I AM A BLACK

(By Gwendolyn Brooks)

According to my Teachers,
I am now an African-American.

They call me out of my name.

BLACK is an open umbrella.
I am a Black and A Black forever.

I am one of The Blacks.

We are Here, we are There.
We occur in Brazil, in Nigeria, Ghana,
In Botswana, Tanzania, in Kenya,
In Russia, Australia, in Haiti, Soweto,
In Grenada, in Cuba, in Panama, Libya,
In England and Italy, France.

We are graces in any places.
I am Black and A Black
Forever.

I am other than Hyphenation.

I say, proudly, MY PEOPLE!
I say, proudly, OUR PEOPLE!

Our People do not disdain to eat yams or melons or grits
Or to put peanut butter in stew.

I am Kojo. In West Afrika Kojo
Mean Unconquerable. My parents
Named me the seventh day from by birth
In Black spirit, Black faith, Black communion.
I am Kojo. I am A Black.
And I Capitalize my name.

Do not call me out of my name.
Cultural Identity and Diaspora

STUART HALL

A new cinema of the Caribbean is emerging, joining the company of the other 'Third Cinemas'. It is related to, but different from the vibrant film and other forms of visual representation of the Afro-Caribbean (and Asian) 'blacks' of the diasporas of the West - the new post-colonial subjects. All these cultural practices and forms of representation have the black subject at their centre, putting the issue of cultural identity in question. Who is this emergent, new subject of the cinema? From where does he/she speak? Practices of representation always implicate the positions from which we speak or write - the positions of enunciation. What recent theories of enunciation suggest is that, though we speak, so to say 'in our own name', of ourselves and from our own experience, nevertheless who speaks, and the subject who is spoken of, are never identical, never exactly in the same place. Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation. This view problematises the very authority and authenticity to which the term, 'cultural identity', lays claim.

We seek, here, to open a dialogue, an investigation, on the subject of cultural identity and representation. Of course, the 'I' who writes here must also be thought of as, itself, 'enunciated'. We all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always 'in context', positioned. I
Cultural Identity and Diaspora

was born into and spent my childhood and adolescence in a lower-middle-class family in Jamaica. I have lived all my adult life in England, in the shadow of the black diaspora - 'in the belly of the beast'. I write against the background of a lifetime's work in cultural studies. If the paper seems preoccupied with the diaspora experience and its narratives of displacement, it is worth remembering that all discourse is 'placed', and the heart has its reasons.

There are at least two different ways of thinking about 'cultural identity'. The first position defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history. This 'oneness', underlying all the other, more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence, of 'Caribbeanness', of the black experience. It is this identity which a Caribbean or black diaspora must discover, excavate, bring to light and express through cinematic representation.

Such a conception of cultural identity played a critical role in all the post-colonial struggles which have so profoundly reshaped our world. It lay at the centre of the vision of the poets of 'Negritude', like Aimee Ceasire and Leopold Senghor, and of the Pan-African political project, earlier in the century. It continues to be a very powerful and creative force in emergent forms of representation amongst hitherto marginalised peoples. In post-colonial societies, the rediscovery of this identity is often the object of what Frantz Fanon once called a

   passionate research ... directed by the secret hope of discovering beyond the misery of today, beyond self-contempt, resignation and abjuration, some very beautiful and splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves and in regard to others.

New forms of cultural practice in these societies address themselves to this project for the very good reason that, as Fanon puts it, in the recent past,
Identity

Colonisation is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it.¹

The question which Fanon's observation poses is, what is the nature of this 'profound research' which drives the new forms of visual and cinematic representation? Is it only a matter of unearthing that which the colonial experience buried and overlaid, bringing to light the hidden continuities it suppressed? Or is a quite different practice entailed - not the rediscovery but the production of identity. Not an identity grounded in the archaeology, but in the re-telling of the past?

We should not, for a moment, underestimate or neglect the importance of the act of imaginative rediscovery which this conception of a rediscovered, essential identity entails. 'Hidden histories' have played a critical role in the emergence of many of the most important social movements of our time - feminist, anti-colonial and anti-racist. The photographic work of a generation of Jamaican and Rastafarian artists, or of a visual artist like Armet Francis (a Jamaican-born photographer who has lived in Britain since the age of eight) is a testimony to the continuing creative power of this conception of identity within the emerging practices of representation. Francis's photographs of the peoples of The Black Triangle, taken in Africa, the Caribbean, the USA and the UK, attempt to reconstruct in visual terms 'the underlying unity of the black people whom colonisation and slavery distributed across the African diaspora.' His text is an act of imaginary reunification.

Crucially, such images offer a way of imposing an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation, which is the history of all enforced diasporas. They do this by representing or 'figuring' Africa as the mother of these different civilisations. This Triangle is, after all, 'centred' in Africa. Africa is the name of the missing term, the great aporia, which lies at the centre of our cultural identity and gives it a meaning which, until recently, it lacked. No one who looks at these textural images now, in the light of the history of transportation, slavery and migration, can fail to understand how the rift of separation, the 'loss of identity', which has
Cultural Identity and Diaspora

been integral to the Caribbean experience only begins to be healed when these forgotten connections are once more set in place. Such texts restore an imaginary fullness or plentitude, to set against the broken rubric of our past. They are resources of resistance and identity, with which to confront the fragmented and pathological ways in which that experience has been reconstructed within the dominant regimes of cinematic and visual representation of the West.

There is, however, a second, related but different view of cultural identity. This second position recognises that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather - since history has intervened - 'what we have become'. We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity', without acknowledging its other side - the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely, the Caribbean's 'uniqueness'. Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.

It is only from this second position that we can properly understand the traumatic character of 'the colonial experience'. The ways in which black people, black experiences, were positioned and subject-ed in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalisation. Not only, in Said's 'Orientalist' sense, were we constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as 'Other'. Every regime of representation is a regime of
power formed, as Foucault reminds us, by the fatal couplet, 'power/knowledge'. But this kind of knowledge is internal, not external. It is one thing to position a subject or set of peoples as the Other of a dominant discourse. It is quite another thing to subject them to that 'knowledge', not only as a matter of imposed will and domination, by the power of inner compulsion and subjective con-formation to the norm. That is the lesson - the sombre majesty - of Fanon's insight into the colonising experience in *Black Skin, White Masks*.

This inner expropriation of cultural identity cripples and deforms. If its silences are not resisted, they produce, in Fanon's vivid phrase, 'individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless, rootless - a race of angels'. Nevertheless, this idea of otherness as an inner compulsion changes our conception of 'cultural identity'. In this perspective, cultural identity is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. It is not some universal and transcendental spirit inside us on which history has made no fundamental mark. It is not once-and-for-all. It is not a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute Return. Of course, it is not a mere phantasm either. It is *something* - not a mere trick of the imagination. It has its histories - and histories have their real, material and symbolic effects. The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us as a simple, factual 'past', since our relation to it, like the child's relation to the mother, is always-already 'after the break'. It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning*. Hence, there is always a politics of identity, a politics of position, which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental 'law of origin'.

This second view of cultural identity is much less familiar, and more unsettling. If identity does not proceed, in a straight, unbroken line, from some fixed origin, how are we to understand its formation? We might think of black Caribbean identities as 'framed' by two axes or vectors, simultaneously operative: the vector of similarity and continuity; and the vector of difference and rupture. Caribbean identities always have to be thought of in terms of the
Cultural Identity and Diaspora

dialogic relationship between these two axes. The one gives us some grounding in, some continuity with, the past. The second reminds us that what we share is precisely the experience of a profound discontinuity: the peoples dragged into slavery, transportation, colonisation, migration, came predominantly from Africa - and when that supply ended, it was temporarily refreshed by indentured labour from the Asian subcontinent. (This neglected fact explains why, when you visit Guyana or Trinidad, you see, symbolically inscribed in the faces of their peoples, the paradoxical 'truth' of Christopher Columbus's mistake: you can find 'Asia' by sailing west, if you know where to look!) In the history of the modern world, there are few more traumatic ruptures to match these enforced separations from Africa - already figured, in the European imaginary, as 'the Dark Continent'. But the slaves were also from different countries, tribal communities, villages, languages and gods. African religion, which has been so profoundly formative in Caribbean spiritual life, is precisely different from Christian monotheism in believing that God is so powerful that he can only be known through a proliferation of spiritual manifestations, present everywhere in the natural and social world. These gods live on, in an underground existence, in the hybridised religious universe of Haitian voodoo, pocomania, Native pentacostalism, Black baptism, Rastafarianism and the black Saints Latin American Catholicism. The paradox is that it was the uprooting of slavery and transportation and the insertion into the plantation economy (as well as the symbolic economy) of the Western world that 'unified' these peoples across their differences, in the same moment as it cut them off from direct access to their past.

