This issue of Uhuru is dedicated to African-American manhood. Why? Well, aside from the fact that if there was no African manhod there would be no manhood at all, this is an extremely crucial time for the African male in America. Since the beginning of American history to the present, African men have suffered under the mental degradation and the physical exploitation of a system which they were not expected to survive.

On the plantations, African men were exploited for their reproductive capabilities—today a tall, dark, handsome man is what every woman wants. On the auction blocks they were exploited for their working abilities—today college and professional sports teams (not to mention boxing promoters) will do anything to "buy" them. When the African man became old and could no longer fulfill "massa's" needs in the field, he was sold or made to become a butler—today once a star athlete breaks his arm, he can't even be "traded" but has to revert to doing commercials to make up for the loss of money coming into his pocket. When the African man exhibited his God-given intellect and wisdom, he was discouraged, ridiculed, beaten, even murdered for being so foolish to think for one moment that he was something more than mere chattel. Today intelligent African-American men such as Spike Lee, Louis Farrakhan, and Leonard Jeffries are trivialized by their counterparts (and vice versa). We are two halves of one whole. I, like many other sistahs, don't have many positive male figures in my family—my father was never there for us, my mother raised all of us alone, and I've had a few male cousins in jail. I am also one of many African-American women whose experiences with African-American males have sometimes proved disappointing and hurtful, but my experiences have not turned me against the Black man because I realize that would be turning against myself. Rather I just take into consideration that it takes time to reverse decades of miseducation, and there's only so much women can do to help you without being labeled as "overbearing," "dominant," or "henpecking"—as sister Ali has accused us of being in her "guidelines."

You brothas must come together on your own, first, and find solutions to regain the power, position and respect you once had long ago before you were brought to America. All we ask, as African-American women, is that you remember that our struggles are parallel and the future generations of all of humanity depend heavily on the rehabilitation of your collective minds and spirits. We have faith that you are "Gonna Work it Out" for all of us. Do not allow the notion of extinction to frighten you because once you are extinct, the African woman is sure to follow and without the two of us there can be no humanity at all, for it is our seed which spawned all you see before you. A Luta Continua.

"Your manhood is not from the waist down, it's from the neck up"

—Na'im Akbar
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By Dr. Linus Hoskins

For the past two years, President George Bush has garnered much geopolitical currency by his public enunciation of a "new world order". The fact of the matter is that there is absolutely nothing new about this so-called "new world order." The only thing that is new about it is that instead of the European France, Britain, Portugal, Spain, Rome, Italy, etc., in the vanguard, we now have Euro-America in the vanguard as the last/sol survivor European superpower. Hence, President Bush's assertion that America is "a European nation."

This article analyzes the "new world order" from an Afrocentric, geopolitical perspective, with special emphasis on its impact on the African male. It is this writer's contention that the geopolitical realities of the "new world order" are simply a European collusive masterplan to (1) deal with the "international Negro question" (2) ossify the fact that the Black (African) man still has no rights which the White (European) man is bound to respect, and (3) perpetuate the myth/Big Lie of White supremacy and White invincibility. In other words, how to deal with and perpetuate the continued domination and oppression of the world's majority non-European/African peoples in the twenty-first century is the geopolitical reality of the "new world order."

The national origins of this lie/doctrine of White supremacy and White invincibility lie in the dissent by Justice John Marshall Harlan in the 1896 Plessy vs. Ferguson legal segregation case. In this case dealt with the "national Negro question." In his dissent, Justice Harlan wrote: "...The White race deems itself to be the dominant race in this country. And so it is, in prestige in achievements, in education, in wealth, and in power. So, I doubt not, it will continue to be for all time, if it remains true to its great heritage and holds to the principles of constitutional liberty..."

Another national origin of the doctrine of White Supremacy and White invincibility is the 1857
from Moscow "or the dictator of human being. But on the ism, self respect and mankind. In today's geopolitical reality, it also does not matter whether that Black (African) man is a head of state, a local mayor, an elected public official, a local police officer, an appoint-

ded Judge, a civilian, a tenured professor, or chair of a department at a major university, etc.

In other words, regardless of his position or status, the Black (African) male is still a Nigger--an individual, not an equal human being, who has no rights which should be respected by the White, or European male.

Let us also recall that even though former President Reagan called the eastern European communist government of the Soviet Union the "evil empire," the personality, dignity, self respect, humanism, and manhood of its head of state, President Mikhail Gorbachev, was NOT dehumanized, attacked, denounced or devalued. They remained intact. There was no character assassination. He was never humiliated. President Mikhail Gorbachev was not described or labeled as the "devil from Moscow" or the "dictator of Moscow" or "a modern-day Satan," simply because he is a fellow, equally civilized European human being. But on the other hand, the dignity, humanism, self-respect and manhood of the non-European Head of State President Saddam Hussein of Iraq have been attacked, dehumanized, denounced and devalued simply because he is not a fellow, equally civilized European human being.

Moreover, we must be reminded that there is a direct correlation between a government's national and foreign policy. For example, if we take a close look at the "selective prosecution" or harassment of elected African American male officials, viz, Rep. Julian Bond, former Rep. William H. Gray, Rep. Gus Savage, former D.C. Mayor Marion Barry, Rep. Harold Ford, Rep. Floyd Flake, Mayor Arrington, deceased Chicago Mayor Harold Washington, Rep. Mervyn Dymally, Rep. Clarence Mitchell III, Mayor Kenneth Gibson, Cleveland Mayor Michael White, Justice Robert Collins, etc., we see that at the international/foreign policy level, the Euro-American government has afforded the same treatment/harassment to elected male heads of state of African/non-European descent. For example, as president of Panama, Manuel Antonio Noriega was "decapitated" during his opening remarks to the court on 16 September 1991 at his trial.

Regardless of his position or status, the Black African male is still a Nigger-an individual, not an equal human being, who has no rights which should be respected by the White, or European male.

in Miami, Florida, the White Euro-American government prosecutor, Michael Sullivan, described Noriega as "just another crooked cop" and stated that although Noriega "was big in Panama" now "he is a small man in a general's uniform." As prime minister of Grenada, Maurice Bishop was diplomatically insulted by the Reagan administration and his government and popular revolution were eventually "blown away" during the U.S. invasion of Grenada on 25 October 1983. Prime Minister of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega was considered a "thug," a "little man," and "the Caribbean's Saddam Hussein." President Fidel Castro of Cuba has to be "cut down to size."

As president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, a non-European, has been subjected to the same Eurocentric geopolitical/military treatment, harassment and humiliation accorded to elected male African-American officials. According to published reports, President Bush attempted to force Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to swallow a specific punishment "that may be even more painful than a military rout: public humiliation before his people and the Arab world so that he cannot emerge from the battlefield as a martyr."

In addition, the Eurocentric geopolitical argument is that Saddam Hussein must be taught a lesson--military aggression will not be tolerated. But why isn't the European president of South Africa, Frederik deKlerk, also taught a lesson for his military aggression and U.N. document- ed destabilization cum carnage inflicted upon the independent, sovereign nation-states of Southern Africa, particularly the front-line states and their innocent people? In addition, why was no attempt made to punish or teach the former Soviet Union president, Leonid Brezhnev, a lesson for his military aggression against the non-European people of Afghanistan in 1979? Why the obdurate, albeit paranoid, determination to teach President Saddam Hussein a lesson? Why are certain heads of state allowed to use military aggression and others are not? Is this the reality/racism of the "new world order" or is it in fact a contemporary Eurocentric geopoliticalization of the 1857 Dred Scott decision to the extent that a non-European Head of State "has no rights which the (European head of state) is bound to respect?"
In 1903, W.E.B DuBois stated that the “problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.” I am suggesting that the problem of the twenty-first century is the problem of nationalism, i.e., the inability and arrogant resistance on the part of Europeans to treat, accept and respect the Black (African) male as an equal, full fledged human being who also has the natural rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Speak Your mind

What should be done to improve African-American male-female relationships?

I personally feel that males and females should communicate on a more serious level and simply have more respect for one another.

They should learn to communicate more freely and to be honest. Also they should know one another’s personalities. This could help them to communicate.

—"Bernadette" Mae Pickens

I believe that African-American male-female relationships can improve if the African-American couple respect and trust one another more. We should bypass all negative stereotypes that have been put upon us by others and focus more on the positive characteristics of our African ancestors.

