

THE RELATIONSHIP OF BLACK POWER AND BLACK
ARTS/CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENTS TO THE BLACK STUDIES MOVEMENT

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of three social movements that occurred during the 1960s and 1970s: the Black Power Movement, Black Arts/Consciousness Movement, and Black Studies Movement. This study acknowledges that each movement had its own distinct character and ideas, but had overlapping actors, ideas, and objectives. The thesis argues that the political nationalism of the Black Power Movement, and the cultural nationalism of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement influenced African students in the Black Studies Movement. Therefore, the study centers on the Black Studies Movement. Each Movement was a response to the cultural hegemony of the dominant Euro-American society. The study traces the development of each social movement including influences originating from previous eras. The Black Power Movement helped students to understand the political purpose of education in the United States and that it must help to liberate African people from white oppression. The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement contributed to the student's recognition of the importance of identity, history, and culture. The thesis demonstrates the dialectical and reciprocal nature of all three movements in the 1960s and 1970s.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Benjamin Woods was born and raised in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. His lineage extends to the All-Black Town Movement in Oklahoma. His Father was a student activist in the Civil Rights Movement. In middle school he became acutely aware of the inequities and injustice suffered by African people in the United States. But it was not until college when he began to study Global African history and culture that he gained a political consciousness. He graduated from Brookhaven Community College with an Associates Degree. Also he graduated from the University of Houston with Honors in Sociology. He is a first generation college graduate who worked his way through college. Ben has been an active member of several student and community organizations. In the fall of 2008, he plans to enter the Political Science Ph.D. program at Howard University. He believes and fights for the right to self-determination of Africans in the United States and all oppressed nationalities.

FREE THE LAND!!!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Afro-American Association	AAA
Black Panther Party	BPP
Counterintelligence Program	Cointelpro
Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement	DRUM
Moorish Science Temple	MST
Nation of Islam	NOI
Organization of Black American Culture	OBAC
Revolutionary Action Movement	RAM
Republic of New Afrika	RNA
Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee	SNCC
Universal Negro Improvement Association	UNIA
US Organization	US

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

The decades of the 1960s and 1970s constituted an important period in American history that continues to have a profound impact on contemporary American politics, economy, and art. During this period there were various social movements that challenged the dominant ideology and structure of American society. This thesis studies three distinct, but overlapping social movements. It is an examination of the relationships between the Black Power, Black Arts/Consciousness, and Black Studies Movements.

In this study I argue that the philosophy of self-determination of the Black Power Movement, and the cultural revolution/revitalization of the Black Arts/Consciousness

Movement impacted the cultural ideas and political development of African¹ students in the Black Studies Movement. The Black Power Movement was a series of organized activities from 1967-1974 used by Africans in America for the objective of political self-determination and economic self-reliance. The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement was a reorientation from protest and petition in the area of creative production to a more nationalistic focus by creative intellectuals that occurred from 1965-1976. The Black Studies Movement was a series of student protests carried out by African students, primarily but not exclusively, on predominantly white campuses with the objective of creating scholar-activists trained

¹ In the early nineteenth century, Africans in America included the name African in their churches and mutual aid associations. An example is the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Eventually, primarily due to their increasing Americanization, Africans adopted the names Negro, Colored, Black etc. in reference to themselves. There has been a consistent debate among Africans regarding their name. In the 1960s, Africans, during the process of self-definition, began to challenge the names given to them. In this essay, all people of African descent regardless of geography are referred to as Africans. As eloquently stated by professor John Henrik Clarke:

“Black is an honorable word, and I am glad to see so many people lose their fear of using it, but it has its limitations. Black or Blackness tells you how you look without telling you who you are, whereas Africa, or Africana, relates you to land, history, and culture. No people is spiritually and culturally secure until it answers to a name of its own choosing—a name that relates people to past, present, and future.” As the Caribbean writer Richard B. Moore has said in his book, *The Name ‘Negro:’ Its Origin and Evil Use*, “Slaves and dogs are named by their masters. Free men name themselves.” Also see, “Africana Studies: A Decade of Change, Challenge, and Conflict,” in *The Next Decade: Theoretical Issues and Research Issues in Africana Studies* ed. James Turner (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 31.

to struggle for social justice on behalf of the African community. These three social movements were important forces in the African Freedom Movement—the intergenerational struggle for the liberation of people of African descent.

This study is informed by Clovis Semmes' seminal work *Cultural Hegemony and African American Development*. Semmes defines cultural hegemony “as the systemic negation of one culture by another.”² In the book, Semmes relates that the power over Africans by Euro-Americans was facilitated through the domination of African cultural life. Culture is inclusive of the values, perceptions, beliefs, and norms that are distinct to a population. Cultural hegemony allowed Euro-Americans to influence the values, behavior, worldview, and habits of African people. He continues stating, “the seizure of African labor and wealth required the seizing of the African mind, and the transmutation and manipulation of culture became the vehicle to accomplish this end.”³ The inhumane and destructive process of enslavement necessitated the distortion of African consciousness severely constraining agency in world history. Enslavement required the creation of the relatively unconscious African or ‘negro’ labor that was not self-defining and self-determining, lacked memory and a sense of purpose and history. A large number of Africans began to accept the worldview and definitions of their enslaver, which attempted to negate their humanity.

During the Black Power Movement, Africans in America began increasingly to compare their struggle to that of a colony struggling for national liberation. In a colonial situation a stratum of the colonized population emerges that views its own interests as the same as the colonizer. Normally, this group has received an education

² Clovis Semmes, *Cultural Hegemony And African American Development* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995), xi.

³ *Ibid.*, 2.

that was determined by the colonizer. The culturally hegemonic education the colonized population reflects the values and beliefs of their oppressor. The colonizer intends for the scholarly production of the colonized group to serve the interests of the dominating regime. But Semmes issues a caveat as he argues that “the absolute negation of humanity was not possible because a damaged human spirit seeks to resurrect and reconstruct itself . . . consequently reconstruction involves renewed historiography and reflectivity.”⁴ Therefore, a dialectic—two opposing tendencies or realities—emerged based on the attempted historical negation by Euro-Americans of Africans on the one hand, and the cultural revitalization of Africans on the other. Africans engaged in an ongoing resistance against the systematic negation of their culture and humanity in matters of politics, art, and education. Central to this resistance was the formation of a culturally-affirming education that asserted African humanity, dignity, and culture.

This thesis is an examination of three distinct social movements, but centers on the Black Studies Movement objective to create a historically reconstructed and culturally-affirming education that resisted the centuries of attempted Euro-American cultural hegemony. Education is the transmission of the values, beliefs, and ethos to each successive generation of a group of people essential to their continued maintenance and development.⁵ Semmes contends that “cultural hegemony has become the metaproblem out of which epistemological, conceptual, theoretical, and critical issues emerge in Black, African American, and Africana Studies.”⁶ Africana

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Julius K. Nyerere, *Freedom and Socialism: A Selection From Writings and Speeches* (Nairobi, Kenya: Oxford University Press, 1968), 268.

⁶ Ibid., 1.

Studies emerged as an intellectual project during the late 1960s and early 1970s as a part of the ongoing mission of African people to maintain historical continuity and institution building. As an intellectual project the Black Studies Movement is an attempt to rebuild and sustain a collective consciousness in order to further the process of institutional development and resist white oppression. During the Black Studies Movement, Africans continued the process of defining an education that served their group interests. The creation of educational institutions, such as Africana Studies Departments, was the means to transmit the new self-defined education to the next generation. The education this generation received would help to develop a liberated consciousness among African people.

This thesis seeks to build upon the existing and growing corpus on the discipline by graduate students in Africana Studies such as *Black Students, Black Studies: Education for Liberation* by Pamela Ross, *Challenging White Cultural Hegemony, Advancing Black Liberatory Education* by Agyei Tyehimba, and *Fighting for Our Education, Fighting for Our Future* by Natalie Hodge. This work hopes to add greater clarity in analyzing and understanding the actions of African students. The Black Power and Black Arts/Consciousness Movements were instrumental in giving impetus to the actions and philosophy of the students.

Rational & Objective

The 1960s was a dynamic time period in American history. African students who lived through this era in American history were extremely influential in shaping American education. The Black Power Movement provided a political thrust through organizations like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), US organization (US), and the Black Panther Party (BPP). The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement helped to give

African students a cultural ideology that would reject white-supremacist values, reconstruct African history, and instill a strong sense of African identity. In this political context students began to raise serious questions about American education. Tyehimba describes these questions as:

What is the purpose of education? What role should students play in the formulation of curriculum or the hiring of faculty? Does our education prepare us to work with, and liberate our people in the larger Black community? Does the European certification of knowledge (a degree) have more primacy than community experience and commitment to Black people in determining a teacher's qualifications? What are my responsibilities to my community, and is my education preparing me to meet them?⁷

Malcolm X was a major contributor to the political development of students during the Black Studies Movement. For example, Malcolm X believed history and culture had an indispensable role to play in the African Liberation struggle. He stated:

But by keeping us completely cut off from our past, it is easy for the man who has power over us to make us willing to stay at this level because we will feel that we were always at this level, a low level. That's why I say it is so important for you and me to spend time today learning something about the past so that we can better understand the present, analyze it, and then do something about it.⁸

An in-depth knowledge of history allows a person or group to better understand the origins of themselves. In regards to Africans in America, it is important that they

⁷ Agyei Tyehimba, *Challenging White Cultural Hegemony, Advancing Black Libratory: The Black Student Struggle for Black Studies at Cornell University* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1997), 24.

⁸ Malcolm X, *Malcolm X on Afro-American History* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1967), 4.

are conscious of the origins and cause of their current political and economic condition. If they do not know history they might conclude that an innate deficiency has always kept them in a subordinate position relative to Europeans. A case in point, a study of the last one thousand years of African history demonstrates Africans have the ability and potential to build viable states and overcome great odds.

The ideas of the Black Power and Black Arts/Consciousness Movements affected all areas of life of Africans in America including sports, religion, labor, humanities, and the military. There was a strong cultural revitalization effort in the African community. The advocates of Black Power concluded that the problem for Africans in America was a lack of power. Therefore, the goal of Africans in America must be empowerment. Black Power was:

a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It [was] a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support those organizations. It [was] a call to reject the racist institutions and values of this society.⁹

Activists in the Black Power Movement used three different means to secure empowerment: electoral politics, pursuit of an independent state, and the abolition of capitalism. Another important element of the Black Power Movement is the concept of self-definition. Black Power advocates contended that it was necessary for Africans to define their own reality. Minister of Defense for the Black Panther Party Huey Newton stated, “power is the ability to first of all define phenomena, and secondly the

⁹ Kwame Toure and Charles Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).

ability to make these phenomena act in a desired manner.”¹⁰ Another central component of the movement was the notion of self-defense. In general, the activists asserted that Africans had a human right to defend their lives and property from white aggression. Finally, such activists believed that the African freedom struggle in America must be put in an international context. African activists in America viewed Africa as an important part of the freedom movement. Also, they were in solidarity with other oppressed peoples in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement artists-activists attempted to use “culture as a weapon” against the white cultural hegemony. The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement was composed of four elements: “art for the people’s sake,” a discourse about the Black Aesthetic, restoration of historical memory, and Black Pride and Consciousness. The term, “art for the people’s sake,” originates in a poem called *Wall of Respect* written by Haki Madhubuti. The poem states:

A black creation
Black art, of the people,
For the people,
Art for people’s sake
Black people
The mighty black wall¹¹

The poem was a dedication to the *Wall of Respect* created in 1967 on the Southside of Chicago. Artists and activists created institutions and organizations in African

¹⁰ William L. Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture 1965-1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992), 23.

¹¹ James Prigoff and Robin J. Dunitz, *Walls of Heritage, Walls of Pride: African American Murals* (San Francisco: Promegranate, 2000), 24.

communities in America that began community projects like the *Wall of Respect*. They started community theatre, poetry houses, and murals in African communities. These institutions allowed poor and working-class Africans to enjoy activities like poetry and theatre that are generally associated with so-called high culture. The art created by these institutions reflected the lives and history of everyday people as opposed to the lives of Euro-Americans. These artists, institutions, and organizations also produced art that advanced African liberation. Cultural theorist Larry Neal states:

The Black Arts Movement preaches that liberation is inextricably bound up with politics and culture. The culture gives us a revolutionary moral vision and a system of values and a methodology around which to shape the political movement. When we say 'culture', we do not merely mean artistic forms. We mean, instead, the values, lifestyles, and the feelings of the people as expressed in everyday life.¹²

The next component of the movement was a discourse about the Black Aesthetic among creative intellectuals. The writer and activist Hoyt Fuller stated, "young writers of the black ghetto have set out in search of a black aesthetic, a system of isolating and evaluating the artistic works of black people which reflect the special character and imperatives of black experience."¹³ Creative intellectuals wanted to produce art that reflected the culture and history of African people. They rejected the western aesthetic. This required the restoration of historical memory, which was the next aspect of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement. As Semmes states in *Cultural Hegemony*, Europeans attempted to erase the history of Africans. Black artists and

¹² Larry Neal, "Black Art and Black Liberation," in *The Black Revolution: An Ebony Special Issue* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing, 1970), 46.

¹³ Hoyt Fuller, "Towards A Black Aesthetic" in *The Black Aesthetic*, ed. Gayle Addison (New York: DoubleDay, 1971), 9.

activists wanted to restore the historical memory of Africans through their creative production. The final component of the movement was the development of Black Pride/Consciousness. Centuries of white oppression and social degradation had negatively affected the psyche of African people. The great African scholar W. E. B. Du Bois discussed the double consciousness of Africans in America when he wrote:

this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness- an American, a Negro- two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.¹⁴

The development of an African consciousness helped Africans to identify themselves as Africans, know they are oppressed, oppose that oppression, and then finally understand that they must organize collectively to secure their interests. The development of an African consciousness helped to cease the alienation caused by living in a racist society. The ideas developed during these two movements were instrumental in the identity of Black Studies departments as well.

The Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University was a vanguard department of the Black Studies Movement. The inception of the department is most associated with the Willard Straight Hall Takeover in 1969, where students armed with guns and a list of demands, organized and executed a successful takeover to ensure that their demands for Cornell to develop a Black Studies Program were heard by the administration.

But the department is also important for its ideological contributions to the discipline. Today several departments use a diasporic or global focus. In the

¹⁴ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folks* (New York: The Modern Library), 5.

beginning of the discipline, most departments limited their scope to Africans in America. At its inception Cornell University utilized the concept of global Africa hence the name **Africana**. Global Africa is inclusive of all people of African descent, therefore, follows in the tradition of great Pan-African thinkers in the past. Also, it seeks to reconnect Africans in America to their African heritage and background. The department contends it is impossible to study Africans in the United States in isolation without reference to Africans in other parts of the world. Black Studies Departments at other universities chose different names.

From its inception names of departments have varied such as: Black Studies, Afro-American Studies, African American Studies, Africana Studies, and Pan-African Studies. Though naming is important, it does not necessarily signify the ideological focus of the department. For example, Temple University's department used the name African-American Studies, but is widely recognized for its Nationalist and Pan-Africanist position. African Studies is different from Black Studies for two reasons: its strict continental focus, and its origins and development. After World War II, African nations began to gain their independence from colonialism. The United States enlisted the help of scholars to gather information about newly independent nations to help conduct its imperialistic foreign policy. David Robinson states,

Federal money was now made available to support language and area training on Africa, on the model already practiced on other world areas. It was intended to provide so-called experts, in and out of government, that would be required for a successful American policy and practice in Africa. The [African Studies] Association forged close ties with private foundations and with the Departments of State and

Education.¹⁵

Significance of the Study

The goal of this study is to demonstrate the dialectical relationship between African student activism and the larger political and artistic world in order to give a more holistic view of a truly revolutionary time period. Also, it hopes to directly and indirectly raise fundamental questions about the nature of the discipline of Africana Studies: How has the discipline remained true to its ideals and objectives of African Nationalism? What is the role of the African intellectual in the African Freedom Movement? How do we integrate politics; economics; the arts; and more generally, the traditional disciplines into the discipline? Intellectuals like E. Franklin Frazier; Harold Cruse; Vincent Harding; Jacob Carruthers; and most importantly, African students, raised these questions, but it is necessary that each generation of scholars continue to ask and answer them.

Methodology

This study is an analysis of three social movements: Black Power, Black Arts/Consciousness, and Black Studies. The objective of the study is to show the influence of the former- Black Power and Black Arts/Consciousness- on the latter,

¹⁵ David Robinson, "The African Studies Association at Age 35: Presidential Address to the 1993 African Studies Association Annual Meeting," *African Studies Review* 37, no. 2 (September 1994): 1-11.

Black Studies. The study is primarily, though not totally, composed of secondary sources. Malcolm X had a profound influence on all three movements, therefore, his speeches and writings are examined. The books and studies concerning the Black Power and Black Studies Movements are mainly secondary sources. The material used for the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement is a mixture of primary and secondary sources. The study cites poetry books written by poets such as Amiri Baraka, Haki Madhubuti, Sonia Sanchez, and Nikki Giovanni. Also, books such as *The Black Aesthetic* and *Understanding the New Black Poetry* written during the course of the movements help to understand theoretical development of all the movements.

There are a few limitations to this study. The first is the reliance on mainly secondary sources. The inclusion of more articles written from the time period and interviews of individuals active during the movements could better supplement the study. Interviews of activists that were involved in all three social movements could help make the links between all three social movements. The second limitation is the small number of schools examined. Howard University is a key site because it is a predominantly African university where one of the first takeovers of an administration building took place in the country. San Francisco State University is the location of the first Black Studies department. The Black Studies Movement was a national movement: therefore, it would be very difficult to cover such a wide-ranging movement in its totality in a master's thesis.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter 2 examines the Black Power Movement. In this study, the symbolic beginning of the Black Power Movement is the United Nations (U.N.) protest of African activists in February 1961, in New York City; and Amiri Baraka's repudiation

of African Nationalism in 1974, marks a decline of the movement. Because the movement was nationalist in character, the intellectual and historical development of African (American) Nationalism is traced. Then I analyze the development, words, and actions of Malcolm X as a major influence on the Black Power Movement. Finally, I examine the organizations during the Black Power Movement that exerted a profound impact on African students.

Chapter 3 explores the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement. In this study, the symbolic beginning of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement is dated from Amiri Baraka's move to Harlem in 1965, to create the Black Arts Repository School and Theatre (BARTS); and the closing of the *Negro Digest/Black World* in 1976, marks the decline of the movement. The chapter gives a historical overview of the creative production that focuses on resistance and identity. The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement was a diverse movement that was inclusive of many art forms such as music, literature, paintings, sculpture, theatre, film, murals, poetry, and dance; but this work, primarily focuses on literature. Finally, the works of four poets who exemplify the ideas and objectives of the movement are examined: Amiri Baraka, Haki Madhubuti, Sonia Sanchez, and Nikki Giovanni.

Chapter 4 is the intellectual capstone of this thesis. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, European Americans created an education to maintain the American system of racial hierarchy. African intellectuals in the nineteenth and early twentieth century produced scholarship and built institutions to counter European American cultural hegemony. Though the Black Studies Movement was national in scope, this thesis focuses on two institutions: Howard University and San Francisco State University. The final section of this chapter looks at the ideational relationship between the three movements.

CHAPTER 2

THE BLACK POWER MOVEMENT

The movement to create Black Studies departments on college campuses arose concurrently with other social movements for African liberation, such as the Black Power Movement. Black Power activists believed the problem for Africans in America was a lack of power; therefore, they organized for political and economic control of their communities. The Black Power Movement has deep roots in the African Nationalist¹⁶ tradition in the United States which advocated African solidarity, militant resistance, and African consciousness. Malcolm X was a vital ideological influence upon Black Power activists. He spoke in the vernacular language of everyday people; his message was that Africans in America should practice self-defense, internationalize their struggle, and unify against white oppression. The Black Power Movement signaled the emergence of a new type of African activist in America who declared a struggle for radical political change and advocated a rediscovery of African heritage and culture. African students in America played an integral role in the founding and rank and file membership of the organizations in the forefront of the Black Power period.

