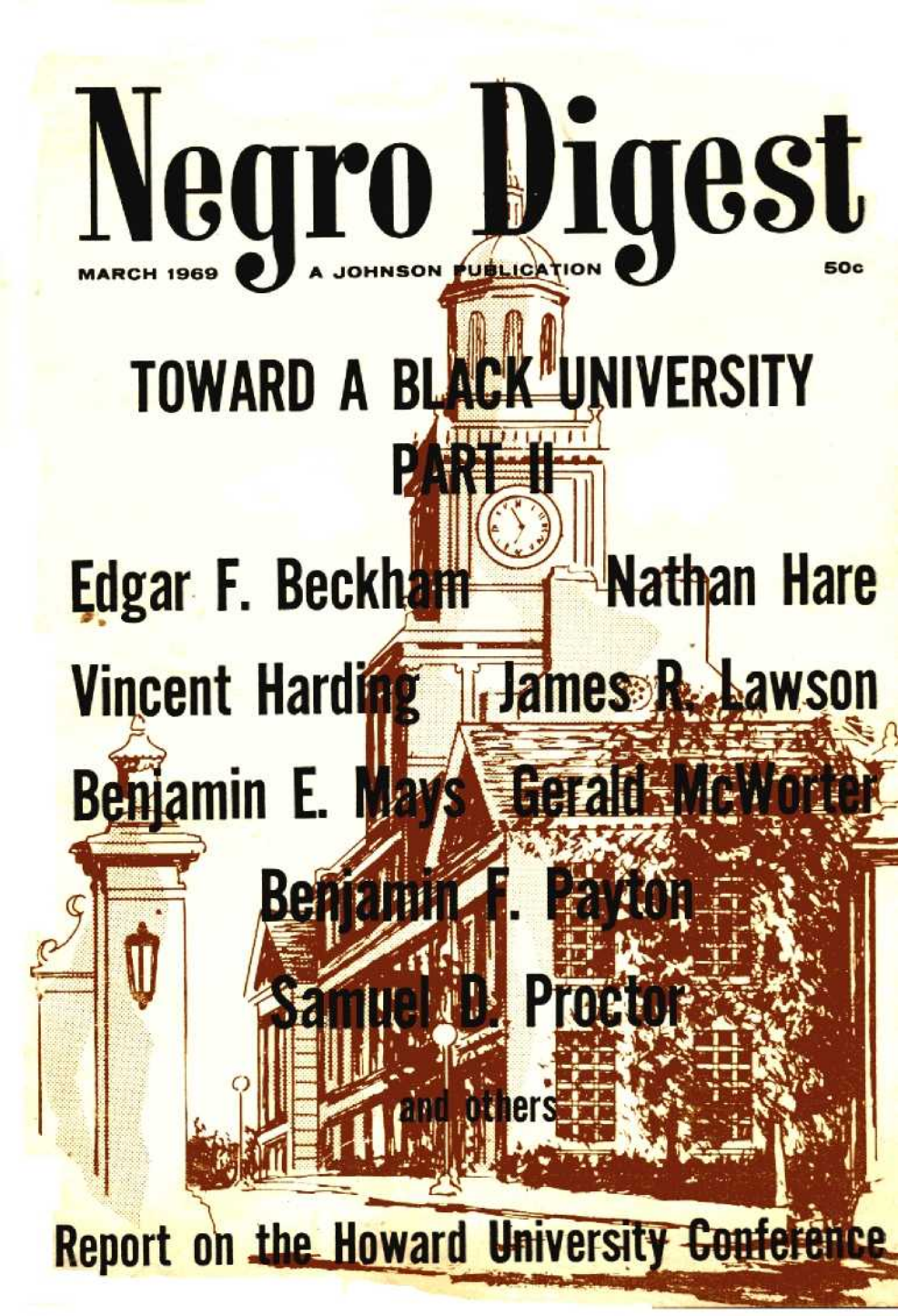


Negro Digest

A detailed line drawing of a university building with a prominent clock tower. To the left of the building is a large stone gatepost with a lantern. The building has multiple windows and a gabled roof. A large tree is on the right side of the building. The entire illustration is in a reddish-brown color.

MARCH 1969

A JOHNSON PUBLICATION

50c

TOWARD A BLACK UNIVERSITY PART II

Edgar F. Beckham

Nathan Hare

Vincent Harding

James R. Lawson

Benjamin E. Mays

Gerald McWorter

Benjamin F. Payton

Samuel D. Proctor

and others

Report on the Howard University Conference

BLACK HISTORY

BLACK POWER U.S.A. THE HUMAN SIDE OF RECONSTRUCTION 1867-1877

BY LERONE
BENNETT JR.

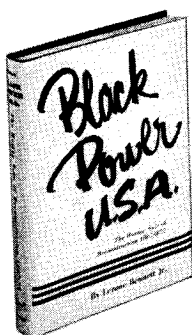
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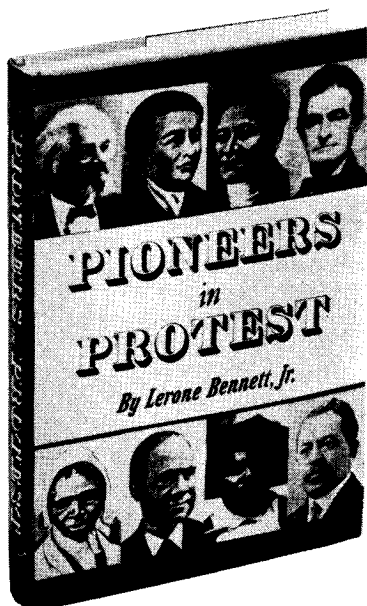
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Editor's Notes

The first point to be made clear in any discussion of the Black University is that the concept is not to be defined within the limits of the university as it traditionally has existed in this country and as it is imagined by the academics. The concept is revolutionary; that is, it is concerned with breaking out of—indeed, leveling—the existing university structure and instituting in its stead new approaches to education. Where existing universities are scholar-oriented, the Black University will be community-oriented; where the traditional university has emphasized the intellectual and cultural development of the student toward the ends of academic excellence and élitism, the Black University will seek to involve the total community and its institutions in a system of interrelated and interlocking “schools” and programs of study which are designed to serve the black community in its reach toward unity, self-determination, the acquisition and use of political and economic power, and the protection of the freedom of the human spirit; where the American university has sought to prepare the student to assume a meaningful role in the mainstream of American life, the Black University’s goal will be to destroy in the minds of black people the validity of the values of the “mainstream,” those values which, for nearly 400 years, have been used to debase and to dehumanize black people and to generally diminish the respect for human dignity, and to resurrect and to glorify within the black community the spirit of *Muntu*.*

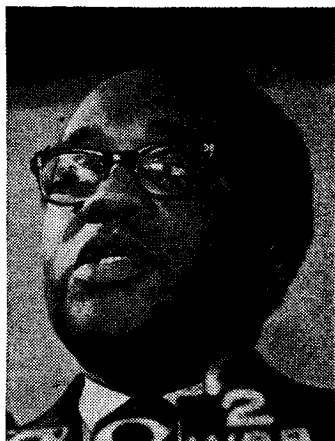
Nor will the proliferating Black Studies Programs now being hurriedly established at major white colleges and universities across the country succeed in co-opting the Black University concept and in de-fusing the drive toward its realization, despite the expressed hopes of some in the academic and political Establishments. Hard on the heels of the announcement from Harvard University that that queen of educational institutions would offer a degree in Afro-American Studies beginning in the Autumn of 1969 (joining such other Establishment schools as Yale and Stanford), the New York Times published an editorial commending Harvard’s move as “an important step in depoliticalizing an issue that has become enmeshed in unnecessary controversy . . .” As is the custom, after the fact, the Times editorial admitted that “Even without the protest of black students across the country, it should have been evident to college curriculum-builders that a significant part of American social, economic and cultural history has long been shamefully neglected,” but

(Continued on page 95)

*An Open Letter to
Black Students
in the North*

NEW CREATION OR FAMILIAR DEATH?

BY VINCENT HARDING



*A letter of the greatest urgency "written in
the spirit of black ecumenical concern as we
move towards a new humanity"*

DEAR Brothers and Sisters,

This letter may touch on sensitive and painful areas, but it is based on the assumption that every contradiction within our struggle must be examined with relentless care and discussed with total candor throughout the brotherhood of our blackness. On the other hand, it must also be clear that I do not assume that those of us who work out in the academic halls of the South are any more free from powerful and ironic inner confusions than you who operate in the North. Nevertheless, there are certain current developments among you which appear dangerous—indeed disastrous—from our perspective. We are convinced that no meaningful building of the Black University can take place unless at least some of these issues are resolved. So I have taken it upon myself to try to articulate our general concerns, especially as they are directed to those of you who study and teach on northern campuses.

Let me get to the point in the most brutal manner first, and then attempt to elaborate with greater precis'ion as I go. The center of our concern is this: Do the black student (and faculty) brothers in northern schools

realize that much of your motion over the past year has often appeared to encourage the destruction of those colleges and universities where some 125,000 black students study in the South? Besides, do you realize that such action towards destruction puts you in league with many white, northern, academic administrators who are ready to deny the future of black southern education, ready to manipulate the death of potentially powerful black institutions?

Now, let me say more fully what I mean. Over the past several years, for dozens of good, bad and indifferent reasons, the schools of the North have been discovering that they need black students, faculty persons and various levels of black-oriented curriculum. (As you well know, the current commercial value of blackness has not been one of the least of the reasons for the belated and somewhat sudden awakening.) As might have been expected, these white institutions turned increasingly towards the black campuses of the South. There they found a ready-made supply of black faculty, and discovered the presence of some Afro-American curriculum which had not been destroyed by "integration." In addition, they began to enter into serious competition with the southern schools for the best black students.

All this action was facilitated by the ready access such institutions had to the very financial sources which had been traditionally parsimonious in their help to black schools for some of the same tasks. (Of course, it should also be said loudly that the brain-draining process was significantly aided by the great hesitancy on the part of many faculty persons and administrators in the "predominantly Negro" colleges to realize that our experience as a people was worthy of serious academic exploration, and by their failure to offer the younger black scholars those encouragements which money cannot buy. But that is another article!)

Then came the assassination of our brother in April, 1968, and many of you stepped up the pace of your action a hundred-fold. Wherever you were gathered on the northern campuses, whatever your numbers, you demanded more faculty, more courses, more black students than ever before. "Freedom, Now!" became "Blackness, Now!" So you rapped with articulate vigor, boycotted, threatened all kinds of things, took over meetings, classes and buildings—and generally raised hell.

Meanwhile, we watched from the South. We applauded. We laughed at trembling white administrators who seemed ready to offer you everything you demanded—sometimes before the words were dry on the leaflets. Occasionally we joined in the action on your behalf, and strengthened our own students in their resolve to their own southern thing.

As a matter of fact, when an increasingly large number of us were wafted through the skies to visit your campuses as consultants and lecturers and to become objects of tempting salary offers, some of our egos were mo-

mentarily bolstered (or our minds momentarily deranged) beyond description. Our black academic forefathers had never known such high adventure, we thought.

Now, for a variety of reasons, a blessed but painful clarity has begun to break into our euphoric white visions. We realize now that this situation is clearly neither a matter for laughter nor for self-gratification. Rather it seems evident that we were—and are—being tempted to sell out the black colleges of the South. And it appears no less evident that many of you were—and are—unwittingly acting as agents in the process, being used by persons who are not unwitting at all.

What we see in the new black light is that we are being called upon by the northern administrators (though your voices are often the ones on the phones) to give our energies, our course outlines, and finally our full-time talents to these institutions. So, for instance, programs in Afro-American Studies begin to spring up from the Ithaca to Berkeley, and we are invited to help staff them all. Again it also appears that northern-based financial sources are more ready to fund Afro-American Studies in rural Ohio and upstate New York than in the heart of the black South. This means, of course, that it is possible for the northern schools in the post-assassination period to offer salaries sometimes fifty to one hundred per cent higher than the black schools—to say nothing of space, time, atmosphere and assistance for research and publishing.

Not only is this happening to us as faculty persons, but we watch as you count your numbers on the campuses. We hear you demanding more black company, especially from among the ranks of the brilliant brothers and sisters on the block, and it becomes clear what this means for us. It means that recruiters (now often black) from the North move more fully than ever before into the traditional southern territories of the black schools and offer fabulous scholarships and other financial aid to the best black students available. (They also offer, of course, the prestige of their names to a still prestige-conscious black community.) When college-bound brothers and sisters weigh these offers against those of the black schools (often late-moving black schools) it is understandably hard for them—for you to resist. Thus the southern colleges face increased deracination on every level.

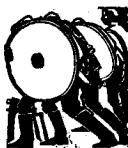
By now it should be clear that this southern exposure provides a different perspective. Therefore, it is not a matter of our begrudging you the blackness you so sorely need in those bastions of whiteness. Rather it is a matter of letting you know how it looks to us. For instance, as the white administrators of the North (and South) explain their newly discovered love for black students and faculty, and their sudden conversion to black studies, we who are the objects of that bulldozing love had to hear more than the words which are spoken. We think our southern position allows

us to hear essentially these sentiments from the keepers of the embattled educational establishments:

"We are determind to get our black multi-tokens up here," they say. "If we don't do it quickly we'll lose money, status, and perhaps some of our nicest buildings. Therefore, we have learned well our lessons from the black community's hero, and we are determined to get students, courses and faculty members *by any means necessary*. If that involves the destruction of the black schools of the South, so be it. We never thought very much of them anyway. We've got the money and the prestige. They haven't. As everyone knows, money and prestige buy everything, even loud-talking, gun-toting black militants."

Indeed, just as this letter to you was being completed, two black students from Northwestern University came into my office at Spelman. I had met them during one of my visits up North two years before, and now they were in Atlanta returning the visit—and recruiting black students for Northwestern. Just as I was presenting to them some of the central concerns of my letter, the phone rang and the long distance operator introduced the voice of an old acquaintance—a dean at a prestigious white institution in Pennsylvania.

He said he wanted to know if there was any directory of black scholars available, or if I had a list I could give him, because his Afro-American student organization was demanding black faculty representation in every department of the college. He had already seen a piece of writing in which I had decried the raping of black schools, but he was calling anyway, he said.



I told him that I was quite serious in my published position and therefore had no intention of giving him such a list when we needed in the black schools every excellent black scholar we could find. At that point, he produced a fascinating and revealing response, one worth reporting. He said, "You realize, of course, that there are many persons in the northern schools who have serious questions about whether those institutions should continue—at least as black schools; and that is one of the reasons why they have no hesitation about attempting to draw from them whatever faculty they can." The conversation came to a more or less abrupt halt after that, and I reported it to my friends from Northwestern for the same purpose that I report it to you: to ask whether you have pondered the im-

plications of such attitudes as you make your moves.

Of course, when we consider the past performances of the colonizing world, the attitude of the white administrators should not startle us. The "Metropolitan" areas have had no more qualms about sapping the human, creative resources of their colonies in a later period than they did about claiming the physical resources in an earlier, more blatant time. Nor should "good intentions" becloud the issue; for if they do exist anywhere, they do not in any way lessen the impact of the attitudes which make the so-called "brain-drain" possible. Whatever has suited the purpose of the colonizers has been defined as good and necessary, whether it takes place between Brussels and Leopoldville or between New Haven and Atlanta.

Nor does it matter that the term has sometimes been "assimilation" and at other times it has been "integration." Ultimately it spells destruction of the heart of the colonized people if it is not stopped. Ultimately it is reminiscent of Harold Cruse's lament for the cultural (now followed by the physical) destruction of the heart of Harlem. Finally, when we remember the historical attitudes of white northern institutions towards the black schools of the South, we are not surprised. For the current action fits well their pattern of basic unconcern about the needs of black life.*

What does surprise and trouble us is the way in which many of you brothers and sisters on the northern campuses are participating fully in the patterns of our common destruction. I say "common destruction" out of a conviction that whatever diminishes the life and vitality of any significant black institutions (especially those which have been rooted in our history and which are now being pushed to an encounter with our essential blackness) is a destroyer of us all. So this letter comes as an urgent fraternal message, raising what is for us a crucial set of concerns.

Assuming that we are no longer committed to the individualistic ethos of America, nor to integration as it has so far been defined, and assuming that one of our major goals is the building of new levels of solidarity within the black community, I wish to raise the following questions for serious discussion:

1. As you assess the total struggle and your own particular situations in the North, in what ways may those of us who teach on southern campuses be of greatest help to you? How much of our energies should be spent in consulting and lecturing in the North at your request when there is so much business to take care of down here?

* For an excellent, though chilling, summary of the history of relationships between white and black academic institutions, see John Sekora, "Murder Relentless and Impassive: The American Academic Community and the Negro College," *Soundings*, LI, 3 (Fall, 1968). This is available by mail at 400 Prospect Street, New Haven, Conn. 06511.

2. Many of you have been involved in attempts to recruit us to teach full-time on northern campuses, urging us to take the 3-to-5 year appointments which we have been offered. How do you reconcile this position with the needs of the thousands of black students in the South? (Though I have no inclination to play the numbers game, it *is* important to consider the fact that the black student group usually numbers less than 100 on most northern campuses, and 400 is an unusually large figure—though it often represents a miniscule percentage of the total student body. On the other hand, you ask us to leave campuses with black student populations ranging from 500 to more than 5,000.)
3. If we really intend to make the search for the Black University more than good rapping material for a hundred conferences, then where can we take the best concrete first steps—on a white campus or a traditionally “Negro” one? Especially when we consider the service the black university must render to its immediate community, is it contradictory in the extreme to consider such nation-building service coming from “black universities” in overwhelmingly white institutions?
4. One former professor at a well-known “Negro” University recently announced to the world that he will do his black thing from now on at a predominantly white school. He made this decision, he said, because black schools eventually will be more likely to imitate a good thing if it happens in a white context first. Without using such words, other black faculty persons have evidently taken a similar point of view. How does that way of producing blackness fit into our rhetoric concerning the needs of the community? Is it really *more* imitation that we must have now?
5. Considering our sadly limited resources, can there be more than a few really excellent programs or institutes in Afro-American Studies in this country? Is it possible that the recent announcements of the creation of at least two dozen such programs will lead to even more dispersion of our black talents, rather than to the consolidation we so badly need for this period? If only a few such black research and teaching centers can live with significant integrity, where should they be developed? Indeed, where will they find nurture during a period of prolonged struggle?
6. To move to an even more directly personal level, have any of you considered the possibility that it might make more sense to bring 50 black students to a black-oriented professor in the South than to take him away from his campus? In other words, have you questioned your own locations seriously in the light of our need to gather ourselves together?

7. Have you given serious thought to your own sense of vocation? The building of The Black University, whether it be realized in one or a dozen locations, demands totally committed teachers, organizers and administrators who have moved beyond jiving to real work. What about you? (Perhaps you don't know that black students in the South, on the "Negro" campuses, are also calling for more black faculty. When will we find them?)

These are, as I said, questions for discussion. Though they may sound rhetorical and loaded at points, they are not meant to stifle debate. If they seem unfairly weighted they simply bear all the freight of my own fullest concerns for our future in this strange land.

Even as I raise the questions, though, I am well aware of the fact that many of you may have currently excellent reasons for staying on the northern campuses where you are. So, as we develop those discussions which must question and reexamine both the southern and northern black academic positions, I wish to add a few concrete suggestions for action, action which may make it possible for us to serve—rather than destroy—each other where we are now.

1. On the recruiting of black faculty for northern schools: If this must be done during these days when the supply of well-equipped, black-conscious brothers and sisters is so limited, then why not work for the establishment of special visiting professorships rather than outright raiding of black schools? Under such an arrangement faculty from the South could be invited for one year, we could teach one course in our specialty each quarter or semester and be available for many kinds of counselling. There would also be freedom from the many ordinary academic pressures of our southern campuses, and time (as well as secretarial and research assistance) could be made available for more research, writing and publication. At the same time we would not be wrenched away from the southern schools on an indefinite basis. In a sense, this would be no more than a token presence, of course, but it represents a temporary measure which might have some mutual benefit while we discuss the questions above and while we seek to increase the supply of brothers and sisters who can do the job.
2. On the recruiting of black students: There are obviously hundreds of thousands of black students outside of the colleges who ought to be involved in some meaningful experience of higher education. Since your institutions have obtained funds from many sources for some of this task, why not make at least part of that money available in more creative ways? For instance, a consortium of one

or more white and one or more black schools could be created solely for the purposes of recruiting black students. Through some pooling of funds (mostly yours in the North), black students could then be approached with this offer: Here are the funds you need to go through college. You can use the money to attend (for example) Morehouse, Dillard, Cornell or the University of Illinois. If you choose a black school we ask only that you agree to spend one of your years on the predominantly white campus, strengthening your brothers there. If you choose an overwhelmingly white school, you will have the privilege of going "home" for a year. In this way black students could take the money from white schools and use it in any way they choose. Besides, under the new conditions now prevailing in both black and white institutions, the exchange could not help but be fruitful.

3. The issue of finances is a crucial one, especially as it relates to the future of black colleges. Some institutions would obviously serve the cause best if they merged with other schools to create new strengths and expanded facilities. But even those which remained need to be enlarged and endowed in ways that black schools have not known up to now. Why, for instance, should it not be possible for prestigious northern schools to use their prestige to help obtain special research grants for certain work which can be done well only by black scholars? Or why should your more affluent northern institutions not be pressed to make other significant financial contributions to the life of these schools they now so blithely seek to rape? The United Negro College Fund might be one general depository. Others can be found. Perhaps an autonomous but well funded black educational foundation ought to be established, with its single mission the financing of creative ventures in black education. (This would not exempt the existing white foundations, of course; it would simply mean that this black institution would be able to give all of its time and energies to the task.) So far it has been relatively easy to get white institutions to perform certain kinds of money-producing acts on behalf of black education on their own campuses. Perhaps the time has come to press them to use part of their budgets, even sections of their endowment funds, to help establish such a foundation, or otherwise to make long-term substantial investments in the black academic institutions. These would, of course, constitute no more than preliminary steps towards restitution. (Certainly it is no accident that such proposals, fit the pattern of what the former colonizing nations must do to be of significant assistance to the areas they crippled.)
4. Finally, it is apparent in the current rush to blackness on the part

of white institutions that there simply is not the beginning of an adequate supply of persons trained in Afro-American studies. It is imperative for us—and for you—that we move urgently to fill that gap in ways other than the stripping of the southern black campuses.