I believe that RESPECT is due. It is about time that we treat each other as adults, as either a gentleman or a lady if that is what they are. If they do not deserve respect then move on and find someone that is deserving because we need to unify. If you don’t have anything nice to say don’t say anything at all! Peace!

—TeAnna H. Copeland

Brothers and sisters, what a question! First thing’s first, they should know what they want in the relationship. What I am saying is that the African-American relationship should be a very special relationship. Secondly there should be trust, respect and care for the relationship to be ROSY. I believe without trust, a relationship can’t exist. Cheers

—Nudia

I think that the way that relationship should be bonded is by brothers treating the sisters as queen—as someone highly exalted instead of a hooker on the street. —Seriously
Castration of the mind is a much greater crime for what is conceived in the womb can never be stolen from you, sold away, mutilated or raped.

It is becoming rapidly clear as the seeds of my mind are nourished with the thunderstorms of thoughts and the enrichment of books that it is no longer necessary for whitemen to hang Blackboys from trees, looking up to their dangling, mutilated bodies like the pagan worship of a Great Black God with a little modern technology and broken Blackbrains it is possible to alter the direction of the immeasurable potential of a race.

2.

I used to think (in my infinite ignorance) that Blackmen weren't really needed for anything. I used to believe that Blackwomen could run their households, rear their children, walk their dogs, sweep their floors, runwhitemen's corporations all by themselves but as age, wisdom, my feminine desires (and God) bestowed themselves upon me I realized that a strong Blackwoman without a Strong Blackman to help her run that household rear those children walk that dog sweep those floors and run those whitemen's corporations is definitely a Black castration.

3.

Maybe in 1992 Blackmale castration can be bought to a whole new level and 1992 castration can = Blackmale lobotomization. maybe it will be much easier to sit back and observe the direct removal of the Black mind as opposed to watching the daily deterioration of Black male strength and ideas and babies (which are all equal and equivalent to one another)
Objects of your discarded
interest delight me
(like the abandoned bottle
you left on my living
room table),
they remind me
that they too
were once subjects
of your undivided
attention.
The curve of the
glass is not
so different from
the curve of my hips
that your hand
slid down
absently
when we were
alone in that room.
Yes, there are
days that I forget
how the sideways
glance from your
autumn eyes
reminded me
of leaves crashing
to the earth
in defiance
of the long dark
mother that
nurtured them.
Reminded me
of my mangled emotions,
all that remained
after the rejection of
the first boy I kissed.
(and how that
suddenly doesn't seem
so long ago...)
Days that I forget the
soundless slide of
your smile and
the overwhelming sensuality
of your refusal to
"talk to me."
the
frustration that
hovers above me
when you leave
my house
leaves a silence-
so distracting
that I find myself
scowling at its
incessant irritation.
Forcing me to
count the days
until your return
fills the void
that your absence
has created.

By Katika Thomas

untitled

in need you now
more than ever
you left me without a
warning
i see your beautiful reflection
resurface under the scheme of
things
and take me again
and again
and again
it seems like a lifetime
when i see you again
what will i do?
will i surrender?
his being is more than i can
bear
his face-full of
sorrow
because of what he left
his beauty cannot be described
with words
as precious as an onyx jewel
his person is as strong as his
emotion
and swear to never leave me
again

by krista franklin

untitled #2

what is the problem?
funky, funky, funky,
little dreads
sittin upon yo african head
filled with nothin thats gonna
do you or me any good.
do they teach you about
yo environment, yo people
yo community, yo life?
hell no, brotha!
tell them what you want
and if they don't give it to
you, go get it yo own damn
self.
do they teach you about
marcus, malcolm, huey,
nelson?
no, just king and his magnifi-
cent dream
(it's easier for them to
stomach),
can't give you an inch of
militancy,
cuz you just might act on it,

by katika thomas
As a daughter of a student of sociology, I have always been interested in what one would call the deviant. At a very early age I read crime studies and listened quietly as my mother talked to other adults about individuals who murdered several people seemingly without rhyme or reason. I watched television movies and documentaries and wondered if there is a way to understand how these types of people came from and how they were made. What kind of person would grab people off the street, brutalize them, murder them and bury their bodies in their backyard or in the walls of their home?

What kind of person would grab people off the street, brutalize them, murder them and bury their bodies in their backyard or in the walls of their home?
mer's blockbuster thriller, The Silence of the Lambs. One character, when explaining to a rookie F.B.I. agent the vague traits of a serial killer, said "They rarely kill outside their own ethnic race." Once this line came to mind, I was forced to research further.

After reading various articles about Dahmer, many reports made reference to the fact that he had a dislike for African-Americans which manifested itself in confrontations that he had with African-Americans while he was in the Army from 1978-1981. Following his time spent in the service, Dahmer spent ten months in prison in 1988 for a child molestation charge. Reporters alluded to the fact that once in prison, Dahmer was victimized by African-American men, and in an August People magazine, Dahmer's stepmother was quoted as saying, "Everyone knows what happens to child molesters in prison. I don't know if that's what happened, but when he came out he was hardened, and he hated Black people."

These early experiences further sparked my curiosity and did not seem to sufficiently answer my question. Once again I asked myself, "What would motivate Dahmer to make African-American men the target of his murdering spree, and furthermore, what would be his reasoning behind dismembering and cannibalizing these men once he murdered them?" With each new article I read I seemed to analyze the question further, and then I proceeded to verbalize it to people that I knew. Most just shrugged; some looked repulsed that I would even be thinking about the subject, and one friend looked at me with an irritated expression and exclaimed, "He was crazy." But even that answer, in all its complex simplicity, did not soothe my troubled mind, and still I asked, "What would motivate him to do that?"

In one book I turned to, The Murdering Mind by David Abrahamsen, M.D., he wrote: "As important as it is to probe the deepest recesses of the murderer's mind in order to clarify his motivation, it is just as important--and fascinating--to study the victim and the often perplexingly close tie between killer and victim, a relationship which often illuminates the character of each."

Some articles that I turned to said that there was no real pattern to the serial killers' victimization, but more of a "random" killing, so to speak. But Dahmer seemed to me, perhaps, a new case. Maybe his murdering was not so random after all, and more interesting, perhaps, as Dr. Abrahamsen stated, there is some close tie between murderer and victim.

"What would motivate Dahmer to make African-American men the target of his murdering spree, and furthermore, what would be his reasoning behind dismembering and cannibalizing these men once he murdered them?"

Dahmer seemed to be a man full of complexities. In the same August People magazine, he was described as being "a disturbed young man--an alcoholic, a homosexual who despised gays and a convicted child molester." Turning my attention back to Dr. Abrahamsen's book I recalled a passage when he described murderers as feeling "...beset, trapped in an intense conflict growing out of the struggle between their sexual and self-preserving feeling on the one hand and their external surroundings on the other."

Dahmer was an alienated and lost individual who was left by his mother at age eighteen, which could have undoubtedly initiated feelings of abandonment and rejection. We could probably also assume that he may have been physically and/or sexually assaulted in prison, maybe even before that. He was probably overwhelmed with feelings of powerlessness, among other deep feelings of hurt, frustration and sexual confusion, which is what may have caused him to act out and murder so violently.

Dahmer's supposed prison assault (undoubtedly perpetrated by African-American men), could have added a new dimension to his "hatred" for African-Americans. Being assaulted in any form does illicit extreme feelings of powerlessness, and in most cases of mentally ill individuals, it seems this powerlessness is what they seek to eradicate. There seems to be a desire to turn the tables, which would allow themselves to be the one in power, and this could, perhaps, be one reason why the majority of Dahmer's victims were African-American men. After feeling powerless to stop an assault on him by Black men, Dahmer may have wanted to be in a position of power over African-American men, which he may have gained after murdering them. However, this is all my personal theory.

Meditating on Dahmer's crimes also brought to mind another psychiatric essay that I read last summer entitled, The Cress Theory of Color-Confrontation and Racism (White Supremacy) by Dr. Francis Cress Welsing. In this essay Dr. Welsing states that "...the white or color-deficient Europeans responded psychologically with a profound sense of numerical inadequacy and color inferiority, in their confrontations with the majority of the world's people--all of whom possessed varying degrees of color-producing capacity. This psychological response, whether conscious or unconscious, revealed an inadequacy based on the most fundamental part of their being, their external appearance. As might be anticipated in terms of modern psychological theories, whites defensively developed an uncontrollable sense of hostility and aggression."