Difference, therefore, persists - in and alongside continuity. To return to the Caribbean after any long absence is to experience again the shock of the 'doubleness' of similarity and difference. Visiting the French Caribbean for the first time, I also saw at once how different Martinique is from, say, Jamaica: and this is no mere difference of topography or climate. It is a profound difference of culture and history. And the difference matters. It positions Martiniquains and Jamaicans as both the same and different. Moreover, the boundaries of difference are continually repositioned in relation to different points of reference. Vis-a-vis the developed
Identity

West, we are very much 'the same'. We belong to the marginal, the underdeveloped, the periphery, the 'Other'. We are at the outer edge, the 'rim', of the metropolitan world - always 'South' to someone else's El Norte.

At the same time, we do not stand in the same relation of the 'otherness' to the metropolitan centres. Each has negotiated its economic, political and cultural dependency differently. And this 'difference', whether we like it or not, is already inscribed in our cultural identities. In turn, it is this negotiation of identity which makes us, vis-a-vis other Latin American people, with a very similar history, different - Caribbeans, les Antillienes ('islanders' to their mainland). And yet, vis-a-vis one another, Jamaican, Haitian, Cuban, Guadeloupean, Barbadian, etc ...

How, then, to describe this play of 'difference' within identity? The common history — transportation, slavery, colonisation - has been profoundly formative. For all these societies, unifying us across our differences. But it does not constitute a common origin, since it was, metaphorically as well as literally, a translation. The inscription of difference is also specific and critical. I use the word 'play' because the double meaning of the metaphor is important. It suggests, on the one hand, the instability, the permanent unsettlement, the lack of any final resolution. On the other hand, it reminds us that the place where this 'doubleness' is most powerfully to be heard is 'playing' within the varieties of Caribbean musics. This cultural play' could not therefore be represented, cinematically, as a simple, binary opposition - 'past/present', 'them/us'. Its complexity exceeds this binary structure of representation. At different places, times, in relation to different questions, the boundaries are re-sited. They become, not only what they have, at times, certainly been - mutually excluding categories, but also what they sometimes are - differential points along a sliding scale.

One trivial example is the way Martinique both is and is not 'French'. It is, of course, a department of France, and this is reflected in its standard and style of life, Fort de France is a much richer, more 'fashionable' place than Kingston - which is not only visibly poorer, but itself at a point of transition between being 'in fashion' in an Anglo-African and Afro-American way - for those who can afford to be in any sort of fashion at all. Yet, what is distinctively
'Martiniquais' can only be described in terms of that special and peculiar supplement which the black and mulatto skin adds to the 'refinement' and sophistication of a Parisian-derived *haute couture*: that is, a sophistication which, because it is black, is always transgressive.

To capture this sense of difference which is not pure 'otherness', we need to deploy the play on words of a theorist like Jacques Derrida. Derrida uses the anomalous 'a' in his way of writing 'difference' - *differance* - as a marker which sets up a disturbance in our settled understanding or translation of the word/concept. It sets the word in motion to new meanings without erasing the *trace* of its other meanings. His sense of *differance*, as Christopher Norris puts it, thus remains suspended between the two French verbs 'to differ' and 'to defer' (postpone), both of which contribute to its textual force but neither of which can fully capture its meaning. Language depends on difference, as Saussure showed ... the structure of distinctive propositions which make up its basic economy. Where Derrida breaks new ground ... is in the extent to which 'differ' shades into 'defer' ... the idea that meaning is always deferred, perhaps to this point of an endless supplementarity, by the play of signification.\(^3\)

This second sense of difference challenges the fixed binaries which stabilise meaning and representation and show how meaning is never finished or completed, but keeps on moving to encompass other, additional or supplementary meanings, which, as Norris puts it elsewhere,\(^4\) 'disturb the classical economy of language and representation'. Without relations of difference, no representation could occur. But what is then constituted within representation is always open to being deferred, staggered, serialised.

Where, then, does identity come in to this infinite postponement of meaning? Derrida does not help us as much as he might here, though the notion of the 'trace' goes some way towards it. This is where it sometimes seems as if Derrida has permitted his profound theoretical insights to be reappropriated by his disciples into a celebration of formal 'playfulness', which evacuates them of their political meaning. For if signification depends upon the endless repositioning of its differential terms, meaning, in any specific
instance, depends on the contingent and arbitrary stop - the necessary and temporary 'break' in the infinite semiosis of language. This does not detract from the original insight. It only threatens to do so if we mistake this 'cut' of identity - this positioning, which makes meaning possible - as a natural and permanent, rather than an arbitrary and contingent 'ending' - whereas I understand every such position as 'strategic' and arbitrary, in the sense that there is no permanent equivalence between the particular sentence we close, and its true meaning, as such. Meaning continues to unfold, so to speak, beyond the arbitrary closure which makes it, at any moment, possible. It is always either over- or under-determined, either an excess or a supplement. There is always something 'left over'.

It is possible, with this conception of 'difference', to rethink the positionings and repositionings of Caribbean cultural identities in relation to at least three 'presences', to borrow Aimee Cesaire's and Leopold Senghor's metaphor: Presence Africaine, Presence Européenne, and the third, most ambiguous, presence of all - the sliding term, Presence Américain. Of course, I am collapsing, for the moment, the many other cultural 'presences' which constitute the complexity of Caribbean identity (Indian, Chinese, Lebanese etc). I mean America, here, not in its 'first-world' sense - the big cousin to the North whose 'rim' we occupy, but in the second, broader sense: America, the 'New World', Terra Incognita.

Presence Africaine is the site of the repressed. Apparently silenced beyond memory by the power of the experience of slavery, Africa was, in fact present everywhere: in the everyday life and customs of the slave quarters, in the languages and patois of the plantations, in names and words, often disconnected from their taxonomies, in the secret syntactical structures through which other languages were spoken, in the stories and tales told to children, in religious practices and beliefs, in the spiritual life, the arts, crafts, musics and rhythms of slave and post-emancipation society. Africa, the signified which could not be represented directly in slavery, remained and remains the unspoken, unspeakable 'presence' in Caribbean culture. It is 'hiding' behind every verbal inflection, every narrative twist of Caribbean cultural life. It is the secret code with which every Western text was 're-read'. It is the ground-bass of every rhythm and bodily movement. This was -is - the 'Africa' that 'is alive and well in the diaspora'.

230
When I was growing up in the 1940s and 1950s as a child in Kingston, I was surrounded by the signs, music and rhythms of this Africa of the diaspora, which only existed as a result of a long and discontinuous series of transformations. But, although almost everyone around me was some shade of brown or black (Africa 'speaks'!), I never once heard a single person refer to themselves or to others as, in some way, or as having been at some time in the past, 'African'. It was only in the 1970s that this Afro-Caribbean identity became historically available to the great majority of Jamaican people, at home and abroad. In this historic moment, Jamaicans discovered themselves to be 'black' - just as, in the same moment, they discovered themselves to be the sons and daughters of 'slavery'.

This profound cultural discovery, however, was not, and could not be, made directly, without 'mediation'. It could only be made through the impact on popular life of the post-colonial revolution, the civil rights struggles, the culture of Rastafarianism and the music of reggae - the metaphors, the figures or signifiers of a new construction of 'Jamaican-ness'. These signified a 'new' Africa of the New World, grounded in an 'old' Africa: - a spiritual journey of discovery that led, in the Caribbean, to an indigenous cultural revolution; this is Africa, as we might say, necessarily 'deferred' - as a spiritual, cultural and political metaphor.