The various Institutes and Ph.D programs in this field which have appeared over the past year are obviously meant to meet the need (as well as to satisfy you and to keep you off certain backs) but I would argue that most of them cannot and will not do the job. (Indeed some of them may die as soon as you stop blowing.) On the other hand, it is only logical that black institutions in the black community, if properly funded, organized and led, could probably do the best job of creating new scholars in the field of Afro-American studies. This seems especially likely in those places where traditions, libraries and faculties seem at least adequate even now, and where students are pressing sometimes reluctant “others” towards blackness.

In Atlanta, that has been our basic assumption, and a group of us have moved towards the creation of such an Institute for Afro-American Studies. We think that black students throughout the nation should know this, and should ponder its possible meaning for your own presents and futures.

As some of you know, there are in the Atlanta University Center six “Negro” institutions in various stages of their search for blackness. On the faculties are more than 30 persons whose training, experience and teaching in the field of Afro-American life and culture are at least significant. The Slaughter Collection of Negro Literature, the Georgia State Archives and the newly begun Martin Luther King Memorial Library (a documentation center for the Movement) combine to present unusual library and archival resources on the black experience. Apart from such tangibles, we are also beneficiaries of the spirit of the great pioneering work in black studies done in Atlanta by such persons as W. E. B. Du Bois, E. Franklin Frazier, Rayford Logan, E. S. Braithwaite, Ira DeA. Reid and many others.

It is against this background of past and present resources that we are now in the process of creating an Institute for Afro-American Studies under the umbrella of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Center. Research, teaching, celebration and action are to be the central driving forces—all focused on the life and times of the peoples of African descent. I mention the Institute here because it will need many things which you can help provide. It will need millions of dollars, the best staff from every part of the African

diaspora, students who are ready to take care of business, and it must have continuous exposure throughout the black community. The schools you attend could help raise funds for this Institute. For they will need our products (both human and informational) if they are to be transformed into viable situations. Some of you will ultimately comprise the staff and student body. The plans you now have for Afro-American studies in white settings must be reexamined and challenged by Atlanta.

In short, I am proposing that you help this Institute become the major black educational creation of this generation. You have a kind of leverage in the white world which must not be dissipated in minor, ambiguous victories. More importantly, you have a power which must not be turned against meaningful black institutions. The challenge to help create such an institute, to break down the many brittle assumptions of conventional American education, to move consistently towards our intellectual roots in the struggle for liberation—this is, I think, a challenge more appropriate to your power.

As you ponder these matters, I trust you will remember that my questions and proposals are meant to be only some of the ingredients in a dialogue which must take place among us. The letter is written in the spirit of black ecumenical concern as we move towards a new humanity. The words are my own, but the concerns are shared by many other persons on the southern campuses. We look forward to appropriate response from the North, East and West.

In the struggle,
Vincent Harding,
Spelman College
Atlanta, Georgia



Vincent Harding, author of "New Creation or Familiar Death," is chairman of the Department of History and Sociology at Spelman College in Atlanta, Ga., and author of the forthcoming book, *Black Radicalism in America*. Dr. Harding frequently lectures on history and contemporary problems, and his articles appear frequently in both scholarly and popular journals, including *NEGRO DIGEST*.

Platform and Program

STRUGGLE, IDEOLOGY AND THE BLACK UNIVERSITY

BY GERALD A. McWORTER

"Today we know the American system for what it is, neo-colonial racism functioning to pacify Black people and to influence Black affairs with revisionary subversion"

 MOST Black people who are seriously concerned about the nature of the Black struggle in education automatically embrace the Black University concept. This thought process is usually based on a taste for the term, the security of being included, and the assumption that Black must necessarily mean liberation. But it is a dangerous process unless we, as Black people, discipline ourselves to never-for-even-a-

moment stop our analysis of *the man* and his subtle forms of oppression and subversion. We must require of ourselves honest scientific analysis (immersed in our spirit-emotions) of how educational activities can lead to—and be a part of—the struggle for the liberation of *all* Black people. One of the best ways to understand this is to pin the ideological basis of the term as it is used by different people.

The dangerous uses of the term fall under the ideological position of REVISIONARY NEO-COLONIAL RACISM, while the progressive forces of Black—our struggle—must be/are guided by REVOLUTIONARY PAN-AFRICAN NATIONALISM. These are descriptive terms that conveniently cover polar opposites, though clearly a systematic analysis would yield more precise types of each. However, this article is not meant to be merely a methodologi-

cal exercise, but is intended as a working paper for all Black people interested in that ideological struggle to understand more fully the correct direction toward liberation.

We are mainly concerned with four basic questions: (1) What are the ideological bases of conflict concerning the liberation struggle for Black people? (2) What-How-Why are certain institutions playing significant roles in the development of the concept of the Black University? (3) What are some of the dangers of Neo-colonial racist pacification? and (4) What is the correct ideological basis of our Black struggle toward liberation? After providing a working definition of each ideological position, the meaning of each will be examined through the workings of five institutional contexts related to the concept of the Black University. By examining several major trends, based on the two opposite positions we hope to clarify certain dangers to our struggle and also we hope to begin to underscore guidelines for our liberation struggle.

1. *The Ideological Bases of Racial Conflict in the United States*

Most previous formulations of the ideological bases of racial conflict in the United States suffer from liberal assumptions-illusions. Black people were to be dealt with as either a topic of intergroup (human) relations or of minority group relations. This was somehow related to the white man's message that everything would be

cool anyway since we all live in a melting pot. Also, the only acceptable (responsible) approach to change was limited to the dictates of the system, obviously the same system responsible for our oppression. Strange forms of racist social darwinisms lurk through this society and haunt us as we will to be free. This type of formulation is inadequate (surprise, surprise) because it is simply a function of this society and its white owners, and has little to do with where Black people are and where we want to go.

But Black Nationalism has never been *legitimate* in the United States since legitimacy was also a function of white nationalism serving to support white supremacy. So, a major illusion was to propagate integration as the only legitimate goal for Black people. The integrationists (used to-still) say that the problem is that some white people, who are from the old school, will learn in time and will support what is right. Every major alternative pointed essentially to the "white-is-right" theory, while much of our Black reality was either suppressed or ignored. Black Nationalism is an idea whose time has come, and with it has come the obvious need to reformulate the structure of our ideological struggle.

Struggle throughout the Third World has helped free us from the American integration myth. We have come to know of colonial-

ism, and we are becoming aware that we are a colonized people living in the very bowels of the monster. Our presence in this country is the result of an illegitimate political process whose most damaging contemporary effect is to convince us of our birthright to citizenship (ha!), to call us to be patriotic, and to put us eagerly to work to uphold this system. Many of us have merely been made to internalize the overseer's whip and thus to control ourselves. Indeed, we are a colonized people.

The key problem, then, is to isolate the major ideological forces which undergird the system and those opposing it, *our* ideological forces. Today we know the American system for what it is, neo-colonial racism functioning to pacify Black people and to influence Black affairs with revisionary subversion. The system is racist because "white is still right," and Black people have never been dealt with as people;—slavery has not been paid for, which means that we are interpreted as either just becoming white enough to be considered people, or that we are merely being tolerated until someone figures out what to do with us (or does it!). A simple example of neo-colonialism is when a "Negro" is sent to manage and control Black people in place of a white cat, though the basic job assignment is the same for either.

The most progressive Black ideological forces constitute Revo-

lutionary Pan-African Nationalism. Nationalism is beliefs/emotions of racial solidarity and pride. Pan-African Nationalism emphasizes two important points for our identity and struggle: (1) All Black people are African, wherever they are. We are Africans colonized in the Americas. (2) All Africans must unite against our common enemy (and join Third World liberation struggles). Our ideology must be revolutionary as we fight a colonialist system. Our goal is to destroy it and to replace it with a system that speaks to our needs. To quote a brother: "We don't believe that what we want is better than what others have, we just believe it has got to be better for us." And if two aren't possible, we'll fight to the death for ours since death of a kind is our fate in any case.

So the ideological conflict is between forces designed to keep us loyal to the system oppressing us, or to make sure that we cannot get ourselves together to do something about it, and the forces of liberation designed to reunite a separated people, to mobilize the will of a people to liberate itself from racist colonial bondage with giant steps toward New Africa.

2. *Role of Institutions*

The ideological conflict is best understood by examining the role of certain institutions (and not the role of particular people, as we are so often tricked into believing). This is particularly true when we're

concerned with concepts like the Black University. We can describe three kinds of institutions, two representing the forces of oppression. Direct colonial control comes from agencies of the federal government, private foundations, and white universities. These colonial forces combine to influence and to direct their neo-colonial extensions, the "predominantly Negro" colleges. The third really shouldn't be called an institution, but a growing number of organized thrusts emerging from the Black community with the sole purpose of making education relevant to/for/within our liberation struggle.



Colonial forces employ the two-faced approach to Black people, using one hand to actively suppress us, while using the other hand to urge the vanguard forward into full view for the slaughter. Some see this as a paradox, but it is really a vise, one that is closing faster all of the time. Why is it that institutions like Princeton, Harvard, Yale, Rockefeller, and the U. S. Congress will sometimes encourage small groups or individuals who are (to them) "Black nationalist extremists," while at the same time refusing to rid their investment portfolios of South African stocks or economic interests supporting racism throughout the U.S.A.?

How can the Congress pass civil rights legislation to help Black to become like whites, and then persecute Adam Clayton Powell for being just like them? (You surely can fill in additional questions for yourself?)

Neo-colonial forces are virtual laboratories for Negro citizens who want the security of a place in (or at least of) white society, while at the same time becoming masters of survival culture fun and games. Here the vise is cloaked in hues of brown, a coloration meant to confuse—if not to convince—us into acceptance. Demands for a program more relevant to Black needs are usually met with two responses which clearly reveal their position: (1) "We have always been interested in the study of the Negro. We have a good library collection and we have a tradition of research and teaching." What is left out is that this "tradition" stopped 10 to 20 years ago, and exactly the opposite trend has reached its summit. A brief search for current materials and a look at course catalogs will demonstrate the reactionary reality of this sickness. (2) "We will not support racism and reject as racist the demand for Black history, especially if it is stipulated that the instructor be Black." However, there is normally no argument when choosing Negro presidents for "predominantly Negro" colleges, but holy hell explodes when demanding Black teachers for Black courses.

New agencies for Black education (Association of Afro-American Educators, New School of Afro-American Thought, Afro Arts Theater-School, University System of the Nation of Islam, etc.) are now developing around the country. These agencies do at least three things: (1) illuminate contradictions about the education provided for Black people; (2) prepare people for the struggle; and (3) immerse our children in the saving grace of Blackness. However, the new Black search is quite obviously in danger of being subverted by the above-mentioned colonial forces. The positive thrust not only includes the goals being sought but also involves the very process and basic assumptions of education itself. And since we have yet to see who will succumb to or reject the seductive hustle of white

resources, we must proceed to discuss its dangers before we begin to chart our course toward liberation.

(3) Dangers of Neo-Colonial Racist Pacification

Since we were taken political prisoners over 350 years ago and are still in bondage, we can safely assume that a thorough analysis of the forms and methodology of past oppression will at least provide the basis for perceiving future dangers. In a summary fashion, there are at least four devices at work for colonial and neo-colonial institutions, although they are often applied in different ways. In the typology of dangers facing the Black University concept, there are four types of dangers listed. Each appears to be relevant to both the colonial and neo-colonial institutions.

The term "inflated expectations"

TYPES OF DANGERS FACING THE BLACK UNIVERSITY CONCEPT

Type of Danger	Colonial Institution	Neo-colonial Institution
1. Inflated Expectations	Yes (as a result of high resources as bait)	Yes (result of illusory tradition of Negro scholarship)
2. Reference Group Conflict	Black vs. White	Black vs. Negro
3. Resource Diffusion	High	Low
4. Terminological Cooptation	High	Low

refers to the dangerous possibility that advocates of the Black University concept will be lured into the trap of believing in the devils, actually believing that funds/resources/positions will be made available for creative work. (I was tricked on two occasions in as many years, though my action was considerably more naive than what I really believed and was told over and over and over again. Whew!). The colonial institutions (especially major universities and the Ford Foundation) use their vast resources to blow people's minds and to cop. And while the neo-colonialist "predominantly Negro" college has pull here, it is not resources but *traditions* which often trick folks. What one discovers is that these traditions are often more manufactured than real and, when real, frequently have been abused by the colleges.

Reference Group conflicts often result from inflated expectations, not to mention the serious ego problems facilitated in the process. Simply put, the problem concerns who (or what group)—Black People are to think of as they prepare to move. This is often related to what audiences they speak to, where they send proposals for funding, where they choose to publish, who they relate to as far as colleges are concerned, *etc.* The colonial confrontation is classic in that it presents the best traditional form of confrontation: Blacks directly facing white authority and

power. The neo-colonial problem is ambiguous here. As Blacks move toward a common analysis and hold onto the goal of liberation as manifested in the Black University, Negroes of all ideological persuasions and experiences move to neutralize, to polemicize, and to expel Blacks from their schools. Often brotherhood alone prevents a San Francisco State type struggle from emerging at Morehouse, though this pattern is subject to shift at any moment. (Note the recent unpublicized burnings around the Atlanta University Center following Martin Luther King Jr.'s funeral and a recent campus visit by Stokely Carmichael.)

An increasingly important concern is how the limited resources committed to the Black University concept are being diffused throughout the country. Dig it: the following "together" brothers are scattered at white schools throughout the country: Nathan Hare, Alvin Pouissant, Robert Browne, Charles Hamilton, St. Clair Drake, Harry Edwards, Price Cobbs, William Grier, Edgar Beckham. And those Negro schools with Black faculty are unique, even when every effort is made to stifle their work and to get rid of them. There is, consequently, no center for revolutionary Black Education, and that shouldn't come as a big surprise. Only the most secure white colleges are announcing grandiose plans for the recruitment of Black faculty (Note the recent UCLA announce-

ment of a plan to hire 200 Black professors by Fall 1969).

Last, there is the problem of definition. If Lyndon Johnson could co-opt the civil rights thrust deceitfully smiling as he proclaimed, "We shall overcome," then Black people ought to watch out. If the United Negro College Fund could place an ad in the New York Times portraying a Negro in cap and gown with the caption, "Black Power," then Black people ought to watch out. But, normally, colonial forces are the first to move in on ideological concepts (Note the emasculated version of the class conflict as compared to what Karl Marx meant in the *Manifesto*) . . . Only after a few foundation grants and a few conferences for whites is it normally possible for Negroes to use the term—and then it is often psychologically difficult for them to say it without perjorative gesticulations.

Terminological cooptation is a process to confuse the ideological struggle for popular support. We must always be aware of the need for clarity and we must never hesitate to provide an understandable analysis for any group of our people. And now, having looked at the dangers, we ought to examine the positive ideological basis for our struggle.

(4) *Ideological Guidelines for Struggle*

There are five ideological guidelines that fit these discussions, though it is in the course of strug-

gle itself that we will define what is ultimately necessary for our liberation. These must be as free as possible of the above listed dangers.

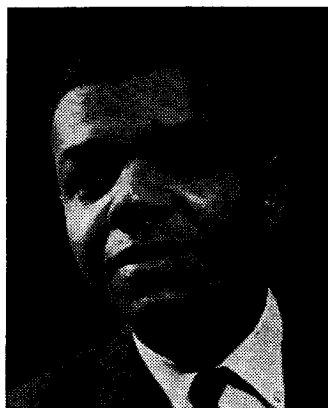
(A) *African identity*: No other identification is as close to our history and as far from our oppressors. The term "Afro-American" still somehow legitimates the hell of America and separates us through generations from Africa. Our identity as Africans is based on the utility it has for struggle. Only by recognizing the alien character of this country (even though it is sometimes tolerable because of our contributions to it) can we ever hope to successfully wage the revolutionary struggle.

(B) *Operational Unity*: While it is obvious that one all-inclusive organization for Black people would be impossible to build, it is not impossible to move toward coalitions of groups. Most national liberation struggles have been based on the operational unity of a diverse set of organizations. And we can see moves in this direction with the Black Congress in Los Angeles, the United Black Front in Washington, D. C., the Black Congress in Chicago, and the attempt to build a Black People's Alliance in Atlanta. We must work cooperatively on common goals in order to utilize all resources, and "for their thousand blows deal one death blow."

(Continued on page 89)

PROBLEMS OF 'PLACE' PERSONNEL AND PRACTICALITY

BY EDGAR F. BECKHAM



"As Black people move toward better communications and better coordination of policy planning, it will become a commonplace that Black students and Black educational personnel everywhere are part of the Black University"

WHAT may be most curious about the Black University as a concept and as an image is that so many diverse impulses out of the Black movement merge in it. That is unusual for this time of crisis in Black life. If you read our poetry, you often hear our simple lyric affirmations exploding abruptly into rapid-fire wrath. Our essays tend to be burdened with self-critical assessments of our own painful shortcomings and with angry railing at what's

wrong with Negroes. Our social and political actions sometimes express a confusing combination of visionary, futuristic fervor and revulsion at the drab aspect of history. Action vies with reaction, abstraction with the concretely real, and at first glance the blinding series of equal and opposite pulls and tugs seems to be getting us nowhere, except maybe into the mudhole that lies in the middle.

What is so exciting about the Black University is that it affirms the diverse activities of Black

people in their struggle toward a coherent ideology and a unified community. It sets clear goals, but makes few restrictions on strategies. It raises the critical questions of Black identity and Black survival, but it avoids pre-empting the role which Black people must play in providing answers. The Black University is quite arrogantly creative in the content of its activities, but cautiously modest in its intention, its organization and in its articulation with other spheres of interest and influence within the Black community.

"Modesty" may seem like an unusual characteristic for a concept, especially for one which has been advocated so vigorously and eloquently in recent months. Throughout the Black community the awareness of the Black University and its profound implications for community development is growing at a rapid rate; and what is more significant, even where the term "Black University" has not been integrated into the rhetorical apparatus of Black ideology, its basic elements are becoming increasingly prominent in the conceptual framework of Black consciousness.

It is precisely in conceptual terms that the Black University displays its modesty, which is simultaneously the source of its vitality. The Black University "knows its place." It is content to be derivative and dependent—derivative of a basic affirmation of Black community and dependent for its very life upon the self-conscious exist-

ence of that community. Like a canny virgin, it attends with studied reserve to the needs of its somewhat skeptical suitors.

Or, at least, that's the way it ought to be. Advocacy of national policy in Black educational affairs, which is what the Black University is really all about, is a problematical pursuit, especially for Black educators, most of whom have been trained in a context alien and antagonistic to the very community they hope to serve. It is appropriate for them to be cautious in their use of borrowed tools of intellectual discourse, and to demonstrate trust in the home-grown expressive sensibility of Black people. And that caution and trust seem to be on the rise these days. Black educators are listening better and hearing more, even if they are not talking any less. The current impulse is to test out ideas by bouncing them off as many natural heads as you can find before promulgating them as the latest and finest Black "truth." It may well be that the crisis of intellectual identity into which traditional Black educators have been forced by the compelling pressure of the Black revolution has exploded one of the most subversive myths of Negro history, namely that formal education in the Western tradition liberates leadership potential automatically.

The new trend in Black intellectual style was apparent at the June 1968 conference of the Association of Afro-American Educators in Chicago. In the Task

Force on Higher Education the discussions began deductively. They were held in a classroom, and on the chalkboard the concrete problems of Black education trailed down diagonally in sub-categories from beneath the overarching statement of abstract goals. It took two days to reverse the process. By Sunday, the Task Force was beginning with specific problems and moving, not so much toward solutions, but rather toward a functional framework within which solutions might be found. It was an exercise in restraint, and it was based on the simple recognition that the collective wisdom of the Task Force did not include all the ultimate answers.

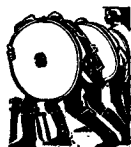
Discussions of Black education often collapse at the question of whether we should create history or merely change it. Talk about Black autonomy, Black unity, and the consistency of a comprehensive Black ideology seem rather long-range, visionary, and dangerously theoretical to someone who wants a program, now, to meet the specific and immediate needs of Black people. Arguments over the issue are usually lengthy and divisive. The one side argues that Black students in a white educational context are oppressed, that the environment in both white and dependent Negro institutions is hostile to the educational growth of Black people, and that autonomous Black institutions hold the key to Black cultural survival. The opponents are usually wise enough to concede all that, but they hasten to point out

that quite a large number of Black students can be expected to remain in the hostile environment at least through tomorrow, and that what we do today to relieve the oppression constitutes progress.

Another aspect of the same basic dilemma concerns the need for unity of purpose in Black educational affairs. Arguments in favor of unity (which always involves sacrifice) run head-on into vehement criticism from creative Black people who, in their own areas, have designed and implemented plans for solving local problems. Even when they are accused of "tribalism" (a curious pejorative in the post-Tarzan era), they maintain their allegiance to their own diverse programs, which they view as being more concretely valuable than any number of abstract constructs flitting beneath some intellectual's bush. If unity is not supportive of Black people's efforts to solve Black people's problems, then it is not unity at all.

At about this point in the dialogue a youngish militant is apt to get up and imply, by whatever suggestion he makes, that the contenders on both sides should be shoved through the nearest open window so that the Black people in the room can tend to business. Often, though, he makes a tactical error. He either calls for an end to overblown rhetoric and pompous theorizing, which supports the one side, or he admonishes all present to "get our thing together," which endears him to the other. When someone

else suggests that the group is back where it started from, people begin to walk out, and the meeting takes on a desperate character.



