

## The Moral and Cognitive Failure of Elite White Men

“The frog beneath the hollow knows, where the nail point goes,  
while the butterfly upon the road, preaches contentment to the toad.”  
-Ella Baker

There was a national conspiracy among the intellectual elite to steal the humanity of the American African at the constitutional convention in Philadelphia in 1787. This conspiracy was perpetuated by men like James Madison in the *Federalist Papers* where they literally wrote Africans out of the human species and designed the structure of the American democracy. In Federalist Paper No. 10 James Madison explains why and how the American democracy is set up based on interest and wealth and that power prevails. (Madison and Jay 44-45) In Federalist Paper No. 54, Madison continues where he talks about how Africans will be considered property and not persons when he says:

The Federal Constitution therefore, decides with great propriety on the case of our slaves, when it views them in the mixt character of persons and of property. This is in fact their true character. It is the character bestowed on them by the laws under which they live; and it will not be denied that these are the proper criterion; because it is not to be denied that these are the proper criterion; because it is only under the pretext that the laws have transformed the negroes into subjects of property, that a place is disputed them in the computation of numbers; and it is admitted that if the laws were to restore the rights which have been taken away, the negroes could no longer be refused an equal share of representation with the other inhabitants.(276-277)

This is the *pretext* that the intellectual elite would use to dehumanize the humanity of Africans. Montesquieu in *The Spirit of the Laws* raises private prejudices to public policy as the leading philosopher of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He argues that vast land cannot be cleared, that precious sugar will not be cultivated, that the physical characteristics of the African not be sympathized with and, “it is impossible for us to suppose these creatures to be men because, allowing them to be men, a suspicion would follow that we ourselves are not Christians. Weak minds exaggerate too much the wrong done to the Africans.” (Montesquieu 238-239) Finally, in *Plato’s Republic*, Part

IV Guardians and Auxiliaries he promotes the magnificent myth. I would like to parallel Plato's myth with that of the myth of the white supremacist founding fathers of America, i.e., the conspiracy to make all that is good white or of European origin and all that is evil Black or of African origin. "Everything black was hideous. Everything Negroes did was wrong. If they fought for freedom, they were beasts..." (Du Bois 125) Plato is initially humiliated by the fact that he is going to tell a lie and that it will be the foundation of his society. He tells us in the introduction that initially his myth will not be successful and that it will take generations for those who know it is a lie to die out. Subsequently, as more of the generations die out the greater the myth's grasp will become on the community. So, by the time all of the members of one generation are dead the lie will have gained currency and will grow stronger if the myth is maintained in the coming generations. In other words, the further the generations are from the original myth the more it will seem true. Similarly, white supremacy is the foundational myth and reality of western culture and it is through this myth that they [white males] have risen to power. The Philadelphia convention of 1787 was a conspiracy of fifty-five white men to create a system that would be run by white males for white males primarily landowning, white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. There were no American Africans, no women, no openly transgender, bisexual or homosexual people. This meeting actualized and solidified white male supremacy in America. To deny this is to confuse and befuddle the correct understanding of the founding of America.

I consider myself to be an African-centered scholar primarily because human history begins in Africa. In keeping with the best tradition in scholarship then African-centeredness from a scientific point of view is where we should start. "In fact, in the period from the 1780s to the 1830s, nationalists dominated the ranks of Afro-American leaders." (Stuckey 214) David

Walker in his famous appeal was an advocate of self defense as well as moral suasion. Henry Highland Garnet, “who in turn believed in moral suasion as he believed in the uses of violence, and so he harmonized the two in 1843 as Walker had done earlier.” (Stuckey 158) In the course of this article I place an emphasis on the term *American African* to highlight our cultural ties to Africa because as African Americans we have a tendency to not identify with Africa holding the false belief that white Americans perceive us only as American. American Africans unfortunately believe in white America’s lies: That we live in a democracy; that there is a universal truth and of course, the whiteness of God and all of its anthropomorphic attributes. In reality, America is a plutocracy, an oligarchy or an aristocracy—a country ruled by the wealthy few who give lip service to democracy. This point is illustrated beautifully when we consider that in a country of hundreds of millions of people George W. Bush won the 2000 presidential election by a single vote of a Supreme Court justice in spite of the fact that Al Gore won the popular vote. This raises the relevance of the Electoral College system where it takes exactly 270 (out of 538) votes to elect the American president. This is not democratic especially where we have the ability to count every vote directly. The sad part about this is many Americans have no knowledge of this process and were dumbfounded when Gore won the popular vote but failed to win the presidency.