The Tradition of African Nationalism

¹⁶ In this thesis, the term African Nationalism refers to what is common called Black Nationalism, Afro-American Nationalism, etc. The term is NOT meant to describe the African Nationalism of the anti-colonial movement in Africa.

The ideological underpinnings of the Black Power Movement are steeped in the intellectual tradition of African Nationalism in the United States. Though the Black Power Movement was composed of diverse ideas and organizations, the theme of African Nationalism was a thread that connected individuals and organizations in the movement. A number of scholars have examined African Nationalism in the United States. In his study of the Nation of Islam (NOI), Dr. E. U. Essien-Odom describes nationalism as:

the belief of a group that it possesses, or ought to possess, a country; that it shares, or ought to share, a common heritage of language, culture, and religion; that its heritage, way of life, and ethnic identity are distinct from those of other groups.¹⁷

Bracey, Meier, and Rudwick state that “the simplest expression of racial feeling that can be called a form of Black Nationalism is *racial solidarity*.” They also believe that there are various ideologies such as Pan-Africanism that are included in the rubric of African Nationalism in the United States.¹⁸ Dr. James Turner has identified five primary characteristics that constitute African Nationalism in America:

- The desire of Afro-Americans to decide their own destiny through control of their own political organizations and the formation and preservation of their cultural, economic and social institutions.

¹⁷E. U. Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism: A Search for an Identity in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1962), 6.

¹⁸ John Bracey, August Meier, and Elliot Redwick (eds.), *Black Nationalism in America* (Indianapolis, IN and New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970), xxvi.

- The determination to unite as a group, as a people in a common community, to oppose white supremacy by striving for independence from white control.
- The resistance to subordinate status and demand for political freedoms, social justice and economic equality
- The development of ethnic self-interest, racial pride and group consciousness, and opposition to and rejection of those normative and dominant ideas and values perceived to be incompatible with this objective.
- A reevaluation of ‘self’, and relationship with the dominant group and the social system in general, and a shifting frame of reference (African and ‘Blackism’ become significant referents) and change in perspective.¹⁹

And finally, Alphonso Pinkney contends that it is organized around “three elements-unity, pride in cultural heritage, and autonomy- [that] form the basis of contemporary Black Nationalist ideology.”²⁰

African Nationalism in America is, at times, viewed as a monolithic concept, but as previously stated, it has a rich diversity of thought. There are various types of nationalism to be examined. Alphonso Pinkney posits the basic types as religious, economic, cultural, educational, and revolutionary nationalism.²¹ William Van Deburg identified three salient features of African Nationalism: cultural, territorial,

¹⁹ James Turner, “The Sociology of Black Nationalism,” in *The Death of White Sociology*, ed. Joyce A. Ladner (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 252.

²⁰ Alphonso Pinkney, *Red, Black, and Green: Black Nationalism in the United States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 6-7.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

and revolutionary.²² Cultural nationalists desire to transform the values and worldview of African people. Educational nationalists view the present American educational system as anti-African and, therefore, desire to create an education that is liberatory for African people. The objective of territorial nationalists is to establish an independent land base and self-government for Africans inside or outside of America. The revolutionary nationalists proposed that liberation can be achieved only with the abolition of international capitalism primarily through armed resistance. All African Nationalists have borrowed select ideas and concepts from each other for their own organizational work and objectives.

African Nationalism in the United States is very often portrayed by some historians as an anomaly that occurred at periods in history when Africans in America were hopeless or discouraged about their prospects for freedom in America. But African Nationalism is an ongoing project that is continued by each generation of Africans in America. The origins of African Nationalism can be found in the maroons, insurrections, revolts on slave ships, and other forms of resistance.

James Cone states that “the roots of Black nationalism go back to the seventeenth-century slave conspiracies, when Africans, longing for their homeland, banded together in a common struggle against slavery, because they knew that they were not created for servitude.”²³

Maroons were a constant feature in the United States with “evidence of the existence of at least fifty such communities in various places and at various times,

²² William L. Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture 1965-1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992), 129-131.

²³ James Cone, *Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare* (New York: Orbis Books 1991), 9.

from 1672 to 1864.”²⁴ They were independent communities created by runaway Africans during the period of enslavement that would be defended with arms and engaged in guerilla warfare with neighboring plantations. The most noted insurrections of the nineteenth century were led by Gabriel Prosser in 1800, Denmark Vesey in 1822, and Nathaniel Turner in 1831. Vincent Harding suggests that Vesey’s plan was to “sweep into the city from seven different points, capture arms from the arsenal, set fire to the whole area, kill all whites who came into their path, and if necessary make good an escape to the Caribbean or Africa”²⁵

In 1775, a group of Africans petitioned the United States to “leave the province [Massachusetts] as soon as we can from our joint labors procure money to transport ourselves to some part of the coast of Africa.”²⁶ Scholar Robert Johnson argues that the greatest influence on nineteenth century African Nationalism in the United States was the Haitian Revolution.²⁷ African Nationalists such as Prince Hall, Denmark Vesey, and others were influenced by the successful armed revolution carried out by Africans in Haiti, which created the first independent African republic. Paul Cuffe, a self-made African entrepreneur, “at his own expense made a second trip to Sierra

²⁴ Herbert Aptheker, “Maroons Within the Present Limits of the United States,” in *Maroon Societies: Slave Communities In the Americas*, ed. Richard Price (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1979), 152.

²⁵ Vincent Harding, *There is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1981), 69.

²⁶ Aptheker Herbert (ed.), *A Documentary History of the Negro People in America* (New York: Citadel Press, 1951), 8.

²⁷ Robert Johnson, *Returning Home: A Century of African-American Repatriation* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 2005), 1.

Leone in 1815. On this trip he transported 38 Afro-Americans to their ancestral land.”²⁸ In 1843, Henry Highland Garnett told his enslaved brothers and sisters at a national convention to “rather die freeman than live to be slaves” and “let your motto be Resistance! Resistance! Resistance!”²⁹ After he spoke, the integrationist Fredrick Douglass attempted to convince the delegates in attendance not to support the concept of armed resistance to end the system of enslavement. By one vote the national convention decided not to support Garnett’s proposal.

But, perhaps, the primary theorist of nineteenth century African Nationalism was Martin Delaney. He published a book in 1852,entitled *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of Colored People in the United States* that postulates: “We are a nation within a nation;- as the poles in Russia, the Hungarians in Austria, the Welsh, Irish, and Scots in the British Dominions.”³⁰ Eventually he would convene several conventions in the 1850s to discuss the emigration of Africans to a country outside of the United States, and later conducted a mission to what is now Nigeria. The foremost African Nationalist in the United States of the late nineteenth century was Henry McNeal Turner, Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He used the newspaper, *Voice of Missions*, to demand reparations to facilitate the repatriation of Africans in America to Africa.³¹

²⁸ Pinkney, *Red, Black, and Green*, 21.

²⁹ Bracey, Meier, and Redwick, *Black Nationalism in America*, 75-76.

³⁰ Martin Delany, *The Condition Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People in the United States* (New York: Arno Press, 1968), 209.

³¹ Pinkney, *Red, Black, and Green*, 32.

In 1913, Noble Drew Ali founded the Moorish-American Science Temple (MST).³² Marcus Garvey, considered the Father of African Nationalism in the twentieth century, founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914 in Jamaica. The UNIA was the largest mass organization of African people with millions of members throughout North America, the Caribbean, Central and South America, Australia, Africa, and Europe with the slogans “African for the Africans at home and abroad” and “One Aim, One God, One Destiny!” The MST and UNIA were forerunners to the NOI. The NOI was critical in the development of Malcolm X, a central influence in the Black Power Movement.

The Political Influence of Malcolm X

Malcolm X was born in Omaha, Nebraska, on May 19, 1925. His father was a follower of Marcus Garvey and a leader in the local branch of the UNIA. When he was growing up his mother read articles to him and his siblings from the UNIA’s official newspaper, the *Negro World*. The ideas of self-reliance and self-determination for African people laid a foundation for Malcolm’s theory and practice. His father was later found dead under mysterious circumstances. His father’s death and mother’s resulting inability to provide for his family caused her to have a nervous breakdown. He later became a hustler in the Roxbury section of Boston, then in the Harlem underworld. He was eventually arrested. In prison he underwent a dramatic transformation from petty thief to African freedom fighter after being exposed to the teachings of the honorable Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam. Upon leaving prison he became one of the NOI’s top organizers eventually rising to the position of national spokesman. He was suspended from the NOI for a comment

³² Essien-Udom., *Black Nationalism*, 46.

regarding the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. In the spring of 1964, he officially left the NOI to form his own organization. In the final year of his life, he became more engaged in the political struggle of African people, but was assassinated before fully establishing a new organization, the Organization for Afro-American Unity (OAAU) on February 21, 1965.

In the last year of Malcolm's life, he was attempting to create a coherent ideology. He was unexpectedly silenced within the NOI, but had a following among radical civil rights activists, African Nationalists, Pan-Africanists, and in the NOI. William Van Deburg states that

he came to be more than a martyr for the militant, separatist faith. He became a Black Power paradigm—the archetype, reference point, and spiritual adviser in abstentia for a generation of Afro-American activists. Although diverse in manner and mode of expression, it was the collective thrust of these activists toward racial pride, strength, and self-definition that came to be called the Black Power movement.³³

Black Power organizations and leaders considered themselves the heirs of Malcolm X. Agyei Tyehimba, in his Master's thesis, identifies key components of Malcolm's ideology:

- African solidarity
- Political and economic self-determination
- Self-defense
- The internationalization of the African freedom struggle in America³⁴

The most influential person upon the philosophy and ideology of Malcolm X was the honorable Elijah Muhammad through his mentorship during Malcolm's

³³ Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon*, 2.

³⁴ Agyei Tyehimba, *Challenging White Cultural Hegemony, Advancing Black Libratory*, 108.

membership in the NOI. The NOI was founded by Wallace D. Fard Muhammad in 1930. Fard Muhammad was reputed to have been a member of the Moorish-American Science Temple of America, but later claimed to have been the reincarnation of the Noble Drew Ali.³⁵ Fard would knock on the door of African migrants who recently relocated from the southern United States to Detroit, Michigan, selling silks and then attempt to teach them the NOI theology. The Lost-Found Nation of Islam in the Wilderness of North America was first and foremost a religious organization. The NOI had a complex theology that taught that the universe was created 66 trillion years ago. According to NOI theology, 6,600 years ago a disgruntled mad scientist named Yakub grafted the white race from the aboriginal Black Nation.³⁶ NOI theology challenged traditional Negro Christian philosophy that tended to be integrationist. It claimed that God was an African and that Europeans were devils by nature. Elijah Muhammad posited: “it is the knowledge of self that the so-called Negroes lack which keeps them from enjoying freedom, justice, and equality.”³⁷ Muhammad wanted Africans to ‘get a piece of heaven’ on earth instead of believing in some ‘spook God’ that taught about a ‘pie-in-the-sky’ when you die. James Cone states that “the utter rejection of white values and the embracing of Black history and culture- lay at the heart of Elijah Muhammad’s teachings, and they became the center of Malcolm’s philosophy.”³⁸

In prison Malcolm became an avid reader who could debate on African and African (American) history and culture. The repudiation of Western civilization and people of European descent as devils meant NOI adherents would forego integration

³⁵ Essien-Udom, *Black Nationalism*, 54.

³⁶ Elijah Muhammad, *Message to the Black Man in America* (Atlanta: M.E.M.P.S., 1997), 110.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁸ Cone, *Martin & Malcolm & America*, 52.

with their oppressors thereby choosing the route of self-determination and economic self-sufficiency. Elijah Muhammad developed a reputation as an institution builder through establishing numerous department and grocery stores, bakeries, and restaurants. The NOI was a formidable and respected force in the African community.³⁹

A central aspect of the political philosophy of Malcolm X was self-defense. He is perhaps most known and possibly, least understood for this belief. Malcolm X was clear that “the only thing that I’ve ever said is that in areas where the government has proven itself either unwilling or unable to defend the lives of Negroes and the property of Negroes, it’s time for Negroes to defend themselves.”⁴⁰ Malcolm X did not mean that Africans should attack others, but if someone does attack them, they have a right as human beings to defend their lives. As previously shown, there was a precedent of Africans in America defending themselves from white-supremacist violence when the government did or could not. In other words, the popular image of Malcolm X as a purveyor of violence is greatly distorted.

Malcolm X’s advocacy of self-defense for Africans in America was likely influenced by his time as a member and leader in the Nation of Islam. He was a member of the Fruit of Islam, a self-defense organization that was trained in the martial arts, but primarily focused on internal security. But Malcolm X was also being practical.

The language you and I have been speaking to this man in the past hasn’t reached him. And you can never really get your point across to a person until you learn how to

³⁹ C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America* (Toronto, Canada: Beacon Press, 1961), 96.

⁴⁰ George Breitman (ed.) *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1989), 43.

communicate with him. If he speaks French, you can't speak German. You have to know what language he speaks and then speak to him in that language.⁴¹

He was calling on Africans in America to examine their history of enslavement, lynching, brutality, and murder to understand the particular type of action necessary to move toward liberation. He thought

that's wrong with you, you do too much singin' today its time to stop singin' and start *swingin'* [applause]. You can't sing up on freedom but you can *swing* up some freedom [applause]. Cassius Clay can sing but singin' didn't help him to become heavyweight champion of the world, [pause] *swingin'* helped him to become heavyweight champ [applause].⁴²

Malcolm X disagreed with the Christian and Gandian philosophy of nonviolence propagated by Martin Luther King Jr. and other ministers. He believed that it was essential for Africans in America to stand up for their rights as human beings in order to be respected as a people and resort to any means necessary, not exclusively nonviolence, to achieve their goal.

As national spokesman for the NOI, Malcolm was highly critical of other African leaders in America, but after he split with the NOI, he began to call for reconciliation and unity between African leaders and organizations. He asserted:

What you and I need to do is to forget our differences. When we come together, we don't come together as Baptists or Methodists. You don't catch hell because you're a Baptists or Methodists. You don't catch hell because you're a Democrat or a Republican, you don't catch hell because you're a Mason or an Elk, and you sure don't catch hell because you're an American; because if you were an American, you

⁴¹ Ibid., 124.

⁴² Malcolm X, "Ballot or the Bullet,"

wouldn't catch hell. You catch hell because you're a Black man. You catch hell, all of us catch hell for the same reason.⁴³

Malcolm persuasively argued that Africans must unite based on their common history, identity, and oppression as Africans and that they suffered from the same enemy. The paradigm for the Africans in America to unite was a historic summit that was composed of nations from Africa and Asia.

In Bandung back in, I think, 1954, was the first unity meeting in centuries of Black people. And once you study what happened at the Bandung conference, and the results of the Bandung conference, it actually serves as a model for the same procedure you and I can use to get our problems solved. At Bandung all the nations came together, the dark nations of Africa and Asia. Some were Buddhists, some of them were Muslims, some of them were Christians, some were Confucianists, some were Atheists. Despite their religious differences, they came together. Some were communists, some were socialists, some were capitalists-despite their economic and political differences, they came together. . . . the number one thing that was not allowed to attend the Bandung was the white man.⁴⁴

Malcolm X viewed the struggle of Africans in America as one front of the worldwide struggle against western imperialism. Though the NOI is often portrayed as narrow nationalist, they were in solidarity with oppressed people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as shown in their newspaper *Muhammad Speaks*. Malcolm X contended

⁴³ Breitman, *Malcolm X Speaks*, 16.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

The first thing the American power structure doesn't want any Negroes to do is to start thinking internationally. I think the single worst mistake of the American Black organizations, and their leaders, is that they have failed to establish direct fraternal lines of communication between the independent nations of Africa and the American Black people.⁴⁵

In the final years of his life, Malcolm X evolved into an ardent Pan-Africanist. Pan-Africanists believe that people of African descent on the African continent and in the diaspora have a common identity, heritage, and destiny and, therefore, must unite to gain their liberation. He made two trips in April and July of 1964 in which he was accepted by African heads of state as a representative of the millions of Africans in the United States. His goal was to present the case of the genocide of Africans in America to the United Nations. During this time he went further as he stated:

What happens to a Black man [woman] in America and Africa happens to the Black man [woman] in Asia and to the man [woman] down in Latin America. What happens to one of us today happens to all of us...those who are intelligent will realize that when they are touching one, they are touching all of them.⁴⁶

During the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s: nations in Africa and Asia were gaining their independence from European colonialism through nationalism. He believed Africans in America could gain their freedom through a progressive African Nationalism that showed solidarity with their struggle

Overview of the Movement

⁴⁵ Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1965), 378.

⁴⁶ Breitman, *Malcolm X Speaks*, 63.

The Black Power Movement was a momentous period, not only in the history of Africans in America, but also in American history in general. Until recently, the Black Power Movement was not widely written about by historians. Currently, a new generation of scholars is attempting to correct the historical error. The new scholarship on the movement is called “Black Power Studies.” Black Power Studies

“reconsiders the story arguing that understanding the history behind the iconic Black Power imagery-clenched fists, Black Panthers, racial upheavals, dashiki, and afro-wearing militants-requires plumbing the murky depths of a movement that paralleled, and at times overlapped, the civil rights era.”⁴⁷

The heroic period of the Civil Rights Movement is delineated from 1954 to 1965. Peniel Joseph, a leading historian in Black Power Studies, has identified four characteristics to this new scholarship:

- It extends the Black Power Movement from the post-World War II period to the 1970’s
- It places early Black Power activists in the context of the cold war
- It puts more focus on ‘ordinary people’ in various local and regional areas
- Contributes to the debate about the legacy of the 1950’s, 1960’s, and 1970’s⁴⁸

In this study, my contention is that the origin of the Black Power Movement can be traced to the demonstrations at the United Nations protest in February 1961. The

⁴⁷ Peniel Joseph, *Waiting Til’ the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt, 2006), xiii.

⁴⁸ Peniel Joseph, “Introduction: Toward a Historiography of the Black Power Movement,” in *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights/Black Power Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 8-9.

protests were a direct response to the United States- and Belgium-supported coup and murder of Patrice Lumumba.⁴⁹ The organizations involved in the protest included Liberation Committee for Africa, On Guard for Freedom, the African Nationalist Pioneer Movement, and the Cultural Association for Women of African Heritage.⁵⁰ The protest included illustrious figures such as Abby Lincoln, Maya Angelou, Leroi Jones, Daniel Watts, and others. From the balcony protestors yelled: Killers!, Murders!, and Lumumba! Lumumba! The protestors interrupted a Security Council meeting held at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. They disrupted the meeting as Adlai Stevenson, U.S. representative to the U.N., was speaking. The protestors viewed the U.S.-backed assassination of Lumumba as an attempt to impose neo-colonialism on the African continent. In his book, *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, Kwame Nkrumah writes, “the essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward

⁴⁹ Patrice Lumumba was the Prime Minister of the Congo. In 1960, during the Congo’s independence ceremony, Lumumba made extremely critical statements about the Congo’s former colonizer, the Belgians. Later in September of that year, he lambasted President Dwight D. Eisenhower for his inability to understand the “African challenge.” Eisenhower ordered the assassination of Lumumba. This, along with Lumumba’s signing an agreement with Kwame Nkrumah to create a United States of Africa, sealed his fate. “On August 26 the NSC approved a CIA plan to bribe a young army officer named Joseph Mobutu into joining the conspiracy. They promised to prop up a new government led by Mobutu in exchange for his cooperation.” In January of 1961, Lumumba was murdered in a CIA-backed assassination. See Karl Evanzz, *The Judas Factor: The Plot to Kill Malcolm X* (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 1992), 101-2.

⁵⁰ Joseph, *Waiting Til’ the Midnight Hour*, 40.

trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside.”⁵¹

The conventional date set for the beginning of the Black Power Movement is 1966, when Kwame Toure used the slogan at the “March against Fear.” Prior to the popular use of the slogan ‘Black Power!’, African activists and organizations were focused on empowerment. The United Nations protest represents the understanding that the fundamental problem for African people was American imperialism. This protest represents a radical analysis that went to the root of African people’s problems. The activists who protested against the establishment of neo-colonialism or external control in Africa demonstrated the understanding that African people must control their own lives. The desire and demand for Black Power had fermented in places like Harlem, Detroit, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles before Kwame Toure’s speech.