It is the presence/absence of Africa, in this form, which has made it the privileged signifier of new conceptions of Caribbean identity. Everyone in the Caribbean, of whatever ethnic background, must sooner or later come to terms with this African presence. Black, brown, mulatto, white - all must look Presence Africaine in the face, speak its name. But whether it is, in this sense, an origin of our identities, unchanged by four hundred years of displacement, dismemberment, transportation, to which we could in any final or literal sense return, is more open to doubt. The original 'Africa' is no longer there. It too has been transformed. History is, in that sense, irreversible. We must not collude with the West which, precisely, normalises and appropriates Africa by freezing it into some timeless zone of the primitive, unchanging past. Africa must at last be reckoned with by Caribbean people, but it cannot in any simple sense by merely recovered.

It belongs irrevocably, for us, to what Edward Said once called an
Identity

'imaginative geography and history', which helps 'the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatising the difference between what is close to it and what is far away'. It 'has acquired an imaginative or figurative value we can name and feel'.

Our belongingness to it constitutes what Benedict Anderson calls 'an imagined community'. To this 'Africa', which is a necessary part of the Caribbean imaginary, we can't literally go home again.

The character of this displaced 'homeward' journey - its length and complexity - comes across vividly, in a variety of texts. Tony Sewell's documentary archival photographs, Garvey's Children: the Legacy of Marcus Garvey, tells the story of a 'return' to an African identity which went, necessarily, by the long route-through London and the United States. It 'ends', not in Ethiopia but with Garvey's statue in front of the St Ann Parish Library in Jamaica: not with a traditional tribal chant but with the music of Burning Spear and Bob Marley's Redemption Song. This is our long journey home. Derek Bishton's courageous visual and written text, Black Heart Man - the story of the journey of a white photographer 'on the trail of the promised land' - starts in England, and goes, through Shashemene, the place in Ethiopia to which many Jamaican people have found their way on their search for the Promised Land, and slavery; but it ends in Pinnacle, Jamaica, where the first Rastafarian settlements was established, and 'beyond' - among the dispossessed of 20th-century Kingston and the streets of Handsworth, where Bishton's voyage of discovery first began. These symbolic journeys are necessary for us all - and necessarily circular. This is the Africa we must return to - but 'by another route': what Africa has become in the New World, what we have made of 'Africa': 'Africa' - as we re-tell it through politics, memory and desire.

What of the second, troubling, term in the identity equation - the European presence? For many of us, this is a matter not of too little but of too much. Where Africa was a case of the unspoken, Europe was a case of that which is endlessly speaking - and endlessly speaking us. The European presence interrupts the innocence of the whole discourse of 'difference' in the Caribbean by introducing the question of power. 'Europe' belongs irrevocably to the play of power, to the lines of force and consent, to the role of the dominant, in Caribbean culture. In terms of colonialism, underdevelopment,
poverty and the racism of colour, the European presence is that which, in visual representation, has positioned the black subject within its dominant regimes of representation: the colonial discourse, the literatures of adventure and exploration, the romance of the exotic, the ethnographic and travelling eye, the tropical languages of tourism, travel brochure and Hollywood and the violent, pornographic languages of ganja and urban violence.

Because *Presence Europeenne* is about exclusion, imposition and expropriation, we are often tempted to locate that power as wholly external to us - an extrinsic force, whose influence can be thrown off like the serpent sheds its skin. What Frantz Fanon reminds us, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, is how this power has become a constitutive element in our own identities.

The movements, the attitudes, the glances of the other fixed me there, in the sense in which a chemical solution is fixed by a dye. I was indignant; I demanded an explanation. Nothing happened. I burst apart.

Now the fragments have been put together again by another self.\(^9\)

This 'look', from - so to speak - the place of the Other, fixes us, not only in its violence, hostility and aggression, but in the ambivalence of its desire. This brings us face to face, not simply with the dominating European presence as the site or 'scene' of integration where those other presences which it had actively disaggregated were recomposed - re-framed, put together in a new way; but as the site of a profound splitting and doubling - what Homi Bhaba has called 'the ambivalent identifications of the racist world ... the 'otherness' of the self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity.'\(^10\)

The dialogue of power and resistance, of refusal and recognition, with and against *Presence Europeenne* is almost as complex as the 'dialogue' with Africa. In terms of popular cultural life, it is nowhere to be found in its pure, pristine state. It is always-already fused, syncretised, with other cultural elements. It is always-already creolised - not lost beyond the Middle Passage, but ever-present: from the harmonics in our musics to the ground-bass of Africa, traversing and intersecting our lives at every point. How can we stage this dialogue so that, finally, we can place it, without terror or violence, rather than being forever placed by it? Can we ever
recognise its irreversible influence, whilst resisting its imperialising
eye? The enigma is impossible, so far, to resolve. It requires the
most complex of cultural strategies. Think, for example, of the
dialogue of every Caribbean filmmaker or writer, one way or
another, with the dominant cinemas and literature of the West - the
complex relationship of young black British filmmakers with the
'avant-gardes' of European and American filmmaking. Who could
describe this tense and tortured dialogue as a 'one way trip?

The Third, 'New World' presence, is not so much power, as
ground, place, territory. It is the juncture-point where the many
cultural tributaries meet, the 'empty' land (the European colonisers
emptied it) where strangers from every other part of the globe
collided. None of the people who now occupy the islands - black,
brown, white, African, European, American, Spanish, French, East
Indian, Chinese, Portugese, Jew, Dutch - originally 'belonged'
there. It is the space where the creolisations and assimilations and
syncretisms were negotiated. The New World is the third term - the
primal scene - where the fateful/fatal encounter was staged between
Africa and the West. It also has to be understood as the place of
many, continuous displacements: of the original pre-Columbian
inhabitants, the Arawaks, Caribs and Amerindians, permanently
displaced from their homelands and decimated; of other peoples
displaced in different ways from Africa, Asia and Europe; the
displacements of slavery, colonisation and conquest. It stands for the
endless ways in which Caribbean people have been destined to
'migrate'; it is the signifier of migration itself- of travelling, voyaging
and return as fate, as destiny; of the Antillean as the prototype of the
modern or postmodern New World nomad, continually moving
between centre and periphery. This preoccupation with movement
and migration Caribbean cinema shares with many other 'Third
Cinemas', but it is one of our defining themes, and it is destined to
cross the narrative of every film script or cinematic image.

_Presence Americaine_ continues to have its silences, its
suppressions. Peter Hulme, in his essay on 'Islands of Enchant-
ment'
reminds us that the word 'Jamaica' is the Hispanic form of
the indigenous Arawak name - 'land of wood and water' - which
Columbus's re-naming ('Santiago') never replaced. The Arawak
presence remains today a ghostly one, visible in the islands mainly
Cultural Identity and Diaspora

in museums and archeological sites, part of the barely knowable or usable 'past'. Hulme notes that it is not represented in the emblem of the Jamaican National Heritage Trust, for example, which chose instead the figure of Diego Pimienta, 'an African who fought for his Spanish masters against the English invasion of the island in 1655' - a deferred, metonymic, sly and sliding representation of Jamaican identity if ever there was one! He recounts the story of how Prime Minister Edward Seaga tried to alter the Jamaican coat-of-arms, which consists of two Arawak figures holding a shield with five pineapples, surmounted by an alligator. 'Can the crushed and extinct Arawaks represent the dauntless character of Jamaicans? Does the low-slung, near extinct crocodile, a cold-blooded reptile, symbolise the warm, soaring spirit of Jamaicans?' Prime Minister Seaga asked rhetorically.12 There can be few political statements which so eloquently testify to the complexities entailed in the process of trying to represent a diverse people with a diverse history through a single, hegemonic 'identity'. Fortunately, Mr Seaga's invitation to the Jamaican people, who are overwhelmingly of African descent, to start their 'remembering' by first 'forgetting' something else, got the comeuppance it so richly deserved.

