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UHURU 1
We exist in a senseless nation; one that refuses to acknowledge the inevitable whirlwind of chaos and destruction that is gaining momentum as we approach the year 2000. We don’t need prophecies, the Book of Revelations, or theories of the New World Order to recognize the signs of the times.

In the past few years we have witnessed a frightening rise in white supremacist groups, militia organizations, hate-induced church burnings and deadly intra-national terrorist bombings. In politics we are chilled by a decidedly conservative political climate that is in the process of passing legislature that will send us into a political and economic ice age. Technological advancement is moving at an alarming pace. Many of us have chosen to ignore the computer frenzy, but we must be aware that somewhere the White power structure is plotting our obliteration using the very tools that they believe we are without. In other words, lack of information leaves us vulnerable to technological warfare targeted at our Black communities. It is no secret that in this greed-ridden, immoral, individualistic society, the Black community historically has been, and will continue to be, the hardest hit.

Due to our brutal placement into a system rooted in domination and abusiveness, the mis-education, immorality and self-seeking - therefore, self-defeating - behavior of our very own comes as no surprise. Capitalism by its very nature violates the sacredness of humanity. It violates the moral and ethical principles that should empower us, and guide our lives. Daily, more and more of our people begin slowly dying of starvation - physical, mental, psychological, but most importantly, spiritual.

The winds of change are rapidly blowing the fire our way, with the intentions of yet another holocaust of our people. Things are heating up...quickly. For some of us the smoke is just stinging our eyes. Others are beginning to choke. Before long we will feel the scorching flames burning our beautiful Black skin. It is time to open our eyes to the hard truths of reality which we have been viewing through glasses tinted with denial. It is time for action. If we do not protect our communities, we will soon find our neighborhoods under martial law. We will find surveillance cameras on every street corner. We will find computer chips inserted in the brains of our children. We will witness a modernized, technologically advanced 21st century slavery. Once again, we, Black brothers and sisters, will be the slaves.

Though we have a tragic history of oppression, we of African descent have a majestic history of greatness. Greatness that was stolen, destroyed, rewritten, and re-claimed...but not lost. Greatness that we must embrace. If we do not regain hold of our traditional African values; which encompass truth, integrity and oneness with the natural and spiritual world, we too will be plagued by the sickness that is destroying humanity. We must free our souls from the diseases of hatred, greed and apathy. We must embrace the beauty of our past, arm ourselves with spiritual strength, and change the world around us.

UHURU....FREEDOM! There will be no freedom without change, no change without power. Power can be achieved through a combination of wisdom, unified activism and direction. No one will represent our interests but ourselves. Political and social pro-active involvement doesn’t ensure anything, but lack of it guarantees nothing. Once again, it is time to empower ourselves. We must shout out in protest, listen with wise, alert ears, and watch through eyes that never close. We must search deep within our souls and cling to all that is still pure, true and untainted by the evils of modern society. It is there where we will find our power. It is there where we as strong Black people can rise to escape - to reverse - the fate of a senseless nation.
Fate of a Senseless Nation - who's nation? Though the idea is not always agreeable, we, African-Americans, are nationals of this United States of America. We are bound to her by a long history of deceit, slavery, rape, murder... As we approach the turn of the century we need to assess our past and present so that we may contrive a future that is fit for the ancestors of Africans, the creators of the first great civilizations.

We know all too well the plight of our people in America, how our skill and labor was exploited to establish this land once stolen from its indigenous people. This "great nation", "the land of freedom and justice", the product of theft and enslavement, could not have been built without the presence of African descendants. Despite this reality, we are still treated as unequals, second-class, in spite of the nominal citizenship that we were reluctantly granted.

So here we are, the subjects of racial and social caste systems that were created to perpetuate the white supremacist ideology upon which this nation was founded. We find ourselves in a condition of self-destruction and hopelessness. Schools are not equally funded, making our children less apt to compete. Social programs are being cut, forcing many families into homelessness. (It is difficult to find employment when your education is not comparable to other applicants.) Those that choose to work "on the block" as a means of earning money are playing right into their hands, subjecting themselves to the judicial system and its unfair treatment of African-Americans and other minorities, not to mention aiding in the destruction of our people. New laws have made the imprisonment of our men easier, with "Three strikes you're out." Males and females are at odds with one another resulting in families that are broken, lacking structure and discipline in the home. The cycle appears endless.

We have a tendency to condemn others for our ruinous state. Let us be honest and admit that although there are perfectly legitimate reasons for our condition, we must accept part of the blame. It has been proven that equality is not an item on the nation's agenda and though we cannot make anyone embrace us, we can demand our respect. To accomplish this, we must first respect ourselves. This means loving and being responsible for one another. We are family. It also suggests that we must know ourselves as a people, our history before this nation. This perilous American dream of money, power and individualism is foreign to the essence of our heritage. It is certain to lead to our destruction. For example, we will sell crack, a drug dispersed throughout our neighborhoods by the government itself, to our own sister because if we don't she will buy it from someone else. "May as well make that dollar." (I say "we" because collectively we shall rise - or fall.)

There is hope. The hope of future generations is embodied in us. Our history did not begin with enslavement and oppression and it would be shameful for it to end as such. We are of a great people, Africans, that built civilizations with accomplishments that mystify even today's technologists. Before Christ we were intellectuals, architects, engineers, and physicians. Grounded in spirituality, our ancestors made strides to be as close to God as humanly possible. Faith. Where is our faith? To be successful, we must take action. The time has come to re-build our families, our communities, our nation - a nation within a nation. We as a people must realize our destiny of greatness despite the inevitable demise of our surroundings. That which is built on deceit and murder can only end in ruins. We must not conform to the values of materialism and the practices of individualism. Our strength is in our numbers. (We must come together regardless of differences of opinion. We need everyone. Our future depends on it!) Our strength is in our spirit. Our strength is in our soul. Strength is a part of us - but apart we are weakened. We must come together, united under a common agenda. It is the only thing that make sense.
Historiography shows that the earliest record of what we call civilization today developed in the same geographic locations where the earliest fossil remains of human beings are found. In other words, long before there was an Egypt, Black people in Africa, along the southern Nile River, produced the first stirrings of "civilization" that have been documented. However, in order to ossify, perpetuate and maintain the myth/Big Lie of European supremacy, European invincibility and European originality coterminous with the Big Lie of the African nothingness and inferiority, the European-centered curriculum/scholarship had to promulgate the myth that Africans contributed nothing to world/human history. The primary objective was to lay the foundations for European geo-political dominance and hegemony. As such, world history is presented as HIS-STORY, HIS Eurocentric-racist-STORY, whereby Europeans are portrayed as the SUBJECT of history and Africans as the OBJECT of history.
in the B.C. era Africa was known as the “Land of spiritual people” and our ancestors developed a secretive and complex philosophical and spiritual system known as the mysteries.

The fact of the matter is that the Nile Valley civilization clearly shows that Europeans are an inherited, transmitting global minority people and that Africans are the original, global majority people with original ideas. Due to their control of the global communications system and information, Europeans have been able to portray themselves as the only creators of world/human history and to present themselves as an original people with original ideas as part of what Dr. John Henrik Clarke calls "the manifestation of the evil genius of Europe." Dr. Clarke asserts:

...Civilization did not start in European countries and the rest of the world did not wait in darkness for the Europeans to bring the light. Most of the history books in the last five hundred years have been written to glorify Europeans at the expense of other people...Most Western historians have not been willing to admit that there is an African history to be written about and that this history predates the emergence of Europe by thousands of years. It is not possible for the world to have waited in darkness for the Europeans to bring the light because, for most of the early history of man, the Europeans themselves were in darkness.

When the lights of culture came for the first time to the people who could later call themselves Europeans, it came from Africa and Middle Eastern Asia...It is too often forgotten that, when the Europeans emerged and began to extend themselves into the broader world of Africa and Asia during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they went on to colonize most of mankind. Later, they would colonize world scholarship, mainly the writing of history. History was then written or rewritten to show or imply that Europeans were the only creators of what could be called civilization. In order to accomplish this, the Europeans had to forget, or pretend to forget, all they previously knew about Africa...

Or as R.R. Palmer and Joel Colton have corroborated in their book History of the Modern World:

Europeans were by no means the pioneers of human civilization. Half of man's recorded history had passed before anyone in Europe could read or write. The priests of Egypt began to keep written records between 4000 and 3000 B.C., but more than two thousand years later the poems of Homer were still being circulated in the Greek city-states by word of mouth.

Shortly after 3000 B.C., while the pharaohs were building the first pyramids, Europeans were creating nothing more distinguished than huge garbage heaps.

By denigrating and devaluing African culture and civilizations, Europeans attempted to rape/strip African people of their oneness, their Africanity, their humanity. However, they have not been totally successful in doing so because of the potency, continuity, and adaptability of the African personality. According to Joseph E. Harris:

...The African diaspora embodies...the voluntary and forced dispersions of Africans at different periods of history; the emergence of cultural identity abroad without losing the African base; the psychological and physical return to the homeland, Africa. Thus viewed, the African diaspora assumes the character of a dynamic, ongoing, and complex phenomenon stretching across time and geography...