The concept of the Black University does not resolve these tensions. On the contrary, it verifies their existence and confirms their significance, thereby providing a conceptual framework in which resolution can occur. The Black University is indeed the product of visionaries, who affirm the validity of Black experience and recognize that the celebration of what is vital and true in the lives of Black people requires institutions free from the corroding effects of extraneous influence. But the Black University is also the product of practical men who recognize that the pressure generated by Black people in response to Black dreams is a primary factor in the evolution of local mechanisms for the alleviation of oppressive conditions. That has certainly been true of the activities of Black students on hostile campuses in this country. Black students at Howard University, at San Francisco State, and at Brandeis were not "programmed" in advance.

In fact, at Brandeis the most significant component of the "program"—the plan for an autonomous institute of Afro-American

studies—was adopted *during* the strike. Since the Black University is concerned more with "process" than with "place," it can accommodate simultaneously the most outlandish visions of Black glory and the most pragmatic attempts at instant remediation. In short, the Black University exists implicitly wherever and whenever Black people join together for a Black educational purpose.

As process, and as people, the Black University has only two critical characteristics: freedom from extraneous influence, and committed responsiveness to the educational needs of Black people. Operationally, within any given institution, these characteristics become the bases of institutional structure, the "credentials" of staff, and the guidelines for program development.

The problems involved in implementing Black University policy are roughly the same all over the country. The critical ones at this juncture are lack of funds, lack of staff, and lack of administrative flexibility. The money ought to come from the federal government, not in the form of an annual dole, but as permanent endowment for several comprehensive institutes of Afro-American studies, located regionally and designed as major centers of Black learning. The governing boards of the institutes would be self-perpetuating and broadly representative of the Black community. Ten such centers could be endowed at a total cost

of less than a billion dollars, and the cost could be spread over a number of years.

The lack of staff is a particularly vexing problem because of the vigorous competition among schools seeking Black teachers. In many instances the competition is not in the best interest of the Black University. Of course, there is one school of thought which maintains that increases in demand result in increases in supply. So, if we want more Black teachers, we should use up the ones we've got. That is probably a comfortable notion for anyone who has complete faith in the market-place. But Black people have been in that place before, and things didn't always turn out so well. One problem is that Black school personnel are rarely used as efficiently as they might be. This is particularly true at white schools where administrations establish Black studies programs and hire Black staff without regard for anything other than the institution's need to reduce the pressure from Black students. What else might explain the recent headlines in the New York Times which told of Cornell University's search for the best Black scholars. Even Cornell must know that, from the perspective of Black educational needs, it is not the place for the Black community's best scholars. Nor is Yale, or Harvard, or any other of the predominantly white institutions which have recently been rushing into print with announcements

of ambitious Black programs. Chances are that if Harvard, let us say, manages to beg, borrow or bribe a Black scholar in art history, he'll be teaching more white students than Black students. That is hardly a committed response to the educational needs of the Black community.

On the other hand, the thousands of Black students on predominantly white campuses cannot be expected to sacrifice satisfaction of all their needs. Demands for Black courses and for Black faculty on these campuses will increase. And the demands should be met, but they should be met efficiently. Institutional smugness should not be allowed to block innovative techniques for expanding the relevant educational opportunities available to Black students. Yale University's new Afro-American Studies program will probably not be too good for Black students at New Haven College or at Quinnipiac, and it behooves Yale's Black students to keep that fact in mind.

Cooperation among neighboring institutions in the development and administration of Black studies programs is essential. During the recent occupation of Ford Hall by Black students at Brandeis, someone quipped that the action would have been beautiful if Black students at Harvard, Boston University, Tufts, and MIT had simultaneously staged their own demonstrations and demanded that a joint program in Afro-American studies

be established for Black students throughout the Boston area. Where transportation seemed to be a problem, classrooms on the various campuses could be linked electronically. A group of students at Tufts, for instance, could participate in a seminar being conducted on the Brandeis campus, and the students on both campuses could see each other as well as hear each other. Certainly, overall coordination of the program could be handled by one "best Black scholar."

The decision by the Afro-American Society at Brandeis to work toward the establishment of a Black institute in Roxbury offers an even more exciting variation on the same theme. An institute in Roxbury, and for that matter, in any other Black community, could serve students enrolled at colleges and universities throughout the area. The participating institutions would, of course, be expected to contribute to the institute's funding and to grant academic credit for its courses. The institute could, in turn, develop special programs to meet a wide variety of community needs.

Of course, the notion that affluent institutions which are reluctant to grant autonomy to Black departments should fund programs outside of their own corporate framework will cause some dismay, at least in New England. But the fact of the matter is that many of these institutions do a spectacularly poor job of educating Black students. At Brandeis, for instance, despite the high level of white good-

will that seems to exist there, one of the precipitating causes of the student revolt was a nominally Black course taught by a super-liberal professor who sought to undermine the developing consciousness of his Black students. The students were justifiably enraged at the deception. But not all of the responsibility for effecting change rests with cumbersome or unimaginative administrations. Black students, who must receive credit for most of the progress made to date, have to continue their efforts, and in a more coordinated manner. As has been stated again and again, we cannot allow our limited human resources in Black education to be spread in token fashion all over the country. The Black educational programs being developed at such key centers as Atlanta University are far too important to be sacrificed at the academic marketplace.

One might contend, of course, that white institutions will try to use these suggestions in an attempt to shirk their responsibilities to Black students. The simplest test, which Black students should apply regularly, is to determine what the institutions *are* willing to do. Will they, for instance, contribute to and share a neighboring institution's program? Will they set up exchange programs with a neighboring school or with a distant Black school so that their Black students can take advantage of courses offered elsewhere? Will they help to fund an autonomous institute in

the Black community in return for educational services to their own students? Will they allow Black students to design and teach their own courses if that seems the only way to develop a relevant curriculum?

A white college president recently suggested that his students should concern themselves primarily with what is good for his institution. That is a rather strange thing to say to any student these

days, but its ludicrousness is quite unique in respect to Black students. As Black people move toward better communications and better coordination of policy planning, it will become a commonplace that Black students and Black educational personnel everywhere are part of the Black University. Their efforts to realize its full potential constitute the best hope for the liberation of Black men's minds and souls.



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The White University Must Respond to Black Student Needs

BY ROSCOE C. BROWN

"The black student awakening and the contemporary student activism on America's campuses point the way for the enhancement of the university as an important institution in our society"

N Thursday, April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated as he stood on the porch of a motel in Memphis, Tenn. With one shot, an assassin snuffed out the life and light of a black leader whom both his admirers and detractors respected. Within hours after King's assassination, riots and violence swept the nation's black ghettos. Almost simultaneously, black students on the nation's predominantly white campuses began to hold demonstrations to present "demands" to college and university administrations. These demands were repeated as though they were being played on a phonograph rec-

ord: "more black students," "more black professors," "more black courses," "all-black dormitories" and so on. In a real sense, the black students had awakened.

What is behind this awakening of black students throughout the country? Is it just a reaction to the King murder? Of course not! Black students have been in ferment for over a decade, first in the predominantly Negro colleges, and now in the predominantly white colleges. We should remember that the Civil Rights Revolution really began when, in February 1960, a group of black college students sat down at a lunch counter in a Woolworth's store in Greensboro, N.C. (a thing unheard-of at that time) and refused to move until they were served. The "sit-in" was the forerunner of the mass demonstrations, the marches, and now the angry confrontations that are part of the Civil Rights Revolution—and black students have been an important part of all of them.

If black students were in the vanguard of the Civil Rights Revolution, why did it take so long for the black students on integrated campuses to awaken? Possibly the answer to this question is the nature of the integrated university itself.

Many integrated colleges and universities have long sought Negro and other minority-group students and some have given a disproportionate amount of their scholarship money to minority-group students. These colleges and universities have insisted for the most part that the minority-group students meet the same standards, with minor revisions, as the white students. On the surface this looks good and seems fair, but it overlooks the educational disadvantages that most black students face in ghetto schools. Thus, the type of black student selected in the past has been a black counterpart of his middle-class white fellow student. Because he was in a definite minority (sometimes 2 per cent or 3 per cent of the entering class) and because he was more like the middle-class white student in background, the black student had little compulsion or desire to challenge even the most unfair aspects of his college life.

One such indignity that black students at integrated colleges have had to put up with for years is a kind of unspoken prohibition on interracial dating. Another has been the toleration of unknowing racial bias on the part of fellow students

and professors concerning such things as racially tinted humor and the alleged rhythm that all Negroes are supposed to have. More painfully, they had to accept the inconsistencies about equality on campus and the existence of racially segregated fraternities and sororities.

Fortunately, many integrated colleges have now recognized that they have been servicing only a fraction of the talent among black high school graduates and have reached out to attract more black students from a wider variety of backgrounds. As more black students come to the nation's campuses and have an opportunity to experience both the positive and the negative aspects of a university experience, the black students have begun to organize and discuss what they can do themselves to improve the situation. Most black students view their proposed improvements as of ultimate benefit to the white students as well. In more than one demonstration for more black courses, students and professors, white students who have tried to participate as members of the black student groups have been told to go back to the white student body and begin to eradicate the racism that exists there.

Mention of the word "racism" in this context requires a brief clarification about what the black students mean when they use it. Racism is used to refer to an attitude, often not conscious, which causes an individual to respond to

a situation in a different manner when blacks are involved than when whites only are involved. Thus, a question as to whether a Negro should quarterback the football team when he is the best quarterback involves a racist attitude. Similarly, concern about whether a qualified black student should be given a Rhodes Scholarship is a racist attitude. The black students feel that white students working among the white students to eradicate racist attitudes is a fundamental contribution that white students can make toward better racial understanding.

The black student speaks of relevance. He says that the curriculum must be "relevant to the black experience." While this sounds like so much jargon, and is spoken by some of the students with an almost ritualistic fervor, their concern is a valid one. What the black students mean is that the curriculum should give them some insights about the black man's role in society and help them to develop those skills which will enable them to improve life in the ghetto. Thus, the black students want courses in black art, black music, the economics of poverty and the economics of the ghetto. This does not mean that most black students want to go back to the ghetto as social workers or teachers. They want to become participating members of society in all of its aspects, and want to use their knowledge to help black people in many ways. The present generation of

black students is aware of those omissions in their education which if rectified might help them to be more effective in their efforts to improve the lot of all black people, not just themselves. The cry for relevance parallels a similar cry by the student activists in colleges all over the nation. Those students are vitally concerned with poverty, racism, war and injustice. They, too, feel that the classical tools of scholarship have not been particularly helpful to them in dealing with these concerns. While they concede that a firm grounding in a variety of subject areas eventually might be helpful to them, the urgency of their youth and the urgency of the problems that society faces leads them to cry for more relevance in their education now.

The present emphasis on programs for black students offends many persons, white and black, because they feel that such an overt emphasis merely stimulates separatism and racial divisiveness. At a first glance, this proposition might appear to be valid. However, we must realize that self-respect and equality are not bestowed on one group by another, but rather must be gained by the group being discriminated against by its own efforts. This is not to say that white people cannot play important roles in the process, but the black man must be his own spokesman, his own strategist, and must mobilize the sentiment among his own people for change. In the process, there is apt to be a strong overreac-

tion by some black people. Thus, demands for all-black dormitories emerge, or statements are made that a white man cannot teach a course in black history. Those who aspire to a society in which black and white will live with mutual respect and opportunity must strive to understand the drives that cause some of these demands to be made.

In understanding the demands, the university must evaluate and analyze the consequences of accepting them or rejecting them. In many cases, such as the allegations about exploitation of Negro athletes that have been recently publicized in *Sports Illustrated* and *Newsweek*, the grievances of the black students have so much basis that some drastic action is needed. For example, the Negro athletes' demand for a black coach is not unreasonable.

True, at the very moment of their demand, an appropriately qualified black coach may not be available, but the reason for this must be understood, too. With the large number of black athletes who participate in college sports, it is certainly more than an accident or oversight that few of them ever return to their alma maters to coach. Thus, the demand for a black coach is not as unreasonable as it may seem at first blush. Why not wait, then, until the college can take time to seek out one or develop one? This is, in a sense, the crux of the black revolution or black awakening. Blacks have been waiting for years for obvious griev-

ances to be recognized and redressed—and since society has continued to ignore them, blacks are making demands for fulfillment now!

The intellectual, of course, recognizes that all demands cannot be met immediately, but a start can be made—even if on a basis that can be criticized as somewhat inadequate. The real task of the university is to begin to bridge the credibility gap that exists between the black students and society. The university can do this by attempting to understand the concerns and grievances of the black students and beginning to deal with them directly. In doing so, the university from its position of greater understanding and maturity must not try to always force the black students to function according to the university's rules—for in a sense it is some of the university's methods of operation that have created the situation from which the grievances stem. Just as the student revolts on campuses all over the country have forced universities to re-evaluate, and often change, policies that have been unchallenged for years, so should the black student awakening be viewed by the university as an opportunity to deal with the subtle, and not too subtle, effects of racism on the university.

Some observers of the changes in the college scene vis-a-vis the black student have wondered if this isn't racism in reverse. As I

(Continued on page 87)

A CULTURAL APPROACH TO EDUCATION

BY MILTON R. COLEMAN

"The concern of the educator must not be to integrate the African-American student into a basically dysfunctional educational system but, rather, to work towards its destruction as a source of black oppression"

HE concern of African-American educators must be first with education and only secondarily with those structures set aside for educational activities (i.e., schools). This is because the goal is a relevant and productive education for our people. Education has no absolute standards and can therefore not be limited by any predetermined or already extant systems or structures. Rather education is an experience in concentrated enculturation which always takes place in the most feasible and culturally expedient location.

Realizing the shortcomings of

white American schools, the fundamental approach has to be either to make those schools adequate through change, or to move elsewhere to administer education. And before considering whether or not American schools can be altered sufficiently, we have to first recognize the essential need for a new approach to education from a black perspective.

Any educational system must be a viable cultural cell in its particular social complex and must work in conjunction with other such institutions in the society (religion, legal codes, social organizations, etc.) towards affecting coordination and continuity of culture and values.

In Afro-America, most schools have not been such a viable cultural institution, established by our people to promote our own general welfare, but rather a substandard distortion of white America's idea of education. The latter serves as a valid institution in the broader/other society, and, as such, has always had to justify the historic and

contemporary subordination of African-Americans. It has, unfortunately, forced many of the same such values of inferiority, both intellectual and practical, upon us. In ways both subtle and overt, it has aided in our oppression.

Intellectually, it has perpetuated a "white lie over black truth." In a more practical sense it has given us broken and outmoded tools with which to operate in the larger society, thereby insuring our traditional position of economic, political and social impotency.

The normal role of education as a lever for cultural enrichment has functioned improperly in our community. Black students returning to the community hoping to develop its positive aspects, have found themselves unequipped to operate effectively. Very little in the educational system has dealt with Afro-America from either a positive, constructive, or realistic framework. The massive unrest among black students today reflects the recognition of this fact.

The long overdue need for school systems to address the most pointed problems of American society (especially as they relate to African-Americans), as well as the failure to accurately reflect the history and culture of black people, has precipitated this high-tide of legitimate discontent. Hence, increased student activism around this issue represents a last call for commitment on the part of American academia towards real and meaningful education.

Nevertheless, some African-Americans *have* accepted education as the answer. And what of them? Can they not be used as examples of what America holds for the black man?

First of all, they are decidedly in a great minority and can therefore not be a legitimate index by which to assess the present state of Afro-America as a whole. And although an increasing number of Negroes hold quasi-middle-income jobs, this does not obliterate the reality that, although most of the poor people in America are in fact white, most of the black people in America in fact are poor—failures in even the American sense, a narrow spectrum of economic acquisition and stability.

Moreover, the so-called successful Negro middle-classman cannot be held up as a symbol of black Americanism because, in a broader social sense, he is also illegitimate. Laying aside for the moment the whole question of practicality and possibility, let us just consider the relation of the middle-class Negro to the broader African-American community.

Although he is recognized as respectable by the white society (sometimes), black youth, for the most part, reject his brand of social success. They simply cannot relate to him. The questions to which he presents answers are not the most relevant ones in their lives. Black children are quite aware of the potential insecurities of their

life-style, yet they persist in their ways.

To attribute this to psychological maladjustment is to assume that schools are more inherently correct than people. Most black students don't want to be like their family doctor, physical education teacher or their case worker; they don't want to sell insurance, be lawyers, or even work in factories as apprentices. The social sacrifice inherent in achieving these positions is too great for them. They must be offered new alternatives, not just alternative ways to become middle-class Negroes.

In addition, it is unrealistic to concentrate on enlargement of the "black bourgeoisie". For this group has its classic creation as a buffer zone between the masses of blacks and the masses of whites. It cannot exist without the existence of the other two externally to itself. In fact, if the masses of African-Americans were to become middle-class Negroes, they would have negated themselves, for there would be no middle, only a full realization of a white top and a black bottom. Comparison of the positions held now by Negro college graduates and their white counterparts illustrates this point vividly.

Therefore, the absence of "respectable" African-Americans in the community is not the answer to the problem. It is rather a failure of the schools as part and parcel of the system which spawns the "black bourgeoisie" to be relevant

to the community as a total institution. From beginning to end, its perspective, its program, and its product have not addressed the needs of the African-American.

Such a miscarriage of socio-intellectual pregnancy has destroyed the average African-American's respect for education. The middle-class Negro succeeds only at the expense of his soul, while the soulful blackbrother suffers a life of economic insecurity. Both are equally politically impotent and hence the community is stagnant.

Moreover, in respect to soul, it becomes apparent that soul is thus more than a music style, a way of walking-that-walk or talking-that-talk. It becomes an inner drive whose motor manifestations are present in the aforementioned traits. Soul becomes that which leads one knowingly in a more meaningful direction than synthetic capitalist Christian materialism temptingly invites. It's a natural *thang* (i.e., of nature), and as such deserves more respect than we often give it. It is, as Maulana Ron Karenga points out, one thing the white man has never been able to deal with, because he can't understand it. Therefore, neither his schools nor anything else in his society has ever, cannot, and probably never will be able to handle it: "The white boy engaged in the worship of technology; we must not sell our souls for money and machines."

We must move then to resurrect

education as a constructive cultural institution among our people.

Aside from the need for white schools to perpetuate the "white lie" mentioned above, other considerations seem to point to the ultimate need for all-black school systems and consequently the necessity for African-American educators to take stock of their present condition and to prepare for the essential move back to black.

The concern of all public schools is obviously educating the public. In America, that public contains a large predominance of non-blacks and a considerably smaller number of Third World peoples, the majority of whom are African-Americans. Because of their historical and ethnic differences, these two groups are decidedly distinct culturally. Yet the American public education system, operating in accord with the country's melting-pot myth, works on the erroneous assumption that there can at once be a basically homogeneous school system to serve all American inhabitants.



This is, in fact, a myth because the historical existence of Africanoid peoples in America has been one of separateness. Therefore, a balanced black-white educational program is a contradiction of both ethnic and historical reality. And

hence we must consider the alleged massive failure of African-Americans to adapt to the American school system not so much as a psychological maladjustment to be relieved by remedial and compensatory programs which, in essence, seek to find new ways to stuff the same rotten food down ever-rejecting throats, but rather as a socio-cultural mismatch, a poorly balanced diet, which is indicative of our even broader paradoxical, self-contradictory existence in America.

In short, when there are consistently so many dysfunctional products, we must question not only the raw material, but the nature of the machine itself. The failure of a round peg to fit into a square hole is not because the peg isn't square, but rather because it wasn't made to fit in a square hole in the first place.

The question can now be raised as to whether or not the present school systems *can* in fact be changed to meet the needs of African-Americans? Are such changes realistic? More important, are they desirable?

First of all, it seems as though no American school has yet affected sufficient changes to satisfy the ever-increasing demands of black students at all levels. And perhaps this inability is illuminated by two observations. On the one hand, and already mentioned above, since the American schools are part of the total American sociocultural com-

plex (a viable institution in *that* society), it must be compatible to the stability of that system. Unless it either justifies or ignores the historic and contemporary oppression of African-Americans, the society as an entity cannot exist.

To deal with the slanting of curriculum for this purpose would be redundant. We all know what's happening there. Yet we have to also reiterate a need for new career opportunities. White schools are structured to meet the needs of the white community. Our needs are quite different and often contradictory to those. In fact, one of the foremost designs of a black school will be the destruction of white schools as the legitimate source of education for African-Americans.

A second point involves the desirability of such a change. In highly mechanized, industrial America, the schools, at all levels, have become the nation's largest baby sitter. Finding nothing more expedient to do with its youth, America offers a 40-hour school week with extra curricular activities for overtime. The world of academia has become a haven of escapism, specializing in the mass dissemination of functional ignorance, justified by "tradition" and legitimized as "education".

American education tends to be a rather static type of thing, so static that it does not apply its most elementary findings to fundamental issues. Elementary biology is inapplicable to Mary's "divine con-

ception"; courses in communism and racism are outlawed in the schools, the study of them being allocated to exclusive federal scholars like the Kerner Commission and the House Un-American Activities Committee, who readily admit these are the two biggest problems facing the entire country. By the same token, Black History becomes a nice thing to "study", but not from which to learn lessons regarding this society's illegitimacy in relation to black people.

And, of course, there is always the matter of co-optation, white folks taking over our *thang*. For the enterprising white hustler, this has always been a good gig—economically, intellectually, culturally, you name it. Tragic it is when we realize that African-Americans have been the creative backbone of this country and nevertheless have little or nothing to show for it.

We have to seek to reclaim our own heritage and to control the definition of our own history and culture in order to preserve a meaningful and accurate definition of our situation—past, present, and future—from our own perspective for ourselves and our prosperity.

It should therefore be the goal of the African-American educator to seek the establishment of a fluid educational structure, for reality is ever-changing, and once established, a black education should never need to be revolutionized, but rather in a constant state of evolution, always putting the pres-

ent in its proper perspective. Our education must answer Frantz Fanon's charge: "What we want to do is to go forward all the time, night and day, in the company of Man, in the company of all men. . . . We must work out new concepts and try to set afoot a new man."

Black people in America have no power to change the public schools. So-called decentralization has yet to prove its viability. Without real control of its schools, the black community, that society which the educational system must serve and hence those who must have the power to define "education" from their own perspective and sufficient for relevance to them, has only a tokenistic or advisory function. And what is to prevent the dismissal of such advisory entities when political sentiments change in the governing colonial power structure? As Brother Stokely Carmichael has pointed out, this is precisely the lesson which black people must learn from Reconstruction in this country.