The 'New World' presence - America, *Terra Incognita* - is therefore itself the beginning of diaspora, of diversity, of hybridity and difference, what makes Afro-Caribbean people already people of a diaspora. I use this term here metaphorically, not literally: diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other people into the sea. This is the old, the imperialising, the hegemonising, form of 'ethnicity'. We have seen the fate of the people of Palestine at the hands of this backward-looking conception of diaspora - and the complicity of the West with it. The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. One can only think here of what is uniquely - 'essentially' - Caribbean: precisely the mixes of colour,
pigmentation, physiognomic type; the 'blends' of tastes that is Caribbean cuisine; the aesthetics of the 'cross-overs', of 'cut-and-mix', to borrow Dick Hebdige's telling phrase, which is the heart and soul of black music. Young black cultural practitioners and critics in Britain are increasingly coming to acknowledge and explore in their work this 'diaspora aesthetic' and its formations in the post-colonial experience:

Across a whole range of cultural forms there is a 'syncretic' dynamic which critically appropriates elements from the master-codes of the dominant culture and 'creolises' them, disarticulating given signs and re-articulating their symbolic meaning. The subversive force of this hybridising tendency is most apparent at the level of language itself where Creoles, patois and black English decentre, destabilise and carnivalise the linguistic domination of 'English' - the nation-language of master-discourse - through strategic inflections, re-accentuations and other performative moves in semantic, syntactic and lexical codes.13

It is because this New World is constituted for us as place, a narrative of displacement, that it gives rise so profoundly to a certain imaginary plenitude, recreating the endless desire to return to 'lost origins', to be one again with the mother, to go back to the beginning. Who can ever forget, when once seen rising up out of that blue-green Caribbean, those islands of enchantment. Who has not known, at this moment, the surge of an overwhelming nostalgia for lost origins, for 'times past? And yet, this 'return to the beginning' is like the imaginary in Lacan - it can neither be fulfilled nor requited, and hence is the beginning of the symbolic, of representation, the infinitely renewable source of desire, memory, myth, search, discovery - in short, the reservoir of our cinematic narratives.

We have been trying, in a series of metaphors, to put in play a different sense of our relationship to the past, and thus a different way of thinking about cultural identity, which might constitute new points of recognition in the discourses of the emerging Caribbean cinema and black British cinemas. We have been trying to theorise identity as constituted, not outside but within representation; and hence of cinema, not as a second-order mirror held up to reflect what already exists, but as that form of representation which is able
Cultural Identity and Diaspora

to constitute us as new kinds of subjects, and thereby enable us to discover places from which to speak. Communities, Benedict Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities* are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined. This is the vocation of modern black cinemas: by allowing us to see and recognise the different parts and histories of ourselves, to construct those points of identification, those positionalities we call in retrospect our 'cultural identities'.

We must not therefore be content with delving into the past of a people in order to find coherent elements which will counteract colonialism's attempts to falsify and harm ... A national culture is not a folk-lore, nor an abstract populism that believes it can discover a people's true nature. A national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence.

Notes

10 Homi Bhabha, 'Foreword' to Fanon, *ibid.*, xv.
12 *Jamaica Hansard*, vol.9, 1983–4, p363. Quoted in Hulme, *ibid.*
15 Fanon, *op.cit.*, 1963, p188.

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237
ANTHROPOLOGY AS AN AGENT OF TRANSFORMATION:
INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS AND QUERIES

Faye V. Harrison

Moving Further toward an Anthropology for Liberation:
An Agenda from the Periphery behind the Veil

With the turn of the century rapidly approaching, anthropologists committed to applying knowledge to action and struggle must re-assess the state of the discipline. Since the late 1960s, critiques of anthropology's collusion with and complicity in colonial and imperialist domination and proposals for more socially and politically responsible disciplinary agendas have been numerous (e.g., Gough 1968, Hymes 1969, Lewis 1973, Asad 1975, and Huizer and Mannheim 1979). In spite of varying attempts at revision and reform, anthropology remains overwhelmingly a Western intellectual—and ideological—project that is embedded in relations of power which favor class sections and historical blocs belonging to or with allegiances to the world's White minority. While these global relations no longer adhere to classical colonial principles or forms, they retain, nonetheless, the basic substance of colonial control. Hence, the contemporary world system is neocolonial in its structure and dynamic. When anthropologists fail to recognize anthropological inquiry as an historically-specific set of discourses "which the West deploys in order to make sense of, define, and figure out and render intelligible how a world ordered by [Western] capitalism works" (Magubane and Faris 1985:93, 101), their contributions are all the more vulnerable to being complicit if not in fact collusive with the prevailing forces of neocolonial domination. Magubane and Faris (1985) take the strong position that anthropology as currently constituted must cease to exist. For cross-cultural knowledge to advance human emancipation, activist intellectuals must move beyond what many Marxists and other progressives have contributed (see Gordon in this volume). It is not enough to rethink anthropological insights in light of an historicized political economy (e.g., Wolf 1982). Despite good intentions, radical anthropology "remains part of what people in the Third World consider suspect— as an invention of their enemy" (Magubane and Faris 1985:92). Whereas most of anthropology's critics have sought a reinvention by expunging the most obvious bourgeois and colonial elements, and then rethinking and reordering what remains, Magubane and Faris argue that a genuine science of humankind based upon premises of freedom and equality cannot emerge until the anthropology born of the rationalist and liberal intellectual tradition is destroyed.

Can an authentic anthropology emerge from the critical intellectual traditions and counter-hegemonic struggles of Third World peoples? Can a genuine study of humankind arise from dialogues, debates, and reconciliations amongst various non-Western and Western intellectuals— both those with formal credentials and those with other socially meaningful and appreciated qualifications? Is genuine dialogue and reconciliation possible,
and, if so, under what conditions? How can anthropological knowledge advance the interests of the world’s majority during this period of ongoing crisis and uncertainty, marked, on the international level, by the cooling of the Cold War, serious dilemmas and setbacks in socialist development, the escalation of conflict in the Persian Gulf and the emergence of a “New World Order” led militarily by the U.S., growing ecological/environmental problems, the imposition of dehumanizing and re colonizing structural adjustment policies upon debt-ridden “developing” nations, and the heightening of North-South contradictions; and, on the national level, by backlash and threats to civil rights, hostile reactions to multiculturalism, deindustrialization and economic displacement, a widening gap between the rich and the rest, and the intensification of state repression in ghetto and barrio communities? Questions such as these should be taken to heart by anthropologists preparing themselves for the global challenges and crises of the 21st century.

One of this volume’s objectives is to reassess and, hopefully, transcend the limitations of the radical and critical anthropology that has emerged from the debates and experiments of the past two decades. Critiques of critiques and provocative syntheses will provide the ground for mapping a path or paths to an anthropology designed to promote equality- and justice-inducing social transformation. The perspectives expressed in the following chapters are those of activist anthropologists committed to and engaged in struggles against racist oppression, gender inequality, class disparities, and international patterns of exploitation and “difference” rooted largely in capitalist world development.

According to Ulin (1991), political economy and postmodernism along with “the feminist trajectory” are currently competing to define “the critical anthropological project.” An aim of this book is to place another claim onto the site of anthropological debate and contestation. The trajectory that is advanced here is informed in considerable measure by the intellectual, existential, and political experiences of Third World peoples and their allies. In other words, this volume seeks to challenge anthropologists to take more seriously the critiques, constructions, and theoretical deliberations of scholars belonging to neglected, peripheralized, or erased traditions that have long confronted and challenged colonial and neocolonial structures of power and economic relations. The major impetus for transformation and for theorizing about it must come out of the experiences and struggles of Third World peoples in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and “the belly of the beast,” namely the “internal colonies” within the so-called First World.