We are taught by the progressive scholarship of Dr. Du Bois that in 1910 American Africans made what was essentially a Faustian bargain to be considered as Americans proper. These were our capitalist business men who placed money and material gain above integrity, self-respect, group unity and truth. Instead, they prostituted cold facts for acceptance by white America mainstream:

Now equality began to be offered; but in return for equality, Negroes must join American business in its domination of African cheap labor and free raw materials. The educated and well-to-do Negroes would have a better chance to make money if they would testify that Negroes were not discriminated against and join in American red-baiting.” (Du Bois 337)

The massive scholarship of Dr. Du Bois is often superficially studied. The radical left and social climbers label him bourgeois for his unparalleled efforts and his intellectual gifts as well as his priestly dedication to leading the charge to uplift all Americans. The liberals maintain he was much too political and revolutionary with a communist leaning and was therefore unacceptable. Du Bois foresaw these criticism of his work and maintained, that he was “too old” to “reformulate” his methods so that his intentions would match his analysis. He retorted, “I will simply have to be remembered as a bourgeois.” He might have added that his body of work was so massive that most scholars would not read it all. Therefore the great work of Du Bois is often misrepresented and misunderstood by both the liberal right and the radical left. The liberal right would imply after reading *The Souls of Black Folk* and a few other volumes that Du Bois died unhappy and alienated from his beloved America. They might also lament that he did not have to die estranged from America’s greatness. This image of a brilliant but failed enlightenment scholar turned rogue, so greatly talented but misguided and dishonored plagued the mindset of the liberal left. Contrary to this idea of Du Bois’ fallen status in America is the thought that Du Bois had achieved success as an intellectual as evidenced by Africa’s acceptance of him as an honored advisor to then president Kwame Nkrumah and when he died he was even given a state funeral bringing his scholarship and life’s work full circle—an American African dying in his homeland of Mother Africa. This particular perspective is rarely mentioned and deserves more scholarly scrutiny.

Walter White, the NAACP officer along with Ralph Bunche did American Africans a disservice when they fought vigorously for a color-blind society although it seems unwittingly. In 1950 this seemed to be an idyllic goal where people were not judged by the color of their skin which served as an advantage to a virulent racist white America. Walter White had some particular problems associated with him and his blond hair and blue eyes. Personally, he thought these characteristics were superior and in the racist atmosphere of the 1950's they were a commodity. White used his light complected skin to investigate lynchings committed by the Ku Klux Klan which benefitted American Africans and the NAACP, although he narrowly escaped being lynched on a few occasions. Eventually he would later die in South Africa, the bastion of racism and apartheid, married to a white woman, and some claimed him to be passing as a white man. While this utopic idea of a color-blind America is still a goal in this country it has been severely challenged by psychiatrists who do not hold Euro centrism as the basis for clinical assessment:

Color-blindness" is no virtue if it means denial of differences in the experience, culture, and psychology of black Americans and other Americans. These differences are not genetic, nor do they represent a hierarchy of "superior" and inferior" qualities. But to ignore the formative influence of substantial differences in history and social existence is a monumental error.

It is therefore noteworthy that the leading contemporary textbooks in psychiatry either overlook completely or give only a glancing reference to the blacks and their special problems in American society. (Thomas & Sillen 58)

American Africans have been targeted for violence, marginalization, disrespect and inhumane treatment that white Americans rarely encounter. This is the exact thing that the African's color implies in the body politics of white American culture and is most important when we consider the history and humanity of African people in America. The NAACP continues to downplay this

essential problem with which they still grapple. Their desire not to offend white people has been a primary problem in their noble efforts to fight for the causes of American Africans. It obscures the issue and leads to discussing ideas in abstraction without any reference to substantive circumstances. For all of the great work that the NAACP and their allied organizations have done they tie their own hands behind their backs and enter a fight that they cannot win because they are not being honest and forthright. Political correctness sometimes has no place in historical altercations. It is necessary to take off the gloves and deal with racism head on because this is a fight to the finish and we must not be coy.

The whole idea of nonviolence must be questioned in light of violence committed against American Africans by whites. It is little known that while American Africans were being nonviolent with white America during the Civil Rights Movement they were being most violent and taking out their aggression on each other. Noted psychiatrist, Dr. Poussaint explains that he found “violent, verbal and sometimes physical fights often occurred among the workers of the Civil Rights projects throughout the South...beating up each other...I frequently had to calm negro Civil Rights workers with large doses of tranquilizers for what I can describe clinically only as acute attacks of rage.” (Bracy 136-137)

Eager to praise the great achievements of the Civil Rights Movement, Steve Estes and other contemporary ahistorical scholars fail to take into account ancient history citing old problems within a contemporary context:

“Nonviolent activism, perhaps seen as a more “passive” form of resistance, was actually the potent moral force and savvy political strategy that brought about real change in the southern society. Southern civil rights organizers showed that nonviolent activism could be courageous and even manly. Above all, they demonstrated that nonviolent protest was an effective way to undercut the violence upon which white male supremacy rested and

also a way to gain political power for disfranchised African Americans in the South.”  
(Estes 63)

However, Frederick Douglas situates nonviolence or what was called in his day moral suasion properly. It was only after Africans tried nonviolence and were unsuccessful did they then turn to violent revolution which precipitated the Civil War (Foner, Vol. 3, 83-84) Floyd McKissick, a constitutional lawyer, former national director of CORE and author of *3/5 of a Man* writes extensively on this subject:

Nonviolent passive resistance requires a special kind of commitment. It is a commitment that allows a man to accept insult and injury without retaliation. To ask such control from Black People who have been humiliated and assaulted and murdered for hundreds of years is hardly just or feasible. An alternative must be found.

