. As Ani explains:

> [*Asili*] . . . *is the germinal principle of the being of a culture, its essence.* The idea of a seed, the ubiquitous analogical symbol in African philosophical and cosmological explanations, is ideal for our purposes. *The idea is that the asili is like a template that carries within it the pattern or archetypical model for cultural development; we might say that it is the DNA of culture.* At the same time it embodies the "logic" of the culture. The logic is an explanation of how it works, as well as, the principle of its development. Our assumption then is that the *asili* generates systematic development; it is a statement of the logos. The *asili* of a culture is formulative, and it is ideological in that it gives direction to development. It accounts for consistency and pattern in culture, also its tenacity. The *asili* determines cultural development; then the form that the culture takes acts to maintain the integrity of the *asili*. It acts as a screen, incorporating or rejecting innovations, depending on their compatibility with its own essential nature. It is as though the *asili* were a principle of self-realization. It is a compelling force that will direct the culture as long as it remains intact: i.e., carried in the "cultural genes." *In order for the culture to change (and this includes the collective thought and behavior of those within it), the asili itself would have to be altered. But this would involve a process of destruction and the birth of a new entity. Cultural asili(s) are not made to be changed.*[39]

I apologize—to the reader—for such a long quote but I wanted to give Ani some space to elaborate her conception of cultural determinism. *Asili*, according to Ani, accounts for the "organicity, structure, and development of any culture"; it is the determining factor of cultural development.[40] It is the logical principle on which cultural development is based; it is a "principle of self-realization." *Asili* is basically a teleological principle embodied in every culture. Such that, every culture exhibits certain fundamental principles of "self-realization" based on their cultural DNA. The *asili* is akin to

an "immaterial (nonphysical) substance" that determines the unique character of each culture. She further explains:

> *Asili* allows us to recognize culture as a basic organizing mechanism that forges a group of people into an "interest group," an ideological unit. This is the case even when the descendents of an original culture and civilization have become dispersed in other areas of the world; as long as they are connected through a common *asili*, they constitute a diaspora, manifesting the continued life of the civilization.[41]

It functions as an analog to genes transmitting certain cultural entities such as particular ideas or behaviors, which ensure the reproduction of a particular culture. Whereas Richard Dawkins introduced the notion of cultural meme as a metaphor, Ani considers *asili* to actually exist in all cultures.[42] The reader may wonder how do we, in fact, know that *asili* actually exist. I'm none the wiser after reading *Yurugu*. Ani's theory is simply a rehash of the Teutonic germ theory of history. What a silly (asili) idea![43]

But we should point out another oddity of Ani's conception of culture. Similar to Asante, cultures are basically Leibnizian monads in self-containment with a closed system of values. Each culture (or race) possesses a certain nature (think of Asante's "cosmological sensibilities") in common, which is embedded in their social institutions, economic systems, mannerisms, music, and so on, in the form of a value system. Furthermore, with Ani, we have a diversity of cultures, in a nutshell, closed off from each other, governed by their own particular laws of cultural evolution. Ani distinguishes three non-European cultures: African, Amerindian, and Oceanic. Ani offers the following discussion of the major non-European worldviews: "It is appropriate, however, to make some obvious observations about what African, Amerindian, and Oceanic majority thought-systems have in common to the exclusion of European thought. All of the views mentioned are spiritual in nature, that is, they have spiritual bases and thereby reject rationalism and objectification as valued epistemological modes. These views generate an authentic cosmology, the interrelatedness of all being. They reject Aristotelian logic as the primary path to ultimate truth, while recognizing the symbolic and not the literal mode as appropriate for the expression of meaning… Yet, what should strike us as students of culture is the fact that of all the world's civilizations the European utamawazo worldview is the strangest (the minority view); it is most conspicuous in its materialism and rationalism."[44]

Ani's approach to culture is representative of comparative anthropology research. The comments of French anthropologist Maurice Godelier on this approach are most apropos:

> In order to compare societies studied by the ethnographer or historian, institutions, economy, kinship, marriage, social stratification, and political power are divided into so many "cultural traits," and their importance within each society is quantified. A first step is marked by a comparing of societies in order to group them into "cultural zones," that is to say, into comparable totalities. In a second step, which is more ambitious, one looks for correlations and statistical regulations between several "cultural traits": for example, type of marriage and type of economy. Based upon these statistical data, a theory of the origin and foundation of these social structures is proposed.[45]

In this respect, Ani's concept of *asili* is an operational category that is not based on a concrete (empirical) study of societies. Rather, we have a subjective, speculative category imposed on societies, focused on the immediately perceived characteristics of particular cultures.

Suffice it to say, Ani has no room in her analysis for Marx's fundamental thesis that "the mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life."[46] Moreover, within Ani's framework, there is no recognition of structural causality or dialectical change in cultural or social development. By emphasizing what Ani terms the "ideological dimension of culture," we, in effect, have an idealist approach that claims that the social is primarily shaped by culture. Ani focuses on the "ideological dimension of culture" because cultural discourse possesses "the power and the authority to define social reality."[47] Hence, the "ideological dimensions of culture" magically becomes the main force determining social reality.

Throughout *Yurugu*, Ani embarks on an anthropological investigation of European vis-à-vis African intellectual culture. She contends that each culture has an essential nature (*asili* or seed) that is expressed both consciously (what she terms *Utamawazo* or life-force) and subconsciously (what she terms *Utamaroho* or spirit-life). As she describes it:

> *Utamawazo* has a self-conscious expression, even thought it originates in the meta-conscious *asili*, but *utamaroho* remains on an unconscious level of feeling…While the character of a culture's *utamawazo* is expressed most obviously in literature, philosophy, academic discourse, and pedagogy, *utamaroho* becomes more visible in behavior and aesthetic expression whether visual, aural, or kinesthetic…The *asili* defines the *utamaroho* (spirit) and gives form to the *utamawazo*. The *asili* is in turn energized by the *utamaroho* (life-force).[48]

In other words, cultures are fundamentally petrified, closed systems of thought that are predetermined and underpin all future traditions, behaviors, and institutions. Ani notes, "culture is the unfolding of principles

already implied in its originating process."[49] Once we adopt Ani's anthropological method, it is believed that we will be able to unravel the fundamental workings, the hidden logic of European culture, that is, its metaphysical essence.

In *Yurugu*, Ani attempts to unveil what we could call the European "regimes of truth" (i.e., what counts as truth from a Eurocentric perspective). Ani informs us, "[t]he desire (need) for control and power are the most important factors in understanding the European *asili*."[50] She further claims, "European culture is unique in its use of cultural thought in the assertion of political interest."[51] Ani's method of investigation can be seen as involving an archaeology of (European) knowledge similar to the French social theorist Michel Foucault. My purpose in mentioning Foucault is not for the sake of anointing her ideas with European legitimacy. Rather, I want to demonstrate that many of her ideas are isomorphic to European thinkers.

Foucault's "archaeology of knowledge" involves a search for "a set of rules that determine the conditions of possibility for all that can be said within the particular discourse at any given time."[52] In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault examines the disciplinary character of modern institutions, practices, and discourses. Power, according to Foucault's perspective, forms a dispersed capillary woven into the fabric of the entire social order. Foucault argues that power and knowledge are inextricably intertwined such that knowledge is tied to what Foucault terms the "analytics of power." Knowledge is formed within the practices of power and is constitutive of the development and production of new techniques of power. Knowledge generates power by constituting people as subjects and then governing the subjects with said knowledge. Consequently, Foucault develops the concept of "power/knowledge." Similar to Foucault, Ani aims to expose the ubiquitous relation between (European) knowledge and power. Ani's investigation, therefore, becomes a digging down through the sedimented layers of European discourse to uncover its essence or essential character. Roughly, the disciplinary techniques associated with European sciences such as disciplines like philosophy, psychology, and anthropology—which Ani unveils—are used to impose a Eurocentric worldview on African people and other non-European people.

So, armed with her anthropological reductionism, Ani embarks on a safari hunt into the labyrinth of European thought. Before she begins her travels, Ani claims:

> The African world-view, and the world-views of other people who are not of European origin, all appear to have certain themes in common. The universe to which they relate is sacred in origin, is organic, and is a true "cosmos." Human beings are part of the cosmos, and, as such, relate intimately with

> other cosmic beings. Knowledge of the universe comes through relationship with it and through perception of spirit in matter. The universe is one; spheres are joined because of a single unifying force that pervades all being. Meaningful reality issues from this force. These world-views are "reasonable" but not rationalistic: complex yet lived. They tend to be expressed through a logic of metaphor and complex symbolism.[53]

She further elaborates, in the European worldview:

> The self was no longer conceived as a cosmic being, that is, a being that experienced itself as intimately involved with other beings in the cosmos. A "cosmic self" implies that the reality of self is phenomenally part of other realities presented as a result of sentient, consciousness, spiritual coexistence in the universe. Cosmos itself refers to the universe as a unified, interrelated (organic) whole.[54]

The reader, may ask, on what grounds are we to accept Ani's characterization of European and non-European worldviews? Unfortunately, Ani does not provide us with any anthropological evidence to support her claim. Yet, Ani does provide the following warning to the reader:

> The view of Europe presented herein will be convincing only to the extent that one is freed of European assumptions and Eurocentric ideological commitments. But that is not because of any weakness in the arguments or evidence presented. Ultimately validity is judged in terms of interest. This theory of European culture is valid to the extent that it helps to liberate us from the stranglehold of European control.[55]

Ani has presented us with very curious criterion on which to judge her argument. First of all, we are not to judge her argument on the basis of logical validity or coherence. For Ani, validity is a question of political interest. Second, if we don't agree with her "view of Europe" we can infer that it is because we are not "freed of European assumptions and Eurocentric ideological commitments." She has presented us with a rather specious notion of validity.

Through her travels, we encounter a host of seminal thinkers in the Western/European tradition such as Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, Immanuel Kant, Georg G. W. Hegel, Sigmund Freud, and Jürgen Habermas, among others. Despite the apparent breadth of Ani's book, we should note that many major European intellectuals and philosophers are ignored. There is no substantive discussion of a range of seminal European thinkers including Thomas Hobbes, Rene Descartes, Mary Wollstonecraft, Adam Smith, John Locke, Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, V. I. Lenin, Friedrich

Nietzsche, John Maynard Keynes, F. A. Hayek, Milton Friedman, Hanna Arendt, Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell, Jean Paul-Sartre, Roy Bhaskar, John Rawls, Simone de Beauvoir, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martha Nussbaum, Iris Young, or Michel Foucault, just to name a few.

How can Ani purport to offer a "comprehensive analysis of European thought and behavior" when so many key European thinkers are passed over? Ani is not concerned with the determinate difference between German idealism or British empiricism, Marx's dialectical materialism or Bergson's intuitionism, Anglophone analytical philosophy or French continental philosophy, much less Marxist political economy or Keynesian political economy. Ani claims, "Beneath its [that is, Europe] deceptive heterogeneity lies a monolithic essences; an essence that accounts for the success of European imperialism."[56] So, despite the diversity within Western/European thought, Ani—for the most part—ignores the internal pluralism and historical complexity that is characteristic of any system of thought. From her African-centered perspective, there is no qualitative difference between being European, Western, American, or Eurocentric.[57] We should be aware that her conception of European intellectual thought reduces to a *generalization without specification*. Which is to say, in this instance, European intellectual culture is conceived without attention to any determinate sociohistorical context.

Feminist philosophers and critics have argued—in a similar vein—that dualisms of nature/culture, rational/irrational, subject/object, and masculine/feminine underwrite Western philosophy.[58] Rather than focus on the pitfalls of Cartesian epistemology and metaphysics as some feminist philosophers have done, Ani turns her lens on Plato as the progenitor of European/Eurocentric system of thought. In fact, Ani dedicates more than a quarter of her book (over 125 pages) to the ancient Greek philosopher Plato.[59] She views Western thought as no more than a footnote to Plato.

Platonic thought is Ani's point of departure in the critique of Eurocentrism because embedded within Platonic thought is a kind of epistemic will-to-power. More pointedly, Ani asserts that an African-centered analysis of Platonism will "expose the oppressive and repressive forms within European and Euro-American culture that shackle Africans, other 'non-Europeans,' and to a lesser extent, women."[60]

Ani identifies several ideas in Plato's philosophy that are as foundational to the development of Eurocentric thought. First, Plato's philosophy represents a shift from the Homeric, poetic, symbolic, oral tradition to the literate, written, critical tradition.[61] Second, Platonic thought represents a shift from philosophical *idealism* to *materialism*. Third, rationality is presented as the apogee of knowing.[62] Fourth, by emphasizing objectivity and universalism, European cultural thought and behavior necessarily gives expression to absolutism and/or objectification. So, Plato's philosophical architectonic

over the course of many centuries is effectively transformed into an ideological justification for European cultural imperialism. As Ani poetically writes, "The ideological base of the [European] culture is the will-to-power."[63] The rest of the book is dedicated to unravelling the logic of the cultural development of Eurocentrism from its birth in Plato's philosophy.

Similar to Asante, she critiques European universalism. Ani asserts, "The myth of objectivity and the use of the methodology of objectification (scientism) is one aspect of universalism as an expression of the European *utamaroho* and as a tool of Western cultural imperialism."[64] European cultural imperialism is packaged under various ideas: "universal religion," "objective scholarship," "progress," "science and scientific knowledge," "humanitarianism," "internationalism," and "world peace." The rhetoric of universalism—within European culture—serves to further the interests of European cultural imperialism. As Ani puts it:

> "Universality" has, within the context of the European utamawazo, been the most significant ingredient of "objectivity." It is the myth of scientific objectivity that allows Europeans to speak for all of us.[65]

She continues:

> Universalism, when translated scientistically (*sic*), becomes objectification. The illusion of objectivity promotes the myth of universalistic commitment, that is, it is a stance that disavows political or group interest. It thereby services group interest more subtly by calling it something other than what it is. We can conclude that this universalism semantically represents European value, is not a universally valid goal, and, as an "imperative" serves the interest of European cultural imperialism in the following manner: Once individuals are persuaded that universal characteristics are the proper human goals, European patterns and values can be presented as universal, while others are labeled as "particular." Then European ideology can be proselytized without the appearance of imposition, invasion, conquest, exploitation, or chauvinism.[66]

Ani argues that European thought is merely a philosophy of particularity. The European pretensions to universal (objective) validity and applicability are illusory and pernicious. The promotion of universalism is not only narrow-minded, but also demeaning and dangerous to inhabitants of other non-European cultures. As Steven Lukes put it, universalism is ethnocentric because ethnocentricity is universal.[67] Therefore, Ani argues that in order to neutralize the effect of this "universalistic rhetoric" we need to reject the ontological notion of universalism and the attendant epistemological notion of objectivity.

Ani's Examination of Plato's Philosophical Architectonic

Since Ani's critique of Plato is central to the validity of an African-centered perspective, let's examine her critique in detail. One of the central arguments of *Yurugu* is that all European thought is a footnote to Plato. Plato's epistemological framework by privileging reason over intuition, the cognitive over the affective and the objective over the subjective, Ani argues, is foundational to the European accent on materialism, objectivism, and universalism. Commenting On the importance of Platonism for the development of European intellectual culture and history, Ani begins:

> While I am arguing for the seminal nature of Plato's work and its powerful influence in the formulation of the European *utamawazo*, I do not want to give the mistaken impression that his work was very influential at the time of his writing. Only a tiny fraction of the Greek populace followed, had access to (i.e., was literate and privileged) or was convinced of this new epistemology. And its accessibility was to remain restricted for many centuries to come. But what makes it so important is that those few who did have access and who were convinced were also those who set the intellectual and ideological patterns for the civilization that would follow.[68]

She continues:

> What Plato seems to have done is to have laid a rigorously constructed foundation for the repudiation of the symbolic sense—*the denial of cosmic, intuitive knowledge*. It is this process that we need to trace, this development in formative European thought which was eventually to have had such a devastating effect on the nontechnical aspects of the culture. *It led to the materialization of the universe as conceived by the European mind—a materialization that complemented and supported the intense psycho-cultural need for control of the self and others*.[69]

For Ani, the "materialization of the universe" is simply "the separation of spirit from matter" resulting in the "denial of spiritual reality."[70] So, as the above quote implies, the Platonic revolution initiated a paradigmatic shift from an intuitionist to a materialist view of the universe. It denied "cosmic, intuitive knowledge." In turn, Plato's philosophy laid the foundation for "the materialization of the universe as conceived by the European mind," that is, a materialist philosophical worldview. Ani further contends, "Plato's innovations were ultimately incorporated into the culture [of Europe] because they were demanded by the *asili*."[71] This shift from intuitionism

to materialism, as expressed in Plato's philosophy, becomes the essence of European vis-à-vis African thought. Ani further notes the influence of what she terms "Pre-Socratic African philosophers" on Plato, but she doesn't quite specify the nature of these influences. She claims that the Platonic intellectual revolution ushered in a shift from the idealist African cosmologies to materialism. We will return to this issue later in this chapter.

For the reader who is not familiar with the history of philosophy, I think it is important to assess Ani's central claim that Plato was a materialist and denied intuitive knowledge. Is it the case that Plato was a materialist? It is safe to say that Ani misses the boat on this point. Perhaps, she is confusing realism with materialism. First, Platonic epistemology is committed to realism (objectivity), but it is not materialist. A realist perspective views the objective world as existing independent of consciousness. While this is a necessary condition of materialism, it is not sufficient. In addition, materialism also asserts the primary existence of matter. So, materialism is a species of realism, but materialism is not identical with realism. Second, Platonic realism is of an objective idealist sort grounded in a rationalist presupposition that mind is not restricted to individual instantiations. All objective idealists such as Plato and Hegel regard the mind as a general category and not circumscribed by an individual, existential character. The dialectical idealism of Plato is in no way identical to the dialectical materialism of Marx.[72] Nkrumah's discussion on the difference between empiricism and rationalism, materialism and idealism are important here: "Inasmuch, however, as an empiricist philosophy can be idealist, even though a materialist philosophy cannot be rationalist, the opposition between idealism and materialism cannot be made identical with the opposition between rationalism and empiricism."[73]

Contrary to Ani's conjecture, Platonism is a shift to idealism not materialism. For anyone remotely familiar with the history of philosophy, this historical and empirical fact is self-evident. In fact, the naturalist metaphysics of the Ionian philosophers such as Thales provided the foundation for materialism, which culminated in the atomistic materialism of Democritus. As Nkrumah observes:

> Thales spearheaded two revolutions. The first revolution matured in his attempt to explain nature in terms of nature. The second revolution consisted in his belief that the unity of nature consisted not in its being, but in its materiality.[74]

Later, Democritus would outline the materialist postulate that the elements of all that exists are indivisible material particles or atoms moving in empty space. Plato's objective idealism represents an immediate ideological reaction to the materialist character of Democritus's atomism. Plato's hatred

of Democritus's materialism was so intense that Diogenes Laertius reports: "Aristoxenus in his Historical Notes affirms that Plato wished to burn all the writings of Democritus that he could collect, but that Amyclas and Clinias the Pythagoreans prevented him, saying that there was no advantage in doing so, for already the books were widely circulated."[75] Both Plato and Aristotle rejected the atomistic conception of mechanical motion and cause. Plato's objective idealist metaphysics jettisoned the idea that matter is ontologically fundamental.[76]

Plato, in contrast with Aristotle, thought of the Forms as ontologically independent of their instantiation in particulars. Particulars are in turn ontologically dependent, and they do not exist apart from the Forms. Methexis or participation provides an ontological explanation of particulars, namely, the reality of particulars can only be understood in light of their ontological dependence on the Forms. However, the Forms are not dependent on particulars, hence their ontological independence. While Plato moves beyond the Eleatic denial of the reality of particulars, nevertheless, the Forms are not ontologically dependent upon the particulars. The instantiation of universals in particulars is not an ontological imperative for Plato.[77] This is epistemologically born out of Plato's distinction between opinion (doxa) and knowledge (epistemé). Knowledge is transcendent (not immanent as in the case of Hegel) and is grasped by reason in apprehending the Forms. Opinion as opposed to knowledge is restricted to particulars. It is precisely Plato's ontology and epistemology, which is the subject of Aristotle's critique. Aristotle posits that form cannot be separated from matter. Aristotle's idealism embraces both matter and form as the fundamental ontological categories. Aristotle's insistence on the inseparability of form and matter is at the heart of his empiricist critique of the Platonic notion of the Forms.[78]

In opposition to Parmenides, Plato's epistemology is a shift from perceptual to rational cognition. The Forms (or Ideas) exist in a transcendental world and knowledge of the Forms can only be obtained by reason. Yet, we also find that intuition—rather than absent from Plato's epistemology—plays a penultimate role. When we examine the Platonic dialogue the *Meno*, Plato's notion of recollection (anamnesis) is not only a form of intuitive knowledge, but crucial to explaining the slave's ability to learn mathematical (geometrical) propositions he had never studied.[79]

The soul, for Plato, functions as a metaphysical connective between the intelligible (Forms) and sensible worlds, reason and intuition, being and not-being (becoming). Reason does have logical priority over intuition in Plato's philosophy, but it does not exclude or negate it. In fact, Plato's appeal to recollection (anamnesis) is predicated on the notion of innate ideas. Since ideas are a priori and not derived from experiential encounters,

all rationalists in the history of philosophy appeal to some notion of innate ideas. This fact is most evident in Cartesian rationalism.[80]

Ani claims, quite interestingly, with Plato "begins a pattern that runs with frighteningly predictable consistency through European thought, continually gathering momentum for ages to come. The mind is trained from birth to think in terms of dichotomies or 'splits.' The splits become irreconcilable, antagonistic opposites."[81] For example, she claims:

> Superiority of the Platonic epistemology is aided by dichotomies that become grounds for invidious comparisons, further justification for control mechanisms. The contrast of "knowledge" and "opinion" becomes another such dichotomy for Plato. Once it is established as a state of value it is used by Europeans to devalue alternative epistemologies, modes of cognition, worldviews, therefore cultures, and even "religions."[82]

She further claims that European philosophical anthropology is based on a conception of the self as "made up of parts that are in continual conflict with one another."[83] Therefore, the European self is not an organic whole being or person. In this connection, we might ask, is Ani employing a Eurocentric method by insisting on a metaphysical dichotomy between European and African thought? Is Ani falling victim to the very logic she throws into question? Here Ani embarks on the path of the fallacy of false dichotomy, by dogmatically asserting a metaphysical distinction between European and African thought.[84]

This is not a new train of thought in Black intellectual history. In many respects Ani replicates the position of Leopold Senghor who played a major role in the development of Negritude. Throughout his writings, Senghor defended Negritude as a mode of being that offers Africans the only viable basis for defining their collective identity. He assumed that this African mode of being differed qualitatively from the European mode of being. In fact, the African mode of being was inscribed in traditional cultural practices. Unlike Europeans, the African has the aptitude for intuitively grasping the inner reality or essence of things. This kind of perception on the part of Africans is linked with emotion, a mystically unified image of the world, a highly developed sense of rhythm, a propensity for analogical reasoning, and a capacity to appreciate asymmetrical parallelisms. According to Senghor:

> All the evidence shows that there are two cultures, that of the European White and that of the African negro. The question is how these differences and the reasons for them are to be explained,… Reason is one, in the sense that it is made for the apprehension of the Other, that is, of objective reality. Its nature is governed by its own laws, but its modes of knowledge, its "forms of thought," are diverse and tied to the psychological and physiological makeup of each race.

He continues:

> The vital force of the African negro, that is, his surrender to the Other, is thus inspired by reason. But reason is not, in this case, the *visualizing* reason of the European White, but a kind of embracing reason which has more in common with *logos* than with *ratio*… *The reason of classical Europe is analytical through utilization, the reason of the African negro, intuitive through participation*.[85]

For Senghor, every race has a fundamental ontological difference from all other races. Europeans in essence embody reason, while the African is governed by intuition or emotion.[86] As the West African scholar Abiola Irele points out:

> For Senghor, each people, race, and civilization has its own manner of envisaging the world, and each manner is as valid ultimately as another. The African manner is rooted in the values of emotion rather than in the logical categories historically developed in the tradition of European rationalism, and it is as valid in its own terms as the European, hence his well-known dictum: Emotion is African as Reason is Hellenic.[87]

Black intuition, following this logic, becomes the Other of Western rationality.[88] As the philosopher Jacqueline Trimier points out, "Senghor simply and uncritically accepts the European dichotomy, not realizing that even though he accepts its more favorable aspects, he never challenges its basic assumptions and foundations."[89] We could say the same for Ani and other Afrocentrists.

In a statement reminiscence of Senghor, Ani writes, "Europeans are not trained to use their senses nor to be 'perceptive' (in so far as that is taken by them to mean 'non intellectual'), whereas Africans relate to the universe using sense perceptions as highly developed tools… that are a valued part of the human intellectual apparatus."[90] Are we to assume the truth of Ani's (and by default Senghor's) position? What empirical evidence or epistemic justification does Ani provide for her position? How can we *know* if Ani's position is true?

The Major Paradox of Ani's Afrocentric Critique

The fundamental *aporia* or paradox with Ani's book is that she conflates the *social context* of knowledge with the *epistemological content* of knowledge

resulting in sociological reductionism. This reductionist undertaking transforms epistemology into the sociology of knowledge, truth to culturally constructed opinions, and the development of philosophical ideas to the sociology of ideas. In blithely adopting sociological reductionism, she ignores the determinate difference between the social context and the epistemological content of a particular doctrine. Ideas, beliefs, philosophies, and doctrines grow out of particular material (social) conditions. Yet, the validity and/or veracity of ideas and philosophies have to be judged independent of the particular material (social) conditions. This is a point that even her fellow ideologue Asante is aware of. Asante informs us, "[t]he invalidity of an idea arises, not from its exponents, but from its own fundamental flaws."[91]

Now, in order to see the point I am making let's examine what I argue is the fundamental paradox of *Yurugu*. On several occasions, Ani mentions the influence of what she terms "Pre-Socratic African philosophers" on Platonic thought and/or Greek thought.[92] She glibly observes, at one point, "Greece developed out of its cultural and intellectual association with early African traditions."[93] Later, she remarks:

> In the early schools of what was to be considered "Greek Philosophy," the teachings of "Pharoanic Science" are evident, and what continued to be developed as "science" was heavily influences by what had preceded in Kemet (ancient Egypt).[94]

In another instance, she remarks:

> And the European interpretation of these priestly Kemetic teachings became much of "Greek Philosophy" through the many strokes of many, many pens, as George James explains (1954). In this view we could almost say that classical European culture began with an act of *profanation* and plagiarism.[95]

In support of her claim, she cites the works of George G. M. James and Théophile Obenga.[96] Both James and Obenga claim that Greek philosophy (and specifically Plato's philosophy) is not only identical to but a plagiarism of ancient African philosophical thought—which we have discussed earlier in this chapter.

Now if we return to Ani's central argument, it would appear that she is making two contradictory assertions. On the one hand, she asserts that early Greek philosophy was influenced by, if not stolen from, African philosophical thought. She writes:

> In his obsession with the abstract and the absolute, *Plato has borrowed from the teaching of the [Egyptian] Mystery Schools that preceded him and from which he learned*.[97]

So, Plato was a student of the Egyptian Mystery System and subsequently taught by the Egyptian priests. Yet, we are also told that there is an "epistemological break," which exists between Egyptian and Greek philosophy, particularly Platonic thought. She contends:

> [Plato] has taken the idea of a sacred, eternal, symbolically stated truth approachable only through spiritual enlightenment, and he has secularized and distorted it for ideological use. It is interesting that the mysteries of the universe for Plato become profane, as the esoteric becomes exoteric, and at the same time deceptively elitist.[98]

According to Ani, Egyptian philosophy became distorted and transformed under the hand of Plato into a secular, profane, exoteric, and elitist worldview grounded on materialism and reason. Ani seems to hold the view that culture cannot travel from one society to another without undergoing a more or less radical change. Cultural influences can only be thought of in terms of theft or borrowing. Can Ani have her cake and eat it too? Is Greek philosophy identical to African/Egyptian philosophy? Or is Greek/European/Western philosophy metaphysically distinctive from African/Egyptian philosophy? Why does Ani part company with her Afrocentric forerunners, particularly James, Diop, Olela, and Bernal in the critique of Platonism (and Western philosophy)? It seems we've reached a moment of aporia (paradox).[99]

In one respect, Ani fails to understand the limitations of her Manichean framework. Ani's sociological reductionism strips African philosophical thought of its cultural dynamism and philosophical pluralism. For Ani, African thought must be idealist or spiritual in nature as opposed to European thought, which is essentially materialist. This presupposition simply does not hold water. Diop brings to the forefront that Egyptian cosmology exhibited both materialist and idealist tendencies. Diop writes:

> Egyptian "cosmogony" is materialistic in essence, for it is professing a materialistic faith when postulating the existence of an uncreated eternal matter, excluding nothingness and containing its own principle of evolution as an intrinsic property. This materialistic component of Egyptian thought will prevail among the Greek and Latin Atomists: Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius.[100]

Perhaps, Ani's confusion has its roots in the conflation of Plato's importance and influence, in Western philosophy, with trying to demonstrate that Platonism is a prototype of European (Western) philosophy. The affirmation of the former does not logically lead to the latter. Important and influential philosophical doctrines are not necessarily prototypes for subsequent

doctrines. However, they may serve to create differing responses within philosophical traditions. As Neal and Ellen Meiksins Wood point out:

> The logic of a system of ideas energized by the theorist's partisanship in the conflict of his age may very well generate, even without his awareness, novel ideas and concepts that in the future become important parts of fertile theories or at least stimulate fruitful lines of speculation. For example, Aristotle's distinction between natural and unnatural acquisition, between production for use and production for profit, which he made to justify a traditional agrarian aristocratic society, in the hands of Marx became a conceptual weapon to attack capitalism and to provide the theoretical basis for the idea of a non-exploitative society.

They continue:

> Similarly, when divorced from its source of inspiration in the aristocratic notion of proportionate equality, the Stagirite's concept of distributive justice can be extremely insightful. Or Plato's view that the economic division of labour, so basic to all human societies, entails in advanced social formations a hierarchical relationship of domination and subordination, when detached from his idea of the moral inequality of men, may be pregnant with theoretical possibilities. A sophisticated and complex system of ideas, consequently, will secrete provocative and challenging insights that when abstracted from their original contexts can serve as intellectual stimuli in the future or basic components of different systems premised upon different values.[101]

Now, of course, no one would accuse Marx the materialist of being a Platonic idealist because he was influenced by Plato's student Aristotle. But, this is exactly what Ani would have us believe.

Although Ani holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Chicago, perhaps, after receiving her doctorate in anthropology, Ani misunderstood Alfred North Whitehead's famous statement, "Western philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato."[102] He was not claiming that Platonism is a prototype of Western philosophy. He understood very well how Aristotle, for example, sought to transform Platonic Forms from arid abstractions to concrete categories. Rather, Whitehead claimed that Platonism was a significant view that Western philosophers in its wake had to respond. As Whitehead explains, "I do not mean the systematic scheme of thought which scholars have doubtfully extracted from his writings. I allude to the wealth of general ideas scattered through them."[103]

We should note that the same importance could be attributed to the German idealist philosopher G. W. F. Hegel for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Is it not the case that Marx's dialectical materialism, Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, Bertrand Russell's logical atomism, William

James and John Dewey's pragmatism—in some way or other—are all responses (footnotes) to Hegel's idealist philosophical architectonic? Surely no one literate with contemporary professional philosophy, particularly analytical philosophy, would claim that Hegelianism is the Western prototype for nineteenth- and twentieth-century philosophies.

There are no logical grounds to infer from the importance and influence of Platonism that it is the prototype of European thought. Ani's essentialist approach to the European experience ignores its long history of intellectual polemics and exchanges; a history that was not lost on such Black philosophers as William Ferris, George G. M. James, C. L. R. James, Charles Leander Hill, Martin Luther King, Jr., Eugene C. Holmes, Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Touré, and Paulin Hountondji. Quite tragically, Ani's mechanistic approach to intellectual history displays an ignorance of both European *and* Africana intellectual history.[104]

Let's return to Ani's examination of Plato. While Ani notes the influence of what she terms "pre-Socratic African philosophers," she does not state precisely what these influences were. She strongly asserts that Plato was the initial and key European thinker to bring about a paradigmatic shift from an intuitionist to a materialist view of the universe. For Ani, this shift from intuitionism to materialism is not just confined to Plato; it becomes the essential feature that characterizes all European thought.[105] We need to critically assess Ani's argument.

Ani asserts that Plato was influenced by pre-Socratic African philosophical thought. While she gives no clear evidence in the text of such influences, she does provide references in the first endnote of chapter 1. This endnote contains a reference to the *Timaeus*, a Platonic dialogue. There is no annotation as to why this reference. One who is modestly educated in Platonic philosophy will remember that this dialogue makes reference to Egypt. The dialogue takes place the day after Socrates described his ideal State in the *Republic*. At the beginning of the dialogue, Critias proceeds to tell the story of Solon's journey to Egypt. Solon, the wisest of the seven sages, recounted that an Egyptian priest remarked, "you Hellenes are never anything but children, and there is not an old man among you."[106] This statement by the Egyptian priest implies that the Greeks are children of the Egyptians; the Greeks stood in the shadow of Egypt.[107]

The account that Timaeus gives of the generation of the universe is based on metaphysical and epistemological principles from Plato's *Republic*. Now the central metaphysical problem in the *Timeaus*, for Plato, is how to provide an account of the structure (rational order) of the universe. Central to Plato's cosmology is the notion of Reason as the demiurge or creator of the cosmos. The demiurge creates the world according to the pattern of the Forms, producing mathematical order on a preexistent chaos. The universe as an

ordered system exhibits a determinate mathematical makeup. Nevertheless, the origin of such a mathematical order, Plato thought, could not be found in the realm of becoming. Plato posits that only from the perspective of being can a causal explanation, for the order of the universe, be given.

Ani infers that Plato's cosmology in the *Timaeus* is similar to, if not identical with, the Egyptian doctrine of the uncreatability of matter. Both James and Théophile Obenga, who are also referenced in the first endnote of chapter 1, make explicit mention to this Egyptian doctrine in their works.[108] What is critical to our discussion is that Obenga and James assert an Egyptian influence on Plato. As we have noted, James famously asserts that Greek philosophy is stolen from, or more accurately, a plagiarized version of Egyptian philosophy.

Now, neither James nor Olela argue that there is an "epistemological break" that divides Egyptian and Greek thought. Instead they stringently assert a continuity with Egyptian thought. Both James and Olela argue that this continuity is based on plagiarism. In line with James and Olela, we find the German philosopher and political economist Karl Marx remarking, "Plato's *Republic*, in so far as division of labour in it, as the formative principle of the state, is merely an Athenian idealization of the Egyptian system of castes."[109] What Marx brings to our attention is that Plato found in the Egyptian conception of the State and philosophy a prototype for his own reactionary anti-democratic political outlook in Athens.

Similar to the Egyptian Pharaohs in alliance with the priestly oligarchy, Plato's philosopher-king—by nature—is qualified to hold the sum total of social-political power. As Kwame Nkrumah notes, "All political and social power was at the same time to be concentrated in the hands of the intellectuals, in trust. In this way, Plato adumbrated an unconscionable totalitarianism of intellectuals."[110] For Plato, the *Republic* represents an ideological justification for the establishment of an aristocratic (or better yet, oligarchic) republic in Athens. While mathematical knowledge can approximate the objects of scientific knowledge (episteme), it does not give us knowledge of the Forms. Only the philosopher-king guided by reason can have access to the Forms (the Good) and rule society. As Plato remarks:

> Unless philosophers rule as kings or those who are now called kings and leading men genuinely and adequately philosophize, that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide, while the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively are forcibly prevented from doing so, cities will have no rest from evils . . . nor, I think, will the human race.[111]

Plato's theory of the State implies a natural division and hierarchy of labor, both derived from the natural inequality of individuals. Plato argues,

on this basis, that each individual is fitted by nature to perform particular duties within the polis. In this way, Plato outlines a social contract of sorts, which citizens agree to abide by, under the rule of the philosopher-king. As such, only the philosopher-king has the moral capacity to rule because he has knowledge of the Good and of what is Good for citizens within the polis.

Plato was nothing more than a reactionary apologist for the antidemocratic philosophy of Socrates.[112] It is of no small significance that Plato was an opponent of the Athenian democratic polis. As Ellen M. Wood and Neal Wood observe: "To put it briefly, the revolutionary nature of Plato's political thought lies in his attempt to 'aristocratize' the polis, or 'politicize' aristocracy—that is, to synthesize what were in their very essence antithetical forces in the history of Athens, the *aristocratic* principle and the *political* principle."[113] Plato's corpus is the ideological reflection of the counter-revolutionary hereditary-landed aristocracy bent on the destruction of the democracy in Athens. This can readily be seen in Plato's aristocratic conception of moral virtues and vices that skillfully become absolute philosophical principles. Plato articulates his anti-democratic philosophy—even more explicitly—in the dialogue *Protagoras*. By defining politics as a specialized art (or technē)—a definition that forms the basis of his overtly political works such as the *Republic* and the *Statesman*—Plato excludes the ordinary artisans and craftsmen from having the required skill or capacity to make political judgments. Arguably, Plato's concept of politics as a technical skill reflects his respect for the ideal of craftsmanship. However, I would surmise that it is closer to the truth that Plato makes use of the values and technical skill of craftsmanship to promote an anti-democratic political doctrine inimical to craftsmen as participants in the Athenian polis.

In my estimation, the import of Diop, Bernal, Olela, and James's work rests in their recognition of the *continuity of philosophical doctrines*. Regardless of differences in social, political, and cultural context, there exists a continuity in philosophical doctrines. Plato's adoption of Egyptian philosophy and theory of the State is best explained in terms of his own reactionary aims in Athens. However, if we recognize the continuity in philosophical doctrines, we have turned the table on Ani's key assumption; namely, there is a fundamental metaphysical difference between the European and African cultural worlds.

Conversely, we have to also account for the differences in context for Plato and African philosophical thought—a point neither James, Olela, Obenga, nor Diop take note of. Not a single philosophy can be understood purely out of itself, purely on the basis of what the philosopher wrote. Philosophical ideas are not removed from determinate sociohistorical conditions. Philosophical works are not disembodied texts. It is in the context of history that philosophy emerges from the realm of abstract speculation and enters the material world. The emergence and development of philosophy is contingent upon

social and historical conditions. Philosophers are passionately engaged in the issues of their time and place. As Marx keenly brings to our attention:

> [P]hilosophers do not spring up like mushrooms out of the ground; they are products of their time, of their nation, whose most subtle, valuable and invisible juices flow in the ideas of philosophy. The same spirit that constructs railways with the hands of workers, constructs philosophical systems in the brains of philosophers. Philosophy does not exist outside the world, any more than the brain exists outside man.[114]

Alban Dewes Winspear notes that the differences in the various schools of ancient Greek philosophy owe a great deal to the differences in "geographical conditions" and "social evolution." He observes, with regard to the development of philosophy in the sixth- and fifth-century Greece, that the "bifurcation of philosophy" reflects

> the very sharp difference of political outlook between the slave-owning landed proprietors and the slave-owning "democracy" of usurers, merchants, and artisans. Wherever the democracy triumphed, as in Athens, and during the period of its ascendency, the dominant philosophy tended to be materialistic-relativistic, as with the early sophists, or dialectical, as with the Ionians. Where the landholding class held a dominant position, as in Sicily and Southern Italy, or wherever democracy overreached itself and ran into crisis, the strongest tendency was idealistic.[115]

While Ani does give attention to differences, her philosophical crime is that she situates the differences in both social context and philosophical doctrines. The chief failure of both Ani and her forerunners is the dialectical unity of *social context* and *philosophical doctrine*. *We have to recognize the continuity of philosophical doctrines and differences in concrete context*; otherwise we engage in sterile, anachronistic and scholastic exercises both in regard to the past and present. But even if we assume that Ani's predecessors missed the boat and failed to recognize the Platonic epistemological break, Ani's further claim that Platonism is a form of materialism does not hold water on empirical grounds alone.

The Ethnophilosophy of Marimba Ani

An Ideological Critique

Ani's conception of philosophy bears a strong family resemblance to what is commonly referred to as ethnophilosophy. The family resemblance, among

texts in ethnophilosophy, is the hosts of discursive practices, wherein descriptions and/or explanations given are thought to be distinctive and exclusive African conceptions of, for example, being, becoming, force, space, time, ethics, epistemology, and so on, that stand contra to the European (or Western) prototype.[116] Representative texts in this tradition are: Tempels's *Bantu Philosophy* (1949), Alexis Kagamé's *La Philosophie bantou-rwandaise de l'être* (1956), W. E. Abraham's *The Mind of Africa* (1962), Jomo Kenyatta's *Harambee* (1964), Marcel Griaule's *Conversations with Ogotemmêli* (1948, 1965), Julius K. Nyerere's *Uhuru na Ujamaa* (1968), and Mbiti's *African Religions and Philosophy* (1969).[117]

All ethnophilosophers are engaged in a relentless quest to unveil *the* African worldview that will free continental Africans and people of African descent from the shackles of Eurocentrism. This quest for authenticity results in a nostalgic groping for the nipples of the pristine African maternal breast. As we have seen throughout this chapter, for Ani, the African worldview refers to an absolute, fairly homogenous, immutable, and ahistorical mode of perceiving reality and explaining phenomena by which Africa can be distinguished from Europe in particular. As Kwasi Wiredu informs us, "African nationalists in search of an African identity, Afro-Americans in search of their African roots, and foreigners in search of exotic diversion—all demand an African philosophy fundamentally different from Western philosophy, even if it means the familiar witches' brew."[118]

This familiar witches' brew ignores the ethnic heterogeneity of Africa and puts forth a set of beliefs, customs, taboos, and practices that are said to be uniformly held by all continental Africans and people of African descent. As we saw earlier in Senghorian negritude, the true African intuitively grasps the essence of things rather than being imprisoned by the tribunal of European reason.[119] So many of the Afrocentrists are possessed with the reality of a "golden past" that their sense of African identity would be fatally damaged if they woke up one morning to find that the whole of Africa was swarming with jet planes, electricity, cellphones, computers, high-speed train service, and skyscrapers like the Kenyatta International Conference Center (Nairobi, Kenya).

Ani would do well to read the Benin philosopher Paulin Hountondji's classic philosophical tract, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*. As opposed to ethnophilosophy that views philosophy as spontaneous, implicit, and collective thought in general, African philosophy, Hountondji argues, is explicit, methodical, and rational. Hountondji argues that we should think of African philosophy as African (not as the ethnophilosophers claim because it is about African concepts or problems) but because it is that part of the universal discourse of philosophy that is carried on by Africans.[120] The social roots of ethnophilosophy are to be found in colonial discourse

about the "African mind" or "African personality." Hountondji, who is sharply critical of the whole ethnophilosophical project, argues that it is a form of "sentimental exoticism" that panders to European prejudices about inferior African rationality.[121]

Hountondji's declaration is most appropriate for us to ponder at this juncture. He states that "neither philosophy nor science are, by right, the patrimony of Western civilization," we should avoid "a short-sighted cultural nationalism which will have us believe that an African Philosophy, an African Science, an African technology are already present, and achieved once and for all in our so-called traditional civilisations, which today we need only to dig up."[122]

At the end of the day, our ethnophilosophers—I would argue—are guilty of sophistry with respect to the word, "philosophy." They do not recognize the difference between a *popular* and *theoretical* sense of philosophy. The popular usage of philosophy amounts to "any kind of wisdom, individual or collective, any set of principles presenting some degree of coherence and intended to govern the daily practice of a man or a people."[123] If philosophy is understood in this manner, everyone is naturally or spontaneously a philosopher and so every society possess a philosophical worldview. Philosophy proper, however, I would argue, is a *theoretical* discipline with its own appropriate standards and methods of philosophizing; and these standards and methods are not culture-specific but universal. Consequently, one is no more spontaneously a philosopher than one is spontaneously a chemist, a physicist, or a mathematician. We don't call someone a mathematician because they can merely count numbers!

Moreover, Ani's project fails to understand the material basis for the origins of world philosophy. The emergence of philosophy—throughout the world—as a theoretical science is anchored in the intense drive and cultural assault on the mythological worldview that dominated the social consciousness of early communal societies. The replacement of the authority of the gods as a source of wisdom began first at the cosmological realm where nature's origin rested not in the supernatural but in nature itself. This *sui generic* perspective on nature had at its foundation an empirical approach where the critical observation of nature was sufficient as the very basis for acquiring knowledge of its origins. Knowledge was jettisoned from the constraints of mythology, where wisdom was the property of the gods and human knowledge was subservient to faith in the gods.[124]

The social context for philosophical investigation cannot be conflated with the epistemological content of philosophical doctrines. If the Yoruba account of space, time, and motion is compared to Einstein's theory of relativity, how do we decide which account is true? Must we suspend evaluative judgment in order to be tolerant of the Yoruba thought system simply

because it is African? We are confronted, once again, with the paradox of incommensurability. Ani's ethnophilosophical argument would entail that we should accept the Yoruba thought system as true without subjecting it to the scrutiny of rational and empirical justification. This is simply irrationalism. Unlike philosophy and science, Afrocentricity does not promote rational discourse—at least by providing carefully considered criteria for what is to count as the truth. Is it the case—for our ethnophilosophers—that two contradictory propositions can both be true?