The trajectory outlined here is a synthetic one that draws upon four major streams: (1) a neo-Marxist political economy, (2) experiments in interpretive and reflexive ethnographic analysis, (3) feminism which underscores the impact race and class have upon gender, and (4) traditions of radical Black and (other) Third World scholarship which acknowledge the interplay between race and other forms of invidious difference, notably class and gender. For anthropology to be able to “theorize the sociocultural terrain” of late capitalism, it must, as Ulin and others argue, reconcile the tensions between Marxist political economy and interpretive/textualist approaches. An authentic study of humankind must also reconcile tensions between critical Western and Third World intellectual traditions (cf. Johnson 1988). This collection results from a project with its beginnings in an invited session that organized and encouraged such reconciliations among female and male anthropologists of diverse racial, ethnic, class, and national backgrounds.

Race, Gender, and Class Inequalities at the Heart of the World System

The contemporary sociocultural terrain of the world system is one that is shaped, colored, and violently distorted by what Haviland (1990) designates as a form of global apartheid. He targets this internationalized White supremacy as one of the world’s principal problems. Arguing that South Africa and the situation in the world at large are strikingly similar, he explains that on the global level apartheid is a de facto structure which combines socioeconomic and racial antagonisms and in which (1) a minority of whites occupies the pole of affluence, while a majority composed of other races occupies the pole of poverty; (2) social integration of the two groups is made extremely difficult by barriers of complexion, economic position, political boundaries, and other factors; (3) economic development of the two groups is interdependent; and (4) the affluent white minority possesses a disproportionately large share of the world society’s political, economic, and military power (1990:457-458).

Whether in South Africa, Papua New Guinea (see Buck’s chapter), or on the global level, under conditions of apartheid racial exploitation is inextricably intertwined with patterns of class formation that arise in situations and contexts of colonial/imperialist expansion and domination—where land alienation, coerced labor exactation, and repressive state power are key features of the social formation (cf. Magubane 1979). Haviland insists that the world system of apartheid engenders structural violence which is built into and “exerted by situations” such as world hunger, over-population, pollution, and cultures of discontent. In other words, he traces the source of humanity’s major contemporary problems back to enduring race/class inequalities.

Paradoxically, despite the pervasiveness of racialized structures of inequality, neither mainstream nor radical/critical anthropology has contributed a wealth of insight and knowledge to our understanding of racism and the sociocultural construction of racial differences (see D’Amico-Samuels’s chapter). While anthropology is in the position to benefit and mature from feminist theories of kinship (e.g., Collier and Yanagisako 1987), the state (e.g., Sacks 1974, Silverblatt 1987, Gailey 1987), politics (e.g., Bookman and Morgen 1988), economic life (e.g., Bosson 1989, Lamphere 1987), and social inequality (e.g., Collier 1988, Caulfield 1981), the anthropology of race is a relatively underdeveloped and sorely neglected domain. Anthropology’s preoccupation with redressing ethnecentrism does not exonerate it from neglecting to confront, both in intellectual and sociopolitical terms, racism/White supremacy as a major ideological and institutionalized force in today’s world. The connotations of a racialized Other—its most extreme and invidious form being the Black Other—have been and, unfortunately, still
remain underpinnings of many anthropological assumptions and perspectives (Pandian 1985; Blakey's chapter).

The emphasis within the discipline on cultural differences has diverted needed attention away from differences constructed ultimately from the political and economic processes that have given rise to the dominant pattern of world development. Class, gender, racial, and ethnic differences cannot be reduced to "cultural diversity," especially when the latter is often a smokescreen behind which power disparities and economic polarizations lie unaddressed or inadequately treated. As Rollwagen (1988:153-154) and Wolf (1982:387) note in their treatments of the world system, the very concept of culture, which has been so central to sociocultural anthropology, must be reconstructed, and culture theory must "take account of larger [contexts and wider fields of force]" (Wolf 1982:387). Moreover, a critical theory of culture must be freed from the Social Darwinist implications of many evolutionist postulates concerning human cultural variation.

The centrality of race is finally being recognized by some feminist scholars (e.g., Sacks 1989, Morgen 1988, Moore 1988) who, over the past two decades, have matured from three phases of feminist anthropology (Moore 1988). The third phase (following one devoted to the study of women and another focused on gender) is concerned with deconstructing sameness and understanding differences—understanding, for example, how race and class shape and divide gender identity and experience (see D'Amico-Samuels' and Harrison's chapters). Recent studies point to the integral parts both genderization and racialization play in the consolidation of ruling class hegemony in state societies (e.g., Silverblatt 1987 and 1988, Greenberg 1980) and in the international division of labor (Nash and Fernández-Kelly 1983; Leacock, Safa et al. 1986). Anthropologists have reached a point where they can potentially formulate theoretical explanations that place the race/gender/class intersection at the very center of such phenomena as economic development, social change, and the politics of domination, resistance, and contestation.9

If anthropologists are to contribute to the study of race and its intersections with gender, class, and ethnicity, then they would benefit from revisiting and critically building upon a body of knowledge produced by anthropologists who were generally forced to work and struggle in an intellectual periphery (see Harrison 1988). The results of Allison Davis' collaborative scholarship, e.g., Children of Bondage (1940) and Deep South (1941), St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton's classic Black Metropolis (1945), and Drake's two volume tour de force, Black Folk Here and There (1987, 1991) are just examples of classic works that have yet to receive their deserved attention and appreciation within anthropology. (See Harrison [1988] for further discussion on the peripheralization of Davis' and Drake's activist scholarship and critique of racism.)

What's 'Postmodernism' Gotta Do With It?

According to its enthusiasts, postmodernism has moved onto anthropology's "cutting edge" and has the potential to liberate the discipline from its dysfunctional modernist/positivist/realist legacy (Turner 1987:72). In the social sciences modernism is characterized by the positivist/realist model of science, which in anthropology legitimates the authority of the outsider/Western researcher in the study of non-Western cultures. According to this model, the production of knowledge takes place outside the realm of values and politics and under conditions of unbiased objectivity (Jordan n.d.). This posture serves to mask and authenticate the underlying logic, value orientation, and ideology of a Eurocentric intellectual supremacy (see Joseph et al. 1990 and Amin 1989).

Postmodernism is a general epistemological orientation influenced by poststructuralism, hermeneutics, and neo-Marxism. It can be argued that it represents an intellectual response largely by Western White males to the challenges to Western hegemony and White supremacy in a world marked by the ascendance of postcolonial nationalism, Japanese capitalism, and feminism (cf. West 1988 and Harding 1987). There are feminist critics who go so far as to argue that postmodernism is "fundamentally a sexist [and, one could add, racist] response that attempts to preserve the legitimacy of androcentric [and Eurocentric] claims in the face of contrary evidence" (Mascia-Lees et al. 1989:15). Ironically, postmodernist literary experiments that essentially undermine the ontological status of the subject have risen in academic popularity when women and Third World theorists are challenging the universality and hegemony of Western and androcentric views. This has grave implications for the legitimacy and authority of counter-hegemonic contributions within the domain of established academia.

Although the postmodernist turn's critique of positivism and realist writing is certainly a significant contribution, its other features are seriously problematic. Jordan (n.d.) points out a number of serious limitations: the extreme relativism and skepticism (cf. Fischer 1986:194) which invalidate radical critique from the ranks of the politically engaged (cf. Mascia-Lees et al. 1989); the reaction against scientific dogmatism that gives rise to a denial of the validity and reliability of theoretical explanation (cf. Friedman 1987), the appropriation and neutralization of the concepts of contradiction, power, and authority (cf. di Leonardo 1989); the conceptualization of dialogic relationships as textual strategies rather than as concrete collaborations (e.g., co-authorship and co-editorship) between ethnographers and informants; "dispersal of authority" as a narrative technique or style rather than as a means of empowering informants (e.g., by imparting research and writing skills to them); the privileging of the force of rhetoric over institutionalized relations of power (di Leonardo 1989); the absence of attention to racism and class inequality in poetic treatments of authority and power; and a notion of cultural critique that is largely limited to giving privileged Americans the benefits of cross-cultural knowledge. Jordan concludes that postmodernism privileges poetic over politics, and its politics is that of academia and not of the world at large. (See his chapter in this volume.) As Fabian (1983) notes, the dilemmas postmodernism poses cannot be resolved by textual and epistemological means; they can only be resolved through political struggle. A genuinely critical/radical anthropology must "go beyond the relativizing of narratives to challenge the exploitative and hegemonic social practices and social formations among our co-subjects of anthropological inquiry" (Ulin 1991:81).