For every ten men willing to make such a nonviolent commitment, there must be more than five thousand who will defend themselves, who will defend their families, when attacked. Self-defense is natural and desirable. It is a constitutional right and a moral duty. Self-defense is *not* in conflict with nonviolence. “Color Morality” would have us believe that a Black Man must be consistently and forever nonviolent—even in the face of the most flagrant abuse—or he is labeled “sick,” “depraved,” “anti-social.”  
(McKissick 134)

Black People today are subjected to the violence of the police, as well as to the violence of the war in Vietnam. They are subjected to the violence of hunger and poverty. They are subjected to the violence of status quo.

American society is not founded upon nonviolence. There is little in the American heritage that is conducive to its teachings. The legends of the West, cowboys and Indians, and the American Revolution, Minutemen and Redcoats—America is rich with a history of violence. The classic means for problem solving in America is violence. Passivity and acquiescence are invariably interpreted as weakness... (McKissick 136)

In the matter of self-defense the NAACP, Bayard Rustin and Dr. King are quite disingenuous. Since Rustin was King’s advisor, I take for granted that King is using Rustin’s logic when he says self defense is a non issue for Civil Rights. In the 1960’s nothing could have been further from the truth. Although the Civil Rights Movement agreed with self defense from a legal perspective they were generally publically silent on the issue which gave the implication to many

that they did not support it. In this regard the NAACP sought to play down Black America's constitutional right of self-defense for fear that it could be misconstrued as violence in a nonviolent movement. In other words, American Africans should forego our constitutional right in order to be perceived as non violent. The fact that the Constitution allows an individual to defend himself or herself when attacked does not change the fact that because of racism in America a Black individual who is defending himself or herself could easily be confused with the Black individual perpetuating or initiating violence. It is not one or the other—it is both. We have a right to defend ourselves and it is possible to lead non violent protest if is not met with violence from the opposing side. Otherwise, this is a major violation of the American African's basic constitutional rights. Contrary to Rustin's and King's position self-defense was a major issue in the '60s and it continues to be a polarizing issue today. It is not enough to leave it to individual discretion simply as the NAACP and other Civil Rights leaders politically quietly did because it may have undermined the non violent movement. It ought to have been asserted that American Africans have a constitutional right to defend themselves any and everywhere.

I have come to these conclusions based on my intellectual studies and 30 years of reading across disciplines and world travel. I have studied American political science, philosophy, religion and history. I have received degrees and advance degrees in the study of American history, culture, political science and philosophy. Studying at some of the best institutions that America has to offer, I have advanced degrees in theology from Harvard, in history from Cornell, and I have determined that America has never had any theology that it considers worthy of practicing undermining its vain boast of Christianity which true to the spirit and letter has been used to cloak imperialism, murder and individual greed. Capitalism in its extreme forms has fuelled human misery and debauchery and was the motivating source of the European enslavement of



Africans. Jacqueline Jones in her book, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow* elucidates these very fine points when she states, "Slaveholders callously disregarded black familiar relationships in order to advance their own financial interest." (4) America is a contradiction. Lying, stealing, killing and getting rich by any means are all welcomed as long as they are hidden. It is an unfortunate reality that a serious critique of capitalism is no longer politically correct. We live in this society with the thin veneer of goodness and every tactic is employed to keep the masses of people unaware of their own ignorance. Public education is in shambles and the average American does not really know to what extent. The hope then lies within the masses of people that they will one day demand better and more for themselves and their children because we deserve it.

The victory of President Obama in 2008 solidified our efforts to become main stream and the Black public sentiment for critiquing Obama has been nearly abandoned. In fact, we have abrogated the political responsibility to white America and others. We walk a fine line not to appear to be against the president. This is complicated by the fact that American Africans have collectively spoken against white American presidents like George W. Bush who did not have their best interest in mind. How can we fail in this tradition simply because our current president is Black? We must walk this line with courage and forthrightness as we assess public policies. More curious is the widening trend of Black people and others who claim to have been in love with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to draw a comparison with Obama where there are none. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s calling as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ led him to fight and protest for the poor, the hungry, the oppressed everywhere while Obama's policies are clearly geared toward the middle class and not the poor, and where his best policy for the poor, i.e. Healthcare is allowed to be watered down to the point where it is not nearly as effective as it

could be. One could seriously ask, “how different is Obama, the first Black president from the other 43 presidents?” Certainly a comparison of Obama to Dr. King is like comparing the toothpick to the tree in human justice. King was fully aware of the political implications for a Black president:

