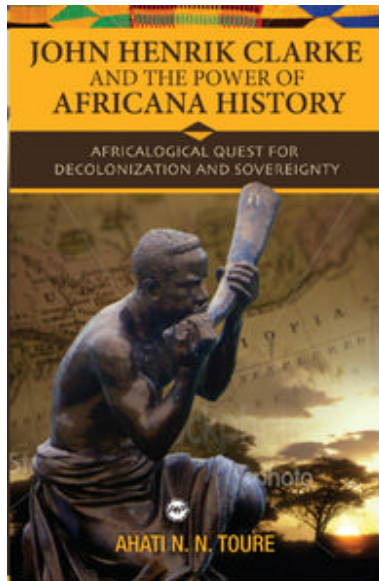


Ahati N.N. Toure, *John Henrik Clarke and the Power of Africana History: Africalogical Quest for Decolonization and Sovereignty*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-1592216277

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Africana studies have recently undergone a major historiographical resurgence. Studies of key figures that have advanced the field have featured notably in this endeavor, with several progressive studies and scholarly conferences helping to recast the meaning and heritage of this aspect of Black Nationalism. Scholars such as Kwame W. Alford and Greg K. Carr have recently broadened our understanding of Nationalist intellectuals who have operated outside of the confines of Europeans controlled institutions.¹ Their studies have begun to help us reshape what we think about Black Nationalist intellectuals and their impact on the African World.

Ahati N.N. Toure's *John Henrik Clarke and the Power of Africana History* is a major contribution to the development of Africana intellectual studies. Concentrating on the genesis of Pan Africanist scholars, Toure's study is one of the first critically scholarly monoliths in this field. Focusing centrally on

John Henrik Clarke and the plethora of grassroots intellectuals that trained or had a profound influence on him, Toure argues that despite not having European degrees, Clarke was able to teach African world History at some of the most prestigious academic institutions in the United States. The author uses the activism and scholarship of John Henrik Clarke to show the genealogy of a movement of "indigenous" African intellectuals in the United States who were committed to a Pan Africanist ideology regarding sovereignty.

¹ Kwame Wes Alford, "The Early Intellectual Growth and Development of William Leo Hansberry and the Birth of African Studies," *Journal of Black Studies* 30, (3) (January 2000): 269-293; Greg Kimathi Carr. "The African Centered Philosophy of History: An Exploratory Essay on the Genealogy of Foundationalist Historical Thought and African Nationalist Identity Construction," in *African World History Project: The Preliminary Challenge*, eds. Jacob H. Carruthers and Leon C. Harris (Los Angeles, CA: The Association of the Study of Classical African Civilization, 2002): 285-320.

Having access to John Henrik Clarke's manuscript collection at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Toure provides a useful account of the intellectual development of Dr. Clarke and many other grassroots intellectuals that preceded him. Clarke was influenced by the numerous Africana historical research societies that date back to the mid-19th century. Some of the scholars that emerged from this tradition include the venerable journalist and former advisor to Marcus Garvey, John Edward Bruce and the organic bibliophile and archivist Arthur A. Schomburg. They advocated "original research, publication, and teaching for principally Afrikan mass consumption (p. 29)." Similarly, Toure shows how Schomburg had the most profound impact on Clarke's intellectual development.

Toure provides an excellent analysis of the troubled relationship between the "indigenous" African historical societies and those that were founded by African scholars who were trained by European institutions. According to Toure, "indigenous" intellectuals such as Schomburg had grown "increasingly disillusioned with his university-trained colleagues for what he judged to be their social and intellectual snobbery, their unrepentant elitism and distance from the common people..." Scholars such as Carter G. Woodson owned some of his academic sources to Schomburg, but refused to acknowledge him in any of his publications (p. 34).

One of the many strong parts of Toure's book is his chapter on the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU). Clarke served as an advisor to Malcolm X during his founding of the OAAU. He was also instrumental in drawing up the constitution of the organization and giving the organization a name (p. 221). According to Toure, Clarke modeled the association after the Organization of African Unity which was the brain child of Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana. Clarke's relationship with Nkrumah dates back to the 1930's, when both were members of the Harlem History Club founded by the late Willis N. Huggins.

Finally, Toure's *John Henrik Clarke and the Power of Africana History* is a critical contribution to the epistemology of Africana studies. Students, scholars and lay folks will find Toure's book useful. John Henrik Clarke's legacy is ensured because of Toure's efforts.