

*Brothas Gonna Work it Out!*  
*Hip Hop Philanthropy,*  
*Black Power Vision,*  
*and the Future of the Race*

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*The New HNIC and the New HBCUs:  
Intergenerational Collaboration, Internal  
Reparations, and the Establishment of  
Communiversities Leadership Academies*

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Each generation must, out of relative obscurity,  
discover its mission, and fulfill it or betray it.  
—Frantz Fanon

## Introduction

The contradiction between the unprecedented accumulations of personal wealth by a generation of young black entertainers and entrepreneurs in the multi-billion dollar Hip Hop industry and the increasing poverty which delimits the life opportunities of the African American consumers of Hip Hop culture, places a unique social burden upon the shoulders of this generation of entertainers and entrepreneurs. “To whom much is given, much is expected.” The challenge confronting the Hip Hop Community is to establish socially responsible philanthropic foundations for the purpose of endowing inner city institutions. Personal wealth must be translated into community power. Some would classify such an effort at black self-help as “internal reparations.” A primary target for such self-help is the establishment of community-based institutions of higher education, i.e., *communiversities*. More experimental in terms of pedagogy, curricula, educational mission, and student body than the very traditional historically black colleges and universities in the south, this new generation of HBCUs would be concentrated in the northern inner cities, and would be responsive to the needs of these communities. Ranging from Leadership Academies to neo-Washingtonian construction trade schools to Highlander-type training academies for producing organizers and activists, to high tech communications industry schools, to Jefferson School-type institutions for proletarian education, to Africana Studies Research Institutes, the possible models would be limited only by the ingenuity (and pragmatism) of their creators and the resources available to implement their proposed programs.<sup>1</sup>

In order for this to be implemented, the rhetoric of intergenerational hostility will have to cease, as the vision for such a project will have to come from experienced or veteran activist educators. This intergenerational hostility is primarily a black male misdirected-testosterone problem. Although there have been some notable exceptions, sistas, by and large, have had the wisdom to refrain from this intergenerational feud. It’s the brothas who have been going buck-wild, claiming to be wise and acting otherwise.

There needs to be a sustained intergenerational dialogue among black men, particularly between the Hip Hop and the Black Power generations, in order to heal this fracture and bring about operational unity. Much of this essay is directed at understanding the roots of the fracture and promoting healing dialogue. The ties which bind us are far stronger than the issues which separate us.

## 1. Who's *Really* in Charge? The Death of Civil Liberties and the Reign of the Mean Machine

...Factories of insanity/playing on your vanity/as they distort your sense of self  
Telling you what you need/and how to succeed/as they steal all of your wealth  
Probing your mind/ trying to find/how to scheme on you best  
From programmed schools/with devilish rules/putting you to the test  
Death dealing devices/sold at high prices/designed with you in mind to buy  
As they kill you slow/and some of y'all don't even know/y'all paying the machine to  
die  
Mechanized lies/dressed up in disguise/in forms of various kinds  
Treachery and deceit/the people must defeat/in the battle for free men's minds  
For complete domination/is the goal of this nation/of all free thinking thought  
And those who oppose/will be killed by their foes/the flunkies whose souls have been  
bought....

—Jalaluddin Mansur Nuriddin

“The Mean Machine” from the album *This Is Madness* by The Last Poets

The classical Marxist view of the march of history, from primitive communities to capitalism, had emphasized the increasing control of man over nature with the development of the forces of production as a progressive emancipation of human society from the tyranny of natural necessity.... Adorno and Horkheimer converted this affirmative conception into a radically interrogative, or even negative one.... The advance of technology...only perfected the machinery of tyranny.

—Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism*

“Automatic push-button remote control/Synthetic genetics command your soul... Automatic automatic automatic.... Driving me nuts bolts screws...”<sup>2</sup> Dystopian imagery of American technology and power-run-amok—and a defiant resistance to this evil technocracy—permeate the spoken word genre of the Black Arts Movement (BAM). The recording artists of this late ‘60s and early ‘70s movement, who spoke truth to power—most notably The Last Poets,<sup>3</sup> Gil Scott-Heron, Nikki Giovanni and The Watts Prophets—are pivotal progenitors in the genealogy of Hip Hop. Indeed, in their heyday, these BAM poets were the Baby Boomer generation’s equivalents of rap artists.

Both connections and disconnections abound between the rap artistry of the Hip Hop generation and the rap artistry of my Baby Boomer generation—a generation which we boomer black activists have defined, within the context of African American history and struggle, as the Black Power generation. The disconnections are rooted in the postmodern phase of capitalism. BAM artists were positioned in a black counterpublic, i.e., they were among the voices of dissent constituting an alternative public sphere, a black oppositional public sphere.<sup>4</sup> Their public discourse was rooted in praxis—linked to

emancipatory politics. In this postmodern phase, the marketplace has overtaken the African American public sphere; black artistic dissent has been commodified. Hip Hop functions less as an oppositional force, but more as, according to Nelson George, “the ultimate capitalist tool.”<sup>5</sup>

The erosion of a public arena for black oppositional discourse is cause for great concern given the triumph of the right, the militaristic adventurism and expansion of Empire, the manufacture of patriotic consensus, the ominous suppression of rights and liberties in the name of homeland security, and the increasing media manipulation of the faces of black conservatism or “right-wing multiculturalism” to achieve these ends. Historically African American dissent and resistance has paved the way for the expansion and extension of democratic rights to all marginalized Americans. While political equality may be of little value without corresponding economic equality, the celebration of consumerism, by the wealthiest-ever generation of adolescent/young adult African Americans, will be greatly muted if and when there is a declaration of martial law. Such a bleak future is a distinct possibility. However, organized intervention can halt the advance of the “Mean Machine.”

In this essay, I shall advance a concrete proposal for fortifying the black oppositional public sphere through the marshaling of Hip Hop resources towards the construction of communiversities, non-traditional inner city-based institutions of higher education aimed at the social reproduction of African American community organizers, leaders, dissident intellectuals, and politically conscious artists. Such a project would entail the collaboration of key members of the Hip Hop and the Black Power generations as full and equal partners. Implementing such intergenerational collaboration is a delicate proposition fraught with the possibilities of failure. Both Bakari Kitwana, in *The Hip Hop Generation* and Todd Boyd, in *The New HNIC: The Death of Civil Rights and the Reign of Hip Hop*, have articulated the thesis of an unbridgeable generation gap between Hip Hoppers and their elders.<sup>6</sup> Of the two arguments, Boyd’s decidedly contains the more radical, hardline, and seemingly irreconcilable propositions. I therefore turn to a critique of Boyd’s thesis.

Boyd advances a controversial thesis about raging intergenerational cultural wars in the African American community, which pits Civil Rights advocates against Hip Hoppers. Yet Boyd’s thesis conveniently marginalizes or minimizes discussion of the Black Power generation, while simultaneously glorifying, co-opting and distorting its legacy. Boyd asserts that Hip Hop is an outgrowth of Black Power. While the actual ideology and practice of Black Power advocates is conspicuously absent from Boyd’s discussion, a vague conception of Black Power somehow casts a long shadow over his explication of Hip Hop.

*A spectre is haunting Hip Hop, the spectre of Black Power!* (And I cannot resist the temptation to add: Since Black Power is already acknowledged by Hip Hop, it is high time that the Black Power generation should openly in the face of the whole Hip Hop world, publish their views, their aims, their tendency, and meet this nursery tale of the spectre of Black Power, with a manifesto of the movement itself.)

The antagonists in Boyd’s pitched battle are a rising Hip Hop cohort who are purportedly the outgrowth of Black Power and a waning Civil Rights cohort who are stuck on outmoded, “pious, sanctimonious” themes of black “suffering,” “I Have a Dream,” and “We Shall Overcome,” which have been “enshrined in the American public

psyche.” Boyd states that the “lingering tenets” of the state-thwarted Black Power movement have had “massive impact” on the Hip Hop generation at a “grassroots level.” To wit, the Black Power generation’s “conscious refusal to integrate with mainstream society” is the sentiment which inspires Hip Hoppers “to willingly exist in their own world.”<sup>7</sup> That world is one’s locality, whether it’s one’s “peops,” crew or posse, one’s housing project, one’s neighborhood, or one’s region, e.g., East Coast or West Coast. The rejection of mainstream assimilation, the identification with one’s own ghetto locale, the need for “keeping it real”—the insistence on defiantly expressing authentic (ghettocentric) cultural identity in public space, and the marketing of that defiant expression to black, white and international youth such that ghettocentricity *becomes* the new mainstream—all characterize the Hip Hop social movement. It is, of course, a multi-billion dollar business as well as a social movement, so the marketing of ghettocentricity also has a bottom line—“gettin’ paid.” “Gettin’ paid by any means necessary” (including underworld criminal entrepreneurialism) is a theme that characterizes much of Hip Hop culture, though the Hip Hop community is split on this issue. The illicit capitalism ethos is challenged by an opposing “black nationalist” ethos of self-enlightenment/self-transformation and community uplift. Unresolved blatant contradictions are an accepted part of Hip Hop culture.

In contrast to the Hip Hop social movement, the Civil Rights generation, seeking upward mobility and escape from the segregated ghetto through Anglo-conformity, have suppressed authentic racial attitudes, ranging from anger to satire, relegating such candid opinions to conversations held in private space. Ethnic expressivity or behavior deemed too lower class or “ghettoish” (“acting like a nigger”) was also taboo. The Hip Hop generation views such assimilationist behavior as “fake”; they deplore the attempt by the Civil Rights generation to impose any such monolithic standard of “blackness” or behavior on them; and they have inverted the despised term “nigger”—celebrating their authentic cultural identity as “niggas.” They view the Civil Rights generation as “playa haters,” who are jealous of the monetary success and fame of the Hip Hop entrepreneurs who attained their success without following the tired, outmoded integrationist-assimilationist script.

## 2. The Reign of Hip Hop or Reactives? The Theory of Generational Personality Cycles and the Question of Race

### (If you can’t stand theory skip to the next section!)

Boyd’s assertions, some of which are summarized above, are articulated with a combative testosterone-filled, “in-your-face” style characteristic of the hip hop culture he describes. In fact he asserts that Hip Hop is essentially black *male* culture. Eschewing mainstream definitions such as Generation X or Generation Y, which have “little to do with black people,” he asserts that the black male culture has shifted from the prevalent *Race Man* prototype of the civil rights era, to the transitional *New Black Aesthetic* prototype (akin to “soul babies” described by Marc Anthony Neal as the generation born between the 1963 March on Washington and the 1978 Bakke Decision) to today’s *Nigga* prototype.<sup>8</sup>

Civil Rights generation, Black Power generation, Hip Hop generation, Race Men prototype generation, transitional New Black Aesthetic prototype generation, Nigga prototype generation: the conflation of “generations” with “political ideologies” or “cultural outlooks” in the popular parlance makes analysis somewhat murky. And Boyd’s assertion that mainstream American generational divides (or is he merely saying mainstream “generational labels”?) may not be applicable to the African American cultural context is intriguing yet unsubstantiated. *In Generations: The History of America’s Future, 1584 to 2069*, William Strauss and Neil Howe note that the average length of a generation is twenty-two years. Challenging conventional wisdom, they assert that the length has little to do with genealogical rhythms, i.e., the span of years between being born and procreating, since these rhythms may vary widely. Generational length is related, instead, to the time span of each of the four lifecycle phases: youth (1-21), rising adulthood (22-43), mid-life (43-65) and elderhood (66-87). Generational cohort-groups are defined by decisive historical events; each possesses its own unique biography, its own “peer personality” (“essentially a caricature of its proto-typical member”) and “collective attitudes about family life, sex roles, institutions, politics, religion, lifestyle, and the future.”<sup>9</sup> Like the personalities of individuals, the personalities of generations may attract or repel one another. Arguing that generational cohorts are transracial, Strauss and Howe state that “As a social category, a generation offers a safer basis for personality generalizations than any such other social categories as sex, race, region, or age.”<sup>10</sup>

Strauss and Howe’s great theoretical contribution, however, is the notion that there are four generational personality types which recur in a fixed order: (1) a dominant inner-fixed Idealist Generation; (2) a recessive Reactive Generation; (3) a dominant outer-fixed Civic Generation; and (4) a recessive Adaptive Generation. Idealists “live a *prophetic* lifecycle of vision and values”; Reactives, a “*picaresque* [i.e., roguish or rascalian] lifecycle of survival and adventure; Civics, a *heroic* lifecycle of secular achievement and reward; and Adaptives, a *genteel* lifecycle of expertise and amelioration.”<sup>11</sup> Strauss and Howe postulate that this cycle of personality types is directed by critical junctures in history called “social moments” when events are moving swiftly and an old order is disappearing while a new one is emerging. Theirs is a non-Marxian conception of history however. Their social moment “is an era, typically lasting about a decade,” arriving on a regular schedule every 40 to 45 years, and alternating in type between “secular crises” and “spiritual awakenings.” During the moments of secular crisis society focuses on changing “the outer world of social institutions and public behavior”; during the moments of spiritual awakening, the focus is on changing “the inner values and private behavior.” A generation’s peer personality is determined by its phase of life position (youth, rising adult, midlife, elder) before and after each type of social moment. We cannot do justice to Strauss and Howe’s intricate schema here; but it is a dialectical one in which history shapes generations and generations shape history.

Reading American history through this paradigm, Strauss and Howe identify five cycles (each with the four generational types): Colonial, Revolutionary, Civil War, Great Power, and Millennial. The two most recent cycles are germane to this discussion. The Great Power cycle consisted of the Idealistic *Missionary* Generation, the Reactive *Lost* Generation, the Civic *G.I.* Generation, and the Adaptive *Silent* Generation. The Millennial Cycle has witnessed the Idealistic *Boom* (Baby Boomer) Generation, the

Reactive *Thirteenth* Generation (Generation X), and a predictably Civic *Millennial* Generation.

Are these cycles and generations identical within the context of African American history? It is arguable that a subaltern experience and interpretation of history is significantly different from the mainstream experience and interpretation of the same sequence of events; the significance of events may be very relative. African American history, as interpreted by African American historians, is propelled by its own struggle dynamic—a dialectic of oppression and resistance. It has its own alternating periods of social disruption (e.g., the slave trade, emancipation and the Great Migration) and social cohesion (e.g., plantation slave existence, rural peasant life, urban proletarian life).<sup>12</sup> Therefore it may possess its own social moments, its own unique social crises and spiritual awakenings, distinct from those of mainstream American history. This is an issue, no doubt, of great significance, but one which we cannot explore here.

The issue of a distinct African American generational personality, however, does come to the fore, especially since African Americans historically have been engaged in a collective search for identity, a search which psychologists William Cross *et al.* assert has been characterized by opposing processes of nigrescence (affirmation of blackness) and deracination (negation of blackness).<sup>13</sup> I would add that this search for identity has involved a complex interplay of race consciousness, class consciousness, gender consciousness, ideological consciousness and, now as we can see, generational consciousness as well. The historical motion of the collective African American self-definition from colored to Negro to Black to Afro-American to African American (and some would say to “Afrikan”) reflects this search. Not all have moved in this direction of course. Some have chosen instead to embrace “border-crossing” definitions such as “biracial,” or “cultural hybridity” and “cultural mulatto,” but all of this self-definition and re-definition is part and parcel of the African American search for identity, as is Boyd’s typology of the Race Man, the New Black Aesthetic and the Nigga. One of dynamics which fuels this African American search for identity is the Du Boisian dilemma of “double consciousness”—the unsettled state of “twoness,” the state of internal warfare between one’s Negro identity and one’s American identity.<sup>14</sup> Additional dynamics are the needs to: combat internalized oppression; negate the Sambo<sup>15</sup> constellation of stereotypes and distorted images; defy the attempts by outsiders to name or define the group; and affirm the process of self-determination or self-definition.

The relevance of the Strauss and Howe model to the African American context can be tested with empirical data, but a rigorous social scientific exploration is not my province here. Nevertheless, we can make a cursory examination of the model to see if there is any interplay of generational personality and the African American search for identity.

The “pre-war/post-war” *Lost* generation of Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald lived in the backdrop of the Jazz Age. America’s Jazz Age coincided with Blackamerica’s Harlem Renaissance and a search for/proclamation of the *New Negro* identity. Some scholars of the period, most notably Barbara Foley (in her book *Spectres of 1919: Class & Nation in the Making of the New Negro*), assert that the culturalist image of *The New Negro* heralded in Alain Locke’s 1923 edited literary collection of the same name, was a concerted effort to hijack or deradicalize a militant proletarian image of the New Negro which first appeared in 1919 in Harlem’s socialist magazine, *The*

*Messenger*. Whether configured in a radical image or a culturalist image, the New Negro was markedly distinct from the Old Negro, i.e., radical as opposed to bourgeois; urban rather than rural; self-assertive instead of subservient or docile; “intelligent articulate and self-assured” rather than a “shuffling darky.”<sup>16</sup> His emergence marked a new leadership and the overthrow of an old order. The *New Negro* was the first of many African American identity reconfigurations to be witnessed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century culminating in Todd Boyd’s turn-of-the-millennium declaration of *The New Head Nigga in Charge*.

Were the New Negroes a Lost Generation? Yes, according to Strauss and Howe, who fit New Negroes squarely within their schema. They scantily yet explicitly touch upon the Great Migration, Garveyism and the Renaissance (“lost blacks streaming” into northern cities from the South “touched off a cultural explosion”) and cite Alain Locke’s proclamation of the birth of the New Negro: “free of cautious moralisms” and “the trammels of puritanisms.” Furthermore they note that Du Bois, and others from the preceding Missionary Generation did not approve<sup>17</sup> (though the “Old Negro” Guard may have been symbolized more aptly by Booker T. Washington than by Du Bois). Strauss and Howe quote the historian Sterling Brown: “the NAACP felt that the characterization of Harlem sweet-backs and hot mamas did injustice to their propaganda and purposes.”<sup>18</sup> The past provides us with an uncanny distant mirror of the present.

Or does it? Is the generational conflict between an Idealistic *Missionary* “Old Negro” generation and a Reactive *Lost* “New Negro” generation really a distant mirror of the conflict between a Civil Rights generation and a Hip Hop generation? Are we talking, then and now, about the Death of Idealists & Visionaries and the Reign of Rogues & Rascals? Not exactly. According to Strauss and Howe, nearly all the leaders and important figures of the Civil Rights movement were from the Adaptive *Silent* generation.<sup>19</sup> In short, Idealistic Boomers were not Civil Righters. This historical clarification corresponds with the self-conscious identity which Black Boomers possess; as stated earlier, we think of ourselves not as Civil Righters but as the Black Power generation. The older Boomers who actually participated in the Civil Rights movement did so as members of SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) rather than as members say of SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference), the church-based Civil Rights organization led by Dr. King. As the younger student-based organization made its transition from a philosophy of nonviolence to a more militant confrontational style, its most prominent spokespersons Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown became symbols of Black Power and black militancy.<sup>20</sup>

Of course, Malcolm, more than anyone, was the pivotal figure for our Baby Boomer/Black Power Generation. He more than anyone symbolized the process of nigrescence, i.e., the transformation of political consciousness from Negro to Black. The title of William W. Sales’s 1994 work *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of African American Unity* captures the essence of our Black Baby Boomer break with the Negro Civil Rights Generation,<sup>21</sup> and in a way is an interesting anthem of our generation which can be placed alongside the Hip Hop anthem title *The New HNIC: The Death of Civil Rights and the Reign of Hip Hop* for all sorts of hermeneutic excavations. Of all the symbolic signifiers that one can dig up (and there are plenty: for example, “African American Unity” vs. the “Reign” of a generation), perhaps the most telling is the date of publication. Sales’s book is a mature work produced during the midlife cycle-stage. This is not an individual quirk or an accident. The activist

scholars of the Black Power generation have only recently begun to produce reflective work examining their own activism. The Fall /Winter 2001 issue of *The Black Scholar* confirms this, even in its title, *Black Power Studies: A New Scholarship*.<sup>22</sup>

*A spectre is haunting Hip Hop, the spectre of Black Power! Since Black Power is already acknowledged by Hip Hop, it is high time that the Black Power generation should openly in the face of the whole Hip Hop world, publish their views and their aims.*

What exactly are the views and aims of the Black Power generation? At the beginning of this essay I quoted Frantz Fanon's famous dictum from *Wretched of the Earth*: "Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission and fulfill it or betray it." Straus and Howe elaborate:

...a generation collectively feels historical urgency and finality, conscious of the unrepeatable opportunities offered by whatever phase of life it occupies. It understands that work left undone at each phase of life may never be done by others—at least not in the way an aging generation might wish it done.[...]