In the B.C. era Africa was known as the "Land of Spiritual people" and our ancestors developed a secretive and complex philosophical and spiritual system known as the Mysteries. The Mysteries System was divided into five major components: astronomy and astrology, geography and geology, philosophy, theology, and law and communications. Students who sought to enter the Mysteries System had to demonstrate success at three stages: The third and most difficult stage stipulated that the students study Esoteric Philosophy. The priests of the Grand Lodge were the only ones who taught Esoteric Philosophy. The Mysteries System is one of the most complex philosophical systems ever created. Admission into this system was gained by initiation and a pledge to secrecy.

One of the greatest contributions of the Nile Valley civilization in Egypt to the world was its educational system. The ultimate aim of education in ancient Kemet was for a person to become "one with God," to "become like God," or...
"to become godlike through the revision of one's own 'Neter' of how God is revealed in the person." "Education in ancient Egypt was religious at its base." At age seven, the brightest boys in Egypt were selected for training in the priesthood. This was the highest honor that could possibly be bestowed on a family -- the selection of a son for admission into a caste of brilliant thinkers, the "guardians of the state" whom Plato so greatly admired and wrote about. When the boys (Neophytes) entered the temple/schools (or Grand Lodge) they had to study for 40 years -- subjects such as Grammar, Arithmetic, Rhetoric and Dialectic, Geometry, Astronomy, Music, Architecture, Masonry, Carpentry, Engineering, Sculpture, Metallurgy, Agriculture, Mining, Forestry, Art, and Magic.

The Neophyte was vigorously trained in how to:

1. Control his thoughts
2. Control his actions
3. Have devotion of purpose
4. Have faith in the ability of his master to teach him the truth
5. Have faith in himself to assimilate the truth
6. Have faith in himself to wield the truth
7. Be free from resentment under the experience of persecution
8. Be free from resentment under the experience of wrong
9. Cultivate the ability to distinguish between the real and the unreal (i.e., he must have a sense of values)
10. Cultivate the ability to distinguish between right and wrong

Plato who greatly admired the Egyptian education system and actually recommended that it be introduced into Greece (the first European country), copied/imitated/stole his three "cardinal virtues" from these ten goals that the neophyte had to attain in the Nile Valley. "Control of thoughts and actions," Plato called the "virtue of fortitude;" "the ability to distinguish between right and wrong and between the real and the unreal," Plato called the "virtues of justice and temperance."

In ancient Kemet, (Egypt), man was seen as the reflective image of the cosmos, universe, God. The African personality was seen as a "spiritual identity" in tuned with the "essence of the Creator." In this regard, a clear distinction must be made between religion and spirituality. Religion is the deification of a people's cultural experiences, and political power control intent, whereas spirituality is a people's direct connectedness/inter-relatedness with nature, cosmos, universe, and that spiritual God force Sun God, Amen-- Ra, "the giver of life." Indeed, Naji Rashid is correct when he states quite unequivocally that:

[In ancient Kemet (Egypt),] nature was not viewed as an object to be conquered and subjugated, but a living force that must be respected. Africans always realized the ever presence of the Divine Essence contained within nature.

Africans understood that if they disrespected the Divine laws contained within nature they would pay the consequences.

But there was no need for Africans in ancient Kemet, (Egypt), to defy nature because their spiritual and philosophical moral codes were based on the Seven Cardinal Principles/Virtues of Ma'at which took our ancestors 1,200 years and 50 generations to develop and perfect. These seven principles are: Truth, Justice, Propriety, Harmony, Balance, Reciprocity, and Order. Based on these Principles, we can, therefore, define African philosophy as "the exercise of reason, rather than the acceptance of empiricism, authority or spiritual revelation." It "provides the only basis for both knowledge and spiritual truth because reason is the prime source of knowledge."

In other words, "understanding of the African world view is an understanding of the African (self)" and that "the African world view operates as a friend with the universe, while the European world view operates as an enemy to the universe." The characteristics of the African world view are unity, harmony, spirituality, and organic inter-relationship, while the European world view is characterized by compartmentalization (isolation, separation), control (power relationships), conflict (tension), materialism, mechanical relationship, and anti-nature modus vivendi.

The African world view is further characterized by the 3C's: Caring, Communalism, and Cooperativism. These characteristics are derived from the African environmental foundations which are communalism and spirituality.
Furthermore, the Seven Principles/Virtues of Ma’at are the DNA of the African world view. It represents a WE value system. On the other hand, the European world view is further characterized by the 3D’s: Domination, Destruction, and Death and these characteristics are derived from the European environmental foundations which are the 20,000 years the European spent during the Ice Age from 30,000 B.C. to 10,000 B.C. Isfet (disorder/disharmony) is the DNA of the European world view. It represents a ME value system. So, we have two contending world views and value systems producing two distinct and different peoples with distinct and different subconscious mind-sets and conscious actions. These two world views are separate but not equal.

In sum, whether it is philosophy or spirituality, the Europe of today (A.D. era) is absolutely nothing more than a progressive replica, derivative, and mutation of the Africa of yesterday Nile Valley, Kemet (Egypt), in the B.C. era.

Dr. Nantambu is an Associate Professor in the Department of Pan-African Studies at Kent State University and the author of Egypt & Afrocentric Geopolitics: Essays on European Supremacy. (1996).
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Donna Schall
Senior Guest Student
Deep agonizing shame fills me when I think about my Caucasian roots. How is it that Caucasians became so greedy, cruel, and debased? Mere survival cannot be the answer because after surviving, my race continued to debase itself. Some under cruel dictators, and we don't care enough to hardly notice. You might say, "But we've helped in Somalia." Yes, we helped after we discovered oil there.

In January 1991, President Bush said we were fighting the "just" Persian Gulf War because Iraq had invaded Kuwait, and the United States was obligated to help the Kuwaiti people "preserve their democracy." In addition, if Iraq succeeded with Kuwait, it might invade Saudi Arabia next. However, I think the real reason we fought the Persian Gulf War was to protect our oil interests and set up a military base in Saudi Arabia. Before the War, the Saudi people refused to permit the United States to build a base in their country. Then, what a stroke of luck! Iraq invaded Kuwait, and now we have our base. I think the United States Ambassador led Saddam Hussein to believe that the U. S. would stay out of the conflict, so Hussein attempted to take back the Kuwaiti territory he claimed to be Iraq's (territory that had belonged to Iraq until Europeans drew new territorial boundaries there).

Another example of a so-called "just" war was the Vietnam War. The United States entered the Vietnam War "to save the World from Communism." Or as they say, to stop the "domino effect" - of countries in Southeast Asia falling to Communist control one by one. Oh, really? I don't believe that. I think we really entered the war to help the South Vietnamese win so we could develop and control the offshore oil. In 1970, I joined a peace organization called Another Mother for Peace, based in California. The group, which sent out periodical newsletters, was trying to help end the
war. One newsletter alleged that the United States was interested in the off-shore oil around Vietnam. "Now I know why we're in Vietnam," I told myself, relatives and friends. They thought I was crazy to believe the newsletter. "The people leading Another Mother for Peace are probably Communists or paranoid crackpots," they said. But many years later, we read that companies were indeed drilling off-shore oil in that area. "British Petroleum Began Drilling For Oil Off the Coast of the South China Sea." (Akron Beacon Journal, April 28, 1995).

Can greed be the only explanation for the invasions and capture of other peoples' lands, exploitation of resources, the Roman and Greek conquests, the Crusades, the Slave Trade, World War I, the Holocaust, World War II, etc.? Only partially, I believe. There are probably other psychological factors at work.

Perhaps a lack of self-confidence, or an emptiness of the soul. It seems as if we Caucasians have an insatiable appetite for material acquisitions. There is never enough for us. Is it that we are trying to fill empty souls with material possessions when we should be looking for spiritual fulfillment instead?

Canadian author, Michael Bradley, explained his theory of why the Caucasian race is so aggressive and violent in his controversial book, The Iceman Inheritance, published in 1978 after fourteen years of research. In its introduction by Imre Nemeth from Seneca College in Toronto, Canada, Nemeth summarizes Bradley's ideas this way:

Bradley's thesis is that the so-called 'white race' is more aggressive, more violent, than other human groups. It is also more prone to sexism and racism. This lamentable predilection is due to the 'iceman inheritance', i.e., genetic contamination by a race of people whose character was traumatically determined by the merciless conditions of the ice age.

This is an oversimplification, Nemeth admits, but is an accurate summarization of what Bradley said. In the introduction to Chosen People From the Caucasus... published in 1992, Bradley himself summarizes The Iceman Inheritance:

...The Iceman Inheritance argued that Caucasian ancestors and their modern Caucasian descendants are significantly more aggressive than other major genetic groups because of their uniquely glacial evolution. Citing evidence from physical anthropology primarily, I suggested that purely physical adaptations demanded by survival under arctic conditions during the last (Warm) Ice Age in Europe conflicted with, and partly erased, previous adaptations designed to absorb and displace aggression.