A decolonizing and decolonized anthropology can indeed benefit from an "experimental moment," but one directed toward the empowerment of its studied populations. Jordan's fieldwork (see his chapter here) demonstrates how concrete collaborative relationships can serve to disperse ethnographic authority in the direction of the traditional "objects" of study. Jordan's research (as well as the analyses that all the
other contributors present) demonstrates how cultural critique as politicized deconstruction of various hegemonic ideologies and discourses can be a significant and necessary component of broader struggles for equality, social and economic justice, and far-reaching democratization.

Also at issue is the dissemination of ethnographic representations to wider audiences that include the ordinary folk anthropologists typically study. Experimental ethnographies are generally geared to the cultural and intellectual tastes of educated Western readers. Anthropologists need to experiment with a wider repertoire of communicative strategies, techniques, and media in order to address more—but not necessarily all—of their work to lay readers. It also must be recognized that the published text is not the most accessible, appealing, and effective medium for communicating with some, if not many, of the anthropologists that need to reach. Ethnography can also be presented through such media as video, film, and drama (see Harrison 1990a and D'Amico-Samuels' chapter). When ethnography is in written form, it must be straightforward and clear if a broad cross-section of readers is to be engaged. Bettyfou Valentine's approach to ethnographic writing entailed extensive inputs and co-editing insights from her African-American inner-city informants. The resultant ethnography on ghetto life styles (1978) did not, however, compromise its intellectual contribution.

It is important to recognize that artistry, creative experimentation, and disciplinary boundary blurring, which are so very prominent in postmodern anthropology, are not peculiarly "postmodern." Zora Neale Hurston and Katherine Dunham are just two examples of intellectuals who, through the use of literary art and dance theatre, took anthropological insights and knowledge to wider audiences beginning more than five decades ago—long before postmodernism, postcolonialism, postindustrialism, or post—anything was in vogue. (See Aschkenbrenner [1989] and Mikell [1989] for intellectual biographies of these peripheralized anthropologists.)

The Politics of Canon Setting

Harrison (1988) and Lutz (1990) have exposed trends within anthropology which have effectively peripheralized or erased significant contributions made by peoples of color and women from the canon. These trends have served to reproduce andro- and Euro-centric biases in the assumptions, concepts, and theories at the core of the discipline. Although anthropology is preoccupied with human cultural diversity, multiple cultural perspectives—particularly Third World/non-Western "minority" perspectives—have been distanced from sites of cross-cultural theory-validation (cf. Blakey 1988:4; cf. Hsu 1973; see D'Amico-Samuels' chapter). The underlying assumption seems to be that cultural, epistemological, and theoretical perspectives outside of the Eurocentric canon are less adequate, less "universal," and less "scientific" —in other words, inferior; and both modernist and postmodernist approaches have placed "native" theorizing on tenuous ground.

These hidden but deeply ingrained presuppositions are not unrelated to the conservative biases reflected in the multiculturalism/cultural diversity debates being waged throughout the U.S. Conservatives are inclined to believe that cultural literacy is necessarily based on assimilating the "facts and truths" associated with the Western intellectual tradition. Consequently, when universities and school systems "accommodate" multiculturalist curricular changes, academic "standards" are lowered and the "politically correct" "propaganda" of special interest groups is "forced" upon the majority (cf. Moses 1990). The historical experiences and intellectual contributions of "minorities" and women are relegated to the status of special interest trivia and are not viewed as deserving of scholarly validation outside of the established study of "social problems" or the authorized curricular menu of expendable "add and stir" electives. Institutionalized anthropology is not untouched by these sentiments. A socially responsible and genuinely critical anthropology should challenge this iniquitous reaction, and, furthermore, set a positive example by promoting cultural diversity where it counts, at its very core.

Jones has pointed out how "native" anthropologists have historically been relegated to the ranks of overqualified fieldwork assistants. He has stated that

the native anthropologist is seen ...not as a professional who will conduct research and develop theories and generalizations, but as a person who is in a position to collect information in his own culture to which an outsider does not have access (1970 [1988]:31).

A decolonized anthropology requires the development of "theories based on non-Western precepts and assumptions" (Ibid); however, "there is as yet no set of theoretical conclusions generated from the point of view of native anthropologists" (Ibid:30). A question that must be raised is this: when natives of the various cultures denied history and intellectual authority do indeed theorize, are those theories legitimized? Are they even acknowledged as higher order explanations? Lutz's analysis cogently demonstrates that even when a sizable quantity of women adhere to the publish or perish rules, their contributions to the literature can be and, in effect, are being erased. In her view erasures result when contributions are not cited nor included in literature overviews. An additional means of partial erasure or peripheralization occurs, however, when works are cited for reasons other than their actual theoretical import. This "tracking" process diverts and restricts attention to minor or secondary points concerning "interesting ethnographic data" or narrow geographically-specific topics. While the latter are not at all insignificant, the authority to explain and generalize beyond the specificity of limited field data (and, in the case of Black scholars, beyond knowledge/mastery of the "Black condition") is the bottom line in effectively influencing the direction and scope of inquiry. Is there a "glass ceiling" in academia comparable to what women and people of color have encountered in big business? Ultimately, canon setting is a process embedded in institutionalized relations of power and authority. Research and scholarship "designed to contribute to the empowerment of disempowered groups" require appropriate institutional bases, and these can be built only in part [if even that much] from existing foundations within, for instance, such established institutions as schools, colleges and universities" (Harrison 1990b:10). Counter-hegemonic analysts must be concerned with "shifting the center of authority and legitimacy ...from those...institutions which our people do not control to
more democratically structured bases which embody the interests and priorities of ordinary...folk in their diversity” (Ibid.:11).

Native anthropologies (Jones 1970) and meaningful reconciliations between Western and non-Western theories and epistemologies (Johnson 1988) are contingent upon a sociopolitical climate and institutional alignments that allow for and support the democratization of intellectual and theoretical authority. Outside of this context of politically engaged authority dispersal, radical anthropological scholarship is vulnerable to the vagaries of trends and vogues which influence the ways that critical and potentially emancipatory knowledge is neutralized and appropriated (see Gordon’s chapter).

**Perspectives on Decolonizing Anthropology**

*From the Contributors*

This volume explores the epistemological, methodological, political, and ethical parameters of a mode of anthropological inquiry geared toward social transformation and human liberation. Building upon earlier critiques, this collection offers critical perspectives on anthropology as colonial discourse (Buck), the invidious biocultural determinisms of hegemonic museological categories and representations (Blakey), cultural critique and politicized discourse deconstruction (Jordan), ethical hierarchies and tensions between professionalism and higher moral and political values (Bourgois), reflexivity and ethnographic politics (Harrison), the constraints of hegemony upon popular consciousness and struggle (Hale and Gordon), and millenarian underpinnings of U.S. militarism (Gilliam).

D’Amico-Samuels, Harrison, Bourgois, and Gordon offer perspectives on various ways that anthropologists—as “organic intellectuals” or otherwise—can engage themselves politically with the peoples and communities that host ethnographic investigations. The importance of demystifying hegemonic ideologies and producing/co-producing forms of knowledge that can be useful and potentially liberating for the world’s dispossessed and oppressed is highlighted in several chapters, particularly in those by Buck, Jordan, Harrison, Gordon, Hale, and Gilliam. Bourgois, Gordon, and Hale offer insightful analyses of conflicts and struggles around human rights violations, militant ethnic self-determination, Fourth World ideology, Anglo-hegemony, and revolutionary politics in Nicaragua and elsewhere in Central America.

Blakey and D’Amico-Samuels underscore the racist underpinnings of many anthropological perspectives and concerns, from the conventions associated with exhibiting the peoples and cultures of Sub-Saharan Africa in museums to postmodernism’s preoccupations and intertextual biases. The insidiousness of racism is especially underscored when Blakey discusses the problem of the racially oppressed consenting to biological determinist assumptions about “race,” and when D’Amico-Samuels briefly mentions her painful estrangement from her family because of her commitment to racial equality. Harrison explores the impact race combined with gender and class have upon self-identity and political consciousness, and how the latter inform and influence ethnographic experience.