Ortega likens a fully come of age generation to "a species of biological missile hurled into space at a given instant, with a certain velocity and direction," on a "predestined vital trajectory." Mannheim calls this "a generation's essential identity."<sup>23</sup>

There is a fallacy in the African American Liberation movement about "passing the baton." On the one hand there are aging members of, yes, the Black Power generation who state that they want to pass on the baton of leadership to a younger generation, but that the younger generation "isn't ready." On the other hand, there are young people anxious to "do something" who wish that the "tired old leaders" would move out of the way since they've "already had their day." Passing the baton is a poorly chosen metaphor which blinds us to the vision—and hampers us from the work—of "what must be done." What must be done involves the forging of an equal and respectful partnership between activists and organizers in the Hip Hop and Black Power generations.

Kevin Powell, one of the articulate spokespersons of the Hip Hop generation, and author of *Who's Gonna Take the Weight? Manhood, Race and Power in America*, laments that the Civil Rights and Black Power generations left behind no "blueprint" for the younger generation to follow.<sup>24</sup> Well, there is a blueprint, and it is rather clear and straightforward. The unfinished work of the Black Power generation is the building and sustaining of alternative independent institutions in our communities. Institution-building was our road map for nation-building. This is what must be done—in partnership with the Hip Hop generation. To be sure, there are a number of other agendas which must be attended to in our struggle, but without institutional structures in place, it is difficult if not impossible to work on them. From our Kemetic (Ancient Egyptian) heritage comes a fitting and instructive maxim: When the god Ra rose into being from the primordial waters, he said to himself: "The first thing that I must do is to build myself a platform upon which I can stand and speak."

### 3. Original Gangstas L.A.M.F.: Ol' Skool Thug Life, Genocide & the Roots of the Generational Divide

The latest volleys of the intergenerational culture wars were hurled at a May 2004 gala event in Washington celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark *Brown vs. Board* decision. The event, of course, was packed with Civil Rights symbolism because the *Brown* desegregation ruling had sparked that Movement, and many members of the Civil Rights "establishment" were in attendance. The fete occasioned—some would say "was marred by"—controversial, and by now infamous, remarks about the black underclass from the comedian-educator-philanthropist Bill Cosby.<sup>25</sup> As a guest speaker, Cosby incited a media brouhaha when he unexpectedly delivered a "culture of poverty" diatribe, indicting the poor for a litany of offenses including lack of personal responsibility, promiscuity, absentee fathers, poor parenting skills, Ebonics, "crappy" child-naming practices and petty criminal behavior. (Cosby illustrated the latter as the shoplifting of "cake"—and justified police shootings of such shoplifters—prompting one of his critics to compare him to Marie Antoinette.) Not surprisingly, conservatives had their own self-serving spin on Cosby's remarks. Those on the left/liberal end of political spectrum, however, were not unanimous in their opinions. Cosby was either unjustly "blaming the victim" (the poor are not suffering from "self-inflicted" wounds, cautioned a NAACP official) or courageously "telling it like it is"—accurately portraying many members of the underclass as collaborators in their own oppression. Cultural critic Michael Eric Dyson, championing a structural rather than behavioral/cultural explanation for poverty, chastised Cosby for not using the platform to call for social (as opposed to personal) responsibility for poverty in the form of national social policy. Dyson also stated that Cosby's remarks "*betray classist, elitist viewpoints that are rooted in generational warfare.*"<sup>26</sup>

It is Dyson's comments, rather than Cosby's, that are the point of departure for this section of my essay. What is the relationship between class conflict and generational warfare? Are class conflicts rooted in generational warfare—as Dyson seems to imply? Or is generational warfare rooted in class conflict? As noted earlier, Straus and Howe assert that a generation has "collective attitudes about family life, sex roles, institutions, politics, religion, lifestyle, and the future" and, as a social category, offers "a safer basis for personality generalizations than any such other social categories as sex, race, region, or age." But what about class? Can a generation, cutting across several socio-economic strata, possibly have a "collective attitude" about class? Does one's generation offer a safer basis for personality generalization than one's class?

I pose these as rhetorical questions rather than as bases for inquiry. In U.S. society, class and race, as we have discovered long ago, are inextricably intertwined. Class, race and generation may also constitute a ball of yarn that is difficult if not impossible to untangle. According to Strauss and Howe, their concept of "generation" guards against what they call the fallacy of "cohort-centrism" which is evident in books such as Gail Sheehy's *Passages* or Dan Levinson's *The Seasons of a Man's Life*. In reasoning that there are "predictable crises" in the lifecycle or that there are "seasons" that have existed in all human societies, Sheehy and Levinson have falsely assumed that "the lifecycle experience of one's own cohort-group offers a single paradigm for all others." "Take any phase of life," state Strauss and Howe, "move forward or backward a quarter century and

you will inevitably discover profound changes in what it meant to be that age in America.”<sup>27</sup> While Strauss and Howe state that there is no “invariant and universal” lifecycle, they acknowledge that there are “timeless denominators [of the] biological phases of aging” as well as “basic social roles [which] follow a relatively fixed age schedule: infancy, childhood, coming of age, marriage, midlife leadership and elderly withdrawal.”<sup>28</sup>

Coming of age in America has been a perennial Hollywood theme, and coming of age in the inner city has spawned its share of films as well. The intertwining of race, class, the urban streetscape and coming of age—i.e., coming of age in the ghetto or the ‘hood—as depicted by filmmakers across generations is worth a mini-course of study in its own right. While films such as *The Education of Sonny Carson* (1974), *Straight Out of Brooklyn* (1991) and *Juice* (1992) are noteworthy examples of this genre, there are four key films which form a natural quartet for such study: *The Cool World* (1963), *Cooley High* (1975), *Boyz ‘N the Hood* (1991), and *Menace II Society* (1993). The latter four films belong together because each “signifies,” in a Gatesian sense, upon its predecessor, i.e., there are intertextual or intercinematic relationships characterized by “parodying through repetition and difference.” Themes are repeated but then inverted via variation, such that “resemblance [is] evoked cleverly by dissemblance.”<sup>29</sup> Each of these stark social realist films presents a fairly accurate snapshot of black male “rites of passage” in the inner city, where one’s peers (gang, posse or crew)—rather than an elder—dangerously “guide” one through the initiation process. The inner city initiation process involves male-bonding via juvenile delinquency, manhood-transition via violence and machismo, and black-on-black fratricide (the protagonist in *Menace II Society* is aptly named Caine). These films thus depict issues of gender as well as race, class, and coming of age. Athletic scholarships are the coveted ticket to college and a way out of the ghetto; death via rival gangs or posses is the fate of most.

From city to city, and across generations, the black inner city experience is similar. Shirley Clarke’s *The Cool World* depicts Harlem in the early ‘60s; Michael Shultz’s *Cooley High*, Chicago of the late ‘60s; John Singleton’s *Boyz ‘N the Hood*, south central Los Angeles in the ‘90s. Allen and Albert Hughes’s *Menace II Society*, set in Los Angeles of the same period, is a darker retelling of Singleton’s script—marked by extreme pessimism and fatalism. Signifying is at its most poignant in the Singleton-Hughes intertextuality. Whereas Singleton narrates a moralistic tale in which good triumphs over evil, the Hughes brothers tell an existential tale in which reality is absurd and human agency is inefficacious. Singleton, like *Cosby*, moralizes about the importance of parenting skills and the presence of strong fathers. The parents of the protagonist Tre (Cuba Gooding, Jr.) are divorced. When his single mother, Reva, realizes that she can no longer raise a man-child (a weak black maternal image which feminists, no doubt, find troubling and false), she sends Tre to live with his father. A stern but loving father, Furious Styles (Lawrence Fishburne), espousing Black Power generation values, helps Tre to narrowly but safely navigate the perils of the ‘hood, to which his peers, lacking such male guidance, succumbed. In contrast, the Black Power generation parents of the Hughes brothers’ protagonist Caine (Tyron Turner) die of drug abuse and the violent drug trade that pervade L.A. in the aftermath of the Watts Rebellion. Caine’s bible-quoting grandparents, so removed from the reality of his generation, are ineffectual surrogate parents. A minor character but parallel father figure to Furious Styles, named

Mr. Butler (Charles Dutton) is equally firm but loving, yet ultimately he cannot save his own son, Shatill, or the other youth whom he informally counsels, from the random and senseless violence which fatalistically engulfs all young men in the neighborhood.

Father and son motifs are relevant not only to the plot lines, but to the generational relationships of the films themselves. *Cooley High* is the collective coming of age biography of the Black Power generation. *Boyz 'N the Hood* and *Menace II Society* are the collective coming of age biographies of the Hip Hop generation. *The Cool World* is the collective coming of age biography of those who were five to ten years older than the *Cooley High* characters—those born on either side of the cusp of the Civil Rights/Black Power (Silent/Baby Boom) generations. (Whereas the *Cooley High* generation watched our own anthem film in retrospect as adults, we watched *The Cool World* as very young adolescents and it profoundly affected us as we sought to mimic and revive its gang violence—a matter of life imitating art imitating life.) The ghetto youth depicted in *Cooley High* and those depicted in *Boyz 'N the Hood* and *Menace II Society* stand in a father-son relationship to one another. *The Cool World* youth are older brothers to the *Cooley High* generation, but could very well be the young grandparents (though certainly not Caine's aged southern-born bible-quoting grandparents) of the *Menace II Society* generation, who themselves appear to be the slightly younger brothers to the *Boyz 'N the Hood*.

The generational biographies are at once similar and dissimilar. The underclass/poor working class culture and lifestyles which pervade the ghetto streetscape and impact upon the lives of youth from solid working class or so-called “lower middle class” backgrounds (e.g., Tre in *Boyz 'N the Hood*) as well, have not changed much from generation to generation; what seems to have changed is the technology that the Mean Machine has made available for ghetto consumption, disruption and destruction. The levels of violence have escalated dramatically from the era of *The Cool World* and *Cooley High* to the era of *Boyz 'N the Hood* and *Menace II Society*, because “weapons of mass destruction”—“gatts” or semi-automatic pistols—have replaced the zip guns, switchblades, bricks, dog chains and car antennas that were the available weapons of an earlier generation.

The drug-overdose death of Caine's mother and the shooting death of his criminally-enterprising father highlight the rupture of father-son relationships between the Black Power and Hip Hop generations. Heroin abuse—a three-stage process for each individual abuser which began via nasal inhalation (snortin'), escalated to subcutaneous injection (skin-poppin') and ultimately led to intravenous injection (mainlinin' or mainin')—was integral to the adolescent “rites of passage” of the *Cooley High*/Black Power generation. I estimate that circa 1967-1972, roughly two thirds of the males between 16 and 35 in my Bed-Stuy neighborhood were snortin', skin-poppin' or mainin' heroin. Decades before the so-called “paranoid” accusations of CIA involvement in distribution of crack-cocaine in Los Angeles surfaced, many folks in my generation had surmised that the local police were involved in heroin distribution. My own rather startling awakening occurred at the age of 19 or 20 when my get-high buddies took me to a “shooting gallery”—an abandoned tenement building where dozens of junkies openly gathered to shoot dope (her'on, doojie, scag). Rather than the usual anxious, surreptitious, hurried demeanor characteristic of two or three kids shootin' up (or “gettin' off”) in hallways, these hardcore older junkies (in their late 20s and 30s)—some fifty or

sixty of them—were leisurely lounging around, unafraid of being caught with either heroin or illegal “works” (a hypodermic needle attached to a glass vitamin-dropper or eye-dropper applicator with a baby bottle nipple affixed—which was used for injection). For those who are in need of visuals, the scene in the shooting gallery resembled the “Taj Mahal” crack hotel in Spike Lee’s *Jungle Fever*. The jarring incongruity which awakened my consciousness to conspiracy was that the shooting gallery was *located on the same block as the local police precinct*. In addition, there were the daily open street-corner markets of heroin trade where as many as thirty customers at a time gathered to “cop” (buy) drugs in broad daylight. Mounting complaints from fearful law-abiding community residents resulted in staged “busts” where scooter cops would break up an outdoor market and arrest the dealers, who in turn would be out on bail three hours later and selling their wares *in the same location!*

Whether it was police involvement in a lucrative criminal drug trade, or simply the police turning a blind eye to an epidemic which was destroying the black community, it all amounted to genocide. Those who didn’t die of overdoses or simply long-term neglect of basic health which characterizes hardcore addiction, found themselves victims of shared “dirty” needles. These were the brothers with “chippies” (light controllable drug habits); they didn’t have a heavy “jones” (habit) like the hardcore addicts. They were recreational weekend users who didn’t rob or steal to get high, who earned decent salaries working as office clerks in the private sector, or as civil servants in the post office, sanitation department, parks department, or as meter readers or tech-men for utility companies (Con-Edison, Brooklyn Union Gas, AT&T). They had started recreationally using heroin in their teens and continued recreationally using it through their 20s and 30s. Then the AIDS epidemic wiped them out. Between the ages of 35 and 39 they were dropping like flies. Few brothers in my neighborhood from the Coolie High generation reached the age of 40. Ninety percent of my generation was wiped out. It *was* genocide.

Shying away from needles, another age cohort—the early Hip Hop generation—turned to smokable crack-cocaine as a drug of “choice.” I watched the whole cycle of generational genocide re-occur in the mid-to-late ‘80s and early ‘90s, as the violence of the drug trade escalated to unprecedented levels (heroin junkies were known for theft but not for violence). This time the powers-that-be pumped not only drugs into our communities, but drugs and guns. Hold-ups for cash, jewelry and shearling leather coats by crack junkies frequently ended up in violence and death. While the heroin trade had been controlled by middle-aged whites in organized crime cartels like the Mafia (increasingly challenged by rising adult blacks in cartels such as the Nicky Barnes outfit), the trade in crack-cocaine was controlled by small rival gangs of young blacks who regularly engaged in gun battles for control of turf. Held in a grip of rampant drug abuse and narco-terrorism, the inner cities imploded. The anger that had triggered “social explosions” (inner city insurrections, urban uprisings, civil disturbances, “riots”) in the past had now been channeled by the powers-that-be into “social implosions”—violent inward collapsings of community life. This was all part and parcel of a socially engineered policy of containment—containment of the revolutionary potential of the black masses via the transformation of latent guerrilla warriors into thugs and addicts. *Who’s really in charge?*

The father-son relationship that was torn away from Caine, via drugs and violence, was also torn away from the Hip Hop generation. Whereas traditions are normally passed down from one age cohort to the next, an entire age cohort of potential middle-aged mentors suddenly disappeared from the scene when they died out before reaching age 40. As with all cases of absentee fathers, the sons experienced a sense of abandonment and rage, but this was a generational sense of abandonment and rage. That rage is taken out on the Survivors—on those black men who were not “taken out” by the genocide. Kevin Powell, cited earlier as author of *Who’s Gonna Take the Weight*, voices the disappointment and anger of the Hip Hop generation with what he calls the “Civil Rights/Black Power generation”:<sup>30</sup>

...when I encounter older Black men in this day and age, men old enough to be my father, men who lived through a segregated America and the bloody and brutal social orgy that was the 1960's, I wonder to myself what they survived and what they perpetually tote with them.

Powell goes on to paint the profile of two prototypes of the “Civil Rights/Black Power generation”; the first is the Black Bourgeois assimilationist:

Is he one of the members of the Black middle class who endured the lunacy of those times and did well for himself by the standards of the so-called American dream, with the house, the car or two, the good job, the latest gadgets, yet has lurking somewhere on his soul a cancerous blemish where he compromised portions of himself—his sanity, his dignity, his identity—to get ahead materially, a sacrifice his ancestors could not have foreseen? Was he real with himself. Does he understand why Black men of my generation, perhaps even his own son or sons, feel he is a sellout, that he is a coward, that he acts like a White man, talks like a White man, thinks like a White Man because, fundamentally, he has surrendered his own soul?

The second portrait is that of the Afrocentric political activist:

And what of that older Black man who has remained on the front lines of what we term "the struggle", the one who has an African or Muslim name, the one who wears Afrocentric clothing, who has maybe dreaded his hair, who to this day insists on labeling Black people as "sister" and "brother", who is routinely called "Baba" by his fellow Afrocentrists, who instinctually refers to White people, underneath his breath and when among his like-minded peers, as "crackers" or "devils", who mocks the police as "pigs", and who is so out of touch with the hip-hop generation, including his own children, that he thinks these children and their culture an aberration, their culture, their music, completely without soul, artless, chaotic, noisy, foul, despicable, ruthless, ugly.

Powell poses a question that is so poignant and full of angst, that I felt compelled to quote him in full—and to answer his question with a very personal reflection.

As a professor, with flexibility of dress code at the workplace, my winter wardrobe usually consists of conventional suits, white shirts and ties; in the late spring and summer I prefer African fabric suits—matching dashikis and pants. Perpetually with me is a

smart briefcase full of books and papers. Depending on mood and season, then, on any given day commuting on the bus or subway, I could be taken for either brother you've described above. But I do have a Muslim name and I have remained on the frontlines of the struggle. What have I survived and what do I perpetually tote with me? These memories:

Born in the post-war era when the term "colored people," was still in vogue, though "Negro" was preferred, my generation (The Cooley High/Black Power/Baby Boomer generation) grew up in same inner cities, in same neighborhoods and on the same streets where you Hip Hoppers grew up—inner cities like New York City's Central Brooklyn, whose neighborhoods include Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, East Flatbush, Flatbush, Brownsville and East New York. Central Brooklyn, a sprawling contiguous urban area, now contains a larger population of people of African descent (African American and African Caribbean) than any other urban location on earth except Lagos, Nigeria. My particular tale is of one Central Brooklyn neighborhood, Bedford-Stuyvesant, which by the late '60s had eclipsed in population its more famous Manhattan sister neighborhood, Harlem, to become, in fact, the second largest African American ghetto in the United States. Only the South Side of Chicago is larger. Therefore, like the "native sons" of Chicago, the "native sons" of Bed-Stuy, are emblematic of Blackamerica, i.e., "we representin'."

This reflection is dedicated to the memory of some very special "native sons," who hailed from the vicinity of the Whitelaw Reid J.H.S. 57 playground in Bed-Stuy, the actual geographic center of NYC: the brothas I grew up with, "the fellas,"—no, not my "dawgs," but my crew, my posse, my peops, my homeboys, my homeys, my partners in crime & juvenile delinquency who have passed on: Michael Jacobs, "Little Charles" Clemmons, Freddy Cedric, Norman Hollaway, Paul Lucas, Larry and Dennis Providence, Alex Edison, Ronald Blocker, Weevie, and any whose names I may have missed. Ase!

This ain't nostalgic "predecessor blues" of an idyllic past that never was,<sup>31</sup> this is the rhythm & blues, the funk and the soul of those aforementioned ancestral spirits and of we who are living survivors. No, this is not nostalgia, this is social history: a record of the lived experience of the black urban poor in New York City circa the 1950s, '60s and '70s, a chronicle of inner city black male youth culture during those decades. We black men, old enough to be Kevin Powell's father, perpetually tote with us memories of childhood innocence aged 7 thru 13: shooting marbles (knuckles down tight); buying candy or snacks and saying "no aggies" so you didn't have to share; playing cracktop—a mean and nasty spinning top game where all the tops but the last to stop spinning were placed in a small chalk-drawn circle or "pot," and the last man down spun again with the object of cracking holes in, cracking chunks of wood out of, or even splitting in half, one of his opponents' immobilized tops with a well-aimed strike by the sharpened point of his top—all with accompanying taunts by the victor and the peals of derisive laughter directed at the victim by the onlookers; shooting skelly, that quintessential inner city street game, with checkers or melted crayon wax-filled wine bottle caps on chalk-drawn courts in the middle of the street ("going for my thirteensies"... "I am a killer-diller..."); early gambling via pitchin' pennies; playing Ringo-Levio/Coco-Levio 1-2-3; playing Old Mother Witch What Time Is It? (where slow runners got lashes with a belt); playing stickball "sewer to sewer" (sewer caps as home plate and second base; "roofing" the ball—an over-the-roof homerun feat), punchball, stoopball, triangle, handball and

“Chinese” handball—all of these games played with Pennsylvania Pinkies/“Pennsy” Pinkies or Spaldings which we called “Spaldeens”; playing card games like War and Knucks (the latter a game where losers were punished by having the knuckles of their extended clenched fists scraped up and even bloodied as the winner inflicted vicious blows with the deck—or worse yet punished by a “52 stomp” where their hands were cruelly stepped on/stomped on with only the card deck as padding); shooting off firecrackers (especially long-fused firecrackers planted in piles of dog doo, timed to explode as an unfortunate, unsuspecting victim passed by); shooting off more powerful explosives: cherry bombs, ashcans and M-80s; taking the risk of buying these fireworks wholesale in Chinatown where you were outnumbered by Chinese youth gangs who had a reputation for selling the illicit goods and minutes later trying to rip you off for the same goods (successfully fighting your way out of Chinatown was part of the adventure of copping fireworks); summertime water balloon fights; summertime dousings of passing cars with the “johnny pump”; and year-round endless rankin’ (soundin’, snappin’, “playing the dozens”) on each other’s mother, e.g., “your mother’s a saint, she wears “holy” drawers....”