“For years I labored with the idea of reforming the existing institutions of the society...Now I feel quite differently. I think you’ve got to have a reconstruction of the entire society, a revolution of values, and perhaps the nationalization of some major industries.” When posed with the question if he would run for president, “King was hesitant to declare himself. “I do not feel that I’m presidential timber,” King replied. “I would rather think of myself as one trying desperately to be the conscience of all the political parties, rather than being a political candidate...I’ve just never thought of myself and I can’t now think of myself as a politician. Of course, I do have sense enough to know I couldn’t win, either.”(Garrow 562)

He would later predict that a Black president could lay in the future 30 or 40 years. However, we now know if we count from December, 1955 that it would take 53 years for this to come true. His dates were misplaced but the prediction would come true. And just as King had become politically savvy enough to see a future American African as president his own personal politics had changed tremendously. CLR James, the Marxist intellectual maintained that King secretly told him that he agreed with the Marxist-Leninist perspective but he could not express it from the pulpit. King was truly as radical and advanced as any left thinking scholar. (Garrow 717)

Given the many comparisons made between Dr. King and President Obama, King would be forced to chastise our president because Jesus’ concern would have been the poor and not the middle class as is his primary concern. King and Obama would have to separate on this issue. Mind you that the late Senator Ted Kennedy considered himself a member of the middle class despite the fact that his family’s fortune was worth 100s of millions of dollars. If Ted Kennedy could consider himself middle class and he was a multi-millionaire then middle class in America is rich and not poor.

Political assassination by any other name is murder. King could not and would not agree with the political assassination of any human being—dictator or not. Is it not suspicious that the drone strikes ordered by Obama target brown, non-Christian and usually non-English speakers as a primary language leaving innocent civilians murdered and injured? King would not condone this. In fact, the carpet bombing in Vietnam caused King to accuse the American government of war crimes. Drone murders in Yemen, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and other non-white nations are no less the equivalent. President Obama's concerns are political and rooted in American values while Dr. King's concerns were more universal and not just for the rich and/or middle class. We must dispense with baseless comparisons and disassociate President Obama from the humane and socially conscious driven legacy of Dr. King. They are not to be compared simply because they are both Black. King who was not a capitalist and by the time of his death he was a democratic socialist (Garrow 709) had major problems with vulgar capitalism. He would be forced to critique Obama's 750 billion dollar bail out for General Motors yet he had no viable national plan for helping the country's unemployed, the underemployed and poor. This would be unconscionable for Dr. King. He would certainly have problems with Obama visiting his alma mater Morehouse College where in his speech he chastised some of the best and brightest young American African men as if they were irresponsible people. He would never have done this at Harvard his alma mater. Also, major concerns for King would be the mass imprisonment of nearly 2 million people who are disproportionately Black and brown, and finally, he would squawk at the billions spent on the military industrial complex. We can be positive that he would question the wisdom of such use of America's finances. Additionally, King's ministerial role and Christian convictions gave him "allegiances and loyalties which are broader and deeper

than nationalism, and required him to adopt a world perspective rather than a narrowly American one.” (Garrow 552-553)

To be fair, before taking office Obama had mitigating circumstances looming over the oval office. George W. Bush left the country in political and economic shambles. In 2008, America was experiencing its worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, General Motors was collapsing, and America had interjected itself into a raging war in Iraq based on erroneous intelligence. As we know, it had been long suggested and later proven that the alleged weapons of mass destruction were nonexistent. It would take the sum of this perfect political storm to create a climate of disaster and political unrest to elect our first Black president. King would certainly congratulate Obama for winning healthcare for all Americans although he would caution that healthcare reform should benefit the people and not just the medical industrial complex. King would give Obama a nod of approval for his progressive views and legislation regarding the fight for gay rights. These are few of the concerns that I am certain Dr. King would raise because as a minister like Dr. King these are some my concerns as well.