Perhaps these feelings also had a somewhat subconscious, although profound, effect on Dahmer's actions, as well. Since African-American men probably represented people of power on one level (by assaulting Dahmer physically), maybe there was also what could be called a second level of powerlessness which may have manifested itself, subconsciously, in Dahmer's psyche. This second level being his unconscious fear of genetic inferiority and genetic annihilation, which would deal with the survival of himself and those who resembled him, his race.

In order to clarify and organize these new ideas, I returned to the original quote of Dr. David Abrahamsen
about the murderers he had studied, and connected these two ideas. Although Dr. Abrahamsen doesn't use the same terminology as Dr. Welsing, the concepts of Dr. Welsing's theory are vaguely present.

"...Intense conflict growing out of the struggle between their sexual and self-preserving feelings (fear of genetic annihilation) and their external surroundings (a majority non-white world) on the other." (Boldface and italics added.)

Once I came to these conclusions I decided to take the ideas a bit further which led me to the second part of my original question: "What may have been Dahmer's motive / purpose behind dismembering and cannibalizing his victims' bodies?"

Some psychiatrists say that serial killers butcher the bodies of their victims for several different reasons: concealment and souvenirs being the two major reasons. Cannibalism among serial killers, I discovered, is rare, and there have not been many conclusions as to why this occurs or what the motivation is behind it. After I had theorized about Dahmer's motivation for killing at least six African-American men out of the eleven victims that were found in his apartment in Wisconsin, I used those ideas to develop further.

If, as I said earlier, Dahmer victimized African-American men to feel power--power he may have felt they possessed before he murdered them--; then it would not be logical to assume that eating, or taking part in eating, parts of these African-American men may also have filled him with a feeling of power.

There is an old saying which says, "you are what you eat"; perhaps we should take this as a literal statement when dealing with Dahmer. Perhaps eating the flesh of "the powerful" also succeeded in providing him with a sense of power. It does seem that he was definitely preoccupied with becoming unified in some way with his victims. Tracy Edwards, the 31 year old who was the only victim who escaped Dahmer's apartment, said on one television interview that before attempting to

murder Edwards, Dahmer said that once Edwards was dead he (Edwards) would be "a part of him (Dahmer)."

I also noticed that there were two particular organs which Dahmer was supposedly planning to eat before he was apprehended. He confessed to police that the human heart that was found on his freezer shelf had been saved "to eat later." The second organ was some severed genitalia, which was found on the stove in a kettle. One of these organs he confessed to planning to eat, the other was found in a kettle, which would lead one to believe that consumption was impending.

There were no boundaries once I opened my mind to new ideas, so I asked myself, "What is the symbolism of these two particular organs of the body?" The actual function of the heart is to pump blood to all areas of the body. It is the life source, or power source of the body. Symbolically the heart is representative of the place of courage. In the Black community when one says someone has "a lot of heart" they usually mean that that person is fearless, gutsy, courageous, even powerful. This is just one symbolism of heart, but it could be used in this particular theory.

The second organ, the African-American male genitalia, has long been a feared, even coveted, instrument in the white male psyche. When mobs would lynch African men they would often castrate them before or afterwards, and there are written records which have stated that it was not rare for post-lynching souvenirs to be taken home--Black male genitalia were occasionally among those souvenirs. Black male genitalia have also been a symbol of power. For centuries people have wondered and pondered the size of the Black penis compared to other men's penis size, and one of the main concerns of the white supremacist psyche was, and still is, the Black male's supposed sexual preoccupation with white women. Thus, the genitals of African-American men has long represented some level of power (in sexual terms).

If power was Dahmer's ultimate obsession then it would make sense on several levels, no matter how abstract those levels, that his victims be, for the most part, African-American men. I cannot stress enough that this is all pure opinion and conjecture based upon the sources I've studied. It could be just as easy for one to believe that Jeffery Dahmer's violent murders were the manifestation of his personal aggression against the homosexual side of him, which he detested, as it is for me to believe that his acts were the manifestation of his subconscious attempts to attain power--power that he believed lay in the "heart" and genitals of all Black men, whether they be straight or gay. Perhaps there is validity to my theories, perhaps not.

The real issue lies in the fact that all humans, especially African-Americans (particularly African-American men), must begin to critically analyze things with more frequency. We should not take everything at face value or accept everything that is handed to us. We, as African-Americans, must begin to make ourselves more vigilant against attacks on our communities. Dahmer was just one monster which resided among us and murdered ruthlessly, AIDS and ignorance are two more, and there will undoubtedly be more where they came from.
Young People Abandon Christianity for Cultural Identity

by Jinida Ojiwawh

Most of us can remember the days when our mothers, aunts, or grandmothers used to drag us out of bed every Sunday morning, after kickin' it all night Saturday, to make us get up for church.

Not paying any attention to the preacher's sermon on Jesus, morality or how to be good Christians, most of us probably passed notes between friends, ate candy, or talked about old ladies' hats. We barely paid enough attention to the sermon to question or ponder the pastor's interpretation of biblical scripture.

Yet for some reason, more young brothers and sisters are questioning those early Christian teachings and not finding satisfactory answers. Therefore they have taken it upon themselves to seek the answers in non-Christian religions—mainly Islam and African Hebrewism.

Kent State University student Bob Putnam is one of them. Fed up with the injustices which continue to occur in this predominantly Christian nation, Putnam decided to seek a more peaceful religious outlet.

"Watching society maintain its usual position on war, violence, rape, etc., made me change," he explained.

Known spiritually as Abdur, which is Arabic for "servant of Allah (the creator)," he converted to Islam, or took Shahada, last year when he was a freshman. Now a nineteen year old sophomore majoring in history, Putnam hasn't turned back (as some critics of young converts predict they would do) and is still working towards living up to his new way of life.

"My new-found religion teaches discipline, being morally aware, and how to live your life," he said about why Islam is the way for him.

Apparently Putnam didn't find those same qualities in Christianity. Since it is not normal to have questions and answers during a preacher's sermon in the Christian church, Putnam said he didn't have much opportunity to question his pastor when he did attend church—or when he even paid attention for that matter.

"I couldn't quite say (if I agreed with the preacher) because I always fell asleep," he admitted, seemingly with no remorse. "The only thing I probably learned from Christianity were stories from the bible like Noah and Sampson and Delilah, but the images of biblical people were white," he said. And he never really thought about questioning that because he said it was just something people in his church accepted.

Now, his family, like those of many young converts, is having trouble accepting his religion. Putnam's parents, especially his mother, were very much into the Christian church. He said they couldn't understand how he could possibly be involved in any other religion but Christianity.

"They thought I was just supposed to be washed in the blood of Jesus and that's all," he said.

Former Kent student, Yashuwa, who was known as Noah Williams when he was a freshman at Kent last year studying architecture, said his family took his conversion to Nubian Islamic Hebrewism harder than Putnam's parents did. They too thought it was a fad and a phase he
was going through, assuring him that it was "fashionable" for young people to be proud of their culture, and pleading with him to break away from this fad.

"They were extremely upset," Yashuwa said quite bluntly. "Because of their Christian background they had an extremely difficult time dealing with what this conversion meant because they had preconceived ideas (about Islam)."

A Nubian Islamic Hebrew is basically what the name states. Nubian means people of African descent; Islamic and Hebrew mean both the teachings of Mohammed and Abraham are followed. Christians may say that they leave out Jesus, but some Muslims and Nubian Islamic Hebrews argue that Jesus follow ed the same principles of Islam and often quoted the teachings of Abraham.

The entire concept of Jesus seems to be the focus of a lot of arguments that arise between Christians and non-Christians. But sister Sheila (as she wishes to be called) told it: there is no need for argument over who Jesus actually was.

"I don't think any prophets are any better or worse than each other," Sheila said in response to Christians' criticism that Muslims regard Jesus as lower than the prophet Mohammed. "All due respect to people who believe and practice Christianity, but all prophets have equal representation of the truth."