We perpetually tote with us memories of “coming of age” from 14 thru 21—when we earned our “H-O card” (Hang-Out Card), making us a “Homey”—when the salutation was “Yole, Homes, and when everything was good, it was “copasetic” and when you was dead serious, no bullsh\*t, you’d say “square business” and when the life was: shooting see-low (three dice craps), shooting hoops (stuffin’ in yo’ face), shooting hooky from school so that we hang out shooting pool, throwing a “fair one” (bare fists, no weapons), playing card games like Twenty-one Blackjack, gambling now for money rather than the skin off your knuckles, riding our ten-speed bicycles at breakneck speed down the winding slopes of “Snake Hill” for the ultimate thrill of barely escaping vehicular death as we hurtled, our handbrakes useless at this velocity, into the heavy four-lane traffic on Jamaica Ave at the foot of the hill (“God protects children and fools”); “stripping” bicycles that dumb kids left chained outside; going to downtown shopping areas to go “boostin’” (shoplifting); sneaking onto buses and subways; hitching rides on the back of buses; running for life in the wee hours of the morning along the track bed of the NYC subway from one station to the next on a dare when we got tired of waiting on the train; playing kissing and petting games like Truth, Dare, Consequences, Promise or Repeat; commuting high schoolers engaging in consensual and non-consensual erotic *frottage* or rubbing games on subways jam-packed full of peers aptly called “booty trains”; and still forever ranking heavy on “your mama, your granny and your whole generation.”

Memories of drinking “pluck”—50-cent pints of wine with names like Gypsy Rose, Wild Irish Rose, Thunderbird, Twister, Silver Satin, Orange Rock, Richard’s Triple Peach, Night Train and Mad Dog 20/20; ritually pouring off the first few drops of wine on the ground (unaware of its origin as African libation) “for the boys upstate” (those incarcerated in prisons in upstate New York), paying a “runner” (a legal age person, usually a wino) fifteen cents or a swig out of the bottle to “cop” for us minors at the liquor store; drinking Buck Gin mixed with Kool-Aid (pouring the contents of a pre-sweetened pack directly into the pint of liquor). Although beer-drinking initially was considered a “white boy thing” we eventually started guzzling some favorite brews: Colt 45, Country Club, Miller’s High Life, and Old English 800....

We perpetually tote with us memories of “boppin’” or “jitterbugging” (or “gang-banging” as it’s called today) with the Imperial Lords (whose several divisions included Homicide Lords, Python Lords, Renegade Lords, etc.) or the Buccaneers and the Baby Bucs, the Fort Green Chaplains, Breevort Chaplains, Corsair Lords (unrelated to the Imperials), Baldies, Nits, Untouchable Bishops, Ellery Bops, El Quintos, Jolly Stompers and Peanut Stompers. Memories of the original “tags” or graffiti—one’s jitterbugging name, followed by one’s gang affiliation, followed with the ubiquitous L.A.M.F., and all underlined with a fancy swirl—Haji Baba of the Imperial Lords, L.A.M.F. (Like a Mutha F\*\*ka). All of us was *baaad like a mutha f\*\*ka*.

Memories of debs who were the female divisions of these various gangs, legends about running a train on a deb (a misogynist serial orgy of several males with one female where it was okay to get “sloppy seconds” or “sloppy thirds” but no one wanted to be the “caboose”). Memories of shaking down “coolies” (those without gang affiliation) for their loose change; pulling a grand (arrogantly taunting the police to chase you with exaggerated body language while yellin’ “Come, cop!” or “Git me!” or “Git One!”), having sham battles, stoning rival gangs with bricks thrown from the roof; rolling on the Patty Boys (Irish boys) in the Breweries.... Memories of our gang songs, the original Gangsta Rap:

Up on the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Grand  
 Out popped the Lords from a black sedan  
 Pulled out our shotguns and cocked ‘em with ease  
 Had the faggot Buccaneers down on their knees...

Memories of Big Joe, the infamous tall, burly, bald-headed, thick-mustachioed, fearsome black police officer who was on foot patrol at JHS 57 park... Big Joe who notoriously kept the peace—during the most savage era of gang-banging (circa 1959)—by hanging out and drinking wine with the Imperial Lords, and banning all rival gangs from the area.... Big Joe whose legendary feats were passed down to us younger gang members: In his heyday, he was known for singing our gang song refrain “High Lords” while swinging his nightstick and cracking heads as he helped the old-time Lords chase invading gangs like the Baldies out of Imperial Lord territory.

Memories of “grinding” on some big thigh girl in the corner at a 50-cent red-light party especially to the Dell’s six-minute rendition “Stay in My Corner;” trying to get some p\*ssy from her in her hallway after the party; memories of hanging out at clubs like C.O.C.P.’s, Bill Daley’s, Manhattan Center; scoping on all of the fine mamas or fly hammers; partying ‘till we ”tear the roof of the sucka, tear the roof of the mutha f\*\*ka”; dancing the Philly Dawg, the Watusi, the Jerk, the Shing-a-Ling, the Bougalou, “Latin,” and infinite variations of the perennial “Hustle”—which some asshole journalist in the *New York Times* claimed was invented in Paris....

Memories of wearing low-cut Caesar hair-cuts, memories of the grease that we used to keep waves in our hair: Duke, Nu-Nile and Murray’s Pomade; and memories of “The Cool World” half-generation before us who wore processes or “Dos” (permed hair-dos) and covered them up with the original Do-Rags; memories of the stocking caps (from our mothers’ old nylon stockings) that we wore at night while we slept to press the waves into our hair; memories of the first Afros which liberated us from all of that nonsense....

Memories of our wardrobes circa 1964-66 wearing “Hustler” style clothes—Applejack hats, bellbottom pants, dagger collar shirts, and a pair of split-toe or biscuit-toe Kangs; memories of our wardrobes circa 1967-72 wearing “Italian Hustler” style clothes—leather coats with Persian lamb collars, or Aqua Scutum coats which we mispronounced as “Apra Scooners,” or coats made of “Unborn Calf”; wearing silk-haired beaver hats (with geometrical designs combed into the fur) and “stingy brim” hats, shaped in either a four-corner block or a “deep roll” (crease in the middle) in the winter and wearing Kangol caps, Panama hats, or pastel colored “skimmers” in the summer; wearing tailor-made silk-and-wool blend pants with various pocket designs; wearing regular Italian knit shirt Monday thru Thursday and sixty-dollar (in 1968 currency) Blye Shop alpaca knit shirts, color-matched by eighty-dollar alligator shoes, on the weekends; wearing footwear such as lizards and Darts, Playboys (high-tops or low-tops) or Chuck Taylor’s Original Converse All-Stars and Pro-Keds (hightops only) on the weekdays, “profiling” with a handkerchief sticking out our back pocket, and a toothpick hanging out the side of our mouths. Memories of shopping at our “designer label” haberdasheries: The Blye Shop, Leighton’s, Phil Kronfield’s, A. J. Lester’s, Richfield’s, Cy Martin’s, Benhil’s and the Revel-Knox hat shop, and “designer label” shoe stores: Florsheim’s, Stacy Adams’s, and Fred Braum’s for the ladies.... Decades before “ghetto fabulous,” we was truly “clean as the Board of Health,” “pressed,” “fly”.... We knew how to “vine.” We wore some mean threads. . . . Of course there was also a “Prep Boy” style—Kangol wool caps, navy pea coats, cordovans and penny loafers, but we talking pimp and thug culture here....

Memories of smoking Kools ‘til they took the cocaine out at which point we switched to Newports; smoking reefer and drinking Boone’s Farm, Scuppernong or Bali Hai all day long; snorting “scag,”/”doojee”/“her’on,” then graduating to skinpoppin’, and finally mainlinin’; using a soda or beer bottle cap held by a bobby pin as a “cooker” for the “her’on” we would shoot; and speedballing—snorting scag in one nostril and coke in the other. Memories of going out in droves to Coney Island on Easter Sunday, Memorial day and the Fourth of July hoping to “turn it out”—meaning hoping to promote mass pandemonium, a riot, so that we could battle the mounted police with bottles and rocks, hopefully drawing a white officer’s blood with a well-aimed missile. These were perennial youth uprisings and rebellions against “the man” (the police; or the white man) that were never reported in the media.

This was the life we lived, all of it. Like in the movie *Coolie High*, it was all played out against the backdrop of a Motown (or a James Brown) soundtrack. The Supremes, The Temptations, Martha and the Vandellas, “Little” Stevie Wonder, The Four Tops, The Marvelettes, Smoky Robinson and the Miracles.... Motown therefore transports many of us to a different set of experiences, a different set of memories than Todd Boyd would have us believe in his *HNIC* introductory metaphor that he asserts is symbolic of the Civil Rights/Hip Hop divide: a bifurcated Coke commercial starring a nostalgic Civil Rightser listening to the Marvin Gaye/Tammi Terrell rendition of “Ain’t Nothing Like the Real Thing” while his young Hip Hop kids listen to the Method Man/Mary J. Blige rendition of the same song.<sup>32</sup> Yes, like the Civil Rights generation, we Cooley High/BlackPower generation members tote with us our memories of Motown, yet “It’s the Same Ol’ Song,” as The Four Tops said, “but with a different meaning” to us Black Power folks.

What we perpetually tote with us also, is the memory of those who are gone. Mowed down by bullets, O.D'ed on drugs, or dead from AIDS—a disease which was far worse than the hepatitis we originally feared getting from “f\*\*kin’ aroun’” (to f\*\*k aroun’: to mess around with drugs, to shoot drugs, to shoot narcotics). We was all some *baaadass mutha f\*\*kas*, but in the end most of us got f\*\*ked-up, screwed, dealt a raw deal. Thug life was a one-way ticket to the grave.

We survivors perpetually tote with us the religion, the politics, the philosophy or the lifestyle that finally rescued us from sure death on the streets, that rescued us from being victims of the genocide, whether that be Islam, Black Nationalism, the Hebrew Israelite faith, Marxism-Leninism, Born Again Christianity, 12-Step Programs, martial arts, a career in the armed forces, marriage and family, the values of a college education, etc., or various combinations of the above. Whatever religion, philosophy, politics or lifestyle saved us from death, we survivors of the street perpetually tote with us, not as memories but as active shields against self-destruction.

#### 4. World’s Great Men of Color: Nigrescence: The Suicide and Rebirth of Consciousness

##### **BAM artists circa 1969-1971:**

*Can you kill the nigger/in you/ Can you kill your nigger mind...*

—Sonia Sanchez, “The True Import of Present Dialogue, Black vs. Negro”  
from the poetry volume, *Black Feeling, Black Talk*

*Die, Niggas! Die Niggas!! Die Niggas!!! So Black Folks Can Take Over*

—David Nelson, “Die Niggas,” from the album *Right On* by The “Original” Last Poets

*But until (the revolution comes) /You know and I know/Niggers will party /and bullshit and party/And  
bullshit and party/and bullshit and party/Some might even die/before the revolution comes*

—Abiodun Oyowole, “When the Revolution Comes” from the album *The Last Poets*

*Time is nothing to niggers and negroes/ Time is getting high/Time is going to a formal /And thinking of the  
next time you can do it again/Time is running/ Time is running /Time is running out/...../Time is  
coming/Time is coming/*

*Time is coming to an end/Ain’t no more time/...../Niggers and negroes/*

*Y’all had all better get right/at this time/while the time is good/cause there might not be no/next time*

—Umar Bin Hassan, “Time,” from the album *This is Madness* by The Last Poets

##### **Hip Hop artists circa 1991-2000:**

*Efil4zaggin*

[CD title]. Spelt backwards: *Niggaz4Life* by NWA (Niggaz Wit Attitude)

*I’ma ride with my niggas/die with my niggas/get high with my niggas/split pies with my niggas/till my body  
gets hard/soul touch the sky/till my numbers get called/and God shuts my eyes*

—Beanie Sigel, “Ride 4 My” from the CD *Truth*

“Those who don’t know history,” states the old adage, “are doomed to repeat it.” Marcus Garvey cautioned that “a people without knowledge of their history is like a tree

without roots.” Malcolm X asserted: “Of all the subjects we can study, history is most qualified to reward all research.” These statements are equally true of ancient and recent history. The genocide of a generation through drugs and violence is disruptive to the continuity of a people in the same manner, though not the same magnitude, as macro historical disruptions, e.g., the slave trade or the Great Migration. Those born in the U.S.A. are detached from much of their Africa heritage, those born in the north are detached from their rural peasant roots, and those born in the wake of recent urban genocide are detached from the continuity of urban heritage. Without urban griots to pass on tradition, without inquiring young minds interrogating their elders, a portion of collective memory is lost, a rich history of an era of streetlife goes unrecorded. I urge young men like Kevin Powell, who ponder about who these “fatherly” “middle class” or “Afrocentric” men are, to approach these elders as brothers (with a modicum of filial respect) and ask for an interview. You’d be surprised how many of us would be willing to have our life experiences audiotaped or videotaped for the sake of preserving history.

Another ancient adage says that “there is nothing new under the sun,” and Marx said that history repeats itself, “the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.” Black Arts Movement spoken word artistry is sprinkled with the word “nigger” (in all of its variant spellings), e.g., “Run, Niggers,” “Niggers are Scared of Revolution,” and “Wake Up, Niggers,” by the Last Poets, “Jibaro My Pretty Nigger” and “Die Niggas” by The “Original” Last Poets and a host of other poems in which “nigger” is repeated throughout the body of the work if not appearing in the title. The repeated usage of the term reflects the fact that the “nigger” was an everyday common term in Blackamerica during the ‘60s—especially within the context of streetlife or Early Thug Life culture (Cool World and Cooley High eras culture)—with diverse connotations depending upon tone and context. They range from despicability, contempt and denigration (“niggers ain’t sh\*t”) to camaraderie or endearment (“my main nigger”) to a reference to one’s less-than-genteel alter ego (“don’t let me get my nigger up” or “don’t make me go into my nigger bag”) to admiration of courage or ingenuity (“niggers is some baaad mutha f\*\*kas”). Fanciful histories and etymologies arose in defense of that latter meaning of the word. “Niggers is the proud name of the ancient warriors who dwelt along the Niger River,” a college classmate told me. BAM poets, however, used the word as admonition of lifestyles which were unproductive to, or even destructive of, community development. Niggers were those members of the race who were at a lowest level of political consciousness and whose cultural behavior reflected the streetlife. Though this meaning of the word was not exactly synonymous with “lumpen,” there was a great deal of overlap. The term “negroes” (lower-case spelling) as used by BAM poets was an equally disparaging term referring to the black bourgeoisie, who also exhibited undeveloped political consciousness, along with superficial and pretentious “airs,” narcissism and materialism. For example, the phrase “niggers and negroes” as used in Umar Bin Hassan’s poetry above, was a blanket put-down of the full spectrum of politically-underdeveloped folk—those with a “colonized mentality”—whether underclass, working class or middle class. Niggers and negroes were, above all else, negative personality types characterized by “backward” tendencies, whose unconscious thought and practice was out of step with the evolving black consciousness of the ‘60s. The exhortation “die niggas” was a call for the “suicide” of this personality type and the corresponding rebirth of a black personality—analogue to the exhortation of middle class Marxist intellectuals

to commit “class suicide.” The death of the nigger was necessary for the birth of the new Black Man and Woman.

The title of SNCC leader H. Rap Brown’s 1969 book *Die Nigger Die!* had a different spin, however.<sup>33</sup> Brown castigated bourgeois “negroes” who, like whites, blame lower class “niggers” for society’s ills and wish that they would “die, nigger, die”—either by becoming negroes or by genocide. Making the same sort of class distinction that Malcolm did in his plantation analogy about house negroes and field [niggers], Brown championed the lower class niggers as the authentic blacks in a prelude to, or anticipation of, Boyd’s celebration of “Niggas”—and predicted that it was the negro rather than the nigger who would “die, die, die.” Brown’s spin was not representative of the general trend of ‘60s Black Arts or Black Power advocates, who saw the deaths of both the “negro personality” and the “nigger personality” as necessary for transformation into the desired Black or Afrikan personality.

The psychologists William Cross *et al.* named this process—of identity change, “psychological metamorphosis,” or black consciousness-development—the “Negro-to-Black conversion experience,” and also gave it a technical or textbook nomenclature (ironically based on the Latin word for black): “nigrescence.”<sup>34</sup> The nigrescence model, in which encounters with racism frequently play a major role, involves four stages: *pre-encounter*, *encounter*, *immersion* [into black culture]/*emersion* [of the new self], and *internalization* [of the new identity]. However, the encounter stage could involve any “shocking,” significant event or series of events which were cognitively dissonant with one’s pre-encounter-stage Eurocentric worldview. Encountering Black History—history narrated by the vanquished rather than the victor—as a corrective to the Eurocentric narrative often produced such a shock. In Afrocentric parlance, “my story” (long a “mystery”) restored “hidden or missing” chapters and exposed the fabrications and distortions of “his story”—the conventional Western narrative about world figures and world events. J.A. [Joel Augustus] Rogers (1883-1966), the outstanding, prolific, self-trained black historian, who was lauded by professionally-trained scholars including W.E.B. Du Bois for unearthing more facts about the black race than any man alive,<sup>35</sup> provided such a mentally liberating encounter with Black History through his many works, as did the iconoclastic Egyptologist Yosef ben Jochannan.<sup>36</sup>

We discovered such paradigm-shattering works—including also a slim but copiously illustrated pamphlet entitled *African History* by Earl Sweeting—at UCLA, the University on the Corner of Lenox Avenue. UCLA consisted of two bookstores side by side at the intersection of 125<sup>th</sup> St and Lenox Ave in Harlem. The first was Michaux’s African Memorial Bookstore, the major black specialty bookstore in Harlem and a meeting place for old Garveyites. Michaux’s was undoubtedly the largest outlet for works in history, literature and the social sciences written by or about Africans, African Americans and Afrodiasporic peoples. At its original location, one block westward at 125<sup>th</sup> and Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard, in a building that was razed circa 1969 to make way for the Harlem State Office Building, there hung a huge overhead sign which proclaimed that it was the *House of Common Sense and the Home of Proper Propaganda*, and featured portraits of heads of state from Africa and Asia, boasting that there were “2 billion Africans and non-white peoples” in the world—an important revelation for people who were always being called a “minority.” The second building of the UCLA campus was Kanya Ke Kumba’s “Tree of Life,” a bookshop specializing in

spiritual, metaphysical, occult and New Age books including many works on Ancient Egyptology, astrology and holistic health.<sup>37</sup> Here we found such classics as a reprint of Godfrey Higgins's 1836 two-volume compendium *The Anacalypsis: An Attempt to Draw Aside the Veil of the Saitic Isis; or An Inquiry into the Origins of Languages, Nations, and Religions*. All this stuff blew our minds! Rogers, however, captured the spirit of our quest for self-transformation, in a two-volume book of biographies of historical personages entitled *World's Great Men of Color*.<sup>38</sup> The amazing feats of heretofore unknown Black heroes and "sheroes" (the word heroine was shunned because it was a homonym to the name of the substance which had wreaked havoc in the black community) and the heretofore undisclosed African backgrounds of well-known figures provided a template for transformation from Coolie High youth to Black Power rising adulthood. History had provided us with the rich examples of Imhotep, Hatshepsut, Akhenaton, Aesop, Al Jahiz, Chaka Zulu, Muhammad Ahmad The Mahdi, Le Chevalier de Saint George, Pushkin, Hubert Harrison—to name but a few.