Professor John Henrik Clarke labeled this “The New Afro-American Nationalism.” With the United Nations protest, “the plight of Africans still fighting to throw off the yoke of colonization and the plight of Afro-Americans, still waiting for a rich, strong and beautiful nation to redeem the promise of freedom and democracy became one and the same.”⁵² For centuries the United States repressed and murdered the bold and visionary leadership of Africans in America. The international lynching of an intrepid and visionary African leader in the Congo allowed Africans in America to see United States imperialism as the common enemy of African people worldwide. The Pan-African motto became ‘one people, one struggle.’ Clark asserted:

⁵¹ Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (New York: International Publishers, 1965), ix.

⁵² John Henrik Clarke, “The New Afro-American Nationalism,” in *Pan African Nationalism in the Americas The Life and Times of John Henrik Clarke* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 2004), 55.

the New Afro-American Nationalists' have learned the value of history and culture as an instrument in stimulating the spiritual rebirth of a people... A people must take pride in their history and love their own memories in order to love themselves. This is the lesson the new Afro-American nationalists are trying to teach and learn.⁵³

Dr. Clark surveyed the landscape of Harlem, the cultural capital of Africans in America, as an example of the new nationalism. In the early 1960s, there were numerous organizations that bridged the gap between the old and the new nationalisms such as NOI, Muslim Brotherhood, United African Nationalist Movement, the Universal African Nationalist Movement, Cultural Association for Women of African Heritage, and the African Nationalist Pioneer Movement. Africans in Harlem had begun to discard Christianity and even Islam for traditional African spirituality in the belief that true liberation will occur only once they 'Africanized everything.'

The independence movements in Africa and Asia impacted the ideas and actions of Africans in America in their own national liberation struggle. The following is an overview of the major events during this highpoint in the African Freedom Movement. On February 14, 1961, approximately sixty African activists in America engaged in direct action at the United Nations headquarters in New York City during a Security Council meeting. They faulted the United Nations particularly Dag Hammarskjold, secretary-general of the United Nations, for not protecting Lumumba by carrying placards that read "Congo Yes, Yankee No!" while outside of the building people carried signs that read "Murder Inc. Hammarskjold, Ralph Bunche, Kasavubu, Tshombe, Mobutu."⁵⁴

⁵³ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁴ Evanzz, *The Judas Factor*, 110-111.

In March of 1962, on the West Coast, a charismatic attorney named Donald Warden who graduated from Howard University and University of California-Berkeley, formed the Afro-American Association (AAA). The organization was highly influenced by Marcus Garvey's ideas of self-reliance and Pan-Africanism. They began as a study group in the Bay area: membership included future Black Power leaders such as Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, and Maulana Karenga.⁵⁵ By 1963, Malcolm X was slowly drifting from the nonengagement policy of the NOI. He made a speech entitled "Message to the Grassroots" that explained the difference between the Black Revolution and the Negro Revolution was the demand for 'LAND!'⁵⁶ In the same speech, he exposed the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom as an event originating in the grassroots, but co-opted and supported by white liberal elites in league with negro leaders.⁵⁷ The year 1965 began on a somber note with the assassination of "our shining Black prince," Malcolm X, on February 21. Malcolm appeared prophetic when a few days following the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the people of Watts rose up in righteous rebellion. Also, in 1965, SNCC organizers began to focus their activities on political power through elected office in Lowndes County, Alabama, by forming the Lowndes County Freedom Organization using the symbol of the Black Panther.

But 1966 would become a watershed year when Willie Ricks would convince Kwame Toure (Stokely Carmichael) to use a phrase that expressed the feeling of African youth during a speech in Greenwood, Mississippi, that was used by Ricks on

⁵⁵Scot Brown, *Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 27.

⁵⁶ Breitman, *Malcolm X Speaks*, 18-22.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 26-29.

other occasions, but would change Africans and America forever: “Black Power!” That same year, Amiri Baraka began the Modern Black Convention Movement with the Black Arts conference in Detroit and Black Power Conference in Washington D.C. These conventions were integral to the successful mayoral election of Kenneth Gibson in Newark and establishing Newark as a Mecca of cultural nationalism. In addition, as Komozi Woodward argues, “the Modern Black Convention Movement hastened Black nationality formation by helping to create a Black national political community.”⁵⁸ These upsurges in radical African political activity did not escape the notice of the U.S. government. On August 25, 1967, an FBI memo was sent to the “personal attention to all offices” establishing the direction of the Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO). Its purpose was to “expose, disrupt, discredit, or otherwise *neutralize* the activities of Black Nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesman, membership, and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and disorder.”⁵⁹

The next two years would be turning points in the freedom struggle. On March 31, 1968, in Detroit, Michigan, the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika (RNA) declared its independence from the United States. They designated five

⁵⁸ Komozi Woodward, *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 2.

The Modern Black Convention follows in the tradition of African leaders in America who met at the beginning of the early nineteenth century to discuss issues like the abolition of slavery and possible emigration outside of the United States. The modern Black Convention Movement begins in 1966 and ends in 1972.

⁵⁹ Ward Churchill & Jim Vander Wall, *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars Against Dissent in the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2002), 92.

states in the Black-Belt South as the traditional homeland of ‘New Afrikans in Amerikkka.’ On April 4, 1968, the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. would contribute to the increasing radicalization of Africans in America. In 1969, a peaceful meeting of the RNA at New Bethel Church was violently attacked by the police. The police fired over 800 rounds inside the church filled with 150 men, women, and *children*. The RNA defended themselves and during the ensuing battle one officer was killed and another was wounded.⁶⁰ The RNA faced continued government repression in 1971, when the FBI with local police raided their headquarters in Jackson, Mississippi. The raid and subsequent arrests produced the RNA-11.⁶¹

On December 4th, the Chicago police under the guise of attempting to serve a search warrant raided an apartment of a local leader of the Black Panther Party, just after midnight, with floor plans provided by a police infiltrator. The serving of the search warrant left two Black Panthers dead: Mark Clark and Fred Hampton.⁶² In 1970, “3,000 Black people met in Atlanta, Georgia on Labor Day weekend to found

⁶⁰ Imari Obadele, *Foundations of the Black Nation* (Detroit: House of Songhay, 1975), 109.

⁶¹ Obadele, *Foundations*, 109-110.

⁶² Ward Churchill, “‘To Disrupt Discredit & Destroy’: The FBI’s Secret War Against the Black Panther Party,” in *Liberation, Imagination, & the Black Panther Party* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 106.

the Congress of African People (CAP), both Black self-determination and Pan-Africanism were central themes.”⁶³

On August 21, 1971, Jonathan Jackson attempted to commit ‘revolutionary suicide’ by liberating his brother, imprisoned revolutionary George Jackson, during a court hearing, but was murdered in the process. The gun he used in the attempted jailbreak was allegedly registered to Dr. Angela Davis. Her subsequent arrest and trial led to an international campaign to “Free Angela.” She would be acquitted of any wrongdoing in the case the following year.⁶⁴

The Modern Black Convention Movement culminated in the National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana, on March 10-12, 1972. The convention attracted a cross-section of African leaders including nationalists, socialists, liberals, and conservatives. The conference was able to create the “National Black Assembly [which] generated a ‘National Black Agenda’ a 55-page document that changed the political discourse for the Black community on a number of local, regional, and national concerns.”⁶⁵ After the African America National Conference on Africa held on May 25, 1972, at Howard University, participants created a united front

⁶³ The new organization was a federation of over 200 local organizations focusing on thirty urban areas committed “to the development of a process of forging a common political program; creating one umbrella political organization, the ‘prototype for a Black party; establishing a communication network for the movement; and pooling and increasing the various resources necessary for Black liberation and Pan-Africanism.” See Woodward, *Nation within a Nation*, 160, 168.

⁶⁴ Joseph, *Waiting ‘til the Midnight Hour*, 269-75.

⁶⁵ Woodward, *Nation within a Nation*, 196, 212-213. The “National Black Agenda” was composed of seven core areas: economics, human development, communications, rural development, environmental protection, political empowerment, and international policy.

organization called the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC). The conference was a meeting of African leaders in America held on African Liberation Day to craft a progressive approach to foreign policy. One goal was to influence American foreign policy towards Africa. The ALSC conducted mass demonstrations against the “Portuguese colonial oppression in Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique; majority rule in ‘Rhodesia [Zimbabwe] and South Africa; and financial and political support to the liberation movements in southern Africa.”⁶⁶ By 1974, state repression had successfully removed organizations like Revolutionary Action Movement and the Black Panther Party from the national scene. Also, internal problems had arisen within the movement. A vibrant discussion around ideology was transformed, with the help of Cointelpro, into competing camps of Marxist vs. cultural nationalists. The movement had lost much, if not all, of its consistency by the fall of 1974, when Baraka began to advocate Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.⁶⁷ The combination of the effects of state repression and internal issues signaled a decline in movement activity and increasing disorganization. Baraka was a leading cultural nationalist. His acceptance of Marxism was emblematic of the internal disagreement in the Black Power Movement. These Black Power organizations were an important component of the movement.

Black Power Organizations

The Black Power Movement was comprised of several prominent organizations. All of these organizations contributed to the forward thrust toward African liberation. Four organizations will be examined: Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee,

⁶⁶ Woodward, *Nation within a Nation*, 175-176.

⁶⁷ Joseph, *Waiting ‘til the Midnight Hour*, 293.

Revolutionary Action Movement, US organization, and the Black Panther Party.

There was a dialectic relationship between Black Power organizations and African students. For example, members of Black Power organizations visited and lectured to African students on college campuses during the Black Studies Movement. Also, African students helped to found and were rank and file members of Black Power organizations. The following is a short survey of four important Black Power organizations.

The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee began as a civil rights organization dedicated to dismantling apartheid in the American south through nonviolent direct action. On February 1, 1960, four college students in Greensboro, North Carolina, sat at a lunch counter reserved for ‘whites only’ sparking one of the largest African protest movements in America.⁶⁸ On April 16-18, 1960, Ms. Ella Baker, a highly respect veteran civil rights activist, helped to initiate SNCC’s founding conference at Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C. Seminary students, James Lawson and John Lewis, were highly influential in the organization’s statement of purpose.⁶⁹ Ella Baker’s philosophy of leadership and organization influenced SNCC to become based on decentralized participatory leadership and consensus decision-making. In 1961, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) initiated the Freedom Rides, which were designed “to test the implementation of a fifteen year old Supreme Court ruling

⁶⁸ Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960’s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1981), 9.

⁶⁹ “We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the founding of our organization.... nonviolence as it grows from Judaic-Christian traditions.” See Clar, *The Eyes on the Prize*, 23.

mandating the integration of facilities for interstate travelers.”⁷⁰ SNCC members such as John Lewis, Diane Nash, and others participated in the Freedom Rides. SNCC initiated more militant campaigns of resistance than traditional organizations such as the NAACP and Urban League. During this time, with the assistance of elder Ella Baker, SNCC settled intense debate about the future direction of the organization. Some members preferred to focus primarily on direct-action campaigns; others wanted to begin an ambitious voter registration project. The decision was that SNCC would have two wings: “one for direct action and one for voter registration.”⁷¹ One example of the direct-action campaign was in Albany, Georgia.

In the fall of 1961 to the summer of 1962, the Albany Movement began in Albany, Georgia. The goals of the Albany Movement were to attain the “general desegregation of facilities and acceptance by city officials of the rights of Blacks to hold peaceful demonstrations.”⁷² Two important lessons were learned from the Albany Movement: the importance of African culture, specifically the freedom songs based on the spirituals, and the importance of SNCC helping to decide the course of the freedom movement.⁷³ A local minister invited Martin Luther King Jr. to speak at Shiloh Baptist Church. The after day his sermon King led a demonstration in which he was arrested. SNCC workers began to sarcastically refer to Martin Luther King Jr. as ‘de lawd’ because of his ability to attract media attention and perceived control of the movement after SNCC had done the difficult organizing work. SNCC workers

⁷⁰Kwame Toure, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Times of Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Toure)* (New York: Scribner Press, 2003), 178.

⁷¹ Clar, *Eyes on the Prize*, 42.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 63.

were organizing in Albany prior to the arrival of King, but the press and local community members followed King as though he would work miracles. In 1962, the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) was founded. It was a coalition of SNCC, CORE, and the NAACP. COFO was instrumental in organizing Freedom Summer, an important event that brought students from throughout the country to help with a voter registration project in Mississippi in the summer of 1964.

A turning point for SNCC was the formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP). In 1964, the Mississippi Democratic Party had a white-only primary. The MFDP conducted its own primary, inclusive of all people irrespective of color, designed to challenge the Democratic Party's delegates at the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey.⁷⁴ The MFDP selected delegates from its own primary, but the Democratic Party attempted to compromise with the MFDP delegation by offering to seat two of its delegates as alternates. The MFDP delegation's rejection of the offer can be summed up from a quote by former sharecropper turned activist Fannie Lou Hamer, "We didn't come all this way for no two seats!"⁷⁵ In 1966, SNCC entered its Black Power phase: Kwame Toure was elected chairman. Later that summer he would express the feelings of the suffering African masses in Greenwood, Mississippi, by thrusting the phrase Black Power on the national stage. In January of 1966, SNCC would take a stand against the Vietnam War.⁷⁶ In 1967, after the election of H. 'Rap' Brown to the chairmanship, SNCC became a target of Cointelpro due to its increasingly radical positions on domestic and foreign affairs. In the late 1960s, SNCC attempted to transfer its success in the

⁷⁴ Ibid., 108.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 126.

⁷⁶ James Forman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 445.

American south against segregation to a strategy relevant in urban areas. SNCC became hampered by its lack of ideological unity and a concrete program. In response to changing conditions, SNCC attempted to form an alliance with a new organization, the Black Panther Party, that was able attract young Africans in urban areas. The alliance did not succeed due to a lack of ideological unity between the organizations and sabotage by Cointelpro.⁷⁷ In 1969, SNCC, under the leadership of ‘Rap’ Brown, changed the organization’s name to Student National Coordinating Committee to reflect its stance on self-defense. But by 1973, the FBI ended its surveillance of SNCC because the organization had effectively ended.⁷⁸

RAM was an African Nationalist organization that was primarily based in the northern urban areas. The two principal founders of the organization were Maxwell Stanford and Donald Freeman. The organization began during a student government election under the name Reform Action Movement at Central State University in Ohio in 1962. Stanford was a student at Central State University and Freeman attended Case Western Reserve College. Freeman and Stanford were influenced by an article written by Harold Cruse entitled, “Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American.”⁷⁹ RAM was also influenced by the ideas and actions of revolutionary-in-exile, Robert Williams, in his *Crusader* publication. Williams was a former head of the NAACP chapter in Monroe, North Carolina. The chapter became recognized for advocating and use of self-defense. He wrote an influential book titled *Negroes with*

⁷⁷ Churchill & Wall, *Cointelpro Papers*, 93, 127.

⁷⁸ Clar, *Eyes on the Prize*, 298.

⁷⁹ Harold Cruse, *Rebellion or Revolution* (New York: William Morrow, 1968), 74-96. In the article Cruse argued that Africans in America were an oppressed nation within a nation. He contends Africans must utilize a form of nationalism that takes into account the unique condition of Africans in America.

Guns. Stanford was a protégé of African Nationalist luminaries such as Malcolm X, Queen Mother Moore, James and Grace Lee Boggs. In 1963, RAM decided to “concentrate on building secret political cells in different parts of the country. These cells were to remain underground and to develop an underground movement.”⁸⁰ In May of 1964, RAM members participated in the Afro-American Student Conference on “Black” Nationalism at Fisk University. The conference was a catalyst that pushed the African Freedom Movement in a more radical direction. The conference adopted a thirteen point program.⁸¹ *Black America* was the official publication of RAM. In the pages of their publication RAM became one of the first African organizations in the United States to oppose the Vietnam War.⁸² In 1965, RAM members radicalized SNCC by infiltrating its Atlanta project in an attempt to reorient the organization toward foreign affairs.⁸³ In the summer of 1967, “RAM members ‘were arrested on every possible charge until they could no longer make bail’ and consequently ‘spent most of the summer in jail’ even though there had never been any intent to take them to trial on the variety of contrived offenses with which they were charged.”⁸⁴ In 1968, RAM dissolved, and instead, decided to build an African worker’s political party based on the work of Dodge Revolutionary Action Movement (DRUM) in Detroit, Michigan.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Clar, *Nation with a Nation*, 108.

⁸¹ Maxwell Stanford, *Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM): A Case Study of an Urban Revolutionary Movement in Western Capitalist Society* (Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1986), 91-93.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 112.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁸⁴ Churchill & Wall, *Cointelpro Papers*, 112.

⁸⁵ Stanford, *RAM*, 143.

As an organization RAM synthesized the ideas of Malcolm X, Karl Marx, V. I. Lenin, and Mao Tse-Tung. “RAM ideologically was a Revolutionary Black Nationalist organization which was anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, and anti-racist. It stated that the major contradiction in the world was between western imperialism and revolutionary people of color, the Bandung World. Class was a secondary contradiction.”⁸⁶ RAM used the dialectics of Marx and Engels to argue that the formerly colonized world in Africa, Asia, and Latin America comprised the most revolutionary group. Therefore, the primary contradiction was not between classes, but between oppressed nations. “RAM’s major theoreticians felt that Black people were a captive and colonized nation within the boundaries of the United States, that is, a nation within a nation.”⁸⁷ RAM viewed Africans in America as a domestic colony in the United States. For that reason, Africans and other oppressed nationalities in America were members of the Bandung World and were the most likely to make revolution in the United States. RAM created a twelve-point platform to implement a program of Revolutionary African Nationalism.⁸⁸ RAM also posited that Africans in America were in need of a cultural revolution. “The purpose of a Black Cultural Revolution would be to destroy the conditioned white oppressive mores, attitudes, ways, customs, philosophies, habits, etc, which the oppressor has taught and trained us to have. This means on a mass scale a new revolutionary culture.”⁸⁹ Its members such as Maxwell Stanford, Larry Neal, and Askia Toure were pioneers in the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement. RAM’s objective was to create an African

⁸⁶ Ibid., 145.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 153.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 160-161.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 124.

consciousness in which Africans would discard identification with their white oppressor and concomitant value system. As an organization “RAM planned student revolts in Black colleges and among high school students . . . [to] lead protests demanding the right to wear ‘natural’ hairdos, African dress, and the right to fly the Red, Black, and Green flags in rallies.”⁹⁰

The US Organization is a cultural nationalist organization that has ideological influences from African Nationalists in Africa and America and other ‘third world’ leaders. According to Scot Brown, cultural nationalism is defined as “the view that African Americans possess a distinct aesthetic, sense of values, and communal ethos emerging from either, or both their contemporary and continental African heritage.”⁹¹ US asserted that the process of enslavement eviscerated the culture of Africans in America, therefore they must engage in cultural reconstruction. The means to reconstruct their African culture was proposed by Kawaiida philosophy and the seven principles of the Nguzo Saba.⁹² African liberation required that Africans reject the values, ideas, and ethos of the dominant society thereby allowing greater intellectual freedom. US economic position was that an “African concept of socialism must grow out of African tradition and then develop in such a way that it ‘can embrace the possibilities of modern technology and meet the challenge of life in the [modern]

⁹⁰ Ibid., 124-125.

⁹¹ Brown, *Fighting for US*, 6.

⁹² See Imamu Amiri Baraka, *Kawaiida Studies: The New Nationalism* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1972), 9-10.

world.”⁹³ Karenga borrowed heavily from Julius Nyerere’s notion of Ujamaa that used the traditional African background as the foundation for building an economic system. Ujamaa is loosely defined as ‘familyhood’ or the members of community working together to build a strong and vibrant community.

The organization had developed several subunits: the *Simba Wachanga* (young lions), the paramilitary wing; the *Saidi*, ‘older’ men, usually over twenty years old; a School of Afroamerican culture, *Mwalimu*, those studying the ethical deeper philosophical aspects of Kawaida; the *Mumunina*, women of the organization.⁹⁴

US utilized a strategy of programmatic influence. Programmatic influence meant that US “would help to build organizations and institutions in the community without leading them and cooperatively work together with them on organizational and joint projects of mutual interest.”⁹⁵ Programmatic influence also fit into Karenga’s concept of operational unity or unity without uniformity. US was not a mass organization, but viewed itself as the vanguard in the African revolution in the United States.