To reject ethnophilosophy does not, however, amount to the denial of the existence of various *philosophical* traditions in contemporary Africa or precolonial Africa. In fact, ethnophilosophy denies the dialectical character of African philosophical traditions. It denies the incipient pluralism within all philosophical traditions and replaces it with a "monolithic body of non-argumentative communal beliefs."[125] It is unlikely to look favorably upon the work of contemporary African philosophers in such areas as logic, epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of language, social and political philosophy, because this smacks of European or "white" philosophy. Be that as it may, Wiredu, Hountondji, Towa, and others are right to argue that ethnophilosophy is a major obstacle in Africa's march toward development and freedom from imperialism.[126] African freedom requires that we discard the mystification of speculative ideology.

Rather than engage in rational argumentation against Eurocentrism, Ani would have us engage in sophistry. No wonder Ani looks favorably on the Greek Sophists over and against Plato. She notes, "the Sophists were the most effective critics of the Platonic Order from those among the 'ancestors' of the European . . . we would do well to look more closely at the writings of the Sophists from an African-centered perspective."[127]

Who were the Sophists? The sophists were paid "teachers of wisdom" who travelled from polis to polis to teach the youth of prosperous families, with particular emphasis on skill in rhetoric or public speaking. One of the key figures and the emergence of the Sophists was Protagoras of Abdera. Protagoras is best known for his aphorism: "Man is the measure of all things, of things that are that they are and of things that are not that they are not."

However, is Sophism any less European (or more appropriately Western) than Platonism? The epistemological polemic between Plato and the Sophists is about whether absolutism or conventionalism is the correct path to knowledge. For the Sophists knowledge is not detached from the material reality of social, cultural, and political relations. Knowledge, from the standpoint of Sophists, is instrumental and derives from a social consensus as to what is operational. The connection between subject and object (i.e., knower and that which is known) is not a matter of apprehending Platonic absolute Forms or ideas. Better yet, the subject or knower determines the

veracity of knowledge claims in debate and dialogue. Rhetorical competence rather than objective standards act as the criteria of truth.

The Sophist conventionalist perspective, which is in essence historicist and relativist, is consistent with Ani's own epistemological stance. Can we infer from this that the Sophists were Afrocentric? Or is Ani's posture essentially Eurocentric? The logic of Ani's essentialist argument ultimately leads to a philosophical paradox. Even if we grant Whitehead's exaggerated claim concerning Plato's space in Western philosophy, it does not remove the Sophists from that same history. For if there are European intellectual and philosophical trends that sustain a conventionalist epistemology, they must share with Ani and the overall Afrocentric project the same quest for particularity and the negation of objectivity.

Conclusion

Yurugu is a typical work in the tradition of ethnophilosophy, covered in speculative cobwebs, embroidered with flowers of rhetoric, steeped in an African elixir. *Yurugu* owes much of its rhetorical force to nostalgia for a beautiful state of Blackness that can never be recaptured. If we consider how Ani's task is actually performed, we see how the same old brew is reheated again and again and served up to all and sundry—a task that may not be without its merits in arousing emotions, though it might sooner be regarded as the superfluous product of dogmatism. Above all, we have ample opportunity to wonder at the tone and pretentiousness that can be detected in Ani's book, as if all that the world had hitherto lacked was her zealous dissemination of "truths," and as if this reheated brew contained new and unheard of "truths," which ought, as Asante and Ani claim, to be taken particularly to heart at the present time.

While many Afrocentrists view her work as a trailblazing effort in the justification of an African-centered worldview, it probably is closer to the truth that Ani is more a hitchhiker than a trailblazer. To be frank, Ani—in *Yurugu*—is taken away with rhetorical flourishes that amount to repeating the same old argument she, perhaps, read from Leopold Senghor, George G. M. James or Théophile Obenga. The truth of the matter is that Ani has merely presented us with Kiswahili word games and outlandish assertions.

Chapter 4

The Heritage We Renounce
The Utopian Worldview of Afrocentricity*

Introduction

Following in the tradition of contributionism, Afrocentrists are engaged in an effort to correct the errors, omissions, and distortions of Africa and the Africana diasporic experience produced by European/Anglo-American/Eurocentric scholarship. The African-centered perspective has not differed substantially with Carter G. Woodson's interpretation of the efficacy of Black history and culture. The Afrocentrists have simply replaced the names of Wheatley, Douglass, and Banneker with those of Ptahhotep, Amenemhat, Duauf, Imhotep, and Cheik Anta Diop. They differ with the vindicationist tradition in one respect that is of great importance. Our friends have replaced the racist representation of Africa with a *bold, fantastic, and passionate reconstruction of African history which accents the role of African subjectivity*. In this respect, they have turned historiography on its head, replacing Euorcentric diffusionist theory with an African-centered one. Africa, instead of Europe, becomes the epicenter of world civilization. Metaphorically speaking, the master narrative has moved from Mt. Olympus to Mt. Kenya![1]

In this chapter, we explore the African-centered philosophy of history. I argue that Afrocentricity is wedded to an idealist conception of history

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that (a) portrays eminent historical figures and personalities such as African kings, emperors, political leaders, and politicians as the makers of history, its chief participants; (b) denies the determining role of classes and class struggle in African and American American history; and (c) African American history is seen as a second-order enterprise vis-á-vis the history of "Kemetic high culture," which is a first-order enterprise. While I agree with the Afrocentric need to affirm the contribution of African subjects to world history, the Afrocentric (and by extension contributionist) tradition leads to a conceptual narrowness that hinders critical reflection on Africana culture and history.

Philosophy of History in African American Studies

While African American scholars have written scores of historical works, few have ventured down the road to exploring the philosophy of history. African American philosophers Wayman B. McLaughlin and Berkeley Eddins have done groundbreaking work on the philosophy of history.[2] Perhaps, the most prolific Black writer in the area of the history of philosophy was not trained as a professional philosopher, but rather he was a professional historian. Thorpe's book *The Desertion of Man* provides an illuminating examination of various philosophies of history. To date, Earl Thorpe remains one of the pioneering theorists in the philosophy of Black history.[3]

While there have not been many formal studies of the philosophy of history in AAS, we should not infer that the philosophy of history has been absent from the work of scholars in AAS. All historians implicitly make use of philosophy of history in terms of writing history. In fact, I contend that all work in AAS is implicitly informed by a philosophy of history. As we noted in chapter 1, the philosopher of history addresses an assortment of questions: What is the role of periodization in the writing of history? What is the substance and significance of history? Can history be a science? What is the relationship between social structures and human agency in historical development? Does history have internal mechanisms that govern its direction, that is to say does it possess something tantamount to laws which regulate its movement? What should be the mode and structure of explanation in history? Is it possible to develop objective causal explanations in history? What methodologies are appropriate for studying history? By what standards should historical explanations be judged and compared?

Let's look, for instance, at periodization, one of the fundamental problems in historiography. Periodization defines the essential content of the stages in the emergence and development of historical processes characteristic of a given

people, country, region, or, even, humanity as a whole.[4] Periodization raises the question of how, if at all, it is possible scientifically to delineate between various epochs or moments in history. Some recent historians—for the sake of novelty—succumbed to the view that history is a "seamless web," without determinate historical periods. However, I argue that historical science is unthinkable without a periodization of the historical process. If history were a "seamless web," then there would be no need to distinguish between the antebellum and postbellum periods in African American history for instance.[5]

Peniel Joseph's award-winning book *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* questions the traditional periodization of the Black Power era. Joseph offers an "alternative narrative" of postwar Black radicalism that challenges the "false dichotomy" between the Civil Rights movement and the subsequent Black Power movement. He hopes to emphasis "the fluidity of two historical time periods too often characterized as mutually exclusive."[6] In an effort to emphasize underlying continuities in African American history, Joseph advocates a periodization of Black Power from 1954 to 1975.[7] Arguably, his narrative history employs such great elasticity with regard to the periodization of the Black Power movement that it often ignores historical ruptures and ideological conflicts in the Black Power movement.[8] As historian Adam Fairclough astutely notes, "The trouble with such broad definitions, however, is that in stressing history's 'seamless web' they turn history into a homogenized mush, without sharp breaks and transformations."[9] This can be seen graphically with Joseph's rather scant attention to Floyd McKissick and Richard Nixon's conception of Black Power *qua* Black capitalism. I suspect that Joseph ignores McKissick's formulation of Black Power because it represents a determinate break in his narrative history of Black Power. In contrast to Joseph, Robert Allen—in *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*—persuasively argues that the Nixon administration in the service of corporate capital sought to "co-opt" the Black Power movement by equating Black Power with Black capitalism. More recently, Devin Fergus has offered a much more complex portrait of the eventual marriage of Black Power with corporate capitalism via McKissick's Soul City initiative.[10] Under the alluring spell of narrative history, Joseph offers us an abstract, empty concept of Black Power, a "homogenized mush" pulled outside the realm of concrete history. To the point, Joseph draws too straight of a line from Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and Huey Newton to the Obama presidency; such that, we are to believe that the right-wing presidential politics of Obama "embodies the boldness and politics of self-determination that were a hallmark of Black Power-era politics."[11]

Karl Marx argues that the failure to adequately attend to questions of periodization would have the effect of "dehistoricising history," that is, obscuring the historical specificity of each period under investigation. In

volume one of *Capital*, Marx observes that "writers of history have so far paid very little attention to the development of material production, which is the basis of all social life, and therefore of all real history. But prehistoric times at any rate have been classified on the basis of the investigation of natural science, rather than so-called historical research. Prehistory has been divided, according to the materials used to make tools and weapons, into the Stone Age, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age."[12] For Marx, history is much more than a "seamless web" of stories about kings, queens, dynasties, presidents, politicians, wars, and the "eternal quest for harmony."

To understand history, Marx insisted, our methodological starting point must be material production. Marx understood that production, distribution, exchange, and consumption all form part of a social totality. However, production predominates. Marx's periodization focuses on production, particularly the conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production. From the standpoint of historical materialism, historical periodization is based on the evolving contradictions between the forces and relations of production of various modes of production. The concept of relations of production is central to historical materialism because the foundation of classes and class conflict is rooted in the relations of production. As Paul Blackledge notes: "Accordingly, if humans were defined as socially producing animals, then distinct productive epochs could be differentiated by the relations of production that dominated within each. Hence Marx periodised history into a series of modes of production, each of which he understood as a distinct articulation of forces and relations of production."[13]

In my estimation, Marx does not offer a linear historical progression. Rather, he postulates—in broad outline—four modes of production—Asiatic, communal, feudal, and bourgeois—as possible alternative paths through history. Since Marx's death, Marxist scholars and scholars influenced by Marx such as Walter Rodney, Maurice Godelier, Chris Harman, Cheik Anta Diop, Samir Amin, C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, and others have deepened his analysis of precapitalist economic formations, particularly as it relates to Africa, to include (a) tribute-paying modes of production, (b) slave modes of production, and (c) the African mode of production.[14] Without the aid of concrete historical research, these forms of historical periodization are merely abstractions with no value. As Marx and Engels argued: "They can only serve to facilitate the arrangement of historical material and to indicate the sequence of its separate strata. But they by no means afford a recipe, or schema, as does philosophy, for neatly trimming the epochs of history."[15]

Problems within the philosophy of history are of more than purely academic import. If we further survey African American intellectual history, we find W. E. B. Du Bois, Alexander Crummell and William H. Ferris

searching for a philosophy of history suitable for the task of racial advancement via the leadership of the "Talented Tenth."[16] The interpretation of history and civilization emanating from Hegel's philosophy of history offered a fruitful source for their political philosophies. For Hegel, world history is intelligible only in teleological terms, wherein the *process* of history is identical to the *purpose* of history. This identity of process and purpose is constituted in how respective social groups (as races or nations) contribute to the advancement of world civilization.

Knowing full well Hegel had relegated Africa beyond the pale of human history, Crummell, Du Bois, and Ferris, nevertheless, appropriated Hegel's philosophy of history. This appropriation of the Hegelian philosophy of history was a critical adoption of what they thought were universal historical principles, which were applicable to the concrete context of African and African American realities. These Hegelian influences are most evident in Du Bois's attempt to present Black people as a seventh world-historic people.[17]

Echoing Du Bois and Crummell's earlier efforts, Ferris dialectically applies the Hegelian philosophy of history to the African American context with the aim of advancing civilization. When Ferris publishes his views in 1913, it becomes abundantly clear that he has an abiding commitment to the Hegelian philosophy of history. In his magnum opus *The African Abroad: or His Evolution in Western Civilization*, Ferris posits, "The happenings in the universe of finite minds and finite matter are not only phases and aspects and doings and forthputtings of finite selves and things, but they are also movements in the life of the absolute, facts of his consciousness."[18] Therefore, Ferris reasons that Black people should never deny their Blackness that is, "the precious traits of the race." So what are these "precious traits" Ferris alludes to? He stipulates not biological or genetic features but certain ethical norms and cultural values. So instead of Anglo-American "gross materialism," Black people can offer the world their "lovable nature, a spiritual earnestness and a musical genius." Ferris also warns against imitating "the vices of the Anglo-Saxon race" and simultaneously he argues for the need to overcome "the limitations of the Negro environment," and "rise to the Universal, and strike the Universal chord in the harp of God's world."[19]

Martin Luther King, Jr. also came under the spell of Hegel's philosophy of history. He saw in the Montgomery bus boycott the workings of what Hegel describes as the "cunning of reason."[20] King viewed "world-historical individuals" such as Rosa Parks as catalysts who galvanized the passions of the masses at a crucial period in history. Parks was a lightning rod for what everyone was thinking without realizing it. To use Hegelian language, she brought unconscious Spirit to mass consciousness, and consequently

her actions raised the universal out of the stormy mass of the particular. King—commenting on Rosa Parks—remarked:

> She was not "planted" there by the NAACP, or any other organization; she was planted there by her personal sense of dignity and self-respect. She was anchored to that seat by the accumulated indignities of days gone by and the boundless aspirations of generations yet unborn. She was a victim of both the forces of history and the forces of destiny. She had been tracked down by the Zeitgeist—the spirit of the time.[21]

King's description of Rosa Parks mirrors Hegel's discussion of historically significant individuals. In this respect, Hegel noted:

> Such individuals had no consciousness of the general Idea they were unfolding, while prosecuting those aims of theirs; on the contrary, they were practical, political men. But at the same time they were thinking men, who had an insight into the requirements of the time—*what was ripe for development*.[22]

For Hegel, the "Cunning of Reason" speaks to the manner in which reason (or Absolute Consciousness) was at the root of historical development and the impulse for change. Reason in its pursuit of self-consciousness and freedom uses the passions of individuals to achieve its goals even though these individuals do not have full consciousness of the consequences of their actions. [23]

From Marx's materialist perspective, Hegel's speculative *teleology* of history resembles a *theology* of history, in which the providential purposes of god are imposed on human history. History, for Marx, does not have an end (*telos*) or predetermined goal. Historical materialism provides an explanatory apparatus that puts Hegel on his feet via a materialist critique and inversion. The anatomy of civil society must be sought in political economy.[24] Rather than start with an ideal (e.g., the Absolute Spirit) to be realized in the course of the historical process, Marx argues that we must start with the mode of production, relations of production, and their dialectical interaction with the social forms of consciousness manifested as the ideological superstructure. This basic premise is the starting-point for all Marxist historical research. Uncovering the material relations on which classes are formed and how their interests are fought out in class struggle is not merely a European concept, but is universally true.

History is intelligible only in terms of the class antagonisms generated by the relations of production. As Alex Callinicos astutely notes:

> The introduction of the concept of relations of productions set exploitation, social conflict, and struggle at the centre of Marx's account of historical development. It thus provided the theoretical foundation of the opening words of the *Communist Manifesto*: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."[25]

Marx forecast the emergence of economic crisis and its resolution as the motor force of dialectical history. The continued development of capitalism and bourgeois civil society inadvertently and dialectically produces its own grave-diggers, that is, the proletariat. The emergence of economic crises constitutes the material context for class struggle. The historic role of the working-class is tied to their position within capitalist relations of production. It is not the result of their being the most oppressed section of civil society—as some feminists or critical race theorists would argue. Rather, it is their objective position in bourgeois civil society.[26]

Contrary to the views of Molefi Asante and other Afrocentrists, Marx's conception of history does not relegate Africa history to an extension of European history.[27] The emergence of classes, class conflict, states and empires in Africa, no doubt takes a specific (particular) form, at specific moments in specific places. (Yet, many Afrocentrists often unduly romanticized precapitalist Africa with the catchphrase: "We were Kings and Queens," albeit without regard for the class character of monarchies.) However, the particularity of this process does not negate the objective laws of social and historical development, but instead grasping the objective lawful process gives meaning to what may appear as random, discrete, disconnected historical events and processes. Egyptian dynastic history, for instance, is tied to a definitive mode of production and social formations based on the exploitation of the laboring masses. If Egypt is the point of departure for African history, as some Afrocentrists argue, then class and class struggle is integral to the very start of African history. This point was not lost on Walter Rodney's examination of African history. Marx and Marxists after him have never asserted that every socioeconomic formation will appear in the lives of all peoples and in all countries. Rodney argues, for instance, that there were a variety of transitional formations ranging in African history from about the fifth-century AD to the colonial era. In fact, very few African societies ever reached the stage of feudalism.[28] Most importantly, Rodney's research demonstrates that African societies were never exempt from the objective material processes that constitute the dialectic of history.

Dancing in Circles

The African-Centered Conception of History as Utopian

Alex Callinicos arguesthat every theory of history has a theory of directionality, that is, it offers an account of the overall pattern described by the historical process.[29] Afrocentrists such as Asante and Tsehloane C. Keto

offer us a cyclical philosophy of history. Time and the events of history contained within go around in a circle. History is nothing more than a recurring treadmill.[30] Foundational to the cyclical philosophy of history are three assumptions. First, human beings, who by nature are the same, will respond uniformly to similar circumstances, and so produce the same effects. Second, history repeats itself ad infinitum in cycles of time. And, lastly, the rise and fall of polities must be seen as episodes in a cyclical movement. The appeal of a cyclical philosophy of history, for Afrocentricity, is based on the explanation it offers of the fall of the African race from ancient civilization and glory into a state of slavery and supposed barbarism. This tradition of racial vindicationism, Wilson Jeremiah Moses argues, envisioned a "utopia of the past" in which Black people were descendants of "a race of supermen," who had created one of the greatest civilizations in world history. On the basis of the cycles of history, Black people would rise from the ashes of slavery and colonialism and give rebirth to the redemption of Africa.[31]

Asante argues that the African-centered philosophy of history stands in opposition to "the Eurocentric idea of straightforward linear progression in time from beginning to end."[32] According to Asante, "African thought was in terms of cycles, circles, continuity."[33] Asante and Keto argue that Eurocentric conceptions of history do not accept a conception of world history understood as episodes in a cyclical movement. Yet, in the annals of European intellectual history, from Plato to Aristotle to Machiavelli to Giovanni B. Vico to Oswald Spengler, various European or Eurocentric philosophies of history were based on cyclical change.[34] Did they adopt an African-centered conception of history? Or can it be argued that the Afrocentrists have adopted a European philosophy of history?

Keto argues that the African-centered conception of history should be based on "a transcendent framework modeled on the experience of the every changing seasonal cycles that rotate through the years and/or the cycles of human existence that go through irreversible stages yet follow repetitive stages for each succeeding generation."[35] Keto also suggests a periodization based on these cycles: (1) the first period before the fourth millennium BCE in Kemet that followed the creation of human cultures; (2) the second period between 600 and 1600 CE in West Africa that witnessed the creation of state power and the formation of empires in Ghana, Mali, and Songhai; (3) the third period from 1800 to 1890 that saw the attempt to "rebuild defensive redoubts" through the unification of existing societies among the Baganda, Ashanti, Fulani, for example; and (4) the emergence of "African initiatives" in the post-1960 period through the Civil Rights movement and the struggles for political independence in Africa and the Caribbean. In this account, the course of history supposedly follows a cycle of progress and regression.

Periods of history give structure to the historical process. Keto's periodization is just simply too broad to allow for any systematic understanding of history. The leap from 4000 BCE in Kemet to 600 CE in West Africa, for instance, is a rather ambitious scholarly approach to African history. The result is not concrete history, but arid abstractions about the continuity of African history under the lens of an African-centered perspective. The difficulties with this periodization scheme become apparent when one sets out to examine and arrange African history—whether of a past epoch or the present.

The natural question we should ask, isn't this just a linear conception of time? If there are multiple cycles of history that keep repeating, by default, we have to order them in a linear series of time. As Nkrumah brings to our attention, "this time-dimension must order the cycles themselves, because some of them must come before others."[36] From this standpoint, there is ultimately historical progress. History merely repeats itself ad infinitum. Whether it is derived from ancient Egypt or Nietzsche's "eternal recurrence," ultimately, the African-centered conception of history is a flight into speculative mysticism in order to escape the challenge of the present.

Despite Afrocentric conjectures, the temporal dimension of historical development is ultimately a movement from past, present to future, that is, temporally linear. Historical progression moves forward not backward. Indeed, Kwame Nkrumah understood this when he fashioned the slogan, "Forward Ever, Backward Never!" This viewpoint is not a denial of the importance of past history in the cultural development of continental Africans, African Americans, and all people of African descent. Rather, it is an emphatic recognition of the past as the ground for our forward movement. History is thus the guide along the path to the future and the road of return to the past via historical research.

Our Afrocentrists are committed to an idealist conception of history that emphasizes eminent historical figures and personalities such as African kings, queens, philosophers, politicians, and warlords as the makers of history, its chief participants. This view is clearly expressed in the work of the English philosopher and historian Thomas Carlyle, who wrote in his book *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*: "Universal history, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the history of the great men who have worked here."[37] Asante and company take the behavior and actions of a single great individual (e.g., the pharaohs) as the only *active* element from which arises all historical motion, change, and development.

In this view, we have the invisible masses of people that are the passive, dull, and "unhistorical" elements of history. By focusing on the great personalities of history, we consequently ignore people's class membership, being

unable or unwilling to understand the dialectics of the relation between the individual and the activities of the classes they belong to. We have to move beyond the romantic idealism of Afrocentricity. It just is not true that *all* African people were descendants of Kings, Queens, and the great philosophers of Africa! While "high" cultures (or civilizations) did exist in ancient Africa, it is closer to the truth that the vast majority of Black people are descendants of African peasants.

I would argue that the people are the chief creator, the real subject of history; this is a fundamental proposition of historical materialism. The truth of this proposition is expressed throughout African and African American history. Here I use the concept of the people both in the broad sense, coinciding with the concept of the population or the nation in general, and in the narrower sense, meaning working-class people, that is, the makers of history. The concept of the masses or working people is a category that changes and develops historically. It must be considered in relation to certain socioeconomic formations, their specific social structure, and also in relation to the specific course of historical development of the given society or given country.[38]

The utopian character of the African-centered conception of history rests in the fact that it devalues the historical experience of the Americas in order to affirm ancient civilization and culture in Africa. Asante observes, "Walking the way of the new world means that we must establish schools which will teach our children how to behave like the kings and queens they are meant to be."[39] In a similar vein, Maulana Karenga once remarked, "The day the slave ship landed in America, our history ended and the white man's story began."[40] Here we find Karenga engaging in an Afrocentric version of the "end of history."

In my estimation, the search for authentic Blackness expresses a sublimated form of the Black bourgeois and petit-bourgeois flight from African American slave culture.[41] African authenticity is not to be found in the wretched and beautiful lives and culture of Black slaves, sharecroppers, stevedores, factory workers, and domestics. Rather, the source for authentic Blackness is to be found in the "talented tenth" of ancient Egypt or the "idealized mythic space" of the lives of African nobility and the priestly class in ancient Africa; as Jennifer Jordan puts it, "a pristine paradise which could be as glorious as the imagination could make it."[42]

It is the essence of a class society that "one or more of the smaller classes, in virtue of their control over the conditions of production (most commonly exercised through ownership of the means of production), will be able to exploit—that is, appropriate a surplus at the expense of—the larger classes," and thus constitute the ruling class in a given class society.[43] The nature of the exploitation differs in any given class society. Consequently,

the political and ideological tension within class societies gives rise to forms of class struggle as members of various classes become conscious of this conflict. Whether prior to European colonialism or after African independence, Africa has not been immune from class struggle. To argue as such, you would have to be as blind as the blues musician Ray Charles.

What remains as truly genuine African culture, for the Afrocentrists, is free of class conflict and transcends time and space. "Only in traditional western societies," Asante remarks, "are there conflicts between classes."[44] This utopian approach results in ignoring the extensive class contradictions, which have existed in Africa and relegated the great majority of Africans to membership in the working-class.[45] One should not overlook the fact that the great pyramids were not built by, but for pharaohs. As Makungu M. Akinyela critically observes:

> Little or no mention is made in Afrocentric writing of the role of the ancient African peasantry and the laborers who actually constructed the ancient monuments of Kemet, Ethiopia, and Great Zimbabwe. The illusion is maintained that these human efforts were all accomplished in totally harmonious relations, with each person, whether king or laborer, male or female, mystically happy to stay in her/his place assigned by the universe.[46]

The popular expression that we, as African Americans, are descendents of kings and queens is at best a distortion of history and at worst a reactionary elitist conception of the value of humanity. We must draw our cultural iconography from the experiences and the class perspectives of Kwame Nkrumah, C. L. R. James, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Chris Hani rather than Pharaoh Amenhotep, Robert Johnson, Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter or other ruling-class personages. Kings and queens are exploiters of the masses of people whether they are African or European. The spurious cultural nationalism of Karenga and Asante takes the real material culture and experience of African Americans as no more than a slave culture that is, less valuable than the monumentalist culture of past African rulers. Here the Afrocentrists offer us a nihilistic conception of African American intellectual and material culture by conflating the *disruption* of culture with its *destruction*.

The debate over whether Black slaves were able to retain any remnants of African culture has been a long-standing one in AAS. This debate is famously referred to as the Herskovits-Frazier debate. The eminent Black sociologist E. Franklin Frazier argues that—given the nature of slavery—all elements of African culture were stripped from African slaves. Anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits's classic *The Myth of the Negro Past* rejects the notion that African Americans lost all traces of their cultural past when they were taken from Africa. His work documents the existence of African cultural survivals

in African American slave culture. In a vein similar to Herskovits, the communist Richard B. Moore astutely notes, "For despite ruthless repress under the chattel slave system, the transplanted Africans could never be reduced to total cultural blankness."[47] On the other hand, Afrocentrists such as Asante, Karenga, and others—in line with Frazier—contend that any semblance of African culture was destroyed under the crucible of slavery. I would argue that contemporary research in AAS does not support their position.[48]

The romantic search for African authenticity serves ultimately to derail and detract from the progressive struggle for self-determination. The Afrocentric hope of finding, in the deep cultural recesses of ancient African history, a pristine originality is no more than a pipe dream. As Manthia Diawara has poetically put it:

> The Afrocentrists have recreated Egypt, the old African city, but their discourses, unlike James Brown's music in the sixties, do not serve the homeless in Philadelphia, let alone inspire revolution in South Africa. And I submit that until Afrocentricity learns the language of black people in Detroit, Lingala in Zaire, and Bambara in Mali, and grounds itself in the material conditions of the people in question, it is nothing but a kitsch of blackness. It is nothing but an imitation of a discourse of liberation. Afrocentric academics fix blackness by reducing it to Egypt and *kente* cloths. Hence, like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Afrocentrism has become a religion, a camp movement, where one can find refuge from the material realities of being black in Washington, D. C., London, or Nairobi.[49]

Keto's *The African-Centered Perspective of History*

A Critical Evaluation from the Standpoint of Historical Materialism

Let's examine Tsehloane C. Keto's attempt to elaborate an African-centered conception of history. His work represents the first attempt to articulate a systematic Afrocentric conception of history. Here I want to examine the details and limits of the African-Centered Perspective of History (ACPH). Also, we will look at the failure of the Afrocentrists to examine the role of class, class struggle, and the political economy of capitalism in the ACPH.

Keto argues that his work is a continuation of the efforts by an eclectic mix of Black intellectuals and scholars including Cheik Anta Diop, Tsenay Serequeberhan, Kwasi Wiredu, Kwame Gyekye, D. A. Masolo, and E. Wamba-Dia-Wamba. Keto seeks to outline the epistemological foundation

for the historical and social sciences from an Afrocentric standpoint. Similar to Asante, Keto argues that the Afrocentric paradigm seeks to place Africa at the center of any analysis of African history and culture. This would include by extension the African diaspora. The ACPH seeks to reclaim ancient Kemet and Ethiopia as Africa's cultural centers. Keto argues:

> African history must possess a fruitful theoretical relation and linkage to the history of Africans in the Nile Valley and ancient Kemet because Kemet and the Nile Valley have always been part of Africa geographically and culturally as well as the cradle for ideas that influenced the world.[50]

According to Keto, as well as all Afrocentrists, Africa is the "historical core" and "epistemological center." To speak of the African historical core as an "epistemological center" means that Africa is both the object of investigation as well as the perspective shaping the conceptual framework of the researcher. Thus, the African historical core is implicitly a worldview, that is, a distinctive way in which African people and people of African descent view reality in general and history in particular.

Eurocentrism is the result of neglecting or denying the role of the African subject in world history. Keto argues that ACPH represents an epistemological break from Eurocentrism that carries far-reaching theoretical and practical consequences. In contradistinction, the African-centered conception of history provides a framework focused on the agency of Black people. Keto argues that the human sciences need to be transformed from viewing African people as *objects of historical study* to *subjects of history*. Keto writes, the African-centered conception of history "produces knowledge about Africans and people in Africa in the human sciences, in which Africans occupy the center and are therefore the *subjects*, the *main players* if you wish, and the *makers* of their own history rather than peripheral players who inhabit the margins of other peoples' histories."[51]

However, African American culture is not in any way a monolithically formed culture where there are only manifestations of resistance. Keto's emphasis on Black agency in history ignores this important aspect of the historical dialectic of African American culture. There is more to African American history and culture than a continuous line of resistance to oppression. Volumes of scholarship in Black Studies have demonstrated that not all African Americans sang the spirituals, hoping to join the Underground Railroad. Some African Americans believed that freedom was to be found in "heaben."[52] Some African American slaves believed that loyalty to "Massa" was the highest virtue and, in turn, resistance against slavery was of the greatest folly. The modern-day connotation for "Uncle Tom" did not enter the lexicon of African American language without the historical presence of

real, existing "Toms." Resistance is cardinal and crucial to any description, definition, and interpretation of African American culture. Nonetheless, we should not be under any illusion that resistance is exhaustive of its actualities and even of its future possibilities. African American culture in its full substance and scope is more complex than a singular thrust in the monodirection of resistance.

AAS must move beyond the simple assertion that Black people have acted in history. Oppression has bred many forms of Black agency. African American culture historically constitutes an ensemble of traditions of which we are able, for analytical purposes, to locate what are two primary and yet contradictory forms, namely one of *resistance* and another of *accommodation*. For instance, the political quietism of Elijah Muhammad and Booker T. Washington stands in direct opposition to the revolutionary politics of Ella Baker, Malcolm X and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. This internal dialectic is undermined when a scenario of resistance overshadows the concrete history of African American people.

This voluntarist approach to history will ultimately lead us down the theoretical dead-end of infrapolitics rather than "history from below."[53] Examining African American history from below actually means digging deep into the daily lives of the Black working-class and their cultures and communities. How have the lives, politics, and social consciousness of the Black working-class been impacted by the Leviathan of capitalism? What factors have made the lives of Black working-class women multifaceted, diverse, and complicated? Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction*, C. L. R. James's *Black Jacobins*, Gerald Horne's *Fire This Time: The Watt's Uprising and the 1960s*, Barbara Ransby's *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement* and Jacqueline Jones's *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family from Slavery to the Present* are brilliant attempts to write African American history from below—just to name a few.[54] Efforts by Joe William Trotter, Jr. to discuss the notion of class formation—proletarianization—are important to understanding the culture, politics, gender consciousness, and everyday lives of the African American working-class.[55]

Dr. Keto should be advised to read (if not read again since he cites it in his bibliography) Arnold Temu and Bonaventure Swai's landmark *Historians and Africanist History: A Critique*.[56] Temu and Swai critique the Dar es Salaam school of nationalist historiography that exaggerated the role of the "African initiative," that is, African agency and change in the making of African history. Temu and Swai charged the Dar es Salam school with being a form of bourgeois historiography committed to empiricism and methodological individualism. In opposition to nationalist historiography, with its focus on the nation and its great men, Temu and Swai argued for the necessity of a people's history grounded on historical materialism. Their

approach to African history put productive (class) relations, social structures, and social formation at the forefront.

In the process of highlighting African agency or initiative, the Afrocentrists ignore the objective social (material) conditions that shape the intentions, motives, and relations between individual people. This idealist problematic ignores the fact that:

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.[57]

These celebrated words are from Marx's pen. The beginning of Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* offers an important insight into the relationship between social structures and human agency. History is the process through which human beings constantly make and remake their lives. Structures—for example, modes of production—represent objective limits to human practice, obstacles to be overcome by men and women in their struggles to assume conscious control of their social world. A materialist philosophical perspective brings to the forefront the recognition that human agency depends on and is constrained by historically specific material conditions.[58]

Without being concerned with the material determinants of people's interactions, struggles, and culture and thus the classes that they constitute, the history of Africa continues to be a strange brew cooked up by our Afrocentrists. Content with viewing Africans as an amorphous mass, the African-centered conception of history simply views people as an aggregate of individuals without any gender or class. This is nothing more than what Temu and Swai refer to "drum and trumpet history" which is concerned with vindicating the African past against the charges of Eurocentrism.

If history is not an objective process thus established on a materialist theory of knowledge, then what is known is not the object under investigation in itself, but a hermeneutical interpretation or emphatic understanding which is necessarily tied to the categories imposed by the subject, by the researcher. What we can know is not the thing in itself, not objective reality, only the phenomenal form which is the product of the consciousness, or worldview, of the investigator. For Keto, consciousness determines historical reality. Keto's call for an African-centered perspective of history is grounded on a neo-Kantian epistemology. This school of thought has shaped a definitive outlook within bourgeois historiography that includes Wilhelm Windleband's differentiation between ideographic and nomothetic

and Wilhelm Dilthey's hermeneutic understanding. The anti-naturalism of neo-Kantian thought is the prop for eschewing any general laws in history and society. Hence, phenomenal descriptions of the particular necessarily become the limit of historical research.[59]

The African-centered conception of history is not only internally inconsistent, but empirically lacking, particularly, in its ability to offer sensible historical explanations. Keto's attempt at historiography does very little to answer important questions about African and African-American history. Why should Black Studies scholars in the social sciences and history follow a theory and method that leads down the road of subjectivism? Why is philosophical materialism not the ideal or aim of social scientific analysis and AAS?

Keto cautions that the Afrocentric perspective does not intend to replace Eurocentricity as a universal perspective. Keto observes, the term "Africa-centered" or "Afrocentric" simply means: "a *centering* of an intellectual inquiry not the *denial* of the validity of other paradigms of knowledge."[60] We are informed that the Africa-centered perspective is just one of several "regional-cultural perspectives." The totality of these "regional-cultural perspectives" constitute what Keto calls a pluriversal perspective. ACPH "redefines and redirects the focus of the human sciences in a diverse world by indicating the need to locate all geo-cultural paradigms on equal footing."[61] Keto explains further:

> I do not oppose the use of a perspective based on the Europe-centered paradigm of knowledge because it is Europe-centered. This would be a violation of consistency. As one of the geo-culturally based paradigms of knowledge about the world's people, a Europe-centered perspective is as valid as one derived from an African-centered paradigm, an Asia-centered paradigm or any other paradigm based on the experiences, thoughts and values of a people in a particular geo-cultural region of the global village in which we all live.[62]

Here again, we see the old Afrocentric two-step that replaces cultural pluralism with cultural relativism.

Prima facie, an African-centered perspective is a form of cultural pluralism because it advocates the coexistence and equivalence of other regional views. ACPH is a holistic approach to the study of the world and its heterogeneous people. Here Keto's motivation seems to be an attempt to counter all forms of ethnocentrism, absolutism, and cultural intolerance. I would contend that this subjectivist approach to history is problematic.

Keto believes that there is one historical theory or ensemble of theories that explain the experiences of people of African descent, another that explains the experiences of people of European descent, ad infinitum. Consequently, Keto rejects historical realism and opts for an extreme version of historical relativism. Because there is no objective truth or the existence of an objective

reality, Keto leaves us with intersubjectivity, in which each regional-cultural group imposes its categories of understanding and value on the world. Historian Gregor McLennan is right to observe: "If theory does have an important function in historiography, it is by virtue of its general explanatory capacity, not simply its immediate object of analysis."[63] To put the point another way, any theory of history has to be evaluated on the basis of (a) its internal, conceptual consistency, and (b) its empirical adequacy. The self-refuting cultural relativism offered by Keto does not suffice as an empirical adequate or conceptually consistent form of historical explanation.

At first glance, Keto believes that all racial perspectives are equivalent; that is, equally valid as tools of analysis within their separate racial spheres or universes. For instance, Keto argues: "For purposes of our argument here, the intellectual acceptance of cultural diversity which is at the heart of the historical process of what Karenga calls 'America's becoming' allows Europe-centered, Asia-centered, Africa-centered and America-centered perspectives to provide partial pictures which coexist collective in creative intercourse."[64] Yet, we should see behind the shadow of cultural pluralism lies a self-defeating cultural relativism.

Keto's position begins with the affirmation of cultural pluralism, but ultimately lapses into subjectivism. Cultural pluralism as a descriptive claim merely points to the multiplicity and diversity of cultural norms and practices. It carries little or no implications as to the normative status of these cultural norms and practices. However, Keto swiftly adopts cultural relativism and violates his principle of peaceful coexistence when he rejects Europe-centered perspectives and asserts that all humanistic global values originated in Africa. Consequently, there is a need for an African-centered historical analysis of Europe and Europeans in order to prevent "parochialized views of Europe and Europeans that might emerge from a Europe centered analysis."[65] Moreover, the African-centered perspective claims not only the right to view the African experience from an African worldview, but also the right to view the rest of the world from the "humanistic values" of the African-centered perspective. According to Keto, the writing and research of the history of African people as well as world historical developments are best understood when valuations about the "East" and the "West" are submerged into a "humanistic hierarchy of values" whose historical core is traceable, in part or in whole, to African origins.[66] Consequently, once the "humanistic values" of Africa become the interpretive lens from which to view the whole world, Keto has fallen back into the hegemonic (we could even say universalist) approach he abhorred. He has, in fact, made a regional cultural perspective (i.e., the African-centered perspective) the universal measure for other cultures, particularly, Europe. From the standpoint of Keto's supposed cultural pluralism, doesn't Europe have the right to

"develop paradigms of knowledge that reflect the perspectives of the region's qualitatively significant human cultures, histories and experiences"?[67]

Classes and Class Struggle in the Black World

A Neglected Topic in Afrocentric Discourse

As I demonstrated in chapter 1, anti-communism played a determinate role in the formation and institutionalization of Black Studies. From Harold Cruse to Cedric Robinson to Charles Mills, we are told—without hesitation—that the totalizing "master discourse" of Marxism is as dangerous as the bourgeois ideologies to which it apparently sets itself in opposition. Asante characterizes Marxism as "limited view of reality" because it is "a product of a Eurocentric consciousness that excludes the historical and cultural perspectives of Africa."[68] With Asante, Nah Dove, and too many others, we have nothing more than a caricature of Marxism and no systematic attempt to critique dialectical and historical materialism, Marxist political economy, or scientific socialism.[69]

Now, if Marxism–Leninism is not a valid approach to examining Africa (and by implication the Africana diaspora), then Marxism should be sent to the museum where Marxologists can dissect it. If this were the case, it can't possibly have any relevance to the Black Liberation movement or Black Studies. But, this has been asserted and not proven. At least Asante has provided us with the wisdom to find our way out of this dilemma. Asante rightly remarks, "The invalidity of an idea arises, not from its exponents, but from its fundamental flaws."[70]

Marx's intense castigation of the idealist conception of history follows from its failure to take into account the real-life material conditions. For Marx, the mode of production, constitutive of productive forces, and the (social) relations of production, is the socioeconomic basis for his materialist conception of history and his excursus into political economy. Our Afrocentrists, on the other hand, reduce history to a collection of dead facts. They have, in fact, stripped history of its dialectical development. Most importantly, their cultural nationalist framework has ignored the political significance of class contradictions, sexism, and political inequalities in Africa and the Africa diaspora. For example, Karenga once argued, in 1967:

> We say with [Sekou] Toure that for Us there are no intellectuals, no students, no workers, no teachers; there are only supporters of the organization . . . We do not accept the idea of class struggle; for today in Afro-America there is but one class, an oppressed class [of blacks].[71]

In a similar vein, Asante claims: "Racism is the fundamental contradiction in African-American existence. It is also the case in Brazil, South Africa, and Namibia."[72] Neither Asante nor Karenga assign much political significance to a Marxist class analysis because to focus on sexism, class formation, class struggle, and class contradictions would point in the direction of a Eurocentric model of society. The Afrocentric approach, we are told,

> must not emphasize the Western conflict view but the humanistic view which is based on harmony. It is not the tradition of African society to see conflict as a method of progress; in fact, societies are made livable and kept that way by removing and keeping out conflict as much as possible.[73]

Because Asante assumes racial identity to be homogenous, he can approach class differentiation only as a deviation from, rather than, a constitutive element of, African society, identity, and consciousness. In this vein, Asante claims:

> Marxism acts on the same Eurocentric base as capitalism because for both life is economics, not culture. The class-warrior attitude dominates the thinking of Marxists and capitalists. It is a war of class against class, group against group, and individual against individual . . . This, of course, is contradictory to the Afrocentric value which respects difference and applauds pluralism. Strangers exist in that they have not been known. They bring good fortune and therefore are welcomed.

He continues:

> In economics, therefore, *Marxism's base is antithetical to the African concept of society. Life for the Afrocentric person is organic, harmonious, and cultural because it is integrated with African history.* However, the Marxist view of life is as competitive as that of the capitalist, since both are rooted in Eurocentric materialism . . . Marxism's Eurocentric foundation makes it antagonistic to our worldview; its confrontational nature does not provide the spiritual satisfaction we have found in our history of harmony . . . . Marxism explains European history from a Eurocentric view; it does not explain African culture from an Afrocentric view. It is in fact the ultimate example of European rationalism.[74]

I admire Asante's candidness. However, we should note that this quotation from Asante is notable for its sheer confusion. "Marxism's Eurocentric foundation" is "antithetical to the African concept of society," which respects difference, pluralism, and harmony. Marxism is committed to "European rationalism." Really? Nothing but more conjecture and name-calling, but we don't have a smidgen of an argument.

But, when we unveil Asante's attempt to enter into the world of political economy the results are an affirmation of capitalism. From an African-centered perspective, Asante writes:

> One of the most important economic right (*sic*) in the coming decades will be the right to salary . . . We must struggle to gain a foothold in every sector of the American economy . . . Our path to economic survival will not be based upon landholdings but owning secure industries, creative breakthroughs in art and music, exploitation of all fields of athletics and salaried positions based on education and talent.[75]

So, we are to believe that the path toward liberation is *Ujamaa* or cooperative economics or quite simply Black capitalism.[76] The call for Black capitalism fails to understand the monopoly character of capitalism. Capitalist competition forces capitalists to accumulate and reinvest as much as possible in order to produce on a larger scale with the end-result being an increase in profits as a form of surplus value. Karl Marx called this process the *concentration and centralization of capital*. As Marx observes: "The smaller capitals, therefore, crowd into spheres of production which Modern Industry has only sporadically or incompletely got hold of. Here competition rages in direct proportion to the number, and in inverse proportion to the magnitudes, of the antagonistic capitals. It always ends in the ruin of many small capitalists, whose capitals partly pass into the hands of their conquerors, partly vanish."[77] At this stage of capitalism, it does not matter whether you are in a so-called Black market, if small markets show any profits, capitalist competition over these profits will necessarily be eaten up by monopolies. When Afrocentricity becomes a call for Black capitalism, we are left with a political project that promotes the interests of the Black petit bourgeois class vis-à-vis the Black working-class.[78] Can Afrocentricity hold on to the mantle of radical critique and discount the value of a class analysis of racism and sexism?

The African-centered conception of African history and culture is ahistorical, despite declaimers to the contrary, particularly because it denies the role of classes and class struggle in Africa. The utopianism of cultural authenticity is quite evident in the empty worship and romantic glorification of Kemet and Kemetic esoteric knowledge. Aren't the moral virtues and ideals expressed in the teachings of Ptah or the papyrus of Ani (the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*) really the moral virtues and ideals of a particular segment of ancient African civilizations, that is, the ruling class? Lest we forget that Egyptian society was a class society in which peasant farmers constituted the largest section of the Egyptian population. In ancient Egypt, peasants were excused from military service because they had to work the land. When

they were not working in agriculture, these peasants performed obligatory corvée labor, building the huge pyramids that served as religious monuments and later the pharaoh's tombs. The masses of people in Egypt also labored in the construction of roads, irrigation canals in addition to quarries and mines. While some classes were periodically exempt from the obligations of corvée labor, the Egyptologist Guillemette Andreu observes that a "sentiment of revolt" appeared during the Middle Kingdom among the masses of working people. Some of the pharaoh's subjects fled the kingdom. If caught fugitives were subject to a life sentence of forced labor.[79] Is this a society built on harmony?