From this new historical perspective of the heights to which Black people had risen in the past and which they could reach again, we could plainly see that the social roles of nigger and negro had been imposed upon us by our oppressors and in turn internalized by us. The oppressor had also circumscribed our worldview to the parameters of ghettos or colonies or reservations. No longer would we be imprisoned by these confines. We would be the [new] World's Great Men and Women of Color! There would be no limits to our achievements, no artificial boundaries drawn around our ambition. The sky was the limit. The universe was ours. The Black Butterfly, the Arise and Shine, and the New Birth motifs confirming our miraculous transformation appeared everywhere—in the BAM art, poetry, and music. Our new identity was certainly in line with what Todd Boyd identifies as "Race Men"—though that honorable term seemed to stretch back as far as the Garvey era. However our dramatic metamorphosis from Thug Life to World's Great Men of Color equally reflected the example and dictum of Malcolm X, the *pivotal* figure of the Negro-to-Black transformation: "Wake up, clean up, and stand up!"

## 5. The Crisis of the HNIC Intellectuals: Without a Vision, the People Perish

In our aspirations to become World's Great Men of Color, many of us succeeded at least in becoming ardent bibliophiles and grandmasters at the game of "tea." Decades before we pored through Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* and discovered the term "organic intellectuals," we were already there; years before we used the word "salons," without the adjective "beauty," we had established them; long before we began to admire Bloomsbury or become fascinated with "Niggerati Manor," we already had formed noteworthy intellectual circles. "Playing tea" became our major recreational activity. We didn't have a name for this activity at the time, other than the denigrating college dormitory terms such as "shooting the breeze," "shooting the bull" or "bullsh\*t sessions," which didn't do justice to a pastime that we had raised to the level of art. Some black folks preferred to call it "kickin' it" or "kickin' it live." Still no justice. After all, there were lots of levels of "shooting the bull" or "kicking it live," beginning with street

corner, park bench or barbershop dialogue and ranging upwards to the dizzying heights of abstract intellectual discourse.

It wasn't until much later—when we were in our late twenties or early thirties and already *Magistri Ludi* (masters of the game)—that one of my most esteemed colleagues, the late Fermin Ennis, identified the sport as “tea.” “Tea” was probably short for “conversation over tea” or “tea party chatter,” i.e., what Americans refer to as “cocktail party chatter.” No doubt it originated as a British term and some may have legitimate misgivings about its Eurocentric or colonial connotations. Yet unlike the local colloquialisms “kicking it live” or “shooting the bull,” “playing tea” had achieved some international, even Pan African, currency. It was an African sister who actually introduced the term to my colleague Fermin, during a conversation when he, true to character, was displaying his vast erudition. The sista exclaimed “Oh, so you want to play tea, huh!?” “Playing tea”—Fermin and I loved the ring of that arcane phrase—the very obscurantism of the phrase itself was pregnant with connotations of a sophisticated game played by cognoscenti and literati. In honor and fond memory of Fermin Ennis, a human encyclopedia, triple ivy leaguer, and world-class tea-player—in fact, *the* most awesome, formidable tea-player I've ever gone up against, a brotha in a category all by himself who played this game the way that Bobby Fischer played chess—I shall forever refer to our beloved pastime as tea.<sup>39</sup>

What exactly is “tea”? That is a question worth a disquisition in and of itself. Here, I will just note that the game of tea was not to be confused with gentlemen's idle conversation. Congeniality had yielded to a competitive spirit, especially on campus. It had become a game of mortal combat, a bloodsport, an arena for honing razor-sharp intellectual skills—and we didn't engage in this activity while sipping a “spot of tea” but while smoking bag after bag of “herb” or “weed.” We eagerly read everything we could get our hands on: religion, philosophy, political theory, economics, history, literature, psychology, social science, physics, mathematics, linguistics, philosophy of science; as well as arcane, abstruse, esoteric, occult and antiquarian fare; we listened to all the contemporary music and spoken word artistry available; sought after *avante garde* visual art: cinema, painting, architecture, photography, sculpture, comic books and underground comix—and held marathon, free-wheeling, no-holds-barred conversations, giving expositions of and commentary on all the culture we had imbibed. Governed by a set of tacitly acknowledged rules, the goals of these conversations were to get at “the Truth,” to demonstrate the incisiveness, clarity, depth, breadth and *relevance* of one's erudition (the sh\*t *had* to be relevant), and to cut one's opponents to shreds, to draw blood—or, if not to go for the jugular, then at least to establish hierarchy, pecking order. But this was nothing new; from childhood, our games and our verbal play had been brutal: cracktop, knucks, playing the dozens.

“As iron sharpens iron, so does the scholar sharpen the scholar,” says a Talmudic tradition. Ditto with organic intellectuals. Amongst the brothers who had developed a thirst for intellectual culture, we dueled it out like master swordsmen—like the Chevalier de Saint George. I emphasize brothers, because it was decidedly a very *male* sport. Perfected to the level of perversity in ivy league circles, where honor and reputation were at stake, and the favors of intelligent, dark, lovely, maiden spectators were to be won, brothers rose to the occasion, becoming dazzling wits, charming dilettantes, profound philosophers, baffling brainiacs and, in rare instances, as with Fermin Ennis, veritable

polymaths. (The chorus of approval for a true tea champion was “That’s a deep mutha f\*\*ka !” or “That brother is heaveeey!”) Whereas some ivy league brothers aspired to be the cream of the crop via political leadership of Black Student Organizations and others via academic honors such as the Dean's List or the prestigious Scholar of the House, many budding black intellectuals sought campus renown as unrelenting and undisputed masters of tea. The fierce edge of the game, however, often gave way to the more relaxed and casual tenor of a “random walk” (through any and all fields of knowledge), when bonds of friendship, mutual respect and admiration grew between well-matched worthy opponents. We survivors of the street culture, in our bid to become World’s Great Men of Color, had begun to converge for intellectual discourse and debate in homegrown salons, neighborhood cafes, black cultural centers and college dormitories (where we met brothers like ourselves from other cities, thus creating national networks). In the process, we emerged as a serious intelligentsia—albeit a flawed male-dominated intelligentsia, an old boys network, one which our black feminist sistas would soon critique. Nevertheless, an intelligentsia had been crafted from our generation. This was our intelligentsia-formation process.

Certainly this process was not universal: some brothers cut their intellectual eye-teeth in the heated debate of nationalist study groups or Marxist political cells or by mastering Islamic, Hebrew Israelite or Five Percenter doctrinal/theological debating skills in order to “bust up” disbelievers. In the final analysis, it was essentially the same process whether one’s training came in the context of the liberal arts academy, the cafes/cultural centers or salons, the political cadre or the religious sect—though some bloods were so dogmatic that they were actually anti-intellectual (closed-minded to alternative viewpoints and hostile to speculation, inquisitiveness, and dissident freethought). Still, in the Gramscian sense we had all become intellectuals; seeking and mastering knowledge had become the new game in town. We had all become animated and engaged with doctrines, theories, cosmologies, worldviews and philosophies.

But at some point, we tea-players and other knowledge-seekers learned that all of our intellectual theorizing was useless without application, without action, without putting theory into practice. We soon acknowledged, as the Little Red Book had taught us, that “A revolution is not a tea party.”

*Until the revolution comes, you know and I know niggers will party and bullsh\*t, (tea) party and (shoot the) bullsh\*t... some might even die before the revolution comes.* The challenge for the newly-formed intellectual strata representing my generation was to overcome, as Cornel West has phrased it, the “paralysis of analysis” or, in the words of Jalaluddin Nuriddin of The Last Poets, “to close the gap between the view and the do.” In short the challenge for armchair intellectuals was to transform themselves into *engagé* or activist intellectuals—intellectuals actively engaged in struggle. The “view” or “vision” that Jalaluddin Nuriddin spoke of was captured in the black student slogan of the late ‘60s and early ‘70s: “It’s Nation Time.” The vision was nationhood, sovereignty, autonomy, independence, self-governance. Great Men [of Color], after all, were architects of their own destiny, their own society, their own nation-state. Certainly great men like Washington, Jefferson, L’Ouverture, Lenin, Mao, and Castro were. Taking charge of one’s own destiny was what separated the men from the boys. Historically, black men in the Jim Crow south—and the north as well—had suffered the

indignity of being called “boys.” All of that shuffling and bowing to white supremacy was now over. We were no longer boys in the hood, but men committed to nationhood. That was the spirit of our times, the prevailing Zeitgeist.

We were swept up by that Zeitgeist. Men make history, but more importantly history makes men. Although we aspired to be Great Men of Color, we did not necessarily subscribe to a “great men theory of history.” To the contrary, we understood that men and women are a product of their society, their culture, their times, and the forces of history.<sup>40</sup> As organic intellectuals we were rooted in the masses, rooted in, and products of, the social movements of our time, especially the Black Power movement. The idea of an independent nation-state was not “reefer madness,” it was not a marijuana pipe dream concocted by intellectuals during one of their “tea parties.” It was an idea historically envisioned by the masses, and realized, for example, by runaway slaves who had set up maroon societies or “quilombos.” The most successful of these maroon societies was the red and black Seminole nation in Florida, a collaborative effort between Native Americans and Africans which resisted white incursion for 120 years.<sup>41</sup>

Analysts of black history such as Draper, Cruse and Bracey *et al.*, have observed a dialectic in which the two polar ideologies, integration-assimilation and nationalism-separatism have vied for ascendancy or dominance.<sup>42</sup> Amiri Baraka similarly has identified the “twin character” of the African American struggle: a struggle for democratic rights and a struggle for national liberation.<sup>43</sup> In the late ‘60s the democratic rights or integrationist-assimilationist thrust of the Civil Rights movement had given way to the nationalist thrust of the Black Power Movement. Nation-building was an *idée-force* whose time had come. It was Nation Time. That was the historical moment.

Certainly there were different tendencies within the Black Power movement. Van Deburg differentiates between *pluralists* and *nationalists*. Pluralists concentrated their efforts, within the system, on the goal of “community control,” i.e., neighborhood empowerment—the empowerment of educational, economic, and political institutions in the community—as a base or springboard for empowerment at the state and national levels. Nationalists were fatalistic about the prospects of gaining power within the system. They rejected “majoritarian values, avoided entering into entangling alliances with ‘establishment’ organizations, and campaigned for longterm sociocultural autonomy.”<sup>44</sup> The nationalist camp itself was further subdivided into three tendencies: *territorial nationalists* (advocates of a separate territory such as CORE in the late ‘60s, the Nation of Islam, and the Republic of New Africa), *revolutionary nationalists* (nationalist advocates of worldwide socialist revolution such as the black Panther Party), and *cultural nationalists* (advocates of a cultural renaissance as a key component of the revolutionary struggle such as Karenga’s organization US).<sup>45</sup> Franklin identifies four themes that developed “under the general rubric of black power”: *black community development* (“community control revolving around...community development corporations”), *black capitalism* (ranging from “grand visions of black retail stores, manufacturing plants, development banks, and enterprise zones” to modest SBA policies for family entrepreneurship), *cultural nationalism* (involving a focus on African heritage, a struggle against white supremacy and internalized oppression, and an overcoming of the “black identity crisis”), and *revolutionary nationalism* (Marxist Leninist alteration of the class structure such that the black masses owned and controlled all major institutions).<sup>46</sup> McCartney identifies three categories of black power advocates: *pluralists*

(who seek to work within the present U.S. system but see a crucial relationship between individual and group power, and stress ethnocentrism over individualism), *counter-communalists* (Panthers, “who seek to replace the values, interests, institutions and beliefs of the present system” with socialist ones), and *separatists* (“who ‘disvalue’ the present and desire to separate from it”).<sup>47</sup> Marable identifies Black Power with a “black nationalist renaissance” or “re-emergence,” and differentiates between *cultural nationalism* and *left nationalism*, using the latter term interchangeably with revolutionary black nationalism.<sup>48</sup> Both tendencies advance the goal of self-determination and self-reliance; “the critical distinction between the two tendencies is that left nationalists are materialists (i.e., socialists) and cultural nationalists are idealists.”<sup>49</sup> Examining the radical black intelligentsia historically, he delineates four generations of left nationalist intellectuals, identifying himself (at the time) with the fourth generation. He sees Du Bois as representing a “complex tradition of *cultural pluralism*” distinct from both the nationalist and integrationist traditions of his contemporaries, but he does not address the issue of Black Power era pluralists.

The ideological tendencies of Black Power often converged. Marable calls cultural and revolutionary nationalism “overlapping categories.”<sup>50</sup> Van Deburg calls the line that “divided pluralist from nationalist on the issue of community control” a thin one, “crossed so many times that it became muddied and indistinct.”<sup>51</sup> Franklin notes that the four black power themes which he identified “all embraced a common ideology: the need for black identity based on race and culture, the need for black self-determination, and the need to overcome white economic and cultural domination.”<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, “black power advocates always opted for independent forms of action” in the economic sphere, politically and in the cultural domain. McCartney identified five characteristics that bound his three variations of Black Power into a “family resemblance”: (1) agreement on the meaning of power [(a) the ability to change, control, define and determine one’s destiny or environment; and (b) an institutionalized relationship of coercion or consensus between groups]; (2) primary goal as self determination for blacks as a group (rather than the goal of individual black equality which integrationists sought); (3) political realist approach to analyses and strategies (as opposed to the idealist theory and tactics of Dr. M.L. King); (4) agreement that the black community itself must take the lead in alleviating racism (as opposed to appealing to the conscience of the rest of the society); and (5) confidence that strategies emphasizing blackness can succeed [in contrast to King’s three-pronged critique of these black strategies: (a) minority-based policy is doomed to failure, (b) many whites are sympathetic, and (c) all black progress has been achieved by multi-racial strategy].<sup>53</sup>

The question “Which Way Forward?”—pluralism or nationalism, revolutionary nationalism or cultural nationalism, etc.—plagued the movement and contributed to the “paralysis of analysis.” Classically, the question “Which Way Forward?” applied to a debate between black Marxist-Leninists (who emphasized the class struggle and interracial working class solidarity) and revolutionary nationalists, who emphasized both the national liberation struggle and the class struggle but gave primacy to black solidarity. Classically, it was a debate among socialist factions over issues of “ideological clarity” and “the correct line” analogous to Lenin’s *What Is to Be Done?* However, the question “Which Way Forward?” actually plagued the African American movement for social justice on several levels that had little to do with socialist infighting. The question

applied to many debates: Civil Rights vs. Black Power, integrationism vs. nationalism, nonviolence vs. militant self defense, separatism vs. pluralism, socialist vs. capitalist development, repatriation to the Motherland vs. establishing a sovereign nation on North American soil, and even secularism vs. religion, and religion vs. spirituality. In a work which was monumental in scope, originality and importance, although flawed by vituperative personal attacks and historical inaccuracies, Harold Cruse controversially addressed the question “Which Way Forward—nationalism or Marxism?” (George Padmore, had addressed the same question in a more international dimension in his book *Pan Africanism or Communism?*) Cruse identified the inability of the radical leftist or socialist-leaning black intelligentsia of an earlier generation to develop a nationalist agenda or pluralist Black Power model of self-determination as *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*. This so-titled book became the “bible” of the Black Nationalist movement—though it actually argues for pluralism not separatism, as is evident in the title of Cruse’s more recent work *Plural but Equal* (a play on the segregationist phrase “separate but equal”).<sup>54</sup>

On the questions of pluralism (community control) vs. separatism or territorial nationalism, or cultural vs. revolutionary nationalism, there was no confusion amongst most pragmatists, those who were not held captive to an ideological camp or rhetorical line. Pragmatic nationalists or “nationalist pragmatists” often synthesized the various positions. For nationalist pragmatists there were long range, intermediate range and short range goals. The establishment of a nation-state was an ultimate but very long-range goal, one that required protracted struggle and was unforeseeable during their own lifetime or even that of their children. In the meantime, energy and focus had to be placed on the achievement of short-range and intermediate-range goals. If these nearer-term goals were not achieved, then their grandchildren would not inherit the building blocks or foundations for achieving the long-range goal of national independence. Conceivable also, is that with such foundations in place, future progeny would have achieved plural but equal status in a multiracial egalitarian society and would choose not to exercise the right to self-determination.

Nationalists cannot put constraints on future possibilities, they can only build towards their vision of the future. The rhetoric of “freedom in our lifetime” while admirable in its intent was merely a reflection of the need for instant gratification—the “I want it in a hurry” habit, the fast food, instant coffee, pop-in-the stove tv dinner, mentality of American society. Nationalists talked about protracted struggle (long drawn out struggle) but acted as if that meant a ten or twenty year maximum period. Those who weren’t in it for the long haul, those who weren’t prepared to spend their entire lifetimes in struggle without the benefit of seeing total results, burned out, dropped out, or sold out along the way. Perhaps we needed to pay attention to a good old Eurocentric adage: “Rome wasn’t built in a day.” Or maybe translate it into counterhegemonic discourse so that it would penetrate the consciousness of the nationalist community: “Kemet wasn’t built in a day.” Brothas talked about “revolutionary suicide” and martyrdom for the cause and being ready to die valiantly or gloriously on the battlefield of armed struggle, but only the hardy few were prepared for the thousand little deaths suffered on a daily basis: being fired from jobs, being evicted from apartments, spouses leaving them, children veering off in a non-nationalist direction, organizations failing, leaders misappropriating funds, etc. These everyday personal setbacks—personal battles and

skirmishes—were an essential component of this stage of the struggle. Yet a lot of people who were not imbued with a sense of self-sacrifice, quit the struggle and opted for the big bucks when they got tired of living this way. They are those who, as Douglass said, “want rain without thunder and lightning... want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.”<sup>55</sup>

The short-range goals of nationalist development—institution-building and community control—are no different from the pluralist demands. The building of alternative institutions, a work which began in the ‘60s but faltered due to economic downturns, is a fundamental nationalist goal. Nation-building begins with institution-building. We can’t seriously speak about building a nation if we cannot even build and successfully maintain and operate an institution. The intermediate range goals are a federation of community-controlled inner cities and regions. This goal, which S.E. (Sam) Anderson considers non-viable as a long-range solution, still has merit, from my perspective, as a main component in a transitional program for black liberation.<sup>56</sup> Anderson states that “*city-statesmen*” believe in “building the blackening cities into politically and economically powerful quasi-autonomous city states” which either “vie for influence and control of white America’s capital and resources” or attempt to exist within the capitalist society as “communal non-capitalistic” entities.<sup>57</sup> Anderson argues that this would merely be a colonial arrangement working in the interests of a “colonialized bourgeoisie” who be the administrators of the city-state, and that the ultimate authority would be still be the white power structure.

Reform measures, however, cannot be rejected out of hand simply because they are not revolutionary. As an intermediate or transitional goal, the establishment of a network of city-states offers far more hope for African Americans than the present state of affairs, and the African American public is politically sophisticated enough to create measures which will hold its leadership accountable. The establishment of such a network would hinge upon the passage of a national reparations social policy calling for the reconstruction and redevelopment of the basic institutions and infrastructure of the inner cities (housing, schools, industry/manufacturing, hospitals, day care facilities, mental health clinics, drug and alcohol rehab centers, parks and recreational facilities, etc.) and the Black Belt South (which would also need farmland policies).<sup>58</sup> The initial architects of such a national policy must be a National African American Congress, a representative body of the people, who call upon “congressional aides”—experts in public policy, city planning, architecture, education, business development, public health, housing, construction trades, etc.—to develop a master plan for reconstruction and development which can be adapted/modified from city to city.<sup>59</sup> Through mass education and organized struggle, we must insure that the federal, state and municipal governments adopt such policy and implement it with funding released in annual installments over a 50-to-75-year period to insure the maintenance of all projects and programs. With careful planning we can avoid the neo-colonial pitfalls of the Model Cities/Anti-Poverty programs which Robert Allen addressed in *Black Awakening in Capitalist America*, and which Anderson echoes.