The Civil Rights Movement has failed in its understanding and its teachings relative to the white male foundation of American government. The abolitionist movement that had lost its way in the 1790s and was nearly dead by 1829 when it was injected with the emotion from a fiery young William Lloyd Garrison and Benjamin Lundy who served to carry the movement forward. Garrison’s passion and uncompromising position was exactly what was needed for the survival and flourishing of the radical abolitionist movement. Wendell Phillips, the abolitionist says that Garrison took on the position of the enslaved African and fought as if he were an African. This is exactly what was needed to turn the rain of a few dedicated abolitionists which were mere drops in the desert which became a trickle. That trickle became a stream. That

stream became a wave. The wave became a tidal wave. And the tidal wave became a tsunami of humanity that would ultimately break the back of slavery and cause Abraham Lincoln to sign the Emancipation Proclamation. (Ruchames 13-17)

Bayard Rustin in his effort to make us American failed to teach us properly the history of American Africans and the damaging impact of white supremacy. Rustin was certainly aware that violence got positive results as he cites several examples in his book, *Down the Line*. The Civil Rights Movement was not the first time American Africans had tried non-violence which Rustin seems to be unaware of. Frederick Douglass informs us and documents the fact that when tried non-violence failed. Rustin argues that rioting in the late '60s and '70's was the most violent American Africans had ever been. This is not true. The truth of the matter is Africans fought violently for our liberation during the Civil War which led to Abraham Lincoln freeing the Africans. This is generally not taught in American history because it undermines the notion of a long suffering ever forgiving non-violent Black people. Before the Africans came to America they were taken to Brazil and we now know that as early as 1655, Zumbi and his fellow Africans fought and defeated the Portuguese winning freedom for their colony in Palmares. Another important historical fact which is hidden away and almost never mentioned or taught. When we accept the dominant people's history uncritically we also accept our own enslavement. It is incumbent upon us to do our own research and writing. American Africans have become too relaxed. We falsely believe that winning some victories means that we have won all victories. We are still not a free and sovereign people. Dr. King readily admitted that some violence was good and named the American Revolution as an example. He failed, however, to mention the Haitian Revolution that freed African people from the French. It would appear then that the only "good" violence was when white Americans fought for their own freedom. If it is

right and good for white Americans to literally fight why is it not equally good for Africans to literally fight for their freedom? We must understand that physical violence ought to be the last weapon in the arsenal used for human rights. But it must be an option for us as well as it is for the dominant culture. If not, it unfairly ties our hands leaving us eternally vulnerable to unreasonable and inhumane physical attacks. It is time that American Africans affirm our rights to defend our humanity by any and every means. If we fail to do this then white people who have the right to defend themselves will always have an advantage.

Surprisingly, critiques that Bayard Rustin made in 1967 are still applicable today. Employment was a problem, minimum wage and a guaranteed annual income was on the table. All of these things can be used as political talking points in 2014 except today, with an American African president in office, a guaranteed annual income is not on the table. Ironically, the Republican president Richard Nixon had placed this item on his agenda. Equally important to remember is that COINTELPRO (1955-1971) set out to systematically disrupt and dissolve progressive Black organizations and groups such as the Black Panther Party, the NAACP and the SCLC.

COINTELPRO used legal and illegal means to destroy and infiltrate groups Black and white thought to be anti-American. They were most effective in circulating propaganda that led Black progressives to believe that the Black Panther Party was extreme and irrelevant and that it was the absolute worse organization humanly imaginable. Never mind the fact that the Panthers established free breakfast programs and free healthcare in poor Black communities. Even today, the Panthers are still hard pressed to shed this negative image and are deemed suspect and no good for Black progression. Take for example the movie *The Butler* where there is an interesting scene that is out of step with the movie's overall positive assessment of the Civil Rights Movement. The butler's radical eldest son is at home visiting after a seven year absence. His

son who attended Fisk University is a Freedom Rider as well as a member of the Black Panther Party. Accompanying him to the dinner is his love interest a young vocal female member of the Panther Party who has a huge afro. This young woman talks tough and incidentally burps at the table without apologizing. This is overshadowed by the rising tension created between the men when the son denigrates his father's hero, Sidney Poitier by calling him "a white man's nigger." The butler retorts, "Poitier is breaking down barriers for all of us." In which the son replies, "Only in a manner that white folks accept." The butler becomes so angry he lunges across the table at his son and demands that he leave his house. Out of step with the focus of the tension, the butler's wife shouts, "take this triflin' low class bitch and get out of here!" My question is how does a tug of political tension between father and son move to displacement of anger and the dehumanizing classification of a young Black woman fighting for the freedom of Black people by the mother? This is an example of how the Black Panthers are still seen as demons. Sure, the young woman was arrogant and she could have apologized for burping at the table but this does not make her fodder for the mother's misplaced feelings and negative perceptions of the Black Power Movement. The movie goes on to show that after retiring from service, the Butler reads from a book about the movement and realizes that his son (and incidentally his girlfriend) belonged to a group of individuals thought to be heroes and heroines for their dedication to fighting for freedom. Although hero status is given to the son by the end of the movie his young girlfriend is never redeemed. Lurking in the shadow of course is Hollywood's sexist practice of demeaning women.