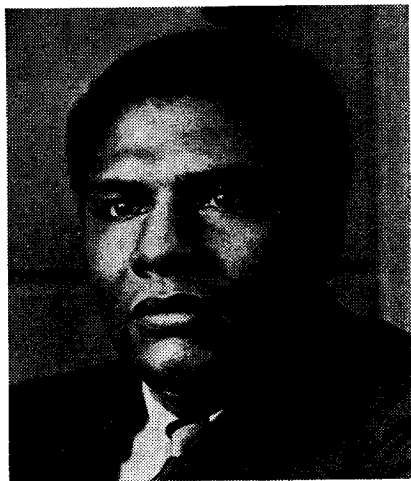
And so, the concern of the educator must not be to integrate (by

any means necessary) the African-American student into a basically dysfunctional educational system, but rather, if he chooses to work within that system, to work towards its destruction as a source of black oppression.

For those who do not wish to accept the cold reality of this, there is a sort of alternate approach. And that is to merely strive to offer a valid educational experience to the African-American student: one which evolves from a black frame of reference, operates with materials drawn from the black experience, and prepares the individual for relevant and effective functioning within and in accord with the general welfare of that society. If this can be done within the existing structures, then do it. But if it cannot be done there, it is the clear duty of the African-American educator to denounce that system and to seek any means necessary to serve the black community, in which his position and reality ultimately rest: "No man is any more than the context to which he owes his existence." (Maulana Karenga)



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The Positiveness of Separation

BLACK INVISIBILITY OF WHITE CAMPUSES

BY NATHAN HARE

"Black student endeavors, if successful, not only might bring about a kind of black renaissance, they could also possibly wield an impact on the entire cemetery of American education"

THROUGHOUT this land, a volcano of student alienation and resentment—compounded in the case of black students—is erupting in the

form of ephemeral administrative take-overs. *Vis-a-vis* black students, the problem stems in part from the emptiness and subtle racism of the college system; in part from the pain of black student experiences in the society which the college system serves.

Black students, it is necessary to know, are descendants of a people cut off from their attachment to land, culture and country, robbed of a sense of pride in pastness (the roots of identity) so essential as a

springboard for a sense of collective destiny. Shut off from involvement in the educational process (during slavery, it was unlawful to teach a black person to read or write), black Americans, then largely inhabiting the South, sought adjustment by way of supernatural rationalizations such as the superstition still extant that "if you read too much you're bound to go crazy."

The problem today, though many-faceted, is irritated by the gross invisibility of black students—despite their seemingly mushrooming physical presence—on most white college campuses. The neglect of the black student's needs may be apparent but acutely unnoticed in the scarcity, for example, of courses dealing forthrightly with the black race, its problems and its contributions, in American society. "I sort of thought Negroes came here to try to become white," a white student leader recently admitted.

In the wake of a general black revolt, the black college student's awareness of the psychology of exclusion grows ever keener, and he longs at last for educational and political visibility. Accordingly, while the perfunctory nature (and general obsolescence) of higher education in America plagues white students as well, the black student is impelled to seek visibility ("get it together" and "move on up" and "come back home") through sharp demands for symbols such as the presence on campus of at least a

token number of black professors and courses exposing black history and culture, down to the inclusion of hog maws and chitterlings on cafeteria menus which already include beef stroganoff, meatballs and spaghetti, and occasionally, chop suey.

Black students see themselves as window-dressing tokens of black participation in campus life, knowing that, as individuals, they are "in," but nevertheless wanting general recognition of the fact that they are there. This contrasts with the situation of black students on the Negro college campus, where protest does occasionally reflect racial and color considerations—stemming chiefly from Negro college conformity to the mores and values of the white college system—but more typically takes the form of a basic quest for personal freedom: the liberalizing of curfew regulations and other aspects of the right not to be treated as children while training to be adults.

By comparison, the white college permits a greater degree of freedom (thought not as much as they claim to believe in and not enough to please today's generation of students reared on the permissive approach, members of an age group which constitutes an increasing majority while treated as a kind of minority). Particularly is the white college characterized by a greater spirit of inquiry than the typical Negro college. This intellectual activity rubs off on the student. Black students become concerned just as

white students are, except that whatever problem white students encounter black students inherit, plus the dual condition of being rejected or ignored as individuals, or as blacks.

On white campuses located in small college communities, blacks live in social isolation (aggravated frequently by a skewed sex distribution) where their acceptance is superficial even when apparent. In less exclusive colleges located in large cities, the opportunities for social and romantic philandering are more prevalent, in both the greater number of their kind on campus and a relative access to the off-campus black community.

This quest for meaningful social relations, coupled with discriminatory housing and economic considerations, increase the black student's probability of becoming a campus commuter. Commuting each day between the black community and the white campus, black students experience a daily sense of discrepancy between two contrasting, even conflicting, worlds: one world whose spirit has been largely broken in the quest for the social elevation which the black student now holds dear; the other world characterized by a good deal of *minutiae* which the black student recognizes as profoundly "irrelevant" to himself, his fate and his experience. And yet he knows so well that he must wade somehow through this "white" *milieu* in search of ratification for the "white rat race" (which is a chore for

anybody). The chore is simply compounded by the fact that, psychologically and otherwise, it does not relate so well to what is crucial to the black student's life, inclining him in too many cases to give up. He eventually comes to see it as essentially "a bad set."

This sense of defeatism and despair is reinforced and magnified by the models of failure surrounding him in the black community. On top of that, exposure to harsh measures of discrimination, past or present, provoke a feeling of suspicion out of which can develop a negative definition of certain phenomena which the white middle class employs for social acceptance, including not merely cultural symbols of status; it might become derogatory, for example, to be seen spending much time with books. Under the prevailing college system, structured so that an individual succeeds best by conforming most to middle class values, black students labor considerably less prepared (than white students of suburban training and experience) to cope. They grow naturally and indelibly alienated. It might become more "in" to be pretty good at cards, for example, which only multiplies the probability of failure in the academic arena. The black student—covertly at first—rightfully begins to question the nature of standards impassionately dangled above his head as obstacles to the acquisition of the stamp "qualified."

Recently, during a talk at Yale

University, I had the occasion to ponder the blank and (in a good many cases) open-mouthed stares of ignorance from the predominantly white audience when I related how all white students given a test devised by a black colleague and myself had fundamentally flunked; all were unable to identify such commodities as hog maws, fried pies and butter roll. The professor-collaborator and I had been impelled to concoct the test (at the risk of falling victims to the fallacy of *reductio ad absurdum*) after a ruckus between black students and white administrators at a predominantly white college over the choice of a professor for a course in "ancient black history." The administrators' choice was a young white fellow, armed with an Ivy League Ph.D. and much-lauded publications in "learned journals." The black choice of the black students (preferred also by many white students) bore no college credentials but probably knew as much about ancient black history as anybody extant, having recently spent two years haunting the Schomburg Collection in New York. The white professor knew little or nothing about the subject under scrutiny, he was quick to admit, but continued to cry out with strong emotion that he was "qualified." The black students who sought to break up his class could not understand why the Administration would choose a white man admitting his ignorance to teach a course while

rejecting the black man who knew all about it.

Later, it occurred to me that a black historian seeking publication in learned journals is placed in a rather precarious position of having to document his work (when writing aggressively against the slavery era) with references from the writings and records kept by a slave society in which black persons were restricted by law and custom from access to the written word.

While a graduate student in sociology at the University of Chicago, I ran afoul of academia's demand for copious footnoting, fleetingly scanning library shelves for instant references from unread books to win high marks and influence professors with padded documentation. (A Harvard administrator in the audience at Yale assured me that I did not invent that "vulgar" practice.) Even so, it was for me excusable because, unlike my professors who were unable to tell me the identity of The Four Tops, I was "culturally deprived." I acquired the Ph.D. without gross dishonor, and that appears sometimes now to count in the minds of some people more than all the good and bad things I have ever done. My contempt grew stronger, in any case, as I discovered the footnoting cliques in references used to buttress white theorizing on the black race. Not only did I detect mutual-quoting affairs; I noted that a professor might suggest hypotheses (as many

did) to thesis students who then graciously used some of the professor's work for references, only in turn to have their thesis used by the professor to document a larger theory based on the hypotheses of the several students. I learned, further, while poring over learned journals, that the motivation behind the footnoted expressions of gratitude to wealthy foundations and colleagues was not gratitude alone. The fact that a top-rated foundation has backed a piece of research gives it the boost of prestige. The scholarly custom of sending a manuscript around to sundry colleagues reaps similarly the inference that the reviewing colleagues have given it the stamp of approval. This "dirty knowledge" (as one of my professors called it) gave me, as a faltering black student from a rural district in Oklahoma, a new kind of confidence.

Many experiences (which can turn him either on or off) confront the black college student in the typical white college classroom. For example, he must sit silently bemused while his eminent sociology professor reports solemnly but proudly that his surveys show there will be no riots in Chicago because (as one suggested early last September) only seven per cent of Negroes surveyed say they definitely approve of riots. A black student might not realize that such a professor, like his peers at large, is suffering from the bias of democracy's myth of majority-rule,

but the calculator in his brain might quickly register 70,000 blacks and wonder how many Negroes his professor believes sufficient to start a riot. The professor himself may later have stood perplexed when rioting broke out in Chicago on the heels of Martin Luther King's assassination, but he is not likely to alter his methods or standards of "scholarly excellence" which he requires his black students to accept.

Early in his educational career, the black student encounters the subordinating slap of white supremacy. Modes of communication, for instance, compel him to lose his "in-group dialect" and imitate the snarls and twangs of the white race. "There" becomes "thear;" "nine," "nigh-yun;" "law," "lower;" and so on. Verbal facility is frankly presented to the black student as the salient ingredient for admission to college, although I know young black men with more verbal facility than I will ever have who have either flunked out or dropped out of school.

Beyond this, the black student instinctively, if only faintly, is affronted by the fact that foreign languages required are exclusively of white European origin, though Oriental languages may be offered as electives. This, in spite of the fact that Chinese is spoken by more individuals than any other language in the world and Swahili, an African language, competes very favorably with German. This is just

(Continued on page 91)

THE HOWARD UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE

BY GEORGE B. DAVIS



NABRIT



CARMICHAEL



HARE



KARENGA

The first major conference aimed at the goal of a Black University, ironically, was held on the campus of the Negro college most famous for its elitist tradition, which might account for the conference's results

DURING a balmy five-day weekend that started on Nov. 13, 1968, more than 1900 students, scholars and artists from 40 states and more than 100 colleges and universities gathered at Howard University for

a conference called, "Towards a Black University."

It was the most comprehensive group of great black thinkers ever to focus on this single issue. If you ran your finger down the guest list it would fall on names like Dr. Alvin Poussaint, LeRoi Jones, Max

Roach, Harold Cruse, Rhody McCoy, Ossie Davis, Maulana Ron Karenga, Stokely Carmichael, Dr. Andrew Taylor and hundreds of others with national and local reputations.

To the Howard campus the conference had the effect of a rock thrown into a pool: it caused ripples, but two months later the surface of the pool gave little sign that the questions raised by the conference were submerged there.

However, for some, like Acklyn Lynch, a social science instructor at Howard who helped to design the conference, it achieved exactly what he had supposed it would: "It gave people a chance to get together and start to talk about the kinds of things they were going to have to do. It furthered the dialogue." He added that he was still talking and exchanging ideas by telephone with people from all over the country, people he had met at the conference.

During those bright warm five days the Howard campus was full of dashikis, Afros, undercover FBI agents and revolutionary talk.

Former Howard instructor Nathan Hare had declined an invitation to return for the conference because he said Howard students would rather talk about a black university instead of making the university black. He stayed at San Francisco State College where students were doing more than talking. His statement read: "unless every Howard student comes armed

with a shotgun and a molotov cocktail they are defenseless against an Amos 'n' Andy administration.

Lynch reflected later, however, that talk was all they had intended to do. "Back in the 1930's and 40's scientists from all over the world were meeting and talking about space exploration, but the first flight didn't take place until 20 years later."

Buddy Hunt, a Howard freshman, interrupted to say that the Black University couldn't wait that long. We were all sitting in Lynch's office on the third floor of Founders Library. Lynch was quick to add that he had not meant that it should. He turned from marking final examination papers. "But you can't have a five-day conference and after it's over go out and build a Black University. There are thousands of questions that you have to answer first."

But the prospect of revolutionary talk was enough to bring a reaction from the trustees. I quoted to Lynch a statement the Board had issued to the effect that Howard was founded 101 years ago "primarily for the education of disadvantaged black people, but nothing in its charter will support a Black University," they said, seemingly unmindful that Howard 101 years later has very little relation to the *really* disadvantaged black people who live in the slums surrounding the campus in northwest Washington.

The trustees were making it plain

that the school, which has produced half the country's black doctors, a good percentage of its black lawyers, Senator Edward Brooke, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, and Washington's mayor, Walter Washington, was not going to tolerate anything revolutionary happening to "General Howard's University," as one student called it, and laughed.

Lynch looked up from his paper-marking again. "The trustees didn't have to tell us that. The conference was not designed to have Howard become *the* Black University."

Invitations to the conference stated precisely what the conference was designed for:

"The concept of a Black University is revolutionary. It emerges out of the frustrations of black students, educators, activist 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 . . .

Our responsibility as conference participants is to define the structure and mechanics of that university."

On Wednesday, in a two-hour keynote speech, Stokely Carmichael told the delegates they were going to have to "quit talking and start acting." But the conferees had come from as far away as Califor-

nia to talk, so they broke into small workshops and met in classrooms and houses in the community and read poetry and prose and listened to jazz and talked.

The range of subjects was too wide to summarize well. In short, every aspect imaginable was dealt with—financial, international, political, curricular, artistic, athletic, technological, environmental, structural, agricultural, musical, clerical. There were 75 workshops digging out the answers to some of the thousands of questions that had to be answered.

A Howard co-ed, tall, thin, very attractive, recalled that some of the most beautiful people in the world were in town for that weekend. Lynch complained, however, that only about five percent of the Howard student body participated. This figure seemed surprisingly low to some of the outsiders who were there that weekend. But it was hard to tell the participants from the students who were simply making their regular rounds to classes in the same buildings.

Lynch said he took it upon himself to close the workshop sessions to representatives of the white press. He said he was trying to avoid the danger of misrepresentation and sensationalism. But others say it was more a group decision which was, in part, motivated by the planners' belief that black people at this stage talk more freely when there are no white people present, which meant that some

conferees attempted to eject white faculty members. One observer said the selection of who was 'black' enough got a little ridiculous. A black former Howard student who came on his own said he was put out because he happened to work for a white newspaper. He said there was a dude, a holder of a black belt in karate, at the door to Cramton Auditorium threatening to hurt him if he was caught inside. "The dude had a list of folks he was going to 'chop up,'" the former student said.

The local media reacted with anger. White Americans perhaps more than any other people on earth get really disturbed when they are discriminated against. Radio station WWDC broadcast an editorial which started off by saying: "Officially approved discrimination is) supposed to be a thing of the past." And ended up with: "Howard University, chartered by Congress, supported in large by public money, has no *right* to permit discrimination on its campus (emphasis added)."

The administration was in a dilemma. It was caught between white money and black students. A spokesman for the University said the administration did nothing. Organizers of the conference said the University closed certain facilities to the conference, forcing it to hold most of its last workshops in the gym. Several outsiders said, at the end, that there were so few people remaining that all the workshops

could fit into the gym. Perhaps all of the reports are partially correct, or perhaps none of them are.

Some participants complained that the conference did not get much support from the community. This may have been because the conference was not well advertised in Washington. By barring the Washington press—which, though overwhelmingly white-owned, is nonetheless the least segregated and the fairest of any large city press establishment in the country—the organizers assured that very little news would come down from Howard hill to the rest of Washington.

But the conference survived all this. Mid-way through, a major reorganization was necessary to keep all the participants from attending the workshops conducted by the big names and neglecting the ones where a lot of the bread and butter work was being done.

A small group of hard working students planned and made the major decisions at the conference. All of them I interviewed said there were many things they would do differently if they had it to do over again, but all agreed it was a good first step.

Joey Mitchell, a Howard junior, who is in charge of reprinting the official results of the conference, rated it a success despite the bumpy road it traveled. He has in hand 15 resolutions and about 75 papers that deal not only with the Black University's role but also with the

bordering areas of the black man's role historically, presently and the future in white society.

The papers and resolutions are available through the office of the Howard University Student Association, which sponsored and paid for the conference. The papers and resolutions summarize what came

out of the interaction of students, artists, Muslims, professors, scientists, community leaders, clergymen, poets, musicians and intellectuals. Mitchell said they are first steps which will have to be joined to the next steps taken in New York or Atlanta or Los Angeles or San Francisco, or somewhere.



George B. Davis, author of the report on the Howard University conference, "Toward the Black University," is a staff writer for the Washington Post. He previously has published fiction in **NEGRO DIGEST**.

Perspectives

Black Life, White "Experts"

Life magazine, perhaps the most influential of all the Establishment publications, put the case very simply in its recent profile of the reigning white expert on black people, **Daniel Patrick Moynihan**. Explaining why Mr. Moynihan has achieved such eminence and authority in two Administrations by stealing the insights of **W.E.B. Du Bois** and **E. Franklin Frazier** and then distorting them, Life said the following:

"... Moynihan is white, and it is a fact of our times that white people in power tend to listen more closely to white advisers . . ."

The black reality must be authenticated by the white expert before it is admitted into acceptability. In the world of books, the practice is no less prevalent. No opinion about black books and authors is more authoritative than **Robert A. Bone's**. When the Johnson Reprint people brought out a handsome facsimile edition of **Alain Locke's** classic *The New Negro*, the white expert on blacks **Allan H. Spear** was selected to write the new introduction. **August Meier**, the expert on black history, is serving as general editor of the American Negro Life Series which Atheneum is publishing.

Herbert Hill, whose official position has been for some time that of Labor Secretary for the NAACP, appointed himself chief *guru* of black literature some years ago. Now, with the surge of interest (and possibility of huge earnings) in black history, Mr. Hill has leap-frogged over to history and is now a grand *guru* in that discipline. Word has it that he has been named general editor of a series on black history to be published by Simon and Schuster.

Apart from the overall distastefulness of the whole business of white experts presiding over black work, the opportunism inherent in the practice is monstrous. These white experts on black people eagerly capitalize on their white skins and their easier access to the editors and publishers to grab off fat advances and fees. The black community is not without remedy against these practices, however. Many of the new books being planned are earmarked for sale to schools and libraries in the metropolitan areas where, often, black children are more numerous than whites in the public schools (New York, Chicago, Washington). Vigilant black parents and teachers, made aware of those books which are the products of black scholarship and planning, can defeat the white experts in the end. They can insist that, where practical, the books used in the schools and libraries utilized by their children be books conceived and produced by black people.



Corrections

NEGRO DIGEST wishes to correct two grievous errors made in the



NELLIE BONNER



haste of meeting deadlines for the November 1968 and February 1969 issues. The most serious error was made in the November 1968 issue when the name of the author of a "Focus" profile, **Mrs. Clyde (Nellie) Bonner** of San Francisco, was not published along with her article. The article, "She Lit A Candle," described the career of a prominent educator, **Miss Ida L. Jackson**, now retired and living in California. As a result of the omission of Mrs. Bonner's by-line, her article also was not mentioned in the Table of Contents for the November 1968 issue of the magazine nor in the annual Index which also appeared in that issue. The less serious error was similar in nature. The name of **Dudley Randall**, well-known poet and publisher (Broadside Press), was not listed at the end of his review of the book, *The Algiers Motel Incident*, as is customary. We term this error "less serious" not because it was less careless on our part but because, as a regular contributor to **NEGRO DIGEST**, Mr. Randall's by-line is more familiar to **NEGRO DIGEST** readers. We regret both errors.—THE EDITORS



Publications

The African Scholar is the name of a new quarterly journal "of the African Academy of Political and Social Sciences" published out of Washington, D. C. The first issue of the journal focused on Biafra, with articles by **President Felix Houphouet-Boigny** of the Ivory Coast; **C. Y. Ngonja**, Tanzania's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs; and **J. B. C. Ugokwe**, editor of the journal. An unusual but fascinating

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Black Writing: this is u, thisis u

"Now if a man's mind is impartial in receiving tradition he examines it with all due care so that he can distinguish between the true and the false; but if he is pervaded by attachment to any particular opinion or sect he immediately accepts any tradition which supports it; and this tendency and attachment cloud his judgement so that he is unable to criticize and scrutinize what he hears, and straightway accepts what is false and hands it on to others. . . ."

—Ibn Khaldun

The term Negritude, created by the brilliant West Indian poet Aimé Césaire, and nurtured to maturity by Léopold Sedar Senghor (the poet/politician of Senegal), can help us understand where the black writer is in this country today. Negritude, in essence (as I understand it) denotes that particular quality, those certain nuances which are universal to the thought, action, and behavior of black Africans.

The concept of Negritude has been, and to some extent still is, of fundamental importance in the writings (literature) of black Africans trained in the French-speaking areas, *i.e.*, by those writers who have, willingly or unwillingly (whatever the case may be), adopted French cultural habits as part of their life-style. Negritude came into existence not purely as the result of French culture but as a needed reaction to French classical education. Suddenly, black Africans, stranded together (in time of crisis the weak and strong seek out their own) in some French bar "intellectualizing" and "rationalizing" their existence, became keenly aware of the fact that they were *blackmen*, but (most important) they finally realized this in the most profound terms that were *non-white*, too. Negritude, in its final analysis, can be considered the anti-thesis of everything French, *i.e.*, everything anti-black, everything white. The French-African finally realized that he was accepted by the dominant white French society only because he was willing to subordinate his blackness and become as French as possible. This meant, among other things, that the African had to adopt the dress, mannerism, culture and religion of Western civilization. Thus, the policy of *assimilation* was used to systematically destroy the mind and total identity of black Africans; stripping him completely of his African-ness, his blackness, leaving him more French than African. That's the context in which Negritude grew; it became that rebellious force used by the French-Africans to try and recapture their past, their culture, their religion, themselves and most of all their future.

