The Black Scholar, the Humanities, and the Politics of Racial Knowledge since 1945

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In 1963 the eminent historian John Hope Franklin offered his assessment of the cost of racial thinking to the store of knowledge. The assessment was not positive. Likening black scholars' situation in the academy to a dilemma, Franklin angrily lamented the loss that defined black scholars' lives. In the late nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, Franklin observed, black academics had to fight against a social Darwinist ideology that deemed them incapable of coherent thought in the first place. Though not confined solely to writing in a reactive mode, black intellectuals still had to overcome political, social, economic, and cultural barriers that severely limited their professional opportunities and compelled them to carry a heavy burden of proof that they were capable. Franklin's anger and sorrow were clear: "It must have been a most unrewarding experience for the Negro scholar to answer those who said that he was inferior by declaring: 'I am indeed not inferior.'"

Franklin asked readers to put themselves in these scholars' shoes to try to come to grips with the loss they and the larger intellectual community suffered. There had always been a pressure to publish, Franklin told his readers, but black scholars were under a different kind of pressure from the one felt by their white counterparts. Franklin continued:

Imagine, if you can, what it meant to a competent Negro student of Greek literature, W. H. Croftman, to desert his chosen field and write a book entitled The Progress of a Race. Think of the frustration of the distinguished Negro physician C. V. Roman, who abandoned his medical research and practice, temporarily at least, to write The Negro in American Civilization. What must have been the feeling of the Negro student of English literature Benjamin Brawley, who foresook his field to write The Negro Genius and other works that underscored the intellectual powers of the Negro? How much poorer is the
field of the biological sciences because an "extremely able and well-trained Negro scientist, Julian Lewis, felt compelled to spend years of his productive life writing a book entitled The Biology of the Negro?"

These observations concerned scholars from the first half of the twentieth century. Given the fact that Franklin published his essay on the crisis of some of the greatest civil rights changes in the nation's history and at a time when blacks were never close to full citizenship rights and a generalizable social acceptance into the mainstream, one might expect that Franklin's model of black intellectual struggle no longer applied. Sadly, this conclusion would be wrong.

In a fundamental sense no much had changed as far as the professional possibilities for black scholars. Of the relatively few blacks who were teaching at universities in the mid-1960s, the great majority had to live their careers in a highly prescribed fashion. Upon entering the university's front door, they were greeted with an expectation of expertise that was both intense and narrowly conceived. Black scholars were to know "black things" best and little else beyond that.

It is here where most conversations regarding black involvement in the academy start and end. This much is understandable, given the long history of academic segregation. Indeed, read collectively, the literature on black intellectuals is reducible to what I have termed elsewhere "the crisis context." Owing in large measure to social realities, political expectations, personal sensibilities, of duty, and the effects of plain and simple racism, the great majority of the literature on the black scholar is written from the perspective of crisis. Black scholars have been in "crisis," have faced unique "sileniums," and have "failed."

Speaking in general terms, crises are problems that have escalated to the point where they are given attention in the best and worst ways. Without doubt, the most tradition-bound individuals and institutions in the academy viewed the post-World War II democratization of higher education as a crisis. Would standards persist? Would the campus community as "community" suffer with the push to diversify (first age and income, later gender and race)?

But crises, when taken seriously, do get addressed as people try to ameliorate their root causes. Radical or even modest change, however, has a way of precipitating unintended consequences. In some ways, this may be what is so shocking about the "crisis" of black intellectuals and their inclusion in the academy—the crisis has remained in place even though so many of the variables informing the positions of blacks in society at large and in the university more specifically have changed. Administrators, philanthropic foundations,

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faculty, and students have tinkered and made more substantial changes, but the black presence in the academy remains highly politicized. Furthermore, the debate about what is worth knowing, particularly as it relates to fields of knowledge in which there are greater numbers of minority scholars, still rages on. For example, it is exciting that increasing numbers of black scholars are not limited by external forces to write on black topics. What is not surprising is the extent to which these same scholars are often ignored (at best) or challenged (at worst) for having the audacity to speak on topics so "foreign" to their supposed native knowledge base.

This chapter analyzes blacks' role and participation in the humanities since World War II by looking at the black presence in the academy on three levels: the individual, the institutional, and the ideological. While the scope of the chapter runs from 1945 to the mid-1970s, the particular attention is paid to the mid-1960s through the mid-1970s. This decade holds greater witness to individual, institutional, and ideological change regarding the status, place, and role of blacks in the academy than any other moment in the history of higher education. What stands, however, is the fact that despite these changes the presumptions about blacks' place and role in the humanities is fundamentally the same.