“Statesmen” is an important concept, and I would like to extend the definition beyond Anderson’s intended parameters. No one who speaks of nation-building can be serious unless they study statecraft. Even schoolchildren participate in simulated U.N. Assemblies, yet we have not established a permanent African American Congress for the

study and practice of statecraft. In *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (Le Roi Jones) and Black Power Politics*, Komozi Woodard makes us take note of an important dimension of the Black Power Movement which other commentators have missed, the *Modern Black Conventions Movement*, which included several Black Power Conferences and National Black Political Conventions.<sup>60</sup> The Black Power Conferences culminated in the establishment of the Congress of African Peoples; 3,000 delegates attended the founding meeting in Atlanta in 1970 and branches were established in 25 cities. In Gary, Indiana in 1972, between 8,000 and 12,000 black political leaders gathered at the National Black Political Convention, formed a National Black Assembly and developed a National Black Political Agenda.<sup>61</sup> These institutions, Woodard shows, were critical to black nationality formation. Their demise, their absence accounts for the low level of current black nationality development.

We need a permanent grassroots-based national Congress (not another “Leadership Summit”—we need to move away from the model of charismatic leadership which is often elitist and egotistical). We need a truly representative Congress with an absolute minimum critical mass of 400 disciplined delegates (400/40 million). These delegates should be grassroots organizers, activists and intellectuals who are willing to take on the arduous task of debating, defining, and hammering out, through compromise, 5-year, 10-year, and 25-year development plans which represent the best interests of the African American nation.

From another vantage point, we must examine at the consequences of not engaging in such self-organization. Given a hypothetical situation that African American people were liberated from white domination tomorrow, whether the scenario was repatriation, a territorial domain in the Black Belt South, or a city-state, we would be ill-equipped to govern ourselves, because we haven’t taken the study of statecraft seriously. We actually have a “ward of the state” dependency mentality; we act as if our benevolent Uncle Sam will always take good care of us. Shades of the Sambo-slavemaster dependency complex! Ralph Bakshi satirized our lack of political development and self-organization in his racist film *Coon Skin*. In the lengthy animated portion of this film Ebonics-speaking, “Heckle and Jeckle”-type crows in New Jersey secede from the U.S. and their experiment in self-governance fails miserably as they display the ineptitude of Amos ‘n’ Andy characters. This insulting film, released in the early ‘70s, made a travesty of the entire black nationalist movement, although the New Jersey location suggests a particular, and totally unjustifiable, dig at the Barakas’ experiment in New Ark.

Garvey asked himself “Where is the black man's government? Where is his King and his kingdom? Where is his President, his ambassador, his country, his men of big affairs? I could not find them.... and then I declared, ‘I will help to make them.’”<sup>62</sup> Nearly a century later, we must ask ourselves: Where are our statesmen? Where are those who are experienced in statecraft and who, without interest in personal gain, work indefatigably to promote the public good of the African American people. Indeed we have an abundance of self-interested politicians, but few real statesmen. Where are our public servants? Not our civil service employees, but those African Americans, regardless of profession, who are dedicated and committed to being servants of the people. And if we cannot find such statesmen, such servants of the people (in sufficient numbers or critical mass), then we must help to make them.

The entire thrust of the “Black Revolution of the ‘60s,” i.e., the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, is blunted without such statesmen. In a review of theories of revolution, Lawrence Stone summarized a 1950 article by Rex Hooper, whose four-stage process of revolution remarkably predicted the emergence of Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King during the Black Revolution:

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The first stage is characterized by indiscriminate, uncoordinated mass unrest and dissatisfaction....The next stage sees this vague unease beginning to coalesce into organized opposition with defined goals.... At this stage there emerge two types of leaders: the prophet, who sketches the shape of the new utopia upon which men’s hopes can focus, and the reformer working methodically toward specific goals....<sup>63</sup>

King, though a “Dreamer” who saw the “Promised Land,” was essentially the reformer working methodically towards breaking down the barriers of segregation through nonviolent tactics of direct action. Malcolm was the prophet—a prophet of rage, yes—but also a visionary who moved everyone towards Black identity, and expanded the horizons of the Civil Rights movement. As a minister of the Nation of Islam, he was not involved in direct anti-racist activism. But his scathing criticism, as both John Henrik Clarke and William Sales have observed, was a catalyst which pushed the development of the civil rights movement toward more radical actions and programs, even as he stood apart from and outside of it.<sup>64</sup> Upon his break with the NOI, Malcolm internationalized the struggle, expanding its focus from civil rights to human rights, and restoring Pan Africanism as a pre-eminent aspect of African American political thought.

In the aftermath of the assassinations of these two giants, the reformer and the prophet, no African American leaders have been able to fit in their shoes, though some have unsuccessfully attempted to mimic their leadership style. The masses of the African American people mourn the loss of these two world historical figures. Many of them either pine hopelessly for the emergence of some new reformer or prophet, or cynically and pessimistically conclude that because leaders of this stature will never be seen again in our lifetime, there can be no forward motion. These wistful hopes and dire misgivings reflect our failure to extract the lessons of history. Hooper has extracted some of the lessons of history, from which we can profit. Stone’s summary of Hooper goes on to describe the third stage of the revolutionary process: “The third, the formal stage sees the beginning of the revolution proper. Motives and objectives are clarified, organization is built up, a statesman leader emerges....”<sup>65</sup>

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To move our struggle to this next level, we should understand that our task is to educate a critical mass of potential statesman leaders. We *must* create Leadership Institutes. It is a mandate if we are serious about liberation. In the fourth stage of the process, the institutionalization of the successful revolution, Hooper states that administrators take over. Given the product of typical American institutions of higher education, we will probably have a sufficient body of trained black bureaucrats, if we should reach that fourth stage. What we lack are statesmen. In these times of repression,

depression and U.S. empire-run-amok, what we need are men and women who can say, in the words of the Ancient Egyptian statesmen, Anktifi,

I am the vanguard and the rearguard of the people. One who finds the solution where it is lacking. A leader of the land through active assertion. I choose and use words well and am collected in thought.... For I am a champion without peer who spoke out when the people were silent, on the day of fear.... Those on whom I placed my hand, never met misfortune, for my heart was committed and my counsel excellent.<sup>66</sup>

Which way forward? According to the HNIC intellectuals, that question has now devolved into a debate between the two dominant Hip Hop camps, the conscious political rappers who espouse [a rudimentary form of] black nationalism, and the ghetto rappers who espouse criminal underworld entrepreneurialism—getting money by any means necessary. Then there are those who attempt to fuse conscious and gangsta rap, adding that this combination makes hip hop “incredibly significant...”<sup>67</sup>

Where there is no vision, the people perish.<sup>68</sup>

## 6. The Enemy of the People: Parents? Or the Prison Culture of Mis-Education?

*There are two types of education. One is the formal, intensive, curricular education that is received in the classroom. The other is the informal, extensive, extracurricular education that one receives outside of the classroom.*

— Anon.

*“How far did you get in school?” the judge asked.*

*“Eighth grade.” Bigger whispered, surprised at the question.*

*“If your plea is guilty, and the plea is entered in this case,” the judge said and paused, “the Court may sentence you to death... or the court may sentence you to the penitentiary for the term of your natural life....”*

—Richard Wright, *Native Son*

*Everywhere that you go is school. Some people go to Harvard and Yale and Dartmouth and Boston College. Other people go to Attica and Auburn and Sing Sing. But the learning process continues.*

— H. Rap Brown

Bakari Kitwana, writing about the generation gap, states that the Civil Rights/Black Power generation grew up with the harsh overt racism of segregation and second-class citizenship and, hence, is not surprised by America’s contemporary racial contradictions.<sup>69</sup> In contrast, the Hip Hop generation had high expectations, since it was socialized on a steady diet of racial equality, integration, American democracy and a promise of the American dream as portrayed in television sitcoms, films and advertisements. Oppression, including “poverty, unemployment and limited job options,” is thus experienced differently by the Hip Hop generation than by the Civil Rights/Black Power generation, who had a line drawn in the sand with white

supremacists blocking access. Hence the older generation can't identify with the mode of oppression facing the Hip Hop generation, and "because of these differing perceptions, we often see our parents themselves (and their peers) as the enemy within."<sup>70</sup>

I am reminded here of Mao Tse Tung's dictum about the first important question of the revolution: "Who are our enemies and who are our friends?"<sup>71</sup> And I am reminded of the words of Malcolm X, speaking to young civil rights organizers in Mississippi, less than two months before his assassination. He exhorted them to think for themselves, after searching out and checking the facts; otherwise, he cautioned, they would be maneuvered by others such that

you'll be walking west when you think you're going east, and you'll be walking east when you think you're going west.... you'll find that other people will have you hating your own friends and loving your enemies.... You'll never fight your enemies, but you will find yourself fighting your own self.<sup>72</sup>

Ironically, I write this portion of my text on Father's Day. I am the proud father of a 22-year-old, and I am happy to say that she doesn't view me or my generation as the enemy. More importantly, reminiscing on my own father, who has been deceased some nineteen years, I find some of Kitwana's comments difficult to digest. If there were a seemingly unbridgeable gap between generations, it would have been between my generation who were born circa 1950 and grew up in northern ghettos and the generation represented by my father who was born in a little hamlet in South Carolina in 1915 and grew up in the neighboring "big city" of Savannah, Georgia. My father's generation experienced overt racism in the forms of terrorism via lynchings and Jim Crow segregation that I cannot imagine and that was so painful that he would not even talk about it. Yet he and his generation of migrants from the South certainly could not connect with or comprehend the new forms of oppression that we experienced growing up in the northern ghetto; nor, with his eighth-grade education, could he anticipate the whole new sophisticated level of intellectual racism which I would encounter as I desegregated a Catholic high school in the Italian section of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn or embarked upon undergraduate and graduate studies at ivy league universities.

There were certainly tense moments of inability to communicate across that generation gap, and while his attempt to rule with an authoritarian iron fist assuredly precipitated my own rebellion against all authority figures (ranging from him to the U.S. corporate state), I never went as far as stating that my father or mother were the enemy. Certainly my clean-shaven dad hated my Afro and goatee and threatened to throw me out of his house when I braided my hair in corn-rows. And my mom hated it when I played those militant Last Poets albums, and they both thought I was heading down the path to perdition with all of this angry Black Power "mess." Certainly I was alienated from their working-class aspirations for petty bourgeois status, and I viewed them as representative of a passé generation who were willing to submit to white supremacy—yet I never saw them as the enemy. Nor did I view my maternal grandmother as an enemy—even though she snickered at me for "believing in that stuff" when she saw me reading *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* and told me that she had lost all her money investing in the Black Star Shipping Line. On the contrary, our image of our forebears (and I grew up with parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents) was of an unbreakable

chain of progression, each generation lifting higher, though the notions of uplift were radically different across generations. This intergenerational bond—as well as the common concern for, yet differing conceptions of, uplift—is illustrated in these Last Poets’ lyrics:

Black is us young and old/Black is an old wrinkled face queen/  
sitting on the porch/and rocking away her last days/thinking of her  
grandchildren/Black is the old lady’s grandchildren yelling  
‘Revolution’/so that their grandmother would die free.<sup>73</sup>

As Nana Peasant, the octogenarian matriarch in Julie Dash’s film *Daughters of the Dust*, instructed her family who circa 1902 were about to leave Ibo Landing in the backwater Georgia Sea Islands for “freedom” on the mainland, “there’s got to be a connection, between the old and the young, between them that’s staying here and them that’s going north.”

My generation always sought connections, and I would be totally remiss if I didn’t add that a vital part of our generation’s intelligentsia-formation process, in addition to playing tea or shooting the breeze, was sitting at the feet of elders, especially those militant Garveyites and Race Men (who had not lost faith like my grandmother), absorbing all of their lessons about the struggle. After being kicked out of Catholic high school and finishing my senior year at Boys High, I spent at least two or three days out of the week volunteering at the nearby African American Teachers Association office. There I could sit at the feet of young militants like Jitu Weusi and Al Vann, participants in the fight for community control of the Ocean Hill/Brownsville school district. Even though we had supreme confidence in our own generation’s ability, we continually sought the counsel of those older than ourselves. And then there were those great moments of breakthrough—when the older generation sought to learn a thing or two from us—like the time my Dad picked up one of my “militant” books, H. Rap Brown’s *Die, Nigger, Die* and read it from cover to cover. He was impressed by the strong message, and engaged me in a father to grown son dialogue about Black Power politics.

If there was a connectedness between migratory southern folks from a peasant culture who identified themselves as colored people and Negroes, and their children and grandchildren born in the urban ghettos who soon rejected Negro for Black and Afro-Americans, then how can we account for the divide, the warfare, the labels of “enemy” that characterize present-day generational relationships? I have suggested earlier that one reason is that my generation of males (and many of their female sexual partners) were victims of genocide, destroyed by an AIDS epidemic tied to their intravenous use of drugs that were deliberately dumped in our communities. Hence there was no cultural transmission from one generation to another; instead, there was a sense of abandonment. But I want to suggest other reasons here.

One obvious reason for the generational warfare is that it is simply the latest aspect of social implosion, Blackamerica’s war against itself. Orlando Patterson has identified gender warfare as the greatest and most fundamental problem of the African American community.<sup>74</sup> If he is correct, certainly this newly erupting generational warfare ranks as a close second. Both are symptoms of the violent inward collapsing of the black community, and some, such as Na’im Akbar, have said that they are symptomatic of slavery’s legacy of divisiveness or disunity. This legacy is manifested not merely on the

basis of generation or gender, but also on the basis of class (very few black people own and control the means of production), religion, political affiliation, and “hundreds of other bases.”<sup>75</sup> Paulo Freire warned about the obvious, that there is a “fundamental dimension of the theory of oppressive action which is as old as oppression itself”: divide and conquer. The oppressor must keep the oppressed divided in order to remain in power, and it is in his interests “to create and deepen rifts among them. This is done by varied means from the repressive methods of government bureaucracy *to the forms of cultural action by which they manipulate the people.*”<sup>76</sup>

Another factor in generational warfare is a change in the predominant type of *survival script* that one receives from one’s parents or guardians. Survival scripts are indigenous to African American communities beset by the life difficulties of race and class. They are guides or instructions for surviving the perils of racism and poverty in America, for navigating through life, for being successful in life (however success is defined: upward mobility, heavenly salvation, etc.). For example, my parents were basically apolitical workaholic blue-collar folks with middle class aspirations. I could summarize in two basic formulas their set of personal instructions or survival scripts to me to which I adhered: (1) “get your education, boy; whatever you’ve got in your head, they [white people] can’t take away from you” and (2) “stay out of trouble, stay out of jail... don’t get a police record.” There was a third basic formula, “don’t get yourself messed up with a girl” (don’t get someone pregnant), which basically, however, was a corollary to the first “get your education” instruction, as you can’t stay in school when you have babies to support. Nothing profound here, just basic old folks’ common sense—but it is a message that is being undermined by a contemporary popular black culture that sends at best mixed signals about the value of education and the merits of thug culture. I suggest that the reason for the undermining is that the community’s predominant type of survival script has changed.

Joy Leary identifies four basic types of survival script that are common to black culture.<sup>77</sup> In each of these scripts, emphasis is placed on one central activity which is deemed the key to life success. She suggests that black families pass on these scripts from one generation to the next, and that each family tends to have one predominant script. These four survival scripts are: (1) education, (2) religion (e.g., getting saved, getting sanctified, staying in church, mosque or temple several nights a week), (3) economics/business enterprise (especially mom and pop stores, handyman enterprises, tailors, etc.), and (4) criminal enterprise.<sup>78</sup>

In my family, education was the survival script. And there was a strong caution not to get involved with the “wrong company,” not to get involved with those for whom crime was a way of life. Of course, as I detailed earlier, in my years of adolescent rebellion I circumvented those rules a bit, managing to live the “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” existence of honor student by day and juvenile delinquent by night; but as they say, “the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree” and eventually I opted for a life of scholarship not crime.

Whereas the survival scripts of education for some families, religion for others and [legitimate] business enterprise for yet others, were the scripts that gave cohesion to the community, there was also room for numbers-runners, bootleggers, drug dealers, pimps, prostitutes, boosters (professional shoplifters), etc.—those for whom criminal enterprise was the survival script. There is problem of imbalance, however, when that

survival script becomes a predominant rather than marginal survival script in the community. Then the forces for social cohesion are outweighed by forces which can only bring about social disruption...social implosion. This is what is suggested by the rise of gangsta rap and thug life.

If we explore this from yet another angle—"lifestyles"—we can see where the disappearance or decline in importance of some lifestyles occurred over the past three decades in black culture, creating a vacuum which allowed thug life to take on such a predominant role. Certainly, there has been a remarkable cultural shift in African American culture from the era described by anthropologist Johnnetta B. Cole in her 1970 paper, "Culture: Negro, Black and Nigger."<sup>79</sup> Writing at that time—when it was possible to call *soul and style* the essence of blackness without stirring up the wrath of anti-essentialists, and to define this "black essence" in terms of the American experience without incurring the wrath of Afrocentrists—Cole said that soul consisted of (1) long suffering or weariness from racism and poverty, (2) deep emotion, and (3) the ability to feel oneness with all black people. Style, in her view, is a combination of ease and class in one's dress, speech and mannerisms. Furthermore Cole stated that the major distinct expressions in African American culture could be summed up in four lifestyles: the *street* lifestyle—the cool urban world centered around hustling; the *downhome* lifestyle—the traditional rural and southern ways centered in the kitchen (grits, porkchops, biscuits, etc.), the churches and the fraternal orders (Elks, Masons, etc.); the *militant* lifestyle—the cultural and revolutionary nationalist political world centered on the college campus and in the urban black ghetto; and the *upward bound* lifestyle—the black bourgeoisie, high saddy, boojie, middle class life.

In 1992, culture critic Nelson George was one of the early cultural critics to signal that black culture had entered into a *post-soul* and post-civil rights era. In *Buppies, B-Boys, Baps and Bohos: Notes on Post-Soul Black Culture*, George stated:

Over the last 20 or so years, the tenor of African American culture has changed. I came up on the we-shall-overcome tradition of noble struggle, soul and gospel music, positive images and the conventional wisdom that civil rights would translate into racial salvation. Today I live in a time of goin'-for-mine materialism, secular beat consciousness, and a more diverse, fragmented, even post-modern black community. The change was subtle, yet inexorable.<sup>80</sup>

George, in contrast to Cole, identifies four lifestyles of a generation of *post-soul* African American culture:

There is the *Buppie*, ambitious and acquisitive, determined to savor the fruits of integration by any means necessary; the *B-boy*, molded by hip-hop aesthetics and the tragedies of underclass life; the *Black American Princess or Prince* a/k/a *Bap*, who whether by family heritage or personal will, enjoys an expectation of mainstream success and acceptance that borders on arrogance; and the *Boho*, a thoughtful, self-conscious figure like A Different World's Cree Summer or Living Colour's Vernon Reid, whose range of interest and taste challenged both black and white stereotypes of African American Behavior.<sup>81</sup>

Since George's 1992 book, we hear of additional contemporary African American lifestyles such as "*Ghetto Fabulous*"—emphasizing the "bling-bling" (flashy jewelry, cars and clothes).<sup>82</sup>

The absence of a *downhome* lifestyle as an important element reflects the passing of my parents' and grandparents' generations—those generations which were ever so diligent about instilling educational, religious or business survival scripts. Noticeably the *militant* campus and community lifestyle has been replaced by the *boho* (bohemian) lifestyle. Hence there is no dominant and well-developed oppositional political culture. What remain intact are the two extremes: the *street* lifestyle manifesting itself as B-Boys/Thug Life and the *upwardly bound* Buppies, Baps and *Ghetto Fabulous*. These two extremes, of course, are a result of the well-documented widening gap between the black middle class and the black underclass.<sup>83</sup> In the absence of the downhome link, connection, anchor to our southern peasant culture roots and values, and in the absence of a political opposition which can channel the alienation and anger of the underclass into constructive political activism, there remains only a materialist ethos and two very disparate classes—one displaying wealth and entitlement and the other determined to achieve wealth or "ghetto riches" by any means necessary—and the resulting social implosion. If, in fact, there was validity to anthropologist Cole's assertion that soul was an ability to feel oneness with all black people, then a *post-soul* culture by its very definition signals disunity and divisiveness.