With Negritude the African writer did an about-face and decided to exalt, seek, recreate and contain his African-ness, rather than continuing to run away from it or to cover it with the appropriate French substitutes. This new literary movement to which Césaire helped give

birth started in 1939 when the Parisian Review published his *Cahier D'un Retour Au Pays Natal* (*Journal of a Return to my Native Country*, which has since been re-issued in book form by *Presence Africaine*). The Journal and later poems gave impetus to what is now considered Negritude. But Negritude itself (the concept of) goes back a little further (to about 1927) and was called *Negrismo*. *Negrismo* started in Cuba and was, as was Negritude, influenced by Africa and all things African. Cubans, as well as Africans, had grown up under the white ruling class which tried to destroy everything anti-white (anti-Western) or anything remotely connected with Africa. *Negrismo* grew rapidly and influenced such writers as the Cuban poets Ramon Guirao and Nicolas Guillen and the Puerto Rican poet Luis Pales Matos.

Thus, the frame of reference that the African and Cuban writers used to work in has been established. To bring the concept of Negritude a little closer to home I refer you to Léopold Senghor's definition: "Negritude is the *sum total of the values of the civilization of the African World*. It is not racialism, it is culture. It is the embracing and domination of a situation in order to apprehend the cosmos by process of coming to terms with it. . . . Negritude as we had then begun to conceive and define it was a weapon of defense and attack and inspiration. . . ." Actually, Negritude is the sum total of black consciousness and, when used, is not only applicable to literature but to all forms of art, e.g., painting, sculpture, dance, music, etc. Ezekiel Mphahlele, who most certainly is not a proponent of Negritude, relates this sum-total feeling in his *The African Image*: "It is rather the assimilated African who has absorbed French culture, who is now passionately wanting to recapture his past. In his poetry he extols his ancestors, ancestral mask, African wood carvings and bronze art and tries to recover the moorings of his oral literature; he clearly feels he has come to a dead-end in European culture, and is still not really accepted as an organic part of French society, for all the assimilation he has been through. As a result, French-speaking African nationalists have become a personification of this strong revulsion. . . ." I think that, by lightly reviewing the *idea* of Negritude, it will enable us to better understand the *thought* and *meaning* of blackwriting.

How alike blackpeople in this country are to the *assimilated* French-Africans. However, in our case the term *assimilated* can be substituted with the euphemism *integrated*. Blackwriting as we view it today is the result of centuries of slavery and forced alienation from Africa and one's-self. We've been exiles in a strange land where our whole life-style repeatedly comes into contradiction after contradiction. Blackwriting, to the Afro-American (as is Negritude to the French-African), is the antithesis to a decadent culture that has systematically, over the centuries, debased and dehumanized us with the fury and passion of an unfeeling computer.

Literature produced by blackhands is not, necessarily, blackwriting. What has to be embodied in blackwriting, first and foremost, is that consciousness which reflects the true black experience; the true Afro-American experience; written and related in a style indicative of that experience. Which may mean, as I believe it does, new forms and

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Response to African Woman

Grow old?

Maan! I ain't never
Gonna grow old—no, not me.
'Cause when I dig that old
Cat creeping down the alley
I'm gonna run in the house.
And when he goes to scratching
On the door and calling:
"Joseph Bevans Bush," I'm gonna
Answer: "He ain't here old man—
In fact, he done moved a long time
Ago; and ain't left no forwarding
Address either."

Grow old?

No man, not me.

—JOSEPH BEVANS BUSH

GOING HOME

BY SARAH WEBSTER FABIO

"The total black community has been duped by institutionalized brainwashing and historical conditioning toward an acceptance of dehumanization and deprivation."

IT was Fisk University's Acting President, James Lawson, whose voice, at the other end of the line, asked, "How soon can you be here

for a personal interview?" I fumbled the key to my office at Oakland's Merritt Junior College between my anxious fingers, realizing that relinquishing them would mark the end of my contracted services for the year 1966-67. Straining my ear against the Friday afternoon summer noises which seeped into the public telephone booth, forming static, and following the demands of long distance communication in terms of abrupt decision making, I startled even myself by



answering; "Monday. That is if that's agreeable." It was with him.

Going home! And in a matter of a few days. Two decades stood between my *alma mater* and hometown and me; for me, it was a period of growth, mobility, turbulence and commitment, and I presumed it to be not too different back home. I now lived in the suburbs of San Francisco Bay Area in an integrated neighborhood with my dentist husband and five children; we wore the badge of acceptance for having "made it" in the good old American free-enterprising, "mainstream" tradition. But already my third teenager to graduate from the local high school in as many years was saying, "Forget it. I'm tired of being exotic; a museum piece, the social integrator; I choose a Negro college—one of those in Nashville." I pointed out to the young ones the fact that they could very well be sentimentalizing the southern situation since, unlike me, they had not grown up in a segregated environment. Still failing to dampen their enthusiasm, I reminded them that Nashville was the home that I had been orphaned from, and not them. They checked me with, "You better know it."

For two years, I had worked as a part-time instructor in two junior colleges. One of these was a nearly all-white suburban tomorrowland-type institution; the other a ghetto-fringed urban yesteryear model with over 2,000 black students. Having asked myself a few ques-

tions, such as, To whom did I owe my allegiance? Where were my teaching skills most needed? Which situation offered the greater reward in humanistic rather than materialistic terms?, even as I noted the loaded nature of them, I knew the proper answer. Perhaps I always knew it, just as most black intellectuals have known it. Factors such as the vast difference between the two plants—both of whom I supported through taxes—the aura of academic freedom and exploration which seemed far more prevalent in one; the huge investment in terms of personal involvement and extra curricular time which one demanded in order to meet the community's needs succeeded in clouding the real issue. But, I had already returned the shiny new key to my office in the suburban school and was ghetto-bound when I heard that Fisk was in need of English teachers, black ones. And, then, there was Stanford Cameron's exhortation in the May 1967 NEGRO DIGEST, "Come Home Black Intellectuals — Before It's Too Late."

"You Can't Go Home Again," seems closer to the truth, according to my own personal experience. John O. Killens, writer-in-residence at Fisk, has identified the problem of the century and the main job of the Black Revolution as that of the "deniggrization of the world." And when he points out that minds enslaved with words must be freed with words, it seems he offers a direct challenge to black

language arts experts who should play key roles in liberating black consciousness. If, indeed, the mid-twentieth century is a "world given over to racism," the Negro college campus is apt to be strategically the seat of neo-colonial rule. The English Department, which requires that every student come through its portals for a stamp of approval and a ticket of eligibility in pursuit of academic degrees, must be the focal point of conditioning the mind of the Negro to accept his role in a racist world. If this is true, a University such as Fisk—with nine of the 11 teachers in the English Department white, including the past chairman and interim chairman—does not give any indication of the white man's conditioning of black minds cracking at the seams; in fact, the disproportion of white to Negro teachers would suggest reinforcement of the traditional pattern and should assure the power structure that the seams are uptight.



Going home, then, is a two-way road and must be paved with good intentions by all parties concerned. The total black community of the U.S.A. has been duped by institutionalized brainwashing in the schools, churches, yes even the homes, and historical conditioning toward an acceptance of a status

of dehumanization and deprivation—spiritual, social, if not actually physical. The total white community is diseased with racial delusions—institutionalized in the same ways through myth and deed, sanctioned by religious creed and law—thereby rendering it incompetent to deal with a democratic, non-racist world body in a healthy way. Our educational institutions reflect the American dilemma in a stark mirror image. There are many black intellectuals such as J. Herman Blake (NEGRO DIGEST, March 1967) from the University of California, Berkeley, who see rampant racism at one of America's great universities, who sees the institution as "an intellectual microcosm of America," who sees these campuses for what they are—hideous for white draft dodgers, exploiters of the scholarship racket, racist snobs who use the campuses as country clubs and sports arenas; there are many black intellectuals who are disenchanted with the great northern and western colleges and universities where, in the spirit of the democratic tradition, they have been hired out by the "Rent a Negro" agency for the instant integrated look. What are his alternatives? Are the Negro colleges and universities ready for him or are they engaged in a historical sweep marked by a headlong rush down the "sellout" road to integration or intellectual and scholastic extermination of the Black man? An example which might point out the fallacy of this thinking is that,

at a time when the ratio of Negro dentists to the Negro population is at a crisis low level, around 80 percent of the entering freshmen (1966-1967) at the dental college of Meharry Medical College, one of the two Negro medical colleges, were white students.

Are educational institutions, faced with the task of educating black people, committed to the task which should be within their special province? While northern schools are crying out for teachers with a specialty in motivating and educating the culturally divergent child, is the Negro university training its student teachers to meet this demand? The northern and western college, having admitted to the historical distortions which have created the American image in all its unreality, is now seeking teachers who are aware of the inclusivity of America's heritage. Are the Negro universities teaching Contemporary American Literature, which includes the contributions which have been, categorically, excluded from "main-stream" anthologies because it represented Black Art?

Do they offer courses in Revisionist History, Revolutionary Black Sociology, Afro-American Culture and Humanities, Black Art and Life, Political Science in the Black Community? Black students at many of the California colleges and universities are demanding a black curriculum as a specialty in the Black Studies Department

which will ultimately offer a degree and a new career field. This, of course, enables the student so trained to be a more effective worker in community action programs involving minorities. Does the Negro campus provide an atmosphere for innovative programs and a laboratory for testing new methodology?

The Black intellectual must be willing to choose a position which offers more in humanistic rewards than materialistic gains. His role as a missionary, if he must assume that role at this time, must be played out with black principals as supporting members of his cast and on location in the black ghettos across the land. Being white-world missionaries spreads us too thin and dissipates our energies without the benefits of making racial gains. Ambition must be tempered with compassion and concern for the black brother. On the other hand, the black communities, wherever they exist, must prepare for this second coming. They must prepare the way for him; this time around he should be the welcomed guest and not the intruder. They must lay the groundwork which will result in an acceptance of him in the same good faith as he accepts the challenge. The educational institutions must have no doubts about his belonging, about the role he is destined to play in reconstructing a healthy American society. Above all, it must be made clear that the Black Intellectual is

not suspect; rather, the total society is suspect; the total academic environment is suspect. He has learned his lesson once; he has achieved at great odds; he has proven it can be done and that he can do it; and having accepted the challenge, he indicates a willingness to do it again. Success breeds success: he becomes, by example, hope for the black student. He must be kept comfortable in his blackness in order to impart self-assuredness to his students.

And, most important, the black student must want the Black intellectual back home; he must make him feel at ease, must make him believe in himself and in his decision to come back where it's at; the student must enter a partnership with the intellectual to start the wheels of meaningful education grinding at a new all-time high, a record-breaking pace. Black students must understand that when Adam Clayton Powell admonished the 1966 graduating class at Howard University to "Seek Audacious Power," and thereby ushered in

the age of black power, he called for a black renaissance, resurrected black creativity in all disciplines, a rededication toward building black institutions of splendid achievement with intellectual excitement, dynamic creativity, humanistic idealism. None of these can be achieved without black scholars, who have key roles in developing this idea from dream to reality. This is a reality with a future; it is one which can act as a serum to cure the diseases which, wittingly or not, halfhearted integration attempts have brought to the black community—intellectual mediocrity, economic inferiority, political subservience. Going home can and should be a beautiful thing. For, as Adam Clayton Powell points out, "We are the last revolutionaries in America—the last transfusion of freedom into the bloodstream of democracy. Because we are, we must mobilize our wintry discontent to transform the cold heart and white face of this nation."

Sarah Webster Fabio, author of the article, "Going Home," is a poet and teacher who also was in the forefront of the Black Consciousness movement in the northern California area. She currently is involved in a special program at the University of California at Berkeley, exposing black students to black literature. Mrs. Fabio's poems and articles have appeared in previous issues of **NEGRO DIGEST**.

RURAL BLACK COLLEGE

BY GWENDOLYN MIDLO HALL

In the closed-off world of the small black college in the South, the concerns of the advocates of the Black University are as distant as the moon, although there is where action and emphasis are most needed

 HIS is going to be a somewhat personal account of my experiences teaching in a rural, black college in the South. It is not written in bitterness. I liked the school, especially the students. I enjoyed teaching them. I liked my fellow teachers. I even liked the administrators. And it was great living in the country after escaping from the din and clatter of clashing delusions of grandeur in New York City.

My connection with the college was an act of desperation on both sides. They were desperate because their history teacher suddenly resigned at mid-semester, and they couldn't find anyone else. I was desperate for more complicated reasons. Ever since I was 14 years

old, I had belonged to the Self-Righteous Left: to those who felt that because they subscribed to certain beliefs, they were automatically wise, virtuous, and destined to play an earth-shaking role in the world. I had married into the Faith, and all my social ties were with fellow Believers. Naturally, we talked to ourselves and each other, reinforcing our mutual delusions.

Now, the only world I knew, or could easily function in as the white mother of black kids, was shattered. I had gone through a sudden perception change. It is not easy to describe. I suddenly saw people and their interactions in a new way. Everyone seemed to be wearing a mask, and these masks were telling themselves and each other lies. The masks were cold and unemotional. There was, at the same time, intense, emotional, non-verbal communication going on which I was directly perceiving. But the non-verbal communication between myself and others was different. There was something which I can only describe as spirit which shook them, leapt into their eyes, flashed there for a moment like a desperate

prisoner begging to be freed, and then disappeared.

No one had slipped me any acid. I knew nothing about mysticism. I'd been an atheist since I was 12. So there were limited ways for me to interpret all this. First, I asked myself, do other people perceive the way I perceive now, or do they perceive the way I *used* to perceive? I watched them for a while, and concluded that they only perceive the lying masks, but they do not know that they are lying. The masks were the limits of their consciousness. And their only way of knowing what goes on in the world is what the masks *tell* each other. No one else whom I could observe was perceiving like me. The lying masks were interacting with each other and arriving at a consensus which they accepted as reality. And people were acting on the basis of this consensus. My impression was that very little of what existed in the real world got past the masks.

I concluded that either I was crazy, and they were all sane, or I was sane and they were all crazy. I had no way of knowing for sure. So I decided to test it out. While being very careful not to say or do anything that would get me locked up, I would operate on the basis of the reality which I perceived, and observe others operating upon the basis of the reality which they perceived, and see whose reality was more reliable.

I found myself back in New York in 1964, among familiar

places and people, really perceiving them all for the first time. I couldn't play their games anymore. I longed desperately to escape from the circles I had always moved in and to try out my new perceptions on the world out there.

I went to the college for the interview. The president explained to me that they had only been hiring white teachers for a year. The Board was afraid that any white teacher who would come there would be a communist. They hired Chinese, and East Indians. But, alas, they couldn't get enough teachers of any race, and finally the Board permitted him to hire a few whites.

He asked me, "Is there anything you have to tell me? I might as well know it now."

"Yes, there is. My kids are black."

"Are they adopted?"

"No, they're my natural children."

"I have some relatives who look as white as you do."

"I have often been taken for a creole. I'm from New Orleans. I speak French."

"Whatever I say around here reaches all ears. I could say, 'Have you met our new creole history teacher from New Orleans?'"

"That's fine with me."

"When you get your drivers' license, be sure they get the race right."

All the teachers, except one, believed it. Some of them even began

to comment that I was a typical creole type. One of the teachers from New Orleans asked me where I had lived, and I told him, "The Seventh Ward," which is a very mixed-up place. I invited a creole friend to visit me, and introduced her as my cousin.

The teachers were convinced, but not the students. They weren't fooled. They knew I was a foreigner. A G.I. bride. There were debates about me in the dormitories:

"She's Irish—No, she's German—No, she's Italian."

I showed them my passport to prove that I was born in New Orleans. They still didn't believe me.

"Why do you think I'm a foreigner? I don't have an accent."

"No, but you don't *act* like an American."

Teaching was hard work. I had a heavy load. I had never taught before, and was teaching subjects I hadn't studied in years on one day's notice. My first 10 minutes in a classroom were memorable. I looked down at the faces, puzzled to the point of panic, their pencils poised above their notebooks not knowing what to write. Finally, I read the same expression on every face:

"What in the *hell* is this woman *talking* about?"

I stopped.

"You don't understand what I'm saying, do you?"

They all shook their heads no.

"OK. Let's start over."

We spent a lot of time on words.

Words were concepts. And once they had a word, they understood a lot of things. Once I used the word "paternalism" and no one knew what that meant. I explained, "Paternalism is when somebody makes you do what they want you to do by acting nice—and you better do it or else!"

The students had been taught to obey. To learn by rote. They couldn't understand why I objected to their quoting the textbook word for word on their exams.

"I didn't copy it. I *memorized* it."

They were used to the teacher giving them all the questions, and all the pat answers to the questions. Once we discussed a question in class, and I closed the discussion without giving them an answer. They were disturbed.

"But what's the *answer*? What's the *answer*?"

"There *isn't* any answer," I replied. They laughed. They had never heard of such a thing.

Most of the students were from the immediate area. They were from very poor families with lots of kids. They were patient and long-suffering. The campus was like a prison. It was several miles out of town, and there was no public transportation. Girls were expelled for riding in boys' cars. The girls had to be in their rooms by 7 p.m. They couldn't even sit on the porch, even in the summer. The girls' dorm had iron bars on the windows. The president's dogs

were released from their kennel to roam the campus at night.

The teachers' favorite topic of conversation was the students: how stupid and ignorant they were.

"The students don't count at all," said a not very scholarly teacher. "A university is a community of scholars. It exists for the sake of the teachers."

The school was desperate for PhDs, and the degree seemed to be all important. The chairman of my department was an East Indian who had just gotten his doctorate from N.Y.U. He had never taught, knew nothing about this country, planned to return to India and enter politics shortly, and was very status conscious. He pretended not to know his black colleagues when they met off campus. Then, there were several elderly Chinese refugees. The students couldn't understand their English. They cared nothing about the students. They let them cheat openly on exams, because they didn't want to bother stopping them. Students were eager to get into their classes, because they gave good grades and expected nothing from the students.



Although it was a state college, they had something called Religious Emphasis Week. This consisted of sermons in which the so-

cial order was thoroughly identified with God. The students were exhorted to feel eternally grateful for the opportunity to get a college education, although I don't think that is a good description of what they were getting.

Right after Religious Emphasis Week, we had a class discussion on a statement by Napoleon to the effect that the only way to make the poor and downtrodden submit to their lot here on earth is to promise them rewards in the hereafter. One of the students thought Napoleon had something there. The other students indignantly stared her down.

Many of the teachers complained about the student's lack of spontaneity.

"They never smile."

"They never show a spark of life."

After a while, we had to close the windows and doors in my class, because the discussions were getting so animated.

When one of my students said, "I don't know why we should be grateful to Lincoln for freeing us. He only did it because he had to," I thought I had it made.

There were a handful of students from the outside world, most of them on athletic scholarships. One student, a basketball player from Indiana, was determinedly hostile to me, and influenced the class. The day Malcolm was killed, we both found ourselves explaining to the class who Malcolm was. One of the

students said, "Didn't Malcolm preach hate?" We both answered together, "Malcolm didn't preach hate." Before the term was over, the basketball player was carrying my books to class.

"Aren't you afraid the students will make fun of you?"

"I don't care anything about that," he said.

Most of the students were from tobacco farms, but the college was in a lumbering area. The family that owned the lumber mill owned the town and everyone in it. They wouldn't allow an anti-poverty program in the area because they didn't want any interference with their cheap help. But the college did have funds for student jobs, which teachers were given the right to distribute among their favorites.

The college community was a weird world of make-believe. There were teachers at that school who had worked there for 10 years, and had never been to town. They didn't even know where Main Street was. These were the teachers most likely to talk about what a lovely, advanced, progressive town it was, how important the college was to the town, and how much the black teachers were esteemed by the community. I soon discovered that the only way to maintain these fantasies of prestige, power, and status in relation to the town was, indeed, not to go there. Black PhDs would find themselves addressed by their first names by white store clerks. My kids and I

were nearly assaulted for trying to buy a take-out pizza from a white restaurant. When I told my fellow teachers about it, I was advised not to file a complaint if I wanted to keep my job.

Late spring and early summer was harvest time on the nearby truck farms. Migrant workers arrived from Florida on open trucks. Some of my students told me they had hidden migrant workers who were trying to escape from the camps.

As time passed, recruiting of workers to get in the crops became aggressive. Students were stopped on the streets. Recruiters approached small children. One morning at 4 o'clock I found my nine-year-old son dressed and ready to pick corn for \$4.00 a day. I had a hard time stopping him.

The children told me about conditions in the fields. They had to look out for the tractors. The tractors didn't look out for them. It was swampy country, and there were poisonous snakes. The children were transported on the backs of open trucks. Three small boys had been killed on the highway the year before.

The children seemed to be frightened. They would come and tell me when they were beaten up. I would ask if they told their parents. They always said, "*They* won't do anything about it." I didn't know what to tell them. I couldn't do anything about it, either. One little boy with terror

in his eyes was mute. My son tried to teach him to speak.

The Ku Klux Klan was very active in the area, and they would hold silent demonstrations. Lines of cars with confederate plates would parade slowly down Main Street blowing their horns. I got worried about my kids. We lived on the campus. My son went to school right across the street. I told him to keep away from white people, especially people with confederate plates on their car. He paid me no mind. He'd bring white boys on the campus to play with him. Once he told me, "Mom, you were wrong about those people with confederate plates on their car. I made friends with some of them. I went to their house. They were very nice."

Kids can make you feel humble sometimes.

The campus was like an island. After I had been there for a week, it was hard to remember any other world. Everything was provided by the school. Credit was opened up for me in town. I rented my house from the school. I got my meals from the school. But there was no paycheck the first two months I worked there. If I needed a few bucks, I had to go ask the president to please give me an advance on my salary. I was afraid I would be like the sharecropper with his bales of cotton when payday came. I thought they would say, "You owe us \$100." I finally worked up to getting paid every month.

