

On My Journey Now: The Narrative and Works of Dr. John Henrik Clarke, The Knowledge Revolutionary

by

Kwaku Person-Lynn, Ph.D.

www.Dr.Kwaku.com

In memory of the greatest scholastic influences in my life,
Dr. Boniface I. Obichere and Dr. John Henrik Clarke

with a Foreword

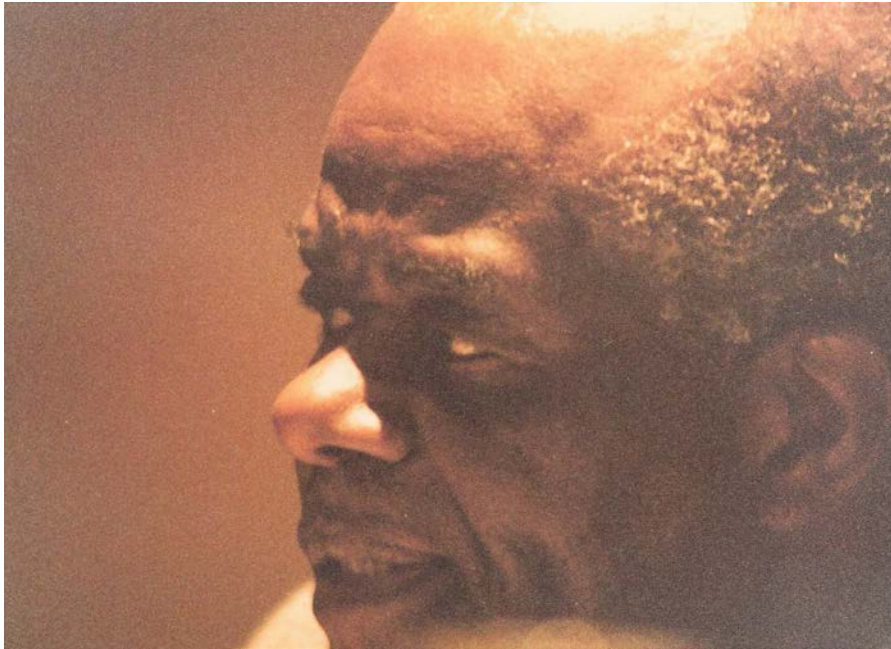
by

Wesley Snipes

Actor, Martial Artist, and Film Producer

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Kwaku Person-Lynn, Ph.D.

Foreward: A Sacred Oracle in Harlem

I remember when I was living in the Bronx, my wife at the time was taking classes at Hunter College. Every now and then she would come home and talk about this teacher, this “really deep brother,” whose class she just loved. Wondering if he was a teacher “teacher,” or just some suave handsome brother with a good rap, mackin’ in classrooms full of beautiful sisters searching for a sense of self-worth and a solution to black depravity, I thought I better go down and check this teacher out. My wife told me he held open classes. Even if I wasn’t registered, I could sit in. “SIT IN? You mean even though I’m not enrolled, I can still sit in on his class?” “Yes!” she said, “but you better get there early if you want a seat. And another thing, if you do come, you don’t know me.”

I recall the day I actually attended the class and saw this teacher for the first time. Here I was expecting a tall, really handsome, fresh pressed dashiki-wearing-brother with some beautiful beaded necklace he got from the “motherland” swinging across the front of his chest like a hypnotist’s pendulum.

What a surprise! In walks this short, medium built, balding man with the skin color of a tootsie roll, wearing what looked to be one of his Sunday school suits back in the day. He was carrying an old, I mean old looking briefcase in one hand, and even older looking books in the other. He was cool, though. Very cool. He reminded me of the men I used to see in the local barbershop in the Griffith Park section of Orlando, Florida.

They’d sit around the shop talking and playing checkers. Debating. Even though I didn’t always know what they were talking about, I did like the way they said it, even if they did “talk funny.” One of them always gave me a gift: a quarter, some candy or some soda water. Though I couldn’t always predict which gift I’d get from time to time, it really didn’t matter. Whatever it was, I knew it would be sweet to the pallet, yummy to the tummy. I always felt safe around those men.

I said to myself, “Could this man, this ‘teacher,’ be like those men from the barber shop?” And as if from my mouth to God’s ears, Professor Clarke spoke, “Awwright now, let’s get to it.” From that moment on, not only could you hear a pin drop, but you taunted the deafness resulting from the thunderous explosions of brain cells being pummeled into submission by all the ‘bombs he kept dropping.’ Just like in the barbershop, but better. On top of all that, he talked funny too.

For the next year I attended his classes. Sometimes I did the homework and took the tests. Hell, I'd even show up when my wife couldn't make it. I would update her as to what new bombshell Professor Clarke dropped on us this time. Now you might say, "Wow! Wesley was making movies, and still taking Professor Clarke's classes too? A movie star hanging with the grassroots folks!" I wish I could say I was "that deep." The truth of the matter is, I wasn't working that much in movies. I had only done two, and it still didn't get me off the Number 4 and 5 trains. I had plenty of idle time on my hands.

Fortunately, I had some background in African and African Caribbean Studies. The lessons taught by Professor Clarke didn't cause a complete and total sensory overload. But he sure rocked the boat. I remember in the middle of a heated discussion about the disunity among people of African descent, based on language diversity and this *strange psychosis* that makes us think our local accent somehow affords us a higher position on the "shit stick." Professor Clarke interrupted and said, "Well, if nothing else unites us ...racism will."

"What?" a student said. "It's racism that got us in the condition we're in now. How can racism possibly bring black people together?" Professor Clarke replied, "Cause if we don't wake up soon and realize we're in the same boat, things are gonna get sooo bad ...we ain't gonna have no choice but to come together, or perish."

Talk about not seeing the forest for the trees, this was the kind of profound statement that could only come from years and years of study and deep meditation. In that one moment, Professor Clarke waylaid any questions I had about who and what kind of man he was. The barbershop of my youth had become his classroom. This time it wasn't soda water, candy or a quarter that would please me. This time, it would be spiritual insight and cultural fortitude conferred on me by the quintessential example of African genius. Funny, we didn't have to go across the ocean to that far away land to find the Great Oracle. The Oracle was right here in Harlem.

Professor Clarke taught us to think. He forced us to exercise that brain of ours in honor of grand mamahs and grand bahbahs for their love and sacrifice. He taught that not only did Africans give the world the first concept of civilization, but that they also left us a spiritually grounded super computer built into our genetic make up. That if given the right information, and some well-trained technicians to keep it running, we could remedy any problem it encounters; anywhere, any time, any day. He taught that not only is reading fundamental, but it is economically sound. It can directly affect your living condition. This, I can truly bear witness to.

In the myths of the ages, when a person went to see the Oracle, usually it was to get a view of one's future destiny. Since Professor Clarke has been teaching, pilgrims from the four corners of the earth, well, maybe not the four corners of the earth, but certainly the five boroughs of New York City, have come to seek guidance from this "good ole southern boy with a photographic memory and the heart of a lion."

If my experience with visiting him is indicative of the many who studied under him, then I can tell you this. This Oracle is not gonna tell you who you gonna be. He's gonna tell you who you are: deans, professors, dancers, doctors, nurses, statesmen, writers, preachers and world leaders, and yes, even actors.

In the summer of 1996, I was asked a question about the kind of legacy I wanted to leave; something that would last long after I'm gone; something that would reflect my full gratitude for all my many blessings, and mean something. I knew that there have been many great actors and many great movies spawned from the African experience, but like any thing that's entertaining, unless it is truly unique, then "it," like everything else, will soon be forgotten.

After a few nights of meditation, it came to me. I've had the good fortune of being graced by some of the most prolific minds coming from the African Experience, but others missed out. These giants should be remembered not only as legends of street corner stories, but as they were. How they looked. How they thought and what they said, in their own words. So I went to video tape. Without wavering, I knew the first one should be Dr., Professor John Henrik Clarke.

By his grace and that of God, the professor sat with me, St. Claire Bourne, Lou Potter, Professor Anderson Thompson and Sis Kamiko-san for over 12 hours. We recorded every word, every moment, every tear and every smile. It is now available for the world to see.

It is said that what we are today is the culmination of experiences we've had in the past. Well, one day I went to see a "teacher" and found an African man: cool, calm and cute to the ladies, with a super computer in his head. I found the Sacred Oracle, right there in Harlem. His name was John Henrik Clarke.

Wesley Snipes

Introduction: The Great Elephant



Dr. John Henrik Clarke (left) being interviewed by Kwaku Person-Lynn, Ph.D. (right)

“I think that my work is so unfinished and I am so unready to leave.” Those were the words John Henrik Clarke said in our last interview. A man who had produced and accomplished so much that it is unmeasurable in standard terms, brought my mind to a conscious halt. First, it was the passion, the pain, the emotion he displayed while speaking. He seemed like a man tormented. Second, as I reflected on it afterwards, I sat astonished at the profound humbleness of this man-scholar whom I loved, as he made this simple, statement about his life’s endeavors. Now that his capacity for work was limited, due to age and health, he was impatient to see his lifelong goals come to fruition: the progress and unity of Afrikan people around the world, and the incorporation of global Afrikan history and culture into general thought and into the educational curricula.

Those last words, which hung over me like a dreary cloud as I left New York, stayed on my mind as I rode the bus to JFK airport. The ride back to Los Angeles this time seemed much longer than the ride to New York. It reminded me of a 24-hour flight back to the United States from Viet Nam. At that time, I knew I was leaving one physical war, but I also knew that I was re-entering a war waged against Black people. At least that's the way it seemed at the time, in 1968. That was not a joyful feeling, just as it was not one now, even though both times I should have been overjoyed. All the way home, I tried to figure out how I was going to get out of the funk I left New York with, so that I could sit down in front of my computer and put together all the material I had gathered.

Here was this man who had probably influenced more young minds than any other American Afrikan scholar today, and who was not a made-up media darling touted by the Euro-American press, who had not benefited from large research budgets or staffs, but who had nevertheless built his reputation from the soil and toil of meticulous and elegant historical works, in and out of the class room. Included in his impressive repertoire of activities, and his being a founding member of several organizations and publications, are the many battles he engaged in regarding equity for global Afrikan scholarship and its scholars, and his numerous lectures and writings. Here was an Afrikan man so accomplished, yet still so willing to do much more.

On my arrival home, after centering from the high and low I was on from being back in Harlem for the first time in over twenty years, working with Dr. Clarke, reality began to set in. I could think with more clarity. There, I had walked the streets of Harlem, heard the sounds, ridden the subway and grooved with the rhythm of the place that is rightfully called the capital of Black America. I had spent hours in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture on the corner of Malcolm X Boulevard and 135th Street, going through the *John Henrik Clarke Papers*, and being overwhelmed. Here, back on the West Coast, I thought about seeing Dr. Clarke being surrounded by several young students at the Marcus Garvey School in Los Angeles, and how they idolized him.

I thought about all those people who claimed him as their mentor. I thought about the phone constantly ringing at his home from people all over the country checking on him. I thought about all of the young and mature scholars who said that Dr. Clarke was their source of encouragement and enlightenment. I thought about a friend who said, "Listening to Dr. Clarke changed my life."

When I began to put all that together, along with several other thoughts and memories, it reminded me of the effect the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* had on people. I have never seen a book that transformed the thought patterns of so many. Actually, lives were changed because of that book. I had not seen that kind of reaction before or since until I contemplated the large sample of the many people Dr. Clarke had touched. This was made manifest later at his memorial service in New York, which attracted more people than had been seen in Harlem, in one place, for decades.

Thinking of him reminded me of a point he would frequently bring up. Practically all Black people in America are born into, grow up in, and must mentally, culturally and spiritually respond to the multi-dimensional perspective of the people who currently control the flow of information, values, and social ethics in this country. The educational institutions, through which Blacks receive their first formal instruction, are philosophically and pedagogically dominated by those same people, who also oversee the mass media, whether it is printed, electronic, focused on entertainment or part of the world wide web.

If an Afrikan people are influenced and dominated long enough by this one perspective (Eurocentric), which is fundamentally different than the people's own, then those people are going to embrace and desire the customs, traditions and habits of this overarching sector more than they will their own historical substance. What makes this especially troublesome is that what will be embraced and imitated are those same Eurocentric people who evolved from a history of initiating chattel slavery, oppression and brutality as an effective means of enriching themselves, in association with the denigration of whole Afrikan societies, a whole continent, and whole histories of Afrikan enterprise. In effect, we, as Afrikan people, will be taught to honor and respect those who have dishonored and raped us.

Dr. Clarke emphasized that against that Eurocentric construction, a relentless intellectual war must be waged. He taught that in time and history, individuals will come along who will upset this entire process. Their spoken and written words, their activist demeanor, and their ability to teach and encourage others to think for themselves will allow a pause long enough for us to see that there is another perspective to be investigated. Through this revelation, the debilitating and invisible haze that we have been under all our lives can be blown away with the enlightened knowledge that evolves from our own rich history, culture and wisdom. These master teachers will show us there is no legitimate reason to think of our own heritage as inferior. When the facts of history are seriously analyzed, what becomes clear is that we have been lied to by dishonest scholars in order to build themselves up by keeping us down. This effort is tragically also propagated by unbalanced scholars of color.

Further, through this thinking one arrives at the consciousness that the parent civilization of all humanity advanced from one's own Afrikan initiative. That is mind shattering. To learn that it was from one's own people, originally, that science, mathematics, philosophy, religion, systematic agriculture, architecture, and a host of other gifts, were brought to the world, is life changing. Such is the impact of these warriors. Their numbers will increase and their teachings will eventually overwhelm the miseducation of Afrikan people.

It will be gratifying and triumphant to see this global Afrikan information spreading throughout the nation and the world, with nobody able to stop it. No leader will be identified who can eliminate it, because it will be like rain. It will drop everywhere, fulfilling the reality that an aware people can never be controlled or oppressed. Dr. Clarke was himself one of that rare breed: a warrior and master teacher; a conductor who drove the train toward our growing knowledge of self and worth in the world.

The decision to do this book on Dr. Clarke did not evolve easily. I first had to convince him. When I brought up the idea, sitting in a hotel room in Los Angeles, I thought he would approve it instantly. To my surprise, however, he was both hesitant and reluctant. He said, "There's already too much stuff out there." I had to demonstrate to him that there was nothing out there like this proposed book; that a narrative, with the totality of his works, had never been published. After pitching my point to him, he was silent for a long time and I prepared myself for a major letdown since this was something I really wanted to do. Suddenly, the silence was broken and I got my second surprise. "Well", he said, "We'll see how it goes." We had a good relationship then, but after that it became beyond beautiful.

Once we got over that hurdle, it was like walking in the dark, not knowing exactly where I was going but knowing I had to keep moving. I had already done a first interview with Dr. Clarke in 1987, when he came to speak at the "Afrikan People's Conference," at Compton Community College, coordinated by Dr. Billie Jo Moore, in Compton, California.

Right after that lecture, I was able to interview him on audio and videotape. At that time, I did not know a lot about him, but I had read some of his works, so I was a little familiar with his point of view. After that first interview, however, I knew there was more to this man than I could immediately comprehend. What followed was the urge to interview him every time he came to Los Angeles. That turned out to be seven different sessions, spanning up to 1997. I knew that some of the interviews were for my radio program, a field I was in at the time, but even after that ended, I continued to interview him without really knowing why. Perhaps it was the simple need of wanting to preserve his knowledge and wisdom as best I could, or maybe it was the same motivation I had prior to radio, building a library for my sons. I didn't know.

At some point, and I am not exactly sure when, it dawned on me that maybe there was enough of his recorded words to make a book, so that his information and works could be widely disseminated and preserved forever. One of the things I had heard said several times, from others interested in increasing their knowledge, and who enjoy reading books by global Afrikan scholars, is that sometimes the written material seemed too complex. That some of the books were too hard to digest. I understand that from the perspective of a writer, and reader.

The transcripts from his interview tapes fulfilled what I was hoping would happen; the essence of his knowledge, wisdom and life experiences emerged in plain language so that everyone could read the material and not have to scratch their heads, run to a dictionary, or call a friend to find out what such and such meant.

It has always been a curiosity of mine that if someone wants to be an effective scholar or teacher, what good is the information they disseminate if most people cannot understand it? It is true that in most American universities, in order for faculty to receive tenure, meaning permanent employment, that individual faculty member must do what is a prevailing theme in academia: “Publish or perish.” If you do not have published what are considered scholarly books, then you must get published what are called “refereed” scholarly journal articles. That means the articles must be read and positively evaluated by a designated number of other scholars before being published.

Dr. Clarke was a tenured faculty member at Hunter College in New York for a very long time, so some of his writing had to comply with that requirement. However, from my perspective, I would add that an effective scholar/teacher, as Dr. Clarke did, must also publish in community newspapers and/or magazines that filter throughout various neighborhoods in America. People working every day, and even most students, don’t often read ‘high brow’ scholarly journals unless they are doing a research paper.

I know scholars who would throw their hands in the air with disgust if the suggestion were made that they condense and simplify their written works and try to get them published in the top hip hop magazines. Some would consider this scholastic sacrilege. The reality of the situation is, however, that if you want to reach the masses of young people, that is how you do it.

One of the most significant things I came to admire about Dr. Clarke over the years, was that he was clearly a people’s scholar/teacher. If one were to study his schedule of lectures, it would immediately become apparent that he frequently spoke at venues that reached people on every level, and every age group. Perhaps this, combined with his volumes of written and edited works, and what he considered his greatest contribution, being a classroom teacher is why he grew to command the highest levels of respect in both the academic and non-academic worlds. He earned the label: “The Dean of Black Historians.” In fact, his influence and contributions on curricula development, study guides and other teaching materials regarding Afrikan World Studies, Afrikana Studies, Pan Afrikan Studies, Black Studies, as well as World History, is unmatched in the last 25 years.

I believe the pinnacle of his work, and maybe the real significance of his influence, has been to teach us how to look at Afrikan world history from a Black historical perspective. When I was doing research for the historical and musicological portion of my doctoral dissertation on Afrikan world history and music, for example, and sifting through decades of written material, one thing sprang forth like a rocket heading toward space: the large majority of written material was done by scholars and writers of European descent, from their perspectives. In other words, white scholars were dominating in the telling of the history of Afrikan people, and interpreting it as they saw fit. This can pose serious problems of accuracy, and lack of cultural sensitivity to the nuances of Afrikan world history, except in a few rare cases.

Dr. Clarke taught that we must reexamine the history told so often that we've taken it for granted. For example, there is the clichéd idea that only the Greeks and Romans should be credited with giving the world the concept of civilization, when the original cultural people of that time and region were of Afrikan descent. The kind of honest re-investigation and analyses of historical facts advocated by Dr. Clarke has, however, brought forth the real truth that when the Afrikans along the Nile created the greatest ancient civilization the world has known, there was no such place called Greece, Rome or even Europe. His consistent theme was "Adding the missing pages of world history."

No one can tell the history of their family better than a qualified member of the family, and Dr. Clarke has been in the family business since he first started teaching the junior Sunday School class at his church, when he was ten years old. This was the period in which he experienced a major revelation that would be a determining factor in his life's direction, discovering that "There were no Black people in the land of Black people" in the Bible. Correcting this absence became his life's mission, and while on that journey he influenced countless other scholars, teachers and people interested in accurate historical information as it relates to the global place of the Afrikan and their contribution to world progress.