Slipping through the cracks between Cole's and George's timeframes is an extremely important lifestyle which arose in the '70s and reached its peak in the mid-'80s: the alternative countercultural New Age, Ancient Wisdom and "Old Time Religion" lifestyle which flourished in the African American community as a result of the type of "social moment" (decade-long critical period of radical change) which Strauss and Howe have labeled as "spiritual awakening"—a societal focus on changing inner values and private behavior. This "spiritual awakening" occurred when the Baby Boomer/Black Power generation was entering the stage of rising adulthood, circa age 21-22. The profusion of New Age, Ancient Wisdom, and Old Time religious cults, movements and philosophies was the culmination of a Flower Child or Hippie /Youth Counterculture's inward quest for higher consciousness via psychedelic or hallucinogenic drugs. African Americans participated in that inward search on all levels (dropping peace sign, purple haze, orange sunshine, yellow microdot, window-pane and blotter). When it came time to pursue a "natural high," they sought their own authentic cultural expressions for their spiritual strivings. While white American youth became enamored with Eastern religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism, African Americans turned in increasing numbers to African traditional religions such as Yoruba or Akan, Kemetic (Ancient Egyptian) beliefs, "orthodox" Islam and Black Judaism, i.e., the Hebrew Israelite way of life. Simultaneously a Rastafarian movement took hold amongst the African Caribbean community in the U.S. Many adopted a holistic lifestyle, including a vegetarian or health food regimen, martial arts training, meditation, acupuncture, naturopathic medicine and an interest in the occult sciences, e.g., astrology, divination, and seership. Metaphysical bookshops such as Kanya's "Tree of Life," Samuel Weiser's, East-West, and Sufi Books were frequented.

The return to the ways of the ancestors or the ancients was in some cases a retreat from—in others a millenarian revolt against—modernity: e.g., capitalism, urbanity,

technocracy, bureaucracy and the alienation experienced in a white supremacist, fast-paced, fiercely competitive, oppressively inhumane society. The soul of man—the core of humane values and higher aspirations—was under constant and vicious assault. The souls of black folks yearned for communalism instead of rugged individualism, benevolent cooperation instead of malicious competition, and spirituality (contemplation and inward reflection) instead of rampant materialism. In short, people were plagued with the cares and worries of the world, financial woes, racism and poverty, insecurities, estrangement from society, and inner extreme existential anxiety—and they sought inner peace. With an array, however, of paths to inner peace, the question became “Which Path Inward?”—a new twist to the political question “Which Way Forward?” Many were firmly convinced that we would not succeed in our struggle unless we turned towards the path of righteousness. In their eyes, the Panthers and other nationalist groups of the ‘60s failed because they had no spiritual guidance, no moral code of conduct, hence “fooling around with someone else’s woman,” theft, lying and all sorts of other vices broke the bonds of revolutionary brotherhood. Furthermore, the struggle to liberate our people was a sacred work and a higher calling. In these circles there was consensus on such issues. But now we began to debate “Which, among the many paths, was the True Path of Righteousness?” Tensions mounted not only *between* different faith communities with competing claims to be sole possessors of “the Truth,” but *within* certain faith communities as esoteric bohemian artistic tendencies were pitted against dogmatic legalistic ritualistic tendencies. Nevertheless, there was a sense of enlightenment as seekers of Ancient Wisdom which complemented and enhanced our sense of upliftment as World’s Great Men of Color. In our efforts to become Great Men of Color, the search for knowledge and mastery of knowledge consumed us. In our efforts to become enlightened like the Ancient Sages, we were consumed by the search for wisdom and the timeless secrets of the mastery of life. As Wisdom Seekers or Wise Men we adopted moral codes, ethics and principles, and we rigorously assessed and repudiated our former “nigger” streetlife existence as an error of our youth and oppressed condition. And we experienced a deeper and richer sense of respect for our parents, our elders, and the generations which came before us.

On the artistic level, our musical tastes expanded along with our consciousness. In our late teens we began to explore jazz, beginning with the spiritual searching jazz of artists such as John Coltrane, Alice Coltrane, Pharaoh Sanders, and Leon Thomas, all of whom were mystic musicians exploring inner space through the vibration of sound. From there we turned to other contemporary jazz musicians and then to the historical archives of jazz. Frank Kofsky links the “Revolution in Jazz,” pioneered by John Coltrane, to the black nationalist movement.<sup>84</sup> Black nationalism and spirituality were combined also in the work of the BAM poets as in Nikki Giovanni’s fanciful “Ego-Tripping” and Suliaman El-Hadi’s sublime “In Search of Knowledge.”<sup>85</sup> The black nationalist and spiritual searching jazz expression reached another crest in the ‘70s art form of Doug and Jean Carn. Their vocalized rendition of Lee Morgan’s “Search for the New Land” became an anthem for the spiritual seeking nationalists.<sup>86</sup>

Spirituality was an integral part of early Hip Hop. Harry Allen, self-described “hip hop activist and media assassin,” and Tricia Rose, author of *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*, state that hip hop culture consists of four components or dimensions: (1) deejaying—disk jockeying/scratching; (2) emceeing—

acting in the role of MC—“master of ceremonies”—rapping/blessin’ the mike/spittin’; (3) break-dancing and (4) graffiti—the visual art component.<sup>87</sup> Afrika Bambata, founder of the South Bronx-based Zulu Nation added a fifth dimension—ideology/spirituality.<sup>88</sup> The Zulu Nation had blended the “Supreme Wisdom” of Five Percenters or Nations of Gods and Earths<sup>89</sup> and the “Right Knowledge” of the Nubian Islamic Hebrews, two other inner city movements with wide appeal to those seeking a blackness and righteousness. Many of these Zulu-Five Percenter-Nubian lyrics appear in “message rap” or “nation-conscious rap” as Ernest Allen and Hisham Aidi have pointed out.<sup>90</sup>

Message or nation-conscious rap, of course, is to be distinguished from gangsta rap—with its decadent glorification of thug life, misogynist lyrics degrading black women as “bitches” and “ho’s” and infantile but often lethal boastin’ and braggin’. Some Hip Hoppers prefer to label the former as Hip-Hop and the latter simply as rap. In “Kickin’ Reality, Kickin’ Ballistics: Gangsta Rap and Post-Industrial Los Angeles,” Robin D.G. Kelley lends a platform to Ice-T, Ice Cube, and the late Ezy-E.<sup>91</sup> In Kelley’s words Ice-T claims that it is “the black bourgeoisie who don’t understand the world of the ghetto, black youth culture, and rap music.”<sup>92</sup> Quoting Ice-T: “the negative propaganda about rap” comes from the bourgeoisie, “not the true black community.” Ezy-E and Ice Cube take cheap potshots at Black Power and black nationalists, caricaturing them as being exclusively concerned with “freeing Africa” or “freeing South Africa” while ignoring the issues which plague Blackamerica’s ghettos.<sup>93</sup> Actually it is the “true black community”—those who were born and raised in the ghetto, in many cases still reside there, and know ghetto life intimately over a span of several decades—who are deeply troubled by the prevailing direction of gangsta rap and youth culture. It is the Black Power pluralists and the nationalists concerned about institution-building and community control right here in the ghetto who are disturbed by present cultural trends. It is the wisdom-seeking men, many of whom were once incarcerated and who turned their own lives around, who see the troubling directions of a people “headed for self-destruction.”

Incarceration is perhaps a key factor. Political scientist Ronald Walters has identified Thug Life lifestyle not merely with ghetto underclass culture, but more ominously with prison culture.<sup>94</sup> The “baggy clothes, slouchy walk and language” are all a part of prison culture according to Walters. The “been there” (been a prison inmate) rank “became the new aspiration, the new standard of manhood, of power, of leadership.” This is not surprising, since the thug lifestyle emanates from the criminal enterprise survival script.

There is also evidence that gangsta rap originates not from ghetto culture but from prison culture. Yvonne Bynoe has traced the origins of Hip Hop from the oral tradition of the African griot to the slave plantation practice of trading big lies and verbally abusing opponents in rhymes (*pattin’ juba*) accompanied by rhythmic slapping of the chest and thighs.<sup>95</sup> *Pattin’ juba* evolved into the dozens and epic tales called toasts which lionized mythical figures—outlaws such as Stagolee and tricksters such as Shine who used their wits to outsmart whites and to get sex. “It is from this oral tradition that modern rap was born,” states Bynoe. “Today’s rap artists, with their tales of sexual prowess, illegal empires and their verbal battles are following the tradition of toasters...”<sup>96</sup> Jalaluddin Nuriddin, of the The Last Poets, also traces rap from the memorization of epic narratives by African griot to the cryptographic messages of the slave plantation spirituals (where “Steal Away to Jesus” or Swing Low Sweet Chariot” were codes for escaping

north via the Underground Railroad) and to the toasts or jail-toasts which originated in the penitentiaries and were “reminiscent reflections on the sub-cultural lifestyles of the infamous black street hustlers—those celebrated fast-thinking, fast-talking, fast-moving, members of the underclass who prey upon the working class in order to insure their own survival.”<sup>97</sup> Nuriddin, also known as Lightnin’ Rod, and author of the *Hustler’s Convention*, goes on to explain:

[The toasts] were nostalgic recollections of hustler’s credo which is Cop and Blow... a credo which acknowledges the transient nature of the street hustler’s lifestyle, the inevitability of rise and fall, ups and downs, fortune and misfortune. To cop was to acquire the fancy and desirable material things in life such as expensive apartments, cars, clothing and jewelry, beautiful women, a prestigious reputation, etc. To blow was to let these acquisitions slip thru one’s fingers. Cop and Blow meant, therefore, that the story of a street hustler’s life, at least when told to one another behind the prison walls, was “I had it but I lost it, I was big time but I got busted.” After being arrested, most of one’s possessions were either confiscated by the police or “inherited” by those hustlers who remained on the street and were eagerly waiting to take one’s place. Therefore all that the imprisoned hustler had left were memories of the good life. Hence jail toasts were reminiscent salutes to the good old days.”<sup>98</sup>

We are now playing a dangerous game of Cop and Blow with the future of race, with the destiny of black people. Years from now we may be toasting about how we almost had liberation. But we let it slip through our fingers. Years from now the toasts may lament how we once had “knowledge of self,” black pride, political consciousness, community control, alternative institutions, self-determination but lost it all in a bid to get rich quick.

## 7. A Survival Script: Building Communiversities

*Tzu-Hsia said “A man who has energy to spare after studying should serve his state, a man who has energy to spare after serving his state should study.”*

—*Analects of Confucius*

*They were right when they sought to found a new educational system upon the University: where, forsooth, shall we ground knowledge save on the broadest and deepest knowledge?*

— W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

*He or she can build or destroy depending on whether they have knowledge of self or don’t have knowledge of self.*

—Five Percenters Supreme Alphabet

Like the Kemetic god Ra who rose from the primordial waters, we new World's Great Men of Color who rose from the mire of the ghetto knew that our first and most necessary task was to build a platform upon which to stand. Institution-building, as a prelude to nation-building, was the first order of the day. And the priority institution was always the school. Struggles around education had been central to both the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement—desegregation of public schools in south, community control of public schools in the north. In Brooklyn, an outgrowth of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville confrontation over community control of schools led to the development in the 1970s of two independent institutions: a cultural center, The East (with its periodical, *Black News*), and the Uhuru Sasa Shule (Swahili for Freedom Now School). Like the African Free School established nearly two centuries earlier (1787) by the New York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves, Uhuru Sasa suffered from inadequate funding, and after operating for a number of years was forced to shut its doors. Another Brooklyn-based school, Weusi Shule (Black School), survived, but during the '80s changed its name to Johnson Academy to reflect a change in its philosophy and orientation. Nationally, however, a coordinating network representing African-centered independent schools, Council of Independent Black Institutions (CIBI), founded in 1972, continues to function.

Why was the school the priority institution? It was a fundamental premise for community activists, whether of a socialist, left nationalist or cultural nationalist persuasion, that schooling in a capitalist society performs the functions of sorting and socialization. Schools sort and select pupils via districting (*de facto* segregation), testing and tracking (gifted programs and honors programs vs. “special education”) in order to reproduce the existing social order of racialized class cleavages. Community activists have been keenly aware that students are socialized differentially by race and class for their eventual roles in society. This occurs via inequities internal to the educational system such as larger pupil/teacher ratios and inadequate allocation of resources in the inner city districts, the labeling of minority children—especially psychiatric labeling and consequent psychopharmacuetical intervention, and a host of external factors, including white flight to private or suburban schools. Occupational aspirations are narrowed and focused throughout the educational process such that there is a social reproduction of one's ascribed social status, with the offspring of the bourgeoisie being socialized for elite, professional and managerial professions, the children of the working class for servile and/or working class occupations, and those of the underclass for chronic unemployment, criminal enterprise, and warehousing in the prison-industrial complex. Although education is supposed to be the chief vehicle for upward social mobility, there is little intergenerational social mobility at the caste-like base of the stratification system.

Activists have critiqued not only the class- and caste-replicating aspects of the educational system, but the colonizing or cultural hegemony aspects as well. From Carter G. Woodson, the founder of Black History Month, to contemporary Afrocentrist educators and social scientists such as Asa Hilliard, Maulana Karenga, Molefi Asante, Marimba Ani, Kwame Akoto, Mwalimu Shujaa, Haki Madhubuti and the late John Henrik Clarke, Amos Wilson and Jacob Carruthers, there has been a critique of the mis-education of the blacks via Eurocentric curricula.<sup>99</sup> It has been observed by scholars of colonialism that in a colonial situation, education can serve only one of two purposes: either to liberate, or to perpetuate colonialism. Liberatory education can only occur as a

result of the indigenous people's struggle to resist colonialism.<sup>100</sup> The school therefore has been a primary site of contestation for African Americans, who in many ways constitute a domestic or internal colony in the United States. While much of the colonial educational system focuses on "teaching students proper behavior relating to both the workplace and the state, the need to consume goods produced by capitalists, and occupational skills needed for working in [the lower echelons of] the capitalist economy,"<sup>101</sup> the other aspect of the system is cultural imperialism—the constraint, transformation, or destruction of the indigenous culture and forced imposition of the oppressor's language, religion, worldviews, values, and norms. This process has been identified by many terms, e.g., cultural hegemony, cultural aggression, white supremacy, Eurocentricism; the Europeanization of culture and consciousness; the falsification of African consciousness; intellectual warfare; and the mis-education of the negro. There have also been many analyses of the impact of this process on the psyche, personality, identity, self-esteem, self-worth, and sense of community and peoplehood of African Americans. The battle waged especially by cultural nationalists/Afrocentrists has been for cultural autonomy in the classroom, specifically re-Africanization of black students via the teaching of an African-centered worldview and value system. From pre-school through graduate education, the methodology for achieving re-Africanization has been threefold: (1) the establishment of independent educational institutions, (2) the establishment of Black Studies/African American Studies/Africana Studies departments within mainstream educational institutions, and (3) the infusion of Africana Studies Content across the curriculum, i.e., the establishment of a multicultural curriculum or curriculum of inclusion, in mainstream institutions.<sup>102</sup>

Most institution-building activity has been at the primary and secondary school level. The challenge ahead is not only to sustain these existing institutions but to create autonomous institutions of higher education. Efforts at building semi-autonomous campuses in partnership with larger public or private universities have had mixed results. For example, the efforts by community activists to establish a Central Brooklyn-based unit of the City University of New York resulted in establishment of Medgar Evers College in 1970. The college attracted and hired a faculty and administration which was predominantly black; many of those faculty members were talented left-leaning radicals and/or Afrocentrists committed to quality education and social change. Plagued by external crises such as underfunding and the undermining of its status as a four-year college (which has since been rectified), as well as internal crises such as a strike which polarized and paralyzed relationships between radical and conservative factions of the faculty, and efforts by minority white faculty to gain control of departmental chairs, it continues "achieving success," as its motto says, "one student at a time," serving a population predominantly made up of immigrant Caribbean women. Other efforts by suburban private universities to set up inner city campuses such as Malcolm-King College, The School of New Resources, etc., met with similar mixed results, with some institutions soon closing their doors.

Radical and nationalist visions for independent institutions of higher education have largely been generated by Black or Africana Studies faculty in mainstream institutions. One of the major objectives of Black Studies has been, in Karenga's words, "the cultivation, maintenance and continuation of a mutually beneficial relationship between the campus and the community."<sup>103</sup> Karenga cites Black Studies pioneer Nathan

Hare's call to action in the late '60s: "We must bring the campus to the community and the community to the campus." The term "communiversity" was, hence, coined by Black Studies educators, such as Leonard Jeffries and others, who had made strong efforts to bring the university to the community, by setting up in the 19'80s a Saturday afternoon Afrocentric lecture series in Harlem entitled "Free Your Afrikan Mind." This lecture series, housed in a local church, was dominated by a triumvirate of Harlem-based Afrocentric professors, the late and esteemed John Henrik Clarke, the iconoclastic Egyptologist Yosef [Dr. Ben] ben Jochannan, and the controversial Jeffries, but augmented by a local and national coterie of cultural nationalist/Afrocentrist professors.<sup>104</sup> The Free Your Afrikan Mind lecture series along with cognate lecture series which sprung up in other locations in the five boroughs—e.g., those sponsored by the United African Movement (UAM) at the Slave Theatre in Brooklyn and later at the Rev. Oberia Dempsey Center in Harlem; those sponsored by "Mackeys 3" in Brooklyn; and those offered at the African Poetry Theatre in Queens—essentially constituted a "university without walls."<sup>105</sup> This "university without walls" was the model for an eventual communiversity: an independent institution of higher education servicing the inner city community with an African-centered curriculum. There were efforts to establish an Afrikammuniversity physically based at Clarke House, a beautifully restored brownstone with African décor near City University, dedicated to the memory of John Henrik Clarke and owned by the "Board of Education of African Ancestry." Leonard Jeffries was the titular president of this Afrikammuniversity, and the activist poet George Edward Tait was the actual administrator. The courses offered reflected the availability of instructors and the ideological direction of Tait, a self-described "orthodox Afrikan Nationalist" who subscribed to the doctrine of repatriation. The Afrikammuniversity operated for four consecutive semesters, circa 1998-2000, offering a potpourri of courses focused on the languages and spiritual/religious belief systems indigenous to Africa. These courses were to prepare "our people to return home to the continent." The Afrikammuniversity failed to open for its projected fifth semester because Tait's administrative salary was insufficient to cover his basic living expenses, and he had to seek alternative employment.

In left nationalist circles, circa 1996-1998, there was also much discussion about creating an independent institution of higher education to serve the needs of the inner city. The plan of the Network of Black Organizers (NOBO) was for a school to train community organizers, which would be named the Ella Baker Center for African American Praxis (EBCAP),<sup>106</sup> in honor of the tireless civil rights organizer who, along with many other notable achievements, became the mentor for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).<sup>107</sup> The basic concept of EBCAP was to provide a curriculum of African American Studies, Scientific Socialist or Marxist Studies, and computer/media technology skills. The focus would be a left analysis of contemporary political and economic issues, globally, nationally and locally, and a historical analysis of the African American struggle with emphasis on the organizing strategies and tactics of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. (Relatively few people realize, for example, that Rosa Parks was not as legend has it simply a tired woman who sat in the wrong section on a bus one day, but an activist who was trained for this planned nonviolent confrontation at the Highlander School, a center for social change, in Tennessee.) The curriculum would be anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-capitalist and anti-

imperialist. The mission of the school would be to train a new generation of community organizers—activist intellectuals—armed with a comprehensive understanding of the African American struggle and equipped with state-of-the-art computer and media skills.