Since 1978, some of Bradley’s ideas have been supported by other scientists and researchers, among them, Dr. Eric Trinkhaus, Dr. T. Dale Stewart, and Dr. George Steiner. I have no credentials whatsoever as a scientist or anthropologist so I can’t evaluate Bradley’s theories. However, I don’t think it even matters if his thesis is right or wrong. I do think that something is terribly wrong with white people. We are too competitive, aggressive, and violent. I also believe that since we have brains, we should be able to get our competitiveness, aggression, and violence under control, not only for the sake of the other races, but for our own sakes, as well.

In Chosen People From the Caucasus..., Michael Bradley makes a passionate plea to African-Americans. He asks them to return to their African values and identity. He says:

I make this plea, not only for you who are Black, but for myself (and my son, and other people) who are white. Some of us realize that we are all living in a culture of violence, and we would prefer an alternative.... We are 'white', but non-whites. All non-whites...must
strive to create some cultural alternative to the Western World's culture of violence...

To this I would add, "And please hurry!" We are all suffering from our diseases of violence, racism, and sexism, etc. The people of the world need a humane alternative desperately.

When I honestly consider myself as a Caucasian, I begin to understand the problem on a larger scale. As a child in the 1940's and 1950's, I was led to believe that white people were superior to other races. Although my parents always told me Negroes were just as good as anyone else, I think the fact that they singled out African-Americans as the example of people against whom I should not be prejudiced, showed their subconscious racism. (At first, I wrote unconscious instead of subconscious. Sometimes I think maybe unconscious is the correct word).

In Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal, Andrew Hacker says,

"...the unhappy fact remains that most white people believe that, compared with other races, persons with African ancestries are more likely to carry primitive traits in their genes." Then he discusses Thomas Jefferson's hope that proof would be found to show Blacks to have equal talents to other races. Why did Jefferson single out blacks, Hacker wonders? He writes,"Warring within the minds of Jeffersonians, both in his time and ours, is the hope that Blacks are equal accompanied by the suspicion that they are not."

I never would have said, "I think the white race is superior," but I think I subconsciously felt that somehow I was better than some people. I felt pity for very poor whites (even though we were barely up one economic level from them) and African-Americans. There was one poor white family to which we gave clothes, and although I never said it, I was glad we were "better off" than them. I was glad I wasn't born Black nor extremely poor. What a contrast with my attitude now! Now, at the age of fifty-six, I'm ashamed to be white and would be proud to be African-American, Native American, or any other minority.

In addition to being led to believe the lie that whites are superior, in school I was taught that all the magnificent advances of civilization had been contributions of the Caucasian race. Other races' contributions were either omitted or downplayed in my education, but I didn't realize it then. In Two Nations..., Andrew Hacker explains it this way:

Since Europeans first embarked on explorations, they have been bemused by the 'savages' they encountered in new lands. In almost all cases, these 'primitive' peoples were seen as inferior to those who 'discovered' them... In the whole, the presumption was that these natives could never attain to a stage where they might emulate European achievements.

So in my ignorance, I believed the lies. It seemed to follow then, that since Caucasians were superior, we deserved to be rewarded for our achievements and for the so-called advancements for the world. Furthermore, we deserved to have all our needs and desires met. If there were not enough resources to accommodate the whole world's population, I was very sorry, but that was just the way things were. Never mind the fact that many times we were stealing other peoples' resources. The Bible said the poor would always be among us, didn't it? I'm glad I can say I realized the Bible was wrong about this sooner than I gave up other false ideas I had. But why did I believe such rubbish so long? I don't think I'm stupid. Is it because these ideas were never stated openly - just acted upon as if they were true? In the introduction to White Racism: Its History, Pathology and Practice, Barry N. Schwartz and Robert Disch, editors, discuss white feelings of superiority saying:

To speak of white racism in America does not mean that everyone who is white believes that the white man possesses some innate superiority. It does mean that American society operates as though this were the case, that the nature of American society is the same as if the belief were held by all whites. One must look at the gross effects of the society's institutions and activities to understand that, regardless of individual exception, the total effect of this society is comparable to that of a society based on the ideology of white supremacy. How ridiculous and foolish for anyone to believe she or he is superior or special because of the accident of birth into a certain race. I'm embarrassed to admit how ignorant I was, even if I was young and the attitude was mostly subconscious.

And so, what is it that makes Caucasians aggressive and violent? Is greed our prime motivation? Do we have empty souls that we try to fill by greedy acquisition of the Earth's resources? It's probably a much more complicated answer than this, and I don't know what the answer is; but I do know one thing. If we Caucasians don't change our greedy, domineering, uncompassionate and sometimes even evil ways, we won't survive; and perhaps we'll take the rest of humanity and the whole planet with us.
It is my belief that the more we love ourselves individually, the more we can love each other collectively. Love can transcend all boundaries of animosity, disrespect, jealousy, perceptions and a whole host of evils as well the "social constructs" of racism and sexism. The concept of love can be looked at in the context of the Christian-based paradigm known as Agape Love.

Agape Love consists of a love based on self-love, loving thy brother and sister as you would yourself, and respecting others as you would want to be treated in any given situation. The nature of Agape Love consists of the type of love that means partaking in the household chores, for example, cooking, vacuuming, and being supportive of one's mate. Partaking in such activities does not make one less of a man (it actually makes you more of a man)! Whether one is married or not, is irrelevant, but what is important is the sharing of one's abilities while desperately and vigorously supporting one's mate. Agape love is not a physical type of love, but a holistic love involving one's kindness and moral attributes. Agape love means highlighting one's positives while down-playing one's shortcomings.

There is a tremendous need for African American males to begin and continue to "walk" the "walk" and respect and uphold our African American women. These women are the bearers of our children, great ancestors, grandmothers, aunts, mothers, wives, girlfriends, daughters. We cannot let society continue to dictate to us the meaning of love, whether in terms of money, or adhering to the notion that women are secondary. We must walk in harmony with our women as well as treat them as our equal. A true test of manhood consists of not calling our women out of their God given names, nor debasing ourselves to the harshness and myopic views that we are so often faced with, e.g., through such institutions as the media.

As African American males we must continue to be at our best and as a result, our best will come out in our relationships. Let us leave a positive legacy to our sons and future sons, so as to leave a foundation from which they too can build better relationships. Let us be modern day trailblazers and realize that what we say, how we act and how we treat our African American queens is crucial to the fulfillment of the type of love made in heaven, AGAPE LOVE. We must realize and understand that what we do today, will certainly affect what we accomplish tomorrow!

Lastly, I challenge all my African American brothers to discard the word bitch, the "N" word and any other derogatory, demoralizing word from your vocabulary. I guarantee that you will feel better about yourself, our African American women, and the African American race as a whole. Feel good about yourself and remember that agape love transcends all obstacles and opens a world of opportunities.
“It has nothing to do with me. I really can’t say that I know much about politics. They’re all scandalous and nothing will be done even if I do vote. That kind of stuff doesn’t really interest me, but thanks.” This is what a brother told me when I asked him to join me at the College Democrats meeting. Ironically, as I asked around, this became the underlying thought of the majority of the Black college students I encountered. In this election, the lives and futures of these brothers (and sisters) are being thrown around in debates in the Supreme Court, Congress and local governments.

Are you sick of hearing about the end of Affirmative Action? Do something! Or will you wait until you are standing in an office with your degree in hand, ambitious and ready, and a smiling white face tells you under his or her breath "Nigger go home."? It will be legal. At this time many scholarships, grants and loans that are putting many of us through school are based on our minority status. By the time our generation reaches the job market, things will be different. Change takes time. When you and your children have grumbling bellies and the cut on educational spending keeps your children from competing with others...what will you do?

Uncle Sam has your name, address, phone number and has issued you a social security card to keep track of everywhere you choose to go. At any time he has the power to draft you and send you into war...cold bloody war. We have a history in this country of being drafted first, working the front lines and giving our lives for the domination and power of the United States of America. If war began right now, how many of you would put on your brown camouflage uniform and "do what you gotta do" with no concept of what you are fighting for or against? Ironically, you do not take time to train yourself as a soldier in your own war. And it is a war.

Times are changing. We are told of the mass killing, brutality and struggle it took to achieve Black political empowerment. As a result we attend public/private de-segregated educational institutions side by side with people of all cultural backgrounds. Yet, voter registration tables are seen and walked past with only a curious glance. Shame. We are giving Jim Crow a reason to smile. He doesn’t want our vote or our Black faces in his office. While "serious" white students are attending forums and seminars on the "Black problem", Black voices are singing Outkast in Eastway. These collective Black voices know all the words yet have no idea of the power contained in them. How many of you will vote for the next BUS president but will not vote for the Commander in Chief of this country?

Is the struggle over? I agree that the economy of the Black community has risen over the past thirty years and many of our parents may have decent jobs, but...are you a professional? Tomorrow is being ignored and the "real world is going to bite several asses". The ghettos and reservations (aka project housing) are being attacked. Welfare reform is in the news. Major cuts in these programs are being debated currently by the Republican party. Will it take seeing masses of Black men, women and children living on the streets for the reality to hit? Job training programs need to be implemented. The rise of science is overwhelmingly high. Competition has risen so dramatically that a Masters degree is now required to attain even a comfortable, middle class standard of living. What will happen to the unskilled laborer, especially when our funding for education disappears? These signs are our "call to action."