The history of black scholars in the academy must start on the campuses of black colleges. These schools, almost all quite small and frequently in financial difficulty, were the proving grounds for future generations of black leaders. This such is unsurprising but there are some interesting aspects to these institutions' structural histories and their place in American society that merit a closer look and best significantly on the efforts to integrate faculties at traditionally white colleges and universities after 1945. The most important things to understand about the black colleges are how few of them there were, how few of these schools bore any resemblance to "mainstream" four-year institutions of higher learning, and how few of them were staffed by an appreciable number of faculty with advanced degrees.

In the early 1940s there were only seventy-four-year colleges for blacks in the country. The campuses were typically small—a median enrollment of 330 resident undergraduates—and only half the schools were accredited. In 1940, part of this failing was due to black college's southern locations and the long-standing refusal of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools to consider accrediting them. But the fact remains that of the thirty-five fully accredited black colleges, only a handful were oriented toward teaching and research—a result of racist state legislatures that provided only the bare minimum of education for blacks, philanthropic foundations that envisioned specialized centers of black research in a few southern
location, and a federal government under Franklin Roosevelt that wanted a "national Negro university" in Washington, D.C., and that poured money into Howard University. Advanced degree programs at black schools were only beginning in the late 1920s, and those schools in this vanguard were the most highly desired by the growing black professoriate. The relevance statistics in this regard are stunning by 1936 more than 40 percent of all black holders of the doctorate were found at Atlanta, Fisk, and Howard University— and Howard was home to the great majority of those individuals.22 The combination of these factors had personal and professional implications for the scholars who did not enjoy the relative luxury of teaching at the triunvirate or who merely felt overwhelmed in a profession that was still virtually all white.23 The vast majority of those individuals resided at black colleges and universities for the duration of their careers. A handful of black scholars—the Historians Michael Winston counts only three employed at white universities in the mid-1930s—existed outside this box until the 1940s.24 With the gradual desegregation of white campuses and faculties after World War II, black professors began to move even the very best black schools.

The numbers of black faculty who departed for white schools were so small at first that it is difficult to envision these individuals—no matter how great their scholarship—as a relevant racial token. Alvin Harris's experiences when he moved to the University of Chicago are a case in point. Harris left Howard in 1946. Although he was already the leading black economist of his generation and was one of the few blacks who met with publishing success in white-controlled scholarly journals, Harris never received an appointment in Chicago's Department of Economics, nor did he teach graduate students. Instead, he was relegated to the Philosophy Department and lived out the rest of his career in relative obscurity. For those professors who remained at black schools, the shifting segregation in the professional and personal worlds cannot be ignored. Michael Winston points out the depth and extent of this racial logic: "It is easy to forget now just how segregation operated as a powerful deterrent to sustained research or writing. In the South, Negro scholars were almost universally barred from libraries, from white university laboratories, and from meetings of local chapters of learned societies. Farther north, in Washington, D.C., even the meetings and dinners of a national organization like Phi Beta Kappa were closed to Negro members, most of whom were Howard University faculty who had been inducted at New England colleges and universities."25

In light of Winston's disquieting general observations it is helpful to turn toward the specific experiences of one individual—in this case, J. Saunders Redding—to contextualize the effect of systemic racism upon the personal and professional lives of black academics. Redding is an effective barometer of the glacial pace of and obstacles attendant on the integration of our nation's university faculties. He was among the first blacks to try to teach at a historically white university and, fortunately, left a gift of autobiographical musings for historians to ponder.

It is important to note that Redding was not the first black scholar to break the race barrier on college faculties. (One of the cruel ironies of this situation is that because black colleges did not offer Ph.D.'s at this time, black graduate students went to schools such as Harvard, Columbia, and Chicago for their doctorates but could not teach in like institutions upon completion of the degree.) In 1942 the Julius Rosenwald Fund, one of a handful of philanthropic foundations that dedicated millions of dollars to all levels of black education in the first half of the twentieth century, discovered that there were only two blacks on the faculties at the nation's white colleges and universities, neither of whom held teaching positions. Determined to change that situation, the Rosenwald Fund arranged for the prominent sociologist Allison P. Davis to be appointed at the University of Chicago. The school was willing to hire Davis because the Rosenwald Fund subsidized his salary. In short, the university paid nothing or close to it and received a leading scholar on the sociology of race and community formation in return. This arrangement spoke volumes about the resistance white schools pressed to the integration of their faculties, particularly when it came to the use of scarce resources in service of what many considered a political agenda. Perhaps as a result of the Rosenwald Fund's arrangement with Chicago or perhaps as manifestation of the pace of a changing tide, within three years fifteen blacks could be found at the roost of white colleges. Redding was part of that tide.