However, Sheila is puzzled by the concept of a holy trinity, which says Jesus is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

"I question how three can equal one, if Jesus had flesh and form," Sister Sheila said. "How then can he (Jesus) be a spirit, and if he's a spirit, how do you know who is God? How can a woman be impregnated by a spirit?" she challenged.

Because Christianity didn't answer her questions, she converted to Islam in November of last year, a month after being introduced to Islam by a fellow student who was then a freshman like herself. Sister Sheila is also nineteen years old and a sophomore at Kent. She said within Islam, questions like the ones she had been asking can easily be answered.

"Islam is not complicated, it's simple," Sister Sheila said. "We in the Nation of Islam are taught to live by what we know as truth. It is the nature of the Black woman to know the truth."

Sheila combats one preconceived idea that women in Islam are degraded, belittled and regarded as insignificant. She said the Nation of Islam, which she is a member of, teaches the respect of women because women are seen as creators of nations.

"Building a nation starts with the women. They have to be honored," she insisted.

Another misconception about Islam is one that it doesn't allow for any fun or recreation. However, Putnam strikes down that thought, too.

"I still have fun," Abdur said.

But of course once he took Shaha da, he couldn't continue doing the same things he did before he converted. "I had to cut out a lot of things as far as relationships with sisters and family members."

While Islam and Hebrewism forbid the consumption of pork, he said most people also assume that Muslims must automatically cut meat out of their diets as soon as they take Shahada, which is not as cut-and-dry as it sounds.

"I can eat meat, but I have to fast to get it out of my system," Putnam said. "But eventually the idea is to become a vegetarian," he explained.

The restricted preparation of his meals is one of the reasons why Putnam said he doesn't go home to Cleveland much. He said he has to explain to his family why he cooks different kinds of food, separate from the rest of the family. It may also be difficult for Putnam to travel home for the weekends because Saturday is for both Muslims and Hebrews a holy day. The Shabbat, or Sabbath, begins Friday at sunset and lasts until Saturday at sunset.

During that time observers of these religions must not conduct any business on that day, do any other kind of work, or in most cases, leave the home. So it's understandable why Muslims or Hebrews in Christian households may find it difficult to keep the Shabbat in the home.

"I could not keep Shabbat at home," Abdur said. "I would have to stay in my room and prepare my food beforehand."

Even though Shabbat is observed by Hebrews and Muslims, the mandate to keep Shabbat is the fourth commandment in the Bible. This is just one of the contradictions which causes disputes between Muslims and Christians. Putnam said that the Bible also commands people to treat their bodies like temples, but he said he doesn't see that happening often within Christianity either.

"Christians eat pork," he said.

"Besides the fact of it having two or three vitamins, it is still a poisonous animal. They (Christians) consider themselves to be above the law," Putnam charged. He also charged that some Christians misinterpret the idea of Jesus dying for the sins of man.

"Christians feel all laws have been abolished as well as their sins because Jesus Christ died on the cross."

Now where Afrocentric critics of Islam have their argument is on the question of whether Islam is truly indigenous to African heritage, or yet another colonial religion forced upon them this time by Arabs instead of Europeans. Yashuwa answers that question with some information he found throughout his studies that may prove that Islam could be the original religion of African people. How? As he explains it, he came across some readings on the Ashante people of Ghana, which claim that the ancient Ashantes had been following the ways of Abraham and Mohammed up until the people of the region split up and formed their own subgroups.

"Traditional Africa is something that is derived from subcultures," Yashuwa explained. "As time flowed, we (Africans) began to deviate from what the root was and we became many different things," he explained.

Some people may believe these 18, 19, and 20 year olds are too young to be professing concepts of spirituality, truth and culture. And admittedly, for some of them, such conversions may be attempts to keep up with a popular trend. But maybe these young people are starting a brand new cultural revolution which just might prove to be the survival force for the next generation of African-Americans in the twenty-first century.
Alternative Music

Crossing Racial Barriers in Search for Humanity

by Amy Crenshaw
Being a fan of "alternative" music, I have noticed the obvious uprisings of musicians who convey humanitarian ideals through their lyrics and music forms. I suppose some humanitarian beliefs were heavily communicated in the 1960s but the catalyst of their consciousness was different. The alternative musical views of the sixties dealt mainly with the Vietnam War and its effect on man. The issues involved appealed to a limited audience in touch with the war. Today's alternative musicians who embrace humanitarian ideals are driven by causes that appeal to a far more eclectic crowd.

Today's alternative musicians are starting to abandon previous connotations and boundaries set by society; they are leaving the racially typed realms of music and are united by a quest for consciousness. Color barriers are being ignored and bands are experimenting not only with non-indigenous rhythms but also controversial lyrics. The white-only flag that hangs over alternative rock is being torn down; it defies the initial and fundamental contribution that African-Americans have made to music in general.

According to F. Brown, a writer for Mother Jones magazine, African-American fans of alternative music are coming out from behind barriers which mandate that alternative music is for young, white modern-day beatniks.

"There is a legion of Black closet metalheads coming out," Brown wrote. "Young African-Americans who dig the Clash and George Clinton, Hendrix and Hip-Hip, and refuse to find that wierd."

Follow For Now, an African-American alternative band from Atlanta, combines punk, funk, ska, and blues music. Their disgust with European politics and religion is expressed in their song, "Holy Moses":

I've been listening closely to all of your lies
The ringing of truth has shackled my brain
With the mumbo jumbo that I

despise
Jack Sprat chewing the fat
We all trust him, imagine that
The blind leading the easily lead
Circling, spiraling, losing our faith

Holy, holy Moses
Ought to show his face
When the songs of the church
Become food for the slave...

Other African-American Bands raising consciousness through alternative music include: 24-7 Spyz, Eye & I, the J.J. Jumpers, and D-Xtreme. The purpose of their music is two-fold: first, to conquer music cited as being solely white, and second, to educate their people through informative lyrics.

At the other end of the spectrum there seems to be a wave of white musicians educating their listeners through predominantly African-American music such as rap and funk. Unlike their white brothers on R&B radio, the alternative musicians are playing music that is enlightening and yet even threatening at times. The Red Hot Chili Peppers is a prime example of a band that is exploring humanity (or loss of) through African music forms. On the album, Blood, Sugar, Sex, Magik, the song "Power of Equality" displays their love for funk and rap through the music itself. The lyrics convey a plea for humanity:

...Death to the message of the Ku Klux Klan
I don't buy supremacy
Media chief
you menace me
The people you say
Cause all the crime
Wake up motherfucker
And smell the slime
Blackest anger
Whitest fear
Can you hear me
Am I clear
My name is peace
This is my hour
Can I get just a little bit of power?

On Sinead O'Connor's album I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got, she sings a song "Black Boys on Mopeds," which refers to the murder of Colin Roach, a young boy who was shot and killed by the London Police:

England's not the mythical land
Of Madame George and roses

It's the home of police who kill
black boys on mopeds
And I love my boy and that's why I'm leaving
I don't want him to be aware
That there's any such thing as grieving

Many industrial bands are writing conscious music to inform their audiences. In the song "Free the Land of the Free," the Canadian band Die Warsaw declares that in America "your freedom depends on the color of skin."

My life with the Thrill Kill Kult, an industrial band with black, white, male and female members, expresses their abandonment of Christianity and its oppressive leaders in the song, "Days of Swine and Roses":

Your mind's diseased with perverted justice
I'm on the last limb-I'M ON THE LAST LIMB
Christian zombie vampire
I am the father
The father of nothing

Though most of the alternative bands are not played on commercial radio, people are searching for the music. Radio music is basically trendy and non-threatening. I, along with many other listeners, find alternative music to be neither of the two. That is the beauty of it. Today's alternative musicians are united by a love for music and a quest for consciousness. Perhaps these musicians will generate social awareness among audiences beyond the Caucasian underground crowd.
**Clarence Thomas** Somebody save us from black republicans. Here's a guy that benefited from the Affirmative Action programs of the sixties and seventies and now that he has reached a position of prominence suddenly decides that these programs are unnecessary.

Another black "role model," handpicked by George Bush. Isn't it curious that the anti-quota president replaced the supreme court's only black justice with another black justice. The Reagan\Bush administration had never considered a black candidate before.