The US organization was founded in Los Angeles in 1965, by several former members of the African nationalist organization established by Donald Warden, the Afro-American Association. US is often described as a nonpolitical organization that focused on cultural aesthetics. But it had an expansive definition of culture that

⁹³Maulana Karenga, “Us, Kawaida and the Black Liberation Movement in the 1960’s: Culture, Knowledge, and Struggle,” in *Engines of the Black Power Movement: Essays on the Influence of Civil Rights Actions, Arts, and Islam* (London: McFarland, 2007), 117.

⁹⁴ Brown, *Fighting for US*, 42.

⁹⁵ Karenga, “Us, Kawaida and the Black Liberation Movement in the 1960’s: Culture, Knowledge, and Struggle,” 102.

included politics. US was active in several grassroots struggles in different parts of the United States though its base was southern California. The leader of US, Maulana Karenga, was a convener with Amiri Baraka of what Komozi Woodward referred to as “the Modern Black Convention movement that eventually led to the successful mayoral campaign of Kenneth Gibson in Newark, New Jersey among its many accomplishments.”⁹⁶ The US organization was a member of a coalition in Los Angeles called Temporary Alliance of Local Organization (TALO), which “among TALO’s major achievements was the partial funding of the Community Alert Patrol, a group formed to monitor police activities in South Central Los Angeles.”⁹⁷ Community Alert Patrol would influence the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in its struggle against police terrorism. In 1966, US also joined another coalition of African organizations called the Black Congress that opposed the war in Vietnam. There has been extensive scholarship on the ideological disagreements between US and BPP: perhaps, most of the scholarship takes a sympathetic view towards the BPP. But US and other organizations of the Black Power Movement, were victims of Cointelpro because of their political activities. Cointelpro’s objective was to foment dissension between US and BPP through writing anonymous letters supposedly from each respective organization.⁹⁸ Compared to other organizations in this study, US is the only organization that is still in existence and arguably has had the most influence upon African culture in the United States especially with the annual celebration of

⁹⁶ Karenga, “Us, Kawaida and the Black Liberation Movement in the 1960’s: Culture, Knowledge, and Struggle,” 110-111.

⁹⁷ Brown, *Fighting for US*, 82.

⁹⁸ Churchill & Wall, *Cointelpro Papers*, 132-33; Karenga, 96-97.

Kwanzaa. Kwanzaa is an annual celebration practiced in varying degrees by millions of people.

The Black Panther Party was the largest Black Power organization. The founders of the party, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, were students who met at Merritt College. The BPP had an eclectic mix of ideological influences. Huey Newton cited the works of great 'Third World' revolutionaries such as Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, four volumes of Chairman Mao Tse-Tung, and Che Guevara's *Guerilla Warfare*. These texts were required reading for party members. The works of American-born African revolutionaries such as Malcolm X's *Autobiography* and Robert Williams, *Negroes with Guns* were also included.⁹⁹ According to the BPP, the central contradiction in society was class. They argued the lumpenproletariat or poor, not the proletariat, was the most revolutionary force.¹⁰⁰ The BPP began as a revolutionary nationalist organization, but transitioned to internationalism because of their solidarity with other oppressed peoples. Their aspiration for revolutionary change in their final stage of evolution, due to changing developments particularly in technology, such as increases in military capabilities and means of travel and communication, they became intercommunalists. Intercommunalists view nations as obsolete and instead view the world as an aggregate of communities.¹⁰¹ The BPP has become most famous for their ten-point platform. The BPP derived its name from the symbol used by the Lowndes County Freedom Organization in Alabama. The BPP was founded October 16, 1966, in Oakland, California. Before the formation of the

⁹⁹ Huey Newton, *The Huey P. Newton Reader* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002), 50-51.

¹⁰⁰ Charles Jones, "Reconsidering Panther History: The Untold Story," in *The Black Panther Party[Reconsidered]* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 1998), 44.

¹⁰¹ Newton, *Reader*, 185-187.

Oakland BPP there was a previous Black Panther Party with chapters in various cities in the United States like Philadelphia, New York City, Los Angeles and San Francisco. The Oakland BPP gained national prominence by protesting an anti-gun bill in the California state capital with arms in hand in May 1967. The Oakland-based party effectively usurped the other group. Later that year, the founder and Minister of Defense, Huey Newton was involved in a routine traffic stop during which he was shot in the stomach and the officer was mortally wounded.¹⁰² Newton would receive a manslaughter conviction that would later be overturned on appeal, supported by a national “Free Huey Campaign.”¹⁰³ On September 8, 1968, Head of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, described the BPP as “the greatest [single] threat to the internal security of the country.”¹⁰⁴ BPP leaders and members became victims of assassinations, imprisonment, infiltrations, and surveillance carried out under auspices of Cointelpro.¹⁰⁵ Cointelpro was a major contributor to the strife that led to the demise of the party in 1971, though officially, the party continued until 1982.

The notion of self-determination as conceptualized by Black Power activists served as an inspiration to African students during the Black Studies Movement. The African nationalism that provided fuel for both movements has a long tradition among Africans in the United States. Black Power helped African students understand the political nature of education in the United States from an African nationalist

¹⁰² Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour*, 210.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 250.

¹⁰⁴ Churchill & Wall, *Cointelpro Papers*, 123.

¹⁰⁵ “Of the 295 counterintelligence operations the bureau has admitted conducting against Black activists and organizations during the period, a staggering 233, the majority of them in 1969, were aimed at the panthers.” Churchill, “Disrupt Discredit & Destroy,” 83.

perspective. Black Power organizations such as SNCC, RAM, US, and BPP are examples of the role students played in the African Freedom Movement. Though each organization had a distinct ideology, they expressed common characteristics such as racial solidarity, self-defense, and militant resistance to white oppression fundamental to the Black Power Movement. The Black Power Movement is an example of what Clovis Semmes refers to as a revitalization tendency to counteract the cultural hegemony of the dominant society.

As the movement progressed several organizations like the RAM and OAAU began to conclude that a political movement alone would not be successful. They became deeply engaged in discussions about identity and culture. The consciousness of Africans would need to be reoriented away from the definitions conveyed in the dominant society. Questions around identity and culture would eventually be taken up by a new generation of artists and activists.

CHAPTER 3

BLACK ARTS/CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT

The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement was perhaps the most important mass-based cultural movement of the twentieth century led by an avant-garde composed of poets, musicians, painters, dancers, and playwrights. These creative intellectuals were in the vanguard of a Cultural Revolution that attempted to generate a racial and *National Consciousness* among Africans in America. In this study, I periodize the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement from 1965 to 1976.

In this chapter, I focus on the literary aspect of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement. In earlier periods of African creative production in America, such as the nineteenth century and twentieth century, there were instances of art concerned with identity and resistance. The earlier periods did not have the national scope and nationalistic focus of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement. Political activism was integral to the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement. For example, although Malcolm X made his transition prior to the Black Art/Consciousness Movement, his words and life served as a source of inspiration to the artist-activists. During the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement, there were a host of independent institutions, activists, and literary journals that projected the ideas of the movement. As a final point, it must be remembered that the individuals involved in the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement were not just artists, but activists who were dedicated to social justice and radical change in the system of racial/cultural domination.

Historical Overview of African Creative Production

The creative production of Africans has occurred in social conditions of extreme deprivation and oppression. Therefore, African art describes the aforementioned

conditions and has been utilized as a form of resistance to white oppression. There have been several generations of art created by Africans in America that predates Black Arts/Consciousness movement material that focused on identity and resistance. The origin of the African literary tradition begins in the eighteenth century, though it did not focus on resistance and identity. In 1760 on December 25, the first work published by an African in America was by a man named Jupiter Hammon.¹⁰⁶ Hammon lived the majority of his life enslaved in the New England region of the United States. There is not much information on his life, but he published other works including three poems and sermons. Hammon was a contemporary of Phyllis Wheatley who was sold into slavery as a child, but was not expected to live long due to her fragile physique. Wheatley, considered the foremother of African literature in America, was able to gain international acclaim as a poet. She is sometimes criticized for lines that are viewed as thankful for enslavement such as “’Twas mercy that brought me from my *Pagan* land/ taught my benighted soul to understand/ that there’s a God, that there’s a savior too” and “remember *Christians, Negroes*, black as Cain/ may be refin’d, and join the angelic train.”¹⁰⁷ Wheatley was able to read and write in English and Latin, studied astronomy, geography, history, and English literature: and was primarily based in the biblical and neo-classical tradition of literature. Due to his white supremacist beliefs, Thomas Jefferson contended her work was ‘unimaginary’ stating, “religion indeed has produced a Phyllis Wheatley; but it could not produce a

¹⁰⁶ Patricia Liggins-Hill. “Phyllis Wheatley” *Call and Response: The Riverside Anthology of the African American Literary Tradition*. Ed. Patricia Liggins-Hill (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company College Division, 1998), 71.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

poet.”¹⁰⁸ Perhaps the greatest contribution of Wheatley is that she showcased the potential of Africans in America during a period when they were explicitly stated to be intellectually inferior by Euro-American society and, by law, were not allowed to study and engage in scholarly works.

In the nineteenth century African creative production that focused on resistance flourished during the antebellum and postbellum periods of the United States. Francis Ellen Watkins Harper was an abolitionist, orator, women’s suffragist, writer, and poet who published several works during this period. She is probably best known for her novel *Iola Leroy*. She is also highly regarded for her oral poetry and ability to speak to pertinent social issues with lines as, “Let me make songs for the people/ songs for the old and young/ songs to stir like a battle-cry/ wherever they are sung.”¹⁰⁹ Another important writer, William Wells Brown, was born enslaved in 1834, but rose to become an abolitionist, historian, novelist, and playwright. His two most recognized literary works are a novel, *Clotel*, and *The Escape*. *The Escape* is a semi-autobiographical play and is a classic in African protest literature in America. It is the account of his personal experiences as an enslaved African and his harrowing escape to freedom. The tradition of artistic resistance continued into the twentieth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century an unprecedented cultural movement was instituted.

The Harlem Renaissance was an artistic movement composed of African artists and intellectuals whose epicenter was in Harlem, U.S.A in the 1920s and 1930s. The artists associated with the Harlem Renaissance include, but are not limited to, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Toomer, Nella Larsen,

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 96.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 352.

James Weldon Johnson, Countee Cullen, and Jessie Fauset. As the Harlem Renaissance was flourishing, the Universal Negro Improvement Association under the leadership of Marcus Garvey was organizing the largest mass movement of people of African descent in history. “The *Negro World* reached many more people every month than the *Crisis*, *Opportunity*, and *Messenger* combined. At its peak circulation of 200,000 it reached more people weekly than all three each month.”¹¹⁰ The role of the UNIA, Marcus Garvey, and by extension the official publication of the organization, the *Negro World*, is sometimes underplayed, but provided an independent voice for the Harlem Renaissance. Several poets’ works contributed to the newspaper’s section, “Poetry for the People” and book review section of the publication. Local UNIA branches throughout the world organized literary and drama clubs that were “designed to explain and further the goals of the organization.”¹¹¹ In general, the *Negro World* promoted what Tony Martin has called the Garvey Aesthetic, a forerunner to the Black Aesthetic of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement. The Garvey Aesthetic posited art “had to serve the cause of freedom justice and equality . . . [as] a weapon in the struggle for African advancement.”¹¹² Garvey was also a poet whose work was primarily geared towards the cause of African Redemption. In a poem titled *Mission* he wrote, “I’m fighting my people’s cause today/to down an ancient wrong/ and to lift this yearning race of mine/ in lofty

¹¹⁰ Tony Martin, *Literary Garveyism: Garvey, Black Arts and the Harlem Renaissance* (Dover, MA: Majority Press, 1983), 156.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 31, 113.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 8. Tony Martin also states, “Garvey saw the Harlem Renaissance for the transient fad that it was- a fad propelled largely by a white bohemian desire for the sensual and the exotic.” p. 158.

tale and song.”¹¹³ A large portion of the membership of the UNIA, among the leadership to the rank and file, wrote poetry, most of which was a ‘fighting poetry.’ An example of the Garvey Aesthetic is a poem titled “When you meet a Member of the Klu Klux Klan”:

When you meet a member of the Klu Klux Klan
Walk right up and hit him like a natural man;
Take no thought of babies he may have at home,
Sympathy’s defamed when used upon his dome. . . .
Call your wife and baby out to see you have some fun,
Sic your bulldog on him for to see the rascal run.
Head him off before he gets ten paces from your door,
Take a bat of sturdy oak and knock him down once more.
This time you may leave him where he wallows in the sand
A spent and humble member of the Klu Klux Klan.¹¹⁴

Three towering intellectuals during the Harlem Renaissance who contributed to the theory, criticism, and production of art during the era, were William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, Alain Locke, and Langston Hughes. Two schools emerged regarding African creative production. Langston Hughes and Du Bois believed in “art as propaganda” while Locke argued for “art for art’s sake.” Du Bois contended that

All art is propaganda and ever must be, despite the wailing of the purists. I stand in utter shamelessness and say that whatever art I have written has always been used

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 73.

for propaganda for gaining the right of Black folk to love and enjoy. *I do not care a damn for any art that is not used for propaganda.*¹¹⁵

Du Bois believed African creative intellectuals had a duty to produce art that served a social and political function for African people. He and other artists attempted to develop criteria for African creative production. A poem that exemplified Du Bois' belief in art as propaganda was Claude McKay's *If We Must Die*:

If we must die let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die, O let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!
O kinsman! We must meet the common foe!
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to wall, dying, but fighting back!¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ W.E. B. Du Bois, "Criteria of Negro Art" *Call and Response: The Riverside Anthology of the African American Literary Tradition*, ed. Patricia Hill-Liggins (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company College Division, 1998), 854.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 883.

Langston Hughes, perhaps the most revered poet of the Harlem Renaissance and in the history of Africans in America, also supported the idea of art as propaganda. He asserted that African poets confronted a momentous challenge in their creative production analogous to scaling a mountain. He wrote, “the mountain standing in the way of any true Negro art in America-[is the] urge within the race toward whiteness, the desire to pour racial individuality into the mold of American standardization, and to be as little Negro and as much American as possible.”¹¹⁷ Hughes desired to create an art that expressed the distinct cultural characteristics of African people and instilled a strong sense of identity and race pride. He consistently encountered artists who inculcated negro-middle-class standards that attempted to emulate Euro-America. He believed that in their desire to gain full democratic rights African must not lose their unique national cultural identity.

Following World War I, Africans developed a new art, psychology, and consciousness referred to as the New Negro Movement. The primary theorist of the New Negro Movement was the Ivy League and Oxford graduate Alain Locke. Locke asserted, “the younger generation is vibrant with a new psychology; the new spirit is awake in the masses, and under the very eyes of the professional observers is transforming what has been a perennial problem into the progressive phases of contemporary Negro life.”¹¹⁸ An important change that occurred during the rise of the New Negro was the large number of Africans migrating from the rural south to the urban north. Locke was a cultural and art critic who viewed “art for its own sake,

¹¹⁷ Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,” in *The Black Aesthetic*, ed. Addison Gayle (New York: Double Day, 1971), 175.

¹¹⁸ Alain Locke (ed.), “The New Negro,” *The New Negro* (New York: Atheneum, 1983), 3.

combined with that stark cult of veracity-truth whether it hurts or not.”¹¹⁹ Locke believed that African art must be concerned with conveying truth and that propaganda should be confined to social journals and political speeches. In his opinion, art should be universal and not a political polemic that, in his eyes, displayed a level of insecurity. After the Harlem Renaissance many African creative intellectuals continued to embrace the art as propaganda school of Du Bois.

There were a number of African creative intellectuals in the 1940s and 1950s who consciously viewed their art as playing a vital role in the African Freedom Movement. Some writers such as Ralph Ellison did not view art as a means to gain social justice. Three significant figures during this period were Ann Petry, Paul Robeson, and Richard Wright. Ann Petry wrote a realist novel, *The Street*, about the struggles of a single African mother in America attempting to raise her son in a poor urban area. In “The Novel as Social Criticism” she contended the greatest novels were social commentary and argues against ‘art for art’s sake.’¹²⁰ Robeson stated, “in my music, my plays, my films, I want to carry always this central idea- to be African. Multitudes of men have died for less worthy ideals; it is even more eminently worth living for.”¹²¹ Robeson traveled throughout the world studying the folklore, linguistics, dance, and music of African people and other peoples. He was an actor, lawyer, athlete, and activist concerned with the plight of all oppressed peoples, but had a particular concern for people of African descent. In his eyes, artists did not reside apart from their people, but were inextricably connected to the people’s causes and concerns.

¹¹⁹ Liggins-Hill, 788.

¹²⁰ Liggins-Hill, 1030.

¹²¹ Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 303.

Robeson, Du Bois, and Wright would be condemned for uncompromising political positions. Richard Wright, known for his classic novel *Native Son*, contended that if the artist's "conception of the life of his people is broad and deep enough, if the sense of the whole life he is seeking is vivid and strong in him then his writing will embrace all those social, political, and economic forms under which the life of his people is manifest."¹²² In other words, African writers should be thoroughly grounded in their culture and have a clear understanding of the conditions of African people.

Cultural Influence of Malcolm X

The ideology of Malcolm X had a significant impact upon African creative intellectuals in the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement. In 1964, after leaving the NOI, Malcolm X founded the OAAU. In The Basic Unity Program of the OAAU, he called for a cultural revolution. Malcolm proposed a "cultural revolution which will provide the means for restoring our identity that we might rejoin our brothers and sisters on the African continent, culturally, psychologically, economically, and share with them the sweet fruits of freedom from oppression and independence of racist governments."¹²³ The process of enslavement was a form of cultural genocide against Africans in America that would suppress their peoplehood in order to tie them to their oppressor. The OAAU program continued: "we are determined to rediscover our true African culture, which was crushed and hidden for over four hundred years in order to enslave us."¹²⁴ He believed the first step in their national liberation struggle was to

¹²² Richard Wright, "Blueprint for Negro Writing," in *The Black Aesthetic*, ed. Addison Gayle (New York: Double Day, 1971), 342.

¹²³ Breitman, *Malcolm X Speaks*, 258.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 259.

displace the values, ethos, and norms of Euro-American society that Africans had inculcated. Malcolm desired to revitalize their *National Culture*, or the traditions, rituals, values, proverbs, ethos, mores, and beliefs unique to Africans in America. Ultimately, the OAAU wanted to “change the thinking of the Afro-American by liberating our minds through the study of philosophies and psychologies, cultures, and languages that did not come from our racist oppressors.”¹²⁵

The issue of identity figured prominently in Malcolm X’s framework of African liberation. Euro-Americans had imposed their names upon Africans in America.

One of the main reasons we are called Negro is so we won’t know who we really are. And when you call yourself that, you don’t know who you really are. You don’t know what you are, you don’t know where you came from, you don’t know what is yours. As long as you call yourself a Negro, nothing is yours. No-languages you can’t lay claim to any language, not even English; you mess it up. You can’t lay claim to any name, that will identify you as something that you should be. You can’t lay claim to any culture as long you use the word *Negro* to identify yourself. It attaches you to nothing. It doesn’t even identify your color.¹²⁶

Malcolm X considered self-definition as a central component of liberation because Euro-America defined Africans in America as nonhuman and devoid of history and culture. The name(s) they accepted from the larger society was connected mainly to a racist social order that placed them in the lowest strata politically and economically. Re-naming would help Africans to regain a strong *National Consciousness*. According to Malcolm, “since the 22 million of us were originally Africans, who are now in America not by choice but by a cruel accident in our history, we strongly

¹²⁵ Ibid., 260.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 24.

believe that African problems are our problems and our problems are African problems.”¹²⁷ Malcolm reminded Black people in America that they are Africans, first and foremost, and that their allegiance was not to the United States government, but instead to their freedom and to liberation of Africans in other parts of the globe. In his eyes Africans brought to America never ceased to be Africans because they were forced to come to the United States.