That really didn't manifest itself until I began to actualize his work in the form of this book. The narrative was not the most difficult, because all of the parts were right in front of me. It wasn't until I started putting his written works, edited works, works written about him, and other material together that my real labors began. I found myself going from library to library, doing every kind of computer search one can imagine. I also found myself manually going through volumes upon volumes of journals, magazines, newspapers and publications I had not even heard of. Soon, it also became apparent that the search had to go beyond domestic borders, because many of his works had been translated into various languages.

Often times, a person's significance is measured by the amount of materials written about him or her, or the diversity of works that quote or refer to that person. After months of collecting those materials, there was no doubt in my mind of the potency of his impact. I tell my students all the time that to do quality research, you have to be like a detective, hunting for evidence and clues in every possible corner you can imagine. I had no idea of the enormity of his works until I began the search.

I did long distance calls, faxes, e-mails, card file searches, news agency searches, I talked with past associates of Dr. Clarke, with his permission I went through his files, checked with his former secretaries numerous times, and checked and re-checked dates, places and printings. What was so amazing is that just when I thought I had gathered all of the materials Dr. Clarke had written, I would check another source, just to explore, and there would pop up another article, book review, short story, or something else he had written or had been written about him. It was the most extensive research exercise I had recently encountered, but it was like what the younger generation say, "It's all good".

As exhaustive as this effort was, the definitive statement I can now make is that I know this manuscript contains the most comprehensive and complete reference of his works to date. I think I have seen them all. In spite of that, there is probably another nugget of a written item hidden in some obscure or discontinued publication not carried in libraries, or in sources I investigated, or else hidden somewhere in his massive library in an area into which I couldn't quite get to.

When the progression of his speeches and writings are intimately investigated, an evolution can be clearly seen in the subject matter, terminology and expansion of his historical and intellectual consciousness. These are the elements that allowed him to be both a master teacher and to broaden his influence steadily through a long career.

His research output was relentless, even to the detriment of his health. Rather than spin the time necessary to recuperate from heart surgery, for instance, he would work in his office almost everyday, often through the night and weekends.

I was there as he was writing his last book, simultaneously trying to help another writer by composing the foreword to this author's work.

Derrick Grubb, his research assistant, read much of the material to him so that he could speed things up, but even with that, Dr. Clarke landed right back in the hospital with fluid in his lungs and his breathing impaired. As soon as he was able he was right back to it, in spite of those closest to him, including myself, trying desperately to get him to cut back and rest. We explained that there were many of his intellectual off springs now capable of carrying the work forward. But how do you slow down a prolific and creative mind? He did say he would cut back and just do some local lectures. Dr. Clarke had a very big heart, and it has generally hard for him to say no to people who asked him to speak and participate in their projects, especially when they were so demanding, and there were so many of them.

One thing that was a major surprise in my searching, while going through the *John Henrik Clarke Papers* at the Schomburg, I saw the study guides for many of his classes. When I started going through them a voice began saying to me, with the turn of each page, "anyone interested in teaching must see these." In fact, the quality of those guides makes me believe that it should be mandatory that new teachers and professors see them and use them. The guides are especially essential in observing how a scholar/teacher, operating from an Afrikan perspective, can present a balanced and rigorous approach to scholarship in the classroom. They can also serve as models for those teaching Afrikan world history in community centers, churches, parks and other non-traditional educational settings. It is hoped that the complete *John Henrik Clarke Papers* are published one day.

Finally, when I first started this endeavor, I felt it was something notable, but I also knew that something was missing. I didn't know what it was until I went back to New York, staying at Dr. Clarke's home. I had to go to The Schomburg Center, named after Arthur Schomburg, the scholar who started Dr. Clarke on his way. This is also the place where Langston Hughes' ashes, my favorite poet, are buried in the marble floor right in front of the Langston Hughes Auditorium. I had to spend almost two whole days doing research on the *John Henrik Clarke Papers*. I had to walk into the Harlem YMCA where the Harlem History Club started, and Dr. Clarke met his great teachers. I had to walk down Malcolm X Boulevard; Frederick Douglas Boulevard; Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard; go through Marcus Garvey Park and up 125th Street. Of course, his own street, 137th St., which is now named after him. That spiritual grounding gave me part of what was missing.

The highlight and the last stage for identifying the missing ingredient was actually working with Dr. Clarke, and having the presence of mind to video tape it. I had to read the entire manuscript to Dr. Clarke since he was totally blind. Reading the manuscript, only so much at a time, amid constant phone calls from people calling across the country checking on his health. When we finished, he said, "It's clear. We didn't have to make too many corrections." I then knew that my mission was complete. I had his blessings and the manuscript about him had come to life. Now, all the pieces were together. Unfortunately, like his friend Malcolm X, Dr. Clarke passed before the book was published.

The icing on the cake was when I returned home. Sitting with my wife Isidra and watching the video of Dr. Clarke and me working together, I noticed a slight smile on his face as he was explaining the title, *On My Journey Now*, which he gave to me. He told me it was the title of a spiritual, which has no individual composer because it is a folk song. He started reciting some of the lyrics: "On my journey now, Mount Zion. I'm on my journey now, Mount Zion. Well, I wouldn't take nothing, Mount Zion, for my journey now. You can talk about me just as much as you please. Well, I'll talk about you when I get on my knees, Mount Zion. On my journey now, Mount Zion." That session brought great joy to him, and to me. It will stay fresh in my mind forever.

One of the last things I said to Dr. Clarke before returning home was, "I promise you that I will do high quality work on this book." That is one promise that will never see a compromise. For I know, thinking in an Afrikan collective manner, that through this book, many of us can thank him for the enormous contributions he has made to our lives and how he has labored selflessly, even to his last moment, to do one simple thing - - make history honest.

Kwaku Person-Lynn, Ph.D.



Dr. John Henrik Clarke (photo courtesy of Bill Tiernan of the *Virginia Pilot*) which appeared on the cover originally published by the Department of Pan African Studies at California State University at Northridge via a special issue of their journal titled *The Journal of Pan African Studies* (vol.1, no.2, 2000; vol.2,no.1, 2001), edited by David L. Horne, Ph.D. and published here by the permission of the author, Kwaku Person-Lynn, Ph.D.

The Knowledge Revolutionary: Chapter 1

I was born from very poor landless peasants on January 1, 1915. They were sharecroppers in the backwoods of Union Springs, Alabama. My father had a dream that one day he wanted to own land. He wanted to leave this land to his son. He wanted to be an independent farmer. A storm that wrecked our house gave him the opportunity to move his family to a mill city called Columbus, Georgia. He worked in the mills and the brickyards, hoping to eventually earn the kind of money he could use to buy independent land. Of course, he never did. But thanks to a ten cents a week policy, the only free land he ever knew was the grave we buried him in. That was paid for, free and clear.

My background would normally be looked at by both black and white sociologists as the one kind of background that would not shape me to be anything of consequence. My early orientation to history came from my great grandmother. We called her Mom Mary. She had witnessed the last slaves who arrived directly from Afrika. She spoke of them and their inability to learn the English language immediately. She told me the story of the trials and tribulations of her family, our family, and of her husband who was sold to a slave-breeding farm in Virginia.

After emancipation, she went into Virginia, spending three years trying to find him. She never found him, of course. She was the mother of my grand aunt, who was a midwife of my father's father.

Nothing really shaped me to be a teacher of history in that immediate background, except that I learned to read early. I used to pick up the letters from the Post Office. I learned responsibility and was respected, and somewhat rewarded for shouldering responsibility at an early age. When we moved to the city, one of the uncles used to give me five cents a week in tribute to my industry in helping my mother, and all kinds of things of this nature.

What set me in motion was when I learned to teach the junior class in Sunday school, and couldn't find the image of my own people in the Bible. They were nowhere to be found in the Sunday school lessons. I began to suspect that something had gone wrong in history. I see Moses going down to Ethiopia where he marries Zipporah, Moses' wife, and she turns white. I see people going to the land of Kush, which is the present day Sudan, and they got white. I see people going to Punt, which is present day Somalia, and they got white. What are all these white people doing in Afrika? There were no Afrikans in Afrika, in the Sunday school lesson.

My great grandmother kept telling me that everything in the Bible was the truth, and it was not to be questioned. That gave me a great dilemma because I loved her almost to the point of making a deity out of her. I didn't want to be in conflict with her, but I was running into a conflict. I couldn't find black people in the land of black people. So I began to search.

One day while doing chores at a high school, there was a recitalist, and this recitalist had a book called *The New Negro*. I would keep his books and his coat because Spencer High School was so new, they didn't have a coatroom. He was reciting to raise some funds for a curtain for the stage. They didn't have a curtain. So I was holding his books. While doing my chore, I read an essay called, "The Negro Digs Up His Past." That was a key moment in my life. I made up my mind that we did have a history. For the first time I read something on the ancient history of Afrikan people. I can't tell you how important that was to me.

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When I think about my people immediately after slavery, I often compare our mental state to now. We were better than we are now -- resisting better, believing more in ourselves than we are right now. We were copping out less on ourselves than we are right now. Immediately after slavery, we began to build institutions, political parties and businesses faster than we are doing right now. We need to study that period. We need to read W. E. B. DuBois' *Black Reconstruction* again. We need to read his essay on the Freedman's Bureau again. There's a whole lot of things we need to reconsider.

We need to reconsider the 19th Century black man and woman who were tall in comparison to what we are right now. They made less excuses. They had more hardships, and they faced them better. They had something we don't have, they had less detractions: no television, no radio. They had their work, and the church was the main outlet. Spiritually, they held themselves together. Culturally, they held themselves together.

The church was also the school. The church was the recreation center. The church was the place where you would go to look for a lady to court that might be your wife. The church was the center of the being of a people. The church was not a weekend thing. The church was an everyday thing.

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There are some carryovers from slavery that affected me in my childhood. The light-skinned kids wouldn't let me on anything. I was kind of dark-skinned. The main thing, they wouldn't let me participate in the program during the school assembly. But fortunately, in the fifth grade, there was a teacher named Evelina Taylor. She appointed students to the assembly based on merit. That's how I got on the assembly.

I began to organize against the light-skinned kids, inasmuch as you got on the assembly, in the program, based on how well you got your lessons. I organized the black kids into what I called the "Black Brigade." We called them the "Light Brigade." We treated them like freaks. These people ate three meals a day, had washed cloths and clean shoes all the year round, you know. Literally, I ridiculed them. We had a kind of strength that they didn't have. I always remember that. We could stand up against more. There was some stamina coming out of those lower depths of our lives.

Because my teacher was so special, I wanted to do something extraordinary for her. I wanted to teach history. I wanted to say something about the history of Afrikan people in ancient times. I went to a white man that I worked for, whose books I had used liberally. He had a good library and never seemed to read books anyway. So when I borrowed his books, he never seemed to miss them. Some of them I brought back. Some of them I did not.

One day, I asked him for a book on -- this is the word they used then, Negro people -- early world history. There was a phrase in the South, they would say, "You let me down slow." He was not unkind. He said, "I'm sorry John, but I don't have such a book. You came from a people who have no history." He wasn't bitter about it. In fact, he was rather sympathetic toward me, in that I had belonged to a people who never made history. He was telling me, "But don't worry, because if you persevere, obey the laws, keep yourself clean and act upright, you might make history one day."

He would prophesize for me the greatest thing a white man could prophesize for a black kid when I was growing up. "One day you might be a great Negro, like Booker T. Washington." That was the highest compliment possible. I didn't know anything about Booker T. Washington then. Twenty years would pass before I would seriously investigate Booker T. Washington, his career, and realize that no matter what is said about Booker T. Washington, he was one of the most imaginative educators this country has yet to produce. There's some good things to be said about him. He was also a strategist, and some of the strategy backfired.

I left home when I was fourteen. I lived in Columbus, Georgia until I was eighteen. I used to caddy at the Fort Benning golf course. Occasionally, I would caddy for two majors. One was called Dwight D. Eisenhower. He was a major at Fort Benning, Georgia at the time. Another one was called Omar Bradley. We always think of Omar Bradley as the senior, because he tipped 25 cents. Eisenhower only tipped 15 cents. They didn't mean anything to us, but the whole measurement of the man, with these poor kids carrying their golf bags, was who tipped the most.

Later on, I started thinking about leaving Georgia. Every year there were lynchings. Some black person was brutally treated. I would say "I'm going to get out of this place." When you would go about in the morning to speak to people, mostly the roustabouts, they would say, "Hey, what you gonna say, man?" He would say, "Save your money and go up North. That's all I can say. Get out of this evil place." That stuck in my mind.

It was further imprinted on my mind by a local comedian called Sloppy Henry. Black people have a way of calling people the exact opposite of what they are. He was the best-dressed man in town, with his spats and his cane. So just to ridicule him, we called him Sloppy Henry. A great comedian. A great liar. I'm glad he related so many stories to me. He would relate stories of his adventures up North, in New York, and how he met Ethel Waters and Bill Robinson, the tap dancer, and appeared in Lou Lester's Variety Show, "Blackbirds." I didn't know until years later that most of it was a lie. Be that as it may, it gave me a sense of adventure. It took me away from that town. It made me dream and hope.

I somehow ended up in New York, though I was originally going to go to Chicago. The World's Fair was in Chicago. They weren't letting anyone into Chicago who had no address, no promise of a job. So I was turned down at the gates of Chicago, and decided to come to New York. I didn't know a soul. Didn't know an address, so I went to the Harlem YMCA on 135th Street, hoping to get at least a place to stay. I had a partner, James Holmes, who died years later, who got me in a municipal lodging house. Finally, I started working on the Lower East Side, mostly in an Orthodox Jewish community.

On the weekends, they didn't turn on their lights, do any chores or do anything. The sinful Gentiles would do their jobs like carrying money, or whatever. They were called a "Shopper's Boy". I was a shopper's boy, running errands for these Jewish families who couldn't touch money on the high holy days. They couldn't turn lights on or off, so I would turn their lights on and off, and occasionally wash their windows, clean the doctor's office, little janitorial work. I survived, but nearly every day that I had the time, I was in Harlem discovering that community.

Harlem was never meant to be a black community. We gained this community by default. Harlem is unique as a black community, as it is not on the other side of anything. It is in the geographical heart of Manhattan Island. This tells you that the community was not originally built for us. It wasn't even built for poor whites. It was built for upper class Dutch, and people of European extraction. Italians and Jews once lived on the outskirts of Harlem, what we now call East Harlem.

They over-built the community so they were advertising the fact that from your home in Harlem, to your office on Wall Street, it would take you only twenty-seven minutes to get there - with the extension of the subway, when they are running well. I have timed it from the door of my home to my classroom at New York University. It was twenty-seven minutes, so that advertisement was true.

They rented some apartments to blacks on 133rd Street. A black man, I think his name was Proctor, invented what was called "Block Busting." He would move blacks into a block, whites would panic and move out. He could then move blacks into the rest of the block. Blacks did not move to other parts of Harlem. The entertainment crowd, Bert Williams and others, Will Marion Cook, got to move to 39th Street. Whites would over charge them for these houses. They had to strive to keep up the payments. So 39th Street and 38th Street got the names of "Striver's Roll." All of this is told in better detail in an article I wrote, "Harlem, World's Most Famous Ethnic Community."

In my portrait of Arthur Schomburg, as my teacher, in an article "The Harlem History Club," that was my first university. More detailed than I have time for now. More than I remember now. The political side of Harlem is told in a book, *Harlem: The Community In Transition* and *Harlem: U.S.A.* There is a partial guided tour of the historical places that once existed in Harlem in a book by a person called Spike Lee, *Historical Tour of New York*.

I am not in the absolute best physical condition at the moment. If you consult these items on Harlem, you could get far more detail than I can give you right now in my state of mind.

I am going to re-write the book, *Harlem: A Community In Transition*, because I want to emphasize the interesting political making of Harlem. Also, the culture making and maintenance of Harlem. We could lose this community, because we do not own the real estate. That may have been our greatest mistake. We have not made it a mission of buying up the real estate. There were times we could have done that, with good organization. Whether it is too late or not, I don't know.

One of the more significant streets in Harlem was Seventh Avenue. It was the street of class and status. On Saturdays and Sundays, there was a custom of not walking on Seventh Avenue without your coat, hat and tie.

In the street speaking tradition, you were not suppose to speak on Seventh Avenue, which was kind of the graduate school for street speakers, until you did your apprenticeship on Lenox Avenue, which was the undergraduate school for street speakers. Lenox Avenue was a lower class, striving to be better. Seventh Avenue was a class that kind of made it. When we moved further up to the Dunbar Apartments, that was mainly middle class. These areas were well kept. It wasn't that Lenox Avenue wasn't well kept, it just wasn't kept as well as Seventh Avenue.

125th Street was the commercial street of Harlem. There's been a struggle for it. There's a struggle going on for it right now. Most of the money that is made in Harlem is made on 125th Street. It's the shopping district. It was the shopping district before blacks took over.

The changing of the street names was a concession to Black Nationalism. I think it was a good concession. It began during the Civil Rights Movement. The agitation began during the Civil Rights Movement. It took about ten years to make them actually do it. They changed Lenox to Malcolm X. Changed Seventh Avenue to Adam Clayton Powell. They changed Eighth Avenue to Frederick Douglas. Mt. Morris Park is now Marcus Garvey Park. One street was changed to Wesley Williams. I think he was a local resident who was the victim of something.

With the nightlife and the talent that came out of it, Harlem was the proving ground for future stars. Ella Fitzgerald started out on the amateur hour at the Apollo Theater. So did Sarah Vaughn. Some were just plain gospel singers. They got their start and established their reputation there.

When I settled in at the Harlem Y, things started to come into focus. I ran across The Harlem History Club. There, a great history teacher, Willis N. Huggins, the historian, taught me the political meaning of history. I met Arthur Schomburg, a Puerto Rican of Afrikan descent, and a great scholar who founded the Schomburg Collection by donating 10,000 books. He taught me the comparative approach to history. How to compare Afrikan history with other history. He taught me to read European history. He said by doing that, "You're going to understand Afrikan history better. The more world history you know, the better. You can put Afrika into proper focus if you have a good knowledge of world history." So I went to a lot of second hand bookstores. I began to buy history books. Oh, the most expensive one cost me a dollar.

My drive and passion was not only reading books, but a kind of feeling of the need for self-redemption, and the need for my people's redemption. After all, the Italian-Ethiopian War occurred soon after, 1935-1936. I arrived in 1933. This would fire me up. I would focus on Afrika and what was happening there. I would join the little youth group of the Garvey Movement, and I would read Marcus Garvey. Garvey was alive then, and he would send his papers and his messages from London. We'd wait by the boat. We didn't wait till it was delivered through the mail. We'd go down and meet the boat, and get the package off of the boat called, "The Black Man Magazine."

He wasn't sending no more than about 20 copies to the U.S., but before it got uptown, we had bought up all the copies. It never got to be sold on the newsstand, because there wasn't that many. Those people that knew about it were reading it ahead of time.