In some ways it is unsurprising that Samuel E. Sanders Redding would live his life at the leading edge of racial change. Born in Wilmington, Delaware, to parents who prized education, civic engagement, and activism (his father was the long-standing secretary of Wilmington's local branch of the NAACP), his was the first African American to pass the bar in Delaware. Redding started college at Lincoln University but completed his studies at Brown. He performed with distinction there and earned Phi Beta Kappa honors. Even though he graduated from college in 1929, the honor society of Brown (or both) did not see fit to admit him until 1942. After he had already become a nationally prominent writer and literary critic.

After teaching for a few years at Mercer College, Redding returned to Brown, where he completed a master's degree in English and American Literature in 1933. He secured positions at a variety of black southern schools over the course of the next three decades. Redding spent two of those decades at Virginia's Hampton Institute, where in his last nine years he served
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sought to describe blacks via his analysis of New Deal Farm Security Administration photographs that captured black folklife. "This [memoir] is personal. I would call it a 'document' except that the word has overtones of something official, vested and final. But I have been clothed with no authority to speak for others, and what I have to say can be final only for myself. I have to say this at the start, for I remember my anger at the effrontery of one who a few years ago undertook to speak for me and twelve million others. I concurred with practically nothing he said. This was not important in itself, but when one promises to speak for me he must reflect my mind so accurately that I find no source of disagreement with him. To do this, he must either be a lack-brain parrot or a god." 19

While Redding did not mention Wright by name and thereby softened the blow—after all, Wright did pen the introduction to Redding's No Day of Triumph, in which he heartily praised the book—Redding's opening words here are instructive. They speak to his frustration that whites as well as blacks too quickly reduced the diversity of black America into a single type or form. They also make plain the extent to which race and racial thinking overdetermined the life chances for all black Americans. Redding continued: "Though there are many lack-brains, historic and present circumstances prove that there are no gods dealing with the problem of race—or, as dangerous to the American ideal and exhausting to individual Americans as it has been for three hundred years, it would have been settled long ago. Else the gods are singularly perverse." 20

Raised in a family of civil rights activists, Redding articulated a sense of self that acknowledged racial differences but insisted upon the fundamental "Americaness" of black culture; that black and white were inseparable. This is an ideology that would become unpopular with the black militants of future decades, but in 1951 Redding's personal ideology, manifested in such a way that the individual was ascendant, was not unusual. This integrationist ethos or call to respect the individual in each person, however, was undermined at every turn by a system of seeing race and imbuing it with constant meaning. Throughout his memoir, Redding insists his "right to speak on his views of race does not extend beyond his self. Clearly wanting to avoid the trap that he suggested Wright fell into when he claimed to speak for all blacks, Redding also took this stance because he wanted to personalize the psychological trauma that blacks and whites incurred by racial thinking. He saw in his memoir a quest for "a purge, a catharsis, wholeness." 21 By claiming expertise in the personal, Redding then felt comfortable extending beyond himself, drawing connections from his private quest for a god of reason to larger phenomena that frustrated him and other like-minded seekers.

as James Weldon Johnson Professor of Creative Writing. In 1949, however, he broke this pattern of employment and served as a visiting professor at Brown. There are scarce details about the terms of his appointment or his personal experiences while there, but there is little doubt today how Brown assessed Redding's relationship to the school.

In a special edition celebrating its one hundredth year of publication, in 2000, Brown Alumni Magazine (BAM) presented a digest of what its editors and a survey of Brown alumni deemed the one hundred most important and influential people to graduate from the Providence school. Breaking the list down into categories (from biochemistry to graphic design to zoology), the editors of the magazine that Redding was one of four alumni who accomplished great things in the field of history. Ignoring the fact that Redding was not actually a historian, his BAM entry pointed immediately to his groundbreaking credentials: "He was the first black member of an Ivy League faculty, the first black to serve as a Brown fellow, and the first black to have his portrait hung in Sayles Hall." 22 What is not mentioned here is the brevity of his appointment to Brown: he taught there for only one term.