It's an isolated, ingrown community. The teachers each live in their own little world, and are afraid to talk to each other. They treat each other with the greatest formal respect, perhaps to compensate for the lack of respect they receive outside. No one is on a first-name basis with his colleagues. It is always, Mr., Mrs., or best of all, Dr. The teachers have absolute power over the students. The administration has absolute power over the teachers. The local policeman has absolute power over the administration. And as the true cliché goes, power corrupts. Some of the students were conditioned to corruption. Around final exam time, some of the girls offered to clean my house, and couldn't understand why I refused. Students complained to me about teachers flunking students who rejected their advances—as if I could do anything about it.

At the end of the semester, I heard that a teacher with tenure was fired for no apparent reason. Before the summer was over, I was fired, although I had a contract to teach the next year, because a young man who was my friend had registered for summer school. No one at the college objected. But the local policeman told the president to fire me, which he did with much guilty, selfrighteous indignation. I knew it hurt to be reminded that when it comes down to it, the local policeman runs the school. I had no hard feelings about being fired.

What I did object to was the effort to stop me from securing employment elsewhere, stating that I was fired for "violation of ethical codes and customs which are expected for membership in the college community here," which really sounds awful, and concluding by, "I hope for you and yours the best of everything." That reminds me of Bob Dylan, "They'll stone you, then they'll wish you good luck." The American Association of University Professors asked for four months salary for me for breach of contract. I never got it. I suppose the local policeman would not allow it.

I was blacklisted all the way to Detroit. I was hired as a substitute teacher in the Detroit Public Schools, and then told that "some of the committee members, on further discussion, had changed their vote." A secret memorandum, a copy of which some kind, anonymous soul at the school board mailed to me, stated:

"It would be our strong recommendation that Mrs. Hall not be hired in any capacity by the Detroit Board of Education. This opinion is based on her lack of judgment and general background for working in our schools." (Memorandum from Gladys V. Hamilton to Miss Malorney, dated Dec. 15, 1965, File No. 14-29-02. Approved by Julie Strwn, Adm. Asst. Robt. Le Anderson.)

This officially-approved blacklist did not stop Albert Schiff from

writing me on Jan. 4, 1966, suggesting that I complete more courses and reapply for employment with the Detroit Public Schools.

I was informed by the American Association of University Professors that there were other complaints about blacklisting emanating from the same school. Their approach is, resign, thereby voluntarily renouncing your contract rights, or they will do their best to see that you never get a job again. I was fortunate, because I am also a legal secretary, and we got by on that for a while. And since I couldn't get a job, I went back to school and learned fellowships. I'll have my doctorate in history from the University of Michigan in a few months. Most teachers in black colleges aren't so lucky. They can't type.

I am making this modest contribution to the discussion of the Black University in the hope that some effort will be made to raise the degraded position of teachers in rural black colleges to something approaching national standards. They are treated like serfs. They feel like they are serfs. And, in fact, they *are* serfs. Still, they are in a better position to change the situation than are the students, if the teachers were well organized, and got support from professional organizations from the outside.

I don't know yet whose reality works. But it sure is interesting finding out.

EDUCATORS RESPOND

In preparation for the second special issue of NEGRO DIGEST dealing with the concept of the Black University, copies of the first Black University issue (March 1968) were sent to a dozen prominent black educators and heads of predominantly black colleges requesting that they read the magazine and then write a brief statement setting forth their reactions to the Black University idea as presented in the magazine. At press time, responses had been received from the four college presidents listed on the cover of the magazine: Dr. James R. Lawson, president of Fisk University; Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, president emeritus of Morehouse College; Dr. Samuel D. Proctor, former president of Virginia Union University and present dean of Special Projects at the University of Wisconsin; and Dr. Benjamin F. Payton, president of Benedict College. The statements of the four gentlemen who did respond are of the utmost relevance for their experience as educators over the past several decades has provided them with a practical basis from which to view the new educational demands and orientation. NEGRO DIGEST is honored to present in the following pages the statements of Dr. Lawson, Dr. Mays, Dr. Proctor and Dr. Payton on the Black University concept.

—The Editor

Dr. James R. Lawson

President, Fisk University

N THE March, 1968, special issue of the NEGRO DIGEST, devoted to a consideration of the Black University concept, you editorialized,

"That something is gravely wrong with the conventional approach to the education of black children no longer is arguable. Much of the problem of course, is general: there is something gravely wrong

with American education, period. However, as always in a society which—being racist by nature—assigns opportunities and rewards according to race and color, those people suffer most who are regarded least, and those people in the American society are black people.” The general validity of this observation should not be a bar to repetitive assertions until all those who are responsible for and involved in education, at whatever level, in our country not only recognize the deficiencies in our total educational system but are engaged upon meaningful programs to correct what needs to be corrected. The important question is: How can the system best be changed? For black children and young adults in the United States, this question takes on some particular connotations.



Since 1865, the traditionally or predominantly black colleges and universities have borne the brunt of the responsibility for educating the black leadership of this country. Many of these schools have compared favorably, and still do, with other schools of similar size with more resources and stronger faculties. In many instances, these largely segregated schools did superior jobs with their student-products despite the problems inherent in black higher education, not the least of these problems being the

necessity for combatting and remedying the deficiencies of our general educational system so far as black students were concerned.

The increasingly complex nature of our society and government beginning with the Great Depression of the 1930's, the technological advances which began with the necessity for a more efficient war machine during the 1940's, the acceleration of these developments following the launching of Sputnik I in 1957, and the ensuing age of cybernation have effected basic changes in our society. These changes—involving environmental conditions, manpower requirements, and individual and societal attitudes—have created new challenges and opportunities for all segments of our society. These challenges and opportunities demand a fundamental and continuing re-appraisal of courses of study in institutions of higher education. It occurs to me that the necessity for a changed role for the predominantly or traditionally black colleges and universities must be viewed at least partially within this context.

This suggests an awesomely dual responsibility for the predominantly or traditionally black schools of higher education—i.e., (1) a relevance and validity with regard to black students and black communities, and (2) a relevance and validity with regard to the society in which black students and black communities will exist. Inherent in both responsibilities is the neces-

sity for preparing students to meet the challenges of change in today's and tomorrow's world. And, with respect to both responsibilities, the overriding consideration should and must be to give these students that education and training sought after in today's and tomorrow's labor market.

Essentially, then, the education of black Americans must encompass at least three objectives—i.e. (1) an increased awareness and knowledge of their heritage and of the contributions they have made throughout history; (2) a motivation and ability to render much-needed assistance and services, of various kinds, to the total black community; and (3) the development of knowledge and skills necessary for gainful employment and satisfactory living in the larger ever-changing society. In terms of what is necessary for sustained upward economic and social mobility of black Americans, I think it meaningless, if not dangerous, to attempt to assign priorities as between these three objectives. They are all necessary. Moreover, they constitute the basis for the continuing validity and relevance of predominantly or traditionally black institutions of higher learning.

These considerations dictate some rather basic modifications in the curricula of our colleges and universities, modifications which involve new directions, new and different courses, and innovatively different techniques and methodologies of instruction. Moreover,

there is the necessity for relating our curricula and campus activities more definitively and directly to the needs of the communities of which we are a part. None of this will be easy, but all is possible with varying degrees of ease or difficulty dependent upon conditions pertaining to particular colleges or universities.

At Fisk, we are attempting to meet the challenges represented by the need and desire for black identity, dignity, and status, on the one hand, and by the new career opportunities for black college graduates, on the other. Regarding the former, we have instituted courses in African-Caribbean Studies, the Fine Arts, Literature, History, Race Relations, Sociology and Anthropology which focus on contributions, problems and developments of black people. Regarding the latter, for example, we are in the process of establishing an ambitious program in Business Administration which will prepare students who choose this area of study for promising employment immediately upon graduation as well as for graduate study in the field. We are cognizant of the need to do even more to meet the twin challenges above, and are continually alert to the opportunities for doing more. We are convinced, however, that meeting the first challenge should represent a supplement to and enrichment of our basic program and our efforts to meet the second challenge.



Benjamin E. Mays

President Emeritus, Morehouse College

THE IDEA of a *black university* is not clear to me. I hear some advocates say that they want a black university large enough to enroll ten thousand students. They mean a new creation.

This would be a very expensive enterprise. If half of the students lived in dormitories, cost for the construction of dormitories alone could be easily 30 or 40 million dollars. The academic plant to accommodate ten thousand students would cost another 30 or 40 million dollars, and this is a conservative estimate. Such a plant could cost between 75 and 100 million dollars. If money of this magnitude is to be gotten from the Negro

community, we can forget it. The Negroes' record of supporting higher education leads me to predict that black people would never give that amount of money. If the Negroes' educational efforts were all centered in this one university, and they might be able to get the money from black people, who could get them united to give it? Do the advocates of a single black university expect to get the money from white people? White support of Negro educational institutions, over the past hundred years, has been niggardly. What would lead one to believe that white philanthropy would be more generous in its giving to a black university than it has been in giving to predominantly Negro colleges?

It should be made crystal clear what is meant by a *black university*. How much of the curriculum would be devoted to Afro-American people? How much of the curriculum would be devoted to disciplines other than Afro-American studies? Would the faculty be all black? Would the student body be all black? If white faculty and white students are excluded, do we expect so-called *white* colleges and universities to exclude all black scholars and black students? Would the Supreme Court permit this kind of segregation? Do we mean by black universities regional centers of institutions that are already in existence, as one writer (in the March 1968 NEGRO DIGEST) advocates? If we mean regional black colleges and universities, the question of the complexion of the faculty and student body must still be asked and answered.

Frankly, I do not believe we need to build a new black university in order to get what I think we need; nor do I believe we need to concentrate on a few colleges and universities in certain centers of the United States in order to get what we need and must have. I believe that there could and should be established in every Negro or black college in the United States a division of Afro-American studies which would concentrate on the black man's history and all that he has contributed to the arts and sciences, literature and art, sports and drama, politics and business. I believe existing institutions can do

this, including the institutions that call themselves white.

This is not enough. I have always believed that Negro or black colleges should be deeply concerned with and deeply involved in the life of the black community. Instead of training Negroes to get away from the poor and the ghettos, they should be trained to help improve the conditions of black people so that the gap between all classes of Negroes will be narrowed or eliminated. There are six million college and university students enrolled in institutions of higher education of which 240,000, or not more than four percent, are black; certainly not more than 300,000 or five percent are black. A single black university of 10,000 would be a mere drop in the bucket. But if all institutions of higher learning tackled the problem of black identity through the teaching of Afro-American history and through training to help improve the conditions of less privileged black people, we could do now what has been neglected for a hundred years. Negro students are ready for it now. Years ago, when Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the eminent Negro historian, was trying to get black students to appreciate themselves and Africa, he didn't have much success. And let me say, with emphasis, that to get this done we do not have to become racists and drive out all white teachers and all white students. With government, industry, and white institutions pulling black scholars apart to get

them, there just aren't enough black scholars to go around!

Although I can appreciate the current emphasis on blackness, and the much discussed *black university*, I am mighty glad that I didn't have to wait 70 years for someone in the late 1960's to teach me to appreciate being what I am—black! My mother, unlettered and untutored, did say many times to her children, "You are as good as anybody." This was helpful to me, although the white world did not accept my mother's philosophy! My heroes were black. In my native South Carolina, fairly often some Negro would come along selling pictures or pamphlets of a few Negro leaders; and pictures of Fred Douglass, Booker T. Washington, and Paul Laurence Dunbar hung on our walls. In my high school

days, Booker T. Washington meant more to me than George Washington; Frederick Douglass, the unyielding Negro abolitionist, was more of a hero to me than William Lloyd Garrison, the fanatic white abolitionist. Dunbar as a poet inspired me more than Longfellow. I heard about Crispus Attucks and was thrilled. The Negroes in the South Carolina legislature, during Reconstruction and in the post-Reconstruction years, were men who were held up to us in high school history classes as being great men, and not the Negro-hating Ben R. Tillman and his kind. I had identity. The thrust now is toward black identity and I have no quarrel with those who advocate it. Fortunately, I have always had black identity.

Samuel D. Proctor

Dean, Special Projects, University of Wisconsin

HE emphasis that the young blacks have placed upon the discovery and promulgation of the truth about the Afro-American community is refreshing. For so many years, the vast majority of us have been in such hot pursuit of the norms of the majority culture that

we have—perhaps unwittingly—forsaken our own identity and assumed a false super-ego that leaves us fragmented persons. I say, the vast majority. This is by no means true of all blacks. In 1940-41, I had to take "Negro History" as a requirement for the A. B. at Virginia Union University. In 1942-43, I had to take "Negro Litera-

ture" to graduate, all the way from Phyllis Wheatley to Margaret Walker.

Moreover, when in college we wired Fred Waring and asked him to include our Alma Mater on his Saturday medley of college songs. He did. Judge Earl Dearing of Louisville and I signed the telegram in the fall of 1941. Indeed, some of us have been proud, aware, conscious, and black for a long, long time. We find it appalling that black students lump all "middle class" blacks (Negroes?) in one ball and condemn them all as spineless accommodationists. This is false. And arrogant.

Notwithstanding, the charge applies to enough to make it valid. And, because there is a sufficient void in the knowledge and appreciation of the history of American blacks, it is understandable that there is a call for a Black University.

Since there have been "white" universities for so long, and all other kinds of *de facto* separate universities serving ethnic and demographic units, it is time for blacks to cry out. Rather recently the Jews established Brandeis (1948) and expanded Yeshiva by adding a coed undergraduate program. Catholics never entrusted higher or lower education to the majority. If Jews and Catholics regard their traditions as sufficiently precious to preserve them in their own schools, a black uni-



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versity makes sense. The Lutherans too! What is St. Olaf's?

Moreover, public colleges located in pockets of cultural homogeneity have in fact been conduits of a continuity of mores and attitudes—e.g. "Ole Miss," L.S.U., Georgia Tech, V.M.I. and The Citadel. Blacks still feel like aliens on these campuses.

Yet, a black university faces some very practical problems that may indicate another answer. Who would finance such an enterprise? The idea of "racial separation" has already fallen on evil days because it has been associated with violence, somehow. It has not enjoyed a positive, affirmative connotation. It has been associated with the riots and four letter words. This is an awful casualty. It is an idea that should be debated on its own merits.

I cannot see the sponsorship for such an idea forthcoming, but the idea need not die aborning. A black university is more imminent than many imagine if the concepts of violence and negative chauvinism can be strained out.

Only nine months of planning could accomplish what most have in mind for a black university at Atlanta, Fisk or Howard. Since there is no black math, chemistry, biology or physics, what we are talking about is an orientation in history, literature, social science, psychology, fine arts and education that is "black." It means viewing these disciplines from the perspective of a black student, standing body deep, soul deep, in his own culture. This implies no hostility, no separatism, no alienation. It could imply a disciplined scholarship that will unearth truths long hidden; a *bona fide* experience of the thought and feelings of black writers, painters and musicians; a construction of social theories that will have an authenticity for black people. The most dramatic results could be seen in teacher education. Hardly any school does justice to the challenge of the black pupil in its teacher education program . . .

But even that would not be enough. Every university, every college should recognize the neglect of black facts and begin to institute programs in black studies, interdisciplinary and scholarly. There are Asian Studies, Indian Studies, Urban Studies, Mexican

Studies and Space Studies. All sorts of studies. Black Studies can be added with no vast shift in administrative machinery. And, indeed, many are doing just that.

A third alternative is perhaps more useful: The location of city, county and state community colleges should take into account the concentration of blacks in the cities' centers. The appointment of imaginative presidents, hustling deans, and teachers with common sense to head and run community colleges in the cities' centers could turn these opportunities to great benefit for black people. An honest, relevant curriculum would accomplish, again, what most of us sense as the mission of a black university.

The sanguine expectation that a well-financed, completely autonomous black university can be founded and supported is a forlorn one, I fear. Fine, if it can be really good and not makeshift. This is too late for another crude, botchy, hand-to-mouth college to be started.

Otherwise, let substantial, ongoing, private black schools, those who have the vision and the freedom, convert their present pursuit of "Western Civ." to an understanding of Man through the eyes of black people. Let the major public and private institutions embrace the cause of "black" discovery and let public community colleges in the urban core look around them and act accordingly with integrity and enthusiasm.

Benjamin F. Payton

President, Benedict College

THE March 1968 edition of NEGRO DIGEST on The Black University celebrates a significant turning point in the history of American race relations. Taken together, the articles in that edition constitute the most compact statement extant of the quest on the part of young black intellectuals for self-definition in the realm of educational theory and technique.

Confronted with the intractable facts of history and culture, an apparently growing number of black thinkers re-opened with fresh intensity the old debate regarding the purpose and strategy of education for Black Americans. Disillusioned with both the conceptual depth of integration as an intellectual construct, and with its slow growth as a social reality, increasing attention is now being given to the internal dynamics of the black community itself.

Whether this re-focusing of vision will aid the struggle for black freedom will depend very heavily on just how faithful it is to the "regimen of fact and logic" in the black community. For this community is not the simple phenomenon that many white and some black writers have taken it to be. Carter G. Woodson very aptly asserted in his book, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, that:

"the Negro community suffers for lack of delimitation because of the various ramifications of life in the United States . . . The Negro community, in a sense, is composed of those around you, but it functions in a different way. You cannot see it by merely looking out of the window of the school room. This community requires scientific investigation."¹

Similarly, the black college is a complex datum requiring the disciplined approaches of sound theory, technique and insight if the realities of its past, the dynamics of its present and the promise of its future are to be accurately gauged. Whether we like it or not, what has always been—and what will likely continue to be—of critical importance are the interconnections of the black college with the world around it, the white world as well as the black world. A fundamental assumption of this article is that no important institution within any community—white or black—can be adequately understood through a process of violent abstraction from the setting in which it "moves and lives and has its being."

The article by J. Herman Blake on "The Black University and Its Community" gives us valuable information about some of the socio-

economic changes now occurring within the black community, particularly in terms of the Northward and city-ward movement of black people, and in terms of changes in occupational roles and income levels of black males and females. Some of these are rather well-known facts: that the majority of black Americans "now live in the central cities of metropolitan areas"; that "despite higher levels of education, the employment situation of black people has changed little from the 'last hired, first fired' status"; that "the black female has a better chance of obtaining a job consistent with her education and training than the black male in the professional, technical and managerial categories, while the black males are more likely than females to be adequately represented in clerical positions"; that "the *relative* situation for the black man improved between 1959 and 1966 while the *absolute* situation declined"; that "the absolute and relative situation of middle-income blacks is getting better and that of low-income blacks is getting worse".

These are all important and interesting data. But, what is their significance for educational mission and strategy? The question is not answered directly, but answers are sometimes implied and sometimes inherent in the conceptual description of "The Black University" provided by the other contributors to

the edition.

All of the writers assume the absolutely critical importance of transforming "the predominantly Negro college" into a meaningful and relevant instrument of social change. The article by Darwin Turner is, by far, the wisest and most reasoned description of the total scope of problems and possibilities to be considered. Whether because of distinct definitions of tasks or for some other reason, his is the only article which treats "The Black University" contextually in terms of the hard facts of financing, policy-making, faculty recruitment and administration as well as in terms of the currently more popular dimensions of curriculum development and public service.

It is interesting to note that in view of the fact that so many black students today get much of their emotional and intellectual fuel from black and "Third World" oriented thinkers, not a single word of the entire edition is addressed to the issue of roles for student involvement in "The Black University." One of the major constituencies of any college, and one of the most important "bearers of an ethical vocation in history"² today are students. Precisely because of their self-conceptions as significant agents of social change—a self-image in the most serious need of careful scrutiny—no concept of "the prophetic social role of the Black University" (McWorter) is

complete without dealing in a large way with students.

If a summary of the arguments can be attempted, the authors seem to be saying that somewhere near the heart of the problems confronting the black community is what Carter G. Woodson called "the mis-education of the Negro." This "mis-education" consists principally in the education of black scholars to feel contempt for themselves and for the black community. By failing to confront them with adequate knowledge about themselves, both to counter white stereotypes and to bolster their self-confidence, the Negro colleges have also failed to develop meaningful helping relationships between black scholars and the black community. Accustomed to facile imitations of white middle class life styles, Negro colleges have failed to plumb the depths of the black experience: Thus, Stephen Henderson underlines the contention that in the search for identity, "the black experience is not only relevant . . . it is fundamental and crucial".³

A strengthened sense of identity will produce not only a black university which serves the Black American community; it will create the indispensable pre-condition for new linkages with the entire Third World. A unique internationalism will be created in which, according to Vincent Harding, "the uniqueness of our approach to the world would be found in our vision through an unashamedly black-

oriented prism. In the academic program and in a hundred other less structured ways, the black university would seek to explore, celebrate and record the experience of the non-western world."⁴ Similarly, Gerald McWorter views as a key component of the very meaning of Blackness the "affirmation of an identity independent of the historical human evils of modern nation states."⁵

The significant problem encountered here is not adequately stated in terms of the simply dichotomy of integration versus separatism. The real question is whether this statement of mission and strategy does justice to the facts and the logic of the very black experience it claims to celebrate. This writer has no quarrel with the *objectives* of a Black University which seeks to serve the needs of the black community, nor with the concern for more adequate study and dramatization of events in the black experience, nor with the desire to create unquestionably intelligent and competent centers of learning for black people.

Nonetheless, as is well known, agreement on specific objectives and even on particular tactical points does not necessarily mean agreement on underlying issues embedded in the strategy itself. This writer wishes to focus on but one of such issues with the hope of clarifying some of the strategic questions raised.

The issue can be introduced by

raising a question regarding in exactly what ways does the black experience address the problem of racism encountered by the black community in the areas of housing and employment, for example. What curricular expression of the black experience would relate the black university more effectively to the black community? Is the creation of a black consciousness in the minds and hearts of black people more important than assisting them with their daily struggle for survival? Are the two problems the same thing? Anyone familiar with the long and often bitter struggle in our colleges and universities not only to get "Black Studies," but a particular ideological brand of Black Studies, will know that these are not trivial questions.

In a footnote to a widely talked about but seldom read volume, Frantz Fanon makes an important observation about the decision of the president of Senegal "to include the study of the idea of Negro-ism in the curriculum. If this decision was due to an anxiety to study historical causes, no one can criticize it. But if on the other hand it was taken in order to create black self-consciousness, it is simply a turning of his back upon history".⁶ The point Fanon is making is that the people are helped not by excessive investments in the study of the people's culture but by addressing current problems felt by the people.