Where do we go from here? The answer is mass political activity, inside and out. Show your faces, lift your voices everywhere. Not only in Black student political organizations, but also represent our nation in "closed door" discussions. The door is only closed because you are not there. It is time to get involved. Rise! Write letters, make fliers, and get active. Times are changing.

Jim Crow Thanks You
by Jennifer Louise Banks
The shock of the verdict of the O.J. Simpson trial reverberated around the nation and enraged the white population. It didn't result in a riot, but it might as well have. As a matter of fact, the only thing that kept them from rioting are the escape mechanisms available to them.

Whites, unlike their black counterparts, have at their disposal a multitude of outlets and venues to properly vent their anger, frustration, rage and violent nature. These channels allow them to peacefully and leisurely contemplate the "proper" way to avenge the loss of one of their own.

We, on the other hand, are laughing at them now. "Finally," we say, "they were bit in the tail by one of their own wicked creations." One white woman was murdered and America feels that her family was denied justice. This is in stark contrast to the hundreds of thousands of non-whites who have been denied justice since this land first became polluted by the arrival of Europeans.

If you're like me, you're probably saying to yourself that this is the same judicial system that white people created, fostered, subsidized and supported for over two hundred years. They've protected it as if it were a member of their own family. This is their baby. We were not invited to the table when they assembled this contraption, so this is THEIR Frankenstein. They have bragged to the world for decades - for centuries - that this is the greatest system of jurisprudence on the planet.

Judging from their utter fixation on the trial, one would have thought that the blond-haired, blue-eyed Angel had returned and demanded that "white justice" be served. Now, of course, they want to rip apart their judicial system because a so-called black man beat them at their own game.

Because of the outcome of the O.J. Simpson-Barnum & Bailey Circus trial, many of us were left with the feeling that justice has finally trickled down into the valley of the dispossessed and poor. We thought that after centuries of injustice, we had finally received true justice from the truly unjust. We were wrong.

First of all, O.J. Simpson receiving "justice" does not translate into blacks as a whole receiving justice. O.J. Simpson is not one of us. He was America's sweetheart - one of their own. He didn't become America's NIGGA like the rest of us, until he was accused of killing that blond-haired, blue-eyed ex-wife of his. Key phrase here being blond hair/blue eyes, for had she been black, white America wouldn't have given a damn.

But, O.J. was not OUR hero, not OUR idol; not a leader nor a spokesperson for anything that resembled Blackness. He intentionally severed himself from the black community to find heaven in the snow. He didn't want anything to do with us. He disowned us and his true self. And, now that he's free, he'll do it again.

As you have seen, extreme shock experienced by whites did not spark any instantaneous combustion of rage. There will be no riots like we know riots. They will most definitely not destroy their precious suburbs like Hollywood Hills, Beverly Hills or even ant hills. White people are rioting quietly. They will riot at the polls in the upcoming elections. They will riot into the extreme fringes of the Democratic and Republican parties. (To me, both parties are one in the same: they are the left and right arms of the same grotesque, monstrous being.)

They will riot on the floors of the House and Senate when issues that affect you come up for a vote. Affirmative Action? Welfare? Crime? Drugs? Enterprise Zones? What do you think they will do now that we have
celebrated in the face of their anger? And, don't even begin to underestimate the judicial backlash. Three Strikes & You're Out will change into One Strike & You Fry. Statistics state that one-third of the black male population will have some run-in with the penal system. Well now, they will see what they can do with the remaining two-thirds. Although we comprise a mere twelve percent of the U.S. population, we already outnumber whites in America's prisons. Now it's going to get worse, and white folks are just loving it.

And what about the gross and shameful disparity in drug sentencing? Mandatory five year sentences for a certain amount of crack cocaine; probation for an identical amount of powder cocaine. (Which is more expensive and used predominantly by whites.) African-American leaders have worked hard to demonstrate this unfairness. Do you think they'll change it now? Congress voted overwhelmingly in favor of supporting it. And your President, Slick Willy Clinton, gave his approval for this ludicrous law. How many of you have a "good" job in Corporate America? Do you think that promotion. And if the company decides to downsize, consolidate or relocate - see ya, bro. Do you have a tardiness, attendance or disciplinary problem, and are borderline anyway? If so, I'll soon be seeing you at the unemployment office.

For every action, there's an equal and opposite reaction. In our spontaneous outburst of celebration and relief, we forgot that everything that is life-giving, life-sustaining and life-taking comes into the black community from the white world: food, water, shelter, jobs, education, etc., etc. At this point, they are directly or indirectly in control of virtually every aspect of the lives of black people. This is why the outcome of the trial is so important. Whites were deeply injured by it, and saw millions of us laughing at their pain while celebrating their defeat. Now they want revenge; they want blood. Then again, they always want blood.

White riots are nothing new. But, over the centuries, they've consistently altered their methods to ensure a more widespread, longer lasting and more virulent effect. Today, their riots are done incognito. They are more sinister, more devilish in nature. White riots are very organized and conducted three fold: politically, socially and financially. So if you thought that blacks got the last laugh about the O.J. trial, you will soon discover that you were dead wrong.

With newspapers, magazines and talk shows fiendishly fanning the flames of racial discord, they are ensuring the rise of white rage and the explosion of seething hatred. But, they are not rioting outwardly; they are rioting from within. And, as is evidenced throughout history, the only ones who ever get burned by these types of quiet riots are the people of African descent.
GROWING BACK BLACK INTO ONE: A PERSONAL
POETIC STATEMENT

submitted to Jazz Poetry Anthology Project, c/o Sascha Feinstein, ed.
by MWATABA S. OKANTAH

photo by David McNeal
Poetics. Poetry. Word Sounds. In the beginning was the Word. Blackness. The sacred power of the Spoken Word birthed first light out of original darkness. For the poet, words exist as energy vibration. Words are living things. The word-roots of the black poet-tree run down deeply, deep into our African soul-soil. Tradition. When I looked inside myself, I discovered poetry. Forced to listen with my inner ear, I heard black poem sounds calling me in a new name. When I opened my inner eye, I saw that poetry is how I see. I became one with the musicians and the singer poets who have always been there to remind us "word sounds have power," and who sing the praises of those who gave poetry its first name.

I will always remember my first encounter hearing Gwendolyn Brooks "read" her poetry. At the time, I was a 23 year old "wannabe" poet/student. Miss Brooks was the featured poet at the Tenth Anniversary Celebration of Dudley Randall’s Broadside Press. Her poetry mesmerized me. She leaped beyond the confining boundaries of a mere reading. I can now say she played her words (her "ax") the same way Thelonius Monk played his piano—all herky jerky motion and syncopating, unusual rhymes and rhythms. After hearing Sonia Sanchez, Haki Madhubuti and Etheridge Knight, I literally became drunk on black poets song-chanting their own words. For the first time, I experienced the natural music inside black words.

I learned to listen for word sounds. I did not know it, but my personal poetics were being driven by the challenge of capturing my own inner word music on the blank, white page. During her workshop at the 1975 Broadside gathering, Brooks stressed respect for the writing process. She directed us to study our place in relation to the full range of the black tradition in poetry. She echoed sentiments she expressed in Broadside’s A Capsule Course in Black Poetry Writing (Brooks, Kgositsile, Madhubuti, Randall):

The new black ideal italicizes black identity, black solidarity, black self-possession and self-address ... the essential black ideal vitaly acknowledges African roots ... ESSENTIAL black literature is the distillation of black life. Black life is different from white life. Different in nuance, different in gritty,ortion. Different from birth. Different at death.

Stephen Henderson, in the introduction to his book Understanding the New Black Poetry, places the poetic challenge of the black poetry tradition within a clearly defined, African-centered frame of reference. His essay, "The Forms of Things Unknown," had a major impact on my approach to writing, as well as performing, my poetry. Given the present impact of rap, not to mention new technologies, I think his essay may be more important now than when it first appeared in 1973. He writes, "Structurally speaking ... whenever Black poetry is most distinctly and effectively Black, it derives its form from two basic sources, Black speech and Black music...."

The very title of the essay suggested a necessary focus. It articulated what had been only a painful, nagging need that kept me awake through long nights, and also woke me from fitful sleep each new day. Henderson provided aesthetic direction:

By black speech I mean the speech of the majority of Black people in this country, and I do not exclude the speech of so-called educated people.... This includes the techniques and timbres of the sermon and other forms of oratory, the dozens, the rap, the signifying, and the oral folktales.

By Black music I mean essentially the vast fluid body of Black song--spirituals, shouts, jubilees, gospel songs, field cries, blues, pop songs by Blacks, and, in addition, jazz ... and non-jazz music by Black composers who consciously or unconsciously draw upon the Black music tradition.

In this regard, I am not a jazz poet. Jazz music is in my poetry, yet my work is not limited to just one music form. As a form of black cultural expression, jazz lends itself to our need to articulate feelings which cannot be expressed in English words.