Anyone who listens to and/or reads the speeches given by Malcolm X understands the profound grasp of history he had even without a college education. Malcolm’s philosophy of history reconnected Africans in America to their African heritage. He proclaimed:

If you want to take the time to do research for yourself, I think you’ll find that on the African continent there was always, prior to the discovery of America, there was always a higher level of history, rather a higher level of culture and civilization, than that which existed in Europe at the same time.¹²⁸

Malcolm would argue at the same time as Europe was in the so-called “Dark ages,” Africans built three large states in the Western Sudan, one almost the size of Europe. Similarly Kmt (Ancient Egypt) and other Nile Valley Civilizations had reached their peak before the emergence of ancient Greece. Malcolm stated: “just as a tree without roots is dead, a people without history or cultural roots also becomes a dead people. And when you look at us, those of us who are called Negro, we’re called that because we are like a dead people.”¹²⁹ Malcolm believed that for Africans in America, lack of knowledge of self contributed to a lack of self-worth. In his opinion,

¹²⁷ Ibid., 89.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 27.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 25.

other ethnic groups were able to overcome obstacles similar to Africans because they knew their history. He claimed that

of all our studies history is best qualified to reward our research. And when you see that you've got problems, all you have to do is examine the historic method used all over the world by others who have problems similar to yours. Once you see how they got theirs straight, then you know how you can get yours straight.¹³⁰

Malcolm X did not view history as idle gathering of information, but as a means of problem solving, especially for an oppressed group. The reclamation of history was paramount in the struggle for African liberation.

Malcolm was eulogized by the poets of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement in a book of poetry, *For Malcolm X*. "The theme which recurs in many of the poems, and which recalls the theme of Ossie Davis preface is that Malcolm was a man, in spite of white America's effort to emasculate the Blackman." These two poems by Gwendolyn Brooks and Amiri Baraka demonstrate the theme of the book:

Malcolm X

Original.

Hence ragged –round,

Hence rich-robust

We gasped. We saw the maleness.

The maleness raking out and making guttural the air

And pushing us to walls.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 75.

And in a soft and fundamental hour
A sorcery devout and vertical
Beguiled the world.

He opened us-
was a key.

Who was a man.¹³¹

-Gwendolyn Brooks

A Poem For Black Hearts

For Malcolm's hands raised to bless us
all black and strong in his image
of ourselves for Malcolm's words
fire darts, the victor's tireless
thrusts, words hung above the world
changes as it may, he said it, and
for this he was killed , for saying,
and feeling, and being/ change."¹³²

-Amiri Baraka

¹³¹ Gwendolyn Brooks, "Malcolm X" *For Malcolm X* (Detroit: Broadside Press, 1967), 3.

¹³² Amiri Baraka, "A Poem for Black Hearts" *For Malcolm X* (Detroit: Broadside Press, 1967),

Malcolm's life and words were instrumental in the formulation and execution of the African cultural revolution in America. An entire generation of artists and activists used their art to institute the cultural revolution.

History, Meaning, & Objectives of the Movement

The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement followed in the tradition of creative intellectuals such as William Wells Brown, Francis Watkins Harper, Claude McKay, and Langston Hughes. The goal of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement was to implement the cultural revolution as explained by Malcolm X. The movement explored the interiority of African life and culture in the United States and hoped to exhibit that ethos through poetry, dance, music, paintings, sculpture, and theatre. The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement exhibits the resiliency of African culture in the United States.

The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement is composed of four distinct characteristics: art for the people's sake, the development of the Black aesthetic, restoration of historical memory, and Black identity. The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement continued in the tradition of those who postulated that art must serve the cause of African liberation or 'art for people's sake'. Maulana Karenga, influenced by Leopold Senghor, argued that art must be three things: functional, collective, and committing. Functional art means that art must not solely be 'art for art's sake,' but that it must be useful to the cause of African revolution.¹³³ Next, art must be

¹³³ Maulana Karenga, "Black Cultural Nationalism" *The Black Aesthetic* ed. Addison Gayle (New York: Double Day, 1971), 33. Karenga continues stating:

collective-in other words-all art emerges from a certain context- in this case, the African community-and therefore, it should serve the interests of that community and be accountable to that community.¹³⁴ Finally, all art ought to be committing. Committing art means that it should commit Africans to the past, present, and future by giving the artist and audience inspiration to create a world based on justice and equality.¹³⁵ In the seminal essay “Black Arts Movement,” writer, poet, activist, and literary critic Larry Neal states: “the Black Arts Movement is radically opposed to any concept of the artist that alienates him [her] from his [her] community. This movement is the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power Movement. . . . one is concerned with the relationship between art and politics; the other with the art of politics.”¹³⁶ The goal of both movements was self-definition. The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement saw the role of the artist as carriers of the spiritual and collective aspirations of a people.

African creative intellectuals in this period had a deep commitment to struggle and a determination to produce art that would regenerate an African sensibility or a Black Aesthetic. While Black Power organizations such as the BPP, RAM, RNA, and DRUM advocated political revolution, African artists had the same purpose by

“In terms of painting, we do not need pictures of oranges in a bowl or trees standing innocently in the midst of a wasteland. If we must paint oranges and trees, let our guerillas be eating those oranges for strength....all art is mute until the artist gives it a message and that message must be revolution.” P. 34.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 34.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 37.

¹³⁶ Larry Neal, *Visions of a Liberated Future: Black Arts Movement Writings* (New York: Thunder Mouth Press, 1989), 62.

promoting another type of revolution. They “advocate[d] a cultural revolution in art and ideas. The cultural values inherent in Western society must either be radicalized or destroyed, and we will probably find that even radicalization is impossible.”¹³⁷ For centuries western art had negated the humanity of African people by promoting European writers and artists, but the Black Arts/Consciousness activists wanted to establish its own cannon in the areas of creative production. Stephen Henderson established three categories of African poetry:

(1) “Theme- that which is being spoken of, whether the specific subject matter, the emotional response to it, or its intellectual formulation.

(2) Structure- some aspect of the poem such as diction, rhythm, figurative language, which goes into the total makeup. (At times the word is used in an extended sense to include what is usually called genre.)

(3) Saturation- the communication of ‘Blackness’ and fidelity to the observed or intuited truth of the Black Experience in the United States. It follows that categories should also be valid in any critical evaluation of the poem.”¹³⁸

Literary critics of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement desired to establish criteria to evaluate and judge African American art. In terms of poetic structure, African speech patterns and music, such as Ebonics and jazz or the Blues, provided a reference point for African poetry.

Another central component of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement was the restoration of historical memory. The holocaust of enslavement disrupted the transmission of history from one generation to another of Africans in America. The

¹³⁷ Neal, *Visions of a Liberated Future*, 63.

¹³⁸ Stephen Henderson, *Understanding the New Black Poetry: Black Speech and Black Music Poetic References* (New York: William Morrow, 1973), 10.

first pictorial book of the revered poet and activist, Askia Toure, was “an illustrated biography of the great Mandinka freedom fighter *Samory Toure* who was the grandfather of the former president of Guinea, Ahmed Sekou Toure, another notable modern freedom fighter who resisted French colonialism in West Africa.”¹³⁹ His first full book of poetry was titled *Songhia*, after the Western Sudanic nation during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Henderson wrote: “the single most popular hero of contemporary Black poetry is Malcolm X, not Martin Luther King Jr. And the heroes whoever they are, that do not apologize to America, do not plead, but seek to affirm their right to self-definition and (wo)manhood.”¹⁴⁰ The writers wanted to celebrate the (s)heroes of the African Liberation Movement that exhibited a commitment to uncompromising struggle and sacrifice. It did not matter to the artist if the protagonist was considered radical or an

¹³⁹ Patricia Liggins-Hill, “Askia Muhammad Toure” *Call and Response: The Riverside Anthology of the African American Literary Tradition*, ed. Patricia Hill-Liggins (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company College Division, 1998), 1871.

Toure attempted to fulfill the command laid out by ancestor John Henrik Clark:

“The entire history of Africa will have to be rewritten, challenging and reversing the European concept. It is singularly the responsibility of the Negro writer to proclaim and celebrate the fact this his people have in their ancestry rulers who expanded kingdoms into empires and built great and magnificent armies, scholars whose vision of life showed foresight and wisdom, and priests who told of gods that were strong and kind. The American Negro writer should pay particular attention to the Western Sudan (West Africa) his ancestral home.” See John Henrik Clarke, “Reclaiming the Lost Heritage,” in *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing* (New York: William Morrow, 1968), 17.

¹⁴⁰ Henderson, *Understanding the New Black Poetry*, 25.

extremist by Euro-America society because these were African America's historical figures.

The final characteristic of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement was concerned with Black identity. On a daily basis the institutions of Euro-American society denigrated the image and culture of Africans in America through mass media, schools, and religion. African Consciousness was fostered to combat this negation. South African activist Steve Biko defined African consciousness as

the realization by the Black man [woman] of the need to rally together with his brothers [and sisters] around the cause of their operation-the Blackness of their skin- and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude. It seeks to demonstrate the lie that Black is an aberration from the 'normal' which is white.¹⁴¹

Consciousness is defined as something "done with awareness or purpose." The development of African consciousness was integral to Africans combating the Eurocentric distortions that do not allow them to see themselves at the center of their own experience. In the United States, Africans were relegated to the periphery in society and even in their own minds. The promotion of African consciousness and pride is demonstrated in a poem "Sunrise" by Askia Toure:

We will rise as a pine tree, tall and proud,

Rises under bloody

Southern skies to kiss the moon

SING of our Race! SING out our Destiny

To your sons, to your warrior sons- in the ghettos,

¹⁴¹ Steve Biko, *Steve Biko: I Write What I Like* (London: Heinemann, 1979), 49.

on the tenant farms,
in the swelling cities by the western sea.¹⁴²

The artists-activists of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement established several independent institutions and literary journals based in different regions of the United States. The founding of the Black Arts Repository Theatre and School (BARTS) in Harlem following the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965 is the symbolic beginning of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement. BARTS was led by Amiri Baraka in connection with other creative intellectuals such as Askia Toure and Larry Neal. Before his move to Harlem, Baraka was associated with white beatnik artists in the Lower East side of Manhattan. Baraka's move to Harlem represented a symbolic break within the larger African community to a new aesthetic and politic. As previously noted, Harlem is traditionally seen as the cultural capital of Africans in America. Sun Ra's Arkestra, Yoruba temple, and natural beauty contests helped Harlem to retain its status as a cultural innovator in early 1960s.

In Chicago artists-activists such as Haki Madhubuti, Hoyt Fuller, and Gwendolyn Brooks founded the Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC). OBAC established a writer's workshop that strove to develop the Black Aesthetic based on the sensibility of musicians like John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, and Ray Charles.¹⁴³ The Visual Arts Workshop members, including artist Jeff Donaldson who created the *Wall of Respect* in 1967: "a collective piece, a 'wall of heroes' that would belong to

¹⁴² Askia Toure, "Sunrise" in *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing*, ed. Amiri Baraka & Larry Neal (New York: William Morrow, 1968), 322.

¹⁴³ Fuller, *Towards a Black Aesthetic*, 10.

the community and would have no signatures.”¹⁴⁴ The wall was a collective project in which “people from the community gathered to watch the artists work, often bringing them food and drink. Sometimes a call-and-response developed as people offered critiques and commentary to the artists.”¹⁴⁵ The *Wall of Respect* instigated a mural movement across the country that included murals like the Detroit’s *Wall of Dignity* in 1968 and Atlanta’s *Wall of Respect* in 1974.

In 1961, Hoyt Fuller became the editor of the *Negro Digest* and eventually the *Black World*, which was primarily an intellectual journal catering to the activist and artistic community. Two other prominent institutions were Broadside Press and Lotus Press, both based in Detroit, which published notable works of artists Amiri Baraka, Sonia Sanchez, Haki Madhubuti and others. According to James Smethurst, the *Black World* was “shut down by Johnson Publishing Company in 1976, ostensibly over the issue of an allegedly anti-Semitic article about Zionism.”¹⁴⁶ The President of Johnson Publishing stated the reason was due to not enough profits. Also, by 1976 the *Journal of Black Poetry* had ceased publication and Broadside Press went into a hiatus. The end of these important Black Arts/Consciousness Movement institutions marked the symbolic decline of the movement

The west coast was a focal point of Black Nationalism particularly cultural nationalists, such as the US organization. This politically rich ground allowed for a flowering of literary journals such as the *Soulbook*, *Black Dialogue*, and *Journal of Black Poetry*. Both the *Soulbook* and *Black Dialogue* had roots in the Afro-American

¹⁴⁴ James Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960’s and 1970’s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 213.

¹⁴⁵ Prigoff & Dunitz, *Walls of Heritage*, 25.

¹⁴⁶ Smethurst., *The Black Arts Movement*, 242, 208.

Association emulating its Pan-Africanist, anti-colonial and pro-civil rights stance. The *Journal of Black Poetry* belied more than its name: “it published criticism, reviews and news about Black cultural and political movements sent in from all over the United States (and beyond).”¹⁴⁷ After the dissolution of BARTS, Baraka, influenced by US founder Maulana Karenga, founded the Spirit House. Also, in the southern United States was BLKARTSOUTH, a performance-oriented, community-based poetry and theater collective. Several members of BLKARTSOUTH were also members of political organizations like Congress of African People (CAP) and African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC). While doing political work with CAP and ALSC, BLKARTSOUTH would have poetry, music, and drama performance in such diverse venues from schools and universities to public housing projects.¹⁴⁸ Under the guidance of Kalamu ya Salaam, BLKARTSOUTH founded the journal *Nkombo* (Bantu word from which ‘gumbo’ is derived) primarily featuring writers from the south.¹⁴⁹

The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement was an effort to counteract the cultural hegemony of the dominant Euro-American society. Robert Washington contends that the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement was the first literary school in which Africans in America were not culturally and ideologically dominated by white liberal schools of thought. From the 1920s to 1960s, African America’s literature was dominated by primitivism, naturalism, existentialism, and the moral suasion of the

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 277.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 350.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 350, 353.

white liberal intelligentsia.¹⁵⁰ As Africans made attempts to reform American society they also have transformed their own community. Yet, Harold Cruse lamented,

it remains for the Negro intellectual to create his own philosophy and to bring the facts of cultural history in focus with the cultural practices of the present. In advance societies it is not the race politicians or the 'rights' leaders who create the new ideas and the new images of life and man. That role belongs to the artists and intellectuals of each generation.¹⁵¹

Cruse argues in his classic work, *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, that African creative intellectuals had not created a theory or ideology that conformed to their unique social, political, and economic condition, which is their vanguard role as cultural workers. But the Black Arts/Movement created its own institutions and journals to counter the hegemony of white left. The artist-activists of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement broke from the ongoing cultural hegemony.

Black Arts/Consciousness Leaders

The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement was composed of determined artists-activists. As already indicated some, but not all, of the notable artists include: Amiri Baraka, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ed Bullins, Askia Toure, Jayne Cortez, Toni Cade Bambara, Mari Evans, Hoyt Fuller, Nikki Giovanni, the Last Poets, Gil-Scott Heron, Maulana Karenga, Etheridge Knight, Adrienne Kennedy, Haki R. Madhubuti, Larry Neal, Ishmael Reed, Sonia Sanchez, Dudley Randell, and Quincy Troupe. This section examines the work and ideas of four major figures that were influential in the

¹⁵⁰ Robert Washington, *The Ideologies of African American Literature: From the Harlem Renaissance to the Black Nationalist Revolt* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 317.

¹⁵¹ Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: Williams & Morrow, 1967), 96.

movement and influenced its direction: Amiri Baraka, Haki Madhubuti, Sonia Sanchez, and Nikki Giovanni.

The first poet discussed is Amiri Baraka. Baraka was raised in a middle-class home in Newark, New Jersey. He attended both Rutgers and Howard University from 1951-54, but did not graduate. Then, he served for three years in the United States Air Force where he received a dishonorable discharge. His artistic-activist career has three stages: Beatnik-Bohemian (1957-1964), African Nationalist (1965-1974), and Third World Marxist (1974-present). This work focuses on his African Nationalist period. He adopted the Kawiada philosophy as explained by Malauna Karenga.

Baraka stated that “the minds of the people are the most important factor of any movement, without them you can have nothing else.”¹⁵² Baraka advocated a cultural revolution that would help to supplant the internalized value system of Africans in America especially individualism and white supremacy. He wanted to recreate an African value system that would advance the African revolution. He maintained that “the Black Artist’s role in America is to aid in the destruction of America as he knows it. His role is to report and reflect so precisely the nature of the society and of himself [sic] in that society, that other men [sic] will be moved by the exactness of his rendering.”¹⁵³ Baraka’s ideas are clearly expressed in his poem “Black Art:”

We want ‘poems that kill.’
Assassin poems, Poems that shoot
guns. Poems that wrestle cops into alleys
with tongues pulled out and sent to Ireland.....
We want a Black poem. And a

¹⁵² Amiri Baraka, *Kawaida Studies* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1972), 16.

¹⁵³ Amiri Baraka, *Home: Social Essays* (New York: William Morrow, 1966), 251.

Black World
Let the world be a Black poem
An Let All Black People Speak This Poem

Silently
Or LOUD.¹⁵⁴

The poem was so influential that it helped to name the *Black Arts/Consciousness* Movement. The writer has a clear intention to create art that attacks the injustices suffered by Africans in America, by any means. Also, Baraka wants the poem to instill a sense of identity, direction, and unity in the African liberation struggle. In a poem titled “Nation Time” he intones:

Time to get
Together
Time to be one strong Black enrgy space
One pulsating positive magnetism, rising
Time to get up and
be
come
be
come, time to

¹⁵⁴Amiri Baraka, “Black Art,” in *The Leroi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader*, ed. William J. Harris, (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 1991), 219-220.

be come . . .
Its's Nation
Time!¹⁵⁵

This poem speaks to the need to develop a *National Consciousness* that allows Africans in America to move in a unified manner towards a clear objective. “It’s Nation Time!” became the rallying cry during the Black Power Movement that captured the sentiments of organizers at the National Black Convention at Gary, Indiana.

Haki Madhubuti was one of the pre-eminent cultural nationalists during the Black Power and Black Arts/Consciousness Movements. Born Don L. Lee, Madhubuti, was part of the younger generation of artists-activists during the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement. He was influenced by poets like Baraka and the award-winning writer Gwendolyn Brooks. His most recognized work is *Don’t Cry, Scream*.¹⁵⁶ Throughout his career he has remained against Marxism and, what he considers, other Eurocentric ideologies. He asserted that “we need a value system for Afrikans in America. It has become increasingly clear that this value system must take into account the political social, economic, spiritual, and emotional crisis that we face in the western world.”¹⁵⁷ Madhubuti was an advocate of independent Black institutions eventually creating the

¹⁵⁵ Amiri Baraka, *It’s Nation Time*. (Chicago: Third World Press, 1970), 21.

¹⁵⁶ Haki Madhubuti, *Don’t Cry, Scream* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1992), 2.

The title comes from his mother’s advice to him as a child: “nigger if u is goin’ ta open yr/ mouth **Don’t Cry, Scream**, which also means **Don’t Beg, Take**.”

¹⁵⁷ Haki Madhubuti, *From Plan to Planet, Life Studies: The Need for Afrikan Minds and Institutions* (Chicago: Broadside Press, 1984), 79.

Institute for Positive Education and Third World Press. He was critical of artists and writers who published with white-owned presses. He viewed institutions as a means to transmit this new value system to the next generation. As a literary critic he claimed that “the language of the new writers seems to move in one direction; that is to say that the poets of the sixties are actually legitimizing their own communicative medium.”¹⁵⁸ African creative intellectuals opposed the Eurocentric definition of so-called ‘standard English’ in favor of the vernacular language of poor and working class Africans. An example of this sensibility is “In A Period of Growth”:

Like,
If he had da called me
Black seven years ago,
i wd've

broke his right eye out,
jumped into his chest,
talked about his momma,
lied on his sister
& dared him to say it again
all in one breath-
seven years ago.¹⁵⁹

I

¹⁵⁸ Haki Madhubuti, “Toward a Definition: Black Poetry in the Sixties (After Lerio Jones)” in *The Black Aesthetic*, ed. Addison Addison (New York: Double Day, 1971), 239.