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I became an active socialist, and to this day I don't see any difference between being a socialist, a Pan Afrikanist, and a nationalist, all at the same time. I think true nationalism has a socialist base. When I say socialism, I'm just not talking about what Karl Marx was talking about. I was not following the European invention of socialism. That's what got me in trouble with the Marxists of that day. That's what keeps me in trouble with the Marxists of this day. I was saying that I learned in the study of Europe, that the European mind was never suited for socialism. It was an individual mind.

The Afrikan had a collective mentality from the beginning, and socialism is a form of collectivism. If communism was to be brought over any place in the world, the chances are Afrika would have been the best place to bring it off. They were thinking along the lines that land cannot either be bought or sold, because it's the collective property of a whole people. The ruler is the guardian of the wealth, if there is any wealth. He serves at the grace of the people, and can be removed by the grace of the people. They're not talking about votes.

This difference I have had with Europeans on this issue, has caused me great stress at one point. The socialists or communists have always differed with me in relationship to black nationalism. I differ with a whole lot of people on it because I just don't think that we have to take our socialism from Europe. I think nationalism is a thing we have a right and responsibility to be, as we see fit. We can't let other people supervise us in this regard.

This conflict I had with the European socialists was accentuated when members of the War College, a socialist group, visited Harlem and different other communities once a year. I happened to make a speech. I had just come back from Egypt. I talked with some Egyptian engineers about the Aswan Dam. They said it was an engineering disaster. They took me to the dam and proved it to me. It was a disaster. A lot of historical places were flooded that didn't have to be flooded. A lot of things were removed that didn't have to be removed, including the great statues of Ramses II, at Abu Simbel. His wife, Nefretiri, had to be moved to another bank.

The ecology of Egypt was thrown out of kilter, when all they needed was booster dams, small booster dams, other than a big dam. Egyptians had asked the Americans to build the dam. America didn't do it, so they asked the Russians. The Russians went and built it in such a hurry, that they did it wrong. This was reported in a paper run by Reverend Moon's group, the "Moonies," called the *Harlem Weekly*.

James Jackson, of the *Daily Worker*, the Communist Party paper, picked it up and used this to say that I was a CIA agent. That I've gone the way of Eldridge Cleaver and Roy Innis, you know. This was utterly ridiculous. It's a simple truth. If America had built the dam, it would have done a better job, because they had more experience in building dams. It didn't mean that I favored one over the other. I don't favor either one of them. I wish the Egyptians, with all the engineers they've trained, would have built their own dam. That, and the fact that all of the editors, with no exception, even at *Freedomways*, where I had written several articles, tended to agree with Jackson's assessment.

Let me get this straight right off. I'm not talking about John Jackson, whose in Chicago. John Jackson is not a politician in that regard. He's a historian, somewhat of a cynic, but he's one of the best friends I've had from that old period.

These false accusations bothered my mind a great deal. The fact that people whose marriage I'd saved. Whose mortgage I saved. Whose jobs I helped to get, would turn on me without a question. This kind of pressure ultimately caused me to have a stroke.

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Choosing the path that I travel does have some painful moments. The one thing that hurt me most, is that a lot of times I'm boycotted by black professors. Because of my attitude and approach toward black history and black people, they seem to think it's extreme. The loss of money doesn't bother me. But the maintenance of integrity matters to me, and I think enhances me. I'd rather have followed the same course, kept my integrity, than to have the money. I didn't set out to be rich anyway. I set out to deliver a message. I am self-educated from the depth of poverty. I figure my life has made a statement to black youth. I have assisted in the training of two generations of Ph.D's., and I barely finished grammar school.

In the course of their training, my greatest hope is that they themselves will give back to society what I tried to give to them. In my own community, there are three doctors at the Harlem Hospital that are former students of mine. Eleven heads of Black Studies' Programs are former students of mine. Three black ambassadors are former students of mine. Three different cultural attachés are former students of mine, two different students who are deans. I've left my mark for the better. If I have any memorial, that's where it's at, with the students I've trained. That's my hereafter.

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When I define history, it is self-belief, self-confidence, and self- direction. History is the human road map, political road map, and cultural road map. We are children in the woods with no direction, until we understand. Otherwise, we can't get out of it. We don't know what direction we came from, when we got in there, and don't know which way to come out. History is really the leveler that tells you where you've been, where you are, and where you still have to go.

The Nile Valley is a good place to start when talking about our history. When I'm explaining in the classroom about beginnings, I say, "Suppose the continent of Afrika is a woman, and the Nile Valley is the womb. Out of that womb came some children that people call civilization." That's its real significance. It was the mother, not only of great Afrikan civilizations, but it was the mother of world civilizations. It created the first nation-state. Created the first basis of a philosophical way of life. It created the embryo of what is going to be a university, at least 5,000 years before the first university appeared in Europe.

It's important that we realize that all of this happened before the first foreigner set foot on Afrikan soil. It happened before the Hebrew entry. Egypt had reached its greatness when the Hebrews arrived. It was invaded soon after. There's no way you can claim Egypt for anybody other than Afrikan people. That's where you begin to put Afrika in proper focus to the world. Just like when you put a problem in a computer, if you say that two and two makes three, everything else is out of kilter. Egypt puts Afrikan history in proper focus. That's where you began to put the rest of it in focus.

Because of its enormous greatness, Europeans have tried to lay claim to it. They have even tried to take it out of Afrika. It's a fact that the first pieces of European literature were the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, that's approximately 800B.C. Egypt had risen to its greatness before the European wrote his first piece of literature. Egypt was in decline before the European wore a shoe for the first time, or lived in a house that had a window. When the doubters appear, I would ask them to show me their chronology of Europe. Show me the dates when you started it. Why would you build so much in Afrika, before you build anything in Europe? Why are you so generous to outsiders, and so stingy to yourself?

Once you know European history, you can repudiate all of that right away. That's the significance of knowing European history. You can stop their claims in their tracks. When Egypt was in its golden era, Europeans didn't exist as a people. The first European nations to come into existence were Crete, Greece and Rome, those closest to Afrika. There were no organized states in Europe at the time. There was no England at the time. No Russia, no Scandinavia, no Germany at the time. How can you create something for other people, when you hadn't created anything for yourself?

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When you talk about the NAACP, the Urban League, SCLC, all of these organizations were integrationist compromisers. They still are. I think we've seen the fruit, or should I say strange fruit of integration. Marcus Garvey did not compromise. He added a dimension. He added the Afrikan dimension to our struggle, and the significance of the Afrikan connection. That was what we were looking for. We were too dependent on the United States. We were depressed. We had no place in the world to turn. No place in the world to claim. He laid claim to Afrika in such a way that it enhanced our spirit. We didn't even cry when we blew millions on the Black Star Line. It was a million dollar walk in the sun, but psychologically, worth it. It saved our sanity.

When I look at the consciousness and enthusiasm of that period, compared to now, we've regressed. This regression may have begun soon after World War II. We fought so hard for so long. There's something that happened to our spirit. We began to kind of pull back and settle. When you start off in a battle, you'll say, "I'll only settle for a whole loaf of bread." When you have fought so hard for so long, and you get tired, you'll say, "Oh hell, half a loaf will do."

Unfortunately, some of us still think that way. I think the spirit may be coming back up again. But you need a people to fire that spirit, and stroke that spirit. We've lost the fires and the stokers. We've lost our Malcolm X's, and King in his own way. Of course, I place Malcolm X over King, in the long range significance of leadership.

Malcolm had a shadow non-Muslim cabinet, and that was his great strength. People who were not Muslims, and were not even involved in the politics of being Muslim. People who would furnish him with basic information. The idea was that Malcolm must never be caught wrong, no matter what you did with the facts, make sure you get your facts straight.

I was his man on history -- history and movements that came, and resistance movements. Different people did different things for him. He would call up and say, "Hey, what about some information on this? What do you got on this?" I would put a folder of information together and handed it to him. He was the fastest learner I've ever met in all my life. He could absorb more, and play it right back. He could take it from you, then talk it back to you, and teach you about it. His insight was so good. He learned so fast. God, he was a fine teacher, too. I would have loved to have him in the classroom.

As a human being, I think first that he came from the lower strata of society. He came up from the mire and made something of himself. He became a person of international affairs. I think first, as a human being, once he learned what integrity was, and what a cause was, what a commitment was, he couldn't be moved from it. He was honest to a fault. See, he had gone down the old dirty road. He didn't have to do that anymore. He saw that was no good. He was very shy, even bashful.

When he was at your home, and he saw something he wanted, he would ask for it like a respectful child. He wasn't like some of my colleagues, who would go to my book shelf, just take off a book, and sit down and start reading. He would say, "John, may I see this?" He wouldn't touch it until you told him okay.

Another thing about eating. He wouldn't eat anything at anyone's house. The reason, he was poisoned in Egypt. He would have coffee sometime. For us, only one time.

Lynn Schifflet, who lived in Los Angeles, was his last secretary. He came to her house or apartment she had with Mariel Feelins. He'd been out all day, so he bought a steak and asked Mariel to fix it. He stood in the door of the kitchen the whole time. He didn't move. When she finished it and put it on a plate, she handed it to him. He wouldn't let her bring it to the table. He was as careful as he could be. Yet, there was a warmth in him that you don't see in many men.

The Knowledge Revolutionary: Chapter 2

I'm still a Baptist preacher that never made it to the pulpit. An actor that never made it to the stage, but I'm doing the best I can to get the message of Afrikan liberation across. I realize there is no retirement from struggle.

Generally, my physical health is basically good right now, thanks to some proper dieting, some good advice and some people making sure that I have proper food to eat. My vision is practically gone. It's down to minimum. I've been legally blind for a number of years, which means that you cannot maneuver through situations effectively. When you're first classified legally blind, sometimes you can at least go to airports by yourself. You can identify the men's room from the ladies room, and you can look up on the signs and see what gate you're supposed to be at. I've passed that stage now. My eyes can no longer pick up letters. I've lost the capacity to read, and yet since my being legally blind, I've written four books, and revised a couple. I've done two small books, and traveled a great deal across the country almost six times. I've been on tour in Japan. I'm still active.

I would love to have my full 20/20 vision back, and the other facilities. I would like to do more in the struggle, and do more in research. The value of vision in research is editing, observation and analysis. That's a priceless tool. When you lose it, you have to do something to compensate for it as best you can. I just say to myself, "If you lose your eyesight, you increase your insight."

My mind is good, and I'm still functioning. I'm not teaching in the classroom sense, but I'm teaching in the general sense just the same. I think of myself basically as a classroom teacher. Of all the things I wanted to do in life, that's the one thing I did the most, and the longest. The one thing I was the most effective in. The thing I loved the most.

When my final contribution is tallied, I really think that my years as a classroom teacher, developer of curricula, study guides, and long before people started talking about a multi-ethnic curricula, I was doing this in the classroom. I didn't ask permission, or wanted to know whether the Board of Education agreed or not agreed. I just developed my teaching techniques, my study guides, book lists, additional information, closed my classroom door and taught.

I made demands on my students that they thought were unreasonable at first. But when they see me a little later, sometimes years later, with their own children, they thank me for being thorough and being demanding enough to let them know that a school is a place where you get an education for life. If you can't use it for life, it's a waste of time. There's really but one reason to educate a human being, and one reason alone. Everything else is a waste of time. That reason is to train the student to be a proper handler of power.

No matter what you learn, music is the controller of sound. Everything is a form of control of power. When you learn the difference between a red light and a green light, you're controlling yourself to the point of staying out of danger. We look at education as a tool to control power. As a teacher of history and social science, some of the things I looked at were protest movements, pre-colonial Afrika, and Afrika's reaction to the coming of conquerors. I have done my best to teach students how to think better of themselves through an understanding of the role people, Afrikan people in particular, but in general all people have played in that great parade, that sometimes looks like a charade called history.

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In the process of teaching history, we sometimes lose some of our main proponents. We just lost a great thinker. The importance of Chancellor Williams and his work, in addition to being a senior scholar -- he was one of those scholars that looked in the neglected corners of history and brought out things other scholars not only objected to, other scholars did not know or even cared to research. His last book, *The Destruction of Black Civilization*, uneven in its presentation, because it was supposed to be a two volume work, he wrote it while losing his eyesight, he crammed into one volume. That explains the unevenness of it.

I'd say that Chancellor Williams, more than any other of the black historians of this century in the United States, left us a blueprint for liberation and salvation, and the restoration of the best aspects of a people. *The Destruction of Black Civilization*, his best known book, is not his best book. He would admit this. His best book is *The Rebirth of African Civilization*. He wrote that while his health facility was intact. His eyesight was intact. That book itself is almost an academic architectural blueprint for what Afrikans will have to do to recover what slavery and colonialism took away. Both of his books are Pan Afrikan, because of his Pan Afrikan nationalism, something which we talk about without thoroughly understanding.

He decided that he would stop extensively quoting white writers. He was qualified to quote himself. He was just as much an authority, or more so, than the people he was quoting. We differed on this, because I think you can take white references and beat them over the head with it. You can take their own references and prove them wrong. I thought he should have mixed it up very extensively. But that's not the main point. It's the fact that for the first time you had a book which dealt with the impact of invaders on early Afrika, and how every invader of Afrika did it more harm than good.

Every new belief system or religion that was brought into Afrika, ultimately did Afrika more harm than good. We have to stop being dewy-eyed over all forms of organized religion, because the basis of western organized religion came from Afrikan belief systems anyway -- the basis of Christianity, the basis of Islam, and the basis of Judaism.

There's a devastating chapter in Chancellor's book that deals with the impact of western Asia on Afrika. Afrika had enemies from western Asia well over two thousand years before Europe was an entity in the political life of the world. The enemy from western Asia that devastated Afrika to a great extent is still in Afrika, in the presence of the Arabs. The "white wannabes" are not too clear about what side they're on in this world struggle of all people to be sovereign and free on their own soil.

He had extreme interest in his chapter dealing with the southern Afrikan origins of the country the Greeks called Egypt. Read the second chapter in his book *Destruction of Black Civilization* called, "Egypt, Ethiopia's Oldest Daughter." What is this man talking about? The population that later peopled Egypt came from the South.

We have to make up our mind to ask the vital questions and to be in a military position to force the right answer. We must ask everyone, "What is your mission in my house? What is your loyalty to my house?" This is the responsibility of all the people who walk this earth. We are the only people that permit others to live among us for hundreds of years without declaring any loyalty to us. The Arab has never had any Afrikan loyalty. None of these western Asian people have ever had any Afrikan loyalty. Then finally, the 15th and the 16th century, with the coming of the Europeans, they had no Afrikan loyalty.

The house of Afrika in the world, is our mother home in the world, all of it. We should never concede North Afrika to an invader. We should look at Afrika, holistically. That all of it is not only our home, but all of it is our Holy Land. Long before the birth of Jerusalem, at Abydos, in the country the Greeks called Egypt, we produced the world's first spiritual Holy Land. We need to go back and restore our historical memory. We need to know what we did before outsiders interfered with us and disrupted the structure of our society to the detriment of our societies forever.

This is precisely what recently happened in Somalia. Afrikans can feed Afrikans. Africans can put Afrika's house in order. Afrikans had a structure imposed on them, in the illusion of that structure being a salvation. Therefore, there's no Afrikan structured states in Afrika. These are all imitation European states. The structure of the present day African nation-state is European. The Afrikan was at his best before this interference from western Asia, and subsequently Europe, beginning with the Greco-Roman period, then the slavery-colonial period in the 15th and the 16th century. Afrikans lived in territorial states, other than nation-states. States where there were several states within a territory, with different religions, different belief systems, different customs, and yet, coexisting side by side.

Afrikans never used the word democracy, yet they practiced it. They never used the word Christianity, yet they practiced it. We have to look back in order to look forward. We're not looking back far enough.

No one, with all the talk about Somalia, no one mentioned the fact that Somalia was once a part of greater Ethiopia, the greater Ethiopian Empire. So was Eritrea. Foreigners fragmented these countries. Invaders said, "I'll take this piece," cut it in half in some places, arbitrarily, with one culture group on that side of the border, with the other half on the other side of the border. Afrika has to put itself back together again. It's going to have to learn to relate to itself.

I suspect there was a hidden agenda in this whole Somalia affair. I assess it as part of a rationale to re-colonize Afrika. Once Afrika gained its independence, whites began to put Afrikans against Afrikans. There was no Muslim Afrikan conflict before independence, yet there were Muslims, and Afrikans not practicing Islam, living side by side. Why the conflict now? Someone wishes to use one against the other.

There are Afrikan Muslims and there are Arab Muslims. The Arab fundamentalist Muslims wish to deny the Afrikan the right to be an Afrikan, in Afrika. They wish to deny him the right to have Afrikan loyalties that takes precedence over Islamic loyalties. There's a great cultural and religious struggle going on in Afrika. Some of it is being imposed from the North, by the Arabs, who intend to Islamize Afrika and destroy every aspect of indigenous Afrikan culture. They are for sale to the highest bidder.

I will not be shocked if one day, sooner than you think, you will see a coalition between the Arabs and the Jews against the Afrikans, to the detriment of the whole of the Afrikan world. They will pull off this thing about Semitic. I think this whole thing about anti-Semitic is such a bogus lie. Their word Semitic started off being linguistic. They attach it to a whole people. If it applies to any people at all, it doesn't apply to anybody in Europe. Europeans were belated converts to the Hebrew faith. We must make a clear distinction between a convert to the Hebrew faith and a descendent of the original members of the Hebrew faith. We're dealing with a religion, a faith, not a people.

There are blacks who are Hebrews. There are browns who are Hebrews. There are members of the Hebrew faith in India, in the South Pacific. The European has no monopoly on this religion. Yet, the European uses this religion as the handmaiden of his imperial desires. I strictly mean the Europeans who answer to the word Jew. He reads the word Jew into ancient history, where the word didn't exist. When the European Jew didn't exist. The word Jew is not of western Asian origin. It's of European origin.

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The European's genius is their draining of the political pus of their diseased sores on the lands of other people. Any time Europe needs a solution for its internal problems, it finds an external solution outside of Europe. There's usually somebody outside of Europe who has to pay for it. Somebody's land has to be taken. Somebody's resources has to be taken, because Europe lacks the ability to sustain itself. These hungry people from a thawed out icebox have always been trouble on the world.

Think now back to Somalia. America will marshal millions of dollars, chemistry, military might, air forces and navies to save some starving black people. There are more people starving in India than in Somalia. The starvation in Ethiopia was mainly because they didn't have enough good roads to get the food from one part of the country to another. The instigators who intended to keep Ethiopia separated were putting one against the other. The Muslim element of Ethiopia was part of that separation.

The irony of it is, when the Islamic faith was in danger of extinction, the Prophet Muhammad sent a cadre of his followers to Ethiopia to seek haven. "Go," he said, "to that righteous land where no one is wrong." He was supposed to have said this on his deathbed, "Islam will never forsake Ethiopia, when Ethiopia is in distress." Islamic armies coming from the North have literally taken over Ethiopia, right now. No nation in Afrika has suffered more at the hands of Islam than Ethiopia, which is a betrayal of the promise of the Prophet Muhammad. No one brings this up as betrayal.