And what a cold slap in the face to replace Thurgood Marshall, a man who had proven his commitment to the black struggle time and time again, with a sellout like Thomas, who was opposed by the majority of black organizations in America.

**Mangosuthu Buthelezi** It should have come as no surprise when it was reported recently that the South African government had been funding Zulu Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi and his Inkatha Freedom Movement to the tune of over half a million dollars in the last two years. What is surprising is how easily a "black leader" can be manufactured in order to divide and destabilize a revolutionary movement.

Chief Buthelezi opposes mass demonstrations and strikes, is against economic sanctions, and rejects the idea of immediate voting rights for 70 percent of the population. His political views are, in fact, the same as F. W. DeKlerk, leader of one of the most sinister and brutal governments since the Third Reich.

The South African government has taken a page out of the C.I.A. handbook. A simple divide and conquer strategy which coincides with its covert destabilization of neighboring countries such as Namibia.

What a pity that in 1991 Black people are still willing to be used as pawns in order to achieve personal gain.

**Michael Jackson** Mike sings "It makes no difference if you're black or white," as he spends thousands of dollars in order to look like an anorexic white woman. I guess to Mike it makes no difference if you're black or white, male or female, human or ...whatever. Recent controversy erupted when Mike "fondled" his nonexistent crotch on camera. Rumor has it that Mike was just checking; he sometimes forgets what stage of metamorphosis he's currently at.

**General Colin Powell** "Uncle Tom Wants You" to give up your life protecting the oil and stolen resources of some rich capitalist who wouldn't cross the street to spit in your eye. In the process you'll get to kill other black and brown skinned people like yourselves in Panama and Grenada, maybe even Cuba. No we won't send you to fight for the rights of your black brethren in Haiti or South Africa or Los Angeles, but we will send you back to Africa to bomb Libya. We'll even give you a couple of bucks to feed your starving babies.

What more could a negro ask for?
If one distilled racism down to its purest form, what would remain? I would venture to say it would be much more profound than a schemata, born from an individual's disfunctional existence; without any doubt, its primary character would be an intrapsychic conflict. If one would delve deeper into the cause of this infringement on the humans (hue-mans) of this world, white supremacy would be the spring from which all of the variables of so-called racism, receiving its nourishment, originates from. So the query remains: what is the danger of a disfunctional thought process (namely racism a.k.a. white supremacy) which is constantly being denied?

It is a fact, that so-called-racism found fertile soil (so to speak) in the dark and callous recesses of a rejected, despised and unwanted people who lived in the caucus region of Europe. And that these base people were seeking a savior to mount an attack on a world (hue-mans) that reinforced the fact that they lived in uncivilized conditions—social outcasts for 2000 years. Therefore, white supremacy was and is racism, born out of these uncivilized conditions. Racism was germinated from white supremacy and its nutrients were the obtrusive, beastial conditions that were at an apex during the DARK AGES and/or MID-EVIL ERA. Keep in mind that these terms are theirs (Europeans) and not mine. Thus, as it is known, the more things change the more they stay the same.

Keeping all the aforementioned information in mind, how can racism—which we now realize is really white supremacy—end if it does not exist? Truly, if we know that a rose is a rose is a rose, then we should call racism what it truly is: White Supremacy. Holistically, white supremacy (not racism) has dominated people of color psychologically, physically, and spiritually since antiquity.

The emancipation of the African minds can only be achieved by confronting White supremacy (not racism), because this is the mind-set that has produced negrosaxons e.g., the Michael Jacksons of the world. If not, we will forever be naive to the reality of what racism is: a silhouette for white supremacy.

Consequently, the next time someone White tells you to help fight racism, you should tell them that they mean white supremacy. Or, if someone calls you a racist, you can tell them you may be a lot of things, but one thing you can never be is a white supremacist! Then, just watch how confused they look or check out their intelligent response of Huh? Or when you see a flyer saying; “end racism now,” or similar verbiage; you'll now know that someone is a very bad speller (because racism is not spelled r-a-c-i-s-m, but W-h-i-t-e S-u-p-r-e-m-a-c-y).

Only we, my people, can unlock the door on the conditions that destroyed us and the language that has dehumanized us—namely, savage, evil, dumb, lazy, violent, crazy, whores, accursed, heathen and God-breed slaves to name a few, indeed. We have been given the key to unlock our true essence, so do not ask for better slave conditions, because negotiations with our oppressor will only extend our incarceration. And if we, the present generation, die without taking measures to uplift our people afrocentrically—if only for our children—then there is a high probability that we may not get another chance again, 'cause-somethin'-sho' smells like death to me; and its too close to repudiate, i.e., genocide. As Teddy Pendegrass stated in one of his songs, "Wake up everybody no more sleepin' in bed, no mo' backwards thinking time for thinkin' ahead...".

Wake up Black man and wake up Black woman, let us send a rebuttal to the racist a.k.a. White supremacist that we see it for what it really is. If not—when will it end?
"THE RAPE"

by Tina Shaver
Gazing out over the vast terrain, I reflect on what a truly beautiful heaven our Creator has created here for us. Mother Earth in all of her glory and youth struts her green trees and colorful gardens like a new dress.

I hear the touchingly sweet song of a bird and the gentle whisper of the wind blending together to create a harmonious sound of content. High-pitched laughter interrupts my reverie and I turn to see my younger brother, Maigeri, holding a multi-colored butterfly in his hands. What a handsome warrior he will be, I muse to myself. Proud of his watch, he looks at me with a grin on his face as wide as the Nile and boasts to me, "Amina, Aminal, look what I have captured." I notice how excited he is and I can't help but laugh as I tell him to let the poor butterfly go free. "It is not good, Maigeri, to keep a living thing against its own will," I gently reprimand him. As we walk hand in hand back to our small village near the blue-green waters of the river, I cannot help but feel so content and so happy that for a moment I feel I might burst.

Mama in her regal head tie and Papa in his formal endenchikt, or shirt, the two together are a stunning pair. Most of the elders are having prayer in the "spirit house." Looking behind me, I catch the last rays of golden sunlight streaked with shades of red and violet, disappearing below the horizon. Okwa, my pet monkey, playfully grabs the hem of my skirt and runs away, teetering to himself. After helping to prepare dinner for our fellow villagers, I walk over to a hill beyond our village and I stretch out on the soft, green grass. What a warm and caring family constituted in the community the Creator has bestowed upon me. The stars are beginning to appear and soon I see the moon’s crescent shape. I am thinking of my future and what lies ahead for me. Then I wonder if, in all of my eighteen years of life, I have ever been any happier than I am right now.

I awake with a start to screaming and cries for help. My heart pounding hard, I leap out of my bed and rush to the front door of my home. Shock, horror, then tears of anger and pain overtake me. The scene before me will forever haunt me in my nightmares. White-skinned men wearing foreign uniforms were destroying our village and forcing village members to leave their homes. These Devils then started setting fire to our houses! Suddenly becoming aware of Maigeri, I swing around and see him huddled in a corner, tears of absolute terror streaming down his tiny face. Thinking quickly, I look outside again and I see that the foreigners are heading our way! Grabbing Maigeri, I make a run for freedom through the back of the house. Because our Creator blessed us with darker skin, Maigeri and I are not spotted as we head for the grove of trees ahead.

We will be staying in a cave tonight. I, rocking and holding Maigeri tightly, will reflect over and over again on the night’s
events. These men who destroyed our village must be the ones I've heard about during the fireside stories. We were told that these men practice a religion that allows them to steal people and make slaves of them. I remember one evening, during one of the stories, an aged, wise man warned us to be wary of any foreign white man who calls himself a Christian; he is sneaky and will cause much pain! But I am young and I am sometimes foolish and I did not think too much of the storyteller's advice. Now look at me! I begin to weep as I realize that perhaps the foreigners have murdered everyone. I cannot rest tonight because my body and my mind are beset with anguish. I am immobile, holding Maigeri close to me, praying to the gods for answers and mercy.

It is morning now and Maigeri is crying for Mama. I am unable to quiet him so I gather up what courage I have, crawl to the mouth of the cave and peer out cautiously. The foreigners have gone, but so has our village. What was once a peaceful oasis on Mother Earth, is now a hell filled with the ashes and tears of my people. I can feel a lump rising in my throat and a stinging in my eyes, but I hold onto my own turmoll for Maigeri's sake. I must be strong, I am thinking.