Of the four authors who discuss the curriculum of the black uni-

versity, three of them (McWorter, Henderson, and Harding) seem to give clear priority to the humanistic sciences. Henderson is quite explicit that "such a university would almost by definition involve chiefly those disciplines which are human-centered, i.e., the social sciences, the behavioral sciences, literature, art and the like."⁸ Moreover, "the faculty of the University (would) be staffed with Black Humanists and Specialists in Blackness".⁹ And although he says that the non-humanistic sciences "should have . . . an honored place in the curriculum",¹⁰ it is obvious where the resources of such a university would be invested.

I want to state the strongest possible disagreement with this bifurcation of the black experience. It is the logical outcome of a narrow conception of black identity which, if actually pursued, would isolate the black university even further than some of these same authors say it is today from the black community.

If, as Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton persuasively argue, "the process of political modernization must take place"¹¹ in both the black and white communities in order to treat adequately the problems of racism, then a Black University which invests a preponderance of its resources in black humanistic studies is seriously disadvantaged in its intentions to help

(Continued on page 96)

perhaps adaptiveness of present forms. Black consciousness, in any case, can be a conscious or an unconscious effort in blackwriting (if one is black it's very difficult to write otherwise). Although, we must understand, there will be a pervasive presence of every and anything that is indigenous to the Afro-American people. Blackart is a functional art; it's what the Africans call a collective art. Our art is committed to humanism. It commits the artist. "They commit him in a future which then becomes present for him, an integral part of himself." The blackwriter/artisan works out a concrete situation which means that "he commits not only himself but his race, his geography, his history as well. He uses the materials that are at hand and the everyday things which make up the texture of his life, rejecting the anecdotal, for this does not commit because it is without *significance*." Blackart, as is African art, is perishable. This, too, is why it is functional. Like, a poem is written not to be read and put aside but to actually become a part of the giver and receiver; to perform some function, to move the emotions, to become a part of the dance or to simply make one act. Whereas, the work itself is perishable the *style* and *spirit* of the creation is maintained and is used to produce new works. Here we can clearly see that art for art's sake is something out of a Shakespearian dream; it does not exist. *All* blackart is social (art for people's sake).

An example of good blackwriting now in existence is an anthology called *Black Fire*, edited by LeRoi Jones (Ameer Baraha) and Larry Neal (Morrow, 670 pp., \$8.95). *Black Fire* includes between its jackets a convincing collection of Afro-American literature. Its 70 contributors, plus its editors, move to define and to present a forceful concentration of blackwriting with essays, poems, short stories, and plays. This is not to say that every author represented in *Black Fire* has contributed a work of art in *accordance with my standards*. But it is to say that every selection of work in *Black Fire* is *significant*. Significant, in that I feel that the test of a good writer/poet is not necessarily in what he says, or how he says it, but in what his work does to us. I mean, does the writer widen us, does he clear our vision, does he add to a deepening of our knowledge, does he amplify our total being?

The Saturday Review said of *Black Fire*: "the ambitions of *Black Fire* make it newsworthy and instructive, but the disparity between its ambitions and its achievement is painful and embarrassing." Painful and embarrassing to whom? Certainly not to those who contributed to it, certainly not to the blackpeople who read it (not many at \$8.95), certainly not to me. But yes, "painful and embarrassing" to some white boy who teaches English at Williams College in Massachusetts and has, in all likelihood, only seen six "negroes" in his life-time; who feels that just because Saturday Review sends him the books to review it's his responsibility to be "painful" and "embarrassed" about it (quiet-as-it's-kept, it was supposed to be painful for him). And yet, this "painful and embarrassing" reviewer from Williams College goes on

to say that "yet an irreverent reviewer could merely repeat Larry Neal's own statement and say, 'the text could be destroyed and no one would be hurt in the least by it.'" He, the Saturday Review's black literature authority, does not remotely understand what Larry Neal meant by that statement; Brother Neal was working from an ideological concept so foreign, so alien to the Western mind that one wonders how such people (as the reviewer) continue to have such control over blackpeople. Brother Neal was quite clearly talking about the *perishability* of blackart. Remember, art for the people's sake; art being functional and social (meaning that the people will help to shape the art), not here forever but until its full meaning has been realized. What we have to understand is that every piece of writing in *Black Fire* is legitimate regardless of excellence; because, as with the French-Africans of Negritude, black writers are in a process of defining and legitimizing their own worth/works and we don't need the great white pens of the Saturday Review or other "liberal" white sheets to sanction what (they feel) *is* or *is not* black literature or literature, period.

Black Fire helped us to move into our own direction. James T. Stewart points out what's necessary: "the point of the whole thing is that we must emancipate our minds from Western values and standards. We must rid our minds of these values. Saying so will not be enough." With that we can easily understand what A. B. Spellman was relating when he wrote: "there is a school of young African painters who have never seen a European painting and who refuse to be shown one." David Llorens clears the air, when in "*The Fella*, The Chosen Ones, The Guardian," he writes: "Perhaps the starting point is to look at ourselves, finally to question our existence." Not only to question it but also to *realize* our existence. But sister Lethonia Gee is hippped to a beautiful part of her existence as indicated in her poem "By Glistening, Dancing Seas":

On ugly, cement, city streets
Or quiet village-lands
Black woman has one heavy thought
And it's about her man

All art is the reflection of its creator. Look at New York City, Chicago, Washington, D. C.; need I say more. Where and what you live in reflects you, if you created it. Art is total-being. It cannot be separated from life. That's why we say that blackart is not only social but political, which leads Larry Neal to say: "the artist and the political activist are one. They are both shapers of the future reality. Both understand and manipulate the collective myths of the race." How else could A. B. Spellman write lines like this:

in the congo
they say tshombe leaning
on the beast is leaning on air.

There has to be that political consciousness, too. Social, political, and, of course, spiritual balance, also. When I say spiritual I mean an inner peace, the ability to live with one's self; only then can you

move to live with others. Spirituality is not necessarily meant in terms of biblical reference, as Norman Jordan points out in "Sinner":

I got high
last night
alone
I had an urge to
express myself

So I started talking
to the Bible
and it kept telling
me to Die

Blackwriting is life, is being life; not merely existing. Brother Lebert Bethune displays that ability to live in his "Harlem Freeze Frame":

This gleaming wrinkled blunthead old sweet-daddy
smiles a grim smile
as he hears a voice of Harlem scream
"WE ALL SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD BUT
WE AINT"
And his slow strut moves him on again.

Reality is personified in a poem by Stanley Crouch. Brother Crouch understands that reality is whatever is real to you; whatever controls your pure and unpure actions. He understands where he's at and where he's going:

Around then, sent east, got guns
and dog tags
knew no one bowed our way
shot europeans who peed in jacob's face
and another menace was yellow (closer
to us, but also shot at)
BUT JOHN WAYNE WON THE WAR
and we took our purple hearts,
to the unemployment office

Run on home, blackpeople. The only way to be is to be. And unlike the French-Africans, black writers are not trying to address themselves to white people. Senghor and others wrote firstly for the Frenchman, not for the African people. Black poetry/writing is written for/to/about and around the lives/spiritactions/humanism and total existence of blackpeople. Black writing in form/sound/word/usage/intonation/rhythm/repetition/direction/definition and beauty is opposed to that which is now (and yesterday) considered writing, i.e., white literature. *Black Fire* may not be read by many blackpeople in its present form (hard cover edition) because of the price. Anytime a book is more than thirty-five cents to one dollar you are in trouble. To buy a book that costs more would do harm to most black families' daily budgets. But, if possible, I suggest that you acquire a copy of *Black*

Fire; steal it, borrow it or wait for it to appear in paperback. Hopefully, we can, as a people, move toward a black printing company so that we will not have to continuously run to the Establishment presses to be published.

Finally, this is u; yr/momma, yr/history, yr/literature. Them is u, actually, a beautiful reflection. Understood by u alone. Others will not. Our creations are ours. No one can really take away yr/inner-self, if u have one. People can napalm other people because they never felt the pain of flesh falling off one's body. George Washington is their hero because there is No-thing better. The Mod Squad and Julia are forced upon u in prime t.v. time because that is their reality, not ours. *The Great White Hope* is just that, the great white hope. Our heroes will be named Willie, bigger thomas, blood, pee wee and maniac and will come out of the projects and be hip to Richard Nixon and Lyndon Johnson. Because their fathers were hip to them and their fathers' fathers. Fathers and on and on. LeRoi Jones said it:

These are the words of lovers.
Of dancers, of dynamite singers
These are songs if you have
the music.

this is u, thisis u, thisisu, thisisu, go ahead, now.

—DON L. LEE



Dark Symphony

Anyone who wears \$25 shoes would do well to purchase a \$16 pair, ride them to your nearest bookstore, and invest the difference wisely. *Dark Symphony* (Free Press, \$8.95), an anthology edited by James A. Emanuel and Theodore L. Gross, is a must for anyone who happens not to be an authority on black literature—and no doubt the authorities, few that they are, have already added it to their libraries. A total of 34 black authors, 14 of whom are deceased, are represented in the 604-page book of short stories, essays, poetry, and criticism. The book is divided into four sections: Early Literature; The Negro Awakening; Major Authors; and Contemporary Literature. Not the least of its merits are the lucid, informative introductions to three

sections (There is no introduction to Major Authors). Essay-like biographical sketches on the four selectees as Major Authors (Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin) provide perceptive commentary on their many works. Shorter biographical sketches are included in the case of each of the other contributors. Clearly the editors did not, in this case, request of the authors a contribution of their own choosing. The editors did the selecting, and they were selective, and even though the reader might on occasion wish they had selected a different work by a particular writer, he must appreciate their having for the most part provided insights into the reasoning that led to their choices.

Included in Early Literature are

works by Charles W. Chesnutt whose first story was published in 1887, and whose racial identity was for some years not made public; Paul Laurence Dunbar, the master of dialect who died in 1906 at the tender age of 34; Frederick Douglass; and W. E. B. DuBois. One might, in reading Douglass' "Letter To His Master" (or re-reading it, as the case might be), make certain connections between then and now. Nuances in his fierce pride remind this reader of current literary celebrant Eldridge Cleaver, and, more, in this work by Douglass there is, unmistakably, the sense that man achieves goodness by wanting the freedom of others, a quality critics have cited in praising the existentialist novels of one John Updike. The section is concluded with a poem and a chapter from *The Souls of Black Folk*, by W. E. B. DuBois, whose awakening was indeed early! One agrees with the editors that "no brief selection from his voluminous work could do justice to this man of the world," but how schizoid the mind that would make such a recognition and yet omit *him* from inclusion in Major Authors. (Or was that political—as surely must have been the case as regards LeRoi Jones, who is represented in the section on Contemporary Literature by three poems?)

The Negro Awakening includes the works of James Weldon Johnson, Alain Locke. Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, Rudolph Fisher, Eric Walrond, Sterling A. Brown and Countee Cullen. It marks the period better known as the Negro Renaissance, the 1920's, that era in which black writers came together in their separateness and dived into the literary seas only to come out (to borrow a line from Claude McKay's "Baptism") *a stronger soul within a finer frame*. The scholarship of Alain Locke's "The New Negro," and the singularly classic work of criticism by Sterling

A. Brown, "Negro Character as Seen by White Authors," are outstanding in this section. The excerpts from *Cane* (recently reissued by Harper and Row as a Perennial Classic) reveal the extraordinary gift of Jean Toomer, the man who so early deserted the naturalistic fiction and who, had he not ceased writing, most certainly would have contributed much to that deeper exploration of the consciousness, psychic and cosmic, ongoing in the literature of the past 30 odd years.

"Flying Home" and "King of the Bingo Game" by Ellison, "The Man Who Killed a Shadow" by Wright, and Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues" are stories that speak for themselves. The excellence of the late Langston Hughes is present in the form of five poems and two hilarious Jesse B. Semple tales. And for those who have stubbornly insisted that the literature of social protest was unconcerned with exploration of the ultimate questions, Hughes' story, "On The Road," is a brilliant example of their folly. In the middle of the Depression (which marks as well the time of the writing) a black man in search of shelter from the cold and snow is felled by the cops the moment he succeeds in breaking down the door of a white church. In his unconscious state he dreams, dreams that the church comes falling down, that Christ comes off the cross. "Well, I'll be dogged," said Sargent. "This here's the first time I ever seed you off the cross." "Yes," said Christ, crunching his feet in the snow. "You had to pull the church down to get me off the cross." It is vintage Hughes.

"The Ethics of Living Jim Crow," "Hidden Name and Complex Fate," and "Notes of a Native Son," non-fictional works by Wright, Ellison and Baldwin respectively, have in common their autobiographical na-

tures and yet, in a most interesting way, serve as a reflection of just how diverse were the backgrounds that shaped the sensibilities of the three extraordinary artists.

Contemporary Literature features the works of Albert Murray, John A. Williams, Paule Marshall, Ernest J. Gaines, William Melvin Kelley, Melvin B. Tolson, *Arna Bontemps*, *Robert E. Hayden*, Dudley Randall, Margaret A. Walker, *Gwendolyn Brooks*, James A. Emanuel, Mari Evans, LeRoi Jones, Arthur P. Davis, Philip Butcher, Nathan A. Scott Jr., and Julian Mayfield. It is worth noting, I think, that the italicized

authors' contributions to black literature would include their having, along with the writers of the Early Literature and the Negro Awakening, profoundly influenced the others appearing in this final section. Space will not permit much comment on the works of the above, but the short stories of Gains and Kelley are witness to exceptional talents. Julian Mayfield's essay, "Into the Mainstream and Oblivion," brings us into the day that is upon us, a day one can hardly hope to comprehend while ignoring one's own writers and persisting in the belief that the prophets were white.—DAVID LLORENS



How We Live?

Confronted with a book like *How We Live: Contemporary Life in Contemporary Fiction*, the inclination is to shrug, throw it aside, and proceed to something more relevant and instructive for black people. The time has long since passed when black people should waste their energies challenging the racist assumptions at the base of such books; there is much work to be done; the task of turning the attention of black people away from the integrationist lures which are all-pervasive and toward the possibilities inherent in submergence in their own history and culture is monumental; it is obviously wasteful to debate the racists and—worse—recognizing them merely feeds their arrogance and depravity.

Even so, it is important to keep in mind the many millions of black people—especially students—who are influenced by the kind of racist tripe which passes for "criticism" of black literary works. Generations of black students have gone out into the world as professionals believing that the white view of black literature is the

valid view, and there are far, far too many black teachers who slavishly repeat the anti-black nonsense they have learned in the nation's colleges and universities. Black students must not be abandoned to the insidious propaganda which holds, in essence, that black writers rarely produce works of art because, *of course*, there is an element of "protest" in their work. Only white writers have the "objectivity" toward race which is necessary to produce *art* when the subject matter is race. Pure crap.

And yet it is propagated everywhere . . .

It cannot, therefore, be ignored as it so richly deserves to be. In *How We Live*, a big (1007 pages), expensive (\$12.50) anthology compiled by L. Rust Hills and his wife Penny Chapin and published by Macmillan, the racist line is presented with startling candor. The section dealing with black life and literature is small (123 pages) and toward the rear of the book. Six authors are presented—and three of that six are white!

Now, here, in the editors' own

words, are the reasons why only three black writers (Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, John A. Williams) are included among some 55 authors, many of them third-rate and unimportant by any truly objective yardstick, and—read and weep!—why it was necessary for the editors to select fiction by three white writers to provide an authentically “literary” reflection of *how we (blacks) live*:

“... Unlike the Jews, who have (equal) opportunities and can change their distinguishing names and noses and adopt the elite religious and life styles; and thus not only melt in but rise to the top in a few generations, the Negroes have a much longer and more difficult road to follow in order to lose their racial stigma and become plain, ordinary Americans,” the editors explain, gloriously ignorant of the monstrosity of their presumption and condescension.

“For these reasons, and some others,” the editors proceed blithely, “there has been no ‘Negro renaissance’ in contemporary American fiction to compare with the ‘Jewish renaissance’... There are at least a half-dozen Jewish writers in the absolutely first-rank of American writing today, and there are dozens of others whose potentiality or achievement places them not far behind. Only two really first rate Negro writers can be named—Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin—and the ranks behind them are almost empty. To mention the names of Ronald Fair, Ernest J. Gaines, Chester Himes, Claude Brown, William Melvin Kelley, Paule Marshall, and John A. Williams is to stretch and virtually exhaust the list of Negroes from whom we can expect literary fiction of significant interest. It is not that Negroes are not writing or being published, but aside from Ellison and Baldwin, they have not yet produced the kind of writing that satisfies the complex contemporary (read: *white*)

literary tastes and sensibilities . . .”

“This situation will of course change soon,” the editors write, throwing black writers a patronizing bone, “but up to this time it seems that the dialects and situations of Negro life have provided the Negro writer with the kind of material that is translatable only into a direct recounting of or protest against the sordid or subtle facts of his oppression.”

And, finally, this: “This (all the above quotes) is all perhaps by way of explaining that two of the stories in this section are by Jewish writers and one is by a southern white woman.”

There it is. And you had better believe it!

Two Jews and a southern white woman are better equipped to write about race because, apparently, they are not hampered by “the kind of material that is translatable only into a direct recounting of or protest against the sordid or subtle facts of (black) oppression.” In other words, the black angle of vision is literarily invalid; true literature on race comes only through the white sensibility.

To begin with, none of the white-authored stories is really about black people, and there is some question in the mind of this black reader whether those black people portrayed in the white stories came through as living, breathing human beings. But my sensibility is a black one and, in the view of the editors of *How We Live*, is therefore automatically not to be taken seriously. If, after some 40 years, I do not know black people and how they live and am incapable of passing judgment on the authentic portrayal of black people and black life, then I can learn all that I do not know by reading Jewish and southern writers. The premise is familiar, of course: In every facet of American life, white people know better than black people what is best

and what is the right procedure for black people.

In his story, "The Nickel Misery of George Washington Carver Brown," Jewish Ivan Gold writes about a black soldier who simply is not to be believed, except in the fond fantasies of white people. He speaks in an ersatz Amos and Andy dialect, saying such non-black things as "You's all confused" and "Y'all know who Copperhaid is, that skinny nigrab boy," indicating that Mr. Gold might have been more at home with a white Anglo-Saxon boy from the Ozarks. Worse, Mr. Gold makes his caricature a black-faced Jewish *schlimiel*, a double-dumb loser with an out-sized capacity for debasement which might be common among Semites but which is black only in the veiled hopes of white people. Mr. Gold, in short, suffers from the William Styron-Nat Turner syndrome.

The Bernard Malamud story, "Black Is My Favorite Color," is better than Mr. Gold's but Mr. Malamud is a better writer than Mr. Gold and an infinitely superior observer of human beings and their behavior, black or white. However, a black lady friend who read Mr. Malamud's story at my request was not impressed with the author's creation of the black female character in the story, Ornita. "I guess there are black women like that," she said. "But I don't know them."

The white southern woman author is the late Flannery O'Connor of Georgia, a fine and sensitive writer. Her black character in the story, "Everything That Rises Must Converge," is observed; Mrs. O'Connor does not enter into the woman's psyche; she plays it safe. The story's chief character is a white woman, with whom Mrs. O'Connor is—and

should be—familiar, a run-of-the-mill Georgia racist. But, here, a word should be said: Mrs. O'Connor chose one kind of Georgia expression of racial bigotry. She might well have chosen another. Two women are likely to confront each other across the racial wall in much less violent terms than two men, and yet confrontation between men is more usual. A black writer might well have chosen the more usual confrontation and, to Mr. and Mrs. Hills, his story would have been unacceptable as literature.

One thing more: The Hills state authoritatively that Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin are the "only two really first rate Negro writers" who can be named, relegating to mediocrity such superb craftsmen as John A. Williams, Paule Marshall, William Melvin Kelley and Ernest J. Gaines, and totally ignoring Saunders Redding, Robert Boles, Carlene Hatcher Polite and Kristin Hunter. The Hills can be excused for not knowing about Alice Walker, Lindsay Patterson, Audrey Lee, Louise Meriwether, and the whole new bundle of black writers just being published, and no one expects them to recognize the genius of "militants" LeRoi Jones, Larry Neal or Ed Bullins, but they have slapped in the face even those black writers who slavishly submit to the white literary dogma which demeans them.

How We Live, then, is important for black readers and writers for the reason that it provides them with an example of what they must continue to guard against. Black students in and out of "integrated" schools must be protected from the virulent racism inherent in "criticism" by literary gurus like L. Rust and Penny Chapin Hills.—HOYT W. FULLER

feature in the journal is an article on "Ibo Names and the Concept of Death," by **Ifekandu V. Umunna**. The African Journal's address is Box 6555, Washington, D. C. 20009 . . . Soulbook 7 is dedicated to "the memories of John Coltrane, Ruby Doris Robinson, Che Guevara, Albert Luthuli, Martin Luther King Jr. and Bobby Hutton." Contributors include **Rolland Snellings, Abdelbaki Hermassi, Carlos Moore** and a brace of poets. Soulbook, "the quarterly journal of revolutionary Afroamerica," is available in New York (473 W. 152nd Street) or Berkeley, Calif. (P.O. Box 1097, postal zone 94701) . . . **Bobb Hamilton**, who is New York editor of Soulbook, also is editor of Black Caucus, the journal of the Association of Black Social Workers. Black Caucus is published three times yearly (winter, spring and fall) at 72 W. 126th Street, New York 10030. Articles in the initial issue of the magazine are by **Charles L. Sanders, Anne Carlson, Kenneth E. Marshall, Sidney Jones, Preston R. Wilcox, Judy Beyman, Lewis D. Armand** and Mr. Hamilton . . . Watu is the name of the black student publication at Cornell University, with **Don L. Lee** as faculty advisor. Contributors to the first issue of Watu are **Bob Jackson, Patricia A. Jones, Delores Smith, Sandra Hearn, Janice Willis, Mark Walker, Reuben Munday, Yvette Patterson and Alexis Deveaux**. Mr. Lee contributed the introduction. Mr. Munday is the editor . . . Exposures in Black is "a collection of black imagery, both visual and literary" by **Gerald L. Simmons Jr.** of Detroit (10036 Broadstreet, Apt. 5-C). The collection of four poems and some 47 photographs make an appealing 35-page booklet, offered at \$1.50 per copy . . . Black Theater is not new, but it should be a *must* for black people.