All organized religions have been used to justify the exploitation and the enslavement of one people over another people. Therefore, all forms of organized religions are ungodly. Ungodly, inasmuch as they all profess to believe in a God that is kind. A God that is merciful. A God that believes in the brotherhood of all people. Their relationship with other people who are not a part of their religion, have been betrayed by all those principles, and continue to do so. Therefore, making their God, ungodly.

I am relating to the misuse of all forms of organized religions in the spreading of oppression, and as a rationale for oppression. I believe in all religions that are honest. I think all religions can be and should be instruments of liberation. I grant that every person has the right to use it, other than to be misused by it. I think a lot black ministers and a lot of white ministers too, are entertainers and collection plate artists. They have less spirit than an unpedigreed dog. Yet, I believe that all the belief systems of the world should contribute to man's liberation. All forms of organization should contribute to man's liberation.

I try to get it across to black people, and at this point, very few listen, that we had everything that went into the making of Christianity thousands of years before Christ. I try to call their attention to the works of John Jackson: *Pagan Origins Before Christ* and *Christianity Before Christ*. The work of Alvin Boyd Kuhn, *Who Is This King of Glory?* One of the best books written on the Christ story. *The Shadow of the Third Century*, a book dealing with St. Augustine. He looked at the machinations and the scheming that went on at the conference of Nicea. Augustine said that these people are trying to give us a religion we had three thousand years ago, which indeed they had.

This same religion the Afrikans had was formalized and dogmatized around a personality that comes down to us as Jesus Christ. I have nothing against Jesus Christ. I think he was a great teacher of morality. A great teacher of humanity, even if some say he was a piece of fiction, he did some good, if that is the case.

I'm not preaching against the religion. I'm preaching against the misuse of it, and the lack of understanding of it. The *Bible*, properly used, is a revolutionary weapon that can be more effective than anything Karl Marx ever said. But who's using it that way?

Islam did not have to be an endorser of slavery. All the religions are endorsers of slavery. I'm saying this is what man has imposed on religion. I'm trying to remove the underbrush, the verbiage, and all the ceremony so that people can see the real face of religion. I'm not trying to take away anyone's God. I'm trying to make it possible, intellectually, to see the real face of God, whoever they call God.

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I have been under very vicious attacks by white and black academics. There are certain blacks in the academic profession who have been bought and paid for. They're in the ironic position of having sold their soul for thirty pieces of silver, only to discover, that silver is no longer the marketable currency of our day. So they're stuck with worthless value. Some of them call people anti-Semitic without understanding what a Semitic is. The attacks are coming because the powers that hold sway over our minds, that control us through the machinations of religions and media do not want a clear voice of liberation to appear among a people that they intend to control. I have called for Afrikan people throughout the world to liberate themselves, to move toward self-reliance. I've asked for Pan Afrikan nationalism. I've emphasized the word "Pan," because it means all.

I've tried to seek an operational definition of Pan Afrikanism that is effective throughout the Afrikan world under different conditions. Pan Afrikanism has a different meaning in the Caribbean islands, where it started. Pan Afrikanism has a different meaning in Afrika. It has still another different meaning in the United States. What I'm working toward, and calling attention to the possibility of, is something that will take us from under the tutelage, the power and the domination of other people without giving us the right to dominate other people. I'm calling for an "Afrikan world community." Afrikans looking after Afrikans. I'm calling for Afrikan people to do precisely what other people have already done for themselves, and saw no contradiction. Yet, they see a great contradiction in Afrikan people just loving themselves. Just appreciating themselves. Because if we love ourselves, some people think we hate them. If we love ourselves, we don't have time to hate. If we love ourselves, sometimes people who hate us become irrelevant, because we have removed the effectiveness of their hate by rising above them. This, they don't want to see.

A lot of the attacks that are being contrived stem from the changing tide occurring in America's curricula. We are the keepers of America's truth. We are the victims of America's lie. If the truth about us is known and taught, then you're going to have to take back the lie that you've been projecting as history, and as truth. You might have to tell the real story of George Washington, who purchased a slave for a barrel of molasses, and who had hundreds of slaves. You might have to tell Thomas Jefferson's real story, about his black mistresses. You might have to investigate J. A. Rogers' little pamphlet called, *Our Five Negro Presidents*. Among the ones he pointed out as having our blood, they were not especially outstanding from where I'm concerned. I wish he'd kept four of them. Kept quiet about them. As a matter of fact, we live in a country where the silly, stupid, racial law says that "one drop of our blood, makes you a whole of us." Well, if that's true, then that will give us five presidents.

Generally, internationally, in the hundreds of years of Afrikan and European mingling and touching, and Hannibal's move into Europe, then that Mediterranean mixture, and that Mongolian mix, that would be considered black. If you apply that to Europe, about the "one drop of us, makes you a whole of us," we would have at least 1/3 of Europe. All the Spaniards hands down, no questions asked. Afrikans hung out with them nearly a thousand years, and didn't go home for that biological necessity. Sometimes we get biological necessity mixed up with biological need, but that's neither here nor there. All of the Italians we would get. Maybe we should read *The Journal of African Civilizations*, edited by professor Ivan Van Sertima. We need to investigate the volume, *African Presence In Early Europe*. The European could well be an Afrikan mutation.

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Now, we are convincing our children that mathematics is not hard, because their ancestors invented it, and proved that we can master it. Tell these kids, “Don’t be telling me about mathematics being hard. You built the pyramids. It must have been much harder for the people who built the pyramids. If you don’t believe we built the pyramids, you tell me who did. Europe didn’t do it, because there was no Europe. Asia didn’t do it, because Asia hadn’t even built itself.” Throw down the challenge, “If we didn’t do it, then who did it?”

Cheikh Anta Diop and Théophile Obenga participated in a conference in Egypt, in 1974. This is published in a book called, *The Peopling of Egypt and the Deciphering of the Meroitic Script*. The Meroitic Script proved that what we call hieroglyphs, or Medu Neter, which is “good speech” or “divine speech,” really started in the southern Nile Valley. The civilization of Egypt moved down the Nile river, full grown, with no formative period. Egypt was the culmination of nation-building and thought-building, which had its origins in the south. What is now Ethiopia and the Sudan, was the mother of Egypt. The fertilization, the renewal of the energy of Egypt, came from the South.

Once they produced a great agriculture, followed by a system of granary and preservation. They could feed a lot of people. They could house a lot of people. The organization of labor to build early Egypt might be the beginning of the state as we know it. If someone has any earlier example, I’m willing to listen. I know of no earlier example of the organization of labor. They had an organization of spirituality, to the point where it became a stimulus in work.

If you go to Egypt, as I’ve done many times, look at all those temples and look at the pyramids. Look at how they’re built. They were built on slightly higher ground, away from the river. After the river began to overflow during certain times of the year, depositing that rich earth on the shores, man had to find some other work to do. Instead of great temples being built by slaves, as Cecil B. DeMille told you, a lot of them were built by religious fervor and religious commitment, in one of the greatest acts in the world.

Again, this is called to your attention in a book, *Introduction to African Civilization*, in the chapter by John Jackson called, “Ethiopia and the Origin and Evolution of Civilization.” Also in his pamphlet, *Ethiopia and the Origin of Civilization*. There’s no shortage of work proving that the origin of Afrika’s greatness came from within Afrika. Once we understand this, once we teach and simplify this, and get it across to black parents, then they will understand the nature of our struggle in this country and the nature of our struggle in the world.

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The slave revolts in the Caribbean Islands, the premiere slave revolts away from home, were really in the Caribbean Islands. There were 250 slave revolts in the United States where there are records. We came from a revolutionary people who's record of revolution is not to be challenged. There's no one on this earth that you need to bow to. If we had done other than survive, had we not produced a poet or a novelist, and we've done many of them. Had we not produced statesman or a mayor, and we've got many of them; had we not done any of this, but had we just survived under the pressure that's been put on us, that means we had suffered and survived the greatest single ordeal ever forced on a people in human history. Just survival alone, if these other things were not taken into consideration, frees us forever of the stamp of inferiority. No inferior people could have survived what we have survived. We have not only survived, but in a lot of places, we have prevailed. This is what we are about now, not surviving, but prevailing. To give the world a new answer, a new direction, and subsequently, a new humanity.

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If I were challenged to name some of the most significant Afrikan historical events from ancient to modern times, I think I would start with the Third Dynasty, in Egypt, that saw the Pharaoh Zoser and his adviser Imhotep introduce a great Afrikan intellectual age. Imhotep was more than just an adviser to the pharaoh, he was an architect. He designed the step pyramid at Saqqarah. He was a medical doctor, and the first one to perform an operation on the stomach. Today, he'd be called an abdominal specialist. He may have been the first doctor to use wine as a stimulant for patients. He started the school of thought that later developed into what the European mistakenly called, the "Mystery System." Anything Europeans can't understand, they consider a mystery.

I think the emergence of the Third Dynasty, and the great multi-genius Imhotep was a great step forward for human beings. He lived 2,000 years before the Greek, the so-called father of medicine. Hippocrates, whom the Greeks called the father of medicine, said that "I'm a child of Imhotep." That would be a great moment in the Afrikan intellectual development in the Nile Valley, stretching from the Third Dynasty, up until about the Sixteenth Dynasty.

The recovery from the invasion of Afrika by western Asia is the first beginning of the mulattoization of Egypt, in 1675B.C., needs to be noted. The recovery a hundred, two hundred years later, is also a great event in history, during the B.C. period, needs to be noted. We need to look at the Assyrian invasion of 666B.C., and the Iranian invasion of 650B.C., that brought in the Greek encroachment under Alexander. That subsequently opened the door for the Roman invasion in the so-called Punic Wars.

The Roman Empire rose in Afrika and fell in Afrika, an event in history that pertains to the Romans in Afrika. They stopped killing Christians and became Christians. Their mismanagement of the religion, because they didn't have the temperament for Christianity, helped to introduce Islam. Afrikans, thinking that they would get the Romans off their back by adopting Islam, merely replaced the Romans on their back, with the Arabs and Islam. That replacement is still there.

In the A.D. period, I think a great moment in history is when Abraha, of Ethiopia, broke with the Coptic Church of Egypt and set up the independent Ethiopian Church. When the Europeans, in their charade called the Crusades, marched across Europe, Abraha did not see Ethiopian Christianity as any part of this European side-show. He decided to stay home, and stay out of it. It was the independent Ethiopian Church that kept them free of foreign domination.

Also in the A. D. period, the story of the last extraordinary king of the great independent state of Ghana, Tenkamenin, 1076A.D., must be investigated. The invasion of the country from Mauritania, then the kingdom of the Sosso, was the first Muslim destruction of a non-Muslim nation in Afrika. You have the same thing happening in the southern Sudan right now, Muslims killing Afrikans solely because they are not Muslims. Religious colonialism and imperialism are being imposed on Afrika in the name of a God that was supposed to be kind.

Another event in history that we need to pay a great deal of attention to is the invasion of the western Afrikan independent states by an army from North Afrika, when it was the North Afrikan Muslims against the black Muslims of inner Afrika. The destruction of the last of the great independent states, Songhay, facilitated the spread of the slave trade inland. Afrika's doom was a fact. Afrika was in a trap that it wouldn't get out of after that.

Those who are romanticizing Islam, need to understand that the Muslims from the North brought about this event by attacking the Muslims in the South. Those who say that there's no discrimination and color prejudice within Islam need to have the lie flung back into their teeth. There's color prejudice in all religions.

There are a thousand and one events that we need to talk about. I think the ascendancy in Rome, of three black emperors, Afrikan emperors -- Septimus Severus being the most noted, is important. The ascendancy of three black popes proved that the Romans were smug and arrogant, but they were not racists, in the general sense. They had a great respect for talent.

The formative years of Arab domination of the Mediterranean, when there was a merger between the black side of Islam and the Arab side, showed a toleration of other people. They didn't feel called upon when they went into a Catholic country to burn Catholic churches. In fact, an argument started between the Afrikans and the Arabs. The Arabs would marry more than the customary four, and were not converting the Spanish woman to Islam.

My point is, religions don't have to destroy everything. Any time a religion has to remove other religions, other belief systems out of its way, then that's a bunch of bigots. That's not necessary. If you believe in the teachings of your God, whoever he or she is, then you manifest some kind of kindness, some kind of consideration for the belief systems of other people.

I think the beginning of the slave trade was a catastrophe, but the entry of the British into the slave trade during the period of Queen Elizabeth I is what gave the slave trade organization in attack. It put the Afrikan in a bind that he wouldn't partly come out of for the next three hundred years.

In America, slavery itself is a historical event. Some of the misconceptions about it is what we did in spite of it. We not only had these 250 revolts, but we effected some kind of partnership between the indigenous American, mistakenly called Indians. We produced craftsmen who built some of the great houses of the South, under some kind of supervision, but they did build them. Some of them were independent craftsmen of their own right.

For the first one hundred years, it really wasn't chattel slavery. It was a form of indenture. Afrikan American participation in every American war is of historical significance. If there's any people who have proven their patriotic love for this country, we are that people.

Black participation in the American Revolution and the Civil War was monumental. The Reconstruction period, when blacks tried to put themselves back together again, after the Emancipation Proclamation, which is bogus, is an interesting piece of paper, but it didn't emancipate. The emancipation was like shifting the deck chairs on the Titanic. It was going to sink anyway. What deck chair you're sitting in is not going to make much difference. We just moved from one form of slavery to a form of servitude that was tantamount to slavery, the sharecropper peonage, out of which my own parents came.

The emergence of Booker T. Washington, I would say, was a great event in American history. His building of Tuskegee Institute should be considered a great event, particularly during that time. The opposition to Booker T. Washington is still not understood. The emergence of the greatest intellect we produced in this country, W. E. B. DuBois, is critical. The emergence of two great black journalists, T. Thomas Fortune and William Monroe Trotter is significant. Black participation in World War I, and the fact that America did not even want her American citizens, or alleged citizens, to participate in combat is testament to American racism. They had to participate in combat under a French general. Yet DuBois called for patriotism, in spite of it.

The emergence of Marcus Garvey, in 1916, is of major historical significance. The “Red Summer” of 1919, when black children were being burned in bonfires by white bigots is of note. During our journey between World War I and World War II, we were still fighting for basic rights in this country. The nature of our fight between these wars is still terribly misunderstood. Terribly misunderstood by Afrikans. Terribly misunderstood by Caribbean people. In spite of the fact that a great Caribbean personality, Marcus Garvey, was to accentuate our struggle by developing the largest black organization ever developed, before or since. He called our attention to the fact that we were an Afrikan people. Wherever we are on the face of this earth, we are an Afrikan people.

The emergence of Marcus Garvey, the teachings of Marcus Garvey, the concept of going “Back to Afrika,” the concept of owning your own ships, your own factories, even loving black dogs as against whites was a revolutionary event to turn our minds back to ourselves. We can learn again what we lost. That is the structure and the management of the state. That is the culture container and the political container for all people, and that infrastructure is what holds a people together, their allegiance to the state. When you have no state, you become, as we are in the United States, a large nation within a nation, searching for a nationality.

We can say “we’re American, we’re American,” but we’re reluctant to say Afrikan, because no one in Afrika has ever told us we’re welcomed home. America has not told us we’re welcome to stay here. We’re an obsolete population. We were brought to do labor, now the labor is obsolete. We’re no longer needed, and yet we’re larger than the five nations in Scandinavia, in population.

All the Jewish people on the face of the earth are less than 1/2 the black population in the United States, and yet through Israel, they manifest more power than all of the nations of Afrika put together. All the nations in the Afrikan world put together. They get more aid and assistance for a small country named Israel than all the Afrikan countries in the world put together. That simply means they’ve got their political thing together and we don’t. To get it together, we’ve got to understand who we are.

The emergence of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Supreme Court decision of 1954, were events in our history we need to look at and examine. I question whether the Supreme Court meant what they said. The bus boycott in Montgomery, the organization behind it, are historical events that need closer examination. The March On Washington is another event in history we need to look at, the planning of it and why. Some people call it a picnic on the grass, because it was glamorous and all that. King had a dream, but he never had a plan.

We cannot ignore the emergence of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X and his adopted father, Elijah Muhammad who stand tall in our history. It was second, only to the Garvey Movement, in how it called attention to our needs in this country, our needs in the world, and pointed us as a lost nation away from home. There's a lot about it that I disagree with. There's a lot about it that I agree with. A whole lot of people, using that framework, cleaned themselves up and became whole again. They refocused themselves to a point where they could get back their peoplehood, their humanhood, their manhood and their womanhood. Irrespective of the religious aspect, which doesn't interest me very much, because I really think the heart of it was that most of the followers of Elijah Muhammad were disgruntled Baptists, who are now calling themselves Muslims.

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I set out to do a cycle of three books on the liberation movement outside of Afrika. The first book in that cycle is *Notes for an African World Revolution: The Africans at the Crossroads*. The second book in that cycle is *Conditioned Reflex: The Dilemma of the Africans Away from Home*. The third in that cycle will be *Immigrants Against Their Will: The Africans in the Americas and in the Caribbean Islands*. I recently finished a book in between these other books, *Christopher Columbus and the African Holocaust*. I revised the book of black short stories, and that will be published, which will be almost the definitive study of the contribution of blacks to the literature of the short story. I did a small book first published by Kent State and later by Third World Press. It's out now; a book of my speeches called *Who Betrayed the African World Revolution and Other Speeches*. I'm working on a larger book of speeches called *In Search of Liberation*, dealing with the relevant speeches on the concept of Afrikan liberation over the last twenty years.

I'm writing something all the time. I've written a number of introductions to some books that have been reprinted, some original. I wrote the introduction to Michael Bradley's latest book, *The Chosen People of the Caucasus*, and a book of Leo Weiner's work, *African Discovery of America*, and another work published originally in 1903, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*. I just finished an introduction to Jacob Carruthers' work, *The African Deep Thought, Divine Speech*.

I keep active and hope, although I didn't do it this summer, maybe next summer, I'll finally do the editing of my novel and update it. I have two books of short stories, *The Boy Who Painted Christ Black and Other Stories*, and a book I started in a clinic for professional writers at New York University called, *A Gallery of Lonely People: The Theme of Loneliness and Estrangement in the Twentieth Century USA*. That, and I'm still doing speaking engagements, traveling probably too much here and Japan. I've done a Caribbean tour also. I'm gainfully employed a little bit.

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Every people on earth has a right and a responsibility to love itself and to protect itself. We have to stop flinching from the fact that once we love ourselves, people will call us separatists and call us racists. We have to restore to Afrikan people the independence, the dignity and the connection that was destroyed by slavery and colonialism. Then we have to move beyond that and build a new world society for ourselves, and subsequently for all people. Use the essential selfishness of survival before you think of all people. Think of yourself. It is from that base of having taken care of yourself that you can look out and discover what you're going to do for the rest of the world.

The Knowledge Revolutionary: Chapter 3

Generally, my health is holding out. I had a bout with prostate cancer. It's under some kind of control right now. It didn't disappear. Thanks to the fact that I just took it upon myself to really study my body and what could happen. I withdrew from chemical treatments and just went natural -- natural vitamins, natural foods, and some decent exercise; cleansers, and a good body massage at least once a month, hoping for the best. That seemed to have done me more good than these toxic chemical medicines that the doctors were prescribing. I feel better. I mean all my facilities are normal and intact. I still work, although I'm going through the motions of being retired since '87. I still work practically seven days a week. I've been legally blind for a number of years. I'm almost totally blind now.