Gilliam’s critique of U.S. militarism is premised upon a “parallel” analysis that employs concepts originally constructed for studying the exoticized Other. Drawing in part upon Buck’s compelling deconstruction of the “cargo-cult” construct, Gilliam elucidates the relevance of this “millenarian” notion for understanding the logic and workings of the military-capital accumulation complex. She connects global racism, capital accumulation, Christian fundamentalism, and the hegemonic definition of masculinity with the U.S.’s militaristic responses to geopolitical conflicts and struggles for egalitarianism in Grenada, the Persian Gulf, and elsewhere.

The reification of *Otherness* is problematized by a number of chapters, but D’Amico-Samuels, Harrison, and Gordon are especially forthright in their assertions concerning the concept of “the field” and the relations of affinity, kinship, and solidarity that anthropologists may have with the peoples among whom they work. On a whole, these chapters question whether anthropology can continue to be preoccupied with constructions and representations of Otherness if the discipline is to undergo a thorough process of decolonization.

Contrary to the extreme versions of the “ethnography as fiction” approach, the analyses presented here do not express the “epistemic skepticism...and explanatory agnosticism or nihilism” (West 1991:xxi) that is strongly reflected in “deconstructive” trends today. Among the anthropologists represented here, theoretical explanations are sought to be acted upon in creative, socially responsible, human-centered ways.

**The Intended Significance of this Collection**

This collection aims to go beyond antecedent critiques, proposals, and agenda by advancing an analytical comprehensiveness generally lacking in most of the earlier contributions. Analyses presented here confront the major sources of “difference,” inequality, and structural and symbolic violence in the world today. Race and class disparities, which anthropologists are too prone to neglect or ignore, are joined with gender to assume their rightful place at the center of political as well as theoretical deliberation.

This book amplifies the central role of politically responsible Third World intellectuals. While earlier critiques have dealt with “native” anthropologists and the significance of their prospective contributions, this volume attempts to press this issue further. In a world in which de facto apartheid prevails, and where biocultural presuppositions are extant in popular beliefs and in “scientific” research on race and intelligence, the disciplinary role and potential leadership of Third World anthropologists is a thorny but imperative issue. The varieties of Marxist political economy, postmodernism, and feminism that Ulin (1991) identifies as the major contenders in determining the contours and content of “the critical anthropological project” are overly Eurocentric and, except for feminist anthropology, androcentric. How can an authentically critical anthropology equipped to identify and help solve the world’s problems be dominated by even well-intentioned and truly radical representatives of the world’s minority? Authority dispersal cannot be limited to textualist experiments in representing
Others when the prevailing political climate and epistemological tenor calls into question the very legitimacy of the explanations and resolutions that historically defined Others offer.

The papers here also suggest that for meaningful dialogue and reconciliation to take place across boundaries of culture and nationality, race, class, and gender, much more than logically-sounding talk is required. The political-authority structure and political economy of professional anthropology must be seriously dealt with and changed before conditions can exist for the kinds of principled debates and syntheses that can generate human-centered inquiry. Only on such an altered terrain can Western and non-Western anthropologists truly work together as partners with equalized access to institutionalized resources and power.

Finally, this book underscores anthropologists' responsibility to struggle not only for the enhancement of Third World intellectuals and the politicization of First World researchers but also for the empowerment of those most alienated from and dispossessed of their rights to democratized power and the material benefits of economic justice. The perspectives offered here challenge the received dichotomy between "pure" and "applied" science, or that between social science and advocacy which the proponents of "value-free" research assume. Knowledge-production and praxis are inseparable. The conceptual separation built into the received tradition has served to shroud the role Western research and scholarship have actually played in rationalizing and providing useful information or "intelligence" for sociopolitical control and economic development--at national and international levels.

The views expressed in this volume do not exhaust the ideas which can contribute to the subversion, decolonization, and transformation of anthropological inquiry. However, the papers included here effectively contribute to the book's principal goal: to encourage more anthropologists to accept the challenge of working to free the study of humankind from the prevailing forces of global inequality and dehumanization and to locate it firmly in the complex struggle for genuine transformation.

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1. This is an allusion to W.E.B. Du Bois' prolific contributions on "the color line" and the "veil" of separation (Harrison 1992).

2. This emphasis on the critical traditions within both Western and Third World intellectual trajectories is made in recognition that neither Western nor any non-Western scholarship is homogeneous or monolithic. There are oppositional paradigms within Western intellectualism that can potentially make an important contribution to an authentically transformative anthropology.

3. In her role as a discussant for the 1990 AAA session entitled, "Other Appropriations: When Symbolic Violence Becomes Symbolic Capital," Brackett Williams pointed out that domination and resistance are not opposite processes or phenomena, as is often implied. The problem of contestation has been neglected.

4. Before the U.S. withdrew its support in 1985, UNESCO represented an important site for the production of innovative and internationalist knowledge. That scholarship challenged the unequal distribution of the world's material and ideological resources as well as the theoretical justifications for global disparities. The U.S. withdrawal--under the Reagan administration--sabotaged a major international source of institutional support--the United Nations--for "non-aligned" Third World scholarship (personal communication from Angela Gilliam; Gilliam 1985).

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Lewis, David K.  
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We are embattled—writing, living, and participating in various transnational struggles from our positions as intellectuals in the US: post-civil rights, post-Black Power, post women’s liberation, post queer liberation. This is a moment of reactionary attacks on the gains of previous generations and the attendant reality of fundamentalist wars over power and resources in which Blacks and other people of color are disproportionately victimized. In this moment, as activist critical intellectuals we are compelled by our politics and positionalities to work together to articulate scholarship and activism. Our aim is to form clearer conceptualizations of our collective condition and, more pointedly, to contribute to the liberation of African-descended peoples, and all others, from socially constructed limitations and diminished life chances. We believe that teaching and the production of insurgent knowledge is itself one form of ‘resistance’; however, we struggle to push our work past discourse to praxis. We seek social transformation through both aspects of our work.1

Black and/or Africana Studies is concerned with Black collectivity, Black positioning in relation to power and social hierarchy, and Black agency regardless of national or other boundaries imposed upon us. It follows then that Africana/Black Studies is the intellectual and political work as well as the intellectual politics of the Black and/or African Diaspora. This is our approach to the Black/African Diaspora.

We acknowledge the importance of traditional notions of the Black/African Diaspora as a concept that refers to the dispersion—and attendant racialization—of Black bodies through distinct but overlapping histories of enslavement, colonization, and forced/voluntary migration, as well as resistance and contestation. These processes are mobilized by the globalization of racial capitalism, originally by the transatlantic slave trade. This produced multiple and distinct formations of anti-Black interpellation and racial structuration which have created and continue to create ‘Africa’ and ‘Blackness’ and have impelled the dispersal of peoples of African descent across the globe.
However, our notion of the Black/African Diaspora moves far beyond the mobility and unity imposed on dominated subjects through their interpellation as Black. Rather, our idea of Diaspora focuses on Black agency and the processes of self-making; the Black/African Diaspora as a transnational cultural, intellectual, and, above all, political project that seeks to name, represent, and participate in Black people’s historic efforts to construct our collective identities and constitute them through cultural–political practices dedicated to expressing our full humanity and seeking for liberation.

We recognize that racialization and corresponding racial formations manifest themselves differently in various locations. Within these contexts peoples who are interpolated as Black self-make their subjectivities and fill them culturally and politically in multiply distinct ways. We do not root Blackness in imagined notions of Africa, or assume an essential unity of African-descended people across national, gender, sex, class, or any other sites of difference. Nevertheless, we understand that diasporic notions of Blackness as identity and culture are dialogically produced among African and African-descended populations worldwide. We recognize Diaspora as characterized by both Black roots and Black routes: Black roots meaning the politics and experiences of many Black people of meaningful connections to ‘imagined’ or ‘real’ African ancestry and culture; Black routes being the historical and political–economic processes by which Black identities have been constructed within and across local places and national spaces—for example, Brixton, New Orleans, Port Au Prince and Rio de Janeiro—made up of folks with similar relationships to racialized power hierarchies who recognize each other as connected and potentially collective.