Of course, by their very nature, alumni magazines are celebratory glossies dedicated to sustaining open connections between a school and its graduates. But given the highly contested pace and nature of change regarding race relations and the present racial diversity on college campuses, it is worth considering BAM's commemoration also as a racial celebration of sorts. As it happens, one of the other four historians honored in this special issue is black: Spencer Crew, Brown class of 1971, in 2000 director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Post-civil rights celebrations of diversity are not unusual, but their contextualization, understanding the history of struggle behind the celebration, is always important. Redding's history is profoundly revealing, especially in light of the circumstances surrounding his eventual full-time move to a white campus in 1970.

Redding was a prolific writer whose fiction and nonfiction prose appeared in essay and book form. By the time he published his memoir, On Being Negro in America, in 1951, he had already produced four other major works: To Make a Poet Black (1939), No Day of Triumph (1942), Stronger and Alone (1950), and They Came to Chase: Americans from Africa (1950). It is his memoir, however, that best reflects how the combination of institutional racism and more personal acts of racial antagonism amounted to a daily, low-level psychological battle with which black scholars like Redding found they had little choice but to engage.

Redding opened his memoir with a wild swing at Richard Wright and his 1941 book, 12 Million Black Voices. Redding spoke with outrage that Wright
Redding saw his memoir as "the epilogue to whatever contribution I have made to the literature of race." Although John Hope Franklin did not mention Redding in his 1969 essay on the black scholar, it is clear that Redding experienced the same sense of personal loss and bitterness that Franklin identified: the frustration with the expectation that black scholars spoke for the race or to the race in order to be heard. Redding announced his desire to "get on" to other matters, including the "political issues imposed by race on the average educated or talented Negro" (if this sounds trite, it must) as "rapidly and become at last conscious. I am tired of giving up my creative initiative to these demands. I think I am not alone."

Redding continued this line of reasoning by criticizing the experiences of a famous singer who tunneled the "American" city of New York into every concert. Although she sang well, she was weary of the obligation of finding a place for them in every program, "so that, if they were theme music for an opera" but not "entirely identifying her". She, like Redding, felt "unproductive" in what he termed "ethnocentric costs." Drawing from his own experiences and that of the unnamed singer, Redding then made a declaration about his memoir's value:

"The specialization of the sense and talent and learning...that is expected of Negroes by other members of their race and by whites is tragic and vicious and divisive. I am tired of trying, in deference to this expectation, to feel my way into the particularities of response and reaction that are supposed to be exclusively 'Negro.' I am tired of the unnatural obligation of converting such talent and learning as I have into specialized instruments for the promotion of a false concept called 'race.' This extended essay, then, is probably my last public commitment to the so-called American race problem."

Although the memoir would not be Redding's final public comment on the race problem, his anger at the forces that inspired such sentiments throughout his book. One hears it when he agonizes that his heart is "sickened at the realization of the realization of the spirit of American life" in the 1950s.

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to find their way to teach on historically white campuses. This fact led Rayford Logan, a longtime Howard University professor of history, to express grave concern that "it is likely that most of our best scholars will, in the future, leave permanently or temporarily to teach at other [i.e., white] institutions and that they will be replaced by less notable and capable teachers and scholars."27

This new desire for black faculty followed an surge in the number of black undergraduates at white universities. In a Ford Foundation report on the development of black studies in the nation's colleges and universities, the historian Nathan Huggins charted the dramatic growth in college enrollment as a result of the G.I. Bill and the postwar baby boom.28 Black college matriculation approached 7 percent of total student enrollment by the mid-1970s, and was described as "a crisis of confidence." But Huggins made sure to add an important caveat to this received wisdom: black students were not the only source of pressure to change the appearance and traditions of black colleges. New visions of universities' ability to shape society and an increasing focus on career training prompted school administrators to rationalize departments' respective utility. Administrators now felt free to ask, for example, what was the pragmatic value that a department of philosophy brought to a campus community. "Mercy" contributing to the store of knowledge was being threatened by a heightened devotion to particular knowledge's market value or its potential for demonstrating social relevance. In this new environment, the social sciences and hard sciences along with the professional schools faced it relatively easy to rationalize their existence and "value" to a campus and its students. Humanities programs and departments, on the other hand, faced a steeper challenge.29

Following this line of reasoning, we can discern another motivating factor behind the universities' decisions to create "institutional" and pedagogical spaces that were relevant to the black experience in the United States.

That the humanities would lean, in part, on their ability to address social problems related to race as a basis to justify their value is ironic since, as a mode of inquiry, many humanities programs had been criticized as embodying Eurocentric culture, art, and thought. Whether it was true or not, black students criticized humanities courses for failing to speak to the circumstances of their lives and traditions. "Relevance"—real or imagined—was the catchword of