Egypt was a tributary mode of production in which everything was owned by the pharaoh.[80] Land ownership was the expression of divine providence, dictated by the pharaoh, and held exclusively by the nobles, officials, priests, temples, or free citizens. In the name of the pharaoh, the Egyptian state was administered by a priestly bureaucracy, which ensured that the kingdom's material resources were allocated in a way that maintained social stability and political inequality. By way of divine providence, the pharaoh exercised his power in order to maintain *Maat*. As Andreu notes, "On this fundamental notion [that is, *Maat*], which simultaneously embraced social peace, justice, truth, order, trust, and all the imaginable harmonious forces that made the world inhabitable, depended the equilibrium of the state, and even of the cosmos."[81] Consequently, Asante argues: "African society is essentially a society of harmonies, inasmuch as the coherence or compatibility of persons, things and modalities is at the root of traditional African philosophy".[82] Yet, our friend Asante fails to understand that the principal task of this bureaucracy was to manage society for the benefit of the ruling class and when this was done well, a significant portion of the population may have existed "harmoniously" but not free from oppression and exploitation.[83] His continued failure to bring this issue to the forefront in his analysis of Kemet and Africa in general implies that Afrocentrists do not see the accumulation of social wealth and political power, control of knowledge, and cultural hegemony by one class in society over other classes as problematic in itself.

To be fair, Asante has made a rather cryptic allusion to the role of class in Afrocentric analysis: "Class becomes for the Afrocentrist aware of our history, much more complicated than capitalists and workers, or bourgeoisie and proletariat. Finding the relevant class positions and places in given situations will assist the Africalogical scholar with analysis."[84] We must ask: How is the Afrocentric understanding of class "more complicated"?

Asante identifies class as a "property relation" that is limited to four dimensions: (1) those who possess income producing properties, (2) those who possess some property that produces income and a job that supplements

income, (3) those who maintain professions or positions because of skills, and (4) those who do not have skills and whose services may or may not be employed.[85] It should be most apparent that Asante is simply offering us a Weberian notion of class stratification. He treats class as a nominal category similar to occupational status as opposed to an objective social relation. Asante would do well to examine Marxist treatment of class as an objective social category.

In contrast to Asante, a materialist philosophical perspective argues that people's relation to the means of production is the basic, determining factor characterizing the division of *all* societies into classes. Lenin distinguished four determinate aspects of classes. Lenin defines classes as "large groups of people" differing from each other: (a) by their place in a historically determined system of social production, (b) by their objective, social relation to the means of production, (c) by their role as a class in the social organization of labor, and (d) by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it.[86]

From this standpoint, class is not identical to an aggregate of individuals defined by their income, occupation, status, prestige, or lifestyle. Rather, class refers to a causal relationship that structures other social inequalities in society. It is the determinate ground. It is both the *foundation* on which particular forms of oppression emerge and it imposes particular *limitations* on the form oppression takes. As Keat and Urry observe:

> The term "class" is used by Marx in a realist manner. It refers to social entities which are not directly observable, yet which are historically present, and the members of which are potentially aware of their common interests and consciousness. The existence of classes is not to be identified with the existence of inequalities of income, wealth, status or educational opportunity. For Marx, and generally for realists, class structures are taken to cause such social inequalities. The meaning of the term, "class," is not given by these inequalities. Rather it is the structure of class relationships which determines the patterns of inequality.[87]

A materialist approach to class offers great insight into the central and pivotal role that the Black working-class has played in the world historic struggles against oppression and exploitation. This is vividly seen in Kwame Nkrumah's *Class Struggle in Africa*, C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, Issa G. Shivji's *Class Struggles in Tanzania*, Bade Onimode's *A Political Economy of the African Crisis*, Mahmood Mamdani's *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda*, George Nzongola-Ntalaja's *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*, Oliver C. Cox's *Caste, Class, and Race*, and Sterling Spero and Abram Harris's magisterial *The Black Worker*.

Most of us are quite aware of the fact that African American people are the immediate descendants of slaves, sharecroppers, tenant-farmers, maids, Pullman porters, factory workers, and others at the base of bourgeois society. The Afrocentric approach strips both the African and African American cultural heritages of their dialectical (dynamic and contradictory) development. Our Afrocentrists constantly overlook the fact that the pyramids were not built by pharaohs, but rather by the sweat of peasant laborers. More than this, one can spend hours reading the contemporary scholarship by Afrocentrists and not encounter a single statement critical of the political economy of capitalism![88]

There is no denying that class analysis has been on the decline in AAS. Yet, I would contend that the field of Black Studies can no longer discount the plight of Black workers—past, present, and future. As Bill Fletcher, Jr. observes:

> Black studies as a discipline generally ignores black workers and their efforts at self-organization. The contribution of unions in the fight for African American freedom, e.g., the Colored National Labor Union (of the 1860s), the Knights of Labor (1870s and 1880s), the Industrial Workers of the World (the Wobblies of the early twentieth century), the Congress of Industrial Organizations (in the 1930s and 1940s), has little relevance for the bulk of black studies, with, of course, the exception of the formalistic acknowledgment of A. Philip Randolph that accompanies most examinations of African American life and history in the twentieth century. Generally there is even little recognition of the struggles by black workers to desegregate various craft unions and to win equality within most unions, though when acknowledged it comes along with an implicit condemnation of unionism as a mechanism in the black freedom struggle.[89]

Unlike Asante, the African American political economists Abram Harris and Donald Harris, the African American philosophers Angela Davis, Eugene C. Holmes, and John McClendon, the African American historian Gerald Horne, the Senegalese anthropologist Cheik Anta Diop, the Guyanese historian Walter Rodney, the Ghanaian statesman and philosopher Kwame Nkrumah, the South African sociologist Bernard Makhosezwe Mugabane, the Congolese political scientist Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, the literary critic Chidi Amuta, the Trinidadian writer and political organizer Claudia Jones, among others appreciated the value of and have made use of Marxism for understanding the Africana experience.[90] The red banner of Marxism–Leninism loomed large in the revolutions of Cuba, Grenada, Mozambique, and Angola. And a host of African political leaders such as Frantz Fanon, A. M. Babu, Amilcar Cabral, Sekou Toure, Patrice Lumumba, Modibo Keita, Ben Bella, Samora Machel, and Kwame Nkrumah found

Marxism–Leninism as vital to the cause of anti-imperialism. These individuals understand that Marxism is not a form of utopianism but a theory and practice of how to make a socialist future possible. Asante should seriously take his own advice: "Although both the capitalist and the Marxist positions are European and consequently derive from European exeriences (*sic*), that is no reason in and of itself to reject them wholeheartedly."[91] But, Asante, we might ask, what should be the basis for supporting or rejecting capitalism, from the standpoint of Afrocentricity?

In his work *Classical Africa*, Asante offers us a discussion of ancient Egyptian society. Asante admits that Egypt was based on a caste system with the majority of ancient Egyptians in the position of farmers and peasants, at the bottom of society. He outlines:

> The people of ancient Egypt had different jobs, responsibilities, and duties. Career paths and jobs were not decided by choice. They were decided by the *caste*, or class, of society into which a person was born.... At the top of the society was the pharaoh, who was untouchable by the common people. The pharaoh was a god and held the keys to the society. But the pharaoh did not make all the decisions.

He further states:

> A ruling caste of priests and nobles efficiently carried out the elaborate tasks and ceremonies in the name of various gods, on behalf of the pharaoh. It was believed that the priests knew how to keep the gods happy. The power and responsibility of the priests were shown in the jobs they chose. Priests could be scribes who wrote all the official documents, doctors, architects, and legal experts. A scribe was an official, usually a priest trained in the use of hieroglyphics, who was entrusted with recording all significant events. A person became a noble by being accorded a high position in the government. Nobles were mayors, provincial rulers, generals, and ministers of the pharaoh.[92]

Finally, he writes:

> The largest group/caste of people in Egypt were farmers, who planted small farms along the banks of the Nile. Most were peasants who barely subsisted on the food they grew. When the floods came and inundated their plots, the farmers were often employed on building projects for the pharaoh.... The farmers did not own their land. The pharaoh, who owned all the land, gave them land to farm. But the gift of land was not free. The pharaoh owned most of the crops grown on the land. Most farmers tried to grow a lot on their land. They had to, or they would not have any food left for themselves and their families. A farmer had to meet a requirement of giving more than half of the crop to the government.[93]

Wow, this is what Kwame Nkrumah would refer to as an idyllic portrait of ancient Africa!

Asante offers us a rather heavenly picture of ancient Egypt with class harmony. This is basically how Asante and his merry band of Afrocentrists understand ancient Africa. Asante celebrates ancient Africa with its monarchies and divine-kingships. Yet, he does not mention the fact that the pharaohs in conjunction with the priests were an oppressive and exploitative aristocracy. And he has little to say about the overall treatment of women in ancient or contemporary Africa. Yet, we are to believe Asante when he says, "Afrocentricity does not champion reactionary postures and it is not regressive."[94] The Afrocentrists are content to offer us an undoubtedly bourgeois view, that is, a heavenly picture of ancient Egyptian civilization existing in a state of class harmony similar to Plato's *Republic*.[95] The reader may recall that Plato's conception of political justice is based on class harmony. In the just state, for Plato, each class and each individual has a specific set of duties or obligations to the community. If everyone fulfills his or her natural roles, then justice will prevail. That is, class harmony qua justice will prevail to the extent that a guardian class of philosophers, aided by the class of "auxiliaries" who they command, rules over the class of artisans or producers; we should also include the class of slaves that existed in Greek society.

Class is a determinate concept that Asante simply fails to comprehend. It is instructive to note that Asante exhibits a gross misunderstanding of the class character of Egyptian society. He describes the laborers and soldiers of ancient Egypt as a "middle caste of people with everyday jobs." And then in the very next sentence he asserts that "they were like the middle class in the United States"![96] The terms "middle caste" and "middle class" cannot be conflated, since they connote different modes of production, different social formations. Perhaps, we should refer Asante to the work of the Caribbean sociologist Oliver C. Cox, including his extensive work on capitalism, for him to get a better grasp of the conceptual distinction between caste and class![97]

Asante bizarrely remarks that the ancient Egyptian caste system was flexible because "the Pharaoh could change a person's status by bestowing special favor."[98] Are we to believe that the Egyptian caste system based on divine kingship—as Asante describes it—exhibits a level of flexibility? Are we to believe that any given individual peasants or farmer had the potential to become pharaoh? Even Asante has to understand that people were *born into* the caste system of Egypt. Not once in *Classical Africa* or *The History of Africa* does Asante offer any negative assessment of the Egyptian caste system! Moreover, Asante offers no detailed explanation for the emergence of the State and its role in African history as an *agent* of class rule.

This "sin of omission" is indeed strange since Asante claims to be a student of Cheikh Anta Diop who brings to the forefront the role of the

ancient Egyptian state, class, and class struggle in *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology*. Diop brings to our attention the importance of what he calls the Osirian Egyptian Revolution that brought the end of the 6th Dynasty. In this democratic revolution, "the destitute of Memphis, the capital and sanctuary of Egyptian royalty, sacked the town, robbed the rich, and drove them into the streets."[99] As Diop further points out, "discontent was strong enough to provoke a complete upheaval of Egyptian society from one end of the country to the other." This democratic revolution aimed to have "disclosure of administrative and religious secrets," elimination of "the bureaucratic machine that was crushing the people," and "the proletarianization of religion, which extended the Pharaonic privilege of immortality of the soul to all the people." While this revolution ultimately failed, "the goal of the revolution was the democratization of the empire, if not the creation of a republic."[100] Maybe, the "destitute of Memphis," the masses of the people, were acting out of harmony with Afrocentricity and infected with a bad case of Eurocentrism?

It is clear from Diop's research that some ancient civilizations of Africa (a) were repressive and divided by class contradictions, (b) historically changed, and (c) the extent to which democracy developed in these societies was the result of antagonisms and conflict between classes, in spite of the Afrocentrist assertion that conflict is antithetical to the African ideal of eternal (class) harmony.[101] As Bernard M. Magubane notes, the absence of private property in land—in some parts of Africa—does not mean that Africa prior to its incorporation into the world capitalist political economy was "an eldorado of egalitarianism."[102]

In part, the failure of Afrocentricity to address class contradictions within Africa is because it is commitment to the reform of capitalism and not its eradication. Asante suggests:

> We must struggle to gain a foothold in every sector of the American economy . . . Our path to economic survival will not be based upon landholdings but owning secure industries, creative breakthroughs in art and music, exploitation of all fields of athletics and salaried positions based on education and talent.[103]

Asante is selling us capitalist society as a positive utopia. As Makungu M. Akinyele observes:

> The primary emphasis of this academic Afrocentrism seems to be in promoting a pluralistic, multicultural society where no one culture has hegemony over any other, yet it resists the idea of conflict or antagonism which would seem to be necessary in overcoming the power inequities inherent in current

> political cultural relations. These political cultural relations are evident in disproportionate poverty, disease, crime, police oppression, and other realities of the lived experience of New Afrikans in U.S. cities.[104]

At the end of the day, the Afrocentric conception of history is utopian because it romanticizes the African past and remains completely isolated from modern politico-economic realities facing Africa. As Melba Joyce Boyd astutely notes, "What the Afrocentrists fail to realize, in their quest to claim civilization, is that our struggle, fundamentally and above all else, is for freedom for the common people. We do not desire to be the 'new aristocracy.' Monarchies were not democracies. We aspire to a new society that does not worship royalty, racial hierarchies, gold, corporate power, or any other manifestation that demeans the human spirit."[105]

Conclusion

Where is the Afrocentric scholarship that speaks to the needs and aspirations of Black working-class people? Where is the empirical research from proponents of Afrocentricity that deepens our understanding of the Africana experience? Where are the pre-colonial social histories of Africa by Afrocentrists? Where are the studies (by Afrocentrists) on the process of transition to capitalism in Africa? Where are the studies (by Afrocentrists) on class formation in precolonial, colonial, and contemporary Africa? Where are the studies by Afrocentrists on the transition from mythology (folk wisdom) to philosophy in Africa? What theoretical and conceptual advances have Afrocentrist made in the examination of the African past beyond the work of the vindicationist tradition in AAS?

A core component to the African-centered philosophy of history is a quest for authenticity. By that I mean, rather than move forward and progress to self-determination, it is imprisoned by the incessant need to think in terms of an authentic representation of the African subject located in a mythic African past. Focusing exclusively on ancient Kemetic (or Egyptian) tradition and culture, by implication, our Afrocentrists ignore the complex sociohistorical development of Africa and of various people of African descent. It is a utopia of impotence in matters of political struggle because it fails to see the value of a concrete investigation of concrete conditions in Africa and throughout the world. It arrests the dialectical character of Black culture by focusing exclusively on classical African civilization and positing a Black intellectual culture that is ahistorical, static, and monotypic. This quest for authenticity is grounded on a narrative of ancient African

civilization that dismisses the role of class exploitation and class struggle in African history. Dreaming of what Kwame Nkrumah termed an idyllic, African classless society is a wrong-headed approach, which ultimately wants to recapture any and all values, ideals, and structure of traditional African society. Most importantly, it ignores the contemporary class struggle of today, which is engulfing Africa and Africana people throughout the diaspora. This is the heritage we renounce!

Chapter 5

What's Epistemology Got to Do with It?

The "Death of Epistemology" in African American Studies

Introduction

As critical realist Roy Bhaskar notes, truth is both simple and complex.[1] Many philosophical tomes have been written in search of the eternal question, what is truth? German irrationalist Friedrich Nietzsche famously described truth as a "mobile army of metaphors."[2] By which he meant that truth is nothing more than an illusion. Following Nietzsche, it has become commonplace in our time, a fixed prejudice if you will, to hear that "truth" no longer exists. Similar ideas have enjoyed a considerable vogue among the contemporary postpositivist crowd. Whether it is the pragmatist, anti-foundationalist or a consensus-based theory of knowledge, the mantra heard in the halls of academia, and even in the political arena is: "truth" is a matter of the values and beliefs that prevail among members of an interpretive community.[3] The search for objective truth is a philosopher's dream, which results from an obsession with Cartesian certainty in the face of historical change. As the American television comedian Stephen Colbert would mockingly say, all we have is truthiness, unfiltered by rational argument. There is no longer any need to live under the positivist illusions about scientific knowledge, objectivity and the like. What is "true" depends on who is speaking and in what context. What matters is who is saying what, not necessarily what is said.

This view of "truth" is influential among various Afrocentrists, critical theorists, feminists, and postmodernists in AAS. Since objective truth is a mirage, we are told that all we can attain is what is "true" relative to a particular interpretive community. If epistemology is concerned with the justification of knowledge, then the "death of epistemology" is in sight.[4] If all truth is subjective, then there is no need for its justification. However, if we—as scholars in AAS—wish to avoid the neo-Kantian doctrine that objective reality is essentially unknowable, then it would seem that we require some method for determining which rival theories constitute an objective, approximate reflection of reality. I would wager that the central epistemological problem in AAS, simply put, is this: confronted with rival theories and claims about African American people and a certain body of evidence, how do we use empirical evidence to make rational choices between these rival theories and claims? How do we determine which theory is true? What methods and theories should guide us in the quest for the attainment of objective truth and scientific knowledge?

By rejecting objectivity, I argue, Afrocentricity anchors AAS in epistemological subjectivism. Consequently, I contend, we are left with no objective (material) grounds upon which to critique Eurocentrism. The Afrocentric project of creating a Black social science falls apart at precisely the moment when scientific knowledge is subordinated to ideology. The subordination of scientific knowledge to ideology is an idealist inversion that stands in opposition to philosophical materialism and thus the possibility of a correct, approximate reflection of objective reality.

In this chapter I begin by detailing the efforts of Black nationalist intellectuals during the 1970s to criticize "white ideology" or Eurocentrism in the social sciences. Next, I examine Patricia Hill Collins's effort to articulate an Afrocentric feminist epistemology. I provide a materialist philosophical critique of Collins's attempt to establish immediate experience as the criteria for what can and what cannot account for any and all theories, any and all claims for knowledge. I argue in defense of a materialist epistemology, or what is commonly referred to as a correspondence theory of truth.

The Ideology of Black Social Science

Once the authority of the bible was supplemented by the credibility of scientific explanations, the justification for racism became putatively scientific.[5] Since the antebellum period, Black intellectuals have fought against the rising tide of academic racism.[6] During the early twentieth century, many Black scholars saw academic racism as an unfortunate misadventure

in scientific progress. They did not necessarily make a connection between racism and the ideological foundations of bourgeois social science. Under the spell of empiricism, they devoted themselves to "setting the record straight" by accumulating factual (empirical) evidence for a scientific (objective) investigation and explanation of African American life and culture.

African American literary and historical societies sought to "uplift the race" against the rising tide of speciously scientific racism. The American Negro Historical Society of Philadelphia was organized in 1897, by a group of Black Philadelphians to document American American history and culture; the more influential Negro Society for Historical Research was started by John Edward Bruce and Arthur A. Schomburg in 1912; and the renowned Association for the Study of Negro Life and History was organized by Carter G. Woodson in 1915.[7] The philosophical import of such research institutions was an attack on racist or Eurocentric intellectual practices as false universality. This disclosure of false universality has as its ontological foundation the explicit rejection of any historical account wherein the representation of the African American presence is negated by being subsumed under a strictly white or Euro-American representation. Under such a representation, these scholars claimed, the historical and factual truth about the African American or even the Euro-American experience cannot be presented in its full integrity.

W. E. B. Du Bois's sociological investigations, for example, were a direct response to the work of bourgeois sociologists such as Columbia's founding sociology chair Franklin Giddings and his reactionary theory of "consciousness of kind."[8] Giddings was part of a larger trend in sociological approaches to race relations. He was known for his doctrine of the "consciousness of kind," which parallels Adam Smith's conception of "sympathy," or shared moral consciousness. For Giddings, "consciousness of kind," was an innate collective feeling of similarity and belonging, which forever determined race relations in society. By portraying Black people as American outcasts with a different "consciousness of kind," Giddings provided an academic defense of racial segregation. In response to Giddings's speculative abstractions, Du Bois sought to "put science in sociology" and study the concrete conditions of the African American experience.[9] Objective social scientific inquiry, from Du Bois's standpoint, must have "standards of ethics in research and interpretation."[10] Hume's law does not have a place in Du Bois's theoretical universe. In his ideological critique of bourgeois historians such as William A. Dunning and James F. Rhodes, Du Bois argues that there would never be a *science* of history until we have scholarly works that regard objective truth as more important than the defense of an unjustified belief (or, more accurately, propaganda).

The emergence of Black scholarly associations, such as the Bethel Literary and Historical Association (1881, Washington, DC), American Negro Historical Society (1897, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), the American Negro Academy (1897, Washington, DC), the Negro Society for Historical Research (1911, Yonkers, New York), the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (1915, Chicago, Illinois), and later the Association of Social Science Teachers (1935, Charlotte, North Carolina), were all in response to the racist presuppositions of the social sciences.[11] By 1938, a coalition of Black social scientists, with the aim of combating scientific racism, inaugurated the Howard University Studies in the Social Sciences.[12]

Following World War I, a bevy of new ideas emerged from the writings of Black intellectuals and scholars such as Ralph Bunche, Doxey Wilkerson, Abram Harris, W. T. Fontaine, L. D. Reddick, and Oliver Cox who were extremely critical of the ideological presuppositions of bourgeois social science. These "Young Turks" advocated for a shift to a leftist perspective as opposed to the dominant liberal perspective on the "Negro Question" in the social sciences.[13] In 1948, Oliver Cox's brilliant masterpiece *Caste, Class and Race* criticized—from a leftist perspective—idealist approaches to the discourse on racial inequality, particularly the caste school of race relations championed by Robert E. Park, W. Lloyd Warner, and Gunnar Myrdal. Cox offers a stinging indictment of Gunnar Myrdal's work *An American Dilemma*, labeling his work a "mystical" approach to race relations that avoids a class analysis of race relations in the United States.[14]

Published in 1944, Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* consisting of 45 chapters, combined with its 10 appendixes and 250 pages of notes, was considered to be a monumental study of American race relations. Despite the extensive attention paid to the political economy of racism, Myrdal conceptualizes racism as fundamentally a moral problem and analogous to the caste system in India. For Myrdal, racism constituted a troubling dilemma because of the failures of American society to live up to the ideals of "the American creed of liberty, equality, justice, and fair opportunity for everybody."[15] Rather than subject the American democratic creed—as embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution—to criticism, Myrdal assumes that the American polity was actually committed to the civic values of liberty, equality, justice, and fair opportunity for all. As Cox shrewdly observes:

> One primary objection to the use of the caste belief in the study of race relations rests not so much upon its scientific untenability as upon its insidious potentialities. It lumps all white people and all Negroes into two antagonistic groups struggling in the interest of a mysterious god called caste. This is very much to the liking of the exploiters of labor, since it tends to confuse them in an emotional matrix with all the people.

He continues:

> It thus appears that if *white people* were not so wicked, if they would only cease wanting to "exalt" themselves and accept the "American Creed," race prejudice would vanish from America.[16]

From Cox's standpoint, Myrdal's framework: (1) ignores the class nature of race relations, and, ultimately (2) mystifies the real determinates of racism in the United States, by framing race relations in terms of a caste system. For Cox, the origin and continued reproduction of racism has to be found in capitalist social relations of production and the dynamics of class struggle. As Cox observes:

> The caste system is not merely an attribute of society; it is itself a type of society. It will make no sense at all to speak of a caste society as an attribute of a capitalist society. These two are distinct social systems, with entirely independent cultural histories and with mutually antagonistic social norms. It is beyond all social logic, moreover, to conceive of a caste system developing spontaneously within a capitalist system.[17]

Moreover, Cox did not accept the view that working-class whites were the primary actors in the reproduction of racism. Cox argues, "In the South the ruling class stands effectively between the Negro and the white proletariat. Every segregation barrier is a barrier put up between white and black people by their exploiters."[18]

It is no exaggeration to say that Cox's socialist critique of Myrdal's argument parallels Karl Marx's materialist critique of classical (bourgeois) economics. In his historical research of political economy, Marx, for instance, consistently sought to unmask the link between the epistemological and social basis of various political economic theorists. Marx in his critique of classical economics noted that bourgeois economists (as the ideological representatives of the bourgeoisie) have a tendency to present the world upside down as in a *camera obscura*.[19] Bourgeois economists treat capitalism as a mode of production as if it is "the absolutely final form of social production" and "eternally fixed by Nature for every state of society."[20] As such, it is assumed that private property is natural and, therefore, there is no need to justify the private ownership of the means of production implicit in bourgeois social relations. Similarly, for Cox, the caste school of race relations, particularly Myrdal, provides an ideological mystification that hides the source of racism in capitalist social relations of production. Myrdal seeks to hide the realities of class conflict beneath the mystical veil of the American creed.

With the ending of World War II in 1945, the Cold War began and McCarthyism gained ideological hegemony. As African American historian

Clarence Lang convincing argues, "the early cold war era represented a nadir of black radicalism."[21] Anticommunist repression in the United States stalled and deformed the Black freedom movement and ultimately sidelined Black radical voices such as Maude Katz White, Ben Davis, William Patterson, Paul Robeson, Esther Cooper Jackson, Louise Thompson Patterson, Claudia Jones, and W. E. B. Du Bois in addition to Black radical organizations such as the Civil Rights Congress, National Negro Labor Council, Sojourners for Truth, and the Council on African Affairs.[22] Consequently, Black left-radical and Marxist thought was purged from Black political discourse. The decline of Black leftist thought and organizations, during this period, facilitated the reemergence of Black liberal cold warriors (who would play a seminal role in the burgeoning liberal Civil Rights movement of the early 1950s) and anti-communist Black nationalists such as John Henrik Clarke and Harold Cruse.[23]

In the late 1960s, the critique of the social sciences by Black intellectuals embarked on a new direction.[24] From the beginning of the Black Studies movement, various Black nationalist theorists argued for the need to develop a Black perspective and method of social scientific investigation, that is, a Black Social Science, free from Eurocentrism. These AAS proponents ultimately viewed mainstream social sciences as citadels of white supremacist ideology hiding under the veil of "value-free science." As the story goes, once the academy's whiteness was unearthed, it would reveal that traditional academic scholarship fostered and reproduced a white ideology. Thus, certain AAS proponents presumed that white ideology was synonymous with white supremacy. Some AAS advocates such as James Turner embraced a nationalist framework (or what today we refer to as racialist ideologies) in their ideological counterattack on white supremacy in the social sciences.

During this period, we find the issue of a Black perspective vis-à-vis a European worldview coming to the fore. Joyce Ladner declared "The Death of White Sociology" and Robert Staples wrote *The Introduction to Black Sociology*. Staples would write that "the purpose of Afro-American sociology is to study Black life and culture which when seen from a new Black perspective can serve to correct myths about Afro-Americans found in sociological literature."[25] Sociologists such as Nathan Hare and Delores Aldridge would also come to play a seminal role in the development of a Black Social Sciences.[26] These nationalist frameworks were the precursors to Asante's "Afrocentric Idea."

Ironically, the socialist activist and sociologist Abdul Alkalimat (Gerald McWorter) was at the vanguard of this trend. In his article, "The Ideology of Black Social Science," he vehemently argued:

> Our search for understanding through social analysis is conditioned by how we resolve several longstanding controversies, not the least of which is the

> relationship between ideology and science…this has all too often been resolved by Black intellectuals acquiescing to a white social science. *Many black social scientists seemingly have not really known the extent to which science is inevitably a handservant to ideology, a tool for people to shape, if not create, reality.*[27]

For Alkalimat, the subordination of science to ideology entails that all science is subjective in nature. Alkalimat's contention that "science is inevitably a handservant to ideology" is similar to Thomas Aquinas's position on the relationship between philosophy and theology. The reader may recall that Aquinas argued that philosophy is the handmaiden of theology; philosophy was to be the necessary servant, or handmaiden, of theology. In his efforts to synthesize Aristotelian natural philosophy with the Christian theology of Augustine, philosophy becomes an instrument of theology for Aquinas. Philosophy, from this standpoint, is capable of knowledge of god through reason as long as its knowledge of god complements the knowledge of god disclosed by faith and revelation.[28] In a similar vein, for Alkalimat, science becomes an instrument of ideology. The production of scientific knowledge is nothing more than "a tool for people to shape, if not create, reality." Science, from Alkalimat's standpoint, does not disclose how the world is independent of our subjective consciousness. Rather ideologies reign supreme over the facts associated with objective reality. If our reading of Alkalimat is correct, then objective truth never acts as a constraint to explain why scientific claims become accepted. If the truth of scientific claims doesn't explain why specific scientific claims are held, then the door is open for Alkalimat to argue that ideology drives scientific knowledge. Hence, we have Alkalimat's dismissal of objective truth.

Alkalimat's idealist error rests in his assumption that science is *nothing but* ideology. He fails to see that the epistemological content of scientific knowledge cannot be conflated with the sociology of knowledge. The origins of an idea, belief, or knowledge (i.e., the sociology of knowledge) doesn't determine the validity or veracity of an idea, belief, or knowledge (i.e., its epistemological content). While scientific knowledge flourished step by step with the development of capitalism and the flourishing of the bourgeoisie as a class, this does not mean that *all* scientific knowledge is bourgeois in nature. In a similar vein, all scientific knowledge is not a reflection of white supremacist ideology. To assume that it does, I argue, is to commit what is termed the genetic fallacy.[29]

It is the case that the contemporary production of scientific knowledge is in the service of capital. By this I mean, most scientific research done by professional scientists (in both the natural and social sciences) is directly or indirectly funded by capitalist corporations and the bourgeois State

(e.g., United States military, Pfizer, GlaxoSmithKline, National Science Foundation or the National Endowment for the Humanities). Despite the limitations imposed on the direction of scientific research by capitalism, we cannot ignore the fact that science has succeeded in vastly increasing our knowledge of nature, from subatomic particles to medicine to evolutionary biology to the sheer vastness of intergalactic space.[30]

While the Church would not allow scientific knowledge to pass beyond the boundaries of the bible, the rising bourgeoisie used the emerging social and natural sciences in their fight against feudalism and the Church, primarily in the development of the productive forces. So, while Isaac Newton's mechanical philosophy reflected the ideology of merchant capital, it cannot be reduced to that alone. Newton's theory of universal gravitation is much more than that. The social and economic context of late seventeenth-century England was crucial to the emergence of the theory of universal gravitation. As Boris Hessen notes, Newton's discovery would not have been possible without "the disintegration of the feudal economy, the development of merchant capital, of international maritime relationships and of heavy (mining) industry."[31] Feudal society in conjunction with the Church was a fetter on the advancement of scientific knowledge. My point is simply that the epistemological content and significance of Newton's theory of universal gravitation cannot be limited to its social (ideological) function or context.

So, despite its leftist appearance, Alkalimat's position stands in sharp contrast to Karl Marx. The unity of science and ideology, for Marx, is grounded in an ideology's capacity to approximate objective material reality correctly. Rather than the materialist position of knowledge as an objective reflection of material reality, with Alkalimat, we are left with a subjective idealist conception of knowledge. A materialist epistemology asserts that the object of cognition exists objectively, that is, independent of the subject. Whereas subjective idealism claims that the object of cognition does not exist in the objective world, but exists only as an idea within the consciousness of the subject. In other words, nothing exists except minds and spirits and their perceptions or ideas; the nature of the world is determined by my perception of it. Take the example of George Berkeley. His subjective idealism would not allow him to acknowledge the existence of an external, material world. Berkeley argued that matter did not exist because it can neither be perceived by the senses nor apprehended by the mind. Nothing can be held to exist apart from perceptions. And if "to be is to be perceived," unperceived material bodies do not exist. All that existed, for Berkeley, are "collections of ideas." To the extent that matter, material entities or "bodies unperceived" exist, they are ideas in the mind of god.[32] In reference to subjective idealism, Nkrumah astutely points out: "The distinction between

reality and appearance slips between the spectral fingers of idealism, for in idealism reality becomes merely a persistent appearance. In this way, idealism makes itself incompatible with science."[33]

The Afrocentric critique of Eurocentrism, which is primarily restricted to the social sciences, is a continuation of this *subjectivist* trend in AAS. With Asante, we are told: "Social science in the West is imperialistic, the disciplinary justification for expansion."[34] Asante also claims: "The Afrocentric perspective upholds the significance of science; indeed in the sense that it is based upon history and heritage; Afrocentricity is itself a science. Western science, with its notion of knowledge of phenomena for the sake of knowledge and its emphasis on technique and efficiency is not deep enough for our humanistic and spiritual viewpoint."[35] Unfortunately, Asante doesn't provide us with much more than an unsubstantiated claim about the pitfalls of "Western science."

Suffice to say, an ideological critique becomes the starting-point for the counter-hegemonic discourse of Afrocentricity. Once the empiricist façade of "value-free science" is exposed, we are supposed to see that all theories and methods are value-relative or subjective. This outright partisanship—or value-commitment—is subjectivist in nature. My charge of subjectivism results not from their partisanship but from the idealist epistemology and ontology of Afrocentricity. Our Afrocentrists conflate objectivity with "value-free science" and hence nonpartisanship; objective truth becomes nothing more than fool's gold. Consequently, all science is ideological. In opposition to Eurocentrism, Afrocentrists openly admit that their position is not "value-free" and their story about the world is their own version of the truth.

Toward an Afrocentric Feminist Epistemology

Assessing Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Thought*

Afrocentricity is committed to what is often referred to as standpoint epistemology, whereby notions of objectivity, objective truth, and scientific knowledge are replaced with epistemological relativism. Asante offers the following: "I have the insight that comes from being born black in the United States. That fact puts me in a critical mood within the intellectual and social milieu I share with Eurocentrists."[36] As such, we could infer that one's location or perspective (e.g., gender, class or race) determines one's access to knowledge about reality. Throughout his body of work, Asante gives voice to the view that all knowledge is particular and socially

situated. Being social situated ("being born black in the United States") gives Asante a privileged and ultimately universal standpoint from which to evaluate Eurocentrism. In this instance, Asante's Blackness (or African-centered) perspective gives him a better representation of reality. It is often repeated by our Afrocentrists that all knowledge is relative to a particular cultural matrix. Prior to Asante, James E. Turner, founder of the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University, put forward the following argument: "The theoreticians of Black Studies use the basic social science concept of the sociology of knowledge to explain the legitimacy of the idea that the position of Black people in the social structure not only offers peculiar insights but also represents a specific meaning about social truth. Furthermore, all knowledge is a perspective on shared experience."[37] Since all knowledge is the particular perspective of socially situated individuals, then all scientific knowledge (which is produced by individuals) is subjective. Eurocentric science, from the standpoint of Afrocentricity, is just another perspective employing various subjective devices of persuasion about their conception of reality. As Marimba Ani claims: "It is the myth of scientific objectivity that allows Europeans to speak for all of us."[38] So, the rhetoric of "scientific objectivity" functions as a smoke-screen to justify Eurocentric views and practices. In my estimation, Afrocentrists have failed to answer some complicated questions about why Afrocentrists have correct versions of how things really are, and why they are the only ones who enjoy this privileged position (or this "view from above").

Few Afrocentrists have attempted to go beyond mere assertions concerning the illusion of "scientific objectivity" in the social sciences. One of the seminal Afrocentric works, in my estimation, that goes beyond empty phrases is Patricia Hill Collins's *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and Politics of Empowerment* published in 1990. It represents the only effort to provide a sustained argument for an Afrocentric standpoint epistemology in contrast to the false universalism of "Eurocentric masculinist epistemologies." Her book is one of the few works dealing with epistemology in AAS. The scope of the book includes an indictment of white masculinist theories of power in addition to discussions of Black women's thought as subjugated knowledge, malestream social science, and positivism. In some Black feminist circles, I might add, it is beyond refutation.[39] Her work stands on the shoulders of Darlene Clark Hine and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn in addition to the groundbreaking work in Black women studies such as *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (1982) and watershed empirical works such as Deborah Gray White's *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (1985).

In this section, I focus my examination on her critique of positivism and her further efforts at the elaboration of an Afrocentric feminist epistemology

as a form of subjugated knowledge. My treatment of *Black Feminist Thought* is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to highlight points of epistemological significance for Black Studies. I do hope that I do justice to the richness of the Collins's discussion of Black women and the complexity surrounding the experiences of Black women. My critique should not be taken to diminish the significance of Black women's experiences for AAS, past, present, and future.

Black Feminist Thought is an attempt to evade positivism and embrace the broad postpositivist trend in contemporary social theory. Collins does not develop—in a straightforward manner—a systematic philosophical position. As she has noted, her project seeks to merge Afrocentricity, feminist theory, Marxist social theory, Peter Berger's sociology of knowledge, Frankfurt School of critical theory, and postmodernism. As such, her work comprises a rather eclectic mixture of mutually exclusive theses, propositions, and conjectures.

In all fairness to the reader, we should make note of the fact that Collins's merging of feminism and Afrocentricity has been criticized by Afrocentrists such as Ama Mazama and Molefi Asante. In 1993, Asante labels Collins as one of the "leading Afrocentric female thinkers" along with Carolyn Holmes, Kariamu Welsh Asante, Julia Hare, Linda James Myers, Vivian Gordon, and Dona Richards (Marimba Ani).[40] Yet, by 2007, Collins has been ex-communicated from the "Temple Circle" of Afrocentricity. Asante accuses Collins of "self-hatred," vulgar careerism and takes her to task for whitewashing Afrocentricity, by assigning "religious signification to the idea of African centeredness."[41] Despite their points of disagreements, Asante reluctantly agrees with her overall project of "building grounded knowledge claims that are socially situated" in *Black Feminist Thought*.[42]

The overall argument of *Black Feminist Thought* can be summarized as follows. All Black people share a "core African value system," or Afrocentric consciousness.[43] A shared experience of oppression in conjunction with their Afrocentric consciousness gives rise to a distinctive Afrocentric epistemology or standpoint. Because Black women have access to both the Afrocentric and the feminist standpoints, Black women's experiences give rise to an Afrocentric feminist epistemology or standpoint. As a result of their Afrocentric feminist epistemology, Black women have a cognitively privileged position in society, such that their knowledge is superior to white men's knowledge or what she terms "Eurocentric masculinist epistemologies." This privileged position is grounded in or generated by Black women's experience. Collins seeks to provide an epistemological foundation for an "Afrocentric feminist consciousness" that embraces both an Afrocentric worldview and a "feminist sensibility." An Afrocentric feminist epistemology calls into question the entire scientific enterprise and its underlying

metaphysics; it calls upon us to replace a white male-centered epistemology with an Afrocentric feminist one. By forging an "Afrocentric feminist epistemology," a self-defined standpoint will be developed that can produce a culture of resistance among Black women.[44]

There are six components to Collins's argument for an Afrocentric feminist epistemology. First, Collins claims that Black women—in their roles as mothers, "othermothers," teachers, and sisters—play a central role in the continuation of an Afrocentric worldview within Black communities. Collins argues: "For African-Americans this worldview originates in the Afrocentric ideas of classical African civilizations, ideas sustained by the cultures and institutions of diverse West African ethnic groups."[45] The adoption of an Afrocentric worldview enabled Black women to resist "negative evaluations of Black womanhood advanced by dominant groups."[46]

Second, Collins argues that knowledge production is intimately tied to networks of power relations, specifically male-dominated institutions. Since elite white male interest and worldviews dominate civil society, Black women are excluded from "social institutions of knowledge validation." Black feminist thought *qua* Black women's standpoints is dismissed as a legitimate forms of knowledge. Therefore, Black feminist thought is a form of subjugated knowledge. Collins joins Michel Foucault in calling for an "insurrection of subjugated knowledges."[47]

Third, Collins argues that "Eurocentric masculinist epistemologies," particularly positivism, are inadequate for the development of an Afrocentric feminist standpoint epistemology. Here it is important to note that Collins lumps realism, materialism, positivism, and pragmatism together as forms of "Eurocentric masculinist epistemologies." "Eurocentric masculinist epistemologies"—because of their commitment to objectivity qua value-neutrality—do not value a feminist ethics or what Collins refers to as an "ethics of care." Collins seeks to develop an ethics inspired by, or at least consistent with, the actual moral experience and intuition of Black women. She suggests that women's approach to ethics and their ethical priorities are different from those of men. She argues that "personal expressiveness, emotions, empathy are central to the knowledge validation process."[48] "Eurocentric masculinist epistemologies"—with its focus on "impersonal" methodological procedures for establishing truth—are antithetical to the Afrocentric view that "each individual is thought to be a unique expression of a common spirit, power, or energy inherent in all life."[49] Here Collins implicitly accepts Hume's fork, that is, the separation of facts and values. Rather than challenge the separation of values from science, Collins remains prisoner to the same conceptual scheme as her Eurocentric masculinist opponents.

Fourth, Collins starts from the empiricist presupposition that all knowledge has its origin in experience; or, as it is commonly expressed, knowledge

is socially situated. As Collins argues, "Just as the material realities of the powerful and the dominated produce separate standpoints, each group may also have distinctive epistemologies or theories of knowledge."[50] All standpoints or epistemologies reflect the particular interests of those who hold them, and a universal (i.e., objective) perspective does not exist. For Collins, science, objective truth, and scientific theory are all fundamentally expressions of the dominant hegemonic group, elite European (white) males.

Fifth, the everyday lives of Black women constitutes a "subjective shared experience of oppression" and provides Black women with a "unique angle of vision," standpoint or "Black feminist consciousness." This "unique angle of vision" or "Afrocentric feminist epistemology" is superior to "Eurocentric masculinist epistemologies."

And, lastly, the material conditions of Black women's lives, which inherently involves respectful and caring interaction with the physical world, provides a basis for a "new" epistemology, a "unique angle of vision," that is less oppressive and more caring.[51] There is a way of looking at morality that is characteristic of women and that is essentially different from the way men approach questions of morality. In short, women tend to exhibit the personal virtue of caring and responsibility for relationships, while men tend to exhibit a preference for a more impersonal focus on moral rules and principles.

We should note that Collins's framework implies the existence of biologically based difference between men and women. These ultimately irreversible biological differences give rise to differences in male and female experiences of the world, which, in turn, gives rise to different values, priorities, and standpoints. I agree with Margareta Halberg who argues: "Such views easily fall into mystifications about male rationality and female intuition, masculine clear thinking as opposed to feminine emotional thinking, without paying attention to the possibility of a dialectical interaction within the two sexes between the two principles—the masculine and the feminine."[52]

At the core of Collins's project is a generally hostile attitude toward what she terms the "Eurocentric masculinist knowledge validation process." The Eurocentric masculinist knowledge validation process is identified as those "institutions, paradigms and other elements of the knowledge validation procedure controlled by elite white men" with the purpose of representing a white male standpoint.[53] Black women are systematically excluded from various dimensions of the Eurocentric masculinist knowledge validation process (e.g., exclusion from quality educational institutions, influential academic positions, and credentialing processes).

The positivist model of science is the primary example of a Eurocentric masculinist epistemology that Collins targets.[54] For positivism, science is

generally understood to be value-free, atomistic, discovering causal laws of a "constant conjunction" model (whenever A happens, B happens), and able to express its results mathematically. These are supposed to be the characteristics of the natural sciences that have made them so successful, and positivists assumed that if the social sciences could only imitate the natural sciences, they would achieve similar success. Under this conception of science, the social sciences are necessarily a second-order enterprise.[55]

Collins argues that positivism, particularly its methodological approach, is not a viable option for an Afrocentric feminist epistemology. First, Collins argues that positivism, as a research method, requires distance, on the part of the researcher, from their object of study; good research requires the researcher to become a detached observer. In other words, the researcher, from a positivist standpoint, must be "objective" in order to safeguard against bias. Second, she claims that positivism ignores the fact that all knowledge is situated knowledge and, therefore, scientific knowledge expresses the Eurocentric, elite male standpoint. Third, for positivists, ethical values are considered to be inappropriate to the process of scientific research. Fourth, Collins informs us that "adversarial debates" are the "preferred method of ascertaining truth," in a positivist model of science. She claims, "the arguments that can withstand the greatest assault and survive intact become the strongest truths."[56]

We should note that Collins provides a rather weak caricature of positivism without any detailed attention to August Comte, A. J. Ayer, Bertrand Russell, Ernest Mach, logical empiricism or logical positivism. And, beyond this general caricature of positivism, we are left with a rather weak critique. As a matter of fact, a close reading reveals that Collins exhibits a level of ambiguity toward positivism. Collins informs us:

> The criteria for the methodological adequacy of positivism illustrate the epistemological standards that Black women scholars would have to satisfy in legitimating Black feminist thought using a Eurocentric masculinist epistemology . . . *[M]y focus on positivism should not be interpreted to mean that all dimensions of positivism are inherently problematic for Black women nor that nonpositivist frameworks are better.* For example, most traditional frameworks that women of color internationally regard as oppressive to women are not positivist, and Eurocentric feminist critiques of positivism may have less political importance for women of color, especially those in traditional societies than they have for white feminists.[57]

Despite Collins's presumption that Eurocentric and masculinist biases are intrinsic to positivism, we are informed that not "all dimensions of positivism are inherently problematic" for research on Black women and their experiences. How can this be? Is it not the case that Eurocentric masculinist

biases are necessarily antithetical to Collins's proposed Afrocentric feminist epistemology? If we examine this quote closely, Collins is concerned with the "methodological adequacy of positivism" for an Afrocentric feminist epistemology. Particularly, what epistemological standards or criteria do Black women scholars have to satisfy in order to establish a legitimate Afrocentric feminist epistemology? According to Collins:

> Black women scholars may know that something is true but be unwilling or unable to legitimate our claims using Eurocentric, masculinist criteria for consistency with substantiated knowledge and criteria for methodological adequacy. For any body of knowledge, new knowledge claims must be consistent with an existing body of knowledge that the group controlling the interpretive context accepts as true.[58]

Rather than utilize "Eurocentric, masculinist criteria" to justify Black women's "subjugated knowledges," Collins suggests that some form of intuitionism is central to Afrocentric feminist epistemology. Common sense and intuition allow Black women to "recognize connectedness as a primary way of knowing."[59]

Although Collins criticizes positivism, she gives primacy to lived experience as the (phenomenological) foundation of epistemology. Consequently, knowledge is restricted to the realm of phenomena, that is, to the appearances open to immediate experience. Collins's Afrocentric feminist epistemology consequently overlooks the essence behind our immediate perceptions. We are left with only phenomenal appearances.