¹⁵⁹ Haki Madhubuti, *Think Black* (Detroit: Broadside Press, 1969), 19.

seek
the
integration
of
negroes
with
Black
People.¹⁶⁰

Madhubuti used naming to demonstrate the need for self-definition and how it related to the attitudes and beliefs of an individual and a people. In “The New Integrationist,” Madhubuti reversed the objective of integration of Africans in America into white society to the integration of unconscious ‘negroes’ with conscious Africans.

no
my brothers i will not tell you
who to love or not love
but
i will make you aware of our
self hating and hurting ways.
make you aware of whose bellies
you dropped from.
i will glue your ears to those images
you reflect which are not being

¹⁶⁰ Madhubuti, *Black Pride*. (Detroit. Broadside Press: 1968) 11

loved.¹⁶¹

Madhubuti was mentored by the most renowned Black-woman poet, Gwendolyn Brooks: began a publishing company with Carolyn Rodgers, a Chicago poet. During his career he has promoted respect for women's equality, and has spoken out against rape in the African community. In this piece he acknowledges the need for strong African relationships based on respect. Throughout his career, Madhubuti worked with several women such as Sonia Sanchez, who were an integral part of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement.

Sonia Sanchez was a pioneering artist-activist of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement who challenged Eurocentric definitions of African identity. Sonia Sanchez, born Wilsonia Driver, has been widely published in numerous literary journals. She was educated at Hunter College and New York University. Her work covers various issues of religion, relationships, women in political movements, and African heritage. She discusses elders in "now poem. for us":

it is our
heritage.
u know. part/ african.
part/negro
part/slave
sit down with em brothas & sistuhs.
Talk to em. listen to their

¹⁶¹ Haki Madhubuti, "My Brothers" *Call and Response: The Riverside Anthology of the African American Literary Tradition*, ed. Patricia Hill-Liggins (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company College Division, 1998) 1545.

tales of victories/ woes/ sorrows.

Listen to their blk/

myths

record them taken their ago talk

for our tomorrows.¹⁶²

Sanchez is not only advocating the rediscovery of African heritage but wants her people to return to the African values of respect for elders. In African culture elders are viewed as receptacles of wisdom that transmit their knowledge orally.

yeh. john Coltrane.

My favorite things is u.

Showen us life/

liven.

a love supreme.

for each

other

if we just

lissssssSSSTEN.¹⁶³

Sanchez's unique style of poetry was steeped in the jazz and blues tradition that was emblematic of the Black Aesthetic of artists during the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement. The Jazz and Blues were not just musical forms that happened to be

¹⁶² Sonia Sanchez, *We A BaddDDD People* (Detroit: Broadside Press, 1971), 67.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 72.

created by Africans in America, but were central to their *National Culture*. Sanchez also examined issues of African women in “to all sisters” and “Woman”:

hurt ain't the bag u
shd be in.
loving is
the bag, man.
there ain't
no MAN like a
black man.¹⁶⁴

teLLLLLLL me. earth mother
for i want to rediscover me. the secret of me
the river of me.the morning ease of me.
i want my body to carry my words like aqueducts.
I want to make the world my diary
and speak rivers.¹⁶⁵

Sanchez is lamenting the pain of a hurtful relationship. She doesnot want her sisters to wallow in the past because African men, like African women, are a unique specimen worthy of their love. In “Woman,” as in African myths, Sanchez uses water

¹⁶⁴ Sonia Sanchez, *Homecoming* (Detroit: Broadside Press, 1969), 22.

¹⁶⁵ Sonia Sanchez, “Woman” *Call and Response: The Riverside Anthology of the African American Literary Tradition*. Ed. Patricia Hill-Liggins (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company College Division, 1998.) 1496.

as a metaphor for the feminine principle and rebirth. She uses this poem as a means of self-discovery and a reintroduction to the world.

Nikki Giovanni is another seminal figure in the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement who is known for her militancy, activism, and contribution to the development of the Black Aesthetic. She was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, and graduated from Fisk University. She was mentored by a great, but relatively overlooked, African writer John O. Killens. Giovanni, like many other students, was active in SNCC. She undoubtedly believed in ‘art for the people’s sake’ school as displayed in the poems “Poem for Black Boys” and “For Sandra”:

Poem for Black Boys

You should play run-away-slave

or Mau Mau

These are more in line with your history

Ask your mothers for a Rap Brown gun

Santa just may comply if you wish hard enough

Ask for CULLARD instead of Monopoly

DO NOT SIT IN DO NOT FOLLOW KING

GO DIRECTLY TO STREETS

This is a game you can win.¹⁶⁶

For Sandra

then my neighbor

¹⁶⁶ Nikki Giovanni, *Black Feeling, Black Talk/Black Judgment* (New York: William Morrow, 1970), 50.

who thinks i hate
asked-do you ever write
tree poems- i like trees
so i thought
i'll write a beautiful green tree poem
peeked from my window

to check the image
noticed the school yard was covered
with asphalt
no green-no trees grow
in manhattan¹⁶⁷

During this period Giovanni's poems were designed to inspire African men, women, and children to armed revolution because, in her eyes, their history and current condition made struggle necessary. In a time of militancy, Giovanni was known for her revolutionary poetry. She did not write about trees and flowers because that was not her reality. As shown in "For Sandra," the reality of African people was oppression in urban slums.

Ego Tripping

I was born in the congo
I walked to the fertile crescent and built
the sphinx

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 88.

I designed a pyramid so tough that a star
that only glows every one hundred years falls
into the center giving divine perfect light

I am bad¹⁶⁸

“Ego Tripping,” one of Giovanni’s signature poems, is a chronology of African history, and braggadocio of African achievements. She expresses the accomplishments and tells of the historic figures in her history.

Woman Poem

it’s a sex object if you’re pretty
and no love
or love and no sex if you’re fat
get back fat black woman be a mother
grandmother strong thing but not woman
gameswoman romantic woman love needer¹⁶⁹

Giovanni expresses the travails of African womanhood. African women are too often labeled as either jezebels, mammies, and overly aggressive. African women do not fit into stereotypes imposed on them, but have attempted to define their own identity.

I have sought in this chapter to explore the tradition of African resistance in art through a selection of the main actors, and salient characteristics of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement through literature. The Black Arts/Consciousness

¹⁶⁸ Nikki Giovanni, *The Selected Poems of Nikki Giovanni* (New York: William Morrow, 1996), 92.

¹⁶⁹ Nikki Giovanni, “Woman Poem,” in *The Black Women: The Anthology*, ed. Toni Cade Bambara (New York: Signet, 1970), 13.

Movement influenced African students in their demand for Africana Studies departments on college campuses. While the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement was the artistic wing of the African Freedom Movement, the Black Studies Movement represented the formal educational wing. Both served in different spheres to create a cultural revolution in African America.

Semmes contends that the Harlem Renaissance and Black Arts/Consciousness Movement were “attempts to revitalize African American culture and they reflect a search for identity, self-definition, and a more satisfying way of life.”¹⁷⁰ The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement had its origins in the work of writers such as William Wells Brown, Francis Watkins Harper and Harlem Renaissance artists. These creative intellectuals desired to use art for the people’s sake and instill a sense of identity in the African masses. Paul Robeson, Margaret Walker Alexander, and Richard Wright continued this tradition of resistance art and consciousness-raising art, but the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement activists created the largest mass-based movement for a pervasive cultural transformation.

The central issues raised during the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement affected the community as a whole, especially students. As African students entered colleges and universities they began to question how the curriculum reflected their history and culture. In the same way that the artist had to be connected to the community, students said the campus should be connected to the community. Their struggle for an education in this dynamic period is the subject of the next chapter.

¹⁷⁰ Semmes, *Cultural Hegemony*, 195.

CHAPTER 4

BLACK STUDIES MOVEMENT

This chapter provides an outline of the Black Studies Movement from the origins of the discipline in the nineteenth century to the creation of Black Studies departments in the 1960s. The Black Studies Movement occurred at a period in American history that had a tremendous impact on college education in general and the education of Africans in America in particular. The college education of Africans in America began in the mid-nineteenth century; by the early twentieth century, the education of Africans was dominated by white philanthropy. Some African intellectuals in the nineteenth century responded to the cultural assault of European writers and educators with their own knowledge production. At the same time, others cooperated with the colonial education they received. The protracted battle against cultural hegemony progressed to the Black Studies Movement that occurred in the context of the Black Power and Black Arts/Consciousness Movements. The ideological and philosophical foundation of all three movements was the cultural nationalism emanating from the 1960s and 1970s.

Historical Overview of Higher Education for Africans

The most imposing educational paradigm developed in the nineteenth century as a prototype for education of some Africans is known as the Hampton-Tuskegee model.

One of the chief architects of the Hampton-Tuskegee model was a European named Samuel Chapman Armstrong. Chapman was the co-founder and principal of the Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia, and also the son of missionary parents. His missionary background and the time period in which he lived greatly influenced his racial views. He stated: “the [American] white race has had three centuries of experience in organizing the forces about him, political, social and physical. The Negro has had three centuries of experience in general demoralization and behind that, paganism.”¹⁷¹ Chapman adhered to a theory of Social Darwinism that was popular among aristocratic men of his time period. This theory posits that similar to biological organisms that evolve by “survival of the fittest” competition between individuals, groups, nations, and *races* results in social evolution. In the nineteenth century, a belief in Social Darwinism supported a racial hierarchy with Europeans superior and Africans as inferior. Chapman desired to create an education for Africans to provide them with ‘moral development’ which, in his opinion, would allow them to reach a comparable level of ‘civilization.’

Chapman provided the main theoretical framework and ideological thrust for two vital institutions that would be at the forefront of education for Africans in the U.S., the Hampton and Tuskegee Institutes. The education created for African students was referred to as industrial education. Industrial education prepared young Africans to work as domestic workers, agricultural laborers, and manual laborers at the turn of the twentieth century. A compatriot of Chapman’s and trustee of the Tuskegee Institute, William Baldwin, stated that with this educational model that Africans “will willingly

¹⁷¹ James Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 39.

fill the more menial positions, and do the heavy work, at less wages, than the American white man or any foreign race which has come to our shores.”¹⁷²

The industrial education that these men espoused hoped to instill in Africans an acceptance of their subordinate position in the southern United States. This education taught Africans to eschew political equality in favor of a racial system of hierarchy that placed them in a subservient position. Simultaneously, whites would occupy the positions of skilled labor while Africans would function in the system as unskilled and semi-skilled labor. Whether explicitly articulated or covertly formulated, this education was conceived and designed to help maintain the social structure following manumission from enslavement.

Samuel Chapman Armstrong selected a young African, Booker T. Washington, to be the spokesperson for his social philosophy. Washington eventually became the principal of the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama. In an infamous speech characterized as the Atlanta Exposition or ‘Compromise,’ he contended that “in all things purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to human progress.”¹⁷³ Washington espoused the conservative, accommodationist philosophy that was desired by northern industrial philanthropists who financed Tuskegee and other schools. He argued that Africans should not aggressively agitate for full political, economic, and social equality in the United

¹⁷² James D. Anderson, “Philanthropic Control Over Private Black Higher Education,” in *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad*, edited by Robert F. Arnove (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 155.

¹⁷³ Booker T. Washington, “Atlanta Exposition Address” *Call and Response: The Riverside Anthology of the African American Literary Tradition*. Ed. Patricia Hill-Liggins (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company College Division, 1998.) 682.

States. He believed that Africans must first acquire economic power then they would be granted other rights. Washington contended that if Africans were able to use their strengths as laborers they would be a dominant force in the economic structure.¹⁷⁴ He was a strategist who wanted Africans to gain the necessary technical skills at the Tuskegee Institute then use them to corner the labor market in certain areas. Booker T. was careful not to promote actions and ideas that were not perceived as a threat to his financial sponsors.

Elite European males in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries convened a series of conferences concerning the means of maintaining their own economic hegemony. Europeans in the United States arranged conferences to decide how the United States would relate to African people. In 1890 and 1891, two conferences were held at Lake Mohonk Resorts Hotel in the Catskills to discuss the 'Negro Question,' concentrating primarily on 'Negro education.'¹⁷⁵ The conferences were attended only by European males who were major figures in politics, business, and academia including prominent men such as Samuel Armstrong and President Rutherford B. Hayes. A debate ensued between European missionaries favoring a liberal arts education and northern philanthropists arguing for industrial education. The conferences did not resolve the issue of which direction for the higher education of Africans in the United States should take.

The first in a subsequent series of conferences for education in the south were held by northern philanthropists and southern white reformers in Capon Springs, Virginia,

¹⁷⁴ Donald Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery: Black Industrial Education, 1868-1915* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978), 47.

¹⁷⁵ Anderson, *Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, 70.

from 1898 to 1900.¹⁷⁶ The objective of these conferences was to solidify the pedagogical and social philosophy for southern education in the United States. These conferences were like the Lake Mohonk conferences with the exception of representatives of the missionary societies. The attendees at the conference decided that the best educational policy was the Hampton-Tuskegee model, which promoted African subordination and white supremacy.

The Conferences for Education in the South convened in Capon Springs, Virginia, mark a turning point in the education of Africans in terms of the role of northern philanthropy. From the conferences emerged two organizations that figured prominently in the history of education of Africans. In 1901, the Southern Education Board was created primarily as a propaganda organization to organize southern educators. In 1902, the General Education Board was established by John D. Rockefeller Sr. to allocate funds to educational institutions and state departments of education.¹⁷⁷ Both educational organizations primarily supported institutions that followed the Hampton-Tuskegee model.

Several foundations came under the control of the General Education Board, which included the Peabody Fund, Slater Fund, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Fund, Carnegie Corporation, Rosenwald Fund, and the Phelps-Stokes Fund.¹⁷⁸ The creation of these boards meant the consolidation of the finances of the United States' ruling families under one entity. The Euro-American plutocrats viewed African labor as crucial to the sustenance of the southern political economy as well as their own economic interests in the south. In their view, industrial education would keep

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 83.

¹⁷⁷ Anderson, *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad*, 153.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 154.

Africans out of politics that inflamed racial animosities, thereby, destabilizing the south and their economic investments.

In most instances the industrial philanthropists did not support the higher education of Africans except in the rarest of circumstances. In the early twentieth century, industrial philanthropy conceded to certain notions advanced by missionary societies in order to further their own interests. In 1915, the General Education Board convened a conference that “represented the major parties that had to be confronted in any movement to reorganize and control Black higher education.”¹⁷⁹ This conference was the first interracial conference of its kind that concerned the education of African people, but was still controlled by Europeans. The meeting was attended by principals and presidents of universities with the intention of creating a form of higher education for Africans amenable to European plutocratic interests. They chose Fisk University as an ideal type of to fulfill their objective. Fisk University was founded by European missionaries. European missionaries believed Africans could become ‘civilized’ if exposed to a New England ‘classical’ curriculum. The classical curriculum was Eurocentric. It focused on the topics of Greek, Latin, European history, and Literature to the exclusion of African languages and history. Anderson postulates: “the philanthropists hoped that their economic hold on Fisk would squelch the school’s equalitarian tradition and allow them to develop a more conservative Black professional class.”¹⁸⁰ The board of trustees was slowly replaced with Africans and Europeans who would willingly follow the mission of creating accommodationist leadership. Once the trustees appointed Fayette A. McKenzie as president, they began

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 165.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 170.

a campaign to raise a two-million-dollar endowment for the school and pay off its debt.

At the same time that colonial education was being created for Africans in the United States, it was transplanted to the African continent through European colonial systems to institute white supremacy and African subordination. For instance, the British colonies were in need of an education that would help maintain control of the ‘natives.’ Donald Spivey asserts: “the British colonial office wished to become as familiar as possible with the work of Hampton and Tuskegee by sending representatives to the American South.”¹⁸¹ The American south served as a training ground for industrial philanthropy to perfect colonial education, and subsequently to transfer it in other parts of the world. The General Education Board created a subsidiary- the International Education Board-with almost identical membership. Similarly, “the French policy aimed to leave the masses uneducated and to groom a select few *evolues*, co-opted as loyal upholders of French culture and colonial rule.”¹⁸² In comparison to the British colonial policy, French policy had a more centralized educational system and uniform curriculum with the mission of assimilating the ‘natives’ compared to the British colonial education. Similar to the United States, the colonial education policy of the British, French, and Belgians asserted that African culture was inherently inferior. Therefore, Africans attempted to counter the domination of their educational process by producing scholarship and institutions of their own design.

¹⁸¹ Spivey, *Schooling for the New Slavery*, 118.

¹⁸² N’Dri Assie-Lumumba, *Higher Education in Africa: Crisis, Reform, and Transformation* (n.p.: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2006), 24.

Origins and Objectives of Black Studies

The student struggle for Black Studies departments on college campuses is part and parcel of the intergenerational struggle to create a liberatory education. The dominant Euro-American society attempted to downplay the role of the African contribution to human civilization and legally outlawed reading among Africans in the antebellum south. Renowned historians, John Hope Franklin and Alfred Moss, contend only 1 in 50 enslaved Africans in the southwest could read and write, and 5,000 of 400,000 in Georgia were literate.¹⁸³ In the nineteenth century, the negation of the African contribution to human civilization was primarily carried out through the distortion and exclusion of Africa's history and culture. A group of African scholars emerged to counteract these distortions. Dr. James Turner asserts:

Though we refer to a modern stage in Black Studies, we must hasten to point out the fact that, contrary to broad popularly held belief, Africana Studies is not a recent development . . . the field has a rich intellectual legacy extending at least to the early nineteenth century, based on the works of such people as Edward Wilmont Blyden, Martin Delaney, Francis Harper, Benjamin Brawley, and Casely Hayford.¹⁸⁴

During the nineteenth century European and Euro-American writers wrote histories that attempted to justify the enslavement of African people by denying the history of Africans. As active agents, African intellectuals wrote histories that explored the African background from the Nile Valley to enslavement. For example, in *The Past and the Present Condition, and the Destiny of the Colored Race*, Henry

¹⁸³ John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, 8th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 156.

¹⁸⁴ James Turner, *The Next Decade: Theoretical and Research Issues In Africana Studies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), vii.

Highland Garnett, wrote “Princes shall come out of Egypt, and Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.”¹⁸⁵ This is an often repeated biblical passage by African intellectuals that demonstrates that Africans during another era, as far back as the biblical period, were prominent on the world stage. The enslavement process attempted to sever Africans in America from their African heritage; African intellectuals worked to reconnect with their heritage.¹⁸⁶

The formal intellectual and institutional foundation of Africana Studies began in the early twentieth century with Africans who received a formal education at many of the most prestigious universities in America. W. E. B. Du Bois is recognized as a seminal figure that shaped the foundation of the discipline of Africana Studies. Early in his academic career, “Dubois recognized that the development of what is now known as Black Studies could not be possible under the conditions then existing nor could any correct interpretation of Black people be done by anyone other than trained

¹⁸⁵ Henry Highland, “*The Past and the Present Condition, and the Destiny of the Colored Race*,” in *Black Nationalism in America*, ed. Garnett, Bracey, John, August Meier, and Elliott Rudwick (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970), 120.

¹⁸⁶ Greg Carr, “The African-Centered Philosophy of History: An Exploratory Essay on the Genealogy of Foundationalist Historical Thought and African Nationalist Identity Construction” in *African World History Project: The Preliminary Challenge*, ed. Jacob Carruthers & Leon Harris (Los Angeles: ASCAC, 1997). Greg Carr states this “reflects the fact that, by seeking a historical consciousness which is grounded in the *long view* of African history, African-centered historical thinkers have been able to maintain the responsibilities of the historical thinker in African society.” He compares this responsibility to *dieles* or so-called griots in African societies prior to enslavement. pp. 290-291.

Black scholars.”¹⁸⁷ Du Bois recognized the intellectual and cultural value of scholarship about Africans from an African perspective. The dominant (traditional) disciplines were so hegemonic and racist in nature and orientation, that only African intellectuals could produce scholarship that reflected their experience. He completed an important historical and sociological work called *The Philadelphia Negro* in 1899 that was one of the first empirical works on African life in the United States.¹⁸⁸ This was a pioneering study conducted by Du Bois, similar to *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935), which hoped to observe the interiority of African life. In addition, Du Bois was the first African in America to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He later attended the University of Berlin. Therefore, Du Bois received a New England classical education. Later in his life he wrote books on African history in Africa such as *The Negro* and *Africa and the World*. Also, he incorporated a Marxist interpretation into his political analysis. Throughout his life Du Bois continued to expand his knowledge base and develop his political analysis. In 1912, similar to

Du Bois, Carter G. Woodson received a Ph.D. in History from Harvard University.