I've completed what I consider to be my best book to date, politically: *Notes for an African World Revolution: Africans at the Crossroads*. If I finish the things that I've already planned, and some things that are already completed and need editing, I would need at least fifteen more years. If the Creator grants me twenty more years, I'll be most appreciative. I'd even settle for that. There's so much to do.

The fact that we can rediscover ourselves, and reclaim what colonialism and slavery took away from us takes time. We have been programmed into a form of dependency in which we think we need other people. More than we need other people, I think the main thing we need is ourselves. Just at the time we were on the verge of breaking out of that, we bought a bag of worms called integration.

In the final analysis, it did us more harm than good. It gave us some terrible misconceptions of ourselves and our relationship with other people. The idea was not for us to go out of business, culturally and ethnically. The idea was for us to go into business, and to strengthen ourselves so that we could relate to other people more on our terms, than on their terms. That doesn't mean we would deny ourselves the right to go to any hotel we want to.

We wouldn't deny our children to go to any school they want to, or to aspire to any job they want to. I think the strength building, and the self-confidence building should be in the community, in the home, in the church, so that when our children go among other children, they will go with confidence and realize that they can compete with anyone else. If someone else's mind can build a train, their mind can do the same thing. We did not prepare them. We integrated them into a society that psychologically cut them to pieces, and sent them back home confused, not knowing who to hate.

We don't know enough about self-reliance, being in charge of our own community. Taking care of your own family. Being responsible for what you cause in the world. Don't make a baby unless you're ready to support that baby. Let's stop being casual about our physical relationships. In the heat of passion, you can touch a girl the wrong way or at the wrong time and change your world and her life forever. Don't do this and walk away from this high and very significant responsibility. If you're not ready for it, stay away from it.

Understand that the main thing we lost in the 15th and 16th century was the concept of nation responsibility. Suppose we made a declaration that we won't wear any socks we don't make. We'd have to open a sock factory at once. Suppose we said that we won't wear any underwear we don't make. We'd have to open an underwear factory. Suppose we said, generally, we won't wear any clothes we don't make. Look at all the fabric factories, suit factories we'd have to open. Look at all the young men we would have employed. A whole lot of our young people who are killing themselves would be executives. A lot of young people who are now carrying the numbers in the lotteries, they can add in their head ten, twelve lottery numbers. A lot of these kids can be trained to be executives. They wouldn't be killing each other, because when you love yourself, you don't kill yourself. If you love your brother, you don't kill your brother.

I think the churches are wasting so much of our time. They're massaging us with a whole lot of Jesus. They're not leading us spiritually to a higher place. We can be a much better people. I think spirituality is man's higher goal in life. It is spirituality that lifts man higher than the dog, not religion. Spirituality was here before religion was here. Religion was made out of elements that came out of spirituality. Most religions were male chauvinist murder cults, brought into countries by invaders, foreigners, fakers, and fools.

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I believe that we must get it across to our students that no people rises from a lower to a higher level until the young people accept some form of direction and discipline. They must be clear about where they want to go and why they want to go there. We're not going to go anyplace of any significance without an awareness of our world. The European not only colonized most of the world in the 15th and the 16th century, they colonized history and information about history.

The most disastrous of all their colonizations, they colonized the image of God. Afrikan people, so deprived of the positive image of themselves, dare not address God in a language of their own creation or envision God as someone who looks like themselves. That's the most disastrous of all the things that happened in our holocaust that started five hundred years ago. That's still very much intact.

We do not start counting our losses at six million. When we start at sixty million, we're just beginning our count. Slavery depopulated a whole continent. We'll never know for sure how many people were taken out of Afrika. No people in human history has ever suffered a crime of this magnitude over such a long period. No people ever benefited from this crime, economically and materially, more than the Europeans throughout the world, and benefited from the economic exploitation of Afrikan people.

Their resources, their manpower, their womanpower, even having their future as a people put on hold on a world basis, this kind of crime has never happened to any other people in human history. Therefore, a debt is owed to us, over and above that which is owed to any other people.

In this country, the United States, we are a nation within a nation, searching for a nationality. We realize they didn't bring us here to give us democracy, Christianity, or citizenship. There was nothing democratic about it. They did not come to Afrika and say, "You nice Afrikans, hold up your hands, we must do this democratically. Let's vote and see who wants to get on these slave ships and go to America to labor free of charge for three hundred years. Do another three hundred years, paid less than that of the rest of the population."

When you mention democracy and Christianity, liberty and justice for all, you must be very clear. We were never a part of that at all. We were not in the visual picture of when they say "all." Or when they say "citizen." When they say "man." When they say "woman." We're not in that picture. When they say "human," we're not given consideration when they say "humanity." If the oppressors of blacks would think of that one minute a day, one serious thought about his condition, I think it could be changed.

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One element in liberating one's self is to read more. We've got several black publishers. A book written by a black, for blacks, can become a best seller without whites knowing anything about it. Without a white distributor having anything to do with it. We now have a string of black bookstores large enough to make a book sale hundreds of thousands of copies. This book by Shahrazad Ali, *The Blackman's Guide To Understanding The Black Woman*, which was a terrible book, and terribly misleading, taught us a lesson in marketing. She published the book privately and sold herself so well that the book sold well. She shipped it out to different bookstores and book outlets from her kitchen and her living room. She involved her family into being shipping clerks, although what she had to say was basically negative, and was not based on anything that dealt with historical research on the subject.

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I think Cheikh Anta Diop's books -- I question whether one hundred white people have read Cheikh, and yet Cheikh's books are selling. My book is selling. I'm not rolling in any finances, but I get probably a little more than ten thousand a year. This is small in comparison to what a white author would be getting when he/she's got four books out there actively selling, but they're being sold. I must have signed fifty books when I was in Los Angeles last, so there is a market out there. I think a lot of black people are buying books they haven't even read. The questions they ask indicate that they haven't even read the most basic books about blacks. Otherwise, had they read those books, their questions would be answered by virtue of them having read them.

What gives me that impression is the attitude toward the subjects. The questions they ask and the questions they fail to ask. The things they bring up or fail to bring up. Nobody keeps arguing about whether Egypt was or was not Afrikan, if they have read Cheikh Anta Diop's chapters on Egypt. If they have not read his conference paper on the *Peopling of Egypt* and the *Deciphering of the Meroitic Script*. If they have not read another book called *How Afrika Was Egypt*. Have not read a masterwork written by a European, Gerald Massey, almost a hundred years ago, *Egypt Light of the World*, -- both volumes: *Natural Genesis* and *Book of the Beginnings*. Or the American disciple of Gerald Massey, Alvin Boyd Kuhn's, *Who is this King of Glory*, and *Shadow of the Third Century*. Or John Jackson's work, his *Introduction to Afrikan Civilizations* and *Ages of Gold and Silver*. Especially a chapter in *Introduction* called "Egypt and the Ethiopian Evolution of Civilization," and his smaller book, *Ethiopia: The Origin of Civilization*.

Anybody who questions whether the Moors were black, I argue they have not read Stanley Lane-Poole's work, *The Story of the Moors in Spain*. Otherwise, you wouldn't ask the question. You would know. Also, they have not read the chapter in John Jackson's *Introduction* called "Afrika and the Civilizing of Europe." See, the question you ask tells me what you have not read, or if you read, you have not understood.

This brings up another issue, whether Europeans can write Afrikan history. I maintain that selectively, some can. In general, no. If they are fair to Afrikan history, they're going to have to expose themselves as liars and covers-up of Afrikan history.

Basil Davidson has been honest on Afrikan history. I think the German, Arnold Heeren, in his six volume work, his fourth volume, *A History of the Commercial Intercourse Between the Egyptians, the Ethiopians, and the Carthaginians*, is a good work. I think the Frenchman, Gaston Maspero's *History of Afrikan Civilizations* is good. I think Leo Frobenius' massive volume on Afrikan civilization is good.

Selectively, yes. Generally, no. The European's ego won't permit him to admit that other people did not wait in darkness for him to bring the light. He won't permit himself to write that half of human history was over before anyone knew that a European was in the world. Civilizations existed. Functioning societies existed in Afrika when Europe was nothing but a barren ice box. Once the European admits that, he would also have to admit that he is a liar before the world, promoting the assumption that he was the bringer of civilization, when it was quite the contrary.

Everywhere he's gone in the world, he's put out the light of the local civilization. He's done more harm than good. Read a book called *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest*, dealing with the fact that the missionaries were the handmaidens of European conquest. They made a lot of the maps that showed the Europeans how to come into the country. They went with the Bible, and made the maps, so the Europeans soldiers could come in with their guns. There's no lack of information on this subject.

One way the European still maintains control is to make himself the director of Afrikan Studies' programs, and so forth. It's a form of academic colonialism. The desire to control the subject. To keep certain information under their control and to keep certain other information's from coming to the fore. Some of them are competent. Not too many of them are. In general, they're elements of control. If you can control the interpretation of the subject, you can control what the mind does about the information.

I don't know of any Afrikan heading up a Jewish Studies' program. I don't know a Jew who would tolerate it, an Afrikan head of Jewish Studies? I know of no such animal, which brings up another subject.

First, we have to redefine what we're talking about when we use the word "Jew." The European who refers to himself as Jew has no direct physical or cultural relationship to the western Asian people who joined the Hebrew faith, who were not white people. Who are not what we now call white people. The Europeans who you now refer to as Jew was a belated convert to the Hebrew faith. That came in around the 8th or 9th century, when there was fierce fighting between the Muslims and the Christians, mainly over control of the Mediterranean. There were people in Europe who didn't want to join either one of them, so they chose a third option, the Hebrew faith.

The word Jew is a European development. It's not a western Asian development. The word Jew has no western Asian origin. Let's deal with the difference between the Jew, or the word Jew, and people of the Hebrew faith. Afrikan people have no antagonism toward those people, nor do Palestinians have any antagonism toward them. The antagonism is coming from those who immigrated from Europe. Mainly, because they have the same imperial designs on Afrikan people and Arab people as other European people. I think the Arabs are a little confused about this, because they think they are Semitic. No. When you call me an anti-Semitic, explain first what is a Semitic.

Of all the people accusing us, why us?. Why black people? Their own statistics prove that we're the least antagonistic toward white people of the Hebrew faith called Jews than anyone else in America. There are hundreds of hate groups in America. All of them hate Jews. Many of them are paramilitary. Why are they aiming their objection at us, who have no great finances. We have no army. There's nothing we can prevent them from doing. Why are they aiming at their weakest target. Why can't they stand in front of a German and call him an anti-Semitic? We didn't burn anybody in gas chambers. Neither did the Arabs. What they call the Holocaust was a matter that started in Europe, by Europeans. That should have been solved in Europe, by Europeans. European racism had spent itself out, outside of Europe -- through the oppression of Afrikans and Asians, and people in the islands.

In Europe, it turned inward on itself. Germany had been used as a scapegoat for World War I. What you saw in Germany, in their antagonism toward the Jews, was a scapegoat looking for a scapegoat. They found the scapegoat. Black people should study this seriously. The most interesting thing about what happened to the Jews in Germany, they were physically and culturally the most integrated Jews in the world. Some Jews were making a special point of marrying their daughters to non-Jews, Jewish Germans. They were bidding not so much to be Jews, but to be Germans, first and foremost. They were loyal Germans.

I maintain that Adolph Hitler made the wrong move. Killing them was not a wise move. Had he recruited them instead of killing them, they could have helped him with his economic program. Inasmuch as some of their own racial views were identical with his; the concept of a chosen people. They had that before there was a Germany. They could have taught him how to build a country without practicing genocide.

Wilson Huggins talked about the European Jew claiming a land that was not theirs in an article written for the *African Magazine*. He died in 1940. He wrote the article about a year before he died, around 1939. It was called, "Africa, the Jews, and the Evian Congress." There's absolutely nothing new about the opinion. He was right. These were Europeans claiming a land that was never the homeland of Europeans.

If the western Asian Hebrews claimed it in mythology or folklore, they might have had the shade of a case, if we're to believe what they say about their gods. Since God is not in the real estate business, and God is not the manager of great land surfaces, I would sense to question them. The only people who would have a claim on that land would be people of the Hebrew faith, from western Asia. The people of the Hebrew faith from Europe, has no legitimate claim to Palestine. They were never there. They want to say that God gave them that land. Which God? What time? The European Jew is a European creation.

I mentioned earlier how it is interesting that they are targeting black scholars. Sometimes, I say they're trying to impress their Gentile masters, to get them off of their back. What's behind it is that they need an issue. They seem to thrive on the issue of having an enemy to fight. They stimulate people with the fact that the enemy's at the door, "We better do something. Get organized." They're creating an enemy that's a non-enemy. They're creating an enemy that never plans to fight them, backward or forward. They're creating the enemy that's least likely to fight them. The enemy never had any intention of fighting them.

During slavery, we wanted to attach ourselves to a people who had escaped from something. The Exodus became more real to us than to them. It still is. Right now, in a Baptist church, you can get some of the sisters and brothers to cry over the three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace. That's part of Jewish religious folklore. There is nothing that proves it's a fact. The Exodus either.

We are puritans, where religion is concerned. We'll out Pope, the Pope. We'll out Muhammed, Muhammed. We will not sit down and read in depth the history of the period, when a religion appeared and dealt with the folklore. We will not read well researched works like Sir James Frazer's *The Folklore of the Old Testament*, in three volumes. Or John Jackson's *Man, God, and Civilization*. His *Pagan Origins of the Christ Myth*, or Kersey Graves' *Sixteen Crucified Saviors*. In certain things, we take other people's word for it. We worship Michaelangelo's picture of Christ, painted 1500 years after Christ was dead. Who told Michaelangelo that Christ looked that way? He had no way of knowing how Christ looked. The Bible doesn't even describe him the way he painted him.

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Each one of us are looking at each other through the propaganda of our master or former master. The Caribbeans think that they're different from the black Americans. The Afrikans think they're different from all of them. All of us need to remember that we've all had the same slave master. Those who came out of Afrika, were brought out of Afrika. All came on the same slave ships. The slave ship brought no Barbadians, Jamaicans or Trinidadians. They brought all Afrikan people. These Afrikan people came where the slave ships put them down. Those who were put down at Trinidad, became Trinidadians. Those who were put down in Jamaica, became Jamaicans.

Because of the rape of their grandmothers, their mothers, their sisters, some of them became almost white. Some of them became moderately white. Some of them became light brown, or various shades of color. They're dividing themselves over these shades of color that they had nothing to do with and had no control over. This is a private tragedy.

I find that the color fascination among Caribbean people to be the most sickening among Afrikan people of the world. I find that in the United States, it's still sickening. Some of our sororities, some of our fraternities, are based on this stuff; the Blue Vein Society, the Brown Basket stuff. Part of the saving grace here is that we've been able to laugh at it. We don't take it so dead serious. In the Caribbean, I've seen whole communities of light-skinned people where blacks don't even live in the same community.

In the United States, the light-skinned, the browns and all live in the same community, depending on his ability to pay. They intermarry to the point where the light-skin is darkened down in the first generation after marriage. All of us need to understand that we got the same enemy. All of us suffered a circumstance over which we had no control. Slavery was brutal in the Caribbean Islands. Colonialism and slavery were brutal in Afrika. The same thing in the United States.

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When we look at the gathering of some black scholars at Harvard University and other like universities, who seem to have a penchant for attacking other black scholars, there is an arrogance there, supported by the overseers who hire them. These are paid Judases who've accepted thirty pieces of silver, only to discover that silver is no longer the medium of exchange on the market. They have sold their soul for a mess of porridge, only to find that they're allergic to porridge. They still have a soul out there for sale.

I'm not too clear of what these black conservatives are trying to conserve, except his miserable confusion. I think Skip Gates and Cornel West, and these other black conservatives, are no different from the Afrikans who participated in delivering the Afrikans to the beach, to be put on the boat to become slaves. They're the new slave traders.

Every people must have what I call a "Third Brigade." Once that third brigade is in action, and they are accused, they must be in a position to deny any association with them. I would have no problem with a black third brigade who got rid of the Skip Gates' and the Cornel West's. We could go on to that higher mission. These black conservatives are confusing the issue, really. They're kind of apologizing for our enemy, and making our enemies feel comfortable. They touch upon the "blaming the victim syndrome," but it goes a little beyond just that. That's a minor reason. Just blaming the enemy is small in comparison to what they are doing. They are setting the victim up for a greater assault.

They use the theme of "Afrocentricity" as their attack target point. Well, I never use the word Afrocentricity. I don't believe in it. I don't compromise with the word Afrikan. I think it should have been from the beginning, "Afrikacentricity" or nothing.

I believe that what we're dealing with is -- the 20th century's what we have to deal with, in comparison with the 19th century -- is to look at ourselves from our point of view. This is in part what the Liberia migration movement was about. What the so-called Negro Convention Movement was about. What the church movement was about in the creation of the Afrikan Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Afrikan Lodge. What the Black Mason was about, under Prince Hall. What Pap Singleton's internal settlement movement was about. What Chief Sam's movement was about. What Bishop Turner's church movement was about. So in the 20th century, I think we are puny amateurs in comparison to the dynamic black men and women of the 19th century.

Because I've lived in Afrika, I've learned the value of some of the traditional customs. I know you cannot totally reconstitute any society, but you can reconstitute its spirit and its values. I believe that we should seriously try to do this, especially in relationship to the family. The value of Afrikan society was rooted in the family structure. It was so rooted in the family structure that Afrikans could build a society where there was no word for jail, because no one had ever gone to one. No word for prostitute, because no one had ever been one. No word for old maids, because the society was structured to the point where every girl that didn't have a man, or a future husband at a certain age, the community got together and made a selection for her. While that sounds very unromantic to the western romantic mind, but remember, every girl got one. Today, most girls do not have one. Divorce was not a part of their vocabulary.

We have to remember that we came out of a collective society, not an individual society. The whole society was concerned about everyone in that society, not just the individual members of your family.

The common thread around the world of Afrikan people is back to what I've just been talking to, the family structure, the family as a miniature industry. The family as a miniature nation, and also as an administrator of justice within the group. This is why these societies had no welfare as such. These things were built into the family structure itself. The family was its own agency for the members of the family, and for the other members of the community who needed that kind of assistance.

I began to notice this in 1958, going to Ghana, when I witnessed my first wake. Each time the widow mourned, women of her age group gathered around and mourned with her. She was assisted. She was never alone. She was given assurance of the fact that even though her husband had died, that didn't mean she was going to be alone. She's living in the same apartment. Money was collected for her by the communities, but not charity. New things were made for her by the community. This was her right as a member of that particular ethnic branch of the people of Ghana. She was from the Ga group.

When I looked at this, I said, “some people might call this savage.” This was socialism built into a society. She won’t have to go to no agent and beg and be humiliated. Everything is taken care of within the family structure. She didn’t have to go to no kind of government agency to ask for anything. Yet the funeral, the burial, none of it cost her a nickel. Her husband belonged to a burial society that took care of the coffin. You can get a bus hearse from the city. All you had to do was furnish the driver. There’s a place in back of the bus where the coffin fits. Members of the family can ride inside the bus. Everything is taken care of. The members of his group furnished 75 traditional mourners, all in tradition dress. They march through the street with blankets. People throw money on the blankets. All that is counted and given to her.