Rustin's analysis in its extreme attempt to placate white racism leaves American Africans in a vulnerable position. It would appear according to his analysis that American Africans never wanted to return to African but rather we aspired to mainstream America and would do anything

to be accepted by white Americans as equal counterparts. Rustin and the Civil Rights Movement lost its way in its over eager analysis. We know from diaries, journal entries and biographies that Africans wanted to return to Africa because they missed their culture, friends and loved ones. This is to be expected but this human desire is negated by over zealous died in the wool integrationists. In effect Rustin argues for the inhumanity of our African ancestors while claiming the opposite. Africans could not have been human if they were not homesick and longed for the culture that they created. The intellectual elite have confused the masses into believing it is they who have created this organized chaos. On the contrary, this chaos is a vast conspiracy of the most rigorously and intellectually trained individuals in American society, i.e., white males. White intellectuals write and think about what they please and imply that it is normative and universal. White people as a group are the only true minority in the world yet they superimpose and colonize through extreme violence and terror using the world's communication system. At the same time they use these very systems to portray images of themselves as benevolent, wise, and compassionate human beings in order to commandeer the power from the masses of people they control. In other words they write their evil selves out of the picture while being the invisible hand behind the scenes. According to Dr. Charles Mills "white moral cognitive dysfunction" is what they suffer from. Whites have consistently for the last century been wrong on the moral issue. They have perpetuated evil against Africans by enslaving and murdering them; against women by disenfranchising them; and on people of color by marginalizing and oppressing them. Nevertheless, these issues rarely come up in their philosophical moralizing nor do they mention them in their ethics. "A history of Western political philosophy that runs from Plato to Rawls while ignoring the abolitionist, anti-imperialist, anti-segregationist work of such figures as David Walker, Martin Delany and Frederick Douglas is a history insidiously political



in its amnesiac denial of the centrality of slavery, imperialism, and Jim [and Jane] Crow to the history of the West.” (Mills Blackness Visible 17)

Men and women such as John Brown, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass have been rendered to footnotes and nearly silenced. This ability to be the personification of evil and yet never be accredited with the deeds committed is quite an amazing feat when you think about it. The world is turned upside down. These theorists who consciously conspire to blame the victims continually work their magic while the masses point fingers at each other. This racialization of crime and hate is done subtly over time and with organization. It takes nearly a lifetime for the masses of the oppressed to come to the realization that one: they are oppressed and two: identifying who exactly is oppressing them. Euro centrism and white supremacy is both pervasive and made invisible. The mythologies, white lies, and the wrong-headed thinking are cleverly disguised by the time the oppressed develops legs enough to stand and brains enough to think for themselves do they realize they are assaulted from every side for being trouble makers and rebel rousers. But, it is within this troublemaking that the path to freedom lies. The social contract which is white supremacy cause every would be free person to doubt themselves and their abilities. And it is the swimming against the grain that they are forced to do in order to be free. Once they have broken free intellectually they can see themselves as the beautiful people that they are. (Mills The Racial Contract 117-120)

In understanding humanity as beautiful most American people rely upon the interpretations within the King James Version of the Bible. There is a sexism inherent within white male supremacy which the Bible supports with its creation mythology in Gen. 1:26-28. The problem with Genesis’ depiction of the creation of humanity most commonly known is that it is considered sexist in its depiction because the story in Genesis 2.4b-3.24 places man first and is

most probably the best known of the creation myths. However, this interpretation is just one of the duplicating narratives. A duplicating narrative is one in which tells the same story but with a slight difference. The material previously mentioned in Genesis is material that comes from the Northern tradition and is identified as the P-source or the priestly source. This material was collected around 550 BCE. Elohim is the name used for God by the source. Note, this material though appearing first in the Bible is actually younger than the source that's found in the Southern tradition which is identified as the J-source which shifts the name for God to Lord God. This source was compiled around 1000 BCE. Although it appears after the P-source, the J-source is hundreds of years older than the source first encountered in Genesis 1:26-28. From a scholarly point of view some argue that this source creates man and woman together which is a more liberating interpretation but this source is not the one most promoted. I have taken this moment to mention these facts common in scholarly circles because little of this is known to the masses of the practicing believing public. Biblical scholarship faces a difficult battle in introducing liberating concepts to the people who hold these texts as sacred and unchanging. This is bibliolatry or the worship of the Bible which supplants the worship of God. There are contemporary scholars who use sexism in analyzing patriarchy in Black groups. For instance, Steven Estes' analysis of the sexism and machoism in the Black Panther Party fails to see the root of the problem which is a product of Christian and Muslim theology that envisions the male as the dominate factor in the male/female relationship. Women are relegated to subordinates because of the configuration of their genitalia and subsequently any male who chooses not to participate in the heterosexual dynamic is relegated to sub male or honorary female status. This is not the work of the Black Panthers or any subsequent group of men of color but rather it is a dominate part of Biblical culture that has been accepted and promoted by white supremacy.