Carter G. Woodson exemplifies the notion of academic excellence and institution building for the discipline of Africana Studies; his numerous publications and organizations helped to document the African experience. In 1915,

Woodson organized the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (name was amended to ASALH) with the following purposes (1) to promote historical research; (2) to publish books on Black life and history; (3) to promote the study of

¹⁸⁷ James Turner & Steven McGann, “Black Studies as an Integral In Tradition African-American Intellectual History,” *Journal of Negro Education* 49, no. 1 (1980), 52.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

Blacks through clubs and schools; (4) to bring about harmony between the races by interpreting the one to the other.¹⁸⁹

This organization offered the opportunity for African intellectuals to meet and discuss the scholarship they and others were producing as well as critique the level and interpretation that they presented. The organization wanted to develop a community connection through the promotion of teaching their work in schools for the purpose of community uplift. Over the past ninety years, the organization has published the *Journal of Negro History* that is devoted to historical and literary research concerning Africans in Africa, the Caribbean, and Americas.¹⁹⁰ This journal and others like it produced by Africans are important because knowledge production also has power implications in terms of politics and economics.

In the early twentieth century, African intellectuals began to create new institutions and attempted to transform the universities like Howard University so that they served their interests of producing scholarship that permitted them to interpret their own experience. Arturo Schomburg was another path setter in institution building who served as a pioneer for Africana Studies scholars. Schomburg stated: “We have chairs of almost everything, and believe we lack nothing, but we sadly need a chair of Negro history. The white institutions have their chair of history; it is the history of their people and whenever the Negro is mentioned the textbooks dwindle down to a footnote.”¹⁹¹ Schomburg was known in Harlem as a bibliophile who knew

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Pamela Ross, “Black Students, Black Studies: Education for Liberation” (master’s thesis, Cornell University, 1991), 4.

the importance of preserving the history and knowledge of African people. The preservation carried out by him and other scholars was necessary in order for future generations to tell the story of Africans, not only in America, but around the world. In 1922, William Leo Hansberry established a series of courses on ‘African Civilizations of Ancient Africa’ in the History Department at Howard University. The courses were titled: (1) Negro Peoples in their Cultures and Civilizations, (2) The Ancient Civilizations of Ethiopia, and (3) The Civilization of West Africa in Medieval and Early Modern Times.¹⁹² The introduction of these courses at a HBCU was a major feat considering that Howard was under the auspices of the United States government with a substantial amount of funding from white philanthropy. These courses received an enthusiastic response from African students and served as a precursor to African studies. As shown in chapter 1, African Studies has a different history and ideological orientation than Black Studies.

A large portion of the scholarship and schools of nineteenth and early twentieth century educators and scholars was an attempt by European-Americans to define African education. Education as established by Euro-America was essentially a tool of institutional white supremacy that controlled the mind of Africans. Carter G. Woodson states:

When you control a man’s thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not to tell him to stand over here or go yonder. He will find his ‘proper place’ and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without

¹⁹² William Leo Hansberry, *Pillars in Ethiopian History* (Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1974), 6.

being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his own special benefit. His education makes it necessary.¹⁹³

The educational process in the United States tried to socialize Africans to accept their subordinate position through the denigration of African culture and the veneration of Western culture. James Turner observes: “an education that does not teach people liberation is an education that is part of their oppression.”¹⁹⁴ In other words, education can be a double-edged sword that is a continuation of the status quo or serves to revolutionize society. Turner continues: “the most tragic failure of education in relationship to Blacks has been that it has not prepared Blacks to live within their community. It has not prepared Blacks to be able to positively relate to other Black people.”¹⁹⁵ The education that Africans receive in the United States is culturally alienating because of its Eurocentric nature that simply transmits the dominant Euro-American culture. During the 1960s, African students wanted to create an education to counteract decades of mis-education.

Africana Studies was designed as a means to empower African students to make positive contributions to their community following their graduation. They wanted to create an education for liberation that would provide them with the analytical skills to critique a racist American society. Maulana Karenga, pioneer in the discipline, has outlined five basic objectives of the discipline:

- To teach the Black experience in its historical and current unfolding

¹⁹³ Carter G. Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (New York: Arno Press, 1968), xiii.

¹⁹⁴ James Turner, “Black Nationalism, Black Studies, and Black Liberation,” An Interview with James Turner, *Milwaukee Courier*, 1969, 6.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

- To assemble and create a body of knowledge which contributes to intellectual and political emancipation
- To create intellectuals who were dedicated to community service and development rather than vulgar careerism
- To cultivate, maintain, and continue the expansion of a mutually beneficial relationship between the campus and community
- To establish and affirm its position in the academy as a discipline essential to the educational project and the conception of a quality education¹⁹⁶

In the mid-1960s African students in America launched a national movement to create an education for liberation.

Two Case Studies: Howard and San Francisco State

The Black Studies Movement emerged within the matrix of the Black Power and Black Arts/Consciousness Movement. In addition it was a project to transform an education of assimilation and subservience by proposing an education relevant for Africans in America. It was a national movement that began in 1966 and by its end in 1973, over two-thirds of four-year colleges offered Africana Studies courses and over 1200 college and universities around the country offered 5,611 courses.¹⁹⁷ The movement begins when San Francisco students begin to teach courses in the Experimental College in 1966. This study chronicles the movement at Howard University and San Francisco State University. Howard University is examined

¹⁹⁶ Malauna Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies* (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 2003), 20-21.

¹⁹⁷ Jeffrey Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 137.

because of its status as a predominantly African institution in which students attempted to remold it from the so-called 'Black Harvard' to a truly 'Black University.' San Francisco State University is relevant to this study because it was the site of the first Africana Studies Department in the United States.

Howard University has played a pivotal role in the education of Africans in America. Sometimes referred to as the 'Black Harvard,' in the 1960s African students became critical of the type of education provided by predominantly African institutions. One student stated: "Young Negroes don't want a rejected culture. They don't want a used culture any more than they want a used education, a used car or a used white woman."¹⁹⁸ The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement permeated campuses so that African students began to repudiate the cultural bias within the curriculum at these universities. Students affiliated with RAM were integral to the student struggle at Howard University. "The Black Guards, RAM youth leagues, were to organize African-American history clubs to teach Black history."¹⁹⁹ In February 1967, Dr. Nathan Hare and Howard students formed the Black Power Committee. They created the Black Power Manifesto, which called for "the overthrow of the 'Negro college' and its replacement by 'a militant Black university which will counteract the white-washing Black students now receive in 'Negro' and white institutions."²⁰⁰ The Black Power Committee helped to start a protest with the Students Rights Organization when U.S. General Hershey spoke on campus. When he began to speak students ran on stage using a slogan of the Revolutionary Action

¹⁹⁸ Van DeBurg, *New Day in Babylon*, 70-71.

¹⁹⁹ Stanford, *RAM*, 124.

²⁰⁰ Lawrence de Graff, "Howard: The Evolution of a Black Student Revolt," in *Protest! Student Activism in America*, edited by Julian Foster & Duward Long (New York: William Morrow, 1970), 326.

Movement and yelled “America is the Black man’s true battleground.”²⁰¹ One of the protesting students included the recent homecoming queen Robin Gregory. Gregory made history as the first homecoming queen with a natural hairstyle. “During that summer of 1967 some 20 students and 6 professors, including Nathan Hare, received letters of dismissal from the president. All of the students had been active in the demonstration of the spring of 1967.”²⁰² In the spring and summer, a coalition of Black Consciousness organizations formed an organization called “Ujamaa”—Kiswahili for ‘familyhood or togetherness.’ On-and off-campus events contributed to the increasing radicalization of African students. For example, on February 8, 1968 South Carolina state highway patrolmen killed three students and wounded thirty others on the campus of South Carolina State College in Orangeburg while demonstrating against segregation at a campus bowling alley. The event became known as the ‘Orangeburg Massacre.’

In solidarity with the Orangeburg students and regarding their own campus issues, Howard students held a demonstration protesting poor campus leadership and inadequate curriculum. The students wrote a letter that demanded a set of reforms, such as the resignation of University President James Nabrit, Vice-President Stanton, and Dean Frank Snowden: a student judiciary committee: reinstatement of professors:

²⁰¹ Stanford, *RAM*, 124.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 328.

African history courses: and more.²⁰³ A three-week ultimatum was given to the

²⁰³ Clayborne Carson, *The Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader* (Boston, MA: Penguin Books 1991), 463-464.

“1. We demand the immediate resignation of the following Howard administrators on the grounds of their incompetence and obvious unwillingness to work towards a Black Howard University.

- a. President James Nabrit
- b. Vice President Stanton Wormley
- c. Liberal Arts Dean Frank Snowden

2. We demand the institution of the following curriculum changes by next semester.

- a. We demand that Howard should be the center of Afro-American thought. We demand that the economic, government, literature and social science departments begin to place more emphasis on how these disciplines may be used to effect the liberation of Black people in this country.

- b. We demand the institution of non-prerequisite courses in Negro History.

- c. We demand the immediate abolishment of Freshmen Assembly.

3. We demand the immediate reinstatement of all Howard instructors who have been unjustifiably dismissed for their political activism including:

Dr. Nathan Hare

Dr. David Hammond

Dr. Adress Taylor

Dr. Harold Shipper

Samuel Carcione

Dr. Alan Lefcowitz

Keith Lowe

Dr. Ivan Eames

Measures must be satisfied be instituted to insure that all instructors be given fair hearing

if considered for dismissal.

4. We demand the institution of Black Awareness Research Institute at Howard University.

administration to respond appropriately to the list of demands. The university formed an *ad hoc* committee that recommended the formation of another committee that the students viewed as insufficient to address their needs. Therefore, students protested at the March 1, 1968, Charter's Day commemoration by passing out a leaflet and interrupting the president to read a student created document called "Definition of a Black University."²⁰⁴ The document had a "two-sided nature of student demands, combining the transformation of Howard into a Black University and reforms within the existing structure," essentially reiterating the previous demands.²⁰⁵

The student struggle culminated in the takeover of the administration building following a rally attended by over 1,000 people. The takeover began on Wednesday,

5. Students are trained to be leaders only by learning to accept responsibility. We demand therefore that student autonomy that is student control in matters that concern only students. Therefore we demand:

a. The student judiciary and codification of rules presently submitted to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee should be instituted.

b. That students must be authorized to control the budgeting and expenditure of the students activity fee.

6. Howard must be made relevant to the Black community. The University campus must be made more available to all Black people and programs must be instituted to aid the Black community in the struggle against oppression.

7. We demand that Howard personnel begin to treat students like Black people should treat Black people, with respect and courtesy."

²⁰⁴ De Graff, 333

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 334.

but on Saturday, March 23, students accepted the four concessions offered by the administration: student control of a judiciary that would try the Charter Day demonstrators, promise of changes to make Howard “more attuned to the times and mood of its people”, a student-faculty board to work on student complaints, and amnesty for the sit-inners.²⁰⁶

The Howard University struggle for a relevant African education or/and demand for a ‘Black University’ is an overlooked, but important part of the origin of the Black Studies Movement. Adrienne Manns Israel contends that “most people associate the movement with Black students on White campuses, but it is actually a much older movement starting in the late nineteenth century. Its roots were in Black institutions! Usually, HBCUs are discounted, but in actuality were integral in raising issues in this area.”²⁰⁷

There were some critics of the concept of Black Studies departments, whether at historically white or African schools. They believed it was not possible to have a radical and relevant education in the intellectual centers of white supremacy: American universities. Haki Madhubuti argued that

the reality of the whole mess whatever is accomplished is still in the final analysis, the white boy’s. Yes, he paid for it, so it is his. This is to say that if any competent Afrikan-American studies program comes out of Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Brown, or what have you it belongs to those respective schools. This means that all the time,

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 338.

²⁰⁷ Natalie Hodge, *Fighting for Our Education, Fighting for Our Future: Black Women’s Leadership in the Black Studies Movement* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 2003), 55.

energy and research that went into the development of programs on white campuses are in the interests of the white boy our supposed enemy.²⁰⁸

On November 13, 1968, Howard University hosted a conference, “Towards a Black University” that discussed these and similar issues. The *Black World* provided a forum for African intellectuals over several years to discuss the definition of a “Black University.” George Davis wrote in the publication that

the concept of a Black university is revolutionary. It emerges out of the frustrations of Black students, educators, activists, and community leaders who recognize that the present institutions of higher learning have no relevance to the total Black community and who realize the contradictions of allowing themselves to be acculturated into a society which debilitates Black people.²⁰⁹

Several educators, activists, and students attempted to establish independent institutions such as the Malcolm X Liberation University and the Institute of the Black World.

As the first Black Studies Department in the United States, San Francisco State has a special meaning to the discipline. In the 1960s, students “referred to San Francisco State College as ‘the Freak Factory’ because it seemed to them it turned out petty bureaucrats or ‘freaks’ for the establishment of the state of California.”²¹⁰ The start of the student struggle for Black Studies at San Francisco State begins in the spring of

²⁰⁸ Madhubuti, *From Plan to Planet, Life Studies: The Need for Afrikan Minds and Institutions*, 58.

²⁰⁹ George Davis, “The Howard University Conference,” *Negro Digest* (March 1969): 46.

²¹⁰ Dirkan Karagueuzian, *Blow it Up!: The Black Student Revolt at San Francisco State College and the Emergence of Dr. Hayakaw* (Boston: Gambit, 1971), 112.

1966 when the Negro Student Association changed its name to the Black Student Union (BSU). The student organization began to move towards African Nationalism represented by its name change. There was also new leadership in the organization like Jimmy Garret, Jerry Vernado, Black Panther Minister of Education George Murray, and Jack Alexis. That fall, the Black Students Union began the Black Arts and Culture Series in the Experimental College.²¹¹ The Experimental College was a set of nontraditional courses taught by members of the Black Student Union.

In the spring semester of 1967, students made their first attempt to create Black Studies “when they presented the Instructional Policies Committee and later the Academic Senate with a proposal for a Black Studies Institute.”²¹² In the fall of that year, African students had a physical altercation with the editor of the campus newspaper because of disrespectful comments in the student newspaper, *The Gator*, towards the current BSU president, former BSU President, and Muhammad Ali.²¹³ The President of the University resigned in February of 1968 due to this and other disturbances on the campus. That same month before his resignation, Dr. Nathan Hare, a former faculty member at Howard University was hired to help coordinate the creation of an Africana Studies Department. Several professors on the faculty such as John Bunzel protested to the new president Robert Smith that the new department was “more political than academic.”

²¹¹ John Bunzel, “Black Studies at San Francisco State,” in *Confrontation: The Student Rebellion and the Universities*, edited by Daniel Bell & Irving Kristol (London: Basic Books, 1969), 27.

²¹² Karagueuzian, *Blow it Up!*, 67.

²¹³ James McEvoy & Abraham Miller, ed., “On Strike...Shut It Down,” in *Black Power and Student Rebellion* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1969), 14; Karagueuzian, *Blow It Up!*, 51.

The students managed to secure the support of several on-and off-campus groups. They had the on-campus support of the Third World Liberation Front and white radical organizations like the Students for a Democratic Society. The Third World Liberation Front was a coalition composed of African, Latino, and Asian student organizations. In addition, due to their community activities, like tutorial programs, the African students had the support of the community members in their struggle for a department. On November 1, the president of the university complied with the chancellor's order to suspend George Murray, a Black Panther minister of education, a leader in the BSU, and part-time instructor at the university.²¹⁴ On November 4, the students announced a list of ten non-negotiable demands centered on several issues like the creation of a Black Studies department and admission of African students to

²¹⁴ Karagueuzian, *Blow Up It!*, 126.

the college.²¹⁵ During the strike, there were several on-campus clashes between students, community members, and the police that led to the resignation of President Robert Smith and hiring of a Japanese American, S.I. Hayakawa. In December of

²¹⁵ Ibid., 27.

1. That all Black Studies courses being taught through various other departments be immediately part of the Black Studies Department and that all the instructors in this department receive full-time pay.
2. That Dr. Hare, Chairman of the Black Studies Department receive a full professorship and a comparable salary according to his qualifications.
3. That there be a Department of Black Studies which will grant a Bachelor's Degree in Black Studies; that the Black Studies Department Chairman, faculty and staff have the sole power to hire and fire without the interference of the racist administration and the Chancellor.
4. That all used slots for Black students from Fall 1968 under the Special Admissions Program be filled in Spring 1969.
5. The all Black Students who wish to, be admitted in Fall 1969.
6. That twenty (20) full time teaching positions be allocated to the Departments of Black Studies.
7. That Dr. Helen Bedesem be replaced in the positions of Financial Aid Officer and that a Black person be hired to direct it and that Third World people have the power to determine how it will be administered.
8. That no disciplinary action will be administered in any way to students, workers, teachers, or administrators during and after the strike as a consequence of their participation in the strike.
9. That the California State College Trustees not be allowed to dissolve any Black programs on or of the San Francisco State College Campus.
10. That George Murray maintain his teaching position on this campus for the 1968-69 academic year.

1968, a new Black Studies department was approved. The strike ended in March of 1969, lasting a total of 134 school days.

Ideational Relationship of Movements

Black political and cultural nationalism was central components of the Black Power and Black Arts/Consciousness Movements, which helped Africans to combat the dominance and the ethnocentrism of Euro-America on a political and artistic level. The primary ideological influence of the two movements on African student's notion of education during the Black Studies Movement was cultural nationalism. Cultural nationalists argue that Africans in America have a way of life distinct from Euro-Americans and that its revitalization is critical to the African Freedom Movement. But "generations of American social scientists have rejected this notion, preferring instead the position that Afro-American culture did not exist, that it represented a 'pathological' version of the larger American culture, or that it was part of the larger 'culture of poverty'."²¹⁶ When African students in America entered predominantly white campuses they were further assaulted by a Eurocentric bias in the curriculum, which treated their culture as marginal to World and American civilization. The student struggle for Black Studies was much more than an exercise in educational reform but, as Tyehimba states, was an attempt to "articulate an African worldview."²¹⁷ The experience of Africans in America provided them with a unique way of thinking, being, and seeing the world that differed from other groups and offered an insight into the human experience. Maulana Karenga asserts that the "Organization US and the other cultural nationalist organizations, called for a focus on

²¹⁶ Pinkney, *Red, Black, and Green*, 127.

²¹⁷ Tyehimba, *Challenging White Cultural Hegemony*, 3.

cultural grounding, studying and recovering African culture and extracting from it models of excellence and possibility.”²¹⁸ The Black Studies Movement wanted to reorient African students in America from the deification of Europe to studying the contributions of Africans to World civilization. In addition, Black Power advocates hoped the knowledge of the African freedom struggle would energize African students to use their education for social change.

The primary objective of the Black Power Movement was the political and economic empowerment of Africans in America. The proponents of Black Power recognized the role of culture as a weapon to realize the goals of the Black Power Movement. William Van De Burg states that “the Black Power Movement was not exclusively cultural, but it was essentially cultural. It was a revolt in and of culture that was manifested in a variety of forms and intensities.”²¹⁹ Also, Jeffrey Ogbar in his study of Black Power argues that “cultural nationalism was the central thrust of the Black Power Movement.”²²⁰ For example, organizations like the Organization US (Kawiada), the Republic of New Afrika (Ujamaa), and Black Panther Party (Ministry of Culture) had a cultural component to their political platform.

As shown in chapters 2 and 3, Malcolm X was highly influential on all three social movements, and he advocated for a cultural revolution to transform the consciousness and instill a strong sense of African identity into African people. In *Malcolm X Talks To Young People*, Jack Barnes described an interview with Malcolm:

M: The greatest mistake of the movement has been trying to organize sleeping people around specific goals. You have to wake the people up first, then you’ll get

²¹⁸ Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies*, 12.

²¹⁹ Van DeBurg, *New Day in Babylon*, 9.

²²⁰ Ogbar, *Black Power*, 94.

action.