Women clean her house for her. I’ve seen the same tradition basically in Alabama, Georgia, and New Orleans. We lost so much in being forced out of Afrika. We lost so many beautiful family customs. We lost a genuine structure of the traditional family itself. These are some of the things we’re going to have to get back, if we’re going to survive as a people.

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One of the most tragic things that has happened to some of our scholars is that they died penniless. Chancellor Williams died that way. John G. Jackson died that way. William Leo Hansberry about the same. Another great scholar, J. A. Rogers, about the same.

Chancellor Williams prepared exceptionally well. The interest on his funds was in excess of \$20,000 a year. He could have lived very comfortably on it, but he gave one member of the family power of attorney, and they squandered the money.

My difference is, I’m not that trustful. I have fairly decent insurances. I have some real estate that’s already paid for. I have a pension from the school system. I have social security. In the event I would pass before my wife, the rest of the pension goes to my son to finish his education. If that don’t happen, it could be paid for out of my insurances. My son and daughter will have a house and an amount in excess of \$100,000. Yet, I live moderately. I’m not rich. I’m not poor. It’s just a matter of preparation.

I think Chancellor Williams prepared just as well as I did. John Jackson never really made a whole lot of money, to be frank with you. He was very liberal with that he did make. He liked good food and good wine. Nothing abnormal, nothing exaggerated, you know.

John died with some bitterness. He dreamed a positive dream for a people who showed no positive response to it in his lifetime. He had other options. He could have taken another course. He could have crossed the street and said he was a Frenchman, a Puerto Rican, or almost anything. He looked whiter than most white people. He didn’t have to walk down the black course. It was a choice, a conscious choice.

He served us well, through information. We never really understood it. Very often, he would go to his home on Indiana Avenue in Chicago, and black thugs would push him off the sidewalk saying, "You old silly white man, what you doing in this neighborhood? Looking for a black woman at your age?" They did not know that the man was one of us, and had made some fine contributions to us.

He worked in the garment district for his last working years, not including the two years he was at Rutgers University. He was at City College of New York for three years. When he was in Chicago, he worked at Northeastern University for about two years. He had, oh maybe five to seven academic years.

Sometimes I get despondent but not discouraged among my own family sometimes. I have twenty-six books to my credit. My children glanced through them, mainly because it made them look good with their friends that their father wrote a book.

I've got friends who've known me fifty years, and never seriously read a thing I wrote. Sometimes you wonder what was it all about. You didn't have to go down this course. I've often said I've never met a rich man that had a better mind than me. I never met a crook who wasn't a fool. I could have been a successful crook if I wanted to be that. I could have been a successful rich man if I wanted to be that. I chose to be what I am. If I had to do it all over again, I might choose to do the same thing. I would do it better. As for marriage, I might have looked into that a little more critically than I have.

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There are young people out there today who are doing some very credible writing. I caution them in the field of publishing. There may be six or seven new black publishers out there, and they came up faster than they learned the book business, or learned how to read a manuscript, or how to correct it. I don't know a single one with a top flight editor, though there are some great black editors out there.

I think these young people have to be patient and continue to improve their craft. Improve their ability to do research and get things correct. Try to insist that your work has some good editorship. Some good checking. Check it well yourself, because you don't want to send things out there with a whole lot of errors in them. That's all I can do sometime, and even then, a whole lot of errors creep in. You can correct it, then get it messed up again in printing.

There's a lack of professional people in this new black publishing industry. They're mostly moneymakers, other than professional publishers. The professional publisher has professional people to edit the work and to supervise it. They don't want to go to the additional expenses. So any cousin who comes into the store, who they think knows the English language, they let him do a little editing, him or her.

I encourage young people to not just get stuck in past history. They must also look into science and technology. I think we're doing both, really. Sometimes you have to rescue the past in order to understand the present and the future. I'll admit that we're not doing enough in the sciences and technology. I'll admit that. I'll also admit the fact that we have literally been programmed away from them. We have to get on our children, get on our churches and the schools. I resent the fact that so much of our time and energy is wasted, without returning anything to us. It's not a bleak picture, but it's a picture that's not as good as it needs to be. It's not a total blank, because a whole lot of young blacks are turning on to science and technology, and making good use of it too. But it's not enough.

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My goal has been to write clearly about the age in which I live in to such an extent, so at least a hundred years from now, people can pick up a book I wrote and have a clear picture about the age in which I lived, by virtue of what I've said about my people's plight. I think I may not see my goals in my lifetime, but maybe in the generation that follows me. There's enough seeds that's been planted in enough places, I think some of them will grow.

We have to not become our worst enemy. This is true of all people sometimes, and there's nothing exceptional about it where we are concerned. Maybe no more or less than other people is the fact that it's emphasized different with us. I think it's more true of white people right now, at this juncture in history. When they do not have someone outside of Europe to turn on, they generally turn inwardly on themselves. This is the case of what used to be Czechoslovakia. That is current proof of it. This conflict between the Muslims and the Christians is all making God, ungodly. If they were genuine Muslims, or genuine Christians, their religion would guide them out of it. Same thing is true in the fight between the Irish Protestants and the Irish Catholics.

I think we as a people have gone through the greatest single holocaust in history. We must call it a holocaust because the word is not copyrighted. No one people owns the word. We should stop boasting the fact that we survived, because we've done something bigger than that. Cockroaches survive. We have prevailed, and because we have prevailed, it's proved that we are worthy people. That fate has spared us not just to survive, but to introduce the possibility that we have the strength and the courage to build a new humanity. Not just only for ourselves, but for mankind. If this is our mission, this is also the legacy that we can leave for our children, and for all humanity.

Everytime I am surrounded by children in the various places that I go, I feel that if tomorrow my ancestors called me home, there'll be someone left who can pick up the mantle and continue the struggle for a final definition of the role of Afrikan people on this Earth.

The Knowledge Revolutionary: Chapter 4

I've been teaching most of my life, one way or the other, from stepladders on Lennox Avenue, Seventh Avenue, to several colleges. When I began teaching fully, within the academic community around 1967, I had conducted courses at New York University for Head Start teachers before then. I was working on what they call soft money or government grant money. That means when the government grant is over, the job is over. You might work nine months, then three the next year, depending on the funding. For five years I was the trainer of teachers at the anti-poverty program in Harlem, at the section called the Community Action Institute.

I entered the academic community as a full time teacher in 1967, when I went to Hunter College. Concurrent with being in Hunter College, I was at Cornell University for two years. I stopped a year, and went back for another year. I've been teaching with some consistency most of my adult life.

I have lectured in London, Baghdad, Egypt, a lot of places. I've written one book and compiled a book on my London lectures with Dr. Yosef ben-Jochannan, we call him Dr. Ben, which is still going well. This was done several years ago. The main unbroken streak of my teaching was at Hunter College, as one of the developers of the Department of African and Puerto Rican Studies. I taught in that department for most of the twenty years I was there. I was Chairman for three years.

One of the things that bothered me about being Chairman, it was an administrative job that took me out of the classroom most of the time. I still taught one course while I was Chairman, but I did not have the privilege of teaching the three courses, and confronting three sets of students at least twice a week.

I taught mostly Afrikan and Afrikan American history. I've taught courses on Afrikans in the Mediterranean world. I've taught courses on men and movements in the black urban ghetto, and courses on slavery. Afrikan American history courses 1 and 2, and Afrikan history 1 and 2., I taught all the time, and I always added one new course, a different course, every other semester.

When I would teach "Men and Movements in the Black Urban Ghetto," I would teach that in the Spring. I would not teach it again until the next Spring. I would not teach these alternate courses twice in one year.

I have never been satisfied with any of the textbooks, any of them. Not even one. I was satisfied with some of the basic improvements on their way to becoming an honest textbook, but I've never been thoroughly satisfied with any of them. They're not only unfair to the history of the Afrikans in the United States, they're unfair to the indigenous Americans. They're unfair to the fact that every person that came to America from Europe wasn't seeking any haven, or running from religious persecution. A lot of people came from Europe because there were no jobs and no way of life commensurate with their needs.

There were poor Irish, poor Slavic people, and poor people from other parts of Europe. Some of them had to indenture themselves to get their passes. They couldn't pay for their passes, so they indentured themselves to the sea captain who let them come over. The sea captain in turn literally sold their labor to a farmer, or some other person. They had to work for seven to ten years to pay back the initial cost of getting them here. That's at least part of the origin of white slavery in the United States. Lerone Bennett has written about it with more searching accuracy than most. Other writers have ignored it altogether.

This goes back to what Schomburg said in his own words, "Study the history of your masters. Study the people who took you out of history, then you might find out why they had to do it. Why they felt called on to remove you and an entire people from the respectful commentary of history."

We must understand the Europeans' intentions toward Afrika. Their intentions toward the non-European world has been to control. The idea of bringing enlightenment, the idea of civilizing, was really a cover up to disguise the fact that their main intent was to control. This is just as true in Asia as it was in Afrika. There wasn't enough manpower in Europe to hold down all Asia, all Afrika, or the islands in the Pacific.

The European really effected a massive propaganda machine and its greatest achievement was the conquest not of the body, but the conquest of the mind. The conquest of the mind through the use and misuse of the Bible. Through getting across to a lot of people, rather naive in the subject, that God ordained them to rule. They know how to rule. Therefore, when they declared war on the cultures, the art, the civilization of a people, because the people's lack of ability to deal with this rationale, they fell into this trap, and subsequently lost their freedom.

It's important to learn about the various European dynasties, only to the extent of how they affected us. Learn especially about those that reigned at the time the European began to expand beyond its shores and began to interfere with our way of life. Learn that first. In general, it would do no harm to learn about the rest, because you would see how Europe relates to the whole world. When you see how Europe relates to the whole world, you will have an inkling of how you relate to the whole world.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, after the Crusades, Europe fell on hard times. Famines and plagues had taken about one third of the population of Europe. Finally, they discovered longitude and latitude again, and began to put ships at sea again. They had lost sentimental attachment to other people. They had lost some sentimental attachment to themselves. Europe was land poor, people poor, and resource poor. Without sentiment, it began to expand, using their ships to take the resources, the land, and the energies of other people. They had no compunction, no mercy, and no hesitation. It used the church to justify, or rationalize this in 1455, settling an argument between Spain and Portugal. The Pope said to them, “You take the West. You take the East. You two good Catholic nations stop fighting among yourself.” Then he added, “You’re both authorized to reduce to servitude all infidel people.”

In order to rationalize slavery, all you had to do is just to say that certain people were not Christian. That they were infidels, and they did not even use a knife or fork. That rationale would justify European expansion for the next three to four hundred years. The fact that if you are not a Christian, by their definition, you had no soul, and therefore, an assault on you was an assault on an object without a soul. They needed not to feel guilty for having done so.

At first, color was not an issue, but later on color became a major factor. There were other people in the world, other colored people who were not enslaved quite the same way as us. They came under European domination, but they did not inflict chattel slavery on these other people.

Afrika was exposed, because the Afrikan believed that they did not need any support, any protection from the outside. That was their mistake, because no European had to fight their way into Afrika. They came as guests, and stayed as conquerors. The Afrikan hasn’t fully awakened to this day as to what happened to them.

The so-called curse in the Bible played a major role. To some extent, it still plays a role. The curse was a drug in the Bible, later on during the Babylonian period. It was not originally in there. This so-called curse not only labeled Afrikans infidels, but that they were descendants of Ham, who supposedly committed some crime against Noah. Even the church got the whole thing wrong. This curse was not placed on Ham, but on Ham’s children. They use that same thing to mean all black people.

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There’s some confusion going around related to the term “Asiatic Blackman.” Afrikans did relate to Asians. Some Asians have been our friends, and some have been our enemies. Some are still our friends. Some are still our enemies. People cannot classify us to ourselves, by dragging someone else into it. It’s like some blacks today that have to say that they’re black and Puerto Rican. Or they’re black and Hispanic brothers. When the Hispanic speaks, he rarely says our Hispanic and black brothers. We are rather naive. Many times we’re so democratic to other people, and undemocratic to ourselves.

Ali Mazrui, the Arabian Afrikan historian, argues that the Arabian peninsula should be part of Afrika, or something to that extent. I don't know where he intends to go with it, because Ali Mazrui's an Arab propagandist of the highest order. Though he's partly black, he's really not pro black. He's an apologist for Islam. Of course, there's a book on it called, *When Egypt Ruled the East*. The Arabian peninsula was really northeast Afrika. While I go along with this, I wonder what does he intend to do with it? It seems he's making a rationale for the Arabs grabbing more land.

The Arab nation evolved out of the human mixtures and migrations into the Arabian peninsula. They migrated into an area that had formerly been Afrikan dominated. They drove out the Afrikans in many ways. I refer you again to *When Egypt Ruled the East*, a book published by the University of Chicago Press. It's in Phoenix paperback. The author is Keith Seeley, he's dead now. He also covered up Afrikan history. He found many things that proved that the original civilization of Egypt started in the South, but he covered it up until one of his students opened up his files, after he was dead, and wrote an article called, "The Lost Pharaohs of Nubia." That was Bruce Williams, the archaeologist.

When someone approaches me and tells me that Islam is the black man's religion, in the first place, he's telling me he's a liar, a fraud, and a coward. How can it be a black man's religion when it started in the seventh century A. D. Black people had religions long before then. Some blacks have tried to project Islam into areas before Islam existed. They're being fools and dupes, Arabized. They can't distinguish the difference between Arabism, and Islam. If it's the black man's religion, then why is the black man being enslaved by the followers of that religion. Why are they so silent about it?

They say that Arabic is the black man's language. It's another silly lie. They're a bunch of cop outs. They're trying to avoid a commitment to black people. All this nonsense about the Asiatic black man, what are they talking about? Asiatic black man? There are dark skinned people in Asia of Afrikan extraction. There are dark skinned people in Asia, not of Afrikan extraction. When you say the Asiatic black man, who are you talking about?

Why don't they deal with the Arab slave trade of Afrikans? The genesis of Arab slavery against Afrikans was the Arab looking for labor. Looking for people to exploit. Looking for women to cavort with so he could create a mixture of a bastardized Afrikan and Arab people. He could use them to move inland and start the East Afrikan slave trade. That wasn't started until he had produced this mixed generation.

The Arabs, on sight, were forbidden to move into the hinterlands of Afrika. He moved down the coast of Afrika cohabiting with Afrikan women. After a generation or so, he had produced an Afrikan-looking Arab. These Afrikan-looking Arabs facilitated the spread of the East Afrikan slave trade.

They even created their own language for trade. Let's end some confusion here and put the language of Kiswahili aside for the moment, then we can give an explanation. The language, Swahili, is not a language at all. It's a lingua franca. It's a mixture of several languages. It was a trader's language. You can create a language with the bits and pieces of several languages. You could be understood by several types of people who spoke several different languages.

When you say Kiswahili, that means the Swahili that was spoken before its Arab intermixture. This is spoken in parts of the Congo, even right now, along with Lingala. Kiswahili really is pure Swahili. Swahili is that mixed with Arabic terms.

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When we look at different slave systems, as we do the languages, I'm aware of the system of indentured servitude, when the Afrikan who loses a war, or is caught in between a war, or is weak, had to serve so many years of servitude in order to gain his/her freedom. I'm aware of the slavery of the Afrikans who were in the military in the Mediterranean. When the Arabs lost power, in 1492, the Arabs turned on the very Afrikan who had assisted him in power, and began to sell those Afrikans into slavery. These were the first Afrikans to come to the New World.

This accounts for the fact that many of the early Afrikans in the New World had great skill, skill in iron, skill in boat mending. They were practicing these professions before they got here. After 1492, the opening up of the plantation system, and the call for more labor to replace the Indians [indigenous Americans] -- they were disappearing because of murder, suicide, neglect, and other forms of European encroachment. The Afrikan would replace him as a labor force. A lot of them died too, but the difference here is that you had replacements for the Afrikans. There were no replacements for the indigenous Americans.

In the Caribbeans, it was about the same, but the main thing about the Caribbeans and South America is that the slave buyers generally bought in large lots, and kept the lots together. They thought they could work them better that way, and they were right. They had miscalculated it, because they could also revolt better that way. Keeping Afrikans from the same lot together, they could keep an Afrikan culture continuity. They had a similarity of language and loyalty.

In the United States, they bought Afrikans like a brokerage. They might buy ten slaves early in the week, and sell five at the end of the week. Therefore, mother goes one way, cousin goes another way. When you're breaking up the family, you break up a cohesive group. You're breaking up the loyalty system. The new people that you met, not of your group, your color, not of your kith and kin, not of your customs, it takes you a while to manifest a loyalty system, or even learn to trust them.

The Caribbeans did not have to go through all of this quite the same way. Sometimes not at all. I visited Cuba in the early 1960s, and there were still Afrikans in the Sierra Maestra who had not gone to Havana. Havana was maybe two and a half hours away by a fast moving train. Yet, they were obviously Yorubas. They still spoke Yoruba. They still ate Yoruba type food and engaged in Yoruba type ceremonies. They had not been broken up and resold, to the point where someone could still remember the people who came over on the same boat as they came over on, or their descendants. No such thing happened in the United States. The United States was rather ruthless. They were uncaring in selling a child from the mother or the father from the family.

The United States practiced chattel slavery. Chattel means that you are a slave, a piece of property, and you're owned to the end of your days. Indentured servitude means that you serve so many years, then you are basically free.

All of the slave revolts in the United States were partially successful. In the final analysis, they were put down or frustrated. There's a law in the military; if you don't control the line of supply, you're going to eventually lose, no matter how much you win within a given area. You can be surrounded, and people can keep out ammunition. Keep out the resupply. In the Caribbean islands, the slaves controlled the line of supply. Therefore, they could be resupplied, you know, shoes, guns and food.

In the United States, they could block off these lines of supply and limit the revolt. Subsequently, limit the success of the revolt. There were several slave revolts. Of the 250 that's on record, there were several massive slave revolts that were rather successful: Gabriel Prosser in the Carolinas; Denmark Vesey in Virginia; Nat Turner in Virginia.

When we look at that 19th century, we must understand that not only in the United States, but throughout the whole of the Afrikan world, the 19th century was the golden age of Afrikan resistance and protest. The golden age throughout the world, the United States, the Caribbean Islands, and in Afrika itself. The European had realized that the system of chattel slavery had become unwieldy, and was giving way to a more sophisticated form of slavery, that will be called colonialism.

England, who had the strongest navy, and for other reasons, such as strong resistance from the abolitionists, outlawed the slave trade -- the transporting of slaves from Afrika. The movement by sea, the trafficking at sea was over. Plantation owners, while still keeping the slaves that they already had, adjusted. Besides, at this point, everybody who wanted a slave had one. They could breed slaves other than to bring them all the way from Afrika. They would breed slaves just like they would breed cattle and dogs. There were slave breeding farms. Women could free themselves on some plantations after having maybe ten babies. That represented a large profit for the plantation owner.