Suddenly, a movement ahead of me catches my eye. Terror grips my heart as I watch in fear. Recognition lights up my face when I realize that the movement is Sofala, the maimed saint of our village! With a gleeful cry, I run out to Sofala and throw my arms around him. Astonishment, then joy appears on his face when he recognizes me. In the next instance, Maigeri is there with us; hugging, kissing, and sharing our tears. Maigeri and I help Sofala back to the cave and we try to make him as comfortable as we are able to. Unable to restrain myself, I ask Sofala the dreaded question: "Sofala, it is truly a miracle that we have found one another, but what has become of the others?" Sofala's soft eyes fill with much sorrow and pain as he answers: "My dear, dear Amina, I am just as happy to have found you. As you know, a horrible incident struck our village last night. White slave hunters from across the great waters have stolen our people from their homes."

Christians! I gasp at this realization.

"These men plan to sell our families to slave owners in other lands. There, they will be forced to work for nothing and there they will be treated as nothing," Sofala pauses to brush tears away from his eyes. "At this very moment, our people are being beaten and killed as they fight to escape those slave hunters. Many will escape but many more will be forced onto these Christians' bloody ships and torn away from our land.

I was captured also, but was set free because they have no desire for a lame man."

I can barely whisper, "What has happened to my Mama and Papa?" Sofala looks away from me and cries. "Your Papa was killed last night in the struggle and they have taken your Mama with them!" A loud cry of pain escapes from my lips as tears flood my eyes; I am no longer in control of my emotions.

Sofala, Maigeri, and I clutch and hold each other and cry. We cry for the lost lives; we cry for the lost freedom; and we cry for the evil slave hunters for having been so cruel.
More ACTION than Words

Stereotypically, people may not associate strength and beauty with intelligence and community awareness but Louis Jefferson isn’t defined by any stereotype. Jefferson, a twenty-seven year old graduate student in education and former Kent State University football player has a very clear idea of who he is and what he wants to do.

“I’m looking for a career in educational leadership where I can be in charge of policy and curriculum,” Jefferson said. “I’d like to implement a lot of the developed Afrocentric education programs into the American mainstream.”

For now, Jefferson settles for implementing a little Afrocentrism into Kent’s curriculum via the Human Diversity in Education class that he teaches for the education department.

Before leaving Kent, Jefferson plans to secure a Ph.D. in education. “I think that’s the only thing that gets you the attention that you need in academia.”

Jefferson, a Cleveland native, also works at his home town’s John F. Kennedy High School in the Cleveland Scholarship Program. “It’s designed to assist high school students in college choice, prepare them for college entrance exams, and to assist them financially.”

Jefferson said he enjoys his work. “This is an opportunity where I could actually help some kids. We need more of our kids in higher education so we can start taking over some leadership positions.”

Jefferson, who grew up with his parents and two older sisters, said that his family had an important and lasting influence on him.

“My father always instilled in me the need to search for the truth and not to settle for the lies that are perpetrated. He laid the foundation that led me to other influences.”

The teachings of his mother, who is deceased, are still a part of Jefferson’s character. “My mother taught me to love people. She was a really genuine and kind person.”

Jefferson is also an active member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. “I like the fraternal bond that the brothers have. I also felt that for whatever I wanted to do, politically or socially, I would have an automatic support group.”

However, Jefferson said fraternities are not just social organizations; they also have a responsibility to community. “If there isn’t a sense of community responsibility it (a fraternity) turns into nothing more than a gang.”

Though he prefers to highlight the positive aspects of fraternal life, Jefferson acknowledges there are some problems. “Fraternities shouldn’t get involved in what I call tribal warfare,” he cautioned. “The thing that we should realize is that we’re all African men with a common struggle.”
"Pride, Dignity, Self-respect are the ultimate qualities of a black man. We need to Identify ourselves, Know what we want, where we are going."

-Imudiase Aimiwu
Freshman, Architecture Major
"First and foremost, the Black Man needs to take care of his family - Be a teacher to his family and the rest will take care of itself."

-Troy Gould
Transfer, English Major
“Black Men should act more as role models in the community - Our boys are growing up with just their mothers - Famous Black Men are fine but they need something more tangible.”

-Ray Tucker
Senior, Psychology Major
“So often we put our creative aggression into worldly things when we should invest more of our energy into making things better for the community.”

-Louis Jefferson
Graduate, Education Major
African-American Role Models

The Quest for Positive Male Images

by katika thomas

Malcolm X KRS-One, Louis Farrakhan, Eazy-E, Nino Brown? Who can our young African men possibly look up to as role models?

It seems that in today’s society, Black men need someone or something to look forward to more than anything now. The fate of the Black man is steadily fading, so something has to happen—SOON! The purpose of a role model is not to be the exact replica of that person but to display that person’s positivity through his own being. The sooner that there becomes a change within the sect of the role of the Black man, the sooner things will change for the better for him. This in turn is where the role of the role model comes in. "A good role model would be man who exhibits a kind of quality that
is beneficial to us as a people and to our survival and our prospering as a people," said Mwatabu Okantah, a part-time professor in the Department of Pan-African Studies.

Black men today are looked upon as an endangered species. Elda Jean-Charles reported in the fall 1989 issue of Uhuru magazine that Black males make up an enormous percentilce of the men in American jails today, fifty percent of the population. African-American men aged 16-25 have a declining life expectancy and have a 40-70 percent dropout rate from high school. This is possibly why very little of today's young Black men are striving to get a higher form of education. It is especially important now for Black men to have a positive image to follow because of the everlasting wave of negativity that is being brought to the eyes of the Black man through the media. Instead of an increasing emphasis on the importance of a good education, mastering the knowledge of his people, past and culture, the upliftment of his race, and trying to get by in this society, Black men are exposed to crime and other means as a way to get through the system. So what is a possible explanation to these oncoming problems? Jay Benn, a freshman finance major says: "African men need a positive image to follow, so in turn they can grow to strive to be a part of that image and more to make himself a better being and the world he lives in a better place." Another problem facing young Black men today is the lack of a father as a role model. In many Black families, there isn't a dominant male figure in the home. "It's hard to be something if you've never seen that something," Okantah said. "In my lifetime, my father was there. He wasn't the perfect father, but at the same time I saw my father handle certain responsibilities. It takes a man to teach a boy how to be a man. Even if there is a father in the home, I think it is important that our boys, in some kind of way, develop other relationships with men."

In an essay by Jomo Kenyatta called System of Education: Prior to the Advent of the European, he talks about traditional Africa and the role of boys and men in a particular community. In Kenyan society, Kenyatta said, the boys are separated from the girls and grouped with men in the village and are taken and taught certain responsibilities such as what it takes to be a man in the community. He is schooled on his role as the man in the family, the responsibilities to his group, society, family, and most importantly, himself. The importance of Black male role models was one of the main issues addressed in this summer's movie blockbuster, Boys in the Hood. The three main characters are Doughboy, his brother Ricky, and their friend Tre. Unlike Ricky and Doughboy, Tre had a role model--his father, Furious. Furious was literally Tre's teacher in life. Furious, like the elder men in a traditional African society, taught Tre the facts of life, his responsibility to his woman, his role as a man, and the importance of being true to himself. It takes a man to teach a boy how to be a man. With today's new wave of Afrocentric trends, lifestyles, and education, it would seem that there would be an overabundance of respectable African men for the younger generation to look up to. According to Tre Harris, a freshman secondary education major, "there isn't any major male figure of considerable respect that today's young Black man can look up to."

If that statement is true, where can the African man look for answers? "Allah," says Ha-sin Abdul of Cleveland. "The Black man shouldn't look up to anyone, only their God." Is there anyone one who can earn the respect of being someone's model? It counts only on one's personal or religious beliefs. According to Jay Benn, it's all in one's positivity. "A role model is a positive image to follow. My Reverend at church is my role model. He taught me to be myself and look into my own inner being. He taught me to look into things around me and inside of me."

When asked who his role model was, Kenneth Clemmons, a junior pre-law major, said Bill Cosby was his role model because "he has made many millions and has contributed many millions back to his community." In the many heated debates over the reality of The Cosby Show, Bill Cosby is probably one of very few positive brothers out there who wants to show a positive role of a black man. "It's crazy to think a brother, who is a doctor, can't marry a sister who is a lawyer," Okantah said. "What kind of discussion can there be saying that this isn't a real Black family? That's insanity. We can't limit ourselves. They may not represent all of us, but it's possible."