When I first read Henderson’s essay, the initial impact was revelatory. It provided me with a culturally relevant definition of poetry that made sense to my ears. I did not hear in the alien sounds of English sonnets, I did hear in the cacophony of black life sounds that surrounded me. Put another way, Henderson’s seminal work allowed me to place contemporary black poetry within the context of traditional African modes of expression: drum, dance and song. In African terms, the poet is storyteller. The poet is master of eloquence and keeper of the sacred lore of the folk. The poet is both healer and historian. The poets are "the guardians of the soul of the nation." From this perspective, the black tradition in poetry here in the USA is part of the larger, New World African tradition—a Pan-African tradition.

In the beginning I did not call anything I wrote poetry. High school English teachers had dulled my sensibilities. Forced readings of Shakespeare and "Silas Marner" had left scars. My first quarter freshmen English instructor introduced me to the writing process by requiring our class to keep daily journals. I surprised myself. Writing was, and remains, therapeutic. Subsequent professors—Hulda Smith-Graham, Wylie Smith III, Althea Romeo and Lloyd Mills—would see the poet in me before I was able to acknowledge the poet in myself. The late Hulda Smith-Graham became my cultural midwife. Circumstances, and her tireless insistence, convinced me I had been called "to poet" during a time in my life when I needed both convincing and encouragement.

It was Hulda who had taken me to the Broadside anniversary. Ultimately, I cannot separate my poetry from my personal struggle to develop and maintain a healthy, black identity. The act of writing became my primary means of self-expression and self-discovery. It was a graduate student, Sis. Odara, who introduced me to serious black music. She opened me up with
the Crusaders' "First Crusade." She blew me away with "A Love Supreme" by John Coltrane. She gave me copies of Wright's Native Son and The Autobiography of Malcolm X to read, and I have not been the same since.

Over the years, I have come to understand that I do not write poetry so much as I strive to be poetry. Life is poetry. We are the poetry. It is an attitude. I tell my students I do not believe in "writer's block." As long as there is a local bus for me to catch, or a Greyhound bus station to "hang out" in, I can see and experience a real poem as it is really happening. I began writing poetry before I became a reader of it. Even now, I prefer hearing live poets. I read novels more than I read poetry. Black poetry comes out of me. It erupts. It rages. It laughs. It cries. It sings.

It now occurs to me that the creative writing process and keeping journals also endowed me with the aesthetic tools to explore, nurture and direct my inner voice. Writing in those early journals empowered me to satisfy this urge I did not even know existed inside of me. I learned through experience that word vibrations possessed the awesome power to heal or derange. From Richard Wright, I first learned my own ability to wield this power. I discovered a new world of unlimited black possibility waiting for me in the challenge of blank, white pages. Today I am one of a rousing chorus of black poet-voices, thanks to a college writing instructor whose name and face I can no longer recall.

Black poets give voices to all those unfolding stories our people need to have told. For a long time, I did not know how to describe this thing I sensed growing inside of my being. I could either give in, and become one with it, or I could divide, fight it, and experience personal turmoil. Although I tried mightily, it was not in me to fight against this power. I moved toward the word sounds I heard whispering inside my inner ear. Ancestral voices. Afreakan voices. For the poets, it is not in us to fight against being black oneness. Tradition. My teachers helped me to understand there is no single poet who speaks for black people. Our strong voices together comprise an ensemble of one collective voice.

Instinctively, I have always felt that poets have a place and a significant role to play in black struggle. If we are to become a psychologically and spiritually whole people once again, all of our artists must be joined in the battle. We are the black poets. Afreakan poets. Healer poets. The roll call is long with names both unknown and known. We are the word smiths, those singer-keepers of the story of a scattered people who are slowly, but steadily, growing back black into one. Peace....

Mwataba S. Okantah is a poet in residence in the Department of Pan-African Studies, Kent State University.
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crooked politicians belong in a cell
a president that didn't inhale
government feeds "shit" for our
gestation...this is the
fate of a SENSELESS NATION.
who will repair our ozone layer
masses fall upon their knees in prayer
doomed by a lack of
communication...this is
the fate of OUR senseless nation.

HEAVEN HELP ME
BY JEANETTE DANIELS

If I'm dead please do not mourn.
If it looks as if I'm asleep, I am, so do not awaken me.
I would rather be in the shadow of death than in the light of
destruction and hate.
If I see tears shed, I shall reach from heaven and wash all
rivers away.
If I witness any more of the wicked realm of racism I shall
cast a storm to banish all humanity involved.
If you see me naked on the street, don't stop and stare, clothe
me, for I am your brother, your sister, your mother, your
father, your grandfather.
I am a part of your race, not of the skin, but of the human
race.
If you offer me any type of drug that may deter my mind,
body, or spirit I shall quickly decline.
How we seem to forget that I am a part of your family.
Do you not remember me?
I am society, I am not free.
Heaven Help Me.
A THOUSAND UNRELATED TEARS
BY EHMWENMA AIMIUWU

There are a thousand tears
Over that flesh about to be swallowed
By the earth six feet deep.
To the innocent eyes of observers,
Those shedding the tears all mourn
For the death of a loved one.
But only God
Knows why they weep.

You see that rich clothed preacher,
He weeps due to the loss of membership.
That man over there does not know
Where food is coming from tomorrow.
The wife of the dead one
Has some property battles with her in-laws.

That fat contractor at the corner
Just lost a million-dollar contract.
The dead man’s assassin, standing over there
Regrets he shot the wrong man.
Look, that beautiful beauty queen
Is lost between abortion and adoption.
Even the vultures circling the sky
Are about to see their food buried.

There are a thousand tears
Over that flesh about to be swallowed
By the earth six feet deep.
But only God
Knows why they weep.
And the flesh about to be swallowed
Does not even care.

descendants of a self-proclaimed superior race
better than
descendants of the enslaved?
what is to be said
to an unwilling people who refuse to consider
a change in their ways.

one of your own poets
spoke of wastelands--
even J. Alfred Prufrock
could not have imagined this;
from lives measured out in coffee spoons
to real life lost in cyber-space:
i hear Babbit calling out to you
from his middle class grave.
his people do not care
to listen
to anything save
the seductive buzzing in their own ears.
they hear megabytes.
they hear profit margins.
they have banished true peoplehood
without a trace:
walkmans and cellular phones--
new age glitter
need not even be gold.
from the e-mail to the internet,
they do not know
their story has already been foretold.
Babylon is falling is falling,
machine culture cannot
save any souls.

this is a poem
for those white people who say they want to talk about race.
are you ready
to hear this land is not free?
we have never known genuine liberty.

for us, Americans
have been our raging Nazis.
America has never been
all it claims to be.

and, you ask,
“can WE talk about race?”
but, what is to be said when
Americans have
so poisoned the talking space?

we see you.
we see how you see yourselves.
we see your refusal
to see us.
still, you do not see
a real black face.

can we talk about race?
the real question
is, “can you bring yourselves
to listen when black voices speak?”
we are invisible
only because of the blinding whiteness in so many eyes.
you will never hear us
until you look at yourselves
reflected in the deep black mirror of our lives...

(UNTITLED)
BY KELLY HARRIS

I saw nothing, but white faces--
racist stares.
Just the sight of my color
gave them a scare.

But I was very aware
of what was going on.
Others around me
didn’t see anything wrong.

The waitress acted as if
my color was a burden
but when I looked her in her eyes
her racist tongue started to stutter.

I guess 'cause she knew
I was on to her game.
She offered more water,
hoping my anger would tame
....but it didn’t.

So, I calmed myself
and asked for the bill.

I couldn’t sit still
in a place I wasn’t welcome.

Maybe that’s why I don’t believe
in the American dream.
In some areas of this country our public schools are in crisis. The facilities are crumbling, classrooms are severely overcrowded, and the students are lacking basic supplies. Classes are being conducted in hallways, closets, gymnasiums and what used to be the teacher’s lounge. Books are so scarce that students are forced to share them in class, and may not remove them from the facility to aid them in completing homework assignments. Teachers are feeling the frustrations; but, nothing could describe the frustrations of the students more so than their poor standardized test scores and drop out rates.

In contrast, other schools are breaking new ground. With high-tech computer labs, small student/teacher ratios, and an abundance of supplementary teaching materials, the academic success of these students is unparalleled.

Such inequitable examples of schools within our educational system are an unfortunate reality. This phenomenon is easily exemplified by looking in our own backyard. For example, Cleveland Public Schools - a nearby urban district - and Beachwood Public Schools - an equally close suburban district are polar opposites in many respects.

Let’s look first at facilities. (To make this easier, we will look at one Cleveland high school - John Marshall,
and Beachwood's only high school.) Beachwood High School is a vast state-of-the-art facility settled in a residential area of the suburb. The spacious classrooms, gymnasium and hallways make the students comfortable in their environment. They have two computer labs (IBM and Mac), but also have computers in classrooms throughout the building (75 in all).

They also have a large gymnasium separate and apart from their indoor pool and exercise facilities. The library is fully computerized, and contains a vast array of materials. The science and mathematics facilities are extremely advanced with equipment capable of conducting DNA tests as well as molecular modeling. Each student can surf the World Wide Web as well as post and receive information on the school's on-line Bulletin Board Service. They have an innumerable list of extra-curricular activities which include academics as well as athletics. The average salary of Beachwood teachers is $50,611.