That had a major effect, because it introduced into the Afrikan family the element of the stranger, as father. The absentee father. That was basically unknown in the Afrikan family. It was a crime against the concept of the family, the structure of the family. We pay for that crime even today. We haven't escaped the effects of it, and we still feel the effects of it. The family, we tried to put it back together, after 1865. We did a commendable job, but it was almost impossible to do a better job, given the circumstances.

Many Afrikans, after emancipation, lacking land, went back and worked for the same land-owner they were working for when they were slaves. They worked as sharecroppers and as tenant farmers. Many of them tried to establish several black communities. Some were quite successful. They began to develop independent black institutions such as the Afrikan Lodge, or the first black Masonic order. They had churches, fraternal organizations and sororities. In Tulsa, Oklahoma, Black folks built one of the most successful independent black towns in America, until the Ku Klux Klan burned it down. The building of independent black institutions was an event that we often forget.

During this period, in the 19th century, the first cadre of educated women in New England, white women, were coming out of college. The New England man, who was a good craftsman, good worker, was not accustomed to educated women in their homes. They didn't know what to do with them. Didn't know whether to send her to the kitchen, bed, or to the church.

Many of these New England women began to gravitate toward the South, to teach in the newly opened schools for blacks. They were called New England school moms. After a generation, some of them married southerners, and become southerners. They adopted a southern attitude. Some of them, in their later years, went back home to die in New England. It was a period, an interim period, when they gave our school system a kind of faculty that otherwise we would not have had. We had not had time to educate a large number of black women.

They also created a dilemma, and a detriment. They gave a lot of black youth New England finishing school training. How to set a table for a banquet. A lot of these kids didn't even have enough forks. When you set a table for a banquet, you gotta have a salad fork. Sometimes you have to use three different forks for one place setting. In their own homes, they didn't even have enough forks to go around. Black kids began to develop some aspirations of social mobility that were unreal. Under the sororities and fraternities, they became kind of snob clubs.

After emancipation, there was a government agency called the Freedmen's Bureau. It was set up to supposedly establish freed slaves in society. To some extent, it did. It helped to establish banks and some lending institutions. Some early black landlords could get loans from the Freedmen's. The Freedmen's Bureau was administrative. The Freedmen's Bank was financial. It was a stop gap help in the period after slavery.

After 1844, 1845, in the horse trading between the Democrats and the Republicans, blacks were sold out. The Republicans agreed to withdraw the troops from the South, and let the South handle what they called the Negro problem in a manner of its own choosing. This freed the South of its responsibility for resettling the former slaves. It opened the door for the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, the Knights of the White Camellia, and other racist organizations. It betrayed the promise of democracy in this country. This period is best explained in a book by Rayford Logan called, *The Betrayal of the Negro*.

Later in this period, there were two great individuals, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois, who had a difference of opinion on educational strategy and educational methodology. We have made this into a fight in our minds, and it wasn't a fight, because DuBois and Washington compiled two books together on education. They couldn't have hated each other. DuBois was scheduled to go teach at Tuskegee. It just so happened that the letter from Wilberforce arrived earlier and made him an offer. Wilberforce was offering him \$900 a year. Tuskegee was offering him \$950. DuBois felt obligated to go to Wilberforce, because Wilberforce had answered the letter of application for employment ahead of Tuskegee, who was late in getting the letter out. Tuskegee was going to hire DuBois, and this was before the Washington period was over. Washington was still alive at the time, so that means that these two men were not at each others' throat, to the point where DuBois couldn't have taught at Tuskegee. The real enemy of Booker T. Washington was not W. E. B. DuBois, but William Monroe Trotter of the *Boston Guardian*.

Trotter thought we needed an alternative, an option, and that no people should rely on any one man to make all the opinions relating to their destiny, or their children. He was basically right, of course, but a lot of people were going with Washington. Washington was getting the money from the whites after his famous Atlanta cotton expedition speech. Washington was declared, by white editorial writers, to be the leader of black America. He would be so powerful that if a black person wanted a streetcar to conduct his job in Cincinnati, then whites would want to know if it was alright with Booker. So Booker T. Washington, while he was a dictator of black America, and sometimes ruthless, he was a dictator that dictated some good, as well as some bad.

If he was an Uncle Tom, he was a strategic Uncle Tom. He might have scratched his head, when nothing itched. He might have done a shuffle, and probably did. He might have said yes, when he didn't mean yes. But he said it strategically, so another generation could come forth after him, and say "hell no." This is where we miss the point. When it came our time to say hell no, some of us tommed more than he did, and we got nothing for it. We have to remember now, for his strategic tomming, he got a school built, and the school is still there. For our tomming, we don't even have the memory of nothing, not even the sandwich, or the double scotch we got.

I think we've misinterpreted DuBois' concept of the "talented tenth." DuBois did not rule out all of the things that Booker T. Washington said we should do. He said that if we have a talented tenth, then that talented tenth should be responsible for setting the rules for making the institutions, and for negotiating with the opposition. DuBois discovered that the talented tenth had no talent, except to imitate white people and run from black people.

This is why we have to be careful who writes our history. People are still going around thinking Washington and DuBois were bitter enemies. Very few people sit down and read the literature or analyze who wrote it, and for what reason. People get degrees about a people without reading a single book about that people. One cocktail, you got your minor degree. Two cocktails, you got a major degree. Three cocktails, you got a Ph.D. Let's dispense with the gossip, and look at the documents. When we look at the documents, what they're saying about DuBois and Washington is not true.

Now, there were some problems between Marcus Garvey and W. E. B. DuBois, a terrible envy. DuBois could not bring himself to believe that this Jamaican, with barely a high school education, could bring off a scheme as big as returning thousands of people to Afrika, building ships, building industries, asking the question, "Where is the black man's captain of affairs? Where is the black man's ships? Where is the black man's men of great affairs?" He said, "Because I did not see them, I decided to build them." Which also proved that Garvey wasn't too clear about the upward mobility of blacks before he got here. He wasn't too clear about the black entrepreneurship before he got here.

Blacks had built buildings. Blacks owned ship repair shops in Newport News, Virginia. Blacks owned a lot of things. Blacks owned barbershops throughout the South, catering mainly to whites. Blacks had built one of the largest chain of churches of any people for a given space of time in human history. Blacks owned a lot of institutional buildings, large buildings, fraternity and sorority buildings.

Blacks did not wait in darkness for Marcus Garvey to bring the light. Marcus Garvey did bring a stimulant at a critical time, after World War I, when the Secretary of War told the black soldiers that "your lot will not appreciably change because of your participation in this war."

Garvey went to Chicago at a time when blacks were being assaulted, and rallied them, telling them all the time, "You see, they don't want you here. Let's get ready to go back to Afrika." Well, when you're being assaulted on every side, and you just came out of a war -- some black soldiers were literally being killed in their uniforms. Garvey was something to listen to, under that pressure. When you're drowning, someone throws you a rope, you're not going to debate the morality of the person who throws you the rope. Later, but not then. You've got to get out of the water.

The bulk of Garvey's organization was from his mind. People around him assisted him into this enterprise. Yet, the Garvey Movement, administratively, was a Caribbean clan or cult. The membership was basically Afrikan American, and the money came mainly from Afrikan Americans. The money that was lost on the ships, was lost by Afrikan Americans. We had not discovered the money order or the check. We just put money in an envelope and sent it straight to Mr. Garvey.

A lot of that money was stolen right there in the office. It wasn't stolen by black Americans. Black Americans weren't that high in the administration of the Garvey Movement. Not even as minor clerks. There's an FBI report on all of this. The FBI report on black radical organizations in the United States. None of this are things that can't be proven.

The charges against Garvey were not true. The charges were true of his organization, but not of Garvey, personally. Garvey had to take responsibility because he was the head of the organization and should have known.

Garvey was internationally influential, because he was saying something people wanted to hear, and people needed to hear for stimulation. He was so effective, one chief in South Afrika started planting extra crops to welcome and feed the blacks who were going to return. That's his real effectiveness. Garvey's message came at a critical time in our history when we were looking for a messenger of this kind.

Garvey did not thoroughly understand the blacks in the United States, and many Caribbean people today have no real understanding of what the black in the United States have endured, and what achievement they have made, under so many great odds.

If the Garvey Movement had been successful, there would have been a transformation of Afrika. An Afrikan independence explosion would have happened, at least two generations before it did happen.

The Garvey Movement was also the political stimulant of the Harlem Renaissance, right in the midst of it. It was a literary renaissance, but the political stimulant of that renaissance was the Garvey Movement. I've written an article called "The Neglected Dimensions of the Harlem Renaissance," dealing with the impact of Garvey on the Harlem Renaissance.

The genesis of the Harlem Renaissance origin was really not Harlem, or black. The genesis of its origin was that a community had finally become black. There were a lot of unemployed college blacks who used that community as a home and haven. A lot of socially inclined whites, after World War I, began to patronize blacks as partially social equals. They began to furnish money for certain black artists and writers. They were sponsoring them to do their work.

A whole lot of gullible, well-educated, very articulate blacks began to tell great stories of what they could do, and what they needed to write, if only they had the funds. A lot of gullible whites supported them. Many of these blacks weren't going to write anything, not even a decent letter. They were social parasites, but not an obnoxious type. They were survivors.

They went to these parties and balanced a cocktail with the best of them. They spoke of Marcel Proust and Ludwig van Beethoven as though it was a regular menu. They spoke of European cultural figures as though they'd never tasted neck bones, hog maws and pig tails; all the regular fare of the black community. I think they made a contribution, a social contribution, though they were parasites. There were other writers who would have written just as well, even if there had never been anything called the Harlem Renaissance.

The Harlem Renaissance, the period of literary flourishing, would still have occurred, but not quite with the same flair. It still would have occurred, because when you see a great number of intellectuals meeting and bumping their heads together, talking and exchanging, trying to outdo each other, somebody's going to sit down and produce some literature. That was going to occur without white sponsorship. With white sponsorship, more of them got their books written, because whites said, "they can write a book."

I would say the most important figures to come out of that period were Langston Hughes and Countee Culleen. A little known novelist now, Wallace Thurman, who wrote *Entrance of Spring* and *Blacker the Berry*, was also a fine editor. He worked on some of the leading white publications. One of the significant critics was Alain Locke. James Weldon Johnson was important. There were social critics, Kelly Miller, DuBois, and the like.

What killed what is known as the Harlem Renaissance, which many black artists called the Black Renaissance, was the coming of the Depression. Many of the white sponsors had to withdraw their sponsorship. They could no longer come to Harlem looking for what they called the "Noble Savage," or the "Exotic Negro." The community was thrown on its own. Its own resources.

I think a Claude McKay would have done just as well without it, because there's fairly little that the Renaissance did for Claude. He would stand up to whites. He wouldn't have lowered himself to accept their money anyway.

There were some black writers, during that time, who were writing just to placate white folks. There was a thread of that going on. I don't know how common it was. I don't think they were any bigger literary prostitutes than some of those we've got today. We've got some today who can outdo them. Who can make them feel like little schoolboys in comparison. They write about things they want white people to hear. Things black men did to black women; desertion, and other things. Some of them write about lesbianism.

The majority of the literary prostitution among black writers today is dominated by women, probably because they seem to be the majority in the publishing business. I think many of our writers are not thinking clearly about the positions they take in their writing, or who have become completely blinded by financial figures that for them supercede any moral standards.

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Dr. Ben and I have had this long standing discussion on which dynasty has been the most significant. The debate is based on, from my point of view, the strength of rulership in the 18th Dynasty, with two great women: Nefertiti and Hatshepsut, along with the great religious reformer, Akhnaton, and the great military genius, the brother of Hatshepsut, Thutmose III. When we come down to the end of that dynasty, we have a teenager who accomplished absolutely nothing, except that he married well. Tutankhamen was known as King Tut. In responsibility, it was probably one of the most responsible dynasties to sit on any throne, at any time in human history. Their major accomplishments were stability, great building, and the spread of a strengthening spirituality, as against a religion.

When we look at Dr. Ben's side, the Rameses, their greatest strengths were consolidation of the previous gains and protection from a future Asian invasion. Both were dynasties of great achievements. The 19th dynasty was dominated by the Rameses. Rameses II was the greatest of the ones who bore that name. He built so many statues of himself that he's called Egypt's supreme egomaniac. That's not against him. His marriage to Nefertiti, from the South, and his building her a temple equal to his own, represent one of the world's magnificent works. He provided massive building, massive sculpturing, and consolidation of the previous gains. It's a toss-up, really.

I happen to favor the 18th, because I'm a little partial to women in power. I was never of the school to separate women from anything that is theirs by right. This dynasty let them go as far as their minds would take them. Out of this dynasty came Akhnaton's mother, the great Queen Tiye, who differed with him on the monotheistic religion, but who told his enemies, and this gives her the role of one of the finest mothers in history, "He is blood of my blood, flesh of my flesh. If you try to harm him, even one hair of his head, I will pull down all the might I can muster down upon you. I still differ with him over this religion. I think he's taking Egypt too far, too fast." Now that's a beautiful qualification. That's his mother. "Being his mother that's one thing, as a person belonging to the old religion, I decry the new religion. That's a separate thing. But he's still blood of my blood, flesh of my flesh."

Opponents of the Afrikaness of the Nile Valley claim that blacks in the U.S. have no claim to that era, because the culture, as they say, did not spread. It did spread. It spread to India. The whole concept of the sacred cow thing was part of the religion of Hathor, sometimes called Hathoru. It did spread, and we need to be concerned. When you look at Egypt and the Nile Valley, the Nile river stretches 4,000 miles into the body of Afrika. There's no way possible, even if the Egyptians were white, there is no way possible they could have built that civilization without other parts of Afrika playing a role in it.

One of the main reasons whites want to claim it, they want to say that our mind did not have the capacity to build anything that massive and that strong. We're saying that you are a liar, and here is the proof. Deal with that. When you read Cheikh Anta Diop's *The Cultural Unity of Black Afrika*, I think his proof is quite substantial. The Yorubas claim their origin is in the Nile Valley, and even among the Wolofs. Both groups were transported heavily during the slave trade. Their descendants are right here, among us today.

We need to look at, what is terribly neglected, is when foreigners hit Egypt, the original Egyptians did not leave Afrika. They moved further down into the physical body of Afrika. They broke with some of their original customs, and amalgamated these customs with local customs. If you study the customs of the people of the South, to the customs of the ancient Egyptians, you find many similarities.

Read Father Temple's work, *The Bantu Philosophy*. He said, "If you want to find out how the ancient Egyptians lived and what they thought, study the Bantu." "Bantu" is a word misunderstood by some Englishmen who heard it. There's no such thing as a Bantu, but he was saying study the indigenous people of Afrika called Bantu. Cheikh Anta Diop has done the best work on the similarities in *The Cultural Unity of Black Afrika*.

This gets into the area confusion in terminology. A lot of this was created by the European, naming things he had no business naming. Some of it has to do with time periods. For instance, one territory may have different names, but the same territory was one and the same. What was Kush became part of what was Nubia. What was Nubia was once part of what is now Ethiopia. There's no contradiction, depending on what time and circumstances you are referring to. It comes down to slight variations with the same geographical area. Kush was mainly in the northern Sudan. Nubia was in the northern Sudan, stretching to the South.

We have to look at West Afrika very particularly, because the original slaves from Afrika came from there. We have to remember the Portuguese slave trade in East Afrika and the Congo. After they were driven out of West Afrika, they had to move their slave trading down, to what is now Angola. They subsequently moved around to East Afrika, and collaborated with the Arab slave trade moving from the North.

Parts of central Afrika held out against the Portuguese until the Berlin Conference, in 1884 and 1885, and built separate and distinct civilizations after the Portuguese entry. They expelled the Portuguese, and not only destroyed the Portuguese churches, but even threw Portuguese cooking utensils in the sea and still went on to build a great civilization in a place called Luanda.

Referring back to the Berlin Conference, European colonialism was in Afrika before the conference, but a good two thirds of Afrika was not under European control. After the Berlin Conference, nearly all of Afrika was under European control, one way or the other. European nations carved up Afrika like slicing a pie.

After colonialism, during the period of independence in Afrika, political anyway, the Organization of Afrikan Unity was formed. People like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Sekou Toure of Guinea, Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, and others, worked toward a unified Afrika. This organization had its origin in the Pan Afrikan Congress in Manchester, England, in 1945. The ideas of Afrikan unity, Afrikan solidarity came out of this conference. It came mainly from the mind of George Padmore, a Trinidadian, who was advisor to Nkrumah. George Padmore is probably one of the most underrated men in the Afrikan freedom movement. The goal of the organization is defined literally, an Afrikan United States, so that Afrikans could protect themselves from the outside. The Arabs, who really have no Afrikan loyalty, saw fit to destroy the effectiveness of this organization.

Joseph Mobutu, head of the Congo, was instrumental in trying to destroy this organization. He's just one of the villains in the piece, and probably one of the most ignorant of the villains in the piece on what has happened.

There were master planners, including some white planners, who systematically planned the disruption of Afrikan nations. When the European colonial powers discovered that they couldn't rule Afrika and easily get its resources, they began to disrupt it. Subsequently, the resources fell into their hands through weakness and the assistance of people like Mobutu.

Though Nelson Mandela is free and President of South Afrika, the policies and sentiment of apartheid are still very much alive. Even if he developed a coalition government, the whites who control the mines and the finances are still going to rule that country. Mandela came into power with whites owning 87% of the land. They still own 87% of the land. Mandela probably doesn't even control his own chauffeur.

Land is essential to a nation's growth. As central an issue as it was in Kenya and Zimbabwe. Land is the basis of nation. If you don't solve the land problem, you might as well not solve any other problem. They are attempting to deal with it. The whites still control large areas of Zimbabwe. One man, Ian Smith, owned land almost equivalent to the geographical size of Delaware, one single human being.

As far as the future of Afrika, politically, it's going to have to get itself together, face reality, and stop imitating Europe. Europe did not plan Afrika and cannot plan Afrikan unity. Europe has no vested interest in Afrikan unity.

Economically, Afrika is going to have to start producing some of the things that they wear. Some of the things they eat. They're going to have to train Afrikans to be in charge of the mines. Be in charge of distribution. Afrikan sea captains must market the goods and services of Afrika to the world. In other words, the total framework of nations have to come together. Landlocked Afrikan nations will have to, through an association with coastal nations, work out some outlet to the sea.

I think things will come about. I don't know what choice the Afrikans have except to bring it about. I just don't believe an entire continent of people are going to concede the fact that colonialists outsiders and Europeans should rule them forever.

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In the Unites States, the past Afrikan consciousness goes further than the seemingly resurgence of today. It goes back to Prince Hall and the Afrikan Lodge; William Wells Brown, who didn't vote; Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner; David Walker and his famous 'Appeal'. All of this was a form of Afrikan consciousness, calling for Afrikan redemption, and subsequently, a return to Afrika. Sometimes this was more than just in the physical sense. Bishop H.M. Turner, near the end of the century, was effective in taking more people back to Afrika than Marcus Garvey. He's unfortunately forgotten.

The consciousness of today is making its mark, in its stubborn raggedy way, without the support it should have. I don't see it giving up. It's part of a spirit, a new spirit. It's a long time coming. Now that it's here, I think it's not going to easily go away.