We should not forget that positivism is a school of thought within empiricism, represented by Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill, Moritz Schlick, Rudolph Carnap, A. J. Ayer, and Bertrand Russell among others. Positivism has influenced a number of philosophers who wanted to make philosophy consistent with natural science. The positivists reasoned that if science is empiricist in nature then the only legitimate knowledge would be knowledge based on and limited by experience.[60] Empiricism is a philosophical view of the knowledge that claims all legitimate knowledge is restricted to experience and empirical verification. Empirical verification occurs when experience or experimentation is the test or proof of knowledge. Empiricism is a form of subjective idealism. It ontologically denies the existence of an objective reality and epistemologically discards the idea of objective truth. Collins's epistemological distance from positivism is not as far as it initially seems to be. Since Collins upholds the epistemological premise of phenomenalism, she is invariably caught in the web of empiricism. The differences between Hill Collins's phenomenology and positivism are ultimately reflective of distinctions *within* empiricism.

An Afrocentric feminist epistemology, for Collins, is grounded in the everyday (phenomenal) experiences of Black women.[61] Collins presupposes that epistemology should start from our lived experiences. Here she starts from the empiricist presupposition that all knowledge has its origin in experience; in other words, knowledge is socially situated. Collins implies that differences in experiences cause a parallel difference in terms of perceptions of reality. The different "web of experiences" we face cause or produce differential standpoints or epistemologies.[62] Each standpoint provides a "unique angle of vision" of the world. Each standpoint or epistemology gives us what I would describe as an immediate perception of the world.

Collins argues that an Afrocentric feminist epistemology enhances "our understanding of how subordinate groups create knowledge that fosters resistance."[63] She argues that Black people in general and Black women in particular have an innately superior cognizing apparatus and so can better know the world than the dominant group of elite white males. Black women have created—what Collins variously labels—an "independent standpoint," "a new angle of vision," or a body of subjugated knowledge concerning their oppression. On the basis of the following, Collins concludes: "People who are oppressed usually know it. For African-American women, the knowledge gained at the intersection of race, gender, and class oppression provides the stimulus for crafting and passing on the subjugated knowledge of a Black women's culture of resistance."[64] Here—we should note—Collins draws upon the French social theorist Michel Foucault's notion of subjugated knowledge; we will return to this particular point later.

In her effort to illuminate the particular epistemological standpoint of Black women, Collins draws on Afrocentricity as an epistemological foundation for her conception of "subjugated knowledges."[65] Asante's Afrocentric perspective gives voice to a particular way of knowing the world that is different from Eurocentric framework she argues. An African-centered perspective is basically a standpoint epistemology that replaces realism's accent on objectivity (universality) with a relativism that emphasizes particularity, the cultural perspective, the local, and the contingent. As we noted earlier Asante believes that "being born black in the United States" provides him with critical insights or knowledge about Eurocentrism.[66]

Yet, we should note that our particular experiences do not necessarily lead us to form *true justified beliefs* (i.e., knowledge) about the mechanisms of oppression and exploitation. To be sure, a worker definitely has different *experiences* from a capitalist—whether the capitalist is Black, white, Korean, Jewish, or Chinese, women, man, or homosexual. However, I would contend that all members of society, regardless of their gender, class, or racial positions, are subject to cognitive distortions (or false consciousness) about society. It does not follow from the fact that a person is a Black male worker

under monopoly capitalism or a female slave under capitalist slavery that they will develop an understanding the inner workings of capitalism vis-à-vis a capitalist textile factory owner or capitalist slave owner. Otherwise, what would be the value of theory?

Let us suppose that the positivist conception of "value-free science" is false. What are we going to put in its place? Collins argues that we have a choice between two "distinct epistemologies," "one representing elite white male interests and the other expressing Afrocentric feminist concerns." There can be no claims to objective truth; all we are left with are "versions of truth."[67] That is, distinctive epistemologies relative to each interpretive community. Collins explains:

> Those ideas that are validated as true by African-American women, African-American men, Latina lesbians, Asian-American women, Puerto Rican men, and other groups with distinctive standpoints, with each group using the epistemological approaches growing from its unique standpoint, thus become the most "objective" truths. Each group speaks from its own standpoint and shares its own partial, situated knowledge . . . Each group becomes better able to consider other groups' standpoints without relinquishing the uniqueness of its own standpoint or suppressing other groups' partial perspectives.[68]

Here Collins's "politics of difference" gives way to a self-defeating epistemological relativism. Collins's approach to epistemology is riddled with problems. Foremost, Collins's standpoint theory fails to address the nagging problem of relativism. A consistent relativism cannot raise objections to doctrines (such as Eurocentrism or masculinist epistemologies) that are blantantly anti-relativist, since the only way to reject them would be to renounce their relativism. As we demonstrated in chapter 2, contradictions arise with cultural relativism when fear of ethnocentrism makes the relativist abstain from criticism of other cultures or standpoints in the name of tolerance. In effect, this kind of relativism assumes that because everyone is or should be regarded as equal, the epistemological status of their beliefs must also be equal. This is just not true—pun intended. While everyone may have a right to his or her opinion, not every opinion is right![69]

If the positivist model of scientific knowledge is false, does it mean that the only cure is a thoroughgoing relativism? For the record, positivism is not the only game in town in the natural or social sciences. It is not the only conception of science. Marx's critique of bourgeois philosophy, political economy, and utopian socialism is the first stage leading to the affirmation of a dialectical materialist conception of science. Marx's rejection of empiricism, as the epistemological basis for science, is fundamentally a discarding of the empiricist premise—that science is exclusively descriptive and devoid of prescriptive tasks. The concepts of exploitation, class struggle, and the

theory of reification, for example, possess both a descriptive and normative (critical) aspect for Marx. After all, Marx made it very plain; *Capital* is *A Critique of Political Economy*. Hence, Hume's fork has no place at a Marxist dinner table.[70]

Collins, however, accepts the empiricist conception of science, particularly Hume's fork. According to David Hume and all of his progeny, it is logically inadmissible to derive a value judgment from a factual proposition or statement. For Hume, judgments of fact are independent of judgments of value. The social sciences are exactly like the natural sciences in that value judgments are not welcomed. Collins implicitly accepts the notion that there is a logical gap between "is" and "ought," factual and value statements. She fails to offer a critique of Hume's fork. While she rightly rejects the positivist notion of "value-free science," she, in turn, wrongly accepts the view that all science is bias and therefore subjective in nature, that is, distorted by our perception, description, or interpretation. For Collins, objective knowledge is not the outcome of scientific research. Rather, in Collins's hands, social scientific research becomes a purely subjective enterprise, determined by particular interpretive communities.

On the contrary, I would argue, in the course of scientific research, we are attempting to obtain an approximate, yet objective truth about the world. In a nutshell, the value of scientific objectivity becomes an epistemic virtue. Now, from a materialist perspective, entities, theories, and explanations are, in the last analysis, good or bad, adequate or inadequate, plausible or implausible, true or false, in terms of how they correspond to the actual, complex, stratified, partly imperceptible but discoverable world external to us. The question of our knowledge of the reality of the natural and social worlds is closely bound up with the question of the *rationality* of practices of research, explanation, and theory choice, and therefore the rationality of our *beliefs* about the world. In a manner of speaking, a materialist epistemology seeks to develop a dialectical relationship between theories, immediate sense perception, and objective reality. Nature and society exist independently of our consciousness and in ways that are not obvious to immediate sense perception. The objective complexity of the world has to be discovered through the mediation of theory and practice. This process of discovery requires a conceptual and methodological framework that informs us of the dialectical connection between theory, immediate sense perception, and objective reality. The production of scientific knowledge requires that we go beyond the boundaries of our immediate sense perceptions.

For those of us who want to understand the world systematically in order to change it, Collins's framework gives us little guidance. So, while Collins's subjective intention is to end oppression and exploitation, her intention is not carried out objectively in theory. Criticism of Eurocentrism in social

sciences has become reduced to complaints about who is making the truth claims, not about whether the *justifications* for the claims are objectively true. Here it is important to note that Collins's critique of positivism is not an external (or ideological) critique. Since Collins's shares the same empiricist commitments as other positivists, what occurs is—at best—an internal criticism of positivism from the standpoint of phenomenological empiricism.[71]

A materialist perspective rejects the popular idea (shared by some phenomenalists and empiricists as well as many nonphilosophers) that unexamined or unmediated sense perception gives us a reliable picture of the reality of the world. In my estimation, there is good reason to believe that the *perceived qualities* of an object or phenomena are not identical with the *real properties* of that object or phenomenon. Otherwise, as Marx famously observed, "all science would be superfluous if the outward appearances and the essence of things directly coincided."[72] Marx constantly sought to unveil the "hidden substratum," the "inner connections," the "intrinsic movements," the "inner structure," connecting the phenomena being investigated.[73] Scientific (objective) knowledge is the result of advancing from phenomenal appearances to the essence of an object or phenomenon.

Despite Collins's weak criticism of positivism, it is important to note that all theories—from positivism to Marxism to poststructuralism—can account for sexism or racism. For instance, conservative economists such as Gary Becker and, later, Thomas Sowell, in concert with Milton Friedman's neoclassical presuppositions, held that discrimination obstructs the market in the manner that tariffs abort the free flow of foreign trade. Racism is not seen as a product of capitalism but as a fetter to its full development.[74]

The same can be said of Marxism. Angela Davis examines the nature of women's oppression by consciously drawing on the works of Marx. Davis argues that seemingly unrelated "modes of oppression" are rooted in the increasingly "pointed and omnipresent fragmentation of capitalist social relations."[75] From a Marxist perspective, she argues, "the subjugation of women and their ideological relegation to the sphere of nature were wedded to the consolidation of capitalism."[76] In the concluding pages of her article, Davis pens the following:

> Within the existing class relations of capitalism, women in their vast majority are kept in a state of familial servitude and social inferiority not by men in general, but rather by the ruling class…The objective oppression of black women in America has a class, and also a national origin. Because the structures of female oppression are inextricably tethered to capitalism, female emancipation must be simultaneously and explicitly the pursuit of black liberation and of the freedom of other nationally oppressed peoples.[77]

Davis argues that the women's liberation movement must be committed to overthrowing capitalism as a mode of production. Davis's analysis is a direct continuation of the political organizing and theoretical works of "Red feminists" such as Claudia Jones, Esther Jackson, Shirley Graham Du Bois, Vicki Garvin, Charlene Mitchell, Martha Gimenez, and others.[78] The question still remains: confronted with rival theories and a certain body of evidence, how do we determine which theory is true? Should we accept Becker and Sowell's social explanation? Or is Davis's Marxist social explanation right? What becomes the criterion for determining truth and falsity? Or is one story as good as another?

Collins on Power

In this section, I examine how the production of knowledge is tied to the exercise of power in *Black Feminist Thought*. Collins's standpoint theory owes much to the French social theorist Michel Foucault.[79] Power is discursive in nature for Collins. So, social relations of production and social structures are greatly discounted in her social analysis. I argue that her idealist conception of power has dire political consequences, that is, political quietism.

From his studies of prisons, sexuality, and medical discourse, Foucault spent a considerable amount of time analyzing the relationship between knowledge and power. From a Foucaultian perspective, the analysis of power cannot start with the state apparatus, society's legal structures or the dominance of one class over and against others. Rather, as Foucault often says, modern power is a capillary form of domination.[80] That is, power does not emanate from some central source, but circulates throughout the body politic via a plurality of everyday micropolitics. This regime of power/knowledge comprises "micro-techniques," institutional practices, regimes of knowledge, forms of social and political constraint that are local, continuous, capillary, and exhaustive. The fullest account of the disciplinary origins of modern power can be found in volume one of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*. In this work, he discusses the modern macrostrategy of "bio-power," the management of the production and reproduction of life in modern society. Here Foucault turns his gaze on such issues as population, health, urban life, and sexuality, which are to be administered, repressed, and controlled. He also gives us his most succinct discussion of power. To correctly understand power, he argues, we have to focus on the "multiplicity of relations of force." Foucault argues:

> The condition of possibility of power . . . should not be sought in the primary existence of a central point, in a unique space of sovereignty whence would

> radiate derivative and descendent forms; . . . Power is everywhere: not that it engulfs everything, but that it comes from everywhere.[81]

Power is everywhere, and so ultimately nowhere. In the realm of political philosophy, Foucault argues, we need to displace our conception of power from any notion of the State, social relations, or social institutions. This approach forces us to focus on discourse (i.e., the attitudes and beliefs people hold) rather than the social structural relations that produce and reproduce power. This conception of power opens up the door for a focus on "identity politics" vis-à-vis class struggle as the basis for political struggle.[82]

Despite the "omnipresence of power" Foucault informs us: "Resistance is integral to power."[83] By disconnecting power from its social basis in capitalist exploitation, where an essential division between the powerful and powerless is materially determined, I agree with Stephen Tumino who astutely notes, Foucault's theory becomes "part of the dream of a perfectly governed utopia, albeit with the spectacle of resistance but, just the same, with no social revolutions."[84] Foucault's concept of power leads us down the intellectual road of political quietism and inertia; for the ultimate conclusion to Foucault's political odyssey was stoicism, that is, a subjectivist passivity in the wake of objective crisis.[85]

At no point in *Black Feminist Thought* does Collins suggest that Black women can be empowered by taking control of the bourgeois state apparatus or overthrowing capitalism. For Collins, class production relations cannot adequately explain power. Power is discursive in nature for Collins. Perhaps, this explains Collins's eagerness to erase Black women who are socialist/Communist from Black women's thought and practice. In fact, little value is placed on the diversity of ideological and political perspectives among Black women. The Black philosopher Joy James posits:

> Unfortunately, *Black Feminist Thought* also elides black female radicals. Reconstructing historical radicals as liberals, it deradicalizes militant women to generalize movement women activists as wedded to liberal politics. Collins redefines most forms of black women's anti-racist work, including social work, as "radicalism." In so doing, her text serves as a primary example for the erasure of the black women radical . . . Collins implicitly defines as revolutionary all black women who survive and thereby resist oppression, even if they do not engage in public activism or confrontation with the state.[86]

Collins's depiction of Black women's thought and practice is rather generic. By implication, all political and ideological tendencies among Black women are seen as radical or revolutionary. However, socialist and/or communist women are excluded from "Black feminist thought" precisely

because of their focus on empowering Black women by taking control of the bourgeois state apparatus or overthrowing capitalism.

Joy James highlights a crucial issue in determining the plausibility of Collins's project. If Black women's experiences constitute the ground for Black feminist thought, is Collins guilty of erasing the differences within Black feminist thought? Moreover, if it is recognized that there are various, and sometimes necessarily contradictory, "women's standpoints," how do we decide which one is the "real" Black women's standpoint? Collins's version of standpoint theory is problematic because it implies a misplaced essentialism in assuming that all Black women will necessarily have a shared standpoint, that is, a "Black feminist consciousness."

In the spirit of Foucault, Collins develops the notion of "matrix of domination" to underscore that one's position in society is made up of multiple standpoints as opposed to one essential standpoint. Taking a poststructural turn, Collins emphasizes the "interlocking" nature of the wide variety of social positions or identities (e.g., race, class, gender, nationality, sexual orientation) that make up our standpoint and, by extension, our oppression. The intersectionality of race, class, and gender is supposed to be analogous to the autonomous structures of racism, sexism, and "classism." So, our standpoint emerges from our fragmented identities that are, consequently, shaped by racism, sexism, and "classism." But what interests Collins the most is the manner in which intersectionality gives rise to different kinds of lived experiences, social realities, and power relations. Collins sees intersectionality working in tandem with a matrix of domination. In line with Foucault, she stresses that where there are sites of domination, there are also potential sites of resistance. Given the rival sets of experiences that constitute the subject, our experiences are oftentimes contradictory rather than complementary.

The concept of "intersectionality" is antithetical to a Marxist (class) analysis of racism and sexism. The supposed economic determinism of Marxism is replaced by a "politics of difference." Although class is included in the triumvirate of "race, class and gender," class is really displaced as another "difference." In such formulations, race and gender identities—as separate and autonomous spheres—are severed from the material context of class formation, capitalist social relations, class exploitation, and, ultimately, class struggle. A class analysis does not reduce all forms of oppression to class or "classism." Instead, it is a mode of analysis that renders capitalism as context and grounds for the explanation of racism and sexism on a materialist basis. Racism is not reducible to class relations. But, we cannot begin to understand the mechanism of racism and ultimately eradicate it without understanding and transforming its material and ideological grounds in capitalism.[87] This is born out in such works as *Class Struggle in France, 1848–1850*, *The*

Condition of the Working-Class in England, and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. The same can be said of works by Black historians in the tradition of Marx, Engels, and Lenin such as C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobin* and Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.[88]

In order to change the relations of domination (i.e., the oppression and exploitation which structure bourgeois civil society and our lives) we must understand how power works, and thus we need a viable theory of power. In class societies—it should be obvious but let me say it anyway—power is not distributed equally. Power is a structural relationship (usually mediated by way of the State) based on the "difference" between those who own the means of production (as a class) and those who do not own these means of production and, consequently, must sell their labor power in order to survive. Power, from this standpoint, functions to reproduce oppression and exploitation. To argue otherwise, as Collins does, results in blurring the fundamental (but not only) contradiction under capitalist societies.

Exploitation, from the standpoint of Marxism, derives from one's objective relations to the means of production where power is attached to owning the means of production. Because the working-class is not in possession of the means of production, they are subject to exploitation in the sphere of production. Black, Asian, Latino/a, and white—whether male or female—workers are exploited under capitalism.[89] But, not all Black people or people of color are subject to exploitation in the Marxist sense. Some Black people as a result of their relationship to the means of production are exploiters and oppressors. Here we could mention Kenneth I. Chenault (Chairman and CEO of American Express), Ursula Burns (CEO of Xerox), Rosalind G. Brewer (President and CEO of Sam's Club, a division of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.), Carl Horton (former CEO of the Absolut Spirit Company Inc.), or Robert Parsons (former CEO of AOL Time Warner).[90] Can we seriously claim that Powell, Barack Obama, Condoleezza Rice, Susan E. Rice, or even Oprah Winfrey are oppressed with respect to a white working-class male?

Rather than employ a materialist (structural) analysis of oppression and exploitation, with Collins, we are left with a culturalist narrative that reduces "such difference to a question of knowledge/power relations which can be 'dealt with' (negotiated) on a discursive level without a fundamental change in the relations of production."[91] We have an "ersatz politics" aimed at intervening at the level of ideas, that is, the sphere of cultural representation as an end in itself.[92] As John McClendon observes:

> [Collins'] epistemological position ushers in nothing less than a politics of compromise. Ostensibly the suggestion is a most debilitating political proposal, viz., pursue the politics of recognition. Moreover, the upshot of this epistemology of dialogical truth is not a politics of liberation but an ethics

> of reconciliation between the oppressed and the oppressors. In ideological terms, we are left with inept liberal moralism serving as a surrogate for political struggle, that is to say, political struggle guided by revolutionary theory and scientific epistemology.[93]

Collins's politics of compromise is a constitutive element of her Afrocentric feminist epistemology.[94]

Afrocentric Feminist Epistemology as Subjugated Knowledge

A Materialist Critique

In this section, I want to offer a materialist critique of Collins's Afrocentric feminist epistemology. I argue that Collins wrongly identifies social experience with theoretical reflection, wherein sociology of knowledge is identified with epistemology. Collins's standpoint theory only offers a description of immediate social experience. Consequently, Collins's phenomenalist approach does not disclose the underlying essential social relations giving rise to immediate (perceptual) experience. The immediacy of our perceptual experience does not constitute scientific knowledge.

Collins argues that the social (material) conditions of Black women's lives, which inherently involves respectful and caring interaction with the physical world on a daily basis, provides a basis for an epistemology, "unique angle of vision," that is less oppressive and more caring.[95] This "unique angle of vision" or "Afrocentric feminist epistemology" is grounded in the everyday lives of Black women. As Collins further observes:

> The unpaid and paid work that Black women perform, the types of communities in which they live, and the kinds of relationships they have with others suggest that African-American women, as a group, experience a different world than those who are not Black and female . . . [T]hese experiences stimulate a distinctive Black feminist consciousness concerning that material reality. In brief, a subordinate group not only experiences a different reality than a group that rules, but *a subordinate group may interpret that reality differently than a dominant group*.[96]

Black women have a "distinctive feminist consciousness" because their experiences are different from those of other people who occupy different positions, places, or spaces in the world. The particularity of Black women's

experiences, therefore, gives rise to a distinctive perspective or "subjugated knowledge" about reality. Not only does Collins argue for the distinctiveness of Black women's standpoint but also for its epistemic superiority. Collins argues that the dominated and marginalized—those in subaltern or subjugated positions—have an epistemic advantage in terms of understanding society, in that they are able to see things which are imperceptible (or not immediately apparent) to the dominant groups.[97] As we noted earlier, Collins claims: "People who are oppressed usually know it."[98] So, oppressed and exploited people are not blind to their oppression or exploitation.

The perspective that experience is sui generis of theory is a philosophical error rooted in empiricism. (The timeworn—yet popular—view that "I lived it so I know it" is an expression of vulgar empiricism.) Here Collins identifies social experience with theoretical reflection, wherein sociology of knowledge is identified with knowledge proper. The social context of knowledge is important; for a materialist analysis, it provides a means for uncovering the objective, material conditions for the genesis of certain forms of thinking and action. However, a description of immediate social experience is only, at best, phenomenalist and does not disclose the underlying essential social relations giving rise to immediate experience. A scientific, that is, materialist, epistemology requires the mediation of theory, in order to understand our immediate social experience. Our immediate experience will not disclose that the Sun is the center of our universe or the existence of subatomic particles.

The weakness of empiricism (and positivism as a form of empiricism) is that it begins with the legitimate notion that knowledge starts with experience and comes to the more general conclusion that knowledge is limited to experience. My critique of empiricism should not be seen as the rejection of what is a legitimate pursuit in AAS, that is, the undertaking of empirical science—both in their natural/physical and social forms. Rather, it is a critique of empiricism. Empiricism is not identical to engaging in empirical work. Just as living under capitalism does not necessarily make one a capitalist, engaging in empirical research does not necessarily make one an empiricist.

Let me offer the following example to further make my point. After a number of years, a worker in a factory would in all probability have a rich storehouse of (immediate) experiences concerning the working of the factory. Yet, by virtue of these (immediate) experiences in a factory, the same worker would not of necessity have a critical comprehension of capitalist political economy.[99] To conflate the *sociology of knowledge* and *epistemology* is to confuse the genesis of thought with its validity and veracity. Epistemology is distinct from the sociology of knowledge. It is concerned with the nature of knowledge or understanding what is the substance

(content) of knowledge. It is concerned with the justification of beliefs and what constitutes truth.[100]

The conflation of epistemology with the sociology of knowledge often leads to a reduction ad absurdum, namely, the validity and veracity of a given idea, or body of thought turns entirely on the social origins or sources of knowledge. This reduction is no more than the expression of a genetic fallacy. This fallacy is pervasive among those, in AAS, who desire to affirm that which is African/Black and negate that which is European/white on the basis of their respective points of social origin or "social situatedness."

In fact, being a member of a "subjugated group" does not mean that you will interpret reality differently from that of the hegemonic dominant ruling class. The so-called Reagan Democrats refers to traditionally Democratic voters, particularly white working-class Northerners, who defected from the Democratic Party and, in turn, supported Republican presidential candidates in 1980, 1984, and 1988 elections in the United States. The turn to the right by "Reagan Democrats" was greatly influenced by bourgeois ideology in the form of Nixon's concept of the "Silent Majority," television shows such as *All in the Family* and the overall structural crisis of capitalism in the late 1970s.[101]

It is important to highlight that, in any class-divided society, the ruling ideology is the ideology of the ruling class. Proletarian consent to the ruling ideas is in substance the subordination of objective proletarian interests to bourgeois ideology. This contradiction in objective conditions as reflected in subjective consciousness is directly manifested as proletarian false consciousness.[102] So, given the influence of white supremacist ideology, all white workers are not inherently racist in the sense of being active and organized proponents of racist ideology. Despite this fact, I would be remiss if I overlooked the fact that racist ideology has a definite influence on the social psychology of white workers, leading to certain beliefs, customs, and traditions as well as to spontaneous actions that are obstacles to class solidarity and the development of class consciousness and, yet, shared by the ruling class.

A clear example of this is the tragic Vincent Chin incident. On June 19, 1982, in Detroit, Michigan, Vincent Chin, a Chinese-American draftsman, was killed by two unemployed Euro-American autoworkers—Ronald Ebens and Michael Nitz. Before bludgeoning him to death with a baseball bat, they reportedly screamed racial obscenities and believing him to be Japanese blamed him for layoffs in the automobile industry.[103] Rather than see increasing unemployment as a structural contradiction of monopoly capitalism, resulting primarily from the trade and investment rivalry between United States and Japanese firms, auto workers such as Ronald

Ebens and Michael Nitz place the blame on some "Yellow Menace" taking jobs from American workers. Their immediate social experiences of the world obscured their perception of the objective world.

The origins of standpoint epistemology can be found in the empiricist errors of György Lukács's work *History and Class Consciousness*, particularly in his discussion of class-consciousness and the "standpoint of the proletariat." For Lukács, the shared collective consciousness of the proletariat becomes the basis for their designation as the gravediggers of capitalism by Marx. Lukács observes: "Only the consciousness of the proletariat can point to the way that leads out of the impasse of capitalism."[104] In a parallel move, standpoint epistemology gives "epistemological priority" to the "phenomenological experience of a specific collectivity."[105] As such, epistemology passes over into the sociology of knowledge. However, as Terry Eagleton astutely notes:

> For it is not in the first place the consciousness of the working-class, actual or potential, which leads Marxism to select it as the prime agency of revolutionary change. If the working-class figures as such an agent, it is for structural, material reasons—the fact that it is the only body so located within the productive process of capitalism, so trained and organized by that process and utterly indispensable to it, as to be capable of taking it over. In this sense it is capitalism, not Marxism, which "selects" the instruments of revolutionary overthrow, patiently nurturing its own potential gravedigger.[106]

There are "structural, material reasons" for Marx and Engels designating the working-class as the "prime agency of revolutionary change." In contrast, feminist and critical race theorists have found in Lukács's framework a critical standpoint from which to articulate forms of oppositional political subjectivity that no longer privilege the proletariat as "the identical subject-object of history." Consequently, we are left with communities that speak a different language and, ultimately, "incommensurable communities across which rational discourse is impossible."[107]

If *all* knowledge claims are partisan and partial, then it logically follows that *all* knowledge claims are equally valid. The obvious problem for Collins's relativism is the following: if all viewpoints or "situated knowledges" are equally valid, then there seems to be no reason why hegemonic perspectives (by white racist and sexist males) should be thrown out of the intellectual marketplace. Collins provides us with the view that reality is always subject to different descriptions or interpretations. There are as many valid "true" descriptions of the world as there are "language-games," "forms of life," or "cultural communities" in existence. Ultimately, our standpoint or "social situatedness" becomes the final arbitrator in all conflicts or disagreements,

whether epistemological, political, social, economic, or aesthetic. We should take note of the following commentary by Andrew Sayer:

> To note that a particular kind of knowledge comes from a particular culture or is associated with a particular subject position, does not entail that it is valid for or applies only to those who belong to the same originating social group. Acupuncture is Chinese in origin but it can also work on non-Chinese people, just as Western medicine can work on non-Western people. Similarly, French social theory cannot be discounted as only applicable within France! To be sure, there is no view from nowhere—all knowledge is social, situated, and contextual. But it does not follow from this that truth claims can only be applicable to the particular group who propose them.[108]

From the standpoint of Collins's Afrocentric feminist epistemology, both race and gender take on the power of epistemology and, consequently, make the rules for valid arguments. The problem with "malestream" social science is not merely that it is a masculine or Eurocentric view. Rather, the heart of the problem is that it does not offer a true, approximate reflection of the way the world is.

In Defense of Objectivity, Objective Truth, and Scientific Knowledge

The exact definition of what counts as objective truth or objectivity in the process of gaining knowledge is, of course, a matter of some debate. In our common usage of the word, an idea is objective to the extent that it is unpolluted by our individual's beliefs, value assumptions, or presuppositions. Before we flippantly discard the notion of objectivity, we must examine what counts as objectivity in the realm of epistemology. In this section, I offer a defense of objectivity qua objective truth. I argue that objectivity has three different meanings, which are commonly confused. I contend that these three meanings are logically independent of one another. The failure to disambiguate the meaning of objectivity has important epistemological consequences for scientific inquiry in AAS.

Andrew Sayer, in my estimation, has provided a useful typology by which to understand the various senses in which "objectivity" is used in scientific discourse. He distinguishes three connotations of the term, "objectivity." These three meanings are logically independent of one another. Yet, in many instances, people may intend more than one of the senses simultaneously. ***Objective***$_1$ refers to being value-neutral or value-free. ***Objective***$_2$

means the truth of a belief is determined by virtue of its correspondence to or reflection of material reality; that is, a correspondence theory of truth. Truth is an *objective* reflection of reality. Objectivity, in this sense, is a necessary condition for distinguishing scientific knowledge from all sorts of unjustified beliefs or opinions such as pseudoscience, myths, and astrology. ***Objective***$_3$ means pertaining to objects as distinct from subjects and refers to the nature of things regardless of what others may think about them. In other words, to speak of the world as objective simply means that there is a material reality that exists independent of the subject or our consciousness of it. In this sense, objective (scientific) knowledge is knowledge, which is not only independent of our consciousness, but also an approximate reflection of objective reality.[109]

As we have seen, Collins's Afrocentric feminist epistemology conflates **Objective**$_1$ and **Objective**$_2$.[110] Once Objective$_1$ and Objective$_2$ are conflated, we assume that Objective$_1$ (true) statements about the world entail that those statements must be value-free. Marxism resolutely rejects Objective$_1$. From a Marxist perspective, as Terry Eagleton rightly observes, "Objectivity and partisanship are allies, not rivals."[111] If it is true that a particular social structure or ideology is racist, then it has to be objectively true. It is not just my opinion, or yours. The truth of this statement is contingent upon the objective material world. That is to say, the objective nature of knowledge and its truth derive ontologically from material reality and subsequently empirically verified by social practice and experimentation.

As the foregoing sections have demonstrated, it is commonplace to hear Afrocentrists reject the term "objectivity." With the possible exception of Collins, no Afrocentrists has provided a sustained argument for this thesis. A small library of books and articles has been produced by Afrocentrists, rehearsing the same thesis over and over again. The Afrocentrist Philip T. K. Daniel writes, "The whole emphasis on objectivity and empirical theory as opposed to normative theory is out of place in Black Studies and the arguments concerning it should be dropped."[112] The Afrocentrist Ruth Reviere points out:

> Objectivity is an impossible standard to which to hold researches; rather, researchers should be judged on the fairness and honesty of their work . . . the researcher should present sufficient information about herself or himself to enable readers to assess how, and to what extent, the researcher's presence influence the choice, conduct, and outcomes of the research . . . The inclusion of the personal is therefore necessary for Afrocentric research.[113]

Here Reviere takes objectivity to mean value-neutrality. Any pretense of objective scholarship serves to camouflage the promotion of European

particularity under the guise of universalism. Asante offers the following: "The Afrocentricist does not accept the European concept of objectivity because it is invalid operationally . . . Therefore, it may not serve any useful purpose to speak of objectivity and subjectivity as this division is artificial in and of itself."[114] Yet, we also find Asante claiming that:

> [Afrocentricity] is a difficult analytical method, fraught with pitfalls, detours, and intellectual seductresses and seducers. Yet it is a worthwhile method, perhaps the only valid method, for a proper understanding of *our objective reality*.[115]

We should note that Asante blatantly contradicts himself here. He cannot, on the one hand, dismiss objectivity as European subjectivity and, on the other hand, argue that an Afrocentric method is "the only valid method, for a proper understanding of our objective reality." Asante is quick to assert that an Afrocentric perspective is based on intellectual integrity, a "language of truth," and "an absolute commitment to the discovery of *truth*."[116] Asante claims that scholars committed to Afrocentricity must maintain "intellectual vigilance" against all false scholarship that ignores the truth concerning the origins of civilization in the highlands of East Africa.[117] So, a commitment to Afrocentricity entails uncovering all falsehoods about Africa.[118] Afrocentricity, Asante informs us, is "a truth, even though it may not be their [i.e., Europeans] truth."[119] He even asserts *universal* (objective) truths such as the following: "We *know*, for example, that in one biological sense all humans are Africans since we all possess the mitochondrial DNA of an African woman who lived 200,000 years ago."[120] How are we to make sense of these claims to truth on the part of Asante and other Afrocentrists? Is Asante trying to have his cake and eat it too? Or is this an instance in which we have to accept Asante's assertion that "the logic of Afrocentricity" is "non-contradictory"?[121] What constitute "canons of proof" or "structures of truth" for Afrocentricity?[122]

The Afrocentric critique of objectivity and objective truth is premised on a positivist conception of science such that "objectivity is equated with neutrality, a placeless, detached, presumably cruel and classifying normative gaze."[123] This supposed orthodox view of science as value-free is based on what has become an article of faith for the entire empiricist tradition, that is, Hume's fork. The English philosopher David Hume argues that there is a fundamental logical gulf between statements of what *is* (has been or will be) to be the case and statements of what *ought* to be the case. Consequently, it is logically inadmissible to make a transition from statements of value (prescriptive) to statements of fact (descriptive), or vice versa.

One of the insightful questions, we must answer is, what must the world be like for science to be possible? I tend to agree with Roy Bhaskar who

argues: "Most scientists would subscribe to being scientific realists in the sense that they accept that the theoretical terms they employ possess real referents independently of their theorizing."[124] Here Bhaskar suggest that scientists are *spontaneous realist*. Bhaskar argues that scientist engaged in scientific research necessarily makes certain metaphysical and epistemological realist presuppositions. The production of scientific knowledge presupposes the existence of an objective world in both its natural and social dimensions.[125]

Bhaskar's point holds true in AAS. The discovery of the truth about the African American experience in its complex and contradictory development, in all its infinite diversity, is necessarily bound up with a conception of truth as objective knowledge. Objectivity is a necessary condition, a determining characteristic of truth. This conception of truth expresses the dialectical character of truth. By the dialectical character of truth, I mean (a) truth is a process of scientific cognition, not an absolute accumulation of "dead facts," and (b) truth is an approximate, objective reflection of the material world. Scientific (objective) knowledge does not stop at understanding the world in its past and present state, but also its future process of development. From the standpoint of dialectical materialism, the universality of truth is based on the ontological principle of the unity of the existence of the world, a unity implied in its materiality as infinite, eternally existing, and developing matter. This unity is naturally manifested in the infinite diversity of phenomena and processes, but it is the material unity of reality that forms the objective ground for the universality of truth.[126]

From a materialist philosophical perspective, the commitment to objectivity has four implications. First, objectivity is not identical to nonpartisanship or "value-free science." Second, the truth of a belief is determined by virtue of its correspondence to or reflection of material reality; that is, a correspondence theory of truth. Take, for example, the following statement: "the electron forms part of the structure of the atom of any element." The objective truth of this statement derives from its correspondence to an objective reality, from the state of things that exists independently of the consciousness of the people who seek to know it. Objective$_2$ is a necessary condition for distinguishing scientific knowledge from all sorts of other unjustified beliefs such as the existence of ghosts, astrology, the Loch Ness monster, or even the "Willie Lynch" letter.[127] Third, thought (or consciousness) reflects rather than constitutes the objective, material world. Fourth, as an essential complement to the correspondence theory of truth, to speak of the world as objective simply means that there is a material reality that exists independent of our consciousness of it. Once again, objective (scientific) knowledge is knowledge that is not only independent of our consciousness, but also an approximate reflection of objective reality.[128] Although we grant (especially in

light of further research and discovery) that such knowledge is approximate, we also recognize that our scientific knowledge is not absolute. It is open to revision. In other words, "to know" is not the same as to be "absolutely certain." Here objective knowledge is not identical to absolute knowledge qua Cartesian certainty. Consequently, objective knowledge is fallible. As Lenin notes: "In the theory of knowledge, as in every other branch of science, we must think dialectically, that is, we must not regard knowledge as ready-made and unalterable, but must determine how *knowledge* emerges from ignorance, how incomplete, inexact knowledge becomes more complete and more exact."[129] The objective character of scientific knowledge does not rule out the fact that we can gain deeper, more comprehensive insights into the material world and its laws of operation.

How can the relativist argument of an Afrocentric feminist epistemology be squared with the many truths about the natural and social world—that we know—on every scale from the subatomic to the social world? Do microscopic objects such as atoms, genes, or molecules objectively exist? These truths hold nonetheless, independently of our limited perceptual, cognitive, or epistemic powers. Alex Callinicos comments are most apropos:

> The criteria for determining which out of a set of competing discourses approximates most closely to the truth must be objective ones applicable to all discourses. Questions of political or ethical *preference* must be ruled out of order. Epistemology is normative only in the sense of evaluating discourses in terms of their relation to the truth. Furthermore, discourses must be judged from the standpoint of whether they add to, or at least seek to add to, our knowledge of reality.[130]

Without a concept of objectivity, truth becomes an empty concept. To paraphrase the epigraph from Norman Geras: If there is no objective truth, there is no injustice to speak of.[131]

Eschewing the notion of objective truth, social scientific investigation becomes restricted to an interpretive (subjective) understanding of social phenomena. Consequently, in typical neo-Kantian fashion, we are left with the proposition that the objective world is unknowable because all we can know are the immediate phenomenal appearances. From this standpoint, as Marx notes: "Scientific truth is always paradox, if judged by everyday experience, which catches only the delusive appearance of things."[132] Consequently, the writing of history would be indistinguishable in principle from writing a novel about the past. While a historical novel such as Lawrence Hill's *The Book of Negroes* may be an imaginative reconstruction of historical facts, it is not history proper. Unlike Gerald Horne's historical work *The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of*

the United States of America, we do not expect to find annotated endnotes, arguments about the strength and weaknesses of its sources, or discussions about problems in interpreting historical evidence. Hill's novel is a work of fiction, whereas Horne's work is a product of historical research. My comments in no way should imply that there is no value to Hill's novel. Rather, my point is that when writing history or doing social scientific inquiry, it is simply impossible to avoid asserting the truth of historical or social science explanations. To say that something is *known* implies that it is known to be true; that is, it is a justified true belief. To maintain the plausibility of claims about ancient African cultures and societies or the origins of humanity in Africa or slavery, we have to adhere to notions of rationality, epistemic justification, objectivity, and truth. This does not mean that historical claims or social scientific investigations are infallible.

To criticize the natural and social sciences for being Eurocentric—or a false universal—is effectively to say that this is not how the world is independent of our consciousness. If this is the case, the way the world is must in some way be independent of the Eurocentric frame of reference. To highlight the social character of knowledge does not mean that there are a multiplicity of contradictory, yet true claims about the world. Moreover, the truth or falsity of a claim is independent of being European or African. As I observed in chapter 2, Europe and Africa per se are value neutral. By that I mean sociocultural phenomenon emanating out of Europe and Africa, by virtue of their genesis, are neither endemically nor intrinsically good or bad, progressive or reactionary, beautiful or ugly.

Truth in science is not just the truth of facts. It is also the truth of theories. Robert Solomon and Kathleen Higgins note: "It would be a very limited and boring science, indeed, that did nothing more than collect large numbers of facts and compile them into a encyclopedia compendium. Chemistry would be nothing but an enormous laboratory and catalog filled with specimens and names of different substances. Biology would be nothing but garden tending and zoo keeping."[133] A scientist without a valid theory and methodological approach for guidance would make few scientific discoveries. Like a child with a new chemistry set, of course, a chemist could just throw together substance, one after another and see what happens. But in addition to being dangerous, this would be an aimless intellectual exercise similar to ejaculation. It would produce very little in the realm of scientific knowledge.

The empirical facts may serve to confirm or disprove the various theories put forward by scientists to explain both the natural and social world. However, the interpretation of facts is contingent upon theory and method. One's theoretical framework and methodological commitments greatly shape one's interpretation of the facts. There is no way around it. Facts are interpreted according to theories.

Conclusion

In contrast to Afrocentricity, the subject matter under investigation in AAS is not identical with the method of investigation. What determines the theory and method of AAS is the intellectual outcome of a specific epistemological and scientific investigation. Hence, the Afrocentric notion regarding an Black epistemology and science has to be rejected. The appellations of African, Africana, African-American, or Black, from a materialist perspective, do not constitute a description of the method or theory of AAS. The subject matter of investigations and the methods of investigation are qualitatively distinct dimensions in our analysis.

Similar to any brand of epistemological anti-realism, Afrocentricity consistently denies the possibility of attaining objectivity and objective truth in AAS. They deny the possibility of objectively describing and explaining how the world is, and, yet, they can't resist telling us how the world actually is! Any philosophy of AAS worth its salt should reject the strong tonic recommended by our Afrocentrists and other "friends of the people" to correct the Eurocentrism within the humanities and social sciences. There is no alternative but to openly stand on the side of science, scientific knowledge, and objective truth.

Notes

Introduction

1. Perry A. Hall, *In the Vineyard*: *Working in African American Studies* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 17.
2. Naomi Schaefer Riley, "The Most Persuasive Case for Eliminating Black Studies? Just Read the Dissertations," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (April 30, 2012). http://chronicle.com/blogs/brainstorm/the-most-persuasive-case-for-eliminating-black-studies-just-read-the-dissertations/46346 (last accessed December 7, 2014).
3. William R. Jones, "The Legitimacy and Necessity of Black Philosophy: Some Preliminary Considerations," *The Philosophical Forum* 9(2–3) (Winter–Spring 1977–1978), 149.
4. Ibid., 149.
5. Joseph Neff and Dan Kane, "UNC Scandal Ranks Among the Worst, Experts Say," *Raleigh News and Observer* (Raleigh, NC) (October 25, 2014). http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/10/25/4263755/unc-scandal-ranks-among-the-worst.html?sp=/99/102/110/112/973/. This is just one of many recent instances of "academic fraud" and sports that include Florida State University, University of Minnesota, University of Georgia and Purdue University.
6. Robert L. Allen, "Politics of the Attack on Black Studies," in *African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 594.
7. See Shawn Carrie, Isabelle Nastasia and StudentNation, "CUNY Dismantles Community Center, Students Fight Back," *The Nation* (October 25, 2013). http://www.thenation.com/blog/176832/cuny-dismantles-community-center-students-fight-back# (last accessed February 17, 2014). Both Morales and Shakur were former CCNY students who became political exiles. Morales was involved with the Puerto Rican independence movement. He was one of the many students who organized the historic 1969 strike by 250 Black and Puerto Rican students at CCNY that forced CUNY to implement Open Admissions and establish Ethnic Studies departments and programs in all CUNY colleges. Shakur was a member of the Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army. For more information about Assata Shakur, see Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill, 1987).

See also, Joy James, "Framing the Panther: Assata Shakur and Black Female Agency," in *Want to Start a Revolution?: Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle*, ed. Dayo F. Gore, Jeanne Theoharis, and Komozi Woodard (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 138–160.

8. Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee, "Defend the Guillermo Morales/Assata Shakur Community Center," (October 28, 2013) http://revolutionarystudents.wordpress.com/2013/10/28/defend-the-guillermo-morales-assata-shakur-community-center/ (last accessed December 7, 2014).
9. African American philosophers like John McClendon and Charles Frye have done groundbreaking work on the philosophy of AAS. See Charles Frye, *Towards a Philosophy of Black Studies* (San Francisco, CA: R and E Research Associates, 1978); Charles Frye, "The Role of Philosophy in Black Studies," *Contributions in Black Studies* 4 (1980), 65–74; John H. McClendon III, "Materialist Philosophical Inquiry and African American Studies," *Socialism and Democracy* 25(1) (2011), 71–92; John H. McClendon III, "On the Dialectical Relationship of Philosophy to African-American Studies: A Materialist Assessment on The Black Scholar and Its Intellectual Legacy," *The Black Scholar* 43(4) (2013), 108–116; John H. McClendon III, "The Afro-American Philosopher and the Philosophy of the Black Experience: A Bibliographical Essay on a Neglected Topic in Both Philosophy and Black Studies," *Sage Race Relations Abstracts* 7 (1982), 1–51.
10. For a materialist examination of Blackness, see John H. McClendon, "Act Your Age and Not Your Color, Blackness as Material Conditions, Presumptive Context, and Social Category," in *White on White/Black on Black,* ed. George Yancy (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 275–295.
11. Molefi K. Asante, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* (Revised and Expanded) (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 2003), 55. All citations will be from this edition unless otherwise stated.
12. McClendon, in *White on White, Black on Black*, 284.
13. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 223.
14. Jennifer Jordan, "Cultural Nationalism in the 1960s: Politics and Poetry," in *Race, Politics, and Culture: Critical Essays on the Radicalism of the 1960s*, ed. Adolph Reed (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 34.
15. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Germany Ideology* in *Collected Works*, Vol. 5 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), 31.
16. This is important to understand. Religion and mythology accept what is habitual or traditional based on the principle of authority. The tribunal of reason is sacrificed on the basis of the authority of the gods. In the specific instance of religion, the authority of a given individual (e.g., Jesus, Buddha or Muhammad), institution (e.g., the Roman Catholic Church) or religious text (e.g., the Qur'an or the bible(s)) gives authority to our claims, which we then accept primarily on the basis of *faith*, or unjustified belief. So, while religion and mythology are forms of social consciousness, however, all forms of social consciousness are not philosophical consciousness.
17. Oftentimes, philosophy is seen as any activity in which we engage in introspection, contemplation and speculation. I want to submit that this is not

necessary philosophy. Philosophers do engage in such activities; however, these activities are not a necessary and sufficient condition for being classified as a philosopher. In folklore, proverbs and wives tales, we find, for example, gems of wisdom, but this does not necessarily constitute philosophical labor. See Paul Gomberg, *What Should I Believe? Philosophical Essays for Critical Thinking* (Buffalo, New York: Broadview Press, 2011).

18. T. Oizerman, *Problems of the History of Philosophy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), 148. See also, T. I. Oizerman, *The Main Trends in Philosophy: A Theoretical Analysis of the History of Philosophy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1988).
19. Paulin Hountondji, "What Can Philosophy Do," *Quest: An International African Journal of Philosophy* 1(2) (1987), 18.
20. Holmes' three articles are: "The Main Considerations of Space and Time," *American Journal of Physics* 18(9) (1950), 560–570; "The Kantian Views of Time and Space Reevaluated," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (1955), 240–244; and "Philosophical Problems of Space and Time," *Science and Society* 24(3) (1960), 207–227. See John H. McClendon, "Eugene C. Holmes: A Commentary on a Black Marxist Philosopher," in *Philosophy Born of Struggle*, ed. Leonard Harris (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1983), 36–50.
21. A. J. Kershaw, "Evolution: Its Darwinian and Jordanic Theories Compared," *The A.M.E. Church Review* 14(4), (April 1898), 495–502; Edward A. Clarke, "Evolution: God's Method of Work in His World," *The A.M.E. Church Review* 15 (January 1899), 729–733. See also, Lawrence S. Little, "The African Methodist Episcopal Church Media and Racial Discourse, 1880–1900," *The North Star: Journal of African American Religious History* 2(1) (Fall 1998), 1–14.
22. Louis Althusser, *Philosophy and the Spontaneous Philosophy of the Scientists & Other Essays* (New York: Verso, 2011), 88.
23. John H. McClendon, Phone Interview with Author, March 27, 2015. See "Earl E. Thorpe to Mr. William C. Turner, January 14, 1976," Department of African and African American Studies Records, Duke University Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.
24. For a penetrating critique of the "underclass thesis" and the value assumptions that undergird it, see Adolph Reed, *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 179–196.
25. See John Arena, "Bringing In the Black Working Class: The Black Urban Regime Strategy," *Science & Society* 75(2) (April 2011), 153–179.
26. Robert L. Allen, "Politics of the Attack on Black Studies," in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2001), 496. This article originally appeared in *The Black Scholar* September 6(1) (1974), 2–7.
27. In Hegel's *Logic*, he makes a point about a "presuppositionless" starting point for philosophy. Hegel confronted a paradox of sorts. Philosophy, unlike other sciences, is not entitled to make assumptions or presuppositions. And, yet, it seems inevitable to assume certain concepts, propositions, or methods of procedure. See Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic,*

with the Zusätze: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze. Translated by Théodore F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1991). See also Paul Ashton, "The Beginning before the Beginning: Hegel and the Activation of Philosophy," *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 3(2–3) (2007), 328–356.

28. C. L. R. James, "Black Studies and the Contemporary Student" in *At the Rendezvous of Victory*, ed. C. L. R. James (London: Allison & Busby, 1984), 191–192.
29. C. L. R. James, "Revolution and the Negro" in *C. L. R. James and Revolutionary Marxism: Selected Writings of C. L. R. James 1939*–1949, ed. Scott McLemee and Paul Le Blanc (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1994), 77; italics added. Also in the same collection read, "The Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Problem in the United States," originally written in 1948. Also see Glenn Richards, "C.L.R. James on Black Self-Determination in the United States and the Caribbean," in *C. L. R. James: His Intellectual Legacies*, ed. Selwyn R. Cudjoe and William E. Cain (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 320–326.
30. See C. L. R. James, *A History of Pan-African Revolt* (Washington, DC: Drum and Spear Press).
31. See, "*THE BLACK SCHOLAR* Interviews: C.L.R. James," *The Black Scholar* 2(1) (1970), 35–43; C. L. R. James, "Presence of Blacks in the Caribbean and Its Impact on Culture," in *At the Rendezvous of Victory* (London: Allison & Busby, 1985).
32. See Alex Dupuy, "Toussaint-Louverture and the Haitian Revolution: A Reassessment of C.L.R. James's Interpretation," in *C. L. R. James: His Intellectual Legacies*, ed. Selwyn R. Cudjoe and William E. Cain (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 106–117.
33. Ibid., 116n1.
34. Ibid., 116n1.
35. Ibid., 116n1.
36. See also C. L. R. James, "The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery: Some Interpretations of Their Significance in the Development of the United States and the Western World," in *A Turbulent Voyage: Readings in African American Studies*, ed. Floyd W. Hayes III (San Diego, CA: Collegiate Press, 1992), 213–236.
37. Langston Hughes, "Air Raid over Harlem," in *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, ed. Arnold Rampersad (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 186.
38. Brian Lloyd, *Left Out: Pragmatism, Exceptionalism, and the Poverty of American Marxism, 1890–1922* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 3.
39. Molefi K. Asante, "Harold Cruse and Afrocentric Theory," in *Harold Cruse's the Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, ed. Jerry Watts (New York: Routledge, 2004), 235.
40. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1 (New York: International Publishers, 1984), 712.
41. Henry Wiencek, *Master of the Mountain: Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012), 251.

42. Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007); Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440–1870* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997)
43. On the concept of release time, see John H. McClendon and Stephen C. Ferguson, *Beyond the White Shadow: Philosophy, Sports and the African American Experience* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt, 2012), particularly chapter 2, "The Emergence of the African American Athlete in Slavery: A Materialist Philosophical Perspective."
44. See Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1978; and John Lovell, *Black Song: The Forge and the Flame; the Story of How the Afro-American Spiritual Was Hammered Out.* New York: Macmillan, 1972
45. Karl Marx, "Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right (1843)," in *Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1975), 182.
46. Robert S. Wachal, "The Capitalization of Black and Native American," *American Speech* 75(4) (2000), 365. For a further discussion of this issue, see John H. McClendon, "Black/Blackness: Philosophical Considerations," in *Encyclopedia of the African Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Culture*, Vol. 3, ed. Carol Boyce Davies (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 198–203; and and Richard B. Moore, "The Name 'Negro'—Its Origin and Evil Use," in *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem: Collected Writings, 1920–1972*. Edited by W. Burghardt Turner and Joyce Moore Turner (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1988), 223–239.

1 Class Struggle in the Ivory Towers

1. See Jewel Graham, "Remarks for Panel on Black Studies," Annual Meeting of the American Orthopsychiatric Association, San Francisco, CA. March 23–26, 1970. http://antiochcollege.org/antiochiana/songs_from_the_stacks/remarks-panel-black-studies (Accessed May 15, 2014).
2. See Armstead L. Robinson, *Black Studies in the University: A Symposium* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).
3. E. H. Carr notes in reference to Cleopatra's nose: "This is the theory that history is, by and large, a chapter of accidents, a series of events determined by chance coincidences and attributable only to the most causal causes." See E. H. Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 128.
4. In the Introduction to Karl Marx's *Class Struggle in France 1848–1850*, Engels observes: "The materialist method has here often to limit itself to tracing political conflicts back to the struggles between the interests of the social classes and fractions of classes encountered as the result of economic development, and to show the particular political parties as the more or less adequate political expression of these same classes and fractions of classes." See Karl Marx, *Class Struggle in France, 1848–1850* (New York: International Publishers, 1986), 10.

5. John Arena, "Bringing in the Black Working Class: The Black Urban Regime Strategy," *Science & Society* 75(2) (April 2011), 156.
6. As Karl Marx observes: "I paint the capitalist and the landlord in no sense *couleur de rose* [i.e., seen through rose-tinted glasses]. But here individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class-relations and class-interests. My standpoint, from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them." See Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1 (New York: International Publishers, 1967), 20–21. For discussions of class analysis, see Nicos Ar. Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (New York: Verso, 1987); Scott G. McNall, Rhonda F. Levine, and Rick Fantasia, *Bringing Class Back in Contemporary and Historical Perspectives* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991); Rhonda F. Levine, *Enriching the Sociological Imagination: How Radical Sociology Changed the Discipline* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005). For Marxist works on social movements, see Peter Alexander, "Rebellion of the Poor: South Africa's Service Delivery Protests—A Preliminary Analysis," *Review of African Political Economy* 37(123) (2010), 25–40; Colin Barker and Gareth Dale, "Protest Waves in Western Europe: A Critique of 'New Social Movement' Theory," C*ritical Sociology* 24(1–2) (1998), 1–2; Colin Barker, "Some Reflections on Student Movements of the 1960s and Early 1970s," *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* 81 (June 2008), 43–91; Satnam Virdee, "A Marxist Critique of Black Radical Theories of Trade-Union Racism," *Sociology* 34(3) (2000), 545–565; Alf G. Nilsen and Laurence Cox, "What Would a Marxist Theory of Social Movements Look Like?," in *Marxism and Social Movements*, ed. Colin Barker, Laurence Cox, John Krinsky, and Alf G. Nilsen (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 63–81.
7. I have borrowed this title from Barbara Foley. See Barbara Foley, "Looking Backward, 2002–1969: Campus Activism in the Era of Globalization," in *World Bank Literature*, ed. Amitava Kumar (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 26–39.
8. Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 4.
9. C. L. R. James, "Key Problems in the Study of Negro History," in *C.L.R. James on the Negro Question*, ed. Scott McLemee (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1996), 127. See also, C. L. R. James, "The Philosophy of History and Necessity: A Few Words with Professor Hook, Part 1," *The New International* 9(7) (July 1943), 210–213; "The Philosophy of History and Necessity, Part 2," *The New International* 9(9) (October 1943), 273–274. http://www.marxists.org/archive/james-clr/works/1943/07/hook.htm#a1 (Accessed April 18, 2014).
10. For a representative work in the philosophy of social science that employs methodological individualism, see Martin Hollis, *The Philosophy of Social Science: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For a broad overview of the philosophy of social science, see Alexander Rosenberg, *Philosophy of Social Science* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988). For a

critique of methodological individualism in the context of Black sport history, see John H. McClendon and Stephen C. Ferguson, *Beyond the White Shadow: Philosophy, Sports, and the African American Experience* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt, 2012). For instances of methodological individualism in Black sports history, see Albert N. D. Brooks, "Democracy through Sports," *Negro History Bulletin* 15(3) (December, 1951), 56ff.; Albert N. D. Brooks, "Negro History—A Foundation for Integration," *Negro History Bulletin* 17 (January 1954), 94, 96. Edwin B. Henderson, "Foreword: The Negro in Sports," *The Negro History Bulletin* 15(3) (December, 1951), 42–56. This issue of the *Negro History Bulletin* was specifically devoted to African Americans in sports. The contributionist philosophy of history still remains as an influence on a good number of African American intellectuals today who are scholars of the Black experience. One only has to observe the groundbreaking research on African Americans in sports. Far too many, manuscripts and biographies are focused on "Black first" who broke through the "Color-Line" in the sports arena. See, for example, Charles Kenyatta Ross, *Outside the Lines: African Americans and the Integration of the National Football League* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); David L. Porter, *African American Sports Greats: A Biographical Dictionary* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995).

11. Earl E. Thorpe, *The Dissertation of Man: A Critique of Philosophy of History* (Baton Rouge, LA: Ortlieb Press, 1958), xxii.
12. See Berkley B. Eddins, *Appraising Theories of History* (Cincinnati, OH: Ehling, 1980).
13. Karl Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1987), 15. See also Berkley B. Eddins, "Historical Data and Policy-Decisions: The Key to Evaluating Philosophies of History," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 26(3) (March 1966), 427–430.
14. Carr, *What Is History?*, 174.
15. Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010), 10.
16. See E. P. Thompson, "On History from Below," in *The Essential E. P. Thompson* (New York: New Press, 2001), 481–489. See also, Sterling Stuckey, "From the Bottom Up: Herbert Aptheker's *American Negro Slave Revolts* and *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*," *Nature, Society and Thought* 10(1–2) (January–April 1997), 39–67.
17. For an example of African American history as people's history, see Richard Wright, *12 Million Black Voices* (New York: Basic Books, a member of the Perseus Books Group, 2008).
18. Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 15. The Oxford philosopher and historian R. G. Collingwood observed: "the past which an historian studies is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living in the present." R. G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography and Other Writings*, ed. David Boucher and Teresa Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 97.
19. For recent histories of Black Studies, see N. M. Rooks, *White Money/Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of Race in Higher Education* (Boston: Beacon, 2006); Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to*

Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2007).

20. For another example of narrative history in African American Studies, see John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).
21. "Charles Darwin to Henry Fawcett, 18 September 1961," in *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, Vol. 9, ed. Frederick Burkhardt (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 269.
22. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1973), 5.
23. Ibid., 433. For a Marxist critique of White's *Metahistory*, see Alex Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives: Reflections on the Philosophy of History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 44–94.
24. Ibid., ix.
25. Peter Gay, *Style in History: Gibbon, Ranke, Macaulay, Burckhardt* (New York: Norton, 1974), 189.
26. Examples of recent scholarship treating the Black Studies movement, as part of the Black Power movement, see Peniel Joseph, "Dashikis and Democracy: Black Studies, Student Activism, and the Black Power Movement," *Journal of African American History* 88(2) (Spring 2003), 182–203; Ibram H. Rogers, "The Black Campus Movement and the Institutionalization of Black Studies, 1965–1970," *Journal of African American Studies* 16(1) (March 2012), 21–40. Both these works employ a narrative history of the Black Studies movement. For Joseph's attempt to elaborate a philosophy of history, see Peniel Joseph, "Waiting till the Midnight Hour: Reconceptualizing the Heroic Period of the Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1965," *Souls: Critical Journal of Black Politics & Culture* 2(2) (2000), 6–17. For critiques of Peniel Joseph's work, see Jonathan Fenderson, "Towards the Gentrification of Black Power(?)," *Race & Class* 55(1) (2013), 1–22; Bruce A. Dixon, "Dr. Peniel Joseph: Peoples Historian or Establishment Courtier? Part One of Two," *Black Agenda Report: News Commentary and Analysis from the Black Left* (June 16, 2010), available at: http://www.blackagendareport.com/content/dr-peniel-joseph-peoples-historian-or-establishment-courtier-part-one-two (Accessed March 3, 2014); Bruce A. Dixon, "Dr. Peniel Joseph: Peoples Historian or Establishment Courtier? Part Two of Two: Peniel Joseph vs. Hubert Harrison on Democracy," *Black Agenda Report: News Commentary and Analysis from the Black Left* (July 7, 2010), available at: http://www.blackagendareport.com/content/dr-peniel-joseph-peoples-historian-or-establishment-courtier-part-two-two-peniel-joseph-vs-h (Accessed March 3, 2014). For a Marxist discussion and critique of narrative history (or "narrativism") as a method, see Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives*.
27. Joseph, "Waiting till the Midnight Hour," 7.
28. This is not to imply that a historical work should be an exhaustive presentation of a historical moment.
29. Robert S. Boynton, "The New Intellectuals," *Atlantic Monthly* 275(3) (March 1995), 53. For a leftist critique of Black public intellectuals, see Adolph L. Reed, " 'What Are the Drums Saying, Booker?' The Curious Role of the Black

Public Intellectual," in *Class Notes: Posing As Politics and Other Thoughts on the American Scene* (New York: The New Press, 2000), 77–90.

30. James Boggs, "Culture and Black Power," in James Boggs, *Pages from a Black Radical's Notebook: A James Boggs Reader*, ed. Stephen M. Ward. (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2011), 184.
31. See George Orwell, *1984: A Novel* (New York: Plume, 2003), 39.
32. Marx, *Class Struggle in France*, 56.
33. Here I am assuming that racism and sexism are rooted in capitalist relations of production. For a Marxist political analysis of the events of 1968, see Chris Harman, *The Fire Last Time: 1968 and After* (London: Bookmarks, 1998). For a discussion of the New Left and "New Communist Movement" in the United States after 1968, see Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* (London: Verso, 2002).
34. San Francisco State University is usually cited as the first Black Studies program. However, there are two other schools that are ignored, Merritt College (California) and Antioch College (Ohio). For a case study of the emergence of Black Studies at Merritt College, see Sidney F. Walton, Jr., *The Black Curriculum: Developing a Program in Afro-American Studies* (East Palo Alto, CA: Black Liberation Publishers, 1969).
35. See Robert A. Malson, "The Black Power Rebellion at Howard University," *Negro Digest* 27(2) (December 1967), 20–30; and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein and Paul Starr, *The University Crisis Reader*. Vol. 1, *The Liberal University Under Attack*, and Vol. 2, *Confrontation and Counterattack* (New York: Random House, 1971). For a documentary on the Howard University student takeover, see *Color Us Black* (New York: National Educational Television, 1968).
36. Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein and Paul Starr, *The University Crisis Reader*, Vol. 2, *Confrontation and Counterattack* (New York: Random House, 1971), 486. For various positions on the concept of a "Black" university vis-à-vis Negro university, see "What We Mean by 'The Black University'," "Basic Concepts of the Black University," and "A Policy Statement on the Black University," in Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein and Paul Starr, *The University Crisis Reader*. Vol. 1, *The Liberal University Under Attack* (New York: Random House, 1971), 356–363. See also, Valerie Jo Bradley, "Black Colleges Start New Year with Changes Student Demand," *Jet* (October 30, 1969); Vincent Harding, "Black Students and the 'Impossible' Revolution," *Ebony* (August 1969) (The Black Revolution: Special Issue), 141–146, 148; James Turner, "Black Students and the Changing Perspective," *Ebony* 24(10) (August 1969), 135–140.
37. Senegal under Leopold Senghor was a bureaucratic petit bourgeois regime. By a "bureaucratic petit bourgeois" regime, I mean it functioned as an intermediary between French capital and the masses of Senegalese people. While it promoted the overall agenda of France, it could—under pressure—advance what appeared to be egalitarian and democratic reforms for Senegal. On the details of the revolt in Senegal, see Andy Stafford, "Senegal: May 1968, Africa's Revolt," in Philipp Gassert and Martin Klimke, *1968: Memories and Legacies*

of a Global Revolt (Washington, DC: German Historical Institute, 2009), 129–135; Robert Fatton, "Gramsci and the Legitimization of the State: The Case of the Senegalese Passive Revolution," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 19(4) (1986), 729–750; William John Hanna, "Student Protest in Independent Black Africa," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 395 (May 1971), 171–183.

38. The 32 countries represented by the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa, in 1968, were Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Congo (Brazzelaville), Congo (Kinshasa), Dahomey (now Benin), Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Republic (Egypt), Uganda, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), and Zambia. See Amy Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: The 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).
39. See John Carlos, *The John Carlos Story: The Sports Moment that Changed the World* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2011), 81–82.
40. See Harry Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (New York: Free Press, 1969). Also consult, Douglas Hartmann, *Race, Culture, and the Revolt of the Black Athlete: The 1968 Olympic Protests and Their Aftermath* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
41. See Samantha Christiansen and Zachary A. Scarlett, *The Third World in the Global 1960s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012); particularly, James Bradford, "Brother Wally and de Burnin of Babylon: Walter Rodney's impact on the reawakening of Black power, the birth of reggae, and resistance to global imperialism," 142–156, and Pedro Monaville, "The Destruction of the University: Violence, Political Imagination, and the Student Movement in Congo-Zaire, 1969–1971," 159–170.
42. John F. McDonald, *Urban America: Growth, Crisis, and Rebirth* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2008), 150.
43. Adolph Reed, "Black Particularity Reconsidered," *Telos* 39 (1979), 71–93.
44. For recent efforts to document the "forgotten" history of the Black student movement, see Peniel E. Joseph, "Dashikis and Democracy: Black Studies, Student Activism, and the Black Power Movement," *The Journal of African American History* 88(2) (2003), 182–203; Stefan M. Bradley, *Harlem Vs. Columbia University: Black Student Power in the Late 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Ibram H. Rogers, *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965–1972* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). For an examination of the role of Black students in the formation of Black Studies at a particular campus, see Rhett Jones, "Dreams, Nightmares, and Realities: Afro-American Studies at Brown University, 1969–1986," in *A Companion to African-American Studies*, ed. Lewis R. Gordon and Jane Anna Gordon (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 33–58.
45. Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2005), 206.

46. Angela Y. Davis, *Angela Davis: An Autobiography* (New York: International Publishers, 1988), 161.
47. Stokely Carmichael and Michael Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture)* (New York: Scribner, 2003), 431–435; Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 147–148. For a critique of Carmichael's position, see Maxine Williams, "Black Women and the Struggle for Liberation" in *Black Woman's Manifesto* (New York: Third World Women's Alliance, n.d.); Linda La Rue, "The Black Movement and Women's Liberation," *The Black Scholar* 1 (May 1970), 36–42.
48. Judith Lowder Newton, *From Panthers to Promise Keepers: Rethinking the Men's Movement* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 65. See also, Tracye A. Matthews, "'No One Ever Asks What a Man's Role in the Revolution Is': Gender Politics and Leadership in the Black Panther Party, 1966–1971," in *The Black Panther Party (Reconsidered)*, ed. Charles E. Jones (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1998), 267–304. Kimberly Springer, *Living for the Revolution Black Feminist Organizations, 1968–1980* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).
49. A Gambian student Lamin Janha attending Central State University reported to Kwame Nkrumah in April 1971 that study groups were held on campus and in the community about philosophical consciencism. John H. McClendon III who was the student body president at Central State and a member of Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU) organized these study groups. See Kwame Nkrumah, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Conakry Years, His Life and Letters*. Compiled by June Milne. (London: Panaf, 1990), 398.
50. Robert Allen, "The Politics of the Attack on Black Studies," *The Black Scholar* 6 (September 1974), 2–7. Historically Black colleges and universities were governed by locus parentis. Consequently, the administrators, faculty, and staff were viewed as the caretakers of students, and governed in a paternalistic manner. For an excellent discussion of the pre-history of African American Studies, see Michael R. Winston, "Through the Back Door: Academic Racism and the Negro Scholar in Historical Perspective," *Daedalus* 100(3) (Summer 1971), 678–719.
51. Spike Lee's 1988 film *School Daze* captures both the political quiescence and paternal authoritarianism at Black colleges and universities, while simultaneously feeding into petit bourgeois romanticism. For a good review of the film, see Janet Maslin, Review of *School Daze*, *New York Times* (February 12, 1988). For a leftist critique of Spike Lee's films, see Amiri Baraka, "Spike Lee at the Movies," in *Black American Cinema*, ed. Manthia Diawara (New York: Routledge, 1993), 145–153.
52. Noliwe Rooks, *White Money/Black Power* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2006), 4. See also, "Student Strikes: 1968–1969," *The Black Scholar* (January–February 1970), 65–75.
53. Rogers, "The Black Campus Movement and the Institutionalization of Black Studies, 1965–1970," 26. For a more extensive discussion of the Black Student movement as part of the "long duree" of Black campus movements, see Rogers, *Black Campus Movement*.

54. Peniel Joseph, "Dashikis and Democracy: Black Studies, Student Activism, and the Black Power Movement," *Journal of African American History* 88(2) (Spring 2003), 197.
55. Take for instance the members of the board of trustees for the HBCU Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee, Alabama) in 1968: Retired General Lucius D. Clay, E. B. Goode, Frances Bolton (U. S. House of Representative-Ohio), Basil O'Connor (President, National Foundation, New York City), Alexander Aldrich (Executive Assistant to New York's then-governor Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller), Arthur P. Cook (retired publisher of the Sun Papers, Birmingham, Alabama), A. G. Gaston (Birmingham businessman and attorney), Melvin A. Glasser (director of Social Security for the United Auto Workers Union), William Rosenwald (president of American Securities Co. of New York), Frederick D. Patterson (president emeritus of Tuskegee College), Dr. Montague Oliver (president of the Gary, Indiana School Board of Trustees), and William G. Gridley, Jr. (vice president of the Chase Manhattan Bank of New York). See "Tuskegee Students Lock Up Trustees 13 Hours," *St. Petersburg Times* April 8, 1968, A1, A8. For a more general discussion of this issue, see David N. Smith, *Who Rules the Universities? An Essay in Class Analysis* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974). For recent instances of the collaboration between the corporate capital and universities, see William J. Broad, "Billionaires with Big Ideas Are Privatizing American Science," *New York Times* (March 15, 2014). http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/16/science/billionaires-with-big-ideas-are-privatizing-american-science.html?_r=0 (Accessed April 19, 2014).
56. See V. I. Lenin, *State and Revolution* in *Collected Works*, Vol. 25 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961), 381–492.
57. "Students to Be Readmitted at Tuskegee," *The Times-News* (Hendersonville, NC) (April 22, 1968), 11.
58. No police officer was ever held accountable for these murders. The only person convicted and sentenced was SNCC activist, Cleveland Sellers, who was shot in the back and one of the people injured in the campus shooting. See Jack Bass and Jack Nelson, *The Orangeburg Massacre* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002); Cleveland Sellers, *The River of No Return: The Autobiography of a Black Militant and the Life and Death of SNCC* (New York: Morrow, 1973).
59. See "Texas Southern University Riot of 1967," in *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, Vol. 2, ed. Walter C. Rucker and James Nathaniel Upton (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 635–636.
60. Tabula rasa, meaning blank slate in Latin, makes reference to the epistemological theory of John Locke, who argued that individuals are born without *a prior* knowledge and that all knowledge comes from experience and perception. John Locke refers to the mind as "white paper void of all characters." See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book 2, Chapter 1, Section 2 (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996), 33.
61. Nathan Hare, "War on Black Colleges," *The Black Scholar* 9 (May–June 1978), 18.
62. Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 78.

63. Quoted in Jelani Manu-Gowan Favors, *Shaking Up the World: North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University and the Black Student Movement, 1960–1969*. Thesis (M.A.) (Ohio State University, 1997), 97.
64. Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission "From Black Power to multicultural organizing in Greensboro," (2006), 49–50. See also *The Danville Register* (March 15, 1969), 5.
65. The role of education in Black political struggles was debated over three successive years in special issues of *Negro Digest* (later changed to *Black World*) on the "Black University". See *Negro Digest* 17 (March 1968), 17; *Negro Digest* 17 (March 1969), 4–97; *Negro Digest* 19 (March 1970), 4–97.
66. James A. Foley and Robert K. Foley, *The College Scene: Students Tell It Like It Is* (New York: Cowles Book Company, 1969), 24.
67. See Stefan M. Bradley, *Harlem vs. Columbia University: Black Student Power in the Late 1960s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009).
68. Quoted in Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 51.
69. Angela Y. Davis, *Angela Davis: An Autobiography* (New York: International Publishers, 1988), 196.
70. See George Mariscal, *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement: 1965–1975* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005); particularly Chapter 6, "To demand that the university work for our people." The then left-radical "third" college Lumumba-Zapata College was opened in September 1970. It was eventually renamed after the liberal Thurgood Marshall in 1993.
71. See Chuck Hopkins, "Malcolm X Liberation University: Interim Report," *Negro Digest* 19(5) (March 1970), 39–42.
72. See Fanon Che Wilkins excellent dissertation, " 'In the Belly of the Beast': Black Power, Anti-Imperialism, and the African Liberation Solidarity Movement, 1968–1975" (PhD diss., New York University, 2001). G. A. McWorter, "Struggle Ideology and the Black University," *Negro Digest* 18(5) (March 1969), 15–21; See also, Vincent Harding, "Toward The Black University," *Ebony* (August 1970), 156–159; "Malcolm X University Crumbles," *The Spartanburg Herald* (June 28, 1973), A5; James T. Wooten, "Malcolm X University to Open," *New York Times* (October 28, 1969); Willie E. Davis, "Malcolm X Liberation University," *SOBU Newsletter* (February 6, 1971), 10. Malcolm X Liberation University was originally located in a converted brick warehouse located at the corner of Pettigrew and Ramsey streets in Durham's historic Black business section. In 1971 MXLU relocated to Greensboro, North Carolina. See Devin Fergus, *Liberalism, Black Power, and the Making of American Politics, 1965–1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), particularly Chapter 2, " 'We Had a Beautiful Thing': Malcolm X Liberation University, the Black Middle Class, and the Black Liberation Movement." See also Brent H. Belvin, "Malcolm X Liberation University: An Experiment in Independent Black Education" (PhD diss., North Carolina State University, 2004). After leaving the movement in the mid-1970s, Howard Fuller

eventually served as the superintendent of Milwaukee schools. He is an advocate of school vouchers and charter schools. He is currently on the board of a charter high school, CEO Leadership Academy. He is also Distinguished Professor of Education and Director of the Institute for the Transformation of Learning. Reportedly, he is good friends with the Walton family and former president George W. Bush. See Rob Christensen, "The Winding Journey of Howard Fuller," *Durham News & Observer* (November 19, 2013.) http://www.newsobserver.com/2013/11/19/3387943/christensen-the-winding-journey.html (Accessed April 14, 2014).

73. See, for example, The Center Staff, "Center for Black Education: Position Paper," *Negro Digest* (March 1970), 44–47. A Federation of Pan-African Education Institutions was formed in 1972. See *Black World* (July 1972), 80. On the East, see Kwasi Konadu, *A View From the East: Black Cultural Nationalism and Education in New York City* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2009).
74. See Sundiata Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "Providence, Patriarchy, Pathology: Louis Farrakhan's Rise and Decline," *New Politics* 6(2) (Winter 1997), 47–71.
75. Lerone Bennett, "The Challenge of Blackness," *Black World* 20(4) (February 1971), 21.
76. Ernest Kaiser, *In Defense of the People's Black & White History and Culture* (New York: Freedomways, 1970), 2.
77. *Black Studies: Myths and Realities*. ed., Martin Kilson (New York: A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund, 1969), 21–22.
78. Ibid., 30.
79. Kenneth B. Clark, "Letter of Resignation from Board of Directors of Antioch College," in *Black Studies: Myths and Realities*. ed., Martin Kilson(New York: A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund, 1969), 34.
80. Marxist theorist and activist Robert Rhodes led the Black Studies program at Antioch. The Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare used the double-edge sword of the 1964 civil rights law to hinder the development of the Afro-American Studies Institute. Antioch College was threatened with possible loss of federal assistance for violation of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act for discriminating against white students at Antioch. Rhodes later taught in African American Studies at Ohio University. See his important article, "Internationalism and Social Consciousness in the Black Community," *Freedomways* 12 (1972), 230–236.
81. Bayard Rustin, "Black Studies and Inequality," in *Bayard Rustin: American Dreamer*, ed. Jerald E. Podair (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 147.
82. Martin Kilson, "Reflections on Structure and Content in Black Studies," *The Black Scholar* 3(3) (March 1973), 300. This article was a thinly veiled attack on Ewart Guinier, then-chair of Harvard's Black Studies department. Kilson viewed Guinier as an ill-trained, Marxist ideologue, "a politician sporting intellectual garb."
83. Ibid., 307.

84. "Inclusive scholarship" refers to Nathan I. Huggins's report to the 1982 report on Black Studies. See Farah Jasmine Griffin, *Inclusive Scholarship: Developing Black Studies in the United States: A 25th Anniversary Retrospective of Ford Foundation Grant Making, 1982–2007* (New York: Ford Foundation, 2007), particularly the 1982 report by Nathan I. Huggins, "Afro-American Studies: A Report to the Ford Foundation."
85. Bundy played a crucial role in all of the major foreign policy and defense decisions of the Kennedy and part of the Johnson administration. These included the Bay of Pigs Invasion, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and, most controversially, the Vietnam War. See Lloyd Gardner, "Harry Hopkins with Hand Grenades? McGeorge Bundy in the Kennedy and Johnson Years," in *Behind the Throne: Servants of Power to Imperial Presidents, 1898–1968*, ed. Thomas J. McCormick and Walter LaFeber (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 204–229.
86. Robert Allen, "Politics of the Attack on Black Studies," *The Black Scholar* 6 (September 1974), 2–7. For a discussion of parallel developments in African Studies, see Africa Research Group. *The Extended Family—African Studies in America—A Tribal Analysis of U.S. Africanists: Who They Are; Why to Fight Them* (Cambridge, MA: The Group, 1970). See also Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "Building Intellectual Bridges: from African studies and African American studies to Africana studies in the United States," *Afrika Focus* 24(2) (2011), 9–31.
87. In 1941, the Julius Rosenwald Fund sought to encourage the appointment of Black professors at white colleges and universities. Most white educational institutions and administers responded that they could not locate or identify qualified applicants as the main reason for maintaining all white faculties. So, Fred G. Wale, a member of the Rosenwald Fund, circulated a list of qualified African American scholars, most with PhD degrees in 26 fields, to 509 college administrators. The Rosenwald Fund offered as an additional incentive. They would pay the salary of any Black faculty hired. It wasn't until 1945 that Olivet College in Michigan hired Cornelius Golightly (becoming the second African American philosopher to teach at a predominantly white college (after Patrick Healy)) and the University of Chicago hired Allison Davis in the sociology department. Olivet College hired Golightly in philosophy and his wife in the English Department. He later became Dean of Liberal Arts at Wayne State University. See A. Gilbert Belles, "The College Faculty, the Negro Scholar and the Julius Rosenwald Fund," *The Journal of Negro History*, 54(4) (October 1969), 383–392. For an analysis of the relationship between industrial education, corporate philanthropy, and Black education at HBCUs, see Henry Allen Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South: From 1619 to the Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968); James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); William H. Watkins, *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865–1954* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001).

88. See also N. M. Rooks, *White Money/Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of Race in Higher Education* (Boston: Beacon, 2006); Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2007). The Ford Foundation, for example, funded the Civil Rights Documentation Project, whose aim is to collect information on the civil rights movements, including oral history and unpublished material. It was established formally on May 1, 1967 by the Fund for the Advancement of Education at the suggestion of Fund board member and United Nations Under Secretary Ralph J. Bunche.
89. This would be equivalent to nearly $60 million today.
90. Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 138–139. The only exception to the rule—in regards to Ford Foundation funding—was the Institute of the Black World. See Derrick E. White, *The Challenge of Blackness The Institute of the Black World and Political Activism in the 1970s* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011).
91. John T. Bethell, *Harvard Observed: An Illustrated History of the University in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 263–264. For an insider perspective on Black Studies at Harvard, see Eileen Southern, "A Pioneer: Black and Female," in Werner Sollors, Caldwell Titcomb, and Thomas A. Underwood, *Blacks at Harvard: A Documentary History of African-American Experience at Harvard and Radcliffe* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 499–503.
92. See "Guinier: Harvard Admin. Undermines Black Studies," *Black Panther Newspaper* (1975).
93. Ewart Guinier was a labor activist who was active in the struggle for Black worker's rights and community organizing efforts from 1938 to 1962. He was the International Secretary-Treasurer of the United Public Workers of American Union. In 1949, he was the American Labor Party's presidential candidate for the Borough of Manhattan presidency and the following year he became vice-president of the National Negro Labor Council. He was also the father of Lani Guinier, lawyer, scholar, and civil rights activist, who was nominated by William Clinton for Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights in April 1993. See Cassandra Zenz, "Ewart Guinier (1910–1990)," BlackPast.org http://www.blackpast.org/aah/guinier-ewart-1910–1990 (Accessed April 18, 2014). See also "Harvard Professors Feud Over Black Studies Plan," *Jet* (January 2, 1975), 49. Ewart Guinier, "Black Studies: Training for Leadership," *Freedomways* 15 (Summer 1975), 196–205; Ewart Guinier, "Impact of Unionization on Blacks," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 30(2) (December 1970), 173–181.
94. Richard M. Benjamin, "The Revival of African-American Studies at Harvard," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 9 (Autumn 1995), 64.
95. Ibid., 62.
96. Ewart Guinier Papers, 19. Kilson was the first tenured professor in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University. He received tenure in 1969.

97. Douglas E. Schoen, "Kilson and Guinier Debate the Role of Black Studies," *The Harvard Crimson* (December 10, 1973). http://www.thecrimson.com/article/1973/12/10/kilson-and-guinier-debate-the-role/ (Accessed April 19, 2014).
98. See Robert L. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America, an Analytic History* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990).
99. The earliest known usage of the term, "Black Power" is found in a 1954 book by Richard Wright titled *Black Power*. For contrasting views of Black Power, see Roy Wilkins, "Black Power is Black Death," *New York Times* (July 7, 1966), 35; Kwame Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path* (New York: International Publishers, 1973), 421–428.
100. For an example of the communitarian foundation to Black Power, see Nathan Hare, "Can Blacks Ever Unite? Black Leaders and Street Brothers Alike Are Optimistic," *Ebony* (September 1976), 96–98, 100, 102.
101. See, Joshua D. Farrington, "'Build, Baby, Build,' Conservative Black Nationalists, Free Enterprise, and the Nixon Administration," in *The Right Side of the Sixties: Reexamining Conservatism's Decade of Transformation*, ed. Laura Jane Gifford and Daniel K. Williams (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 61–80.
102. For scholarship on the history of CORE, see James Farmer, *Lay Bare the Heart: An Autobiography of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Arbor House, 1985); August Meier and Elliott M. Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942–1968* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); Nishani Frazier, *Harambee Nation: Cleveland CORE, Community Organization, and the Rise of Black Power*. Thesis (PhD)—Columbia University, 2008.
103. See Robert Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytic History* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World, 1992), 182–192.
104. Harold Cruse, "Behind the Black Power Slogan," in *Rebellion or Revolution?* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1968), 201.
105. In 1973, Innis announced plans to send hundreds of African American doctors, engineers, technicians and other professionals to take the place of white-collar Indian workers who were expelled from Uganda after Amin seized power in 1971. Amin was made a life member of CORE, and returned the favor by granting Ugandan citizenship to Innis. See, "CORE's Uganda Plan Delayed by Idi Amin," *Jet* (July 19, 1973), 24.
106. See Gerald Horne, *From the Barrel of a Gun: The United States and the War against Zimbabwe, 1965–1980* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 352, n28.
107. Historically, AFSCME has been one of the most progressive unions inside the AFL-CIO. During the 1960s, AFSCME joined students and civil rights activists as they took to the streets to protest racism and imperialism. This alliance culminated in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1968 when sanitation workers struck for union recognition after two Black workers were crushed to death in a garbage truck. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who was organizing the Poor People's March, went to Memphis to support the strike. Only after Dr. King's assassination did the city agree to recognize the workers' union, AFSCME Local

1733. See Joan Turner Beifuss, *At the River I Stand: Memphis, the 1968 Strike, and Martin Luther King* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishers, 1989); Michael K. Honey, *Going Down Jericho Road: The Memphis Strike, Martin Luther King's Last Campaign* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007).

108. Martin Luther King, Sr. is quoted as saying: "No mayor is going to put a tax on in his election year—now, that may come later on . . . Now, if you do everything you can to accommodate them [striking workers], then I say, fire them." See "Strike Is Criticized by Dr. King's Father," *New York Times* (5 April 1977), 22.
109. Mayor Goode also ordered the bombing of the MOVE organization in 1985, killing 11 people, including 5 children. Michael Boyette and Randi Boyette, *"Let It Burn!": The Philadelphia Tragedy* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989). There is also a documentary about the MOVE bombing: Osder, Jason, Christopher Mangum, and Michael Moses Ward, *Let the Fire Burn* (New York: Zeitgeist Films, 2014).
110. For a general discussion of Black mayors, see David R. Colburn and Jeffrey S. Adler, *African-American Mayors: Race, Politics, and the American City* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001). This tendency was the logical outgrowth of racial uplift ideology. See, for example, J. Phillip Thompson, *Double Trouble Black Mayors, Black Communities, and the Call for a Deep Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Clarence Nathan Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1964–1988* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989). For a discussion of Wilson Goode, see Ann Cohen and James Dooley, "Privatizing Philly vs. AFSCME DC 33," *Labor Research Review* 1(15) (1990), 15–23.
111. Amiri Baraka, "A Reply to Saunders Reddings' 'The Black Revolution in American Studies,'" in *Daggers and Javelins* (New York: Quill, 1984), 282.
112. I do not want to imply that the defeat of the Black left was only the result of State repression. There were a combination of political mistakes and errors, which led to the demise of the political influence of the Black left during this period including revisionism, ideological dogmatism, factionalism, Stalinist-Maoist cult of personality, and voluntarism.
113. Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 135.
114. The following college students were murdered: Samuel Younge, Jr. (Tuskegee), Samuel Hammond (South Carolina State), Henry Smith (South Carolina State), Phillip Lafayette Gibbs (Jackson State), James Earl Green (Jackson State), Leonard D. Brown, Jr. (Southern University), Denver A. Smith (Southern University), Willie E. Grimes (North Carolina A & T), Rick Dowdell (University of Kansas). James Earl Green (Jackson State), Delano Middleton (South Carolina State), and Larry D. Kimmons (Pepperdine) were high school students. And Benjamin Brown (Jackson State) was a community activist. See Rogers, *Black Campus Movement*.
115. Hugh E. Gibson, "3 Voorhees Rebels Are Sought," *The News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) (May 1, 1969), 1–2A; "Voorhees College's Future Uncertain," *The Daily Item* (Sumter, SC) (March 21, 1970), 2A; "Voorhees Students Feel School Oriented to White Society," *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* (Spartanburg, SC) (March 22, 1970), B9.

116. Rogers, *The Black Campus Movement*, 138.
117. In 1949, at the height of McCarthyism, the University of California Board of Regents passed a bylaw banning the hiring of members of the Communist Party or other organizations that advocate the overthrow of the Government by force or violence.
118. "The Radicalization of Angela Davis," *Ebony* (July 1971), 114.
119. Robert Allen, "Politics of the Attack on Black Studies," *The Black Scholar* 6 (September 1974), 2–7.
120. Students from both organizations had been active in the National Student Association (NSA). The National Association of Black Students (NABS) was founded in El Paso, Texas. It broke from the National Student Association (NSA) in August 1969. Some former student activists associated with NABS were Gwendolyn Patton, James Forman, Ken Amos and Mickey McGuire. It held its first convention at Wayne State University from June 26 through July 5, 1970. See "Black Students Tell White Supports to Get Lost," *Jet* (October 9, 1969), 48.
121. For an overview of SOBU/YOBU, see Jelani Favors, "North Carolina A & T Black Power Activists and the Student Organization for Black Unity," in *Rebellion in Black and White: Southern Student Activism in the 1960s*, ed. Robert Cohen and David J. Snyder (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2013), 255–279. See also, "Student Organization for Black Unity—Developmental Background," (unpublished document) in author's possession.
122. Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU), "Developmental Background," (Unpublished Document), 7. In author's possession.
123. For an excellent introduction to the white settler regimes in Southern Africa and the African liberation movement, see Africa Research Group, *Race to Power: The Struggle for Southern Africa* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1974).
124. Milton Coleman is currently the deputy managing editor of *Washington Post*. Coleman graduated from University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. He was a Southern Education Foundation Fellow in 1971 and a fellow in the Michele Clark Summer Program for Minority Journalists at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in 1974. He joined the staff of the *Washington Post* in 1976. See Milton Coleman, "Student Organization for Black Unity Explains Program," *The A & T Register* (NCAT, Greensboro) (October 23, 1970), 1, 3. Later, Jerry Walker became the editor of *The African World*, after Coleman's departure from SOBU.
125. Ronald Washington, "The Rise and Fall of the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL) Or as was said in the 'Bronx Tale,' There's Nothing Worse Than Wasted Potential." http://www.marxists.org/history/erol/ncm-1a/#rwl (Accessed May 15, 2014).
126. Ibid.
127. By January 1974, YOBU was dissolved in order to form the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL-ML). It was composed of members from Youth Organization for Black Unity, Owusu Sadaukai's Malcolm X Liberation University, Abdul Alkalimat's Peoples College, Lynn Eusan Institute (Houston, Texas), and the Marxist Leninist Collective (San Francisco and Detroit). The

organizations formed the left-wing faction of the African Liberation Support Committee. At its birth, RWL was the largest Black leftist organization in the "New Communist Movement." RWL-ML later merged with the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization (PRWO), an offshoot of the Young Lords Party, to form the Revolutionary Wing. See Rod Bush, *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 209–211. See also Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* (New York: Verso, 2002).