John Marshall is a bit different. Even though the school building is very large, it accommodates nearly five times as many students as Beachwood. The building is in disrepair, especially the roof which leaks in many places. The ceiling is in need of repair in many areas including hallways, classrooms and the auditorium because of water damage. Aside from that, the atmosphere is not nearly as aesthetically comforting as that in Beachwood. They have one computer lab that must accommodate many students at once. The gymnasium is large. But, because of the way it was built, it is almost useless in winter. (It was built on stilts to allow for underground parking, but in winter pipes freeze and the temperature drops significantly.) The indoor pool was recently repaired but is not yet in service. The average salary of Cleveland school teachers is $41,033.

The demographics of each school are also significantly different. Beachwood High services 495 students, 88% of which are white, 10% are black. The teacher/pupil ratio is 14:1. Therefore, the average class size does not exceed 14 students. 40.2% of the students participate in Academic/Subject Related extra-curricular activities. 61.2% participate in athletic activities. 0.4% of Beachwood's students are considered economically or academically disadvantaged, with .5% on public assistance.

At John Marshall, however, there are 2,250 students. Although only 35% of Marshall's students are black, the district itself is almost twice that. The teacher/pupil ratio is currently 32:1 because the school is understaffed by about eight teachers. 17.2% of the students participate in academic subject/related extra-curricular activities, while 19.6% participate in athletics. 72% of the students are considered economically or academically disadvantaged with 63.5% on public assistance.

What role do finances play in creating or exacerbating these discrepancies? A large one I'm sure! It's difficult to draw dollar for dollar comparisons between the two schools. The Cleveland City School District is so large, it's hard to extrapolate the reported data to look at just one school. Let it suffice to say that Beachwood City School District's per pupil expenditure is $12,493 per year, and Cleveland City School District's is $6,017 per year. I asked Randy Boroff, Principal of Beachwood High School, if he could provide the same level of services to his students for half of what they currently spend, and he
said they could not. My only question is: Why should Cleveland schools be expected to do what Beachwood schools certainly could not do?

When I first thought about this, I saw it as strictly a black and white issue. Although racism can never be ruled out, in this situation it seems more a matter of social class. (Unfortunately, we (African-Americans) are more often members of a lower social class, and are therefore disproportionately affected by unfair funding practices.) The school funding policies used across this country favor the wealthy and punish the poor. Not only are tax bases higher in affluent communities, but individual family resources are higher too. These school districts still receive their portion of state allotments, even though they have greater resources (even without state support) than urban districts. According to Alex Molnar, Professor of Education at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee,

"It is vital that we have a serious debate about both the amount of money we are willing to spend on the education of our young and how fairly and wisely we spend it."

The key issue here is fairness. When talking with Principal Boroff, we tried to agree on a funding strategy that would be fair and unbiased. Unfortunately, we could not. Boroff felt that taking money from wealthier districts to give to poorer districts would bring mediocrity to all schools. He also said that making schools more equitable was a matter for the state and federal governments to address, not local taxpayers. I also spoke with Gil Frelino, Principal of John Marshall High School. When asked the same question, he thought that a 1% state income tax increase for people working in Greater Cleveland would generate a lot of desperately needed revenue. But, he also thought that an in-depth look at tax abatements was in order. He was not convinced one way or the other as to whether they were hurting or helping Cleveland schools.

This is a very complex issue that deserves to be given more than a cursory review. Obviously, we do not have all the answers here. However, in my opinion, the public school system is not fulfilling its obligation to its cit-

izen. With the exception of a few suburban districts like Beachwood, most schools are so strapped for funds that creating a positive, effective learning environment is nearly impossible. In a society so reluctant to embrace any system other than Democratic Capitalism - which is based on individualism and competition - how can we all have an equal opportunity to compete and succeed if we don't all start at the same point?

My position can be summed up best by looking again to Alex Molnar's article "School Funding: The Right Issue, The Wrong Logic":

"Our Constitutional values require that each child have an equal claim on whatever resources we provide for public education. In practical terms, this means spending at least as much money on children living in poverty as we spend on their wealthier (peers). To spend enough to buy a Cadillac education for some children, while others must settle for a used Chevette is an obvious affront to our Constitutional principles. It reflects (our) decision to treat some children as more valuable (to us) than others."

Parents, especially those whose children go to urban or rural public schools, should demand that these policies be changed. According to a study conducted by Ronald Ferguson of Harvard University, standardized test scores improved when school districts were given money to reduce class sizes and employ more experienced teachers. But, these programs cost money to implement. If we don't go out and fight for the equal distribution of public school funds, we are relinquishing control of our children's futures to those who have the most to gain by keeping them under-educated.

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WILL OUR FUTURE BE AN EDUCATED ONE?

by Melissa Prunty Kemp
It is no secret that America is facing an education crisis. Our schools suffer from the insur- gence of violence, drugs, apathy on the part of teachers, parents and students, lack of vision, government take-over and quite possibly, the voucher-select-your-own school programs. Large numbers of our black students - - black males in particular - - are being removed from the classroom and placed into the concentration camps of special education, alternative education or detention, suspension and expulsion.

Each year our nation’s colleges and universities pro-
duce hundreds of BA’s, MA’s and PhD’s. Yet with all these educated people, the African American community is still not reaping the rewards: the decolo-
nization of our minds. We aren’t educating our children, we allow the oppressor to do it for us. This in fact, guarantees that we as a people will remain "miseduc-
cated"; ground up in the public school machine.

Carter G. Woodson, the father of modern black history, clearly defined what was then, and what remains today, one of the most daunting obstacles to our collective freedom: obtaining a truthful, full, intellectually challenging education. As Woodson states," the mere imparting of information is not education. Above all things, the effort must result in making a man think and do for himself just as the Jews have done in spite of universal persecu-
tion". If we spend millions of dollars in the nation’s colleges and universities, shouldn’t we expect our intellectual prepar-
tations to allow us to empower ourselves and communities? How often do we give up fifty thousand dollars or so and get nothing in return?

Woodson further writes that "It may be of no impor-
tance to the race to be able to boast today of the many times as many ‘educated’ members as it had in 1865. If they are of the wrong kind, the increase in numbers will be a disadvan-
tage rather than an advantage. The only question which con-
cerns us here is whether these ‘educated’ persons are actually equipped to face the ordeal before them or unconsciously perpetuating the regime of the oppressor". The timelessness of Woodson’s words attests to the fact that with the substan-
tial increase in the number of African-Americans with degrees, we as a people have seen little in the way of true lib-
eration from our oppressor. By now among other advances, we should have multitudes of African-American teachers and administrators, funded by African-American communities and supported by any other human beings truly down with the cause. Why don’t we have this? Where are those African-
American college graduates to teach our children? Why can’t we see that teachers mold the minds of our youth? If we let the oppressor mold those minds, where will we be?

Today, we are likely to send our children to school and when "problems" arise with their school work, peers, or authority figures, we allow our oppressor to impose a new form of ghetto-
ization upon us. We allow the oppressor to give our children drugs to correct their scholastic and adjust-
ment problems. We allow school counselors and social workers to tell us that because our children don’t perform well in testing situations, and don’t seem interested in learning or are having continuous discipline problems, that they are learning disabled, hyperactive or both. And, therefore, we parents should begin a drug regime for our children as early as four years old and ignore the likelihood that we are predisposing them to more insidious drug abuse in their adult lives.

While there are certainly legitimate cases of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder meriting drug therapy there can be no doubt that our children, particularly our boys, are being targeted for failure and special education by an educational system who’s teaching staff is predominantly white

Jawanza Kunjufu, lecturer and best-selling author, has done extensive research on what he calls a "conspiracy to destroy black boys". He presents convincing evidence that
hyperactivity and special education are tools of the oppressor directed against black children. Theories of hyperactivity, for instance, deal with what should be considered normal energy levels for children at certain ages. By physiology and by culture, black children have higher energy levels which are expressed differently than in white children. White children are used to set the standard for normal behavior. As a result, 41% of black children (who make up 17% of the entire school population) are in special education classes. 85% of special education students are black males. According to Kunjufu, special education has become a dumping ground for children who are "hyperactive," have unmet emotional needs, behavior problems or may not be liked by school authorities.

Black people must wake up! We go to college and study the sociological, psychological and philosophical theories that impact education. We know the history of those great black thinkers who created educational curriculum and instruction during segregation- - Booker T Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, Mary McCloud Bethune. We must begin to use the hundreds of years of knowledge we collected and history we've created to affect real change, to become independent and free.