Who would be a good role model? Joe Todd, a sophomore premedicine major said sports figures could serve as positive role models too.

"Michael Jordan (is a positive role model) because of all of the positive things he does and a lot of young Black males want to be athletes," Todd said. "He's an extraordinary athlete, and very positive. They would want to be just like him."

In the choosing of a role model, Okantah said young Black men shouldn't limit themselves to actors or athletes, not that there are none, but there should never be a limit to the millions of many productive Black men in America today.

"Most of our young Black males are exposed to preachers, athletes, and criminals. There is more than that out there," Okantah said. "Talk to most young Black boys, they want to be athletes. It would be easier for some of them to be brain surgeons, but they haven't seen them." Role models cannot attempt to solve the underlying odds facing today's African man in America, but it can at least serve as one small solution to a large problem.

Hopefully, today's men of color will find someone positive to act as an example in order to make their own footsteps for future generations of Black men to follow.
The problems of the African-American male in society have been well documented in the journals of today's society. It has been reported that death, unemployment, homelessness, illiteracy, inadequate job training, and occupancy in the nation's prisons are increasing at alarming rates. Not to mention oppression from his caucasian counterparts, rejection from African-American females and a prediction of our extinction from the human race. These are cold, faceless figures that many could give a damn about.

To bring the figures to life, and to put a face with the statistics, "Uhuru" sponsored a forum to discuss the problems of the day. The group was composed of African-American males, but that is not to say that it's just their problem. It is a problem for all of America. The panel represented different facets of the University. There was an undergraduate student senator, an ex-Black United Students president, a student from the islands, and a graduate student earning his doctorate: People from diverse backgrounds with differing political, religious, and social ideologies.

With that in mind, many times the course of topic went awry. But before the one-hour discussion was completed a common theme had developed.

It could have been called a gathering of four angry men.

A fitting description for a play or a short story, but it could have also served as the theme for a significant event that took place in the Hub of the Student Center at Kent State University. African-American men gathered in a single setting for an ominous purpose. Some came by foot and others by automobile, but when they reached their destination, the reasons that brought them together were glaringly evident. Four brothas from different segments of the University gathered on a dark, cold and dreary autumn evening to sit down and discuss the problems of today's society and how those problems pertained to them, African-American men. Talk.

That's it. They hadn't planned to fight or sell drugs as many in the media would have the public believe that is all that a group of black men are capable of anymore. These kinds of stereotypes have been perpetuated by the few, exploited by some, and spoon-fed to the masses.

The brothas that gathered in the Student Center were angry. They were upset and frustrated with the white-dominated society. One had already given up on society and sought an alternative form of living. One had become conscious of the oppression inflicted upon his people and decided that the only solution to end that oppression was to put a stop to the cycle "By any means necessary," and possibly change the tides of this country. And then there were those who had just given in completely. They were content to assimilate and conform to the norms of society.

Whatever they did in the past, was just that—the past. On this occasion these brothas decided to vent their frustrations in a different way; they planned to talk, and through discussion and dialogue try to find an answer to the question that has eluded African-American men for nearly four centuries: Talk. Discussion. Planning. These tactics were thought to be the key and maybe the salvation for a segment of the American population that has for centuries been targeted for termination. The brothas that showed came with their dreams of how the world should be and they were very passionate in their beliefs. Each one, individually strong and unique in his own way, had a solution to solving the dilemmas that plague African-American men.

The agenda was simple. We talked about three dynamics that plague African-American men: education; the new racism; and plans for the future of our race. The discussion was sponsored by Uhuru in an attempt to document how African-American men on this campus perceive the threat of genocide, fratricide and mental suicide. The participants are not unique. They are much like all the brothas on this campus. They are intelligent, opinionated, AFRICAN, out-spoken, controversial, AMERICAN, hip, hardcore, up-beat, ambitious MALES. The discussion that took place in the Student Center has probably happened before in the dens and homes of families across the country. What was said in the meeting has been spoken many times over by African-American men in lecture halls, barber shops, pool halls, the corner of avenues, front porches, and living rooms around the country.

Except this time, Uhuru was there to witness it. The editorial board of Uhuru felt that an article like this was long overdue, not only does it help sistas see brothas as they truly are, but if we are to emerge as a united African people then we must redefine the roles of the African-American man. And the best way to accomplish this goal is to look at ourselves not through the racist and propaganda myths and half-truths of today's society, but to let our brothas on campus tell their own story.

Here is an excerpt of just fifteen minutes of what was said in a very significant event that took place in the Student Center.

Uhuru: Is Kent State University properly educating us?

Lou Jefferson: I would say no. There are some professors in some areas of study that do that, namely Pan-African studies that give students the notion that what they're learning is not to just buy into the status quo American system because the system does not work for us. We need to begin to secure a future for ourselves.

Uhuru: But is there a class called "How to learn and give back to the society where you came from?"

Ohvahdyah Israel: Well, I don't really see that as being the sole objective (of college students) or an objective for this University because it's a business. When you have a business you may open it up and hope to sell particular items, but that doesn't mean that because you
have them in your shop, they are going to be sold. I think this is what happens on the campus, there is so much here that they (administrators) say they are offering us, but from whose perspective?

So if I'm on this University, and I realize that the greatest cause that I can do for my people is I must take what I've been given here, and what I do with it must be a reflection of not only my self-education, but I must be here educating the people who I know will never hit the campus.

Uhuur: Is it much like the phrase "Each one, teach one?"

Israel: I think it's deeper than that.

Jefferson: I like to look at the Seven Principles of Nguzo Saba and one of them is collective work and responsibility. What we have to do is think about our principles of life and how we're going to make it through this hell that America has placed us in.

Uhuur: Fortunately we have together brothers that are involved in campus organizations, so I can ask, "Have you used your authority on campus to bring about some of these goals and if so, how?"

Israel: Well, I have, but sometimes most people don't understand. They don't know whether it's a blessing or a curse to be a visionary. Because if you don't have the masses of a people understanding where you are trying to take them, sometimes change makes a person fear so much that they try to resist it. And if they resist it so much, they can have a sincere contempt for those that are trying to change them.

What I tried to do in my tenure as BUS president is give my people a selected amount of information that will save us. Not a religion, not an economical status, but a people that will save the people.

Lucien Stephens: I think it's important to know your heritage and most of us don't know. I don't think that the Pan-African (Studies) department or BUS has done an accurate job because we have only one side. We only have one view, one voice speaking for African-America. That's a liberal viewpoint.

I've learned more about Africanism and my history by going down to a white bookstore in Kent than I would ever learn from the Pan African Studies department.

Jay Henderson: I'm not as well versed on Afrocentrism as a lot of people. I'm coming from a standpoint in which I don't know and I know I don't know. And I've done a lot of things in order to find out something. Basically, my central purpose in coming here is to get a degree just to use this university and this white system.

Uhuur: Using it to do what?

Henderson: My longterm vision is to go into law.

Jefferson: And as a lawyer, what will you do?

Henderson: I could help the Black community. Stanley Tolliver (a Cleveland attorney) is a big influence to me. I see myself in a very similar role.

Uhuur: Lets look at racism in the nineties. Has it changed over the years?

Israel: I look at this as a changing of the guard. You still have somebody watching the interest of the white masses,

I think what it comes down to in society is that they're bridging the gap between overt racism and covert racism. And we think that because we don't see it as overt racism as it was in the past that it's getting better, but it isn't, it's getting worse.

Uhuur: But how can you argue that? A lot of people do not think that there is a group or a person controlling racism. A lot of people think that it just happens.

Israel: No, it isn't a person, it's a political agenda.

Uhuur: Is it an idea?

Stephenson: This is the mistake that we make. Yes, racism does exist, it definitely does exist, but I think that it's not an excuse for failure. We still use that as an excuse.

Many times we hear, "I didn't do well in school, didn't like me because I'm black." Same thing with the decay of the inner city. There's nobody making the young brothers sleep with all them women. I go to Akron and I can't believe the situations that I see. At the first of the month, we have a whole bunch of guys talking about the four or five women that they get their welfare checks from. Is that racism?