We have consciously chosen to employ the term African Diaspora to disrupt the traditional ways that Africa and its peoples have been reified as sites of savagery and underdevelopment. To reiterate, we are not privileging Africa as the primary site of Black identity formations, nor are we rooting Blackness in imagined notions of Africa, though we affirm the importance and power of this imaginary. Instead, we seek to critically resituate Africa within both historical and contemporary global processes of racial formation and the politics of Blackness. This move acknowledges the important ways that Africa and the Black Diaspora have been and continue to be mutually constituted.

The analysis of and struggle against racisms is one of the fundamental organizing elements of our perspective. The diasporic framework places seemingly disparate processes of racial formation in dialogue, enabling us to recognize and articulate how race operates locally and globally. Following the principles of racial formation theory we are working to develop a diasporic race theory that probes the articulation of processes of racial structuration with practices of racial representation. We are particularly interested in unveiling hegemonic notions of cultural difference/pathology, racelessness,
and hybridity. In this way, we seek to reveal the ways in which some rely on transparent identities as the basis of their privilege while denying others the ability to use identification as a tool of struggle against such privilege.3

Our analysis of racial formation among global Black populations demonstrates that race is crucial to the construction of identities in the Black/African Diaspora. Racial identities continue to be axes by which power and resources are controlled and distributed. Even in societies where color/class continua exist and the existence of racism is denied, these are masked expressions of racial processes and racialized identities that enable structures of dominance. Given the continued salience of (racialized) identities in the Black/African Diaspora, our work attends to the political significance and effectiveness of mobilization around issues of identity. Black identity politics is a fundamental constitutive element of Black diasporic cultural processes and communities. Therefore, without understanding the cultural politics behind the strategic construction of Black identities, there is no framework for understanding Black expressive practices. Moreover, we insist that in a global racial formation in which racialization and racism continue to structure social processes with devastating material effects and in which political collectivity empowers, Black identity remains an important (though admittedly contradictory) basis from which to wage forms of collective anti-racist struggle.

As we understand it, race is neither adequately understood nor lived absent inter-articulating and mutually constituting axes of [at least] gender, class, and sexuality. Our political commitment and scholarly choice in this regard emerges from the Black radical intellectual tradition of Black feminism, which persuasively posits, among other things, that listening to knowledges, movements, and expressive projects from below and in between power axes provides the most powerful critical locus and compass. As we seek to move beyond additive analytical approaches and rather insist upon the mutually constitutive character of identities and inequalities along the lines of race, gender, class, sexuality, following Black feminist precepts, we are committed to strategies of simultaneous struggle for justice against all forms of social hierarchy.4

Methodologies are the conceptual framework of our research and methods are the tools we deploy to carry out the research. Our methodology is driven by the overarching goals of social change and theoretical development. We seek to couple established methods with those that emerge from our interactions with collectivities with whom we work. In struggles for liberatory politics, our emphasis is on dialogic and reflexive methods. Rather than stressing observation as a method, we stress participation: acknowledging our positionality, engaging in dialogue and synthetic practice. Reflexivity is a critical and aware process for transformative practice.
The core of our practice is activist research. Our research agenda is formulated through the people with whom we work, in alignment with their efforts, and with a shared sense of purpose. Our conceptual repertoire emerges from their political struggles and from our commitment to an anti-racism agenda. A central goal of the School is to work in support of liberatory social change and create the conditions through which academic practice can contribute to these ends. This kind of practice engages us in social movements and other forms of political practice that we find produce new forms of knowledge. Activist research begins with an act of political identification and dialogue with collective subjects in struggle for relief from oppression, for equality and betterment. These dialogic processes in activist approach will necessarily transform our methodologies.

Upon this activist research foundation, the Austin School engages in activisms that include: pedagogy and training; university-based politics, both contesting racism and affirming actions of institution building; public education; direct activism and advocacy with struggles that we support.

NOTES

This manifesto is a collective living document. For this reason there is no definitive version. This version was presented by E.T. Gordon at Williams College in spring 2006 and revised in August 2006. It was based on the results of a collective writing effort initiated during the two-day Diaspora Symposium held at UT Austin in 2003, with a version produced by Jafari Allen from notes that he and Jemima Pierre took of discussions that took place over the course of two days during the Diaspora Symposium held in 2005. This was leavened with some of ETG’s insights and those presented on the subject in commentary by Charles Hale as a discussant of papers presented by affiliates of UT’s Diaspora Program on an AAA panel in 2004.

1. Black Studies emerged out of the Black Power movement in this country. To continue to have salience both for the Black community and within academia it must retain its activist and contestatory core and in particular its anti-racist project. Neither Blackness nor anti-Black racisms are contained by national boundaries. Given the particular place of Blacks in the global racial formation and the centrality of racial oppression to interlocking modes of social and material hierarchy worldwide, the struggle for Black liberation has global implications for human liberation. Therefore, global formations of capital, race, patriarchy, etc. and the place of Blacks within them can only be understood and combated in diasporic perspective. In the tradition of Dubois, Lorde, Drake, and many others, the intellectual and political work as well as the intellectual politics of the Black/African Diaspora is what Black Studies should be.

2. African Studies is thus seen as an integral part of Black Studies. Sub-Saharan Africa is part of the Black/African Diaspora in the routes sense of its peoples’ connections with diasporic Black identities and cultural processes. It is an
integral part of Black Studies in that its peoples occupy positions similar
to and connected with those of other diasporic Blacks in global racial formation
and that racialization processes similar to those that take place elsewhere in
the Diaspora take place on the continent. Analysis of how racial processes
operate in relation to Africa or in Diaspora without understanding the other is
incomplete. Sub-Saharan Africa is part of the Black Diaspora and so should be
a part of Black Studies.

3. It should be obvious that Critical Race Studies and in particular racial formation
theory are central theoretical tools for our notion of Black Studies. Historically
and contemporarily, we understand local, regional, and global racial formations
to be the contexts within which Blackness and Black politics are created.
Racial formation theory provides critical theoretical tools to understand these
processes.

4. As laid out here, Black feminist theory and particularly its emphasis on
intersectionality provide key theoretical tools for our version of Black Studies.
We are also particularly interested in the ways in which patriarchy as ideology
and practice are key to understanding important issues of gender and sexuality
in our communities. In general, the heterosexist and masculinist focus of Black
Studies can only be reversed by making Africana Women’s Studies a central
feature of Black Studies.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The complier–interpreter of this version of the Austin School Manifesto is Edmund
T. Gordon, Sterling Brown Visiting Professor at Williams College (Fall 2006),
Director of the Center for African and African American Studies, Assoc. Prof. of
Anthropology, and founding member of the African Diaspora Graduate Program
in Anthropology at the University of Texas at Austin. He is a light skinned and
eyed, 55-year-old, married with two children, heterosexual, bi-racial Black man
who was born in New York to a middle-class professional family. This version of
the Manifesto reflects this and other more complex aspects of his positionality.
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Coal
BY AUDRE LORDE

I
Is the total black, being spoken
From the earth's inside.
There are many kinds of open.
How a diamond comes into a knot of flame
How a sound comes into a word, coloured
By who pays what for speaking.

Some words are open
Like a diamond on glass windows
Singing out within the crash of passing sun
Then there are words like stapled wagers
In a perforated book—buy and sign and tear apart—
And come whatever wills all chances
The stub remains
An ill-pulled tooth with a ragged edge.
Some words live in my throat
Breeding like adders. Others know sun
Seeking like gypsies over my tongue
To explode through my lips
Like young sparrows bursting from shell.
Some words
Bedevil me.

Love is a word another kind of open—
As a diamond comes into a knot of flame
I am black because I come from the earth's inside
Take my word for jewel in your open light.