We can no longer follow a pattern of behavior the Harold Cruse has so aptly described in The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: "Every time the "Negro" gets to a position of being able to empower the race, to suggest and enact proactive change, we fail to make the necessary leap in our thinking and our actions." He continues, "the more practical sides of the Negro problem in America are bogged down organizationally and methodologically precisely because of cultural confusion and disorientation on the part of most Negroes. Thus it is only through a cultural analysis of the Negro approach to group "politics" that the errors, weaknesses and goal-failures can cogently be analyzed and positively worked out". It was Cruse's primary contention that blacks as a group were being constantly thwarted by various political and ethnic groups, the Communist Party, Democrats and Jews among others during Cruse's time. Because of the courting of these groups, blacks more often than not have failed to take up the necessary agendas that would promote the black community. What was true for Cruse in 1964 remains true in large measure today, especially in our thinking on education.

We lose our children's minds to deception and weakening because we don't recognize how much could be gained by an African-American creation of a culturally connected, receptive learning environment for our children. Social constructivist thinkers like Vygotsky (trans 1990) and Jay Bruner (1986) have demonstrated that it is the collective social unit that has the greatest impact on an individual's construction of language, selfhood and world view. If we accept this premise, it only follows that our children would best be educated by people who have the greatest natural access to, and possibly the greatest understanding of, our culture.

The current educational system has failed us to truly understand us and our needs as a people. It consistently refuses to represent us in teaching and professional positions, even in numbers proportionate to our numbers within an individual institution. It does not fully require the development and training of its current and incoming teachers in cultural diversity and multiculturalism. If the current education system will not love, nurture and properly educate our children, we should use what we have to educate them ourselves.

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The Department offers an undergraduate major leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree and a minor in the College of Arts and Sciences. The developing discipline of Africana Studies includes Pan-African Studies (or Diaspora Studies) as one of its primary emphases. The Department of Pan-African Studies therefore, offers major and minor course sequences structured to provide in-depth study of history, language, philosophy, education, literature, sociology, art, music and other subjects as they relate to people of African descent throughout the world. It also exposes the student to the theoretical, practical, domestic and national issues facing African Americans and leads them to consider utilizing their intellectual skills to effect better organization and development of the African American community. Specifically, the Bachelor of Arts degree in Pan-African Studies recombines the humanities, the fine arts, the social sciences, research, and community development. Although Africana Studies legitimately includes the technical sciences, these subject matters have been strategically reserved for a later period in our development.
Below is an excerpt from an interview conducted by Christopher Miller, of an 18 year old inmate at an Ashland, Ohio correctional facility. To protect his identity, he asks that we not use his real name and instead refer to him as "Absoloot." He has since converted to Orthodox Islam and has hence taken a new name. All too often, brothers and sisters from our generation are getting caught up in this country’s criminal system of injustice. If we are to have any chance at stopping this phenomenon, we must act now. Let us all share this information "Absoloot" has so graciously given us, so that we may hopefully prevent the next man from making this same grave mistake.

Q: Good afternoon. Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. I’d like to begin by asking why you are currently incarcerated?
A: "As-Saamum Alaikum. All praises due to Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful. I was charged with felonious assault, possession of criminal tools and two aggravated drug trafficking offenses."

Q: How do you feel about the process -- the system?
A: "I think the system is just that, a system. A system whose main objective is good in front of the white man. They’ll sell each other out to get status as a valuable C.O. (Corrections Officer). All the guards are robots controlled by the government."

Q: Has your attitude changed since being incarcerated?
A: "Yes, it has. Now that I am on the inside looking out, I see a lot of the games that are played by Uncle Sam. I have the attitude of Malik El Shabaz, Marcus Mosiah Garvey and the Honorable Louis Farrakhan. I have the attitude of my people who are oppressed all over the world. Before, I had the attitude of an ignorant stool pigeon; I had the attitude 'fuck the world'. I had the attitude of a blind man walking through these pitch black corridors called life. Notice, I said I had; now it’s about what I have".

Q: Do you have any advice for those on the outside doing wrong?
A: "The advice I give is simple: Educate your mind, leave the foolish life of the many alone, become aware of where you come from and where you are going. Believe in God Almighty. I did not list God first because our race is a hungry race; hungry for answers to the problems of poverty and oppression in America. I know a hungry man don’t want to hear nothin’ about no God. He wants to hear something about some food, then he’ll listen to some talk about God. Believe me, I know. So first, I’ll feed you some knowledge of self,
Q. Do you have any advice for those on the outside doing wrong?

A. "The advice I give is simple: Educate your mind, leave the foolish life of the many alone, become aware of where you come from and where you are going..."
It seems to me my fate in this world was chosen in the womb. I was a statistic. I started off in Morris Black Cleveland Metro Housing Authority. Me, a so called minority. My mama was a soldier, was my daddy too. Her faith in God strayed me from the boys in blue. We got out the Projects. Moved into some different P.J.'s. It was all good. Started off brand new. No friends. No siblings. Nothing but my name, which was Willie, and these big old bags of luggage under my eye sockets which held all the corruption I had gathered from this world.

P.J. Willie, you sure look tired today.
No, I ain't tired.
P.J. Willie, you sure look mad.
Naw, I ain't mad.
PJ Willie, you sure is quiet.
Naw, I ain't quiet.
PJ Willie, what is wrong?
I'm ready to go.
Where?
Hell, I don't know. Just ready to go. Look in my eyes. Do you see my eyes?
Yeah, they're brown.
Naw, look deep into my eyes.
I see some sleep.

AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!
What in da hell wrong with you, screamin and all?
Fool, that's what my eyes are saying.
Fool, your eyes can't talk.

But if they could them would.
They'd say:: Why that man rappin to that Lady in your front yard, why that boy just accidentally shot himself with the gun? Why these boys always hangin out way after dark?
Why that lady be so skinny and face all shrivelled up, and hair all fallin out and she ain't but twenty! Oh yeah, and

why she sit on the corner and rock back and forth all day?

They'd say: Why that boy runnin so fast and that white man running just as fast behind him? Why don't no one care about education? Why that car speed off and that boy shoot at it six times? Why that woman all on that man's penis like a lolly pop and why she got all her clothes off in a car in broad daylight? Why the helicopter always flash his old light at night around here? Why the high priced universities don't want black folk to have nothin, just enough to pacify?

Where that little boy daddy at? And his and his and hers too? All I see is her momma. OH... I see one daddy. Hell, where's the rest?

Man, stop. Stop. Stop! How long you going to go on and on about what your eyes going to say?
Until I finish.
When is that?
Ask my eyes.
They're closed.

Well, that's when they'll stop...when they close.

Healthy Body...Healthy Mind
by Dave Love

One evening as I was watching television, I heard something that totally caught me off guard. CNN Headline News reported that the New England Journal of Medicine published a study regarding the eating habits of American people and the findings were that poor African-American people ate better thirty years ago than anyone else in America, including the wealthy whites. On hearing this, I was somewhat happy. Being a personal trainer by trade and an African-American, I am familiar with the diets of my people, and the situation isn't nearly as positive as they reported.

Then came the other half of the headline. Studies now show that African Americans, as a whole, have the worst eating habits of all races in America. After hearing the latter, I felt grounded. Not that I was happy by any means, but it made me think about my role as a personal trainer.

Not quite thirty myself, I can remember when and how African-Americans' diets began changing for the worst. When I was born in the latter part of the sixties we ate what we could. My mother and father couldn't afford the big juicy steaks and meals that whites ate, so my mother would give us more vegetables, rice, and grains with our meal as supplements for the small amount of meat we were given to eat. Little did she know she was feeding us just what we needed. White Americans, from what I'd seen from television, would eat steaks, chicken and roasts as big as their plates. I would look at them and my mouth would water. I would also get mad because we couldn't eat like that.
As the seventies came it seemed as if fast food restaurant chains started to explode in the black community. McDonalds’ and Burger Kings were being built on every block. I used to beg my mother for money to go to McDonalds to eat instead of eating her home-cooked meals. Kids on our block bragged everyday about eating at one of the fast food places and made fun of those that couldn’t boast the same. The whole state of the black nutritional diet started to change because we wanted so much to be like our white counterparts, who were wanting to be like us.

Then came the eighties. Whites were starting to learn a little more about health and they paid more attention to their diets. They learned that much of what they were eating, such as steaks, hamburgers, and other fried foods, was garbage and that eating them would lead to heart and lung disease. So they started a health kick, joined Weight Watchers and even went as far as to follow some of of the ideas of Elijah Muhammad. As whites began to eat more nutritional foods, they began to sell us unhealthy foods. Steak and chicken prices started coming down and we started opening up rib joints, Hot Sauce Williams, and Whitmores to name a few. Now blacks could eat out and live high on the Hog (for jokes sakes). Not only did we have McDonalds instant, fried, greasy garbage in a bag, but we also has a choice of meat that could delight our taste buds every evening. The food was cheaper and we could eat as much as we desired.

We finally felt closer to the White (I mean American) Dream. Our white counterparts, on the other hand, started building health spas, eating more fruits and vegetables and began to exercise on a daily basis. For them, eating right and exercising became part of the daily routine. Blacks, on the other hand, were sitting back and bragging about who ate the best food in fancy restaurants.

Now in the nineties not only do we eat badly but we drink badly as well. First it was Kool-Aid, loaded down with sugar, and now you can’t find a black neighborhood without a liquor store near by that sells malt liquor or beer. Sadly, the people we look up to, such as rap stars and movie stars, promote this garbage in our neighborhoods.