Sam Anderson, Muntu Matsimela and Joel Washington created the original concept of the Ella Baker Center. I became responsible for amplifying the concept and “shopping it around” to various radical groups when the original NOBO idea was reintroduced under new umbrellas (the Brecht Forum, the Black Radical Congress and now the Black Resistance Network). In 2000, I took the proposal with major modifications, including a name-change, to Dr. Jeffries and George Tait, in an effort to join forces and collaborate around a John Henrik Clarke Communiversity. This latter effort included Trust Graham (a representative from Waset University, an African-centered center of higher learning in Newark), Thomas Helm (a student of the late Amos Wilson, who had drafted a proposal for an Amos Wilson School for Self-Empowerment), Deborah Tyson (a public policy analyst and a New York City Teaching Fellow), and Abu Bakr Traore (a West African professor of economics). “Dr. J” was absent but received a full report on the meeting. The initial meeting and subsequent rounds of conversation were not conclusive. These dialogues, which should be re-opened, were an initiative by left nationalists to join forces and work hand-in-hand with cultural nationalists to create a world-class, free-standing Africana Studies Institute (Communiversity) on par with African American Studies Departments at leading universities. The idea was not to replicate the ideological orientation or curriculum of any existing college or university (the two major orientations being Afrocentricity [e.g., Temple University] and liberal multiculturalism [e.g., Harvard University]), but to offer an entirely different model of Africana Studies.

Based on unique resources of New York City—such as (1) the Schomburg Center for Black Culture, which is the world’s largest library of materials by or about black people, (2) the at-the-time much touted Harlem Urban Development and Economic Empowerment Zone, and (3) a sizeable pool of African American faculty who are either “homeless” gypsy scholars or who have their chief “home” or appointment at one of the several metropolitan area colleges and universities—a free-standing African American Studies Institute in Harlem financed through a combination of black philanthropy and possibly Empowerment Zone monies, would be feasible. The model would to some extent resemble the New School for Social Research in its heyday (circa 1920-1940), when it served as a home for (a) U.S.-born dissidents who were not able to engage in progressive scholarship and teaching at traditional universities and (b) refugee scholars escaping the Jewish Holocaust in Europe.<sup>108</sup> What resulted was an assemblage of progressive scholars rivaling and often surpassing in academic reputation the faculties at many traditional universities. Significantly, the New School did not attempt, at that time, to be a university. Instead it concentrated on the strengths of its faculty, which were in the humanities (mainly philosophy) and the social sciences. It established a reputation for being at the cutting edge of critical thinking in these fields.

In like manner, the Communiversity could be a home for dissident and progressive African American scholars (e.g., Afrocentrists and left nationalists) as well as home for “refugee scholars”—i.e., immigrant scholars from Africa and the Caribbean. We would expect the resulting interaction to produce a rich cross-fertilization of ideas and to generate significant collaborative research projects. The school would not attempt to be a university, but would concentrate on Africana Studies, though this would embrace much

of the spectrum of the humanities, the social sciences, and, very importantly, social/urban policy. The social policy/urban studies orientation to Africana Studies is the orientation which has been least utilized, but which offers the greatest potential since it would focus on policy issues—evaluating existing policy, advocating new policy initiatives, etc.—which impact on the inner cities, on the black urban poor.<sup>109</sup>

Drawing upon a pool of full and part-time faculty—those who are “homeless” as well as those with a “home” appointment in the metropolitan area—and establishing a concentrated focus, such an institute could be at the cutting edge of Africana scholarship. A formal collaborative relationship with the Schomburg Library should be explored; yet even without formal ties, scholars working at an Africana Studies Institute located in Harlem could still make excellent use of this neighboring institution.

Critical to this ongoing project is the necessity to produce a new generation of scholars trained with a certain ideological orientation and possessing strong research skills. Mindful of Du Bois’s dictum “The University must become not simply a center of knowledge but a center of applied knowledge and a guide to action,” our objective should be the social reproduction of activist scholars and intellectuals.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, the school should move towards full accreditation and degree-granting at every level.

The school should be wide enough to encompass both a Pan Africanist/Repatriationist outlook and a Community Empowerment agenda. The proposed institute might have under its umbrella several different configurations which could be institutes or courses of study or both; e.g.: the *Kwame Nkrumah Institute for International Relations and Diplomacy* could prepare students to work in the international/Pan African arena; the *Ella Baker Institute for Community Organizing* would give students an in-depth background in the history of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements as a backdrop for preparing them to take leadership roles in the struggle for community empowerment; the *Mumia Abu-Jamal Institute for Print and Broadcast Journalism*, in collaboration with local media outlets (such as WBAI Pacifica, Manhattan Neighbor Network cable television studios, and local black newspapers), could prepare students for socially conscious journalism.

Of course, building an Africana Studies Institute on a European or European-American model, no matter how radical, would be an oxymoron. It would be a gross error—one reeking of Eurocentric bias and conditioning—not to examine the African past for models of higher education. There are at least three main historical-geographical contexts in which world-class African higher educational institutions flourished: (1) Africa of Classical Antiquity—the Nile Valley Civilization, especially Kemet or Egypt, (2) The Golden Age of Western Sudanic Civilization, and (3) the Moorish Civilization of Al Andalus. (This listing, in turn, hinges on debates about racial identity of the Ancient Egyptians and, to a lesser extent, the Moors, which is a real no-brainer if one were to apply the current American social construction of race paradigm as the means for classification.)

The classical seven liberal arts and Instructions of Wisdom (ethics, values, moral development and etiquette) were taught in the Kemetic or Ancient Egyptian institutions of higher education to the nobility and upper classes during the Old and Middle Kingdoms and to the middle classes, as well, during the New Kingdom.<sup>111</sup> The city of Waset (later named Thebes by Europeans and Luxor by Arabs) was the center of higher education. Records show that it was a “university headquarters,” or “main campus,” of a

wider system.<sup>112</sup> The Western attitude of elitist conceit which accompanies academic achievement was cautioned against: “Do not be arrogant because of your knowledge. Seek counsel with the unlearned as well as the learned. For the limits of knowledge in any field have never been established and no one has ever achieved them. Wisdom is rarer than gems, yet it is found in the women who gather at the grindstones.”<sup>113</sup>

In the Western Sudan, the Songhai Empire produced a world-class Islamic university, the University of Sankore at Timbuktu. The philosophy of education in the Islamic world was guided by the traditional sayings of the Prophet on the subject of education, which were numerous, e.g., “Learning is a life for the mind, and a shining lamp which leads away from darkness,” “Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave,” “Seek knowledge even unto China,” and “All wisdom is the lost camel of the believer and it is his duty to retrieve it.” The scholar was a highly esteemed figure in Islamic society as this tradition reveals: “The ink of the scholar is holier than the blood of the martyr.”<sup>114</sup> The quality of education in Timbuktu surpassed that in the Hejaz (western Arabia) and matched that in Morocco (whose tasseled fez and thobe were the antecedents of the mortarboard and robe). Ahmad Baba, president of the University of Sankore and a 16<sup>th</sup>-century bibliophile, is reputed to have had 1,600 books in his personal library, and he stated that among his circle of academic friends his collection was the smallest. Thousands of books have recently been rescued and restored due to the efforts of Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. to publicize and preserve this legacy.<sup>115</sup>

The Moors—a Muslim grouping of Africans, Berbers and Arabs—established 17 universities on the Iberian Peninsula, including faculties of medicine which trained women students, and geography/navigation classes where globes were used (only the uneducated masses believed that the world was flat).<sup>116</sup> More importantly, a recent study by Pimienta-Bey demonstrates that Moorish universities were the source and foundation for the rise of medieval universities throughout Europe.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore Muslim scholarship had preserved the learning of antiquity including both Kemet (Ancient Egypt) and Greece. Pimienta-Bey states:

Needless to say not all of the achievements of Muslim erudition are traceably African. But...much of the scientific genius of Al Andalus was of an African nature, primarily because the blood of Africans was the most dominant among Iberia’s non-European populace. Therefore when we speak of the civilizing effect of Andalus upon the continent, we must visualize Africans (so-called “Blacks”) as among the main civilizers.<sup>118</sup>

In planning for the Communiversity/African Studies Institute, the African Universities models, along with the model of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), should be studied in detail in order to derive crucial lessons about black higher education. One lesson which can be extracted immediately from both the Kemet and the African Islamic model is the importance of training in social ethics—especially for students who are expected to take a leadership role in society.<sup>119</sup> Power corrupts; an education which provides ethical or moral instruction attempts to immunize the future powerholder from corruption.

In *The African American Odyssey*, Darlene Clark Hine *et al.* list a total of 88 HBCUs.<sup>120</sup> The *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, interviewing William H. Gray (1993), then president of the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), stated that “some

210,000 students attend these schools, 73 percent of whom are enrolled in predominantly black southern *state* universities.”<sup>121</sup> The remaining 27 percent (some 56,700 students) were enrolled in the 41 *private* black colleges and universities represented by the UNCF. The latter number has since dropped to 39 because of losses of accreditation.<sup>122</sup>

Writing in 1971, the late St. Clair Drake examined the HBCUs historically, presenting four stages of development: the Formative Period (1850-1920), the Era of Southern Liberalism (1920-1945), the Desegregation Decade (1955-1964), and the Black Power Upsurge (1965-1970).<sup>123</sup> Although Hine *et al.* have established that the HBCU public institution Cheney University of Pennsylvania was established in 1837,<sup>124</sup> Drake adhered to the dominant narrative of HBCU chronology which credits Ashmun Institute, founded in Pennsylvania in 1854 and renamed Lincoln University in 1863, as the first of the pre-Civil War institutions specifically established to provide higher education for blacks.<sup>125</sup> During an era in which there were four million Africans in the United States, but only 500,000 free blacks, the mission of Ashmun Institute was to provide (1) leadership for the race and (2) missionaries and teachers for Liberia, the West African state established for freed and repatriated slaves. Ashmun Institute/Lincoln University was founded and funded by white abolitionists and missionaries; it was not a black initiative. These abolitionists and missionaries had their own vision about what was best for black people and Drake pointed that it was not until 1950, that these whites allowed Lincoln University to have its first black president, Dr. Horace Mann Bond.<sup>126</sup> In 1856, Wilberforce University of Ohio became the next established pre-Civil War HBCU, and it provided a contrast with Lincoln. Although it was founded by white benefactors (the Cincinnati Conference of the Methodist Church) and named after a white abolitionist, a black denomination—the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church—purchased the assets of the institution in 1863, creating the first black-controlled institution of higher education in the country.<sup>127</sup> Black control also created the quandary that community controlled institutions face today, as Wilberforce was not able to attract the kind of financial resources that were available to Lincoln.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, according to Hine *et al.*, “northern blacks and white missionary groups fanned out across the South and—frequently with the assistance of the Freedman’s Bureau officials—founded colleges, institutes and formal schools in the former slave states.”<sup>128</sup> The A.M.E., A.M.E. Zion, and Baptist churches established several HBCUs during this period.<sup>129</sup> According to Drake, the Formative Era also witnessed the infamous W.E.B. Du Bois-Booker T. Washington debate about the education of a “Talented Tenth” vs. “industrial education.” “Northern industrialists who were interested in a stable conflict-free New South with a literate industrious black and white labor force” put their philanthropy behind Washington’s Hampton-Tuskegee model, which dominated black southern education until World War I.<sup>130</sup> Liberal arts universities such as Fisk, Howard, and Atlanta were unable to secure large endowment funds and Du Bois’s dream of fifty black schools “attaining full university status and producing a black Talented Tenth was never realized.”<sup>131</sup>

Drake’s analysis of the Era of Southern Liberalism is what I find most instructive as it provides details about the reliance of black institutions on white foundations and philanthropists. Booker T. Washington, according to Drake, “became the adviser to an impressive group of wealthy men who included Negro education among their other more extensive philanthropies, men such as Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and the

railway magnate William Baldwin.”<sup>132</sup> Washington’s Tuskegee Machine became so powerful that he developed international projects in Africa—Togoland and the Sudan—and he interested the Phelps-Stokes Fund in helping to finance these projects. The Phelps-Stokes Fund subsequently emerged (circa 1915) as a hub of a foundation complex concerned with southern education. The other foundations in this network were the Rockefeller-owned General Education Board, the Slater Fund, and the Anna Jeans Fund. In 1917, two years after Washington’s death, the Rosenwald Foundation also became instrumental in funding the Washingtonian model of HBCUs. Also in 1917 the Phelps-Stokes Fund carried out a comprehensive survey (*Negro Education*, 2 vols.) which was issued through the federal government’s Bureau of Education. The report reflected essentially a *liberal* southern viewpoint which attempted to move the separate and unequal caste system toward “separate but equal,” in order to stem the tide of black labor migrating to the north. It advocated improvements in public school education, strengthening of agricultural and industrial education, improved teacher training programs and moves towards equality of pay for black and white teachers, and revision of college curricula away from liberal arts and towards natural and social sciences. It also advocated elimination of “inefficient” private black colleges, a close coordination of the activities of all foundations and church boards involved in black education, and “closer association of southern white educators and governmental officials in planning the future of Negro education.”<sup>133</sup> Du Bois found the report “despite its many praiseworthy features...a dangerous and...unfortunate publication” because of its emphasis on allotting white southerners control over the fate and the philosophy of black institutions.<sup>134</sup>

Even with this cursory examination of the HBCUs, the lessons of money, power and control are stark and the need for black philanthropic foundations to finance black independent institutions is patently evident. Actually there is not just a “need,” there is a *duty* for black athletes and entertainers, including the Hip Hop stars, to collectively form a few sizeable foundations which will assist in black institution development. The money which black entertainers splurge on conspicuous consumption is a travesty, and that’s not “hatin’”; that’s common sense. In this regard, an anecdote from Fermin Ennis is worth sharing: A young man asked a wise old sage the secret of worldly success. The wise man told him that there were three worldly ambitions that men seek after, and one’s level of worldly success depends upon which of the three ambitions one decides to pursue. “What are they?” inquired the youth. The old man replied: “First there’s money, then there’s power, then there’s sho’ nuff power!” The stars of the “get paid” Hip Hop generation have focused on money; and they have spent that money lavishly in an attempt to emulate “lifestyles of the rich and famous.” What they have failed to do, thus far, is to translate that money into power and control. Black Power, in its ultimate manifestation as the quest for sovereign nationhood, is a quest for “sho’ nuff power.” But we don’t have the means to go there, because we haven’t even developed ordinary “power” in the form of ownership and control of a network of institutions. To this extent, the Fanonian mission of the Black Power generation, quoted at the very beginning of this article, remains unfulfilled and quite possibly betrayed... though it ain’t a wrap until the fat lady sings.

Reparations in the form of a “Marshall Plan” for the inner cities, a plan for the total reconstruction and redevelopment of the infrastructure and institutions in the African American community—housing, schools, day care, healthcare/hospitals, light and heavy

industry, hi-tech and lo-tech manufacturing, mental health clinics, drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers, parks, gymnasiums, after-school and weekend recreational facilities and cultural centers, etc., financed and maintained via federal, state and municipal monies in annual installments over the next 50 to 75 years, and controlled and operated by black people (not the middle classes but the masses)—is the goal that many Black Power generation activists are currently working towards. In the meantime, we must begin to rely upon what has been called *Internal Reparations*, organized self-help. “The Messenger” said it best, most simply and most succinctly: “Do for Self.”<sup>135</sup> The resources that are being spent on “bling bling” would be better spent on major institution-building projects. And an institution of higher education is a number one priority. Many claims have been made that the Hip Hop generation is the legitimate successor to Black power; if so, it is simply time for this generation to put its money where its mouth is. The black power generation, turning its back on the model of self-indulgence and narcissism posed by the black bourgeoisie, became a self-sacrificial generation in its attempt to be of public service to “the community.” We had the vision of what was necessary to uplift the community; however, having turned our back on capitalist accumulation we lacked the collective resources to realize our vision. The “get paid” generation has the necessary capital to “do for self,” but it lacks vision because it has turned to ghetto-centric manifestations of self-indulgence and narcissism, aping the worst characteristics of the black bourgeoisie, yet exhibiting disdain for them because they are not “keepin’ it real.” History repeats itself—the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. The black bourgeoisie is tragic, the ghetto fabulous bling bling is farce. Three phrases to remember: money, power, and sho’ nuff power.

Internal Reparations would not consist merely of individual philanthropy. It’s not about somebody grandstanding and having photographers around as he donates a check for a million dollars to the municipal government. While such actions are laudable they still smack of individualism and the desire to be on camera. Internal reparations should be organized as a collective effort first of all. Several athletes and entertainers should form a foundation complex, similar to the foundation complex involving the Phelps-Stokes Fund, General Education Board, the John F. Slater Fund and the Anna Jeans Fund. In unity there is strength, and strength is power. This is not about showboating; it’s about power. Next you need to meet with an advisory committee of lawyers, community-based activists, academics, and those political leaders whose track records show accountability. Although we like to be in the limelight, some things are best done on the down-low, on the QT—quiet tip. Rather than kings, you should aim to be kingmakers—the invisible power behind the throne. With your advisory committee, your consortium or foundation complex needs to target two or three doable projects that can be sustained over a number of years. One of them could be a communiversity, since that gives you the opportunity to have a perpetual think-tank at your behest—the intellectuals and academics on the faculty.

But regardless of the type of project, it should be institution-building, not just a charitable donation to existing organizations. With an institution-building project, as king-makers, as the power behind the throne, you ultimately have the full control, you have the purse-strings, you call the shots. Whoever is the executive director or president of the institution has to answer to your foundation complex. It’s best that you however stay in the background, and let your executive director be the public face of the

institution. Perhaps representatives from your foundation complex will be on the institution's Board of Trustees. But again all of this needs to be decided with your advisory board of lawyers, community activists, academics and accountable political leaders. The philanthropy also needs to be part of systematic plan, not a shot in the dark or a gamble. You need to short-range, intermediate, and long-range plans. Strategic planning is everything. In the words of my deceased comrade Khalid Tariq, "If you fail to plan then you plan to fail." Have a Master Plan. Think of this as empire-building, a giant monopoly game if you will. But the stakes aren't merely wealth, but power.

This is not a comprehensive outline but just a brief sketch to get your juices flowing—and to turn your focus in the right direction. Right now athletes and entertainers are still nothing but consumers, spending lavishly, buying two and three Bentleys. All of this is kid stuff, boys with expensive toys. You want to play major league ball. You want to have real power here in America. You want to become builders, architects of your destiny. We are talking modern-day Garveyism. We don't need a Black Star Shipping line, we don't need a fleet of ships, but we do need a "fleet" of institutions that we own and control. As Marable states: "Even 'a nation of millions' cannot 'hold us back' if we utilize the power embedded in hip-hop art as a matrix for constructing new movements and institutions for capacity and black empowerment"<sup>136</sup> Businesses are among those institutions for sure. But that's another survival script. Here I am concentrating on the survival script which I know best, which is education.

Why the education survival script? In *School Daze*, Spike Lee's alma mater, Morehouse, was caricatured as Mission College. The motto of Mission College on the back of his leather bomber was "Uplift the Race." That motto is no caricature. In the final analysis, the mission of a HBCU or a Communiversity is to uplift the race. I often throw this question at my students in Africana Studies for debate and discussion: "Is the purpose of a college education to uplift the race or to uplift the individual? Is it for public service to the African American community or is it simply for self-aggrandizement?" Some students, of course, will answer that you can't uplift the race without first uplifting the individual, but often the battle ranges on fiercely between individualistic and communal values. Given the constant exposure to capitalist ideology, this is little wonder. But we must translate our survival script from the level of individuals and families to the level of nation and race. Karenga states that one of the objectives of Black Studies is "creating a body of black intellectuals who [are] dedicated to community service and development rather than vulgar careerism."<sup>137</sup> To meet this objective, in the face of all obstacles, the proposed John Henrik Clarke Communiversity (or John Henrik Clarke African Studies Institute) should draw upon all available models, whether from Africana Studies programs such as those at Harvard, Temple, UMass/Amherst, from the Kemetic and African Islamic University models, from the HBUCs, or from such actual and proposed models as the Afrikammuniversity, the Ella Baker Center for African American Praxis, Waset University, and the Amos Wilson School for Self-Empowerment. It should also draw upon models of Black Studies/Ethnic Studies as advanced in an important body of recent literature.<sup>138</sup>

In the final analysis, it's all about uplifting the race not being New Head Niggas In Charge. I leave those with a New HNIC philosophy, to ponder this quote from Du Bois:

We have lost something, brothers, wandering in strange lands.  
We have lost our ideals. We have come to a generation which

seeks advance without ideals—discovery without stars. It cannot be done. Certain great landmarks and guiding facts must stand eternally before us....<sup>139</sup>

As for that old nationalist/integrationist saw: it needs to be buried. Not all nationalists are romantic nationalists; many of us are pragmatic nationalists. Whether we, as intellectuals and educators, look to the Talented Tenth model or to the World's Great [Wo]Men of Color model for our inspiration, we are all deeply concerned with the future of the race.