Q: Wake them up to their exploitation?

M: No, to their humanity, to their own worth, and to their heritage.²²¹

According to Malcolm, a strong sense of identity provides Africans in America with a feeling for their own human worth and dignity. The objective of stripping Africans of their identity and history was to remove of their own sense of humanity. Similarly, Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator and activist, discusses conscientizacao, which “refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality.” Conscientizacao, he contends,

“makes it possible for men [women] to enter the historical process as responsible Subjects, conscientizacao enrolls them in the search for affirmation and thus avoids fanaticism. The awakening of critical consciousness leads the way to the expression of social discontents precisely because discontents are real components of an oppressive situation.”²²²

Oppressed people tend to view themselves as victims or objects that do not have the capacity to act to change their condition. A truly liberating education helps them to critically assess their situation. If their education is successful, they lose their fear of freedom and embrace their own humanity. Frantz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* was instrumental in the Black Power and Black Studies Movement. Fanon wrote, “The claim to a national culture in the past does not only rehabilitate that nation and serve as a justification for the hope of a future national culture. In the sphere of

²²¹ Malcolm X, *Malcolm X Talks To Young People* (New York, NY: Pathfinder Press, 1989), 28.

²²² Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2000), 21.

psycho-affective equilibrium it is responsible for an important change in the native.²²³ The distortion of African history can lead Africans to believe that without Euro-Americans they would ‘revert to savagery.’ Therefore, the oppression of Africans by Euro-Americans is considered a benevolent and kind gesture. The study of history then becomes a necessity in order to construct a liberating political and economic program. Elijah Muhammad stated “the American Negro is without knowledge of self. You are a so-called Negro because you are ‘not’ a Negro We have been to schools where they do not teach us knowledge of self. We have been to schools of our slave-master[‘s] children.”²²⁴ Before the Black Power Movement Africans misidentified themselves as negro’s because they did not know their identity. Euro-Americans do not have the ability or desire to give Africans an education to gain knowledge of self. Therefore they give Africans what amounts to a slave education or an education that keeps them in a state of enslavement.

During the student strike at San Francisco State, Kwame Toure, former chairperson of SNCC, spoke to the students about the importance of ideology. In reference to their struggle for Black Studies he said. “All of the courses we read are riddled with white racism. Different ideology means ideology rooted in Black Nationalism, not just adding Black people to white history. That’s a subterfuge. It’s an insidious subterfuge.”²²⁵ This meant that it was not adequate just for Africans to teach the courses, but also to transmit an ideology relevant to the lives of Africans in America. During the Black Power Movement there were sometimes heated debates about the role of culture. The student-intellectuals knew the critical role of culture in

²²³ Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 210.

²²⁴ Muhammad, “Message to the Black Man in America,” 34.

²²⁵ Karagueuzian, *Blow It Up!*, 102

the struggle. Student-Activist James Turner stated: “nationalism can be revolutionary or conservative and reactionary: such as Black capitalism and romantic culturalism. It is reactionary to think that culture can gain us political freedom and economic progress. But it is equally reactionary to deny the cultural dimensions of our political struggle.”²²⁶

As a cultural nationalist movement in tone, the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement was integral to the ideological conception of the discipline of Africana Studies. Several important figures in the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement were on faculty during and after the student struggle for Africana Studies on campuses. For example, at San Francisco State, “the BSU approached Sonia Sanchez about teaching African American Literature based on her experience as teacher, a poet, and participant in BARTS.”²²⁷ The students in the BSU knew the Sanchez’s experience as an activist and cultural worker could add immensely to the nascent department. Also, “the BSU brought [Amiri] Baraka to found the Black Communications Project (BCP). Funded by the student government under the BSU sponsorship, the BCP attempted to bridge the gap between campus and community by putting on plays, poetry readings, and other events in the Bay Area African American neighborhoods.”²²⁸ The BSU brought Askia Toure, a pioneer in the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement, to teach at the university as well. Baraka, Sanchez, and Toure added greatly to the cultural understanding of the students.

The Black Power and Black Arts/Consciousness Movements also affected the demands students made upon their universities. Arguably, the most important affect

²²⁶ Turner, “Black Nationalism, Black Studies, and Black Liberation,” 7.

²²⁷ Smethurst, *Black Arts Movement*, 279.

²²⁸ Ibid.

Black Power movements had upon the Black Studies Movement, is that it helped students to understand the political nature of education. The students came to see that education was not a neutral process, but serves a particular groups interest. They wanted to transform their Eurocentric universities to centers that would create Black Power activists. The Black Power Movement was a movement that focused on political and economic control of African communities. Two demands at San Francisco State University were:

That there be a Department of Black Studies which will grant a Bachelor's Degree in Black Studies; that the Black Studies Department Chairman, faculty and staff have the sole power to hire and fire without the interference of the racist administration and the Chancellor.

That Dr. Helen Bedesem be replaced in the positions of Financial Aid Officer and that a Black person be hired to direct it and that Third World people have the *power* to determine how it will be administered.²²⁹

African students wanted control of their education instead of leaving it in the hands of others with ulterior motives. Across the country, students protested and demanded departments that they could shape in order to create an education for liberation. In the course of their protest on campuses, students demanded control of other areas of campus life as well.

The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement directly influenced the Black Studies Movement by three philosophical concepts: acquiring 'knowledge for the people's sake, knowledge of African history, and education that leads to awareness/consciousness. The demands of students at Howard University offer great examples:

²²⁹ Karagueuzian, *Blow It Up!*, 27.

We demand that Howard should be the center of Afro-American thought. We demand that the economic, government, literature and social science departments begin to place more emphasis on how these disciplines may be used to affect the liberation of Black people in this country.

Howard must be made relevant to the Black community. The University campus must be made more available to all Black people and programs must be instituted to aid the Black community in the struggle against oppression.”²³⁰

African creative intellectuals, like Larry Neal and others, wanted the artists and their work to be connected to the community. According to the creative intellectuals, artists should not be detached from the community and should serve the interests of the community where the artists were born and raised. Malauna Karenga referred to this artistic position as ‘art for the people’s sake.’ Similarly, students believed in the maxim, ‘knowledge for the people’s sake.’ As an institution predominantly of people of African descent, students concluded that the university should be responsive to the needs of the African population. Prior to the Black Studies Movement, Howard University attempted to emulate Euro-America culture, particularly pedagogical models of universities like Harvard. The education at Ivy League institutions was designed to serve the needs of Euro-Americans, not Africans. The students wanted to learn about their own history and use education to generate an African consciousness. For example, they stated, “We demand the institution of nonprerequisite courses in Negro History. We demand the institution of Black Awareness Research Institute at Howard University.”²³¹

²³⁰ Ibid., 463-464.

²³¹ DeGraff, 463-464.

A core aspect of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement was the restoration of historical memory. The Black Studies Movement had the same objective. The students hoped to achieve this goal by developing history courses at their respective universities. In their attempt to be the 'Black Harvard,' Howard did not adequately teach the history of African people. Also, the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement wanted to develop an African consciousness among Africans in America. Similarly, African students in America wanted their university to use its research to cultivate African consciousness in its students. African consciousness among graduating students would allow them to combat white oppression in a racist society.

Throughout its history, the African Liberation Movement has expressed sexism and patriarchy in its gender dynamics. But nonetheless, African women in America were not acquiescent, but were self-defining and central to the African Liberation Movement in the United States. The Black Power, Black Arts/Consciousness and Black Studies Movements manifested the aforementioned gender issues. As one of the largest organizations of the Black Power Movement, the Black Panther Party is a great example of the movement's gender dynamics. A leader in the BPP, Eldridge Cleaver wrote: "[W]e have to recognize our women as equals . . . revolutionary standards of principles demand that we go to great lengths to see that disciplinary action is taken on all levels against those who manifest male chauvinism behavior."²³²The BPP was one of the first African organizations in America to have an official position in favor of gender equality. Women and men were represented at all levels of the BPP, including the election of Elaine Brown as chairperson. At the same time the actions of all male members did not align with the official position of the

²³² Mumia Abu-Jamal, *We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press), 161.

BPP. For example, BPP member Regina Jennings was harassed by the captain of her party chapter because she declined his sexual advances.

The cultural revolution in the 1960s and 1970s was organized, led, and supported by women and men. In the literary portion of the movement there were many prominent women such as Sonia Sanchez, Nikki Giovanni, June Jordan, Mari Evans, Jayne Cortez, and Toni Cade Bambara to name a few. In 1970, Bambara published *The Black Woman: An Anthology* “due to the her frustrations over the lack of interest given to the needs of Black women within the Black Nationalist and Women’s Liberation Movements.”²³³ Similar to the Black Power Movement, African women while confronting patriarchy and white supremacy asserted their right as Africans to be a part of one of the most important cultural movements of the twentieth century.

The Black Studies Movement expressed the same gender dynamics as its counterparts in the Black Power and Black Arts/Consciousness Movements. The gender dynamics of the movements included the assertion of African women’s rights to contribute as rank and file members and leaders and patriarchy within the movement. For example, in 1967, Carolyn Carter, editor of *The Hilltop*, the official student publication of Howard University, wrote the first article on Black Power. Adrienne Manns Israel, student leader at Howard states, “many thought a woman shouldn’t be the editor of the paper or have any authority over men for that matter.”²³⁴ Andrea McLaughlin, a student-leader at Cornell University stated, “women in the Black student movement were treated respectfully overall by our male counterparts because we demanded it and insisted upon it.”²³⁵ The gender dynamics of all three

²³³ Hodge, *Fighting for Our Education*, 83.

²³⁴ Ibid, 75.

²³⁵ Ibid, 76.

movements were very often complex. Men were, at times, reactionary in their gender assumptions, but at other times, respected and fought their own sexism in order that African women contribute to all three movements.

The Black Studies Movement was a direct challenge to the Eurocentric bias and distortion of the education of Africans in America. African students wanted to create a relevant and liberatory education that would allow them to be fully functional in their own communities. The curriculum, whether at predominantly white or African institutions, alienated them from their community and the society and world at large. They were inspired and influenced by the Black Power and Black Arts/Consciousness Movements, which were at their core, predicated on Black cultural nationalist theory and practice. They hoped to create an education that would help them to become agents of social change, not solely to provide them with a means of social mobility.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the Black Studies Movement occurred in a dynamic time period that witnessed massive social protest, educational transformation, and artistic production that impacted virtually all sectors of American society, but particularly the African community. It is an examination of three social movements that were a direct confrontation to the dominant ideology and ethos of the United States. In this study, I argued that the philosophy of self-determination of the Black Power Movement and cultural revolution of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement impacted the ideas and development of African students in the Black Studies Movement. All three were fundamentally Black-political-cultural-nationalist movements, asserting that Africans in America have a distinct way of life that must be preserved and protected, and allowed to flourish in order for African people to prosper.

This study was informed by the book *Cultural Hegemony and African American Development* by Clovis Semmes. Semmes defines cultural hegemony as the “systemic negation of one culture by another.”²³⁶ He contends that cultural hegemony is the context out of which Africana Studies must address the issues that affect African people. The cultural hegemony of Africans by Euro-Americans began during enslavement as an attempt to control the consciousness of Africans and by extension their labor and community. One means of control used by Euro-Americans was the manipulation of the socialization of Africans. The educational process was the

²³⁶ Semmes, *Cultural Hegemony*, xi.

primary vehicle used to socialize Africans into a position of subservience and compliance with their inferior position within American society. All three social movements, including the Black Studies Movement, were a mode of resistance to the cultural hegemony of the dominant society.

In the early 1960s, the integration and nonviolent orientation of the Civil Rights Movement was paralleled by the radical, militant, and nationalistic demands of the Black Power Movement. The advocacy of Black Power activists to gain political and economic control of the African community influenced students to attempt to control their education on college campuses. African Nationalism provided the ideological underpinnings of the Black Power Movement.

African Nationalism in the United States has a long tradition among Africans in America. African Nationalism in the United States begins with the maroons and insurrections that attempted to escape plantation life and set up independent communities. In the nineteenth century, African Nationalism expressed itself primarily through the emigration movements led by individuals like Martin Delaney, Henry Highland Garnett, Alexander Crummell and others. Malcolm X was an African Nationalist who had a tremendous impact upon the Black Power and Black Studies Movement. Malcolm X was able to influence all three movements through his militant and uncompromising critique of American racism, promotion of self-defense, reclamation of African identity, and Black pride. Several Black Power organizations, such as SNCC, RAM, US, and BPP, viewed themselves as heirs to Malcolm and simultaneously influenced African students engaged in the Black Studies Movement.

While several Black Power advocates wanted to produce a political revolution the artists-activists in the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement generated a cultural revolution through creative production. The Black Arts/Consciousness Movement had a major impact on the cultural ideology of African students during the Black Studies

Movement. Beginning in the nineteenth century, Africans used their art to protest white oppression imposed during enslavement and segregation. In the early twentieth century, there was a major flowering in the creative production of Africans called the Harlem Renaissance. During the Harlem Renaissance artists such as Langston Hughes used their work to instill a strong national identity for Africans in America. At the same time, art critics like W. E. B. Du Bois argued that art should be used as propaganda in service of the African Liberation Movement. The next generation of artists agreed with Du Bois and Hughes that art should have a political and social function and must come from the traditions of African people. The creative intellectuals of the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement built on this legacy of creative production. Though, unlike previous periods that focused on creating protest literature oriented towards the dominant society, the Black Arts/Consciousness Movement was more focused on an internal conversation within the African community.²³⁷

The political and social context of the 1960s provided fertile ground for the growth of the Black Studies Movement and support of its demand for a relevant education and recruitment of African students in America. African students in the 1960s did not

²³⁷ Lorenzo Thomas, *Extraordinary Measures: Afrocentric Modernism and Twentieth-Century American Poetry* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2000), 144. “The Black Arts movement required its artists to return to the Black community and to produce their art from within it. The movement encouraged a new sense of community and a new awareness of Black heritage while simultaneously embracing a militantly engaged political stance. But the most important effect of the movement was the identification of artists as the spokespersons of the people and a concept of art, not solely individualistic expression, but as the blossoming of the most ancient communal tradition of African creation.”

view the curriculum at the colleges as relevant. The history of the education of Africans in America demonstrates there has been an ongoing attempt to transform African education. Beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, prominent white capitalists created a system of philanthropy to establish an education to maintain white supremacy and African subordination.

Africans like Henry Highland Garnett, Edward Blyden, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Carter G. Woodson instituted scholarship and institutions that would help Africans to unearth their hidden history. Then in the early 1960s, a Black Student Movement developed that led to the Black Studies Movement. Jimmy Garretts writes, “many of the individuals who had endured the defeats and victories of the integrationist-oriented phase of the student movement set about establishing Black student ‘unions’ on predominantly white campuses.”²³⁸ The BSU led the student struggle at colleges like San Francisco State, while at predominantly African schools such as Howard students fought for a truly ‘Black University.’ Black political and cultural nationalism were central components of all three movements, which sought to counteract the cultural and political hegemony of Euro-America.

It has been forty years since the first Africana Studies departments were created in the United States. The struggle for a relevant education that would produce scholar-activists remains as applicable today as it did forty years ago. Though there have been changes in society, several of the issues that affected Africans in the 1960s remain at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

African political scientist Manning Marable provides an accurate description stating that “the problem of the twenty-first century is *the problem of global apartheid*: the racialized division and stratification of resources, wealth, and power

²³⁸ Jimmy Garret, *Black Students* (New York: The Free Press, 1970), 61.

that separates Europe, North America, and Japan from the billions of mostly black, brown, indigenous, undocumented immigrant and poor people across the planet.”²³⁹ It is his observation that the United States has entered a “‘New Racial Domain’ (NRD) driven and largely determined by the forces of transnational capitalism, and the public policies of state neoliberalism.”²⁴⁰ The impoverishment of the formerly colonized world is maintained through the neoliberal policies of international financial institutions, increasingly aggressive U.S. militarism, and avaricious transnational

²³⁹ Manning Marable, “Empire, Racism, and Resistance: Global Apartheid and the Prospects for a Democratic Future,” *The Black Commentator*, December 21, 2006, http://www.blackcommentator.com/211/211_cover_manley_speech_marable_ed_bd.html.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

corporations. In the United States, Africans face old and new challenges such as the growth of the prison industrial complex²⁴¹ and the subjection to police terrorism.²⁴²

But, perhaps, the most urgent issue that has its origins in the social movements of the 1960s is the incarceration of political prisoners who were victims of COINTELPRO. A small number have been released, but many more of these African freedom fighters remain imprisoned without a proper review of their cases.²⁴³ There is a special onus on the African community to secure the release of its freedom fighters. Africana Studies has a special obligation to political prisoners as a discipline created during the struggle of the 1960s.

²⁴¹ Eric Schlosser, "The Prison-Industrial Complex," *The Atlantic*, December 1998. The prison industrial complex is "a set of bureaucratic, political, and economic interests that encourage increased spending on imprisonment, regardless of the actual need. The prison-industrial complex is not a conspiracy, guiding the nation's criminal-justice policy behind closed doors. It is a confluence of special interests that has given prison construction in the United States a seemingly unstoppable momentum. It is composed of politicians, both liberal and conservative, who have used the fear of crime to gain votes; impoverished rural areas where prisons have become a cornerstone of economic development; private companies that regard the roughly \$35 billion spent each year on corrections not as a burden on American taxpayers but as a lucrative market; and government officials whose fiefdoms have expanded along with the inmate population."

²⁴² Michael Wilson, "3 Detectives Acquitted in Bell Shooting," *New York Times*, April 26, 2008. Rhonda Cook, "Documents Reveal: Cops Planted Pot on 92-Year Old Woman They Killed in Botched Drug Raid," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 30, 2007.

²⁴³ "Los Angeles City Council OKs \$2.75 Mil. Settlement For Geronimo Pratt - in wrongful imprisonment lawsuit," *Jet Magazine*, August 7, 2000.

In order to address the aforementioned issues, Africana Studies departments must continue the mission began at their inception. African intellectuals and Africana Studies as a discipline has a special role to play in the African liberation movement. Nathan Hare writes, “on the shoulders of the Black scholar falls an enormous task. He [she] must de-colonize his [her] mind so that he [she] may effectively guide other intellectuals and students in their search for liberation.”²⁴⁴ The effort to de-colonize African minds can be successful if the discipline maintains its commitment to its ideational, political, and cultural roots.

Black political and cultural nationalism seeks to oppose the racist and Eurocentric definitions that are propagated by the dominant society in education, art, and media. As Kwame Toure said,

The job of the Black scholar [is] to give Black people values very subtly because [the] values people accept most are the most subtle values. Black scholars must be culture carriers, recognizing that the Europeans living in America are not going to allow them to do that, [they] are going to fight them in every way.²⁴⁵

There has been a constant struggle for the discipline of Africana Studies to maintain its integrity since its founding in the 1960s. In *White Money/Black Power*, Dr. Noliwe Rooks chronicles the attempt of McGeorge Bundy of the Ford Foundation to shape the direction of the discipline by awarding grants to departments that promote

²⁴⁴ Nathan Hare, *New Perspectives on Black Studies*, edited by John Blassingame (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 68.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

“an organizational strategy of integration and curricular diversity,” while avoiding support for those with a nationalist viewpoint.²⁴⁶

As stated in chapter 3, the Black Studies Movement was the formal educational wing of the Black Power Movement. But since the mid-1970s, the Black Power Movement has significantly declined. Black Power’s decline has affected the discipline of Africana Studies. The effect has been that today’s students and professors entering the discipline were not influenced by the Black Power and Black Arts/Consciousness Movements in the same way as the previous generation. It could be argued with the influence of grant-giving institutions like the Ford Foundation, that education for Africans has come full circle.

Africana Studies appears to have gained a niche at universities and colleges across the country. In its acceptance in the mainstream academy, it should continue the mission of a relevant education for social change and the resist the tendency to pursue ‘vulgar careerism.’ The first Director of Africana Studies, Nathan Hare, properly defined a relevant education stating, “a Black education which is not revolutionary in the current day is both irrelevant and useless.”²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ Noliwe R. Rooks, *White Money/Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of race in Higher Education* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 106.

²⁴⁷ Hare, *New Perspectives on Black Studies*, 3.

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