128. Lenin argues that the central task of Marxists is to help train working-class revolutionaries who must be on the same level in regard to party activities as the revolutionaries from among the intellectuals. This required a party organization made up of people who, regardless of their class origin, made revolutionary political activity their profession, that is, "professional revolutionaries"—who were trained by the party to be professional Marxist propagandists, agitators, and organizers. See V. I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement* in *Collected Works*, Vol. 5 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961), 440–492.
129. See Jefferson R. Cowie, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York: New Press, 2012).
130. See Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 111–112.
131. John Lewis among other union officials argued that the businesslike functioning of a union required bureaucratic norms of organization as opposed to rank-and-file democracy. For an excellent examination of business unionism and the decline of the US labor movement, see Kim Moody, *An Injury to All: The Decline of American Unionism* (New York: Verso, 1988).
132. Philip F. Rubio, *There's Always Work at the Post Office African American Postal Workers and the Fight for Jobs, Justice, and Equality* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), particularly Chapter 10, "The Great Postal Strike of 1970."
133. Aaron Brenner, *Rank-and-File Rebellion, 1966–1975* (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1996). See the excellent anthology, Aaron Brenner, Robert Brenner, and Calvin Winslow. *Rebel Rank and File: Labor Militancy and Revolt from Below in the Long 1970s* (London: Verso, 2010).
134. See Karen Brodkin, *Caring by the Hour: Women, Work, and Organizing at Duke Medical Center* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988). For a good analysis of the unionization drive of 1978 at Duke, see Tony Dunbar, "The Old South Triumphs at Duke," *Southern Changes* 1(9) (1979), 5–8. See also, Christina Greene, *Our Separate Ways: Women and the Black Freedom Movement in Durham, North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2005).
135. See James P. Comer, "Nixon Policies and the Black Future in America," *Black World* 22(5) (March 1973), 36–39, 66–69.
136. See Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1988); Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall,

The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars against Domestic Dissent (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990); Kenneth O'Reilly, *Racial Matters: The FBI's Secret File on Black America, 1960–1972* (New York: Free Press, 1989).

137. State-sanctioned violence was not just limited to the United States. It was an international phenomenon reflected in the assassinations of Eduardo C. Mondlane (1969), Wallelign Mekonnen Kassa (1972), Amilcar Cabral (1973), Walter Rodney (1980), Ruth First (1982), Maurice Bishop (1983), Samora Machel (1986), and Thomas Sankara (1987)—to name a few.
138. See Clarence Lang, "Freedom Train Derailed: The National Negro Labor Council and the Nadir of Black Radicalism," in *Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement: "Another Side of the Story"*, ed. Robbie Lieberman and Clarence Lang (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 161–188.
139. For a passionate account of the Greensboro Massacre, see Signe Waller, *Love and Revolution: A Political Memoir—People's History of the Greensboro Massacre, Its Setting and Aftermath* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002). Other notable accounts are: Amilcar Cabral/Paul Robeson Collective, *The Greensboro Massacre: Critical Lessons for the 1980's* (Raleigh, NC: Amilcar Cabral/Paul Robeson Collective, 1980); Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, *Never Forgive or Forget the Greensboro Massacre: Nazis, Klan & Kops Go Free, That's What the Rich Call Democracy* (Greensboro, NC: Revolutionary Communist Party, 1980); Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Final Report: Examination of the Context, Causes, Sequence and Consequence of the Events of November 3, 1979. Presented to the Residents of Greensboro, the City, the Greensboro Truth and Community Reconciliation Project and Other Public Bodies on May 25, 2006* (Greensboro, NC: Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2006); Elizabeth Wheaton, *Codename GREENKIL: The 1979 Greensboro Killings* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987).
140. Gerald Horne, "Blowback: Playing the Nationalist Card Backfires," in *After Political Correctness: The Humanities and Society in the 1990s*, ed. Christopher Newfield and Ronald Strickland (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 84. See also, Erik S. McDuffie, "Black and Red: Black Liberation, The Cold War, and the Horne Thesis," *The Journal of African American History* 96(2) (2011), 236–247.
141. See Robert Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytic History* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World, 1992). Many left-radicals are influenced by Marxism–Leninism rather than being Marxist–Leninists per se. For example, the Eldridge Cleaver's concept of "Lumpen" ideology is a clear example of left-radicalism, but definitely not Marxist–Leninist. See Eldridge Cleaver, "On Lumpen Ideology," *The Black Scholar* 3 (November–December 1972), 2–10; Kathleen Cleaver, "On the Vanguard Role of the Black Urban Lumpen Proletariat," Pamphlet (London: Grass/Roots Publications, 1975). For a Marxist critique of "Lumpen Ideology," see Clarence J. Munford, "The Fallacy of Lumpen Ideology," *The Black Scholar* 4 (July–August 1973), 47–51. See

also, Henry Winston, "Crisis of the Black Panther Party," in *Strategy for a Black Agenda* (New York: International Publishers, 1973), 207–233; Chris Booker, "Lumpenization: A Critical Error of the Black Panther Party," in *The Black Panther Party (Reconsidered)*, ed. Charles Earl Jones (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1998), 337–362.

142. Floyd W. Hayes, III and Francis A. Kiene, III, "'All Power to the People': The Political Thought of Huey P. Newton and The Black Panther Party," in *The Black Panther Party (Reconsidered)*, ed. Charles E. Jones (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1998), 169. See also Floyd W. Hayes, III and Judson L. Jefferies, "Us Does Not Stand for United Slaves!," in *Black Power in the Belly of the Beas*t, ed. Judson L. Jefferies (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 2006), 67–92.
143. Huey P. Newton, *War against the Panthers: A Study of Repression in America* (New York: Harlem River Press, 1996), 78–81. Months later, members of the San Diego branch of the Black Panther Party Sylvester Bell and John Savage were murdered by members of Karenga's Us organization.
144. For Karenga's counterargument against charges that US collaborated with the FBI, see Maulana Karenga, "US, Kawaida and the Black Liberation Movement in the 1960s: Culture, Knowledge and Struggle," in *Engines of the Black Power Movement: Essays on the Influence of Civil Rights Actions, Arts, and Islam*, ed. James L. Conyers (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007), 95–133.
145. John H. McClendon III, "From Cultural Nationalism to Cultural Criticism: Philosophical Idealism, Paradigmatic Illusions and the Politics of Identity," in *Decolonizing the Academy: African Diaspora Studies*, ed. Carole Boyce Davies (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), 3–26.
146. See Harold Cruse, *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: Morrow, 1967). For Left-Radical/Marxist critiques of Cruse's *Crisis*, see Robert Chrisman, "The Crisis of Harold Cruse," *The Black Scholar* 1(1) (1969), 77–84; Sterling Stuckey and Joshua Leslie, "Reflections on Reflections About The Black Intellectual, 1930–1945," *First World: An International Journal of Black Thought* 2(2) (1979), 26–29; Ernest Kaiser, Review of *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*. *Freedomways* (1969), 24–41; Julian Mayfield, "Crisis or Crusade? *Negro Digest* (June 1968), 10–24; Ernest Allen, "The Cultural Methodology of Harold Cruse," *The Journal of Ethnic Studies* 5(2) (1977), 26–49; "Childe Harold," *Negro Digest* (November 1968), 26–28; Ernest Allen, "The Cultural Methodology of Harold Cruse," *The Journal of Ethnic Studies* 5(2), 31–39; Tony Thomas, *Black Liberation and Socialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 157–176.
147. See, for example, Cornel West, "The New Cultural Politics of Difference," in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, ed. Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and Cornel West (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1990), 19–36.
148. Adolph Reed, *W. E. B. Du Bois and American Political Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 130. For a similar argument, see Robert Young, "The Linguistic Turn, Materialism and Race: Toward an Aesthetics of Crisis" *Callaloo* 24(1), 334–345.

149. E. P. Thompson, "Commitment and Politics," *Universities and Left Review* 6 (Spring 1959), 51.
150. Earl Ofari, "Black Labor: Powerful Force for Liberation," *Black World* (October 1973); Haki R. Madhubuti (Don L. Lee), "Enemy from the White Left, White Right and In-Between" (October 1974); Kalamu ya Salaam, "Tell No Lies, Claim No Easy Victories," *Black World*; Amiri Baraka, "Toward Ideological Clarity," Amiri Baraka, "Why I Changed My Ideology: Black Nationalism and Socialist Revolution," Ladun Anise, "Tyranny of a Purist Ideology" (May 1975). For a good anthology on Black nationalism, see William L. Van Deburg, *Modern Black Nationalism: From Marcus Garvey to Louis Farrakhan* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).
151. Hutchings, "Report on the ALSC National Conference," *The Black Scholar* 5 (July–August 1974), 48.
152. Ibid., 52.
153. See Pan-African Congress, *Resolutions and Selected Speeches from the Sixth Pan African Congress* (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1976); Walter Rodney, *Towards the Sixth Pan-African Congress: Aspects of the International Class Struggle in Africa* (Atlanta: Institute of the Black World, 1975); Courtland Cox, "Sixth Pan African Congress," *The Black Scholar* 5(7) (1974), 32–34; Modibo M. Kadalie, *Internationalism, Pan-Africanism and the Struggle of Social Classes: Raw Writings from the Notebook of an Early Nineteen Seventies African-American Radical Activist* (Savannah, GA: One Quest Press, 2000), 246–358. For a recent assessment of the Sixth Pan African Congress, see Fanon Che Wilkins, "'A Line of Steel': The Organization of the Sixth Pan-African Congress and the Struggle for International Black Power, 1969–1974," in *The Hidden 1970s Histories of Radicalism*, ed. Dan Berger (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 97–114.
154. See "Nathan Hare," *History Makers* http://www.thehistorymakers.com/biography/nathan-hare-38 (Accessed March 19, 2014).
155. See Haki R. Madhubuti, "The Latest Purge: The Attack on Black Nationalism and Pan-Afrikanism by the New Left, the Sons and Daughters of the Old Left," *The Black Scholar* 6 (September 1974), 43–56. Madhubuti's position was in the same tradition as the anti-communism of Walter White, George Schulyer, and Roy Wilkins. See, for example, Walter White, "The Negro and the Communists," *Harper's* (December 1931).
156. Mark Smith, "A Response to Haki Madhubuti," *The Black Scholar* 6 (January–February 1975), 44–53.
157. See the articles and letters by S. E. Anderson, Alonzo 4X (Cannady), Ronald Walters, and Chancellor Williams, *The Black Scholar* (October 1974); Maulana Karenga and Kalamu Ya Salaam, *The Black Scholar* (January–February 1975); Preston Wilcox and Jomo Simba, *The Black Scholar* (March 1975); Gwendolyn M. Patton and Mark S. Johnson, *The Black Scholar* (April 1975). See also, Kalamu Ya Salaam, "Tell No Lies, Claim No Easy Victories," *Black World* (October 1974), 18–34.
158. A compromise formation is an attempt to bring together mutually inconsistent ideologies and/or theories. See Roy Bhaskar, *Scientific Realism and*

Human Emancipation (New York: Verso, 2009), 6. See Maulana Ron Karenga, "Kawaida and Its Critics: A Sociohistorical Analysis," *Journal of Black Studies* 8 (December 1977), 125–148. After his imprisonment for four-and-a-half years during the 1970s, Karenga flirted with left-radicalism. See the following: Maulana Karenga, "Which Road: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, Socialism?," *The Black Scholar* 6(2) (1974), 21–30; Maulana Karenga, "Ideology and Struggle: Some Preliminary Notes," *The Black Scholar* 6(5) (1975), 23–30. All of these articles were republished in Maulana Karenga, *Essays on Struggle: Position and Analysis* (San Diego: Kawaida Publications, 1978).

159. Here what I have in mind is what Alvin Gouldner's concept of "culture of critical discourse". He argues: "The culture of critical discourse (CCD) is an historically evolved set of rules, a grammar of discourse, which (1) is concerned to justify its assertions, but (2) whose mode of justification does not proceed by invoking authorities, and (3) prefers to elicit the voluntary consent of those addressed solely on the basis of arguments adduced. CCD is centered on a specific speech act: justification. It is a culture of discourse in which there is nothing that speakers will on principle permanently refuse to discuss or make problematic; indeed, they are even willing to talk about the value of talk itself and its possible inferiority to silence or to practice." See Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class: A Frame of Reference, Theses, Conjectures, Arguments, and an Historical Perspective on the Role of Intellectuals and Intelligentsia in the International Class Contest of the Modern Era* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 28.
160. For a discussion of voluntarism and the generally complex history of the "New Communist Movement," see Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* (New York: Verso, 2002), particularly Chapter 8, "Bodies on the Line: The Culture of a Movement."
161. Recent leftist/Marxist works that have not followed down the path of "Black Marxism" are: Malik Simba, *Black Marxism and American Constitutionalism: An Interpretive History from the Colonial Background to the Ascendancy of Barack Obama* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt, 2013); John H. McClendon, *CLR James's Notes on Dialectics: Left Hegelianism Or Marxism-Leninism?* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004).
162. Quoted in St. Clair Drake, "What Happened to Black Studies?," in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2001), 269.
163. Rhett Jones, "Dreams, Nightmares, and Realities: Afro-American Studies at Brown University, 1969–1986," in *A Companion to African-American Studies*, ed. Lewis R. Gordon and Jane Anna Gordon (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 41. See also, Abdul Alkalimat, "Black Power in U. S. Education: Ideology, Academic Activism and the Politics of Black Liberation," *Africa World Review* [London, England] 2 (May–October 1992), 13–15.
164. Abdul Alkalimat, "Toward a Paradigm of Unity in Black Studies," in *African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2001), 391–407. Alkalimat was born Gerald A. McWorter in 1942 in Chicago, Illinois. In the late 1960s, he helped establish the

Atlanta-based Institute of the Black World, which would later become the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center. Alkalimat attended Ottawa University, where he earned a BA in sociology and philosophy in 1963. He received his doctorate in sociology from the University of Chicago in 1974. In the early 1970s, Alkalimat established Peoples College, a Marxist collective that published *Introduction to Afro-American Studies: A Peoples College Primer*, one of the first introductory textbook in African American Studies. He is currently a professor in African American Studies and the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. See Abdul A. Alkalimat (Gerald A. McWorter), *Introduction to Afro-American Studies: A Peoples College Primer* (Chicago: Twenty-first Century Books and Publications, 1986); Abdul A. Alkalimat, *Scientific Approach to Black Liberation: Which Road against Racism and Imperialism for the Black Liberation Movement* (Nashville, TN: Peoples College, 1974).

165. See Abdul Alkalimat, "Black Marxism in the White Academy: The Contours and Contradictions of an Emerging School of Black Thought," in *Paradigms in Black Studies: Intellectual History, Cultural Meaning and Political Ideology*, ed. Abdul Alkalimat (Chicago: Twenty-first Century Books and Publications, 1990), 205–222. For "Black Marxism" contra "Ebony in Marxism," see John H. McClendon, "Marxism in Ebony Contra Black Marxism: Categorical Implications," *Proud Flesh: New Afrikan Journal of Culture, Politics & Consciousness* 6 (2007), 1–44. See also Greg Meyerson, "Rethinking Black Marxism: Reflections on Cedric Robinson and Others," *Cultural Logic: An Electronic Journal of Marxist Theory & Practice* 3(1) (Fall 1999), http://clogic.eserver.org/3–1&2/meyerson.html
166. Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, 57.
167. Consult, V. I. Lenin, "Marxism and Revisionism," in *Collected Works*, Vol. 15 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), 29–39. Eduard Bernstein a leading member of the German Social Democratic Party (he served as co-executor of Engels' estate and was editor of the party's paper-*Sozialdemokrat*) was considerably influenced by the Fabians, Bernard Shaw and Beatrice and Sidney Webb, during his exile in England from 1888 to 1901. Bernstein's acceptance of Fabianism was consciously done despite Engels's harsh reproach of the Fabians.
168. See, for instance, Nah Dove, "An African-Centered Critique of Marx's Logic," *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 19(4) (1995), 260–271.
169. Prior to teaching at Temple, Monteiro was a tenured professor at the University of the Sciences (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). See Eric Draitser, "Dr. Anthony Monteiro and the Assault on the Black Radical Tradition," *Counterpunch* (March 7–9, 2014). http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/03/07/dr-anthony-monteiro-and-the-assault-on-the-black-radical-tradition/ (Last accessed November 10, 2014).
170. Howard Goodman, "Panel Report Sheds Light on Asante Controversy Temple Faculty Board Sought A Tribunal," *The Inquirer* (November 14, 1996). http://articles.philly.com/1996–11–14/news/25649100_1_faculty-senate-committee-members-report.

171. See Myung Oak Kim, "Temple Black Studies Rift Widens," *Philly.com* (June 21, 1997). http://articles.philly.com/1997–06–21/news/25528453_1_asante-grievance-faculty (Last accessed November 10, 2014).
172. John Moritz and Erin Edinger-Turoff, "Ousted Professor Re-ignites Protests within Department," *The Temple News* (February 18, 2014). http://temple-news.com/news/ousted-professor-re-ignites-protests-within-department/ (Last accessed November 10, 2014).
173. These quotes are from a Facebook post on Molefi Asante's Facebook page title, "The Monteiro Affair at Temple University," dated May 11, 2014. (Last accessed November 10, 2014).
174. On Cleaver's evolution, see Jacob Zumoff, "Eldridge Cleaver," in *African American Lives*, ed. Henry Louis Gates and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 173–175.
175. For a great analysis of Fuller's organization The Black Alliance for Educational Options, see Erica Lasdon and Eric Evenskaas,, *Community Voice or Captive of the Right? A Closer Look at the Black Alliance for Educational Options* (Washington, DC: People for the American Way, 2003), 1–16. See also Sarah Barber, *Never Stop Working: Examining the Life and Activism of Howard Fuller*. Master's Thesis. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2012; Jeanette Mitchell, *Fighting the Inequalities in Education for African Americans: A Comparative Analysis of Two Leaders' Stories* (PhD diss., Cardinal Stritch University, 2001). See also Howard Fuller and Lisa Frazier Page, *No Struggle, No Progress: A Warrior's Life from Black Power to Education Reform* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2014). For a recent critique of Howard Fuller, see also, Adolph Reed, "The Real Problem with Selma: It Doesn't Help Us Understand the Civil Rights Movement, the Regime it Challenged, or Even the Significance of the Voting Rights Act," *Nonsite.org* (January 26, 2015). http://nonsite.org/editorial/the-real-problem-with-selma (Last accessed February 25, 2015).
176. Here is a partial list of some of Munford's Marxist writings: "Sartrean Existentialism and the Philosophy of History," *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale* 11 (1968), 392–404; "The Fallacy of Lumpen Ideology," *The Black Scholar* 4(10) (July–August 1973), 47–51; "Slavery and Racism in the U.S.—A Critique of Current Bourgeois Historiography," *Revolutionary World: An International Journal of Philosophy*, vols. 43–45 (Amsterdam, 1981), 65–97; "Marxism and the History of Africa," in *Dialectical Perspectives in Philosophy and Social Science*, ed. Pasquale N. Russo (Amsterdam: B.R. Grüner, 1983).
177. See, Anthony Monteiro, "Review Essay—Race, Class and Civilization: On Clarence J. Munford's *Race and Reparations*," *The Black Scholar* 29(1) (1999), 46–59.
178. See Charles Mills, "Red Shift: Politically Embodied/Embodied Politics," in *The Philosophical I: Personal Reflections on Life in Philosophy*, ed. George Yancy (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 155–175. See also, Charles W. Mills, *From Class to Race: Essays in White Marxism and Black Radicalism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003). For a Marxist philosophical and ideological critique of Mills' position, see John H. McClendon III, "Black and White contra Left and Right? The Dialectics of Ideological Critique in African

American Studies," *APA Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience* 2(1) (Fall 2002), 47–56.

179. See Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Retreat from Class: A New "True" Socialism* (New York: Verso, 1986).
180. See especially John Foster Bellamy, "Introduction to a Symposium on the Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought," *Monthly Review* 45(2) (June 1993), 8–16. See also, Robert Gooding-Williams, "Evading Narrative Myth, Evading Prophetic Pragmatism: Cornel West's *The American Evasion of Philosophy*," *The Massachusetts Review* (Winter 1991–1992), 519–523; John P. Pittman, "'Radical Historicism,' Antiphilosophy, and Marxism," in *Cornel West: A Critical Reader*, ed. George Yancy (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 224–244. For a penetrating left critique read Eric Lott, "Cornel West in the Hour of Chaos: Culture and Politics in Race Matters" *Social Text* 40 (Autumn 1994), 39–50. Also see Reed, Jr., *W. E. B. Du Bois and American Political Thought*, 12, 95–96, 99.
181. Cornel West, *Prophetic Fragments* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1988), 48.
182. Alf G. Nilsen and Laurence Cox, "What Would a Marxist Theory of Social Movements Look Like?" in *Marxism and Social Movements*, ed. Colin Barker, Laurence Cox, John Krinsky, and Alf G. Nilsen (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 71.
183. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 263.
184. I have intentionally focused on three tendencies in this period: liberalism, nationalism, and left-radicalism/Marxism. I have attempted to neatly point out the objective manner in which a given class's ideological position manifested itself on a series of political questions. The real history of the development of these tendencies is much more shambolic. In fact, a particular individual may be within one tendency on one question and another on a different political issue. More importantly, the "epistemological break" between nationalism and Marxism was an ongoing process of historical development. This must be kept in mind, particularly within this section. For instance, Black communists were generally lukewarm to the left-nationalism of Malcolm X after his "epistemological break" and political departure from the Nation of Islam. This was reflected in the fact that Malcolm X was never given the opportunity to publish in the Black leftist journal *Freedomways*, which was financed by the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA) and ran by Black communists such as W. Alphaeus Hunton, James and Ester Jackson, who were members of the CPUSA. The exclusion of Malcolm X occurred despite the inclusion of many Black liberals such as Roy Wilkins within the pages of *Freedomways*. However, Shirley Graham Du Bois, a non-Communist Black leftist and a member of the editorial board of *Freedomways*, openly embraced Malcolm X, particularly during his visit to Ghana in 1964. See Gerald Horne, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 219–220.
185. This is taken from June Jordan's poem, "On the Murder of Two Human Being Black Men, Denver A. Smith and Leonard Douglas Brown, at Southern

University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, November 1972." It was published in March 1973 issue of *Black World* 22(5), 63–65.

186. "Blues for Brother George Jackson," was a song on Archie Shepp's classic jazz album *Attica Blues* released in 1972.
187. After nearly 96 hours of negotiations, authorities agreed to 28 of the prisoners' demands. However, they refused to grant complete amnesty from criminal prosecution to the prisoners who participated in the uprising. Subsequently, Governor Nelson Rockefeller ordered state police to storm the prison. When the uprising was over, at least 39 people were dead, including ten correctional officers and civilian employees. See Donald F. Tibbs, *From Black Power to Prison Power: The Making of Jones v. North Carolina Prisoners' Labor Union* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
188. The ALSC was organized on the following platform: "The principle task of our movement at this time has two aspects. We must merge the Black liberation struggles in the U.S.A. with the National liberation struggles in Africa because a victory anywhere in the fight against U. S. imperialism is a victory everywhere." *Statement of Principles of the African Liberation Support Committee* (Washington, DC, n.d.), 4.
189. For coverage of African Liberation Day in 1973, see Don L. Lee, "African Liberation Day," *Ebony* 28(9) (July 1973), 41–44, 46. For a discussion of African Liberation Day in the context of African American involvement in the decolonization movement, see Brenda Gayle Plummer, *In Search of Power: African Americans in the Era of Decolonization, 1956–1974* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013). From March 23 to 24, ALSC sponsored a Conference on Racism and Imperialism at Howard University: "Which Way Forward in Building the Pan African United Front?" with over 800 attendees. See Phil Hutchings, "Report on the ALSC National Conference," *The Black Scholar* 5(10) (July–August 1974), 48–53. See also, Chris Harris, "Canadian Black Power, Organic Intellectuals and the War of Position in Toronto, 1967–1975," in *The Sixties in Canada: A Turbulent and Creative Decade*, ed. M. Athena Palaeologu (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 2009), 324–339. For a Marxist analysis of African American National Conference on Africa sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus at Howard University, May 25–27, 1972, see Robert Rhodes, "Internationalism and Social Consciousness in the Black Community," *Freedomways* 12 (1972), 230–236. For information on the Council on African Affairs, see Hollis R. Lynch, *Black American Radicals and the Liberation of Africa: The Council on African Affairs, 1937–1955* (Ithaca, NY: Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University, 1978); Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).
190. For a recent history of the Black Panther Party, see Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, *Black against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013). See also Elain Brown, *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992).
191. Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the US Working Class* (London: Verso, 1986), 257.

192. Cedric Johnson, *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders: Black Power and the Making of African American Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 128.
193. Stokely Carmichael, "What We Want," *New York Review of Books* (September 22, 1966), 8.
194. For a rightist critique of the concept of Black Power, see Bayard Rustin, " 'Black Power' and Coalition Politics," *Commentary* (September 1966), 35–40. See also, Robert Lee Scott and Wayne Brockriede, *The Rhetoric of Black Power* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969); especially, Martin Luther King, Jr., "The President's Address to the 10th Anniversary Convention of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, August 16, 1967."
195. "Unemployment Rates, total and black or African American, 16 years and over, 1972–2009," U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. http://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2010/african_american_history/data.htm#figure07_unemployment_rate (Accessed March 14, 2014).
196. This is a reference to Gil Scot-Heron and Brian Jackson's album *Winter in America*, which was released in May 1974 and the television situation comedy *Good Times*, which aired on February 8, 1974. The lyrics to the theme song (composed by Dave Grusin with lyrics written by Alan and Marilyn Bergman and sung by Jim Gilstrap and Blinky Williams) contain the following: "Ain't we lucky we got 'em—Good Times."
197. Adolph Reed, "The Study of Black Politics and the Practice of Black Politics: Their Historical Relation and Evolution," in *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*, ed. Ian Shapiro (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 111.
198. Adolph Reed, *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 121.
199. Robert Weems and Lewis Randolph argue that Nixon's advocacy of "Black Capitalism" complimented his "Southern Strategy." See Robert E. Weems, Jr. and Lewis A. Randolph, "The Ideological Origins of Richard M. Nixon's 'Black Capitalism' Intiative," *The Review of Black Political Economy* 29(1) (Summer 2001), 49–61. For a critique of Black Power, see Eldridge Cleaver, "Open Letter to Stokely Carmichael," in *The Black Panthers Speak*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Da Capo Press, 1995[1970]), 104–108.
200. According to Andrew Bimmer, by June 1986, "there were 44 Black-owned banks out of a total of 14, 253 insured commercial banks in the United States. Black-owned banks represented 0.309% of the total and had total assets of $1,680 million. The average Black-owned bank had $38 million in assets and was about one-fifth as large as the average bank in the nation." See Andrew Brimmer, "Black Banks: High Risks and Slow Growth," *Black Enterprise* (March 1987), 31.
201. See Christopher Strain, "Soul City, North Carolina: Black Power, Utopia, and the African American Dream," *The Journal of African American History* 89(1) (Winter 2004), 57–74.
202. Joshua D. Farrington, " 'Build, Baby, Build': Conservative Black Nationalists, Free Enterprise, and the Nixon Administration," in *The Right Side of the Sixties:*

Reexamining Conservatism's Decade of Transformation, ed. Laura Jane Gifford and Daniel K. Williams (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 61–80.

203. See Robert Lekachman, *Greed Is Not Enough: Reaganomics* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982); Ken, Cole, John Cameron, and Chris Edwards, *Why Economists Disagree: The Political Economy of Economics* (London: Longman, 1983); Bob Rowthorn, *Capitalism, Conflict, and Inflation: Essays in Political Economy* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980).
204. This trend was part of a larger dynamic to restructure education in light of market pressures, particularly to "commodify" and "marketize" learning and teaching from pre-school to post-secondary education and beyond. For a rightist analysis of these dynamics, see Benjamin Ginsberg, *The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why It Matters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). This "neo-liberal" turn was reflected in England and China. For an analysis of the neoliberal turn in China, see Ahmed Shawki, "China: From Mao to Deng," *International Socialist Review* 1 (Summer 1997), http://www.isreview.org/issues/01/mao_to_deng_1.shtml. See also, David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
205. Norman Harris, "'Can the Big Dog Run?' Developing African American Studies at the University of Georgia," in *Africana Studies: A Disciplinary Quest for Both Theory and Method*, ed. James L. Conyers (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1997), 55.
206. See John Arena, "Bringing in the Black Working Class: The Black Urban Regime Strategy," *Science and Society* 75(2) (April 2011), 153–170. See, for example, Cornel West, *Race Matters* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993).
207. William J. Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). For a Marxist critique of Wilson's work, see Steven Rosenthal, "How Liberal Ideology Assists the Growth of Fascism: A Critique of the Sociology of William Julius Wilson," *Journal of Poverty* 3(2) (1999), 67–87. For a discussion of the concept of underclass by African American philosophers, see *The Underclass Question*, ed. Bill Lawson (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1992).
208. See Luke Tripp, "The Political Views of Black Students during the Reagan Era," *The Black Scholar* 22(3), 46.
209. Adolph Reed, *Class Notes: Posing as Politics and Other Thoughts on the American Scene* (New York: The New Press, 2000), 50.
210. For a leftist analysis of the Million Man March, see Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "Providence, Patriarchy, Pathology: Louis Farrakhan's Rise & Decline," *New Politics* 6(2) (Winter 1997), 47–71. See also Adolph Reed, "The Rise of Louis Farrakhan," in *Class Notes: Posing as Politics and Other Thoughts on the American Scene* (New York: The New Press, 2000), 37–60.
211. The so-called melanists would include: Dr. Frances Cress Welsing, Dr. Richard King, Dr. Wade Nobles, Dr. Leonard Jeffries, Hunter Havelin Adams, Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, Anthony Browder, Carol Barnes, and Dr. Naim Akbar. For an excellent discussion of the pseudoscientific character of the melanin school

of Afrocentricity, see Bernard Ortiz de Montellano, "Melanin, Afrocentricity and Pseudoscience," *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* 36 (1993), 33–58.

212. This paraphrases a line from Paul Beatty's remarkable novel, *Slumberland* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2008), 3–4.

2 The Afrocentric Problematic

1. For a general survey of academic racism at the beginning of the twentieth century, see I. A. Newby, *Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900–1930* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965). For "scientific racism" in the field of psychology, see Robert V. Guthrie, *Even the Rat Was White: A Historical View of Psychology* (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 1998).
2. This phrase is attributed to the sociologists Robert E. Park. See Robert Ezra Park and E. W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1921), 136.
3. See Ralph Crowder, *Street Scholars and Stepladder Radicals: Self-Trained Black Historians and the Harlem Experience* (New York: New York University Press, 2010). See also Earl E. Thorpe, *Black Historians: A Critique* (New York: Morrow, 1971). See, also, Carter G. Woodson, "Ten Years of Collecting and Publishing the Records of the Negro," *Journal of Negro History* 10(4) (October 1925), 598–606; Ernest Kaiser, "The History of Negro History: A Survey," *Negro Digest* (February 1968), 10–15, 64–80; Arthur A. Schomburg, "The Negro Digs Up His Past," in *The New Negro*, ed. Alain Locke (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 231–244; L. D. Reddick, "Racial Attitudes in American History Textbooks of the South," *Journal of Negro History* 19(3) (July 1934), 225–265; J. A. Rogers, "The Suppression of Negro History," *Crisis* 47 (May 1940), 136–137, 146; W. M. Brewer, "Acquainting the Negro with History," *Negro History Bulletin* 8 (December 1944), 54, 68; Charles H. Wesley, "The Reconstruction of History," *Journal of Negro History* 20(4) (October 1925), 411–427; John Hope Franklin, "The New Negro History," *Crisis* 64 (February 1957), 73–75.
4. Asante, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 2003), 2. All quotes are from this edition unless otherwise stated.
5. Molefi K. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1987), 9. All citations are from this edition unless otherwise stated.
6. See Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "W. E. B. Du Bois and the Encyclopedia Africana, 1909–63," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 568 (March 2000), 203–219; W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Study of the Negro Problems," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 568 (March 2000), 13–27.
7. Quoted in Wilson J. Moses, *Afrotopia: The Roots of African American Popular History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 2.

8. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea*, 125.
9. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 23. David Levering Lewis in his biography, *W. E. B. Du Bois, Biography of a Race*, argues for the influence of Josiah Royce's Hegelianism. See also Robert Gooding-Williams, "Philosophy of History and Social Critique in *The Souls of Black Folks*," *Social Science Information* 26 (1987), 99–114. Initially Du Bois establishes his philosophy of history on dialectical idealist foundations. Yet, with the publication of his *Black Reconstruction*, he sets out to ground his philosophy of history and, more broadly, philosophy of social science on the basis of materialist dialectics. Du Bois's shift from idealist to materialist dialectics is reflected in the fact that between 1918 and 1928, he was "absorbed in Hegelian dialectics and the doctrine of Karl Marx." See Mozel C. Hill, "The Formative Years of *Phylon* Magazine," *Freedomways* 5 (Winter 1965), 129–142. For other arguments on Du Bois's materialism and materialist understanding of dialectics, consult Eugene C. Holmes, "W. E. B. Du Bois-Philosopher," *Freedomways* (Winter 1965), 44. See also, James Jackson, *Revolutionary Tracings* (New York: International Publishers, 1974). For leftist critiques of Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction*, see Abram Harris, "Reconstruction and the Negro," in *Race, Radicalism, and Reform: Selected Papers of Abram L. Harris*, ed. William A. Darity, Jr. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1989), 209–212; Loren Miller, "Let My People Go!," *New Masses* (October 29, 1935), 23; Ralph Bunch, "Reconstruction Reinterpreted: Book Review of W. E. B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction," *Journal of Negro Education* 4(4) (October 1935), 568–570.
10. We should not take Asante's position on Du Bois as definitive within the African-centered school of thought. James B. Stewart, a proponent of Afrocentricity, has argued that Du Bois's corpus of work is foundational to a philosophy of Black Studies. See James B. Stewart, "In Search of a Theory of Human History: More on W. E. B. Du Bois's Theory of Social and Cultural Dynamics" and "The Legacy of W. E. B. Du Bois for Contemporary Black Studies," in *Flight: In Search of Vision* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2004), 65–85, 249–260.
11. See Clovis E. Semmes, *Cultural Hegemony and African American Development* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992); Joyce Ann Joyce, "African-Centered Scholarship: Interrogating Black Studies, Pan Africanism, and Afrocentricity," in *Decolonizing the Academy: African Diaspora Studies*, ed. Carole Boyce-Davies (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), 125–147; Tunde Adeleke, "Will the Real Father of Afrocentricity Please Stand," *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 25(1) (2001), 21–29.
12. See John Henrik Clarke, "The Fight To Reclaim African History," *Negro Digest* (February 1970), 10–15, 59–64. The African Heritage Studies Association was an offshoot of the African Studies Association, and was founded in 1968 by the ASA's Black Caucus and led by John Henrik Clarke.
13. J. A. Rogers, *World's Greatest Men of Color*, Vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1972), xxiii–xxiv.
14. John Henrik Clarke, "The Mean of Black History," *Black World* (February 1971), 34, Italics Added. In the introduction to the 1978 edition of Cheik

Anta Diop's *Cultural Unity of Black Africa*, Clarke credits Diop with starting "the Afrocentric approach to history." See Cheik Anta Diop, *Cultural Unity of Black Africa* (Chicago: Africa World Press, 1978), i, v. Clarke also suggested the need for an "Afrocentric view of the woman in power" based on Diop's analysis of matriarchy in pre-colonial African societies.

15. P. Chike Onwuachi, "Negritude in Perspective," *Black World* (October 1971), 6. See also P. Chike Onwuachi, *African Identity and Black Liberation* (Buffalo, NY: The Black Academy Press, 1972).
16. Clovis Semmes, *Cultural Hegemony and African American Development* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992), 15–16.
17. Jacob Carruthers, "Reflections on the Revision of the African Centered Paradigm," (1999). http://www.africanbynature.com/eyes/openeyes_carruthers.html (Accessed May 25, 2014).
18. Lerone Bennett, "The Challenge of Blackness," *Black World* (February 1971), 21.
19. St. Clair Drake, "What Happened to Black Studies," in *African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2001), 269. See also James B. Stewart, *Flight in Search of Vision* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 2004), 23–29. See also, Abdul Alkalimat, *The Academic Journals of Black Studies: A Preliminary Report*. December 2008. http://eblackstudies.org/may2009/draft_report_black_studies_journals_dec_2008.pdf (last accessed February 13, 2015).
20. See, for example, Gerald A. McWorter and Ronald Bailey, "Black Studies Curriculum Development in the 1980s: Its Patterns and History," *The Black Scholar* 15(2) (1984), 18–31; Robert Allen, "Politics of the Attacks on Black Studies," *The Black Scholar* 6(1) (1974), 2–7; Molefi Kete Asante, "African American Studies: The Future of the Discipline," *The Black Scholar* 22(3) (1992), 20–29; "Black Studies: A Review of the Literature," *The Black Scholar* 2(1) (1970), 52–55; Melba Joyce Boyd, "The Legacy of Darwin T. Turner and the Struggle for African American Studies," *The Black Scholar* 41(4) (2011), 11–16; Elridge Cleaver, "Education and Revolution," *The Black Scholar* 1(1) (1969), 44–52; Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," *The Black Scholar* 3(4), (1971), 2–15; Darlene Clark Hine, "The Black Studies Movement: Afrocentric-Traditionalist-Feminist Paradigms for the Next Stage," *The Black Scholar* 22(3) (1992), 11–18; Manning Marable, "Blueprint for Black Studies and Multiculturalism," *The Black Scholar* 22(3) (1992), 30–35; William H. McClendon, "Black Studies: Education for Liberation," *The Black Scholar* 6(1) (1974), 15–25; Sydney Walton, "Black Studies and Affirmative Action," *The Black Scholar* 6(1) (1974), 21–28.
21. Yosef ben-Jochannan argues that only Black people are qualified to teach in African American Studies. See Yosef ben-Jochannan, *Cultural Genocide in the Black and African Studies Curriculum* (New York: ECA Associates, 1998). It was originally published in 1972.
22. Norman Hill characterized African American Studies as a "pretext for separatism." See Norman Hill, "Integration or Segregation?," in *Black Studies: Myths and Realities*, ed. Martin Kilson (New York: A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund, 1969), 45.

23. Born in 1942, in Valdosta, Georgia—with the Christian name Arthur Smith—Asante later earned his doctorate in communications from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1968. After spending a year at Purdue University, he returned to UCLA as a faculty member. From 1969 to 1973, as director of UCLA's Center for Afro-American Studies, he helped establish its MA program. In 1971, he founded and served as the editor of the *Journal of Black Studies*. After visiting the University of Ghana in 1973, he discarded his "slave name." In the same year he was appointed a full professor and chair of the communications department at the State University of New York at Buffalo. In 1977, he became chair of the Black Studies department at SUNY-Buffalo. In 1984, he was appointed chair of the African American Studies department at Temple University. In 1995 he was made a traditional king, Nana Okru Asante Peasah, Kyidomhene of Tafo, Akyem, Ghana.
24. Molefi K. Asante, "The Afrocentric Idea in Education," *The Journal of Negro Education* 60(2) (Spring 1991), 171.
25. Ibid., 11.
26. For a rather interesting intellectual genealogy of Afrocentricity, from the standpoint of idealism, see Greg E. Kimathi Carr, "African Philosophy of History in the Contemporary Era: Its Antecedents and Methodological Implications for the African Contribution to World History," PhD Thesis, Temple University, 1998.
27. Between 1991 and 2013, there have been over 150 doctoral dissertations from the department of African American Studies at Temple. For a listing of doctoral dissertations from Temple University's African American Studies department, see http://www.cla.temple.edu/africanamericanstudies/graduate/doctoral-dissertations-in-the-department-of-african-american-studies/
28. See Asante, "African American Studies," 220–229.
29. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 83.
30. A. Mazama, "The Afrocentric Paradigm: Contours and Definitions," *Journal of Black Studies* 31(4), 403.
31. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 76.
32. Asante, "African American Studies: The Future of the Discipline," 24.
33. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 4.
34. For a discussion of intensional and extensional definitions, see Patrick J. Hurley, *A Concise Introduction to Logic* (Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2006), 94–100.
35. For an insightful discussion of this point, see Stephen Howe, *Afrocentrism: Mythical Pasts and Imagined Homes* (New York: Verso, 1998).
36. There have been various attempts to come to terms with the diversity within Afrocentricity by Gerald Early, Moses Wilson, and Stephen Howe. See Howe, *Afrocentrism*; Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Afrotopia: The Roots of African American Popular History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Gerald Early, "Understanding Afrocentrism," *Civilization* 2(4) (July–August 1995), 31–39.
37. John H. McClendon III, "The Afrocentric Project: The Quest for Particularity and the Negation of Objectivity," *Explorations in Ethnic Studies* 18(2) (1996), 21–22.

38. See Amy J. Binder, *Contentious Curricula: Afrocentrism and Creationism in American Public Schools* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).
39. It is in fact true that biological determinism can be put to different uses. Langston Hughes flirtation with primitivism led him to defend and illustrate Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven*; or Du Bois's early writings such as *The Conservation of Races* and *The Souls of Black Folk* valorizing the notion of racial gifts. These are all uses of the basically biological concept of race different from theories of outright inferiority. They have been rightly rejected as false. For a Marxist critique of biological determinism, see, Richard C. Lewontin, Steven Peter Russell Rose, and Leon J. Kamin, *Not In Our Genes: Biology, Ideology, and Human Nature* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).
40. Richard C. Lewontin, Steven P. R. Rose, and Leon J. Kamin, *Not In Our Genes: Biology, Ideology, and Human Nature* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 18.
41. Here are two important works from the so-called melanin scholars: Charles S. Finch, *The African Background to Medical Science* (London: Karnak House, 1990); Richard D. King, *African Origin of Biological Psychiatry* (Germantown, TN: Seymour-Smith, 1990). For a critique of strong Afrocentricity as a form of pseudoscience, see Bernard R. Ortiz de Montellano, "Afrocentric Creationism," *Creation/Evolution* 11(2) (Winter 1991–1992), 1–8; Bernard R. Ortiz de Montellano, "Afrocentric Pseudoscience: The Miseducation of African Americans," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 775 (1996), 561–572.
42. Frances Cress Welsing, *The Isis (Yssis) Papers: The Keys to the Color* (Chicago, IL: Third World Press, 1991), 233.
43. V. N. Voloshinov, *Freudianism: A Marxist Critique* (New York: Academic Press, 1976), 70.
44. Francis Cress Welsing, "The Cress Theory of Color Confrontation," *Black Scholar* 5 (May 1974), 34.
45. Ibid., 36–37.
46. Similar to "scientific" creationism, "melanin scholars" blur the fundamental distinction between science and religion. Religion makes use of supernatural explanations, whereas science employs naturalistic explanations to explain observed phenomena. For a cursory overview of the Cress Theory of Color Confrontation, see Welsing, "The Cress Theory of Color Confrontation," 32–40. For a discussion—with little substantive criticism—of the Cress Theory of Color Confrontation, see Eddie Glaude, Jr., "An Analysis of the Cress Theory of Color Confrontation," *Journal of Black Studies* 22(2) (December 1991), 284–293. For an excellent critique of Afrocentricity as pseudoscience, see Bernard R. Ortiz de Montellano, "Melanin, Afrocentricity, and Pseudoscience," *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* 36 (1993), 33–58.
47. Welsing, *The Isis (Yssis) Papers*, 135–136.
48. Someone like Asante espouses both the weak and strong variants of Afrocentrism. See Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea*, 62–63. See also, Linda J. Myers, "The Deep Structure of Culture: Relevance of Traditional African Culture in Contemporary Life," *Journal of Black Studies* 18(1), 72–85.
49. Asante, *Afrocentric Idea*, 7.