New Broadside Venture

Broadside Press' new venture is directly related to the company's publication of black poetry. Publisher **Dudley Randall** has introduced a series of tapes of poets reading the works in their volumes, an ideal innovation for group sessions for entertaining young people. To date, Mr. Randall has brought out three tapes: James Emanuel reading his *The Treehouse and Other Poems*; Etheridge Knight reading *Poems From Prison*; and Mr. Randall reading from his collection, *Cities Burning*. The latter tape has an extra feature which is a major attraction in itself. A young balladeer named Jerry Moore has set to music two of Mr. Randall's poems, "Ballad of Birmingham" and "Dressed All in Pink," which he sings with notable style. The tapes have been issued in limited numbers, only 50 for each volume, all autographed and numbered, and they augur well to become collectors' items. The tapes sell for \$5 each, all elegantly encased in boxes especially designed to match the covers of the volumes of poetry. They may be ordered directly from the Broadside Press, 12651 Old Mill Place, Detroit, Mich. 48238.

mentioned earlier, the whole black revolution is a reaction to grievances too often ignored and promises too frequently forgotten. Thus, there is the possibility of overreaction, on both sides. It is a painful experience for both the majority and the minority in a society to understand that so much of its fabric is interwoven with racism. The desire to eradicate it or to forget it (this is a much less feasible possibility in the context of modern society with its mass media and mass communication) can lead to many false starts and well-intentioned mistakes. The majority of blacks do not want an apartheid society, but many will stand with "black only" causes until society shows that it really means to include blacks in the society on an equal and meaningful basis. The black students are quite justified in demanding more coverage of black history and the contributions of blacks to society. Although some of the black students don't believe that white students should be admitted to these courses, black history courses will be of considerable value to white students also.

Certainly, the relatively inane treatment of slavery and the Reconstruction period by historians deserves correction in the minds of all. Some definitive works on Reconstruction, such as that of John Hope Franklin, chairman of the history department at the Univer-

sity of Chicago, have been written, but to a great extent these are not included in the basic history courses that are taken by most students. Black students are justified in asking that more black counselors and advisers be appointed. Not that only black counselors can counsel black students, but black students should have black counselors available if they want to talk with one. Also, black and white students should be able to see blacks in a variety of positions in the university. Demands of the type that I have just mentioned are not to develop an apartheid university; rather they are to provide for a valid recognition of black people and black students as a part of society and a part of the university.

The consideration of the black student as a special case in the university, particularly at an institution that prides itself on its democratic traditions, might appear to violate principles of equality and nondiscrimination. But the university, as one of the most important institutions of society, has a responsibility to help blacks and other minority groups achieve the position of social and economic equality that is implicit in our system. President James M. Hester of New York University, for example, says that NYU intends to discriminate *positively* in favor of black students to help eradicate the ef-

fects of racism on them.

Although it can be argued that the university should merely reflect the values and traditions of society and create knowledge for the sake of knowledge, many people in society look to the university for leadership and guidance in the solution of a variety of social and intellectual problems. The university's concern with black students is clearly within this framework. Certainly, mistakes will be made. The black students will make mis-

takes and should be allowed to learn from them. University administrators will make mistakes and should also be allowed to learn from them. The black student awakening and the contemporary student activism on America's campuses point the way for the enhancement of the university as an important institution in our society. Those of us in the university should really hold ourselves in their debt for so forcefully bringing this challenge to us.

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Dr. Roscoe C. Brown, author of "The White University Must Respond to Black Student Needs," is a professor in the school of education at New York University. He is co-author of the book, *The Negro Almanac*. His article appeared originally in the New York University Alumni News.

(C) *Consistency of Thought and Action:* If one thinks Black, one must live Black, dress Black, sleep Black, look Black, speak Black, love Black, move Black, vacation Black, write Black, study Black, eat Black, conference Black, work Black, read Black, go to Black movies, lectures, hospitals, businesses, schools, churches, countries, restaurants, communities, and in the process begin to “get ourselves together” rather than impress white people with how threatening or dangerous the Black vanguard has become. (To paraphrase the poet, Don L. Lee, we must be committed to the integration of Negroes with Black people, we must realize that we are all Africans.)

(D) *Objective Critical Analysis:* Too often our discussions are more a function of ego needs than of the objective condition of our people. We must use our strongest forces to attack the greatest problem in order to meet the most critical needs of our people. Only critical social analysis will prevent the wasting of energy by dealing with symptoms rather than causes. We need serious historical accounts of neo-colonial institutions and not simply journalistic polemics. Our social analysis must be greater than our personal struggles if we are serious about meeting the needs of our people. For example, we need

a serious historical analysis of Howard University and its neo-colonial functions rather than merely accounts of recent controversies (though these accounts are extremely important in supporting political consciousness with details of recent events).

(E) *Develop Revolutionary Consciousness:* The first step toward a revolutionary consciousness is exposure to positive revolutionary forces. While one is immersed in Blackness, it is necessary to read extensively the works of Brother Malcolm, LeRoi Jones, Ron Karenga, Robert Williams, Elijah Muhammad, Mao, Che Guevara, Frantz Fanon, and others like them. We must consistently read periodicals like NEGRO DIGEST, Liberator, Soul Book, Journal of Black Poetry, Muhammad Speaks, and others (many from the Third World). We must examine our homes and listen to revolutionary music, look at revolutionary images, and live a revolutionary lifestyle based on serious discipline. (Note: If you take the last recordings of John Coltrane and listen one hour a day, the vibrations will enable you to dig a lot of things contrary to the ordered system we face in our “place” in the mainstream. Listen to “Ascension” and rise in revolutionary consciousness.)

We are Africans in a death struggle for our liberation.

The Black University must be an institutional concept of life and liberation.

To those who stand in our way we must bring death and destruction. For our people, we must be models of peace and understanding, but when necessary we must

fire the earth and fill the air with bullets.

The rhythm of a different sound sets our stride in motion toward revolutionary liberation. We must be (are) new men, men of New Africa. And we aim to reclaim that which has been taken from us—or nobody is supposed to make it through the storm.



Gerald A. McWorter, author of "Struggle, Ideology and the Black University," is an assistant professor of sociology at Spelman College in Atlanta. Prof. McWorter also is one of the founders of Chicago's Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC).

one of the examples of white snob-bishness lurking behind the criteria of excellence which, by no means however, is entirely a product of racism alone. Running through its history also is a strain fundamentally of a different sort, though it too is racial, by coincidence, in its consequences.

In the beginning American education, particularly on the college level, was highly private, restricted to the few who were wealthy enough to afford it. Such persons, as social theorist Thorsten Veblen observed in his book, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, were characterized by a peculiar mentality in which, owing to the necessity for displaying one's wealth, it was prestigious to be free from productive endeavor. Any work done could not be remunerative and preferably should be of no significant use to anybody, let alone oneself; to waste time, and to have the time to waste time were the symbols of prestige. Their educational enterprise, accordingly, was characterized by a "liberal arts" approach where students learned a little about a lot of things and a lot about nothing. The leisure-class syndrome and its snobbish motivations encouraged a preoccupation with lofty gobbledygook such as footnoting. Students might be compelled to labor in memorizing the idiomatic expressions and the verbal conjugations of dead languages; or, more currently, languages

which invariably fade from the student's memory and, while remembered, are useless in post-college life.

As middle class aspirants began to emulate the leisure class, and education was largely socialized, the principle of exclusiveness was reinforced by the need to stem the flood of recruits to professional occupations. Hence the student might make A's and B's in all required courses only to fail the comprehensive exam or the language test, or pass all academic requirements only to fail the bar exam because of political beliefs or color of skin. Education lost much of its capacity for vitalizing the mind and, since the end-products became more important than the process, eventually amounted to a routine assimilation of approved bodies of knowledge, a process which fails particularly to inspire a black child of working class origin.

I sometimes shock students into a realization of the shallowness of the American college scene by walking into a classroom and throwing out a concept, preferably with a German-sounding name, such as *zeitschaft* (whether this is a word I do not know) which I might claim to be a concept for a societal condition in which there is widespread feelings of racism or inter-group hostility. While students are busy copying down the term, I proceed to show how to measure the intensity of the *zeitschaft* predica-

ment. This is accomplished, I further instruct, by computing an Index of Racial Response. An Index of Racial Response (by now I am calling it the IRR score) is computed by: (1) observing a sample of persons from two or more racial groups over a period of time; say, whites and blacks passing or encountering one another on a given street corner during a given day; (2) charting the number of smiles exhibited by the individuals comprising the sample; and (3) dividing the number of smiles observed by the number of persons in the sample; then (4) dividing this by the square root of two. While the students are furiously engaged in copying this down, virtually slobbering in anticipation of returning to their dormitories where they will ambivalently complain of the difficulty of the course (perhaps requesting their roommates' aid in calling out the material for memory), I step back and explain my desire to have the students see the board clearly, inasmuch as I had made it all up. I further state that I knew that they did not understand it (no more than I had) and that they are not being educated, in spite of what they are accustomed to believe, by merely memorizing a professor's fodder and regurgitating it on his test.

White students, it is true, are victims of the same condition, but it is doubly alien to the experience of black students who, moreover, are burdened by many another unconscious assumption of white su-

premacy. Take the matter of the cultural imperialism which white ethnocentrism produces. A white anthropology professor may think nothing of dividing African tribes into "primitive" and "westernized," then pointing out that primitive tribes are more characterized by the matrilineal system (tracing ancestry through the mother instead of the father) while neglecting to point out that this could be a more accurate procedure. The black student who first called my attention to this fact indicated that "you have to take the mother's word for it and sometimes she doesn't know herself." He swore that a boy in his Georgia bayou community came home from school one day and told his father happily that he was going to marry a girl—let us call her Pearlie Mae. His father said: "Son, I didn't know that you would go that far; you can't marry Pearlie Mae; that's my daughter; she's your sister; don't tell your mamma, now." The boy moped around, then broke down and told his mother what was wrong. "That's okay," his mother consoled, "you can marry Pearlie Mae. Don't tell your daddy but he ain't your father."

Sociology classes will discuss the merits of the Moynihan Report on the Negro family, incognizant of the implications of Moynihan's own figures showing, for example, that for every 100 nonwhite males between the ages of 25 and 40 in New York City there are 33 extra females. Somebody, of necessity,

must carry a greater sexual burden than rightfully is his share, or a number of women will languish via induced celibacy. At the same time, the condition is being intensified by the disproportionate rates at which black males are dying in Vietnam, depleting the supply of eligible black males. This cold demographic fact will lead to family disorganization and high rates of adultery, no matter how "moral" or "stable" (as social scientists say) black sexual codes might be.

Similarly, anthropology professors will subject black students to discussions on family disorganization among Africans in Kenya, for example, impervious to the fact that much family strife is a product of the Christian missionaries' importation of an alien monogamy which, replacing the existing polygamy evidently geared to the demography and socio-economic needs of the people, displaced surplus wives (in order to "save" them) and produced a good deal of the family disorganization which anthropologists get grants and trips abroad to "study."

Courses in European history will skip over the slave trade while courses in American history will mention black persons only with reference to slavery and the myth that Lincoln's restricted Emancipation Proclamation freed all of them. Courses and textbooks in literature remain lily white. Many white students, spurred by involvement in civil rights activities and the daily prominence of the black struggle in

news coverage, are growing keenly aware of these curious omissions, but it is ever so much more painful when the student is black.

Black students who wail about the absence of blackness in white college education accordingly are not trying to destroy American education so much as they are trying desperately to renovate it. Their compensatory response to black exclusion has taken a separatist flavor, for the most part, on the surface; but it may seem ironic to those who misunderstand them that, in the name of black nationalism, calling for the presence of more black students and professors, they actually are bringing about more desegregation of white colleges than there ever was before!

The name of the game is the elevation of a people by means of one important escalator—college education. Separatism and integrationism are possible approaches to that end; they lose their effectiveness when, swayed by dogmatic traces of absolutism, they become full ends in themselves. It will be an irony of recorded history, I have written elsewhere, that "integration" was used in the second half of this century to hold the black race down just as segregation was so instituted in the first half. Black students now seem to feel that integration, particularly in the token way in which it has been practiced up to now, and the neo-tokenist manner now emerging, elevates individual members of the group but, paradoxically, in plucking many of

the strongest members from the group while failing to alter the lot of the group as a whole, weakens the collective thrust which the group might otherwise muster. Increasingly, black students are turning their backs on the old tendency for Negro college graduates to escape from the black community instead of returning to help build it. This new mood is born of a greater awareness of the glories of their own past as a people, an image they now wish to convey also to others. Hence the clamor for more "black courses" and courses taught *from a black perspective* (or

"dark" courses as I overheard one white colleague tell another; later translated by a sociology professor into "color-compatible" courses).

In the effort to make education "relevant" to the black community—and by indirection, to the white community—the communities themselves may be transformed, each in its own way, and, so to speak, made relevant to a *bona fide* education. Thus, black student endeavors not only, if successful, might bring about a kind of black renaissance; they could possibly wield an impact on the entire cemetery of American education.

□□□

Nathan Hare, author of "Black Invisibility on White Campuses," is director and developer of the Black Studies Program at San Francisco State College. A former professor of sociology at Howard University in Washington, D.C., Dr. Hare was in the forefront of the black revolution on the campus. His book, *The Black Anglo-Saxons*, is scheduled to be re-issued by a new publisher.

the editorial proceeded, as also is the custom, to castigate those activists who had *inspired* Harvard to adopt a degree-granting Black Studies Program. "Harvard's stress on integrating the new field of study—on terms of equality—into its over-all teaching and research enterprise effectively answers the efforts to make black studies the ideological propaganda instrument of separatism that have led to so much divisive conflict at other institutions," the editorial stated.

The growing number of advocates and supporters of the Black University, in and outside of white universities, recognize that they have formidable adversaries in their struggle toward achieving their goal. They will be condemned as "separatists" and as "neo-segregationists" by powerful voices dedicated to a brand of "integration" which means, in effect, the continued subordination of black people and the degradation of their values and life-styles; they will be attacked by black men who either are desperately seeking to hold onto their own waning prestige within the rapidly evolving community or else are simply playing the white man's power game for personal profit; and they will be subjected to all the economic and political pressures which those in power can bring to bear against those rebels who challenge the *status quo* and who threaten to chip away at its foundation. Still, there is evidence that they will prevail: already a very large percentage of the brightest of the young black students and professors have thrown their sympathies and, in many cases, their energies behind the Black University movement; and embryonic Black Universities are taking root in several black communities, notably in Detroit and Chicago.

That there are great problems to be surmounted before the Black University becomes a living entity there can be no doubt, and several of the contributors to this issue of NEGRO DIGEST address themselves candidly to some of the problems.

HOYT W. FULLER
Managing Editor

* *Muntu*, as described by Janheinz Jahn in his book by that name, is a Bantu word of inclusive character, having to do with Man as a spiritual being, transcendent, invested with that most precious quality, *humanity*, which is a law unto itself, natural and insuperable, and forever possessed of precedence over things, order and property.

develop black communities. For a cardinal need of black communities is a formal system of education capable of "producing the bureaucratic, managerial, technical, and professional cadres required for modernization".¹²

A recent letter to the editor of a popular magazine may caricature the point somewhat but may also set the stage for clarification:

"Sir: A hypothetical interview of a Negro applicant for employment with a major corporation: INTERVIEWER: 'So you want to work for Magna?'

APPLICANT: 'Yes, sir'.

INTERVIEWER: 'Our shortage at present is in the business administration area. Did you by chance major in business administration, economics, accounting, insurance or statistics? Did you take any courses in those areas?'

APPLICANT: 'No, sir. I majored in Black Studies.'

INTERVIEWER: 'I am sorry, but we have no openings in that field at the present time. As you know, we are an equal opportunities employer. We will put your application on file. Check back with me in six months or so and perhaps I may be able to do something for you. Come in and see me any time. Good day, sir'.¹³

This cartoon characterization of the problem is used merely to high-

light the danger of the development of a too narrow concept of Black Studies because of an uncriticized set of assumptions regarding Black Identity. If one conceptualizes the black experience *only*—or even *principally*—in terms of those immediately felt values of personal experience and excludes or downgrades the role of impersonal items in the self-concept, then the chances of developing a Black Studies Program that is meaningful to both black students and the black community are already pre-empted. The truth of the matter is that such personal items constitute only one configuration in an adequate self-construct. Some scholars argue that in an urban technological society they are not even fundamentals. Rather, "scientific, rational knowledge of the world is the basic relation from which conceptions of the world, personality, and symbol systems are derived".¹⁴

(There is a great need for someone to address the problem of the relations between "Soul", a derivative of the black experience in America, and "Negritude", a derivative of the black experience in Africa. Interesting parallels and differences might be observed and related to the levels of technology in the two societies.)

The thirst for an education that aids them in understanding themselves and the world around them,

and that prepares them to deal effectively with that world, is a basic fact to people in every black community in this land. Parochial programs of Black Studies based on uncritical concepts of Black Identity will not help either our students or these desperately hungry communities. Such narrowly conceived programs may help some professors and politicians (and not a few students) *talk* about helping "oppressed people . . . get 'in' . . . by any means necessary to do it right now!"¹⁵ But such violent discourse only *helps* the ego of the speaker. For that is not *political* language. That is the language of insurrection, and it is both misleading and dishonest unless such spokesmen have both the *readiness* and the *capacity* to carry forward the action implied.

If the black university is truly to become the "service-oriented" center of research and action that Vincent Harding desires; if it is, to use his words, to "set up skills banks for developing nations and . . . urge those students who do not return to the black American communities to offer their skills to Africa, Latin America and wherever else they are needed"¹⁶, then it will clearly have to give the non-humanistic sciences of mathematics, statistics, accounting, engineering, physics, *et. al.*, a very great deal of support. Such a university would not be able to afford to invest all or even the majority of its resources

in humanistic programs. There is no reason why such disciplines cannot be construed as within the programs of black studies. It is the purpose and strategy of a university which defines its being. Black Studies *can* be taught for the purpose of condescending to or patronizing black people, as Darwin Turner observed in his article. By the same token, non-black courses can be taught for the purpose of helping black people, both at home and abroad.

A functional Black University will strive to engage in the kind of teaching and research and public service which provides people with the disciplines of thought and action by which they can mature as persons and help shape the world into a more human place of habitation. The irremediable blackness of Afro-Americans would be accepted both as a fact of life and as a positive value. But, it would not restrict the experience of black identity to the immediacies of skin-associated cultural values. The black experience is one crucible in which we work our way to a vision of and a connection with the human potential in all men.

A final word by way of illustration: Ralph Ellison has complained that his award-winning novel, *Invisible Man*, is often mis-read to imply that it was the blackness of skin of the hero which made him invisible to white Americans. Instead, says Ellison,

"The hero's invisibility is not a

matter of being seen, but a refusal to run the risk of his own humanity, which involves guilt. This is not an attack upon white society! It is what the hero refuses to do in each section which leads to further action. He must assert and achieve his own humanity; he cannot run with the pack and do this".¹⁷

A functional Black University will see the need for instruction in the disciplines of personal moral responsibility as well as in the tech-

niques of social action. Asserting and achieving one's humanity means that black people are not exempted from the universal human need to develop a personal idiom as well as a group style. Black people, too, need the art of transforming and transcending even the materials and patterns of black culture. "We cannot run with the pack and do this", whether the pack is white or black. In the words of the spiritual: "You got to walk this lonesome valley by yourself."

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Why Should Black Boys Have To Grow Up As Model Men?



Recently, a Negro schoolmarm in Indianapolis received a flourish of publicity in the white press by admonishing Black people to "quit feeling sorry for ourselves" and "do the best we can with what we have". In a national magazine not noted for sympathy with Negro aspirations, the teacher was extravagantly featured. "Black people are easily identified, so they just plain have to be better behaved than lots of whites—or we give the prejudiced white man a weapon to use against us," was one of the gems of enlightenment the teacher reportedly voiced.

And the teacher, apparently, is not all advice. Supported by funds from a foundation, she has organized a group which is actually trying to clean up the streets and alleys and to instill in the economically-deprived and socially-restricted children of poorly-educated, inadequately-housed and frequently under-paid Black people all the middle-class virtues of *hard work, cleanliness, discipline, responsibility, respect for property* and general *good citizenship*. Black children must grow up as model men and women.

Perhaps the teacher deserves all the accolades (including a Freedom Foundation award) which her efforts have won for her, but deeper-thinking, less naive Black people know that, good intentions notwithstanding, the teacher's banal philosophy and sincere projects will avail little in the ghetto. Her words have all been said before, and better, and the routineness of her deeds would surprise even her. Attempting to cure the ills of the slums with elementary self-help programs like cleaning alleys is tantamount to attacking the disease of pellagra by painting the sores with iodine. Many white supporters of self-help ideas know this very well.

What is wrong in the Black ghettos can be made right *only* through a determined and committed campaign against racial bigotry and inequity by all the established institutions of American society. Since that eventuality is unlikely in the extreme, the key to the resurgence of pride and industry among Black people lies in the direction of a kind of "nationalism" which draws its energy from reaction to the intransigent Establishment. "It will take many years to erase the feelings of some white people, because these feelings were learned at their mothers' knee," the teacher is quoted as saying. But the new generation of Blacks consider it futile to seek to "erase the feelings" of white people; they are more concerned with rejecting the entire aggregate of assumptions which undergird the teacher's facile philosophy. In a society which ostracizes, degrades and then accuses them, they are refusing to accept as valid and binding the dishonored values the society would impose. "I believe that the right-thinking Negro wants to get down off the white man's lap and walk like a man," the teacher is quoted. And right she is. However, the "man" who is likely to emerge from the Black ghetto today will not necessarily find approval in the eyes of the Indianapolis teacher and her fans.

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