Estes seems to not be aware of the origins of this sexism when he says, “the story of race and manhood in the movement reveals the contradictions inherent in masculinist uplift strategies. Recognizing these contradictions, future activists may be better equipped to focus their energies, not on the quixotic quest for manhood, but on the more promising and inclusive struggles for social justice and human rights.” (185) Similarly, Dr. Bill Cosby who has done excellent work for the community and has been generous with his personal wealth makes comments that undermine the Black community. In his verbal attacks on poor mothers who buy expensive shoes and non-essential items to appeal to their children he fails to address major corporations in their enterprise of marketing their products to poor and underprivileged people. As well, Estes does subtle shifting of these sexual and racist positions which is problematical as it suggests he does not have a firm understanding of Western philosophy, laws and theology. Both he and Dr. Cosby should focus on the capitalist and the creators of sexist practices rather than blaming their poor, unsuspecting victims who themselves are simply following the cues they have been given from the dominant culture.

We are talking about a history where Africans and other non-whites were viewed as mere property and dehumanized by force and not to acknowledge this is an indictment. When Dr. Du Bois in the 1930’s was fighting for manhood rights it was seen as fighting for the rights of all of humanity not simply just men. Dr. King agreed that we are “forever fighting a degenerating sense of “nobodiness.” Malcolm X asserts that America “has not only deprived us of the right to be a citizen, she has deprived us the right to be human beings, the right to be recognized and respected as men and women... We are fighting for recognition as human beings.” (Racial Contract Mills 112). So you see, this masculinist ideology that Estes speaks of and at times describes correctly puts the cart before the horse in that it takes the sexism and patriarchy within

the biblical culture that comes out of 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestine and the so-called near East which to my understanding is Africa and Asia culture and assigns it to contemporary machismo. But, he is wrong. Many if not most Blacks take the creation myths in the Bible and the Quran as the literal word or words of God. These stories are always constructed with males as being dominant and heads of families. This is why manhood rights were seen as what we desired with the man as head and the woman subordinate. There are other interpretations of these myths that are more favorable to females but did not and do not get much of a hearing. Women like Ella Baker had problems with the all male leadership of many religious organizations. Again, Estes reverses history when he posits, "...the white student movement also exhibited the gender and sexual discrimination that plagued the Panthers." (Estes 168) The Panthers were merely victims of emulating the dominate culture in their language and their family organizational structure initially. The idea of sexual prowess is biblical machismo. Abraham became a father of a nation as his "seed" was numerous like the "sand." Although many of the groups had radical rhetoric and in some cases radical politics their family structure hierarchy tended to be classically biblical and conservative. Although radical Blacks and conservative Blacks generally base their family structure on this model, Black families still deviated from whites who based their family structures on the fundamentalist Christian model.

Jacqueline Jones further challenges us to rethink old ideas of patriarchy and matriarchy. She teaches us though Black families have often been matrifocused they are not matriarchies in a white middle class male defined sense nor are Black men patriarchs even though in the 1880s nearly 90% of Black families had a male leader since Black men and women had no access to the wealth that defined sexual relationships. In fact, Black men and women had no power relative to income. Consequently, Black men and women in slavery were equally powerless and therefore

had equality between them that did not exist between white males who controlled wealth. Black women were not seen as women but rather they worked as mules and as men. Gender differences meant little to the enslaver. Profit was their goal. Black women were forced to pick cotton, chop wood and do all of the tasks that Black men could do. The gender differences that were allowed for white women were not applied to Black women. In fact, the whole concept of manual labor was anathema to white men. They saw themselves as gentlemen and of course their women saw themselves as ladies bound to live a life of leisure. Whereas, Black women were forced to work outside their homes and there was no leisure for them for they in fact were the workers. The two parent family structure was the form of cohabitation between African men and women regardless of location, size or the economy of the plantation they lived on. But what is missing in this scenario is the real ruler of the Black household which was of course was the white master. The master determined what children could do or could not do. The master determined what the parents could do therefore this form of patriarchy in the Black family structure is only a veneer. In many ways the Black household deviated from the middle class white norm. Black families were often extended meaning they lived with other blood relatives. They often worked in squads of about seven people. They also created a hierarchy within the African community of work related positions with gender as a basis for doing the work. Irrespective of the master's desires they often credited Africans who sided with and worked for the community as being heroes and heroines—a clear difference from the master's class. These are just a few of the differences among many. Families tended to want to work together. The ideal sharecropper worked with his family which gave him some control over children, wife and his own labor. These were the ideal pluses when you think about total enslavement. But, the reality fell short of the ideal. Sharecropping turned out to be neo slavery. This is the dilemma in