50. Molefi K. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990), 4.
51. Linda James Myers, "The Deep Structure of Culture: Relevance of Traditional African Culture in Contemporary Life," *Journal of Black Studies* 18(1) (September 1987), 81.
52. Norman Harris, "A Philosophical Basis for an Afrocentric Orientation," in *The Afrocentric Paradigm*, ed. Ama Mazama (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), 113. See also, Adisa A. Alkebulan, "Defending the Paradigm," *Journal of Black Studies* 37(3) (January 2007), 410–427.
53. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* in *Collected Works*, Vol. 5 (New York: International Publishers, 1976), 24.
54. I make a similar argument in my article, "Social Contract as Bourgeois Ideology," *Cultural Logic: An Electronic Journal of Marxist Theory and Practice* (2007), 1–19.
55. For a similar argument, see Christopher J. Williams, "In Defence of Materialism: A Critique of Afrocentric Ontology," *Race & Class* 47(1), 35–48.
56. John H. McClendon, "Materialist Philosophical Inquiry and African American Studies," *Socialism and Democracy* 25(1) (March 2011), 71–92. For a critique of Asante's Afrocentricity as a distinctive form of idealism rooted in religious mythology read James Palermo, "Reading Asante's Myth of Afrocentricity: An Ideological Critique" http://www.edu/PES/97_pre/palerno.html
57. This argument ignores the tradition of secular humanism (atheism) associated with Richard B. Moore, Hubert Harrison, J. A. Rogers, George S. Schulyer, Walter Everette Hawkins, A. Philip Randolph, Chandler Owen, Kwame Nkrumah, Eugene C. Holmes, C. L. R. James, and Neil DeGrasse Tyson just to name a few. Anthony B. Pinn has been a trailblazer in terms of documenting and discussing the tradition of African American humanism. See, for example, *Moral Evil and Redemptive Suffering: A History of Theodicy in African American Religious Thought* (2002), *Why Lord? Suffering and Evil in Black Religious Thought* (1999), and *African American Humanist Principles* (2004). For an introductory history of Black atheism, see John G. Jackson, "The Black Atheists of the Harlem Renaissance, 1917–1928," Speech given at 1984 American Atheists Convention. http://nationofatheism.tripod.com/cgi-bin/the_black_atheist.html (Accessed on May 25, 2014). For information on Richard B. Moore, see John H. McClendon, "Richard B. Moore, Radical Politics and the Afro-American History Movement: The Formation of a Revolutionary Tradition in African American Intellectual Culture," *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 30 (July 2006), 7–46. For information on Hubert Harrison, see Jeffrey Babcock Perry, *Hubert Harrison: The Voice of Harlem Radicalism, 1883–1918* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). For Hubert Harrison's writings, see Hubert H. Harrison, *A Hubert Harrison Reader*, ed. Jeffrey Babcock Perry (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 13, 35–36, 41, 42–46, 102, 114, 116, 225, 308, 327, 356, 362. For a discussion of atheism and materialism, see Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization* (New York: Monthly Review, 1970); John H. McClendon, "Nkrumah's *Consciencism*: Philosophical

Materialism and the Issue of Atheism Revisited," *Journal of African Philosophy* 4(2012), 29–52. For a recent discussion of Black atheism, see Sikivu Hutchinson, *Moral Combat: Black Atheists, Gender Politics, and the Values Wars* (Los Angeles, CA: Infidel Books, 2011); Juan Marcial Floyd-Thomas, *The Origins of Black Humanism in America Reverend Ethelred Brown and the Unitarian Church* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

58. Dona Richards (Marimba Ani), "The Implications of African American Spirituality," in Molefi Asante and Karimu Welch Asante (eds.), *African Culture: The Rhythms of Unity* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 210. See also, Ani, *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1994.* . Mazama also agrees with Ani that Africans are essentially spiritual people. See Mambo Ama Mazama, "Afrocentricity and African Spirituality," *Journal of Black Studies* 33(2) (November 2002), 218–234.
59. See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1989. For a critical treatment of Mbiti, see D. A. Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 103–123.
60. Kwasi Wiredu, "Morality and Religion and Akan Thought" in *African American Humanism: An Anthology*, ed. Norm R. Allen (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991), 210–211.
61. Kwame Gyekye, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 133.
62. Ibid., 132.
63. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 4.
64. In the *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*, Qui-Gon Jinn says to Anakin Skywalker: "Without he midi-chlorians, life could not exist, and we would have no knowledge of the Force. They continually speak to us, telling us the will of the Force. When you learn to quiet your mind, you'll hear them speaking to you."
65. Paulin J. Hountondji, *African Philosophy Myth and Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 38. For a Marxist critique of ethnophilosophy by an African philosopher, see E. Wamba-Dia-Wamba, "Philosophy in Africa: Challenges of the African Philosopher," in *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings*, ed. Tsenay Serequeberhan (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 211–246. Afrocentricity bears a strong family resemblance to what is putatively referred to as ethnophilosophy. The family resemblance, among texts in ethnophilosophy, is the hosts of discursive practices, wherein descriptions and/or explanations given are thought to be distinctive and exclusive African conceptions of, for example, being, becoming, force, space, time, ethics, epistemology, and so on, that stand contra to the Western or European prototype. Representative texts in this tradition are: Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy* (1949), Alexis Kagamé's *La Philosophie bantou-rwandaise de l'être* (1956), W. E. Abraham's *The Mind of Africa* (1962), Jomo Kenyatta's *Harambee* (1964), Marcel Griaule's *Conversations with Ogotemmêli* (1948,1965), Julius K. Nyerere's *Uhuru na Ujamaa* (1968), and Mbiti's *African Religions and Philosophy* (1969). See Christian Neugebauer, "Ethnophilosophy in the Philosophical Discourse in Africa: A Critical Note," *Quest: An International*

African Journal of Philosophy 4(1) (June 1990), 43–64. In *The Afrocentric Idea*, we find Asante throws praise on Father Placid Tempels' *Bantu Philosophy*. See Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1987), 93–94.

66. Molefi K. Asante, *Afrocentricity* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1989), 2.
67. See Hountondji, *African Philosophy Myth and Reality*; D. A. Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Tsenay Serequeberhan, *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings* (New York: Paragon House, 1991).
68. See Paul Gilroy, "Tyrannies of Unanimism," in *Postcolonialisms: An Anthology of Cultural Theory and Criticism*, ed. Gaurav Gajanan Desai and Supriya Nair (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 220–-247
69. See Barbara Ransby, "Afrocentrism and Cultural Nationalism," in *Dispatches from the Ebony Tower*, ed. Manning Marable (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 216–223.
70. Walter Rodney, "Tanzanian Ujamaa and Scientific Socialism," *African Review* [Dar es Salaam, Tanzania] 1(4) (1972), 61–76. This article is available online: https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/rodney-walter/works/ujamaaandscientificsocialism.htm (Accessed April 11, 2014).
71. Jonas Savimbi was the leader of an Angolan anti-Communist political organization, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) that was in opposition to the leftist People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) during the Angolan Civil War of 1975–2002. He was supported by the United States and its ally Apartheid South Africa. Most recently, he is featured in the videogame *Call of Duty: Black Ops II* (2012). In January 1986, Savimbi meet with Ronald Reagan and, in turn, was given $15 million in military aid by the Reagan administration. Therefore, given Savimbi's anti-Communism, Ronald Reagan feted him as a freedom fighter. For a definitive account of reactionary role in the Angola's war of independence, see Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). See also Terence Hunt, "Reagan Tells Savimbi He Wants to Be Very Helpful," *Associated Press News Archive* (January 30, 1986) http://www.apnewsarchive.com/1986/Reagan-Tells-Savimbi-He-Wants-to-Be-Very-Helpful/id-aac4344cb87abdb200515823dcf2b712 (Accessed March 10, 2013).
72. Barbara Ransby, "Afrocentrism and Cultural Nationalism," in *Dispatches from the Ebony Tower*, ed. Manning Marable (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 219.
73. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea*, 5; Italics Added.
74. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 15, 41.
75. "Dancing between Circles and Lines" is the title of the introductory chapter to Asante's *The Afrocentric Idea*. He argues for a distinction between an Afro-circular and Euro-linear views of the world. See, Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea*, 18.
76. Karl Marx, "Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right (1843)," in *Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1975), 182.

77. Adisa A. Ajamu, "From Tef Tef to Medew Nefer: The Importance of Utilizing African Languages, Terminologies, and Concepts in the Rescue, Restoration, Reconstruction, and Reconnection of African Ancestral Memory," in *African World History Project: The Preliminary Challenge*, eds. Jacob H. Carruthers, and Leon C. Harris (Los Angeles: Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations, 1997), 182.
78. See Albert G. Mosley, *African Philosophy: Selected Readings* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995); Kwasi Wiredu, *Philosophy and an African Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Hountondji, *African Philosophy Myth and Reality*.
79. Chidi Amuta, *The Theory of African Literature: Implications for Practical Criticism* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Zed Books, 1989), 41.
80. C. V. Roman, "Philosophical Musings in the By-Path of Ethnology," *A. M. E. Church Review* 28(1) (July 1911), 446–447.
81. Kwame Gyekye, "Philosophy, Culture and Technology in the Post Colonial," in *Post-Colonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 25–44. Paulin Hountondji, "Tradition, Hindrance or Inspiration?," *Quest: An African Journal of Philosophy* 14(1–2) (2000), 5–11. For an opposing view, see Albert Mosley, "Science, Technology and Tradition in Contemporary African Philosophy," *African Philosophy* 13(1) (March, 2000), 25–32.
82. On Nkrumah's commitment to materialism, see Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, 28, 79. For treatment of Nkrumah's materialism see, John H. McClendon III, "Kwame Nkrumah's Materialism contra Representative Realism," *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience* 5(1) (Fall 2005), 1–14. See also, McClendon's important article, "Nkrumah's Consciencism as Philosophical Text: Matter of Confusion," *Journal on African Philosophy* 3 (2003), 1–39. For an idealist reading of *Consciencism*, from the standpoint of Afrocentricity, see Kwasi Boadi, "The Ontology of Kwame Nkrumah's Consciencism and the Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa: A Diopian Perspective," *Journal of Black Studies* 30(4) (March 2000), 475–501. For the most extensive treatment of *Consciencism* as a philosophical work to date, see John H. McClendon, *Consciencism: The Philosophy of Nkrumaism* (PhD Thesis, University of Kansas, 1999). For discussions of Nkrumah's conception of philosophy vis-à-vis ethnophilosophy, see Martin Odei Ajei, "Nkrumah and Hountondji on Ethno-Philosophy: A Critical Appraisal," in *Hegel's Twilight: Liber Amicorum Discipulorumque Pro Heinz Kimmerle*, ed. M. B. Ramose and H. Kimmerle (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013), 131–150. See also, Paulin Hountondji, "From the Ethnosciences to Ethnophilosophy: Kwame Nkrumah's Thesis Project," *Research in African Literatures* 28(4) (1997), 112–120. I might add that Asante ironically cites *Consciencism* as a major influence on the development of Afrocentricity! See Molefi K. Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007), 6, 32–34. Nkrumah offers an insightful critique of subjective idealism, particularly Rene Descartes. In Nkrumah's defense of philosophical materialism, he argues that subjective idealism wrongly makes "the existence of matter dependent on perception,

or on the possession of ideas by the mind." Citing the Ghanaian philosopher Anthony William Amo, Nkrumah argues with great force that idealism is "enmeshed with contradictions" because the "distinction between reality and appearance slips between the spectral fingers of idealism, for in idealism reality becomes merely a persistant appearance." See Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, 15–19.

83. In response to the notion of the "disappearance of matter," Lenin distinguishes the *scientific* investigation of the structure of matter contra ontological and epistemological (*philosophical*) formulations. This difference allows for the dialectical unfolding of scientific progress without resort to idealism. He argues: "For the sole 'property' of matter with whose recognition philosophical materialism is bound up is the property of being an objective reality, of existing outside our mind." This definition of matter is opposed to both objective and subjective idealism. See V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* in *Collected Works*, Vol. 14 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), 260. See also, John H. McClendon, *C.L.R. James's Notes on Dialectics: Left Hegelianism or Marxism-Leninism*? (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004); particularly, "Afterword: Beyond the Boundary of the Johnson-Forest Tendency"; Helena Sheehan, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Science: A Critical History* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1985).
84. Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, 20–27.
85. Théophile Obenga, *African Philosophy: The Pharaonic Period, 2780–330 B. C.* (Popenguine: Per Ankh Books, 2004), 31. For a similar argument, see George G. M. James, *Stolen Legacy* (Newport News, VA: United Brothers Communications Systems, 1989).
86. Ibid., 33.
87. Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, 30–36.
88. For a materialist analysis within African American Studies, see Angela Y. Davis, "Women and Capitalism: Dialectics of Oppression and Liberation," in *The Angela Y. Davis Reader*, ed. Joy James (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 161–209; Stephen C. Ferguson II, "The Utopian Worldview of Afrocentricity: Critical Comments on a Reactionary Philosophy," *Socialism and Democracy*, 25(1), (2011), 44–70; Eugene C. Holmes, "A Philosophical Approach to the Study of Minority Problems," *The Journal of Negro Education* 38(3) (1969), 196–203; John H. McClendon III, "On the Nature of Whiteness and the Ontology of Race: Toward a Dialectical Materialist Analysis," in *What White Looks Like: African American Philosophers On the Whiteness Question* ed. George Yancy (New York: Routledge, 2004), 211–225; John H. McClendon III, "Black and White or Left and Right?: Ideological Critique in African American Studies," *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience* 2(1) (2002), 47–56; Clarence J. Munford, *Production Relations, Class and Black Liberation: A Marxist Perspective in Afro-American Studies* (Amsterdam: B. R. Gruner, 1978); Robert Young, "Putting Materialism Back into Race Theory: Toward a Transformative Theory of Race," *THE RED CRITIQUE,* 11 (Winter/Spring 2006) http://redcritique.org/WinterSpring2006/index.html
89. See Vanessa D. Johnson, "The Nguzo Saba as a Foundation for African American College Student Development Theory," *Journal of Black Studies*

31(4) (March 2001), 409–416. Mazama, "Afrocentricity and African Spirituality," 218–234. On the idealist character of postmodernism, see John H. McClendon, "From Cultural Nationalism to Cultural Criticism: Philosophical Idealism, Paradigmatic Illusions and the Politics of Identity," in *Decolonizing the Academy: African Diaspora Studies*, ed. Carole Boyce Davies (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), 3–26. See also Alex Callinicos, *Against Postmodernism: A Marxist Critique* (New York, 1989).

90. Asante, "The Afrocentric Idea in Education," 171.
91. Asante, "African American Studies: The Future of the Discipline," 25.
92. Asante, "The Afrocentric Idea in Education," 172.
93. Asante, "African American Studies: The Future of the Discipline," 22.
94. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea*, 8.
95. Ibid., 3. See also Asante, "The Afrocentric Idea in Education," 172.
96. "The best that has been thought and known in the world" is in reference to Matthew Arnold's view of culture. See Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy and Other Writings* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
97. Asante, "The Afrocentric Idea in Education," 174.
98. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge*, vi.
99. Asante, "The Afrocentric Idea in Education," 172.
100. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge*, 12; Italics added.
101. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 58.
102. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea*, 4. "Dancing between Circles and Lines" is the title of the introductory chapter to Asante's *The Afrocentric Idea*. He argues for a distinction between an Afro-circular and Euro-linear views of the world.
103. This seven points are adopted from James Rachels's discussion of cultural relativism, see James Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003). See also, Steven Lukes, *Moral Relativism* (New York: Picador, 2008).
104. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge*, 24–25.
105. The African American philosopher Cornel West makes the very same relativist argument. He labels it radical historicism. See Cornel West, *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought* (New York: Monthly Review, 1991).
106. Asante, "The Afrocentric Idea in Education," 172.
107. Asante, *The Afrocentric Manifesto* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007), 16.
108. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge*, 12.
109. Walter Benn Michaels, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism and Pluralism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 137.
110. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge*, 9.
111. Asante, "The Afrocentric Idea in Education," 173.
112. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 63.
113. Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*, 160.
114. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea*, 4.
115. On the incoherence of the relativist position, see Alan Garfinkel, *Forms of Explanation: Rethinking the Questions in Social Theory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), 156–184.

116. V. I. Lenin, *Critical Remarks on the National Question* in *Collected Works*, Vol. 20 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), 24.
117. See Michael Parenti, *The Culture Struggle* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2006).
118. Kati Whitaker, "Ghana Witch Camps: Widows' Lives in Exile," http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-19437130 (Accessed April 21, 2014).
119. "Somalia: Girl stoned was a child of 13," *Amnesty International* (October 31, 2008) http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/somalia-girl-stoned-was-child-13–20081031 (Accessed April 21, 2014). See also, "Stoning victim 'begged for mercy'," *BBC News* (November 4, 2008) http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7708169.stm (Accessed April 21, 2014).
120. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge*, 9.
121. Mualana Karenga, *The Quotable Karenga*, ed. Clyde Halisi and James Mtume (Los Angeles, CA: US Organization, 1967), 27–28. For a fuller treatment of gender politics and the Black Power movement, see Tracye Matthews, " 'No One Ever Asks, What a Man's Place in the Revolution Is': Gender and the Politics of the Black Panther Party 1966–1971," in *The Black Panther Party (Reconsidered)*, ed. Charles E. Jones (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1998), 267–304. See also, Maxine Williams, "Black Women and the Struggle for Liberation" in *Black Woman's Manifesto*, ed. Third World Women's Alliance (New York: Third World Women's Alliance, 1970), 9–18; Linda La Rue, "The Black Movement and Women's Liberation," *The Black Scholar* 1(7) (May 1970), 36–42.
122. It should be noted that in 1971 Karenga and two of his followers were convicted of torturing two Black women—Deborah Jones and Gail Davis. He was sentenced to 1–10 years in prison on counts of felonious assault and false imprisonment. See Bruce Michael Tyler, "Black Radicalism in Southern California, 1950–1982," Phd. Thesis (University of California-Los Angeles, 1983), 374–375.
123. Angela Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 122.
124. I would argue that the root of Karenga's idealism has to be found in his method of constructing Nguzo Saba. Karenga proceeds to deductively construct a Black value system from the abstract concept of African cultural traditions rather than from the real social relations which African Americans find themselves in. Kwanzaa is a mythical construction based on a set of ahistorical moral principles, virtues, and values that are impervious to changes in material reality. With Kwanzaa, we are stuck in an ontological gap between the utopian ideal and the sordid actuality. The glorified and ineffective trivialities of Karenga's Nguzo Saba principles are no different than the idealist ethical theories of divine command theory or Aristotlelian virtue ethics. Karenga's idealist approach leads us to believe that abstract virtues or the "pure self-determination of free will" could casually override materials conditions, or substitute for political organization and struggle. See Renzo Llorente, "Maurice Cornforth's Contribution to Marxist Metaethics," *Nature, Society and Thought* 16(3) (2003), 261–275. See also, Paul Blackledge, *Marxism and Ethics Freedom, Desire, and Revolution* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012); Vanessa Wills, "Marx and Morality" (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2012). For an attempt to

elaborate a secular theory of rights, see Alan M. Dershowitz, *Rights from Wrongs: A Secular Theory of the Origins of Rights* (New York: Basic Books, 2004). For a Marxist treatment of rights, see William Ash, *Morals and Politics: The Ethics of Revolution* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977).

125. Ajamu, "From Tef Tef to Medew Nefer: The Importance of Utilizing African Languages, Terminologies, and Concepts in the Rescue, Restoration, Reconstruction, and Reconnection of African Ancestral Memory," 184.
126. On Einstein's theory of relativity, Bernoulli's principle, Boyle's law and Hubble's law, see Bill Bryson, *A Short History of Nearly Everything* (New York: Broadway Books, 2010). On Marx's law of value, see, Maurice Dobb, *Theories of Value and Distribution since Adam Smith* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973).
127. Richard Dawkins, *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), 32.
128. See John H. McClendon III, "The Afrocentric Project: The Quest for Particularity and the Negation of Objectivity," *Explorations in Ethnic Studies* 18(2) (1996).
129. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge*, 6–7.
130. For a treatment of subjectivism read the Essay-Review of Robert Staples's *Introduction to Black Sociology*, John H. McClendon, "Black Sociology: Another Name for Black Subjectivity," *Freedomways* 20(1) (Spring 1980). 53–59.
131. Malcolm X, "Appeal to African Heads of State: A Speech to African Summit Conference," in *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements*, ed. George Breitman (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990), 75. For a recent discussion of Malcolm's humanism, see Moshik Temkin, "From Black Revolution to 'Radical Humanism': Malcolm X between Biography and International History," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 3(2) (2012), 267–288.
132. Ibid., 75–76.
133. Malcolm X, "Racism: The Cancer That Is Destroying America," *Egyptian Gazette* (August 25, 1964).
134. See Gerald Horne, *Communist Front?: The Civil Rights Congress, 1946–1956* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988).
135. William Strickland, *Malcolm X: Make it Plain* (New York: Viking, 1994), 160–161.
136. See George Breitman, *The Last Year of Malcolm X: The Evolution of a Revolutionary* (New York: Pathfinder, 1967); William W. Sales, *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of Afro-American Unity* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1994); Jack Barnes, *Malcolm X, Black Liberation & the Road to Workers Power* (New York: Pathfinder, 2009).
137. Malcolm X, *By Any Means Necessary: Speeches, Interviews and a Letter by Malcolm X*, ed. George Breitman (New York: Pathfinder Books, 1970), 46.
138. For an excellent analysis of the house Negro/field Negro concept in Malcolm's political philosophy, see Adolph Reed, "The Allure of Malcolm X and the Changing Character of Black Politics," in *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1999), 220–221. For an Afrocentric reading of Malcolm X, see Asante,

Afrocentricity, 26–27. See also, Molefi Asante, "Afrocentricity and Malcolm X," in *The Cambridge Companion to Malcolm X*, ed. Robert Terrill (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 150–157.

139. Malcolm X, *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements*, ed. George Breitman (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990), 121.
140. Aristotle, *Categories* in *the Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1970), 7a–7b.
141. See W. T. Stace, *The Philosophy of Hegel: A Systematic Exposition* (New York: Dover Publications, 1955), 203.
142. See Paulin Hountondji, "The Particular and the Universal," in *African Philosophy: Selected Readings*, ed. Albert Mosley (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1995), 172–198. Jay N. Van Hook, "Universalism and Particularism: African Philosophy or Philosophy of Africa?," *African Philosophy* 12(1) (March, 1995), 11–19. For a penetrating as well as pioneering view on how philosophy of the African American experience can be established as a particularity see William R. Jones, "The Legitimacy and Necessity of Black Philosophy: Some Preliminary Considerations," *The Philosophical Forum* 9(2–3) (Winter–Spring, 1977–1978), 149–160.
143. On the concept of Ground, see Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic, with the Zusätze: Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences with the Zusätze*. Translated by Théodore F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1991), 188–192, 329n9.
144. For a study of abstract universality as it relates to African American Studies see Robert Fikes, "The Persistent Allure of Universality: African American Authors of White Life Novels, 1845–1945," *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 21(4) (Winter 1997), 225–231.
145. For a recent instance of abstract universality in Black popular culture, see Raven Symoné's comments on Season 4, Episode 411 of *Oprah: Where Are They Now?*. This episode aired on October 5, 2014. Symoné stated: "I'm tired of being labeled. I'm an American. I'm not an African American; I'm an American." For a critique of abstract universality, see Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," in *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes: Essays on Art, Race, Politics and World Affairs* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 31–36.
146. An argument on behalf of the color blind thesis presented by an African American philosopher is Naomi Zack, *Race and Mixed Race* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1993). For a critical appraisal of the color blind thesis read philosopher William A. Banner, "Guest Editorial: Thoughts on a Colorblind Society," *The Journal of Negro Education* 54(1) (Winter 1985), 1–2.
147. According to the liberal symmetry thesis, if racial identification is immoral, then it is just as wrong for African Americans to appeal to them as it is for whites.
148. Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development with Particular Reference to the African Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 78.
149. See, Jay-Z, *Decoded* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2010), 235. For a favorable review, see Kelefa Sanneh, "Word: Jay-Z's 'Decoded' and the language of hip-hop," *The New Yorker* (December 6, 2010). http://www.newyorker.

com/magazine/2010/12/06/word-3 (last accessed November 24, 2014). For a similar argument, see Adam Bradley, *Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2009). For a critique of Wynton Marsalis, see John H. McClendon III, "African or American? A Dialectical Analysis of Jazz Music," in *The African Presence in Black America*, ed. Jacob U. Gordon (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2004), 85–114.

150. See Harry Targ, "Legacies of the Musical Cultural Front: Robeson, Guthrie, and Seeger." http://ouleft.sp-mesolite.tilted.net/?p=1285 (last accessed November 24, 2014). See also the following articles by Paul Robeson: "The Source of the Negro Spirituals," "Paul Robeson and Negro Music," "Soviet Culture," "Songs of My People," "Some Aspects of Afro-American Music," "The Related Sounds of Music," in *Paul Robeson Speaks: Writings, Speeches, Interviews, 1918–1974*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1978), 73–76, 81–82, 136–137, 211–217, 436–439, 443–448; See also Paul Robeson, "A Universal Body of Folk Music—A Technical Argument by the Author," in *Here I Stand* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1971), 115–117.
151. V. I. Lenin, *Critical Remarks on the National Question*, 24.
152. Paul Robeson, "The Related Sounds of Music," in *Paul Robeson Speaks: Writings, Speeches, Interviews, 1918–1974*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1978), 444.
153. Paul Robeson, *Here I Stand* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1971), 44.
154. Paul Robeson, "I, Too, Am American," in *Paul Robeson Speaks: Writings, Speeches, Interviews, 1918–1974*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1978), 191.
155. Paul Robeson, "Soviet Culture," in *Paul Robeson Speaks: Writings, Speeches, Interviews, 1918–1974*, 136.
156. Paul Robeson, "Songs of My People," in *Paul Robeson Speaks: Writings, Speeches, Interviews, 1918–1974*, 211.
157. Ibid., 213.
158. Paul Robeson, "The Related Sounds of Music," in *Paul Robeson Speaks: Writings, Speeches, Interviews, 1918–1974*, 444. For a classic study of the influence of African culture on African American musical culture, see Miles Mark Fisher, *Negro Slave Songs in the United States* (New York: Citadel Press, 1978), 6, 210. Fisher draws upon the research of Kwame Nkrumah, particularly, "The History of Religion in a Critique of West African Fetishism," unpublished paper, 1940.
159. E. Wamba-Dia-Wamba, "Philosophy in Africa: Challenges of the African Philosopher," in *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings*, ed. Tsenay Serequeberhan (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 242.

3 New Wine in an Old Bottle?

1. Molefi Asante, "Afrocentricity, Race and Reason," in *Dispatches from the Ebony Tower Intellectuals Confront the African American Experience*, ed. Manning Marable (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 198.

2. Marimba Ani, *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1994), 1.
3. George Granville Monah James was born in Georgetown, Guyana, South America. Born in Georgetown, Guyana, South America, James received his Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Theology, and Master of Arts degrees from Durham University in England. After doing postgraduate work at Columbia University (New York), he gained considerable teaching experience, having been an instructor for 18 years at a number of Black colleges including: teaching logic and Greek at Livingstone College (Salisbury, North Carolina); for ten years, he was Professor of Languages and Philosophy at Johnson C. Smith (Charlotte, North Carolina); two years as Professor of Mathematics and Dean of Men at Georgia State Industrial College (Savannah, Georgia); one year as Professor of Social Science at Alabama A & M College (Normal, Alabama); and five years as Professor of Social Sciences at Arkansas State College (Pine Bluff, Arkansas). Unfortunately, while James gained recognition from his contemporaries, today's scholars of the history of Africana philosophy such as Lewis Gordon do not see James as deserving of scholarly attention. See Lewis Gordon, *An Introduction to Africana Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). See my review of Gordon's book, *APA Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience* 9(1) (Fall 2009), 22–25. For biographical information about James, see "In Pursuit of George G. M. James' Study of African Origins in 'Western Civilization'," http://www.nbufront.org/MastersMuseums/DocBen/GGJames/OnGGJamesGGMJames.html (Last accessed June 19, 2014).
4. Pauline Hopkins, "Venus and Apollo…," *Colored American* 6 (May/June, 1903), 465.
5. Carter G. Woodson, "Ten Years of Collecting and Publishing the Records of the Negro," *The Journal of Negro History* 10(4) (October 1925), 598. See also, Robert L. Harris, Jr., "Coming of Age: The Transformation of Afro-American Historiography," *The Journal of Negro History* 67(2) (Summer 1982), 107–121.
6. George G. M. James, *Stolen Legacy* (Newport News, VA: United Bros. Communications Systems, 1989), 7.
7. See Mary R. Lefkowitz, *Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth As History* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996).
8. Molefi K. Asante, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 2003), 50. All citations are from this edition unless stated otherwise.
9. Molefi K. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990), 4, 32.
10. Ibid., 48. Asante's pamphlet *The Egyptian Philosophers* is a vulgar attempt at reproducing James' philosophical historiography. See Molefi Kete Asante, *The Egyptian Philosophers: Ancient African Voices from Imhotep to Akhenaten* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 2000). For a sympathetic, but shallow Afrocentric review of James' book, see John A. Williams, "The Stolen Legacy," in *African Presence in Early Europe*, ed. Ivan Van Sertima (New Brunswick,

NJ: Transaction Books, 1985), 83–89. For a short, but insightful, review of James's work, see William Leo Hansberry, "Book Review: Stolen Legacy," *The Journal of Negro Education* 24(2) (1955), 127–129.

11. James, *Stolen Legacy*, 4.
12. See Roy MacLeod, *The Library of Alexandria: Centre of Learning in the Ancient World* (London: Tauris, 2000); especially the introduction by Roy MacLeod, "Introduction: Alexandria in History and Myth."
13. James, *Stolen Legacy*, 2.
14. Ibid., 3, 46–47. James's pupil Y. A. A. ben-Jochannan in *Africa, Mother of Western Civilization* later repeats this assertion.
15. Ibid., 26.
16. Ibid., 21.
17. George Thomson, *The First Philosophers* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1972), 302.
18. For a good overview of Hegel's political philosophy, see Paul Franco, *Hegel's Philosophy of Freedom* (New Haven: CT: Yale University Press, 1999).
19. James, *Stolen Legacy*, 68.
20. Ibid., 164.
21. See I. F. Stone, *The Trials of Socrates* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 99–100. Stone points to the internal political/class contradictions that led to the rejection of Platonic reactionary aspirations vis-à-vis Solon's democratic reforms. Thus, Socrates' ideas were far from foreign to Athens rather it exemplified an effort at the restoration of landed aristocratic interests.
22. There is a growing list of philosophical literature on the influence on Egyptian culture and philosophy on Greek philosophy. See Diop, *The African Origins of Civilization: Myth or Reality* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill, 1974); Henry Olela, *From Ancient Africa to Ancient Greece: An Introduction to the History of Philosophy* (Atlanta, GA: The Select Publishing Corporation, 1981); Innocent C. Onyenuenyi, *The African Origin of Greek philosophy: An Exercise in Afrocentrism* (Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press, 1993); Lansana Keita (Edward P. Philips), "African Philosophical Systems: A Rational Reconstruction," *The Philosophical Forum* 9 (2–3) (Winter–Spring 1977–1978), 169–189; Henry Olela, "The African Foundation of Greek Philosophy," in *African Philosophy: An Introduction*, ed., Richard A. Wright (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1979), 113–147; Molefi K. Asante and Shaza Ismail, "Akhenaten to Origen: Characteristics of Philosophical Thought in Ancient Africa," *Journal of Black Studies* 40(2), 296–309; Molefi Kete Asante, *The Egyptian Philosophers: Ancient African Voices from Imhotep to Akhenaten* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 2000). See also Ivan Van Sertima, *Egypt: Child of Africa* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995).
23. Wesley C. Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC's Dream for a New America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 282.
24. The trip to Africa ran from September 11 to October 4. The delegation consisted of Julian Bond, James Forman, Prathia Hall, Fannie Lou Hamer, Bill Hansen, Donald Harris, Mathew Jones, John Lewis, and Ruby Doris Robinson. See Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *A Circle of Trust: Remembering SNCC*

(New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998). See also Fanon Che Wilkins, "The Making of Black Internationalists: SNCC and Africa Before the Launching of Black Power, 1960–1965," *The Journal of African American History* 92(4) (2007), 467–490. See also James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries: A Personal Account* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 407–411.

25. "Interview with Askia Touré," in Joyce Ann Joyce, *Black Studies as Human Studies: Critical Essays and Interviews* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 144–145.
26. For a good overview of the Freedom Schools in Mississippi, see Julie Burnett Nichols, "Freedom Schools, Mississippi," in *Encyclopedia of African-American Education*, ed. Faustine C. Jones-Wilson (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 177–178. See also Daniel Perlstein, "Teaching Freedom: SNCC and the Creation of the Mississippi Freedom Schools," *History of Education Quarterly* 30(3) (Autumn 1990), 297–324.
27. "Interview with Askia Touré," 144–145. We should also note that Ani's/Richards's anti-communism put her in the position of opposing SNCC's developing antiwar position. She disagreed with Robert Moses and others over whether SNCC should be involved with the anti-war movement. Eric Burns recounts that she "did not endorse the idea that SNCC officially should take a position on the nation's involvement in Vietnam, because she feared it would lead to additional charges of communist infiltration within the organization and cripple efforts to raise funds." Eric Burner, *And Gently He Shall Lead Them: Robert Parris Moses and Civil Rights in Mississippi* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 219.
28. See "Marimba Ani," Civil Rights Digital Library. http://crdl.usg.edu/people/a/ani_marimba/ (Accessed April 19, 2014).
29. "Dogon," in David Adams Leeming, *Creation Myths of the World: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 96–99. The source for this myth is a supposed conversation between French ethnologist Marcel Griaule and a blind Dogon sage, Ogotommeli. See Marcel Griaule, *Conversations with Ogotemmeli: An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas*; For a discussion of Ogotemmeli's "sage philosophy," see D. A. Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 68–83.
30. Marcel Griaule, *Conversations with Ogotemmêli; An Introduction to Dogon Religious Ideas* (London: Published for the International African Institute by the Oxford University Press, 1965).
31. For critical discussions of Griaule's ethnology, see Walter E. A. van Beek, "Dogon Restudied: A Field Evaluation of the Work of Marcel Griaule," *Current Anthropology* 32(2) (April 1991), 139–158. See also, James Clifford, in *Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 55–91
32. For Ani's critique of Hegel, see Ani, *Yurugu: An African Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1994), 89.

33. Ani, *Yurugu*, 2.
34. Ibid., 3.
35. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 111.
36. Ani, *Yurugu*, 1.
37. Ibid., 10.
38. Ibid., 9.
39. Ibid.,12, Italics added.
40. Ibid., 12.
41. Ibid., 13.
42. For a helpful discussion about Dawkin's concept of cultural meme, see Jeremy Trevelyan Burman, "The Misunderstanding of Memes: Biography of an Unscientific Object, 1976–1999," *Perspectives on Science* 20(1) (2012), 75–104.
43. See, Sheperd W. McKinley, "John W. Burgess, The Godfather of the Dunning School," in *The Dunning School: Historians, Race, and the Meaning of Reconstruction*. Edited by John David Smith and J. Vincent Lowery (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 49–76; and David Levin, *History as Romantic Art: Bancroft, Prescott, Motley and Parkman* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1959) especially chapter, "Teutonic Germs."
44. Ani, *Yurugu*, 98–99.
45. Quoted in Ernest Mkalimoto, "Theoretical Remarks on Afroamerican Cultural Nationalism," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 2(2) (Summer 1974), 5. See also, Maurice Godelier, "Epistemological Comments on the Problem of Comparing Modes of Production and Societies," in *Toward a Marxist Anthropology: Problems and Perspectives*, ed. Stanley Diamond (New York: Mouton, 1979), 71–92.
46. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, Vol. 1 (New York: International Publishers, 1987), 346.
47. John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2012), 87.
48. Ani, *Yurugu*, 15–16.
49. Ibid., 17.
50. Ibid., 48; For a similar endeavor, see Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge: And, the Discourse on Language* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).
51. Ibid., 7.
52. Alan Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (London: Tavistock, 1980), 47. There are several excellent introductions to Foucault's architectonic. See Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Mark Cousins and Athar Hussain, *Michel Foucault* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984).
53. Ani, *Yurugu*, 29. For a similar account of non-European worldviews, see *Yurugu*, 82.
54. Ibid., 44.

55. Ibid., 24, Italics added.
56. Ibid., 4.
57. Ibid., 18–19.
58. In the case of the sixteenth-century French philosopher Rene Descartes, some feminists have argued that Cartesian mind–body dualism, and its abstract characterization of reason has gender implications. On the assumption that women are emotional and bodily creatures, it is argued that reason is an inherently gendered concept—an element in a discursive system organized by the assumption of male supremacy. See, for example, Naomi Scheman, *Engenderings: Constructions of Knowledge, Authority, and Privilege* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 75–102; Susan R. Bordo, *The Flight to Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987); Genevieve Lloyd, "Maleness, Metaphor, and the 'Crisis' of Reason," in *A Mind of One's Own: Feminist Essays on Reason and Objectivity*, ed. Louise M. Antony and Charlotte Witt (Boulder, CO: Westview View, 1993), 69–83; Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: "Male" and "Female" in Western Philosophy* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1984). The Afrocentric psychologist Linda James Myers takes Rene Descartes as her starting point for the critique of Eurocentrism. See Linda James Myers, "Optimal Theory and the Philosophical and Academic Origins of Black Studies," in *African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2001), 300.
59. Ani's entire conception of Plato depends more on secondary sources than Platonic dialogues themselves. She quotes and summarizes more from the British scholar of classical studies Eric Havelock than Plato himself.
60. Ani, *Yurugu*, 41–42.
61. Ibid., 51–56.
62. Ibid., 36–44.
63. Ibid., 105.
64. Ibid., 524.
65. Ibid., 519.
66. Ibid., 551–552.
67. Steven Lukes, *Liberals and Cannibals: The Implications of Diversity* (New York: Verso, 2003), 11.
68. Ani, *Yurugu*, 58.
69. Ibid., 30, Italics added.
70. Ibid., xxvii.
71. Ibid., 30.
72. See Stephen Priest, *Theories of the Mind* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1991), 8–15, 80–97.
73. Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization* (New York: Monthly Review, 1970), 14.
74. Ibid., 30–31.
75. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, ed. Robert Drew Hicks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972). http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0004.tlg001.perseus-eng1:9.7

76. For a discussion on the transition from materialism to idealism in ancient Greek philosophy, see George E. Novack, *The Origins of Materialism* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1965).
77. The Black philosopher Cornel West misreads Plato's position on the relationship between form and matter. The Forms are ontologically independent of their instantiation in material objects. West wrongly argues that Marx's treatment of atoms in his doctoral dissertation is similar to Plato's treatment of the beautiful and its relation to beautiful things. On the contrary, Marx's treatment more closely resembles Aristotle. See Cornel West, *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991), 20–22.
78. Friedo Ricken, *Philosophy of the Ancients* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 141–152.
79. Plato's account of the soul is discussed in such dialogues as the *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, *Timaeus*, *Republic*, *Gorgias* in addition to the *Meno*. For a good discussion on the relation of recollection (anamnesis) and intuition in Plato's philosophy, see A. S. Bogomolov, *History of Ancient Philosophy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985), 180–183. See also Friedo Ricken, *Philosophy of the Ancients* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991).
80. For an excellent philosophical discussion of the relation of rationalism to innate ideas, see Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, 14–15.
81. Ani, *Yurugu*, 33.
82. Ibid., 39.
83. Ibid., 44.
84. This is a type of informal fallacy that involves a situation in which only limited alternatives are considered, when in fact there is at least one additional option. See S. Morris Engel, *With Good Reason: An Introduction to Informal Fallacies* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 153–156.
85. Leopold S. Senghor, "On Negrohood: Psychology of the African Negro," in *African Philosophy: Selected Readings*, ed. Albert G. Mosley (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), 121.
86. For a fuller discussion of Senghor and the intellectual and social influences on Negritude, see Abiola Irele, "Negritude or Black Cultural Nationalism," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 3(3) (1965), 321–348; Abiola Irele, "Negritude—Literature and Ideology," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 3(4) (1965), 499–526.
87. Abiola Irele, "Contemporary Thought in French-Speaking Africa," in *Africa and the West: Legacies of Empire*, ed. Isaac James Mowe and Richard Bjornson (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1986), 129. See also, Clyde A. Winters, "The Afrocentric Historical and Linguistic Methods," *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 22 (2) (Summer 1998), 76.
88. It is important to note that Senghor's formulation of Negritude owes much to the epistemology of the French philosopher Henri Bergson. See Abiola Irele, *The African Experience in Literature and Ideology* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 80. For a similar argument, see Donna V. Jones, *The Racial Discourses of Life Philosophy: Négritude, Vitalism, and Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). For a discussion of the influence of Bergson's philosophy on

Senghor, see Messay Kebede, "Negritude and Bergsonism," *Journal of African Philosophy* 3 (2003), 1–22.

89. Jacqueline Trimier, "The Myth of Authenticity: Personhood, Traditional Culture, and African Philosophy," in *From Africa to Zen: An Invitation to World Philosophy*, ed. Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993), 205.
90. Ani, *Yurugu*, 43.
91. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea*, 8.
92. Ani, *Yurugu*, 30.
93. Ibid., 45.
94. Ibid., 100.
95. Ibid., 119, Italics added.
96. Ibid. 102, 573n1. See also, T. Obenga, *African Philosophy in World History* (Princeton: Sungai Books, 1995); George G. M. James. *Stolen Legacy* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954).
97. Ibid., 70–71.
98. Ibid., 70–71.
99. I would like to thank John McClendon for bringing this insight to my attention.
100. Cheikh Anta Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology* (Brooklyn, NY: Lawrence Hill Books, 1991), 311.
101. Ellen Meiksins Wood and Neal Wood, *Class Ideology and Ancient Political Theory: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in Social Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 8–9.
102. Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 39.
103. Ibid., 39.
104. See, for example, John H. McClendon, "The Afro-American Philosopher and the Philosophy of the Black Experience: A Bibliographical Essay on a Neglected Topic in Both Philosophy and Black Studies," *Sage Race Relations Abstracts* 7(4) (November 1982), 1–53; D. A. Masolo, *African Philosophy in Search of Identity* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994). See also, Stephen C. Ferguson, "The Philosopher King: An Examination of the Influence of Dialectics on King's Political Thought and Practice," in *The Liberatory Thought of Martin Luther King Jr.: Critical Essays on the Philosopher King* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 87–107; John H. McClendon III, *C.L.R. James's Notes on Dialectics: Left-Hegelianism or Marxism-Leninism?* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005).
105. Ani, *Yurugu*, 32, 33–36.
106. Plato, *Timeaus* in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, Including the Letters* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), 22b.
107. Ibid., 21c–26e.
108. Ani cites the following sources: George G. M. James, *Stolen Legacy* (San Francisco, CA: Julian Richardson, 1976); Théophile Obenga, "African Philosophy of the Pharaonic Period," in *Egypt Revisited*, ed. Ivan Van Sertima (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1991), 286–324.
109. Marx, *Capital*, 346. Also see Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization, Vol. 1—The Fabrication of Ancient Greece, 1785–1985*

(New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 25, 103–108. For a contrast between Diop's and James's methodological approach to the connection between Egyptian and Greek philosophy, see Jeffrey Crawford, "Cheik Anta Diop, the 'Stolen Legacy,' and Afrocentrism," in *African Philosophy: Selected Readings*, ed. Albert G. Mosley (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), 128–146.

110. Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, 41.
111. Plato. *Republic*. Translated by G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1992), 473 c11. For an analysis of the antidemocratic character of Socrates's philosophy and his student Plato, see I. F. Stone, *The Trial of Socrates* (New York: Doubleday, 1989).
112. See Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, 40–44.
113. Wood and Wood, *Class Ideology and Ancient Political Theory*, 120.
114. Karl Marx, "The Leading Article of No. 179 of Kolnische Zeitung," in *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, ed. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 195.
115. Alban Dewes Winspear, *The Genesis of Plato's Thought* (New York: S. A. Russell, 1956), 77.
116. For an account of family resemblance see Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 32.
117. See Christian Neugebauer, "Ethnophilosophy in the Philosophical Discourse in Africa: A Critical Note," *Quest: An International African Journal of Philosophy* 4(1) (June 1990), 43–64.
118. Kwasi Wiredu, *Philosophy and African Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 30.
119. See, for example, John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1990).
120. Paulin Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 51–53.
121. The Cameroonian Marcien Towa, even more pointedly, remarks that ethnophilosophy (with negritude included) are generally hostile to innovation, science, and technology. As such, it is servant to an unholy alliance with colonial or neo-colonial exploiters in Africa. See Marcien Towa, *Léopold Sédar Senghor, négritude ou servitude?* (Yaounde: Editions CLE, 1971).
122. Paulin Hountondji, "Occidentalism, Elitism: Answer to Two Critiques," *Quest: An African Journal of Philosophy* 3(2) (December 1989), 7. See also Christian Neugebauer, "Ethnophilosophy in the Philosophical Discourse in Africa: The Critical Note," *Quest: An African Journal of Philosophy* 4(1) (June 1990), 43–64.
123. Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*, 47.
124. See Theodor Oizerman, *Problems of the History of Philosophy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973).
125. Kwasi Wiredu, "On Defining African Philosophy," in *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings*, ed. Tsenay Serequeberhan (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 95.
126. Ibid., 106.
127. Ani, *Yurugu*, 73.