Jefferson: One thing you have to deal with is 400 years of dehumanization process that is so deeply ingrained in both whites and blacks. It's so innate, it's like blinding your eye.

Uhuur: Is racism in this country focused? Is it innate? Ever notice how some white people cannot understand how Black people can use the term "The Man"? They Just don't understand the meaning and sometimes I find it hard to give definitions. I don't think there is somebody pushing all the buttons, but somehow the buttons are pushed. How is that?

Jefferson: It's the foundation of the United States Constitution in general.

Israel: It's 1776.

Stephenson: It was four white men that set down the Constitution of the United States and in that Constitution Blacks were considered to be three-fifths of a human being. This was constitutionalized.

Stephenson: But, a lot of these laws have been reversed today.

Henderson: Even though there is racism, there is still opportunity for a black person to achieve in the country.

Israel: I'm glad you said "Black person" and you're right. For individuals and not a group of people. There is not equity in society.

Stephenson: I don't want equity in society. I don't believe in equity. When you talk about equity, you talk about eliminating someone's freedom. Because when we were slaves, there was equality. We were all equal under the master.

Henderson: We all had a job right? A job with no pay.

Israel: No, we were not equal. Because there were white slaves. There were poor white trash who were just as degraded as we were. They stated that they were one rung above us. They said because of the skin color they would refuse to work alongside a nigga. Because they said "I can deal with being poor, I can deal with being white but they said thank god I'm not black."

Stephenson: I think there are certain individuals with power who have the capability to keep people back. There is something wrong with that.

I also think that it is just as wrong that we have people of the University who have the lowest GPA in American colleges, but we demand so much. I think that when we raise our expectation levels and excel higher, then we should start demanding. We have people here with the lowest GPA, the highest attrition rate, but we demand so much from society. Let's contribute.

Uhuur: If we are all in agreement that there is a problem among African-American men, then where do we go from here?

Israel: I think we need to stop looking at the horror of statistics and letting that basically stigmatize our people. We need to come together and have a think-tank and go out and educate those that don't know. Because we still have a lot of hang-
up. We have to be comfortable with looking at each other without thinking that if I look at you for five minutes, why would you think that I'm a threat? Because you have no respect. And you feel that if I'm staring at you, you feel that I'm dogging you out. We got to change our thinking. Until we change our thinking, we will never be able to walk in a white society and feel healthy about ourselves.

**Uhuru:** How do you change a person's thinking?

**Henderson:** I think what we need to do first before we do anything is define what has exactly happened. We all know that we're killing each other. We all know that we're going to jail, we all know we're not going to college, and we all know that we're not succeeding. We have the statistics to state that something is going on, but we're never saying what's the cause of it.

**Uhuru:** But if we know the cause, whose to say that we will have the power to do anything about it?

**Henderson:** If we can even define the cause in the first place, that can tell us if we can do something about it or not. Is it that we just don't know ourselves? Or we just don't know our history? Because if it is, let's educate the Black man about himself. Why is it that if you examine two kids coming out of the inner-city of Cleveland, one of those kids will end up working real hard and going to college and the other kid will end up pushing drugs? All we know are outcomes, we don't know the causes.

**Israel:** And look at how we regressed as a people. We are a case of society. We are literally a reflection of America. White society is not taking SOME of the responsibility. We need to understand that if we were such an humanitarian people, what is the cause, what is the ill that's produced such a sick and degraded and dehumanized people? And if I know who we were and who we are, and I know that we were great, and we are not great now, it's easy for me to change it if I understand why.

**Stephenson:** It's not going to change by us coming together and looking at the commonality. It's going to happen on individual levels. Throughout history, individuals have made decisions. The decision that I can make as a Black individual is to equip myself so I can help Blacks. Today, Black America is not looking out for itself.

**Uhuru:** So individual change is the solution?

**Stephenson:** It's going to happen on an individual level. The best thing I can do for me, as a Black person, is to raise my family the best that I can so they can go out and contribute.

**Israel:** Four drops in the ocean really is not going to make a great ripple. We got to stop being individuals and think that when I get the baton I'm gonna look good and I'm not gonna worry 'bout passing it. You are running for the team. Until we start working interdependently as a race of people we will never be able to rise.

**Jefferson:** We need to look into the future, far ahead into the future in what I would call the Seventh Generation. We have to prepare for the Seventh Generation of our people and what the world will be like for those people in that time. And the way that we do that is going back to the Seven Principles of Nguzo Saba which has been developed to give us some sort of guide. We should define our purpose and have a purpose to not buy into this capitalistic system because the capitalistic system doesn't work for us, it never has and it never will.

**Uhuru:** But that's the system that's in place in this country. So if we don't buy into capitalism, what should we buy into?

**Jefferson:** We don't have to buy into it. The next thing would be collective work, responsibility and cooperative economics. We need to buy within each other and from each other. Our responsibility is for each other. We live for the development of each other. There's no reason why we shouldn't develop in capitalism. But we shouldn't develop in the destructive mode as our white counterparts have always done. They've never known the difference between where souls were saved and where slaves were sold.

**Henderson:** I think it would be great if we as a people did all this together in order to get ready for the Seventh Generation, but as Lucien said I believe the only way that this is going to happen is if the individual starts taking a stand. Collectively, I don't see it happening.

**Uhuru:** But wouldn't we have greater power if we pool our resources?

**Israel:** But in that [concept], the fame, glory, and accolades would have to be shared. And when you live in a capitalistic society they tell you that you must look out for number one.

**Henderson:** I would like to see all our leaders get together....

**Stephenson:** Who determines who our leaders are? Because they're on television? What really kills me, when I see shows like the Fresh Prince of Bel Air, then I see the executive producer, Marty Horowitz. Who are behind all of these people who say these are our leaders?

**Israel:** We know who it is, white people.

**Henderson:** White people are still just allowing us to do certain things. White people allowed us to vote.

**Israel:** What about Black History Month?

**Henderson:** White people gave us Black History Month. We didn't say, all right we're going to have Black History Month, white people said "Here you go."

**Jefferson:** Like Howard University and Morehouse [University]. It was established by white people to train us to work for them.

**Stephenson:** I think we've had major strides though. Here Black people in this country represent 12 percent of the population, but look how much power that we have. We can go to a major television station and tell them that 'We're not going to support you, until you put some black faces in there.'

We represent about 4 percent of people on this campus, and we have an entire department where we can study ourselves.

**Uhuru:** Unlike the Asian American and Hispanic students, right?

**Stephenson:** That's right. A lot of white people would never believe that we're only a small percentage of the population. They feel such a threat by Black people like we're going to take their jobs. So we have some power in this country.

**Israel:** That power is an illusion.

**Henderson:** It's all an illusion. White people are only allowing us to do certain things. Once we take advantage of what they are allowing us to do then we can go and do our own thing.
Some of the brothers were huddled around a small round table, some stretched out on a small sofa, and a few were sitting on the carpeted floor in the Cultural Diversity office on the second floor of the Kent State University Library. This may look like a laid-back scene, but underneath it all, these fraternity men are actually building a foundation for African-American unity at Kent State University and perhaps beyond.

Umoja is Kiswahili for unity, and also the name of a series of lectures dealing with unity amongst African-American men. Responsible for this are members of Kent's four African-American fraternities, Kappa Alpha Psi, Omega Psi Phi, Phi Beta Sigma, and Alpha Phi Alpha.

One of the reasons these brothers decided to come together last spring and establish the Umoja dialogue series was to counter the old conceptions that Black Greeks are always at odds with one another.

"We started this effort to promote a positive image of all of our organizations and to work together," Marvin Powell of Phi Beta Sigma said.

And through those efforts, they have brought to campus a range of speakers who have addressed the issues and problems facing African-American men, such as Dennis Raheem Watson, Haki Madhubuti and Na'im Akbar, who filled the house with another fiery address in Oscar Ritchie hall this past October. On the agenda for the rest of this year are Jawanza Kunjufu, and an all-day conference on African-American men.

"We need to talk about problems that affect African-American men in this country," said Howard Russel, a graduate student and member of Kappa Alpha Psi. "Since we are African-American men, those problems are directly affecting us."
"A Phrase of Our Past Founders, An Inspiration for Our Present Struggle"

Black United Students