Looking back on my life from a teenager to eighty years old, probably the greatest feat I am proud of is, I've kept my promise. I have not betrayed the people or betrayed my words. When I honestly thought that I was wrong, I wasn't ashamed to correct myself. I've turned down all kinds of prizes and awards and boldly say that no one has bought my services at any price that was offered. I'm free enough to say that when everything is known about me, nothing will be known that will prove that I was ever, at any time, the enemy of my own people.

People have asked me if I felt our total liberation is hopeless. No, not really. I find situations frustrating, aggravating and unnecessarily complicated. I never once thought it was hopeless. There were times I did not see the pieces that were missing, the obstruction, the lack of understanding, the lack of commitment among large numbers of my own people. Maybe it's because I expected too much of them, because I expect too much of myself.

Our biggest obstacles are, other than European oppression, we have not made the best use of our opportunities. We have not studied our enemies well enough to know that they're weaker than anything we ever thought they were. Victory over them is not so difficult if we came together and really believed it.

If I started fantasizing, snapped my fingers and a hundred billion dollars suddenly became available, I would begin strategic planning. The first thing I would revolutionize, or try to revolutionize, are systems of education. I would be bold about propaganda. I would use it to the hilt. I would not mislead people by telling a lie. I would let them know that they have the same strength as other people, and sometimes more. History will not be a part time thing, but every day. I would not just train the youngsters, I would train the parents. What to do with them. What to do with all that restlessness once they find out.

The bulk of the money would be devoted to education, information, and clarification of the areas of confusion. I doubt if I'd buy a shoe string for myself, because to those who've been given a lot, a lot is expected. I will fulfill those expectations in relationship to others and still live on my own resources.

As far as history healing our families and relationships, I don't know too many who have, or too many who are getting along together. I know that my biological mother and my biological father got along better than any two people I know of. My mother, who was wiser than my father, respected him. She rarely lifted her voice above a whisper. She made suggestions to him of what to do and how to solve problems. Once he solved them, she congratulated him for having such great ideas that was hers in the first place. She never impinged on his manhood. She always made him feel good as a man, as a human being, a father, a provider, and as the authority figure in our home. For this, among many things, she will always be dear to me.

The Knowledge Revolutionary: Chapter 5

Afrikan women were the first women in the world to emerge in history, because the society was structured so they could. Afrikan women were the first women to rise to the head of armies. The first women to head a state, and the first women to become gods. The first clear figures in Afrikan history came out of the 18th dynasty. Hatshepsut, who took over after her father became ill, threw her brother Thutmose out of the lineage, and almost Amos-Neferteri. Within the Candace queens of Ethiopia, one faced down Octavius, who became Caesar Augusta.

Afrikan queens became deities. Nefertiti, is not to be confused with Neferteri. Neferteri became the wife of Rameses II, whose temple is side by side with his. Makeda, sometimes known as Belkis, better known as the Queen of Sheba, ruled an area which is now Ethiopia.

Afrikan women have also been prominent in the resistance movement to foreigners. Notable is Nzinga of Matamba, that later became Angola. She fought the Portuguese 51 of her 83 years, and really stayed the slave trade along that coast for a half a century. Then we come down to the period of Shaka's mother. The last leader of the Ashanti wars, in Ghana, was a woman named Yaa Asantewa, Queen Mother of Ejisu. I've done a series of articles for *Essence* called, "The Black Woman as a Figure in World History." I can dig that up quickly.

Some of the women had great warrior traditions. This continued with Amina of Zaria. She's not only a great warrior, but she built a protective wall around Zaria that still stands. Its called the Zaria Wall, to protect the city from its enemies. While she was of the Mulism faith, she rose to be head of state. Women don't generally rise high in a Muslim state, if it's Arab-oriented. Most people can't distinguish between Arab Islam, and Afrikan Islam.

In Europe, there was Queen Charlotte Sophia, the German-born consort of the English King George III, and great great grandmother of George VI, to name one. Look in J. A. Rogers' *Worlds Great Men of Color*, you'll find her. You'll also find a picture of her. That's in volume two. I think there's something on great women in Europe. There's Mary Seacole, a nurse. She was a forerunner of Florence Nightingale. She was from Jamaica and distinguished herself in the Crimean War. There are many others.

In the Americas, I would mention the early women in the antislavery movement: Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman. I'll mention one, Elaine Wilkins Harper, who behind the scenes assisted in the building of the early independent black institutions, such as the church. There were black women in entertainment like Sister Retta Jones. The most famous white woman of that day was Angelina Patty. Sister Retta Jones was called the "Black Patty." This was during the late 19th century. Look in the book called *Black Women Builders*. I think Carter G. Woodson's organization published it.

In West Afrika, when we talk about matrilinear, that means the lineage comes down through the female part. The female line. That doesn't mean they rule the society, but when it came their turn, nothing could be done to stop it. They generally stood in substitute for the king. In many cases, when there was not a king, they were the king-makers. This goes on right straight to today.

In West Afrika, women control the marketplace. Even in Islamic West Afrika. In East Afrika, it's different. The Arabs believe in a patriarchal society. The men rule. But in West Afrika, the concessions are controlled by women. Although they're headed by men, they're controlled by women. If you read Cheikh Anta Diop's *The Cultural Unity of Black Afrika*, it shows you the origin of this. It did not mean female dominance. This is where we get confused. We get into the western thing about female dominance. It meant female privilege to share in the rule. It also meant female responsibilities. This carries on right straight to today, right here, because behind the scenes, women still control many of our churches and most of our social organizations.

Afrikan women do not need a women's liberation movement in the sense of what it means here. Maybe for some other reasons, like circumcision. The adjustment needs to be made within the context of their society. It is a disaster to bring in an alien society that has no understanding of their indigenous customs. The same thing is true about those who live away from Afrika. The women's lib movement has nothing to do with what they're about, their needs or their adjustment. There was no wife beating in Afrika. There was no teenage pregnancy in Afrika, until recently. I mean, what you've got in Afrika now are importations. In the first place, if you hit a woman in Afrika, in the older period, you got to deal with fifty cousins and uncles. She was so tied with both sides of the family, you brought disgrace on both sides.

When women from Afrika come here and imitate the European women, they're under the impression that this is a form of liberation. This is a form of buying into a degenerate society. They don't know that they had something better than straightening their hair. There's nothing wrong with their hair in the first place.

In Ghana, President Nkrumah, during his administration, almost underestimated the power of the market women. They damn near ran him out of office. They put him in power. If they had come to his rescue, they could have kept him there too. The beginning of his downfall started when he pulled away from the people, especially the women. Several times, they could see him whenever they wanted to, at least one day a week. You could have open sessions without appointment. They could just wait their turn, come in and talk to him. He stopped doing that, and lost communication with the common people. They could have been his ears and his eyes out there on the street. They could have told him what was happening. Prices were being risen and their own goods were being priced out of the market. A whole lot of people were talking socialism, but stealing the state deaf, dumb and blind. These women, they got no respect. They could walk around, see what was going bad, and say, "Look Kwame, there are thieves around you. Get rid of the thieves." There wouldn't have been no sophisticated effort about it.

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There have been traitors among Afrikan people as far back as getting on the boat, getting off the boat, and in the plantation system. In the Caribbean Islands, certain language groups were held together. You could identify a man just from the neighborhood he lived in. You could recognize what cultural group he belonged to just by the area he lived in. There was a kind of loyalty. This continued up until about the middle of the 19th century. Most of the slave revolts in the Caribbean Islands were planned by house servants. Most of the slave revolts in the United States were betrayed by house servants. In the U.S., the house servant had no loyalty to the field servant, while in the Caribbean Islands, the house servant had a connection to the field servant.

Some of the traitorous acts caused disastrous events in both the Caribbean and the U.S. Traitors to the race began to divide themselves based on color, and who's related to the master in the house, who has the European blood, etcetera.

There are super traitors today in the highest of positions. Traitors with horn rimmed glasses, satchet cases, living at split-levels in the suburbs. We've got them very sophisticated now. Their main goal is to look after themselves at the expense of others, no loyalty to the group. They're sitting at your best schools, giving them the illusion that they're better than the rest of us. Building their nest at the expense of the rest of us, while still pretending that they're part of us. In the final analysis, they know they've got no place to go, except among us.

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The Columbus myth is really a Western myth, the myth of the western hero. Around this myth is the basis of our protracted holocaust. To glamorize people who engaged in mass murder or set mass murder in motion, European history books have rationalized it for decades. They have annual parades in memory of these heroes, to the point where we're supposed to forget about what they actually did. If you had a parade in memory of Hitler, you'd start one of the greatest riots in history. Yet, what Columbus did was tantamount to what Hitler did.

Part of maintaining the European myth is dismissing what Afrikans did in the development of the Americas. Well, they furnished the labor and the strength. Without them there would have been no plantation system. The plantation system gave Europe the wealth to recover from the Middle Ages. All that money, time and energy spent on the charade called the Crusades. The slave trade laid the basis for the modern scientific and technical world and modern capitalism.

Several hundred years before Columbus, Afrikans played a major role in the development of the Americas. They proved something which people still haven't paid much attention to. They proved that Afrikans can mingle their blood, their culture, their language with other people, without destroying the original culture. They created a third culture that's a combination of the two originals without hardly any hint of war between them. Afrikans were able to make significant contributions to early American civilization. It's never been done quite the same way before or since. Look at all the evidence of the Afrikans among the Olmecs and Mayans. Their journeys in the Americas. We've got no evidence on any major wars between the Afrikans and the indigenous Americans.

It's extremely important that Afrikans today know of their contributions to early America. It's part of their whole self. It's part of our children's whole self to know that we contributed heavily in building this hemisphere. We laid the foundation for it. Without us, it would not be quite the same.

Getting at the truth of our history is a difficult task. Every human effort has been made to keep us away from it. In the 15th and 16th century, when Europe needed a rationale and a justification for the slave trade, they had to change the course of history. The church, principally the Catholic Church at first, gave them that rationale.

It is completely baffling how black people, when they learn that the church they pray in was the agent that initiated their enslavement, could continue to do so. It seems that someone should search to find a spirituality that never committed this kind of human atrocity. If you are involved in Christianity, Judaism or Islam, you are involved in a religion that openly and proudly sanctioned the worst human tragedy in the history of the planet. That has to work on the conscious of somebody.

Prior to that period, in historical terms, there was a well-recorded history. There was Europe coming out of the Middle Ages. There was Afrika, mostly North Afrika, involved. There were independent Afrikan states along the coast of East Afrika. There were independent states in West Afrika, and greater independent states in inner West Afrika. These states lasted a hundred and fifty years into the slave trade period. Some of them were empires. One state was larger than the United States.

Afrika never fell because she was corrupt from within. It was always attacked when it was at its height, but Afrikans never felt called on to defend themselves. They didn't think they needed it.

Now, how did the changing of history affect Afrikans? Firstly, they are not aware to this day how it affected them. And it did affect them profoundly. When they were being gradually left out of history, they were not aware of what was being done. They would awaken a few hundred years later, with missionary indoctrination and propaganda of the slave traders, they would suddenly awaken to discover that they were no longer a factor in history. The only history they knew was a history that was related to slave traders. That was their history.

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I am a teacher, scholar and activist, a political activist as well as a teacher. In this late date, I am still a nationalist, a Pan Afrikanist, and socialist. I still hold with those terms in spite of the fact that socialism has been betrayed all over the world, especially in Russia. Pan Afrikanism has been misunderstood.

I will believe in Pan Afrikanism until my last days. That means I believe in the unification of the whole of the Afrikan world. All Afrikan people everywhere. Those in Afrika being the heart, the majority. Those in Asia, and those in the West Indies, or Caribbean Islands. Those in the United States. I mean all Afrikan people. I believe in a world union of Afrikan people, an Afrikan world community. Socialism, I mean a caring society, a society where a man will get according to his needs, irrespective of his ability to work.

A nationalist means that my first loyalty is to my own people, my own kith and kin. That doesn't mean I don't love and respect the people of the rest of world. But my own kith and kin gets first preference.

In order to develop an Afrikan world community, an understanding of Afrikan people, their role in history is essential. Realizing that we have to develop a nationalism that goes across all religious and political lines. We cannot say that one is a Holy Roller, one is a Seventh Day Adventist, and one is a Jehovah's Witness. It doesn't matter. If you're an Afrikan person, then you belong in the camp. Whether you're Muslim or Christian, you belong in the camp. We cannot divide ourselves along those lines.

It is no secret that I was critical of the Million Man March in Washington D.C. My basic criticism is that it is a ceremonial waste of time, and a waste of money. If we take the same amount of money, the same amount of energy and put it into the community, we could revitalize our community's overnight. If we take the same amount of money it takes for transportation, we could have a chain of supermarkets throughout the community. We could have factories making our own shoes.

There are a whole lot of people leading the march who want to lead it. Who did not lift their voice while the Arab slave trade was still going on in Afrika right today, when it was mentioned. Why are they so vocal now, when they still haven't protested slavery in Mauritania and in the Sudan. Slavery in Afrika now, with the Arabs, is more brutal when it comes to black women. They're literally killing black men and imprisoning black women. They work in the fields in the day and used sexually at night. Nothing is being said about it. These people are cowards and hypocrites.

I happen to believe that this march is a Louis Farrakhan con game. That Farrakhan's mission is really to make us forget that he set up the atmosphere and the attitude that led to the assassination of Malcolm X. While I do not believe the Nation of Islam brought off the assassination, they did permit themselves to be used as the handmaidens of those who planned it. I don't think they were brilliant enough to plan it from beginning to end, but they fell into the trap of those who did plan it, and Farrakhan was one of those who led them into this trap.

There are going to be people critical of me for what I am saying, but I still think there are better things you could come together for, and spend with your time and your energy for. You're coming together and putting on a show to wash the ego of a faker. I don't think this is proper. Years from now, people will look back on this event knowing full well that the results were zero. Look back on it, and say this was the old hustler's greatest hustle.

Now if some men go back to their communities and use the March to do some positive things, I'll admit it if this happens, but I don't see it happening. All these announcements have been made before and nothing happened. I don't think anything will happen this time. In the first place, if they were committed to the community, they wouldn't have to march to do it. They wouldn't need the stimulation of a march. They'd just go ahead and do it. They wouldn't have to march to Washington to be stimulated.

Our forced migration in this country helped to make this country what it is. We have a claim that's outstanding. That's going to have to be satisfied. We've contributed to the culture and to the direction of this country. We live in an American society that's now dying and we can bring it alive if we think it's worth being brought alive.

With all of our faults and all the things that's crippling our development, we are a nation within a nation looking for a nationality. Once we find that nationality, our relationship to Afrika, we will join others in marshaling our true strength, our peopleness, our nationness once again. We will stop answering to the term "minority." We will stop acting like a minority. We will stop feeling like a minority. We will know then that we are world people.

We must stop killing ourselves about belonging to mother countries not of our making. Languages not of our making. Stop worshipping gods not of our choosing and realize that wherever we are on the face of the earth, we are an Afrikan people. No matter where our bodies are, our heartbeat, our future, our political being is in Afrika. We are an Afrikan people wherever we are on this earth. We have to learn how to relax about being an Afrikan people. How to use it as a source of strength, not as a source of retreat or regret. We must wear it like a badge of honor and contribute to it as though it was a new world religious order, which indeed is what it can be.

As for my library, 20,000 volumes have already been given to the Robert Woodruff Library Center at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia, and some other libraries. In the event of my passing, all of the books that are not in the Woodruff Center, all of the African and African American, all of the relevant books, will be sent there. Where the Woodruff Library has duplicates, those books will go to the Africana Studies Center Library at Cornell University in New York. My children's books will go to Public School (PS) 121 at 140th Street and Eighth Avenue in Harlem.

I just hope the best use will be made of them, in as much as I have traveled over large portions of the world to collect them. I've collected books from different places, libraries and little book stores in little known countries. I have books that cannot be bought again because they were published in like 500 editions, and when that edition was sold out, neither the publisher or the author had enough money to get another edition out.

I am preparing the audio and video tapes to be sent first and foremost to the audio and video division of the Auburn Avenue Research on African American Culture and History Library in Atlanta. Some are already gone. A duplicate copy of those tapes will go to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, New York.

Maybe one day there will be books of my papers published. That will be something that will be thought of later. I am limited in preparing for immortality. I think that my work is so unfinished, and I am so unready to leave. It is something I try not to let dwell on my mind too much. Inevitably, I know that everyone has an end, but I haven't planned mine as much as some people think I should.

Ten, twenty-five, a hundred years from now, if Afrikan historians feel obliged to write about me, I hope they can say that he did the best he could to tell the truth. When he discovered that he was wrong, he corrected himself. He was committed to liberation, uplifting of his own people and there's no evidence that he ever turned on his own advocacy of freedom and independence or betrayed any aspects of that long freedom struggle. And to our precious young people, they are really the seeds of tomorrow's crop, and our hope for immortality rests with them. They owe it to themselves, and to us, to pick out the finest things among us as examples, follow these examples and improve upon them. They are the makers of tomorrow. We changed the world once. We'll change it again.

Afterword



Kwaku Person-Lynn, Ph.D. (left) and Dr. John Henrik Clarke (right)

We have had the opportunity to look into a portion of the life, knowledge and works of John Henrik Clarke, who is probably our main proponent in exposing us to Afrikan world history and how it relates to other parts of the world, especially Europe. Personally, I refer to that as “external history.” The focus now is what I refer to as “internal history,” the history of our families.

Dr. Clarke was the best at what he did, but the best historians we will ever know are the elders in our families. They retain a history that will more than likely never reach a book, but is so important in our own development. We must know where we came from and why we are the way we are. That can only be answered by researching our own family history.

Alex Haley, through his *Roots*, showed us how important it was to find his family in Afrika. Most of us will probably not go that far, no matter where our ancestral origin is. But some of us still have great grandmothers or fathers, great uncles, aunts and so forth, who carry the history of their families better than any one else. What is so final, and so cold a reality, is that when those elder members of our families die, the history they carry dies with them. If I had not interviewed Dr. Clarke over the years, look at how much we would have missed. Now that he is no longer physically here, his words become even more valuable.

For those just starting out creating a family, if they do not have the family history from their elders, they will have nothing to hand down to their children. That can be a tragedy. There will always be an empty void in their lives. They will not know who and where they came from. There will always be a detachment from the past.

The way to alleviate that is very simple. Just use your cassette recorder or video camera, or borrow one, buy some ninety minute tapes (Chrome - Type II, or Professional Quality video tape, because they last longer) and interview the elders in your family. You will be completely amazed at how much you will learn. It will probably be one of the most interesting experiences you will encounter.

What will make that experience even more remarkable, is when the young ones become old enough to appreciate their own family history and begin to ask, about it you will have something to which to refer them. That will be an exhilarating experience for them and will help to put some of the pieces together as to who they are.

If you want to take it to another level, have the tapes transcribed on computer disk so that if you want to print out a copy for younger members, family reunions, or whatever the occasion, you can always do so. You, or someone you know, will have a computer and printer. Who knows, you may even have enough data from a book.

What this all adds up to, if you are versed with your internal history, and have a working knowledge of your external history, is that you will probably be closer to being a whole human being than anyone you know, and you will never fall victim to that age old question, "Who am I?"

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