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<sup>1</sup> See Frank Adams, "Highlander Research and Education Center," and Marvin Gettleman, "Jefferson School of Social Science," in Mari Jo Buhle, *et al.*, *Encyclopedia of the American Left* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Jalaluddin Nuriddin (formerly Alafia Pudim), "Mean Machine Chant" and "Mean Machine," from album by The Last Poets, *This Is Madness*, Douglas 7 Records, 1970.

<sup>3</sup> There were three groups of recording artists eventually claiming the name of The Last Poets, due to internal disputes and splits. The first split resulted in The Last Poets consisting of poets Jalaluddin Mansur Nuriddin (Alafia Pudim), Umar bin Hassan (Omar ben Hassen), Abiodun Oyawole and the drummer Nilija; and a second group calling itself The Original Last Poets, consisting of poets Felipe Luciano, Gylan Kain and David Nelson. As personnel changed, the longstanding configuration recording under the name The Last Poets through much of the '70s, '80s and '90s were poets Jalaluddin Mansur Nuriddin, Sulieman El-Hadi, and drummer Mustafa. In the 1990s, poets Abiodun Oyewole and Umar bin Hassan, reunited and also recorded under the name The Last Poets.

<sup>4</sup> Michael C. Dawson, "A Black Counterpublic? Economic Earthquakes, Racial Agenda(s), and Black Politics," *Public Culture* Vol. 7, No. 1 (Fall 1994), 195-223. Also Michael C. Dawson, *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African American Political Ideologies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 29-43.

<sup>5</sup> Nelson George, *Hip Hop America* (New York: Viking Press, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> Bakari Kitwana, *The Hip Hop Generation: Young Blacks and the Crisis in African American Culture* (New York: Basic/Civitas, 2002); Todd Boyd, *The New H.N.I.C.: The Death of Civil Rights and the Reign of Hip Hop* (New York: NYU Press, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Hostile racism during the Reagan/Bush years was also a factor.

<sup>8</sup> Boyd, *The New H.N.I.C.*, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> William Strauss & Neil Howe, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* (New York: Quill/William Morrow, 1981), p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

- <sup>12</sup> E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), pp. 11-17; Abdul Alkalimat, *Introduction to Afro-American Studies: A People's College Primer* (Chicago: Twenty-first Century Books, 1986), p. 25, Figure B "Historical Change and the Black Experience."
- <sup>13</sup> William E. Cross, Jr., *et al.*, "The Stages of Black Identity Development: Nigrescence Models," in Reginald L. Jones, ed., *Black Psychology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Berkeley: Cobb & Henry, 1991), pp. 319-338.
- <sup>14</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* [1903], ch. 1.
- <sup>15</sup> See Yusuf Nuruddin, "The Sambo Thesis Revisited: Slavery's Impact Upon the African American Personality," in *Socialism and Democracy*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Winter-Spring 2003) special issue *Radical Perspectives on Race and Racism*, 291-338.
- <sup>16</sup> Nathan Irvin Huggins, ed., *Voices from the Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) Introduction, p. 3.
- <sup>17</sup> Strauss & Howe, *Generations* (n. 9), p. 256.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.285.
- <sup>20</sup> Stokely Carmichael was later known as Kwame Ture; H. Rap Brown later became Imam Jamil Al-Amin.
- <sup>21</sup> William W. Sales, Jr., *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation: Malcolm X and the Organization of African American Unity* (Boston: South End Press, 1994).
- <sup>22</sup> *Black Scholar*, Vol. 31, No. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2001).
- <sup>23</sup> Strauss & Howe, *Generations*, pp. 63f, 68.
- <sup>24</sup> Kevin Powell, *Who's Gonna Take the Weight? Manhood, Race and Power in America* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2003), p. 158.
- <sup>25</sup> Amy Alexander, "The Gospel According to Bill Cosby," *African American Observer*, Vol. 14, No. 22 (June 1-7, 2004), p. 2f.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* See also Michael Eric Dyson, *Between God and Gangsta Rap: Bearing Witness to Black Culture* (New York: Oxford, 1996), ch. 27 "Gangsta Rap and American Culture"; and *Race Rules: Navigating the Color Line* (New York: Vintage/Random House, 1997), ch. 4 "We Never Were What We Used to Be: Black Youth, Pop Culture and the Politics of Nostalgia"; or *The Michael Eric Dyson Reader* (New York: Basic /Civitas, 2001)—where both essays are reprinted—for Dyson's defense of the Hip Hop generation, his indictment of the "hypocrisy" of the central institutions of the older generation, i.e., the black church, the civil rights organizations and the nuclear family, and his claim that an older generation is afflicted with nostalgic "predecessor blues" for good old days that never were.
- <sup>27</sup> Strauss & Howe, *Generations*, p. 47.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifyin' Monkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 104ff.
- <sup>30</sup> Powell, *Who's Gonna Take the Weight?*, p.107.
- <sup>31</sup> See note 26.
- <sup>32</sup> Todd Boyd, *The New HNIC* (n. 6), p. 1f.
- <sup>33</sup> H. Rap Brown, *Die Nigger Die!* (New York: Dial Press, 1969).
- <sup>34</sup> Cross *et al.*, "Stages of Black Identity Development" (n. 12); also Thomas A. Parham *et al.*, *The Psychology of Blacks: An African-Centered Perspective* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000), pp. 47-49.
- <sup>35</sup> Runoko Rashidi, "Life and Legacy of Joel Agustus Rogers: Chronicler of a Glorious African Past," Global African Community Lecture Notes, <http://www.cwo.com/~lucumi/rogers.html>
- <sup>36</sup> At the time, the two most famous works of the prolific Yosef ben Jochannan were *Black Man of the Nile* (New York: Alkebu-lan Books Associates, 1972) and *Africa: Mother of Western Civilization* (New York: Alkebu-lan Books Associates, 1971).
- <sup>37</sup> Kanya Ke Kumba is also known as Kanya Vashon McGhee.
- <sup>38</sup> J. A. Rogers, *World's Great Men of Color*, 2 vols. (New York: Collier MacMillan, 1972).
- <sup>39</sup> My close friend Fermin Ennis (1952-2001) was a member of the Yale Class of '73, receiving a bachelors degree in architecture. He received an MBA in finance from Columbia and was an M.Arch. student at the Harvard School of Design, before he was stricken by a lifelong disability.
- <sup>40</sup> "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 transformed from the past." Karl Marx, *Eighteenth Brumaire*.

- <sup>41</sup> See Yusuf Nuruddin, "Contemporary Black Patriotism and Historic Amnesia," in Nadia Batool Ahmad, *et al.*, *Unveiling the Real Terrorist Mind* (X-Libris, 2002), p. 170f; also William Loren Katz, *Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage* (New York: Aladdin, 1997).
- <sup>42</sup> Theodore Draper, *The Rediscovery of Black Nationalism* (New York: Viking Press, 1970); Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: William Morrow, 1967); John H. Bracey, Jr., *et al.*, *Black Nationalism in America* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970).
- <sup>43</sup> Amiri Baraka, on several occasions, e.g., panel speech at First Reparations Education and Mobilization Campaign Conference, City College of New York, Nov. 3, 2001 (text in *Socialism and Democracy*, Vol. 16, No. 1, Winter-Spring, 2002).
- <sup>44</sup> William L. Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: the Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 112f.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112-191.
- <sup>46</sup> Raymond S. Franklin, *Shadows of Race and Class* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. 6-8.
- <sup>47</sup> John T. McCartney, *Black Power Ideologies: An Essay in African-American Political Thought* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), pp. 116-119.
- <sup>48</sup> Manning Marable, "Race, Class and Conflict: Intellectual Debates on Race Relations Research in the United States Since 1960, A Social Science Bibliographical Essay," in Abdul Alkalimat, ed., *Paradigms in Black Studies: Intellectual History, Cultural Meaning and Political Ideology*, (Chicago: Twenty-First Century Books, 1990), pp. 181-183, 190.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.
- <sup>51</sup> Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon* (n. 44), p. 129.
- <sup>52</sup> Franklin, *Shadows of Race and Class* (n. 46), p. 6.
- <sup>53</sup> McCartney, *Black Power Ideologies* (n. 47), pp. 119-127.
- <sup>54</sup> Harold Cruse, *Plural But Equal* (New York: William Morrow, 1987).
- <sup>55</sup> Frederick Douglass, "The Significance of Emancipation in the West Indies." Speech, Canandaigua, New York, August 3, 1857; collected in pamphlet by author, in *The Frederick Douglass Papers*.
- <sup>56</sup> S.E. Anderson, "Revolutionary Black Nationalism and the Pan African Idea," in Floyd B. Barbour, ed., *The Black Seventies* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1970), pp. 99-126.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.
- <sup>58</sup> See Yusuf Nuruddin, "Promises and Pitfalls of Reparations," *Socialism and Democracy* Vol. 16, No. 1 (Winter-Spring 2002), 87-114.
- <sup>59</sup> See the website of the National Reparations Congress at [www.reparationunitedfront.org](http://www.reparationunitedfront.org)
- <sup>60</sup> Komozi Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), pp. 1-3.
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.
- <sup>62</sup> Amy Jacques Garvey, ed., *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 126.
- <sup>63</sup> Lawrence Stone, "Recent Academic Views of Revolution," in Lawrence Kaplan, ed., *Revolutions: A Comparative Study: From Cromwell to Castro* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1973), p. 45.
- <sup>64</sup> John Henrik Clarke, ed., *Malcolm X: The Man and His Times* (New York: Collier MacMillan, 1969), Introduction, p. xix; Sales, *From Civil Rights to Black Liberation* (n. 21), p. 27.
- <sup>65</sup> Stone, "Recent Academic Views of Revolution," p. 45.
- <sup>66</sup> Maulana Karenga, *Selections from the Husia: Sacred Wisdom of Ancient Egypt* (Los Angeles: Kawaida Publications, 1984), "The Book of Declaration of Virtues," p. 96.
- <sup>67</sup> Boyd, *The New H.N.I.C.* (n. 6), p. 59.
- <sup>68</sup> Bible (King James Version), Proverbs 29:18.
- <sup>69</sup> Kitwana, *Hip Hop Generation* (n. 6), p. 41. Kitwana considers Civil Rights and Black Power advocates as belonging to the same generation.
- <sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41f.
- <sup>71</sup> Mao Tse Tung, *Quotations from Chairman Mao*.
- <sup>72</sup> George Breitman, ed., *Malcolm X Speaks*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Pathfinder, 1989).
- <sup>73</sup> Umar Bin Hassen, "Black Is" from The Last Poets' album *This is Madness* (Douglas 7 records, 1971).

- <sup>74</sup> *Salmagundi* no.133-134 (Winter-Spring 2002), special issue “Afro-America at the Start of a New Century.”
- <sup>75</sup> Na'im Akbar, *Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery* (Tallahassee: Mind Productions & Associates, 1996).
- <sup>76</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1970) (my italics).
- <sup>77</sup> Joy Leary, talk at John Henrik Clarke house (2003).
- <sup>78</sup> The education script is the Du Boisian, the business script is Washintonian, the black Church
- <sup>79</sup> Johnnetta B. Cole, “Culture: Negro, Black and Nigger,” *Black Scholar* Vol. 1, No. 8 (June 1970), 40-44.
- <sup>80</sup> Nelson George, *Buppies, B-Boys, Baps and Bohos: Notes on Post-Soul Black Culture* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), p. 1.
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- <sup>82</sup> See the special issue of *ColorLines*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Winter 2002-03), entitled *Politics and Bling Bling*.
- <sup>83</sup> Kerner Commission, *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (New York: Viking Press, 1969).
- <sup>84</sup> Frank Kofsky, *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970).
- <sup>85</sup> Nikki Giovanni, *Truth is On Its Way* [record album].
- <sup>86</sup> Doug & Jean Carn, *Spirit of the New Land*, Black Jazz Records.
- <sup>87</sup> *Like It Is*, televised interview conducted by Gil Noble (ca. 2000-02).
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>89</sup> See Yusuf Nuruddin, “The Five Percenters: A Teenage Nation of Gods and Earths,” in Yvonne Haddad & Jane Idleman Smith, eds., *Muslim Communities in North America* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), pp. 109-132.
- <sup>90</sup> Ernest Allen, “Making the Strong Survive: The Contours and Contradictions of Message Rap,” in William Eric Perkins, *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996); also, Hisham Aidi's article on Islam and Hip Hop, in this issue of *Socialism and Democracy*.
- <sup>91</sup> Robin D.G. Kelley, “Kicking Reality, Kicking Ballistics: Gangsta Rap and Post Industrial Los Angeles,” in Perkins, ed., *Droppin' Science* (n. 90), pp. 117-158.
- <sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.
- <sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139 .
- <sup>94</sup> Ron Walters, “Unreconstructed Bill Cosby—Part I,” *Daily Challenge*, June 10, 2004, p. 5.
- <sup>95</sup> Yvonne Bynoe, “How Ya' Like Me Now: Rap and Hip Hop Come of Age” in Herb Boyd, ed., *Race and Resistance: African Americans in the 21st Century* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2002), pp. 89-99. See also Gail Hilson Woldu, “Contextualizing Rap: A Brief History of African American Music,” in Jared Greene, ed., *Rap and Hip Hop: Examining Pop Culture* (Greenhaven Press, 2003), esp. p. 25f.
- <sup>96</sup> Bynoe, “How Ya' Like Me Now,” p. 90.
- <sup>97</sup> Jalaluddin Nuriddin with the assistance of Yusuf Nuruddin, *In the Land of the Lost: The Legend of the Last Poets*, unpublished manuscript, ch. 4 “The Roots of Rap.”
- <sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>99</sup> See Mwalimu J. Shuja, ed., *Too Much Schooling, Too Little Education: A Paradox of Black Life in White Societies* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1994).
- <sup>100</sup> See Martin Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism* (New York: David McKay, 1974), and Philip G. Altbach & Gail P. Kelly, *Education and Colonialism* (New York: Longman, 1978).
- <sup>101</sup> Altbach & Kelly, *Education and Colonialism*, p. 26.
- <sup>102</sup> This threefold approach has been used by many educators in the Afrocentrist movement, including Dr. Leonard Jeffries.
- <sup>103</sup> Maulana Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 1993), p. 14.
- <sup>104</sup> See Yusuf Nuruddin, “African American Muslims and the Question of identity: Between Traditional Islam, African Heritage and the American Way” in Yvonne Haddad & John Esposito, eds., *Muslims on the*

*Americanization Path* (Athens, GA: Scholars Press, 1998), Section: "Islam vs. Afrocentricity," pp. 281-287.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Network of Black Organizers, Ella Baker Center for African American Praxis (EBCAP) Proposal.

<sup>107</sup> See Susan Gushee O'Malley, "Ella Baker (1903-86)," in *Encyclopedia of the American Left* (n. 1).

<sup>108</sup> See Peter M. Rutkoff & William B. Scott, *New School: A History of The New School for Social Research* (New York: Free Press/Macmillan, 1986).

<sup>109</sup> The social policy approach is perhaps the most exciting and potentially fruitful new development within Black Studies.

<sup>110</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Field and Function of the Negro College [1933]," in Herbert Aptheker, ed., *The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques, 1906-1960 by W. E.B. Du Bois* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973), p. 96.

<sup>111</sup> Rosalie Davis, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 206-208.

<sup>112</sup> Asa Hilliard, "Pedagogy in Ancient Kemet," in *Kemet and the African Worldview: Research, Rescue and Restoration* (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 1986), p. 139

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 145; also Karenga, *Selections from The Husia* (n. 66), "The Book of Ptah Hotep," p. 41.

<sup>114</sup> Nur Ahmad, *The Glories of Islam* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1958). Quotes from a chapter entitled "Islam and Education" (72-89), p. 88f. These should be substantiated as authentic sayings of the Prophet Muhammad in various Hadith collections such as *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*. (In *The Intellectual Foundations of Muslim Civilization*, Shaukat Aki states that many of the traditions on knowledge are found in the collection of Hadith by Abu Dawud.)

<sup>115</sup> Henry Louis Gates, documentary film, "Wonders of the African World," aired on PBS.

<sup>116</sup> Willis N. Huggins & John G. Jackson, *An Introduction to African Civilizations* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1969).

<sup>117</sup> Jose V. Pimienta-Bey, "Moorish Spain: Academic Source and Foundation for the Rise and Success of Western European Universities in the Middle Ages," in Ivan Van Sertima, ed., *Golden Age of the Moor* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1991).

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, p. 183.

<sup>119</sup> See Yosef ben Jochannan, *Africa: Mother Of Western Civilization* (n. 36).

<sup>120</sup> Darlene Clark Hine, et al., *The African American Odyssey* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000).

<sup>121</sup> "On the Superiority of Black Colleges," *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* Vol. 1, No. 1 (August 1993), p. 60. Unsigned JBHE author.

<sup>122</sup> UNCF 2004 mail fundraising drive literature.

<sup>123</sup> St. Clair Drake, "The Black University in the American Social Order," *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*. Vol. 100, No. 3 (Summer 1971), special issue *The Future of the Black Colleges*, pp. 853-897.

<sup>124</sup> Hine, *African American Odyssey*, p. 270 (Map 12-2).

<sup>125</sup> "Specifically...for blacks" may be the operative phrase here, since Cheney as a public institution might not have had such a written mandate.

<sup>126</sup> Drake, "The Black University in the American Social Order," p. 835

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p. 836

<sup>128</sup> Hine, p. 270 (Map 12-2).

<sup>129</sup> Drake, p. 837; Hine, p. 269.

<sup>130</sup> Drake, p. 840.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., p. 839f.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 841.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 842f.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p. 843. More details about white foundations and philanthropy appear in Charles V. Willie & Robert R. Edmonds, eds., *Black Colleges in America: Challenge, Development and Survival* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1978), esp. Sherman Jones & George Weathersby's important article, "Financing

the Black College.” Jones & Weathersby state that the two most important foundations supporting black schools in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were the George Peabody Educational Fund and the John F. Slater Fund. They also give detailed information on foundations such as the General Education Board and Julius Rosenwald Fund mentioned by Drake in connection with the Tuskegee Machine.

<sup>135</sup> One of the most fundamental teachings of Elijah Muhammad, self-proclaimed Messenger of Allah and leader of the Nation of Islam, which appeared recurrently in the *Muhammad Speaks* newspaper. A potent illustration was of a colony of ants communally and cooperatively busy at work, with a caption such as “Every community of living creatures must DO FOR SELF” with the implication that even ants instinctively understand this and put it into practice, so why can’t black people do likewise.

<sup>136</sup> Manning Marable, *The Great Wells of Democracy: The Meaning of Race in American Life* (New York: Basic/Civitas, 2003), ch. 10 “The Hip Hop Revolution,” p. 269.

<sup>137</sup> Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies* (n. 103), p. 13f.

<sup>138</sup> Nathan Norment, *The African American Studies Reader* (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2001); Manning Marable, ed., *Dispatches from the Ebony Tower: Intellectuals Confront the African American Experience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), esp. Part Two: “Mapping African American Studies”; James L. Conyers, Jr., ed., *Africana Studies: A Disciplinary Quest for Both Theory and Method* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1997); Gloria T. Hull, et al., eds., *But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women’s Studies* (New York: Feminist Press/CUNY, 1982); Liza Fiol-Matta & Miriam K. Chamberlain, eds., *Women of Color and the Multicultural Curriculum: Transforming the College Classroom* (New York: Feminist Press/CUNY, 1994); and last but not least Herbert Aptheker, ed., *The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques, 1906-1960 by W.E.B. Du Bois* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973). See also Stephen Ward, “‘Scholarship in the Context of Struggle’: Activist Intellectuals, the Institute of the Black World (IBW), and the Contours of Black Power Radicalism,” *The Black Scholar*, Vol. 31, No.3-4 (Fall/Winter, 2001); *Race and Reason*, Vol. 4 (1997-98) special issue *Who Stole Black Studies: Reclaiming the African American Intellectual Tradition*; *The Black Scholar*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Summer 1992) special issue *Afro-American Studies in the Twenty-First Century*.

<sup>139</sup> Aptheker, ed., *The Education of Black People: Ten Critiques, 1906-1960 by W.E.B. Du Bois* (n. 110).