Something is wrong and we need to get it together. African-Americans need to learn how to eat more nutritionally. We are dying of high blood pressure, heart disease, and stress-related problems because of what we eat. We need to eat more vegetables, fruits, and grains, and stay away from so much meat.

We’ve all heard the phrase “You are what you eat.” It’s true. When you eat meat you are taking into your body the drugs they shoot up in the animal. It has been proven in scientific laboratories that subjects who were fed predominately meat were more aggressive than those that had eaten more vegetables and fruit. Natural foods from the earth are God’s gift to us, make use of them. God apparently did not design our bodies to eat so much meat because it clogs our colons and arteries, damaging our bodies and our minds.

The conveniently located foods and drinks supplied into our neighborhoods are slowly killing us and putting us behind bars. Understand that without physical health, you can’t achieve the mental or spiritual realm needed find out who you really are. You need to be physically, mentally and spiritually intact in order to grow as a person and as a people.

Thirty years ago - when we were eating healthier - we changed America. We stuck together in the Civil Rights movement throughout this country. We respected one another. Now look at us, we are killing each other for no reason. We haven’t any sense of unity. We are calling our women hoes and bitches. Our people have no order nor direction. To attain it, we must start with ourselves. Change your eating habits and begin eating more natural foods. You will become healthier, more alert, and will be able to deal with stress.

If you don’t take time to take care of your health, no-one will.

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The recent series of reports in the San Jose Mercury News linking the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), to the introduction and selling of crack cocaine in Black neighborhoods to fund the Contra army in its 1980's war against Nicaragua, has stirred a controversy that has the Black community outraged and demanding answers.

According to the reports, a San Francisco drug ring, which consisted of agents and informants of both the CIA and U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), sold thousands of kilos of cocaine to Los Angeles street gangs between 1982 and 1986. The proceeds of the drugs were then funneled to the CIA-backed Fuerza Democrata Nicaraguense (Nicaraguan Democratic Force). This was the largest of several anti-communist organizations, commonly called the Contras, fighting to overthrow the Cuban-supported Sandinista government, which had overthrown the U.S.-supported dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979.

Although the three-part series of reports outlines the activities of many Nicaraguan and American informants and ties involved in the drug trade, the three key players cited are: Norwin Meneses, a Nicaraguan smuggler and FDN boss; Danilo Blandon, a cocaine supplier, top FDN civilian leader in California, and DEA informant; and Ricky Donnell Ross, a South Central Los Angeles high school drop out and drug trafficker, who was Blandon's biggest customer. Together this trio was directly and indirectly responsible for introducing and selling crack on a national level, according to the reports.

Most of the information surrounding the CIA's involvement in the drug trade came from testimony in the drug trafficking trial of Ross, which took place in March of 1996. Then Blandon, who pleaded guilty to cocaine trafficking charges in 1992, recently added to those claims when he testified in federal court that he did sell the cocaine in L.A.’s Black neighborhoods as a way to raise money for the FDN.

Ross, who was set up by Blandon in a 1994 drug bust, is currently in jail awaiting sentencing, while Blandon continues his work as a paid DEA informant. Meneses, Blandon’s superior in the FDN’s cocaine operation, has never been charged with drug trafficking in the United States, even though the federal government has been aware of his cocaine dealings since at least 1974, according to the Mercury News articles.

Instilling a rage throughout Black America, the charges made by the reports and the new evidence that continues to reinforce the claims, strengthens the suspicions already held by many Blacks about the U.S. government. It continues to fuel the conspiracy theory, believed by many, that the government willfully supplies drugs and guns to gang members to undermine and eradicate the Black community.

The building anger and demand for investigation by Black leaders has unleashed fierce mobilization campaigns in many communities. Fueled by Black radio talk-show hosts, many community activists and elected officials immediately began planning and executing street protests and legislative actions, while demanding answers from the government.

On August 23, 1996 the Los Angeles City Council, responding to pressure by the Los Angeles Chapter of the Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC), asked U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno to investigate the government’s involvement in the drug conspiracy. Kweisi Mfume, president of the NAACP, has also looked to Washington for answers, calling for a congressional investigation into the allegations. BAPAC, a statewide coalition of political activists, has also demanded that the U.S. government provide the necessary funding, materials and labor to rebuild urban areas destroyed by crack cocaine, as well as the necessary medical care, education, counseling and vocational training to restore those lives shattered by the crack epidemic that now plagues the inner-cities of America.

As the secret Contra war, that the Reagan administration-supported, fades from the memories of most Americans, it’s aftereffects continue to be felt in the communities of our country. As reporter Gary Webb wrote in the first installment of the startling series of reports, "...Urban neighborhoods are grappling with legions of homeless crack addicts. Thousands of young black men are serving long prison sentences for selling cocaine—a drug that was virtually unobtainable in Black neighborhoods before members of the CIA’s army started bringing it into South Central in the 1980’s at bargain basement prices."

As this controversy continues and grows, so will the outrage and distrust felt by most of Black America. John Deutch, director of the CIA, has said he does not believe the allegations, but responding to the anger in Black communities, has promised to look into the charges and hold his agency accountable for any direct or indirect involvement in the drug smuggling.
Fired up. Not like the fires they term for marijuana. Since then, we've got everybody hooked.

The State of New York Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse surveyed nearly 28,000 students anonymously in the spring of 1995. The survey indicated that marijuana use among seventh and eighth graders in New York increased to 22 percent in 1995, from 9 percent since 1990.

Reports have indicated that marijuana use among teenagers has doubled since 1990, the same year Dr. Dre released The Chronic. According to the 1994 National Survey on Drug Use, among the 1.6 million teenagers who used illegal drugs in 1994, most smoked marijuana, which government surveys say is on the rise among young people after a thirteen year decline. About 73 percent of teens 12-17 years of age smoked marijuana in 1994, up 4 percent from 1992.

The earliest hip hop artists spoke positively to the black youth. Hip hop's message was centered around the importance of having knowledge of self, unity among black people, and recognizing white supremacy. It also discussed maladaptive relationships and how to get a rapper held their ground in a "battle" in a lyrical confrontation between two or more rappers. Hip hop did not endorse violence, drug use, nor the degradation of women.

Hip hop artists want to defend their lyrics by saying that marijuana is real in their community. They have a point about what is real, but many are too vain to realize they are the ones making marijuana a reality. We should thank those who claimed "Disciples of Reality," because if it were not for them, the thousands of teenagers, now smoking marijuana, would not have known as much about the reality of its existence.

The State of New York Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse surveyed nearly 28,000 students anonymously in the spring of 1995. The survey indicated that marijuana use among seventh and eighth graders in New York increased to 22 percent in 1995, from 9 percent since 1990.

Studies on marijuana use among black students revealed that 23 percent of black students had tried marijuana in 1994, up 21 percent from four years earlier. These statistics may very well be due to the influence that hip hop music has had on our generation.

The change began around 1991, when Southgate, Los Angeles Cypress Hill dropped their self-titled debut, celebrating incessant marijuana use in songs like "Stone is the Way of the Walk." After selling a million records, the trio appeared on a best selling cover of High Times. Cypress Hill is given the credit for starting pro-marijuana rap, but with the emergence of Cypress Hill led a trend that began to change hip hop, because rappers who once denigrated drug use reemerged as hedonistic bluntedheads. "On NWA's 1988 "Express Yourself" Dr. Dre rapped, I don't smoke weed or beer, cause it only gives me a brotherhood and damage/ and brain damage on the mike don't manage."

Now after Cypress Hill, Dr. Dre slipped on his smoking attribues. "Make my bud the chronic," he sang in 1992. "I want to get fucked up." The Chronic, outside Cypress Hill by 2 million units, and hip hop's new direction was established. By 1994, Doggystyle Dogg Dogg had scored his biggest hit by escalating the combined virtues of lush life and stopped bliss, "Gin and Juice" and earned a Grammy Nomination in the process. (Vibe April 1996, p. 76).

Hip hop artists admit that certain acts rap about drugs to increase flagging sales and that pervasive drug references negatively affect hip hop's inhibiting creativity. They'll also admit that the weed movement has become a way for suckers to sneak into hip hop by getting French braids, smoking some joints on stage and hoping everyone will applaud. But ultimately, whether these references reflect society or a celibitous gimmick doesn't really matter because according to scholars, the end result is self destruction. Hip hop music and other forms of music have been criticized by listeners because of the musical content. What worries many listeners is how the content is affecting its fans, its creators and the future generation.

"In the 1950s and 60s black civil rights campaigners fought for the vote. While the '70s saw the Black Panthers attempting to rebuild the black communities in the US, a vision for which they were destroyed. And now, in the New Age 90's? Easy, just rap about splitting up and to make your money, destroy the music and that money is just thrown off of spring, hip hop, is worse. Actively promoted by some labels as the "new music" and 'posited on the coattails of those hip hop releases show all too clearly the adverse effects drugs can have on music... Drugs can be fun, but when their use and influence is overwhelming, is it happening now, then popular culture begins to suffer." (Netscape on the World Wide Web, April 22, 1996)
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