which the Africans found themselves to work as a sharecropper, to be totally enslaved, or starve. The invisible white master was ever present and Africans were in a cycle of continuous hell. They borrowed money for crops, seeds, and tools and they were invariably cheated. Jones gives the example where a racist reporter who hates Blacks who loaf and do nothing is encountered by an African man and woman who had worked an entire year sharecropping and at the end of that year the white man told the husband that all of his labor had not yielded him any profits and therefore his work has only off set his bills. His wife went off and encouraged her husband not to stand for that and the whole year's work should count for something. This same white reporter who despised loafers immediately began to berate and degrade the Black woman for telling her husband to stand his ground. Hardworking Blacks like this couple were just as despised as the no working Blacks he hated. This is the general nature of Republican politics in America. The enslavers could always reason in their own best interest of themselves. It is amazing and laughable to think that enslaved Africans who worked from can't see in the morning until can't see at night and who were nevertheless stereotyped as "loafing around," "lummocking about," [for] "damd sorry work," and "patience worn plum out" while the southern plantations reaped huge profits from the physical labor of Africans. (Jones 58-109) The fact these revolutionary groups did not always get the instructions right is no yardstick for measuring their efforts to challenge authority.

Homophobia is an integral part of fundamentalist Christianity and that Estes seems not to be aware that all ideas that did not correspond to the heterosexual ideology were relegated to subordinate and sinful. In Genesis 19 is the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah which is believed to be caused by the city's homosexuality practices. These ideas are the bedrock to fundamentalist Christianity. A closer look however at scripture suggests that homosexual

practices were not the reason for Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction. Rather, in Ezekiel 16:48-52 the stated reason for the destruction is selfishness, pride and not helping the needy. In mentioning the flaws in Este's theory I do not mean to suggest that all of his ideas are wrong headed. To the contrary, many of his ideas and concepts are good they just need to be historically contextualized. The victims although they participate in their enslavement they are not the source of the problematical idea.

One such man who labored for gender equality and race relations was Dr. Manning Marable. My first encounter with this dynamic young scholar was at Fisk University where I was an undergraduate and he was the professor of sociology and political economy. He was then working as an academic sharecropper at Fisk University for a pitiful salary. Nevertheless, this young engaged scholar did a yeomen's job to educate us on the horrors of sexism, capitalism, and the marginalization of the laboring class. He taught us that our ancestors were marginalized, lynched, tortured and otherwise dehumanized all for the profit of an extremely few super rich capitalists. He pointed an accusing finger at America's political economy and showed us "How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America." On one Saturday afternoon in the Fisk library (which is now named the John Hope Franklin Library) he was lecturing to a small group of students of which I was in attendance. He mentioned the name John Hope Franklin and I said loudly, "that name rings a bell." He looked directly at me and commented, "I'm glad the name rings a bell." He went on to further instruct us that the students in our class of 1985 would not have the luxury of retiring thirty years from a job. He emphasized that most of us would have two maybe three occupations given the nature of the changing economy. On this score, he was exactly correct. Dr. Marable was unapologetically a Democratic Socialist and he was unashamedly Black. This is rare because most Socialists shy away from the issue of race almost

entirely. Dr. Marable did not try to transcend his race. In fact, he made it a part of his analysis which was unique. Suffice it to say that he was amongst my role models as a burgeoning scholar and as such I began reading his books and articles to familiarize myself with his politics. I found him fascinating and I read nearly as much as he published. I used his scholarship as the political and historical gold standard in my own personal analysis of the masses of poor black and laboring peoples of the world. Before he left Fisk I heard as do all children in a family the rumblings of discord between our faculty and administration. I heard Dr. Marable say “he would not work without a contract.” And once while standing in front of the Du Bois Hall, the building in which I lived I heard him passionately discuss his desire to stay at Fisk. He said as a rebuttal to leaving because of the low pay and lack of benefits, “if it were just me I would stay. I can always lecture, teach and write for extra pay.” But, he could not work without health benefits and to his surprise one of his children who was sick needed to be rushed to the hospital where he found out that he had no health benefits for his family and himself. I heard the resignation in his voice when he said, “I cannot work without health benefits for my family.” And, with great reluctance he decided to seek employment elsewhere. He was almost immediately snatched up and made a national star as a respected public intellectual. Small wonder I was so overwhelmingly disappointed by his biography of Malcolm X because it fails to properly contextualize Malcolm’s life from a pro Black perspective. Marable had even mentioned that one day he would write a biography on Malcolm X and at this early date I began to anticipate what this great warrior scholar would produce in this area. When I read this long awaited biography, I was devastated. It lacked the signature courageousness and defense of the working class shown in all of Marable’s previous works. There was a clear animosity and mean spiritedness in the biography that border lined anti-black sentiment running rampant throughout. His critique of



capitalism is simply absent. His support seemed to lean towards exploitation and racism which none of his previous published works presented. Bedrocks like structural racism, militarism, and support of pro-Black organizations were too absent. Also interwoven were vulgar, crude capitalistic and racist sentiments that supported superficial analysis. I contend that his team of researchers, his new wife and his illness were major factors in producing a work made for mainstream capitalist consumption and ultimate economic profit.

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