4 The Heritage We Renounce

1. In Greek mythology Olympus was regarded as the "home" of the 12 Olympian gods of the ancient Greek world. Woodson's writings on African history are: *African Myths, Together With Proverbs* (Washington, DC: The Associated Publishers, 1928); *The African Background Outlined* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1936); and *African Heroes and Heroines* (Washington, DC: The Associated Publishers, 1939). Also consult, William Leo Hansberry, "The Material Culture of Ancient Nigeria" *Journal of Negro History* 6(3) (July 1921), 261–295; and William Leo Hansberry and Joseph Harris, *The William Leo Hansberry African History Notebook*. Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1974.
2. Wayman B. McLaughlin, "History and the Specious Moment," *History Magazine* (North Carolina A & T State University) 1 (Spring 1979), 10–11; Wayman B. McLaughlin, "Is History a Good Training for the Mind?," *History Magazine* (North Carolina A & T State University) 3 (Spring 1982), 26–27. Here are Berkley Branche Eddins's writings: *The Role of Value-Judgments in the Philosophies of History of Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee*. PhD Thesis—University of Michigan, 1961; *Appraising Theories of History* (Cincinnati, OH: Ehling, 1980); "Speculative Philosophy of History: A Critical Analysis," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 6(1) (1968), 52–58; "Historical Data and Policy-Decisions: A Key to Evaluating Philosophies of History," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 26(3), 427–430.
3. No doubt Thorpe's writings on intellectual history and the philosophy of history are deserving of a detailed study. See, for example, Earl E. Thorpe, *The Desertion of Man: A Critique of Philosophy of History* (Baton Rouge, LA: Ortlieb Press, 1958); Earl E. Thorpe, *Black Historians: A Critique* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1969); Earl E. Thorpe, *The Central Theme of Black History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979).
4. Michele Foucault, we should note, calls into question previous systems of periodization, and sometimes of the very enterprise of periodization itself. See, for example, Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).
5. For concrete examples of periodization in AAS, see Abdul Alkalimat and Associates, "Toward A Paradigm of Unity," and Robert L. Harris, Jr., "Coming of Age: The Transformation of Afro-American Historiography," in *Paradigms in Black Studies: Intellectual History, Cultural Meaning and Political Ideology*. ed. Abdul Alkalimat (Chicago, IL: Twenty-First Century Books and Publications, 1990), 29–49, 51–70.
6. Peniel E. Joseph, "Waiting till the Midnight Hour: Reconceptualizing the Heroic Period of the Civil Rights Movement, 1954–1965," *Souls* 2(2) (Spring 2000), 8.
7. Peniel E. Joseph, "Introduction: Toward a Historiography of the Black Power Movement," in *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*, ed. Peniel E. Joseph (New York: Routledge, 2006), 8. For similar

attempts to stretch the periodization of the Black Freedom movement, see Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights As a National Issue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Robert J. Norrell, *Reaping the Whirlwind: The Civil Rights Movement in Tuskegee* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985); Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichstein, "Opportunities Lost and Found: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of American History* 75 (December 1988), 786–811. For a discussion of the Black Student movement as part of the "long duree" of Black campus movements, see Ibram Rogers, *Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965–1972* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). For a contrasting treatment of the Black Power era from a leftist perspective vis-à-vis Peniel Joseph, see Robert L. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytical History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969).

8. See, for example, Sundiata Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang, "The 'Long Movement' as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies," *The Journal of African American History* 92(2) (Spring 2007), 265–288.
9. Adam Fairclough, "Historians and the Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of American Studies* 24(3) (December 1990), 388. For a good discussion of the fallacy of false periodization, see David H. Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 144–149.
10. See Devin Fergus, *Liberalism, Black Power and the Making of American Politics, 1965–1980* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 196–231.
11. Peniel Joseph, *Dark Days, Bright Nights: From Black Power to Barack Obama* (New York: BasicCivitas Books, 2010), 201. For leftist analysis of Obama, see Paul Louis Street, *The Empire's New Clothes: Barack Obama in the Real World of Power* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2010); Barbara Foley, "Rhetoric and Silence in Barack Obama's *Dreams from My Father*," *Cultural Logic* 12 (2009), 1–46; and Adolph Reed, "Nothing Left: The long, slow surrender of American liberals," Harper's Magazine 328(1966) (March 2014), 28–36. For Obama's pragmatic support of Ronald Reagan, see *The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006), 289.
12. Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, ed. Lawrence H. Simon (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1994), 277.
13. Paul Blackledge, *Reflections on the Marxist Theory of History* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 27.
14. The literature on this subject is vast. See David Seddon, *Relations of Production: Marxist Approaches to Economic Anthropology* (London: Frank Cass, 1978); Jean Suret-Canale, *Essays on African History: From the Slave Trade to Neocolonialism* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1988); Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1981); Samir Amin, *Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976). For an insightful overview, see Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, "The Political Economy Approach in African Studies," in *The Next Decade: Theoretical and Research issues in Africana Studies*, ed. James Turner (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Africana Studies and Research Center, 1984), 301–339.

15. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* in *Collected Works*, Vol. 5 (New York: International Publishers, 1976), 37. Paul Blackledge notes: "As a mode of production is a distinct articulation of forces and relations of production, to define the mode dominant within any society is to provide a framework from within which the class struggle, politics, ideology, etc., of that social formation can be explained. However, to define the dominant mode of production within a specific social formation is only the first step along the process to articulating the many determinations of a specific concrete process." See Paul Blackledge, *Reflections on the Marxist Theory of History* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 28.
16. For Alexander Crummell the appeal of Hegelianism centered on its idealist and racialist philosophy of history transposed into a theory of civilization. Du Bois in his classic work, *The Souls of Black Folk* not only pays homage to Crummell, in an essay devoted to him, he openly seeks to elaborate and expand upon Crummell's Hegelian philosophy of history. Du Bois further develops the notion of a theory of recognition and consciousness drawing on Hegel's *Phenomenology*. Du Bois's often cited concept of double consciousness owes much to Hegel's treatment of "Lordship and Bondage." See Shamoon Zamir, *Dark Voices: W.E.B. Du Bois and American Thought, 1888–1903* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Creative Conflict in African American Thought: Frederick Douglass, Alexander Crummell, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Wilson J. Moses, "W.E.B. Du Bois's 'The Conservation of Races' and Its Context: Idealism, Conservatism and Hero Worship," *The Massachusetts Review* 34(2) (1993), 275–294.
17. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 134.
18. William Henry Ferris, *The African Abroad, Or, His Evolution in Western Civilization, Tracing His Development Under Caucasian Milieu*, Vol. 1 (New Haven, CT: The Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Press, 1913), 17.
19. William H. Ferris, *The African Abroad: Or His Evolution in Western Civilization*, vols. I & II (New Haven, CT: The Tuttle, Moorehouse and Taylor Press, 1913), 34–35. For additional commentary of Ferris's text, see John H. McClendon, "The Afro-American Philosopher and the Philosophy of the Black Experience," *Sage Race Relations Abstracts* 7(4) (November 1982), 22–25. Also read Alfred Moss, *The American Negro Academy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1981). For a similar moral critique, from another African American philosopher, see Rufus L. Perry, *The Cushite or the Descendents of Ham* (Springfield, MA: Wiley, 1893).
20. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*. Translated by J. Sibree (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 33.
21. Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1958), 44. For a fuller discussion of this issue, see Stephen Ferguson, "The Philosopher King: An Examination of the Influence of Dialectics on King's Political Thought and Practice," in *Philosophical Perspectives on Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. Robert E. Birt (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012),

87–107. See also, John J. Ansbro, *Martin Luther King, Jr.: The Making of a Mind* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1982); George Russell Seay, Jr., *Theologian of Synthesis: The Dialectical Method of Martin Luther King, Jr. As Revealed in His Critical Thinking on Theology, History and Ethics* (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 2008).

22. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 30.
23. It is worth noting that Alexander Crummell in his Wilberforce University Commencement address—attended by Du Bois—stated Hegel's dictum, "The Real is Rational and the Rational is Real." See David L. Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a* Race, 1868–1919 (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1993), 165.
24. Karl Marx, "Preface," to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (New York: International Publishers, 1970), 19–23.
25. Alex Callinicos, *Marxism and Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 51.
26. See Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (New York: Verso, 1991), 103.
27. On Hegel's philosophy of history in relation to Africa, see Shannon M. Mussett, "On the Threshold of History: The Role of Nature and Africa in Hegel's Philosophy," in *Tensional Landscapes: The Dynamics of Boundaries and Placements*, ed. Gary Backhaus and John Murungi (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 1–18. This article also appeared in *The American Philosophical Association Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience* 3(1) (Fall 2003), 39–46.
28. Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1981), 46–47.
29. Alex Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives: Reflections on the Philosophy of History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 95–109.
30. M. C. Lemon, *Philosophy of History: A Guide for Students* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 102.
31. See Wilson Moses, *Afrotopia: The Roots of African American Popular History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998). See also, St. Clair Drake, *Black Folk Here and There: An Essay in History and Anthropology* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, University of California, 1987).
32. Molefi K. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge*, 96.
33. Ibid., 96. For similar arguments, see Messay Kebede, "The Ethiopian Conception of Time and Modernity,"in *Listening to Ourselves: A multilingual anthology of African philosophy*, ed. Jeffers, Chike (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2013), 15–35. , ; Nikitah Okembe-RA Imani, "The Implications of African-Centered Conceptions of Time and Space for Quantitative Theorizing: Limitations of Paradigmatically-Bound Philosophical Meta-Assumptions," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 5(4) (June 2012), 101–111.
34. For a general discussion of cyclical philosophies of history, see Earl E. Thorpe, *The Desertion of Man: A Critique of Philosophy of History* (Baton Rouge, LA: Ortlieb Press, 1958), 119–136.
35. T. C. Keto, *The African Centered Perspective of History* (Chicago, IL: Research Associates School Times/Karnak House, 1994), 119.

36. Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization* (New York: Monthly Review, 1970), 9.
37. Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1901), 2.
38. In class society the masses may include various social classes. But whatever the historical changeability of the class composition of the masses, this concept always (1) has its core in the mass of the working people who produce material goods; (2) embraces the overwhelming majority of the population, as opposed to the anti-popular upper crust of society, the reactionary classes; and (3) includes all social strata who promote social progress (hence in certain historical circumstances the concept "masses" or "people" may include certain nonworking classes, for example, the national bourgeoisie, inasmuch as it participates in the progressive movement of society, say, for example, during national liberation movements).
39. Molefi K. Asante, *Afrocentricity* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 2003), 59. All citations are from this edition unless otherwise stated.
40. Maulana Karenga, *Quotable Karenga*, ed. Clyde Halisi and James Mtume (Los Angeles, CA: Kawaida Publications), 5.
41. Adolph makes a similar point. See Adolph Reed, Jr., "Marxism and Nationalism in Afro-America," *Social Theory and Practice* 1 (Fall 1971), 6.
42. Jennifer Jordan, "Cultural Nationalism in the 1960s: Politics and Poetry," in *Race, Politics, and Culture: Critical Essays on the Radicalism of the 1960s*, ed. Adolph Reed (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 34.
43. G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 44.
44. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 18.
45. See Kwame Nkrumah, *Class Struggle in Africa* (New York: International Publishers, 1970).
46. Makungu M. Akinyela, "Rethinking Afrocentricity: The Foundation of a Theory of Critical Afrocentricity," in *Culture and Difference: Critical Perspectives on the Bicultural Experience in the United States*, ed. Antonia Darder (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 1995), 21–39.
47. Richard B. Moore, "Africa Conscious Harlem," in *Richard B. Moore, Caribbean Militant in Harlem: Collected Writings, 1920–1972*, ed. W. Burghardt Turner and Joyce Moore Turner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 163–164.
48. See Joseph E. Holloway, *Africanisms in American Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).
49. Manthia Diawara, "Afro-Kitsch," in *Black Popular Culture*, ed. Michele Wallace and Gina Dent (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1992), 289.
50. T. C. Keto, *Vision and Time: Historical Perspective of an African-Centered Paradigm* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), 6.
51. Ibid., xii.
52. See Miles Mark Fisher, *Negro Slaves in the United States* (New York: Citadel, 1990).
53. The notion of infrapolitics is drawn from James C. Scott. See James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale

University Press, 1985); James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990). For an application of Scott's notion of infrapolitics in African American Studies, see Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994). For a critique of infrapolitics, see Adolph Reed, "What Are the Drums Saying, Booker?," in *Class Notes: Posing As Politics and Other Thoughts on the American Scene* (New York: New Press, 2000), 77–90.

54. For an insightful historiography on Black workers, see Joe William Trotter, Jr., "African-American Workers: New Directions in U. S. Labor Historiography," *Labor History* 35(4), 495–523. For Marxist critiques of Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction*, see Abram Harris, "Reconstruction and Negro," in *Race, Radicalism, and Reform: Selected Papers*, ed. William A. Darity (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1989), 209–212; Chandler Owen, "Du Bois on Revolution," in *The Messenger Reader: Stories, Poetry, and Essays from the Messenger Magazine*, ed. Sondra K. Wilson (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 317–321.
55. See Joe William Trotter, *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Joe William Trotter, *Black Milwaukee: The Making of an Industrial Proletariat, 1915–45* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Joe William Trotter, *Coal, Class, and Color: Blacks in Southern West Virginia, 1915–32* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).
56. A. J. Temu and Bonaventure Swai, *Historians and Africanist History: A Critique—Post-Colonial Historiography Examined* (London: Zed Press, 1981).
57. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* in *Collected Works of Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels*, Vol. 11 (New York: International Publishers, 1979), 103.
58. For further discussion, see Alex Callinicos, *Making History: Agency, Structure and Change in Social Theory* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988).
59. See Peter T. Manicas, *A History and Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (New York: B. Blackwell, 1988).
60. Keto, *Vision and Time*, 127.
61. Ibid., xii.
62. Ibid., xiii.
63. Gregor McLennan, *Marxism and the Methodologies of History* (New York: Verso, 1981), 103.
64. Keto, *Vision and Time*, 46.
65. Keto, *The African Centered Perspective of History*, 24.
66. Ibid., 19. See also, Keto, *Vision and Time*, 105.
67. Ibid., 53.
68. Molefi K. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1987), 4.
69. See, for example, Nah Dove, "An African-Centered Critique of Marx's Logic," *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 19(4) (1995), 260–271. See Bobby E. Wright, "Mentacide: The Ultimate Threat to Black Survival" (unpublished, n.d.).
70. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea*, 8.

71. Karenga, *The Quotable Karenga*, 25.
72. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 43.
73. Molefi Kete Asante and Abdulai S. Vandi, *Contemporary Black Thought: Alternative Analyses in Social and Behavioral Science* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1980), 27.
74. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 102–103; Italics added.
75. Ibid., 126–127.
76. For Julius Nyerere's concept of Ujamaa, see Nyerere's *Freedom and Socialism – Uhuru na Ujamaa: A Selection from Writings and Speeches, 1965–67* (Dar Es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968). For a leftist critique of Nyerere's party, TANU, see, Issa G. Shivji's *Class Struggles in Tanzania* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976).
77. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1 (New York: International Publishers, 1977), 587.
78. For a leftist analysis of Black capitalism, see Earl Ofari Hutchinson, "The Continuing Myth Of Black Capitalism," *The Black Scholar* 23(1) (1993), 16–21; Abram Lincoln Harris, *The Negro As Capitalist; A Study of Banking and Business Among American Negroes* (College Park, MD: McGrath Publishing Co., 1968).
79. Guillemette Andreu, *Egypt in the Age of the Pyramids*. Translated by David Lorton (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 28.
80. A tributary mode of production vis-à-vis a feudal mode of production involves the extraction of surplus labor through extra-economic coercion, for example, in the form of state tax-raising. Under feudalism, the extraction of surplus labor involves coercive rent-taking by landlords. For a fuller discussion, see Chris Wickham, "The Uniqueness of the East," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 12(2–3) (1985), 166–196; Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989).
81. Andreu, 14.
82. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea*, 65.
83. See Molefi K. Asante, *Classical Africa* (Maywood, NJ: Peoples Publishing Group, 1994), 27–29; Leonard H. Lesko, *Pharaoh's Workers: The Villagers of Deir El Medina* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); Barry Kemp, *Ancient Egypt Anatomy of a Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Rosalind Janssen and Jac. J. Janssen, *Growing Up in Ancient Egypt* (London: Rubicon Press, 1990). Ironically, this same line of reasoning—the harmony thesis—was widely employed by Southern segregationist who claimed that Northern agitators disrupted the harmonious race relations of segregation.
84. Molefi K. Asante, "African American Studies: The Future of the Discipline," in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2001), 343.
85. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge*, 10.
86. V. I. Lenin, "A Great Beginning: Heroism of the Workers in the Rear 'Communist Subbotniks'," in *Collected Works*, Vol. 29 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), 421. See also, Charles Loren, *Classes in the United States:*

Workers against Capitalists (Davis, CA: Cardinal Publishers, 1977); Bade Onimode, *A Political Economy of the African Crisis* (London: Zed Books with the Institute for African Alternatives, 1988); Bade Onimode, *An Introduction to Marxist Political Economy* (London: Zed Books, 1985); Teresa L. Ebert and Mas'ud Zavarzadeh, "ABC of Class," *Nature, Society and Thought* 17(2) (April 2004), 133–141.

87. Russell Keat and John Urry, *Social Theory as Science* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1975), 94–95.
88. Christopher J. Williams makes a similar point in his excellent article, "In Defence of Materialism: A Critique of Afrocentric Ontology," *Race & Class* 47(1), 35–48.
89. Bill Fletcher, Jr., "Black Studies and the Question of Class," in *Dispatches from the Ebony Towers: Intellectuals Confront the African American Experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 161.
90. See, for example, Abram Lincoln Harris, *The Negro As Capitalist; A Study of Banking and Business Among American Negroes* (College Park, MD: McGrath Publishing, 1968); G. Nzongola-Ntalaja, "The Political Economy Approach in African Studies," in *The Next Decade: Theoretical and Research Issues in Africana Studies*, ed. James E. Turner (Ithaca, NY: Africana Studies & Research Center, 1984), 301–339; Chidi Amuta, *The Theory of African Literature: Implications for Practical Criticism* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books, 1989); Bernard Magubane and Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *Proletarianization and Class Struggle in Africa* (San Francisco, CA: Synthesis Publications, 1983).
91. Molefi K. Asante, "The Ideological Significance of Afrocentricity in Intercultural Communication," Journal of Black Studies 14(1) (September 1983), 7.
92. Asante, *Classical Africa*, 27–28.
93. Ibid., 29.
94. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 52.
95. For a Marxist analysis of class struggle in ancient Greece, see G. E. M. De Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981); and Peter W. Rose, *Class in Archaic Greece* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). For a recent discussion of class struggle in Africa, see Leo Zeilig (ed.) *Class Struggle and Resistance in Africa* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2009).
96. Asante, *Classical Africa*, 29.
97. See Oliver C. Cox, *Caste, Class, & Race; A Study in Social Dynamics* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1959).
98. Asante, *Classical Africa*, 29.
99. Cheikh Anta Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology* (Brooklyn, NY: Lawrence Hill, 1991), 141–143; See also, Diop, *African Origins*, 205. We should note that Diop was influenced by the work of French Marxists anthropologists who have had a major impact on our understanding of the internal social structures tied to the forces of production in African rural societies, on the analysis of social relations of production (including the

control over land, crafts, or trade), and especially on identifying the interactions between economic domination and political power. See Cheikh Anta Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology* (Brooklyn, NY: Lawrence Hill, 1991), 109–207.

100. Diop, *Civilization or Barbarism*, 142.
101. Akinyela makes a similar point. See Akinyela, "Rethinking Afrocentricity," 29–30.
102. Bernard M. Mugabane, "The Evolution of Class Structure in Africa," in *African Sociology—Towards a Critical Perspective: The Collected Essays of Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000), 255. Nkrumah's *Class Struggle in Africa* attacks the myth that class structures which exist in other parts of the world did not exist in Africa. See Nkrumah, *Class Struggle in Africa*.
103. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 126–127.
104. Akinyela, "Rethinking Afrocentricity," 28–29.
105. Melba Joyce Boyd, "Afrocentrics, Afro-elitists, and Afro-eccentrics," in *Dispatches from the Ebony Tower* in *Dispatches from the Ebony Towers: Intellectuals Confront the African American Experience*, ed. Manning Marable (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 207.

5 What's Epistemology Got to Do with It?

1. Roy Bhaskar, *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom* (New York: Verso, 1993), 214.
2. Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," in *The Portable Nietzsche*. Edited and Translated by Walter Kaufman (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), 46–47.
3. See, Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979); Charles Mills, *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 21–39.
4. For a further discussion of the "death of epistemology," see Ian Hacking, "Is the End in Sight for Epistemology," *The Journal of Philosophy* 77 (10) (October 1980), 579–588.
5. See Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: Norton, 1996).
6. For a history of the development of American Social Sciences, see Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). See also, J. D. Bernal, *Science in History*, Vol. 4, The Social Sciences (Cambridge, MA: MIT. Press, 1971). Representative works outlining the racist nature of various disciplines include: in psychology, Robert V. Guthrie, *Even the Rat Was White: A Historical View of Psychology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976). In history, August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915–1980* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986). In sociology, Stanford M. Lyman, *The Black American in Sociological*

Thought: A Failure in Perspective (New York: Capricorn Books, 1972). In philosophy consult, John H. McClendon, "The Afro-American Philosopher and the Philosophy of the Black Experience: A Bibliographical Essay on a Neglected Topic in Both Philosophy and Black Studies," *Sage Race Relations Abstracts* 7(4) (November 1982), 1–51. In economics, Robert Cherry, "Racial Thought and the Early Economics Profession," *Review of Social Economy* 33 (October 1976), 147–162. Mark Aldrich, "Progressive Economists and Scientific Racism: Walter Wilcox and Black Americans," *Phylon* 40(1) (Spring 1979), 1–14. Mark Aldrich, "Capital Theory and Racism: From Laisse Faire to the Eugenics Movement in the Career of Irving Fisher," *Review of Radical Political Economy* 7(3) (Fall 1975), 33–42. For an overview, see Michael R. Winston, "Through the Back Door: Academic Racism and the Negro Scholar in Historical Perspective," *Daedalus* 100 (Summer, 1971), 678–719; I. A. Newby, *Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America 1990–1930* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965) especially chapter 1, "The Contributions of Science and Social Science"; John H. Stanfield, *Philanthropy and Jim Crow in American Social Science* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985).

7. The Leon Gardiner collection of American Negro Historical Society records, 1715–1962 is currently held at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
8. See W. E. B. Bois, "Sociology Hesitant," *Boundary 2*, 27(3) (2000), 37–44. See also, D. S. Green and E. D. Driver, "WEB Du Bois: A Case in the Sociology of Sociological Negation," *Phylon* 37(4) (1976), 308–333; Francis L. Broderick, "German Influence on the Scholarship of WEB Du Bois," *Phylon* 19(4) (1958), 367–371.
9. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 51.
10. W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860–1880* (New York: Touchstone, 1992), 714.
11. Founded in October 1935 at Johnson C. Smith College, the Association of Social Science Teachers later in 1968 became the Association of Social and Behavioral Scientists. On these early developments in Black intellectual societies, see Benjamin Quarles, "Black History's Antebellum Origins," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 89 (April 1979), 89–122; James G. Spady, "The Afro-American Historical Society: The Nucleus of Black Bibliographiles, 1897–1923," *Negro History Bulletin* 37 (June–July 1974), 254–257; Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *The American Negro Academy: Voice of the Talented Tenth* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981); Lawrence Crouchett, "Early Black Studies Movement," *Journal of Black Studies* 2 (December 1971), 189–200; August Meier and Elliot Rudwick, *Black History and the Historical Profession, 1915–1980* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 1–76; Jacqueline Goggin, "Carter G. Woodson and the Collection of Source Materials for Afro-American History," *American Archivist* 48 (Summer 1985), 261–271; Tony Martin, "Bibliophiles, Activists and Race Men," in *Black Bibliophiles and Collectors: Preservers of Black History*, ed. Sinnette, Elinor Des Verney, W. Paul Coates, and Thomas C. Battle (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1990), 23–34. It would not be until 1979 that the Association

of Black Women Historians would be founded. See Janice Sumler-Edmond, "Association of Black Women Historians, Inc.," in *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Darlene Clark Hine, Elsa Barkley Brown, and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 48–49.

12. James Turner and C. Steven McGann, "Black Studies as an Integral Tradition in African-American Intellectual History," *Journal of Negro Education* 49 (1980), 52–59.
13. See *Race, Radicalism and Reform: Selected Papers, Abram L. Harris*, ed. William Darity, Jr. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1986). Also consult, William Darity, Jr., "Soundings and Silences on Race and Social Change: Abram Harris Jr. in the Great Depression" and Julian Ellison, "Formulating the Negation: Abram Harris Jr. as Critic," in *A Different Vision: African American Economic Thought Volume One*, ed. Thomas D. Boston (New York: Routledge, 1997), 250–269. See also, Jonathan Scott Holloway, *Confronting the Veil: Abram Harris, Jr., E. Franklin Frazier, and Ralph Bunche, 1919–1941* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
14. See also, Oliver C. Cox, Introduction to Nathan Hare's *The Black Anglo-Saxons* (New York: Marzani and Munsell, 1965). For a similar effort, see Ernest Kaiser's powerful and perceptive *In Defense of the People's Black & White History and Culture*. See also, Ernest Kaiser, "Racial Dialectics: The Aptheker-Myrdal School Controversy," *Phylon* 9(4) (1948), 295–302. Herbert Aptheker, *The Negro People in America: A Critique of Gunar Myrdal's "An American Dilemma"* (New York: International Publishers, 1946). For a contemporary example of the caste school of race relations—with a leftist perspective—see Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2011).
15. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1944), lxxii.
16. Oliver C. Cox, *Caste, Class, and Race* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1948), 520. For an in-depth study of Cox's sociological perspective, see *The Sociology of Oliver C. Cox: New Perspectives*, ed. Herbert M. Hunter (Stamford, CT: JAI Press, 2000). While Cox was a socialist, he was not a Marxist–Leninist. See Oliver C. Cox, "Marxism: Looking Backward and Forward," *Monthly Review* 26 (June 1974), 53–59.
17. Ibid., 541–542.
18. Ibid., 525. For a similar analysis, see Richard Wright, *12 Million Black Voices: A Folk History of the Negro in the United States* (New York: Viking Press, 1941).
19. In *Theories of Surplus Value*, we find Marx's dialectical (critical) evaluation of Adam Smith. The focal point of Marx's critique is a class analysis of Smith's theoretical positions, which highlights both his scientific contribution to political economy and his corresponding deficiencies. Both Smith's contribution to the scientific cognition of political economy as well as his limitations are materially due to his accompanying bourgeois ideological perspective. See Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, Part I (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), 69–151.

20. Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol. 1.—The Process of Capitalist Production* (New York: International Publishers, 1987), 85.
21. Clarence Lang, "Freedom Train Derailed: The National Negro Labor Council and the Nadir of Black Radicalism," in *Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement: "Another Side of the Story"*, ed. Robbie Lieberman and Clarence Lang (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 164.
22. For seminal works on the impact of McCarthyism on Black liberation struggle, see Erik S. McDuffie, *Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminisim* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Gerald Horne, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); Gerald Horne, *Communist Front?: The Civil Rights Congress, 1946–1956* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988); Hollis R. Lynch, *Black American Radicals and the Liberation of Africa: The Council on African Affairs, 1937–1955* (Ithaca, NY: Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University, 1978).
23. See *Harold Cruse's The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, ed. Jerry Watts (New York: Routledge, 2004).
24. See Jesse McDade, "Towards an Ontology of Negritude," *Philosophical Forum* 9(2–3) (Winter–Spring, 1977–1978), 161–168; Roy D. Morrison, "Black Enlightenment: The Issues of Pluralism, Priorities and Empirical Correlation," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 46(2) (June 1978), 217–240; Amiri Baraka, "A Black Value System," *Black Scholar* 1(1) (November 1969), 54–60. See also, Nagueyalti Warren, "Pan-African Cultural Movements: From Baraka to Karenga," *The Journal of Negro History* 75(1–2) (Winter–Spring 1990), 16–28; Vernon J. Dixon, "African-Oriented and Euro-American Oriented World Views," *Review of Black Political Economy* 77(2) (Winter 1972), 119–156.
25. Robert Staples, *Introduction to Black Sociology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), 21. For a Marxist critique of Staples's *Introduction*, see John H. McClendon III, "Black Sociology: Another Name for Black Subjectivity," *Freedomways* 20(1) (Spring 1980), 53–59.
26. See, for example, Floyd McKissick, "The Way to a Black Ideology," *The Black Scholar* 1(2) (December 1969), 14–17; Vivian Gordon, "The Coming of Age in Black Studies," *Western Journal of Black Studies* 5(3) (Fall 1981), 231–236.
27. Abdul Alkalimat (Gerald McWorter), "The Ideology of Black Social Science," *The Black Scholar* 1 (December 1969), 28; Italics added. See also, Floyd B. McKissick, "The Way to a Black Ideology," *The Black Scholar* 1(2) (1969), 14–17. For a left-nationalist critique of the social sciences, influenced by C. Wright Mills, William Domhoff and Alvin Gouldner, see James Turner and W. Eric Perkins, "Towards a Critique of Social Science," *The Black Scholar* 7(7) (April 1976), 2–11.
28. Since I am referring to god(s) in the abstract, it is more precise philosophically to not capitalize the word. That is to say, I am talking about members of a general class or category, that is, god(s). My intention is not to insult anyone who is a theist. On the one hand, if I was referring to the specific god-concept that a group worships, then it may be appropriate to use capitalization. Confusion

is caused by the fact that Christians don't typically ascribe a personal name to their god—some use Yahweh or Jehovah, but that is pretty rare; whereas, a Muslim, for example, refers to god as Allah.

29. See S. Morris Engel, *With Good Reason: An Introduction to Informal Fallacies* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000), 216–217).
30. See Bill Bryson, *A Short History of Nearly Everything* (New York: Broadway Books, 2003); Clifford D. Conner, *A People's History of Science: Miners, Midwives, and "Low Mechanicks"* (New York: Nation Books, 2005).
31. B. Hessen, "The Social and Economic Roots of Newton's *Pricipia*," in *The Social and Economic Roots of the Scientific Revolution: Texts by Boris Hessen and Henryk Grossman*, ed. Gideon Freudenthal and Peter McLaughlin (Berlin: Springer, 2009), 41–101.
32. George Novack, *Empiricism and Its Evolution: A Marxist View* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971), 61.
33. Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization* (New York: Monthly Review, 1970), 19.
34. Molefi K. Asante, "The Ideological Significance of Afrocentricity in Intercultural Communication," *Journal of Black Studies* 14(1) (September 1983), 5. We do find that Asante's view of the social sciences as "imperialistic" does not necessarily extend to the natural sciences. Asante is willing to concede that the natural sciences provide us with universal truths. For instance, he seems to believe in the truths of quantum mechanics. See Molefi K. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1987), 11.
35. Molefi K. Asante, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change (Revised and Expanded)* (Chicago, IL: African American Images, 2003), 104. All citations are from this edition unless stated otherwise.
36. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea*, 5.
37. James E. Turner, "Africana Studies and Epistemology: A Discourse in the Sociology of Knowledge," in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment, Jr. (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 79.
38. Marimba Ani, *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Trenton: NJ: Africa World Press, 1994), 519.
39. See the favorable review by the Marxist philosopher Angela Davis, "Review of *Black Feminist Thought*," *Teaching Philosophy* 16(4) (December 1993), 351–353.
40. Molefi K. Asante, *Malcolm X as Cultural Hero* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1993), 9. See also, Molefi K. Asante, "Afrocentricity, Race, and Reason," in *Dispatches from the Ebony Tower: Intellectuals Confront the African American Experience*, ed. Manning Marable (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 198.
41. Molefi K. Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto: Toward an African Renaissance* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007), 17.
42. Ibid., 19. In the second edition of *Black Feminist Thought* published in 2000, Collins also distances herself from Asante's brand of Afrocentricity. At the end of the day, whether she has officially been ex-communicated from the Afrocentric school of thought or not, it is not a stretch to see that Collins's

overall argument in *Black Feminist Thought* is an elaboration of situated or subjugated knowledge. Both Asante and Collins share a commitment to relativism, empiricist epistemology, and a rejection of epistemological realism.

43. Despite the linguistic, religious, and cultural differences within the African continent, all African cultures share a common cosmological and metaphysical beliefs—although in an unconscious form—we are told. The implication drawn from this assumption is that there is a collective system of beliefs, largely unchanging over time, unanimously shared among Africans, and unique to Africans. In a similar vein, Daudi Ajani a Azibo argues that there is an African worldview that constitutes "the universal and timeless worldview characteristic of African people throughout space and time." Hence, the main ingredient of African authenticity is an inward essence, instinct, or soul manifesting externally in the personality or psychology of Black people. See Daudi Ajani a Azibo, "Articulating the Distinction Between Black Studies and the Study of Blacks: The Fundamental Role of Culture and the African-Centered Worldview," in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2001), 422.
44. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 28. All citations are from this edition unless stated otherwise.
45. Ibid., 10.
46. Ibid., 11.
47. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: The Harvest Press, 1980), 93.
48. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 215.
49. Ibid., 217.
50. Ibid., 204.
51. Ibid., 25. The idea that women are inclined toward an ethic of caring was first developed by Carol Gilligan in her influential *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982). Since then a number of works have continued to develop this theoretical trend: Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Mary Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); Sara Riddick, *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1989). A useful survey of recent developments in this area may be found in the introduction to *Women and Moral Theory* (Totowa, NJ: Roman & Littlefield, 1987).
52. Margareta Halberg, "Feminist Epistemology: An Impossible Project?," *Radical Philosophy* 53 (Autumn 1989), 5.
53. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 203.
54. It is worth noting that Collins erroneously characterizes Marxist as a form of positivism. See Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 235.
55. For an excellent introduction to positivism, see Robert Klee, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Science: Cutting Nature at Its Seams* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 28–61. For a Marxist critique of logical positivism

as a form of empiricism, see Maurice Campbell Cornforth, *Science Versus Idealism: In Defence of Philosophy against Positivism and Pragmatism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975).

56. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 205.
57. Ibid., 205, Italics added.
58. Ibid., 204.
59. Ibid., 211–212.
60. For an excellent introduction to empiricism, see George Edward Novack, *Empiricism and Its Evolution: A Marxist View* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971).
61. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 207.
62. For a similar argument, see Charles Mills, *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 21–39.
63. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 207.
64. Ibid., 10.
65. See Dorothy Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1988); Nancy Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism," in *Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives in Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology and Philosophy of Science*, ed. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1983), 283–310.
66. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea*, 5.
67. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 202–203.
68. Ibid., 236.
69. I wish I could take credit for this, but this is a phrase often stated by John McClendon.
70. For an explication of how Marx addresses the relationship of fact/value (Hume's fork) see, Bertell Ollman, *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 47–51; Roy Edgley, "Marx's Revolutionary Science," in *Issues in Marxist Philosophy*, Vol. 3, ed. John Mepham and D. H. Ruben (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1979), 17–21; Andrew Sayer, *Realism and Social Science* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000); Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism* (New York: Routledge, 1998), particularly, "Social Science as Critique: Facts, Values and Theories." On the partisan character of social science and Marxism in particular, see V. I. Lenin, "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism," in *Collected Works*, Vol. 19 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963), 23.
71. On the issue of ideological critique, see John McClendon, "Black and White contra Left and Right? The Dialectics of Ideological Critique in African American Studies," *American Philosophical Association (APA) Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience* 2(1) (Fall 2002), 47–56.
72. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 3 (New York: International Publishers, 1973), 817.
73. See Norman Geras, "Essence and Appearance: Aspects of Fetishism in Marx's *Capital*," *New Left Review* 65(1–2) (1971), 69–85. See also, Paul Thomas, *Marxism and Scientific Socialism: From Engels to Althusser* (New York: Routledge, 2008); particularly chapter 1, "Marx and Science."

74. Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1962), particularly chapter seven, "Capitalism and Discrimination." See also, Gary Becker, *The Economics of Discrimination* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1957). Becker's view that discrimination hinders the capitalist market much in the way that tariffs obstruct foreign trade was not lost on Freidman. See Freidman's reference to Becker's work on p. 110 of *Capitalism*. Black conservative economist and former student of Freidman, Thomas Sowell makes the same argument in Thomas Sowell, *Race and Economics* (New York: David McKay, 1975), 165. For a critique of this position read, Michael Reich, *Racial Inequality: A Political Economic Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) especially chapter 3, "Racial Inequality and Neoclassical Economics." For research on the racist assumptions of the economics profession consult, Robert Cherry, "Racial Thought and the Early Economics Profession," *Review of Social Economy* 33 (October, 1976), 147–162; Mark Aldrich, "Progressive Economists and Scientific Racism: Walter Wilcox and Black Americans," *Phylon* 40(1) (Spring 1979), 1–14; Mark Aldrich, "Capital Theory and Racism: From Laisse Faire to the Eugenics Movement in the Career of Irving Fisher," *Review of Radical Political Economy* 7(3) (Fall 1975), 33–42.
75. Angela Davis, "Women and Capitalism: Dialectics of Oppression and Liberation," in *The Angela Y. Davis Reader*, ed. Joy James (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 147. See also, Martha Gimenez, "What's Material about Materialist Feminism? A Marxist Feminist Critique," *Radical Philosophy* 101 (May–June 2000), 18–19.
76. Ibid., 162.
77. Ibid., 173–174.
78. See the special issue of Science and Society, "Marxist-Feminist Thought Today," ed.Martha Gimenez and Lise Vogel, 69(1) (January 2005), particularly, Martha Gimenez, "Capitalism and the Oppression of Women: Marx Revisited," and Teresa Ebert, "Rematerializing Feminism." See also, Kate Weigand, *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), especially chapter 5, "Claudia Jones and the Synthesis of Gender, Race and Class." For a recent Marxist analysis of women's oppression, see Sharon Smith, *Women and Socialism Essays on Women's Liberation* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2005).
79. The African American philosopher Cornel West is influenced in some ways by Foucault in his adoption of postmodernism, see West, "The Postmodern Crisis of Black Intellectuals," in *Beyond Eurocentrism and Multiculturalism: Prophetic Thought in Postmodern Times*, Vol. 1 (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1993), 87–118.
80. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 39. For a critique of Foucault's concept of power, see Nancy Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power: Empirical Insights and Normative Considerations," *Praxis International* 1(3) (October 1981), 272–287; Mark Philp, "Foucault on Power: A Problem in Radical Translation?," *Political Theory* 11(1) (February 1983), 29–52.

81. Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 92–93.
82. Although Foucault's notion of governmentality is beyond the scope of this chapter, Foucault's theory of power forms the basis for his subsequent development of governmentality. For a good discussion of the theoretical limitations of Foucault's concept of governmentality, see Derek Kerr, "Beheading the King and Enthroning the Market: A Critique of Foucauldian Governmentality," *Science & Society* 63(2) (1999), 173–203.
83. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 95–96.
84. Stephen Tumino, *Cultural Theory after the Contemporary* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 25.
85. See, Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*. Translated by Betsy Wing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 331.
86. Joy James, *Transcending the Talented Tenth: Black Leaders and American Intellectuals* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 94–95.
87. For a Marxist critique of intersectionality, see Valerie Scatamburio-D'Annibale and Peter McLaren, "Class Dismissed? Historical Materialism and the Politics of 'Difference'," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 36(2) (2004), 183–199. See also, Martha Gimenez, "Marxism and Class, Gender and Race: Rethinking the Trilogy," *Race, Gender & Class* 8(2) (2001), 23–33; Linda Burnham, "Has Poverty Been Feminized in Black America?," *The Black Scholar* 16(2) (March–April 1985), 14–24. For a critique of identity politics, see James Clifford, "Taking Identity Politics Seriously: 'The Contradictory, Stony Ground . . . '," in *Without Guarantees: Essays in Honour of Stuart Hall*, ed. Paul Gilroy, Lawrence Grossberg, and Angela McRobbie (London: Verso Press), 94–112; Ellen M. Wood, *Democracy against Capitalism: Renewing Historical Materialism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 238–263.
88. V. I. Lenin waged a resolute struggle against economism (or economic reductionism) and even demonstrated why it led to trade unionist reformism and not revolutionary class consciousness. See V. I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done* (New York: International Publishers, 1969), 43–77. Prior to Lenin's efforts, Marx and Frederick Engels also tried to make it very clear (in fact on several occasions stated) that a dialectical materialist approach was not economic reductionism. See Frederick Engels, "Engels to Schmidt" (London, August 6, 1890) in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), 483–485; and Frederick Engels, "Engels to J. Bloch in Königsbęrg" (London, September 21–22, 1890) in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), 487–489.
89. For a fuller discussion, see Donald Harris, "Capitalist Exploitation and Black Labor: Some Conceptual Issues," *The Review of Black Political Economy* 8(2) (Winter 1979), 134–151.
90. See, for instance, "The 75 Most Powerful African Americans in Corporate America," *Black Enterprise* 35(7) (February 2005), 104–142.
91. Amrohini Sahay, "Transforming Race Matters: Towards a Critique-al Cultural Studies," *Cultural Logic* 1(2) (Spring 1998). http://clogic.eserver.org/1–2/sahay.html (Accessed March 17, 2014).

92. Adolph Reed, "Django Unchained, or, the Help: How 'Cultural Politics' Is Worse Than No Politics at All, and Why," 9 (February 25, 2013) *Nonsite.org* http://nonsite.org/feature/django-unchained-or-the-help-how-cultural-politics-is-worse-than-no-politics-at-all-and-why (Last accessed November 20, 2014).
93. John McClendon, "Angela Davis: Marxist Philosophy, Patricia Hill Collins, and the Matter of Black Feminist Thought," *APA Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience* 10(1) (Fall 2010), 4.
94. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 225. Italics added.
95. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 25.
96. Patricia Hill Collins, "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought," *Signs* 14(4) (Summer 1989), 747–748. Italics added.
97. See Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313.
98. Ibid., 10.
99. Thanks to John McClendon for this example.
100. For an overview of epistemology as a subfield of philosophy, see Louis P. Pojman, *What Can We Know? An Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2001).
101. See Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin' Alive the 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York: New Press, 2010); Mike Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream: Politics and Economy in the History of the US Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1986).
102. Rudy Fichtenbaum, "A Critique of the Segmentation Theory of Racial Discrimination," *Nature, Society and Thought* 3(4) (1990), 397.
103. William Wei, *The Asian American Movement* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1993), 193–194, 252–253.
104. György Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 76.
105. Fredric Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2009), 214.
106. Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (New York: Verso, 1991), 103. For a critique of Black standpoint epistemology in the form of "Black Marxism," see Gregory Meyerson, "Rethinking Black Marxism: Reflections on Cedric Robinson and Others," *Cultural Logic* 3(2) (Spring 2000). http://clogic.eserver.org/3–1&2/meyerson.html (Accessed November 20, 2014).
107. Reed Way Dasenbrock, *Truth and Consequences: Intentions, Conventions, and the New Thematics* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 149. For a sample of articles on feminist standpoint epistemology, see *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, ed. Sandra G. Harding (New York: Routledge, 2004). For an overview of feminist epistemologies, see Alessandra Tanesini, *An Introduction to Feminist Epistemologies* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999).
108. R. Andrew Sayer, *Realism and Social Science* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000), 53.
109. R. Andrew Sayer, *Realism and Social Science*, 58–62.

110. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 205.
111. Terry Eagleton, *After Theory* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 136.
112. Philip T. K. Daniel, "Theory Building in Black Studies," in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2001), 377.
113. Ruth Reviere, "Toward an Afrocentric Research Methodology," *Journal of Black Studies* 31(6) (July 2001), 714.
114. Molefi K. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1980), 25.
115. Asante, "The Ideological Significance of Afrocentricity in Intercultural Communication," 10. Italics added.
116. Asante, "The Ideological Significance of Afrocentricity in Intercultural Communication," 12. Italics added. See also, Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 48.
117. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 50.
118. Ibid., 111.
119. Ibid., 56.
120. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge*, 18. Italics added.
121. Asante, *Afrocentricity*, 113.
122. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge*, 10.
123. Gregory Meyerson, "Post-Marxism as Compromise Formation," *Cultural Logic* 2009. http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Meyerson.pdf (Last accessed November 24, 2014).
124. Roy Bhaskar and Tony Lawson, "Introduction: Basic Texts and Developments," in *Critical Realism: Essential Readings*, ed. Margaret Archer, Roy Bhaskar, Andrew Collier, Tony Lawson, and Alan Norrie (New York: Routledge, 1998), 3.
125. For a similar argument, see V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959). See also V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963).
126. See Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization* (New York: Monthly Review, 1970); See also, Friedrich Engels, *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science (Anti-Dühring)* (New York: International Publishers, 1966); V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959); Roy Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science* (New York: Routledge, 2008).
127. See Massimo Pigliucci, *Nonsense on Stilts: How to Tell Science from Bunk* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). For critical commentary on the "Willie Lynch" Letter, see Manu Ampim, "Death of the Willie Lynch Speech (Part 1)" http://manuampim.com/lynch_hoax1.html; William Jelani Cobb, "Is Willie Lynch's Letter Real?" (May 2004) http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/news/jimcrow/question/may04.htm
128. V. I. Lenin puts it this way: "outside us, and independently of us, there exists objects, things, bodies and that our perceptions are images of the external world." Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, 99.
129. Ibid., 98.
130. Alex Callinicos, *Is There a Future for Marxism?* (London: Macmillan Press, 1983), 180. Italics added.

131. Norman Geras writes: "If there is no truth, there is no injustice. Stated less simplistically, if truth is wholly relativized or internalized to particular discourses or languages games or social practices, there is no injustice. The victims and protestors of any putative injustice are deprived of their last and often best weapon, that of telling what really happened." See Norman Geras, "Language, Truth and Justice," *New Left Review* 209 (January–February 1995), 110.
132. Karl Marx, *Wages, Price and Profit* in *Selected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels*, Vol. 2 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), 54.
133. Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins, *The Big Questions: A Short Introduction to Philosophy* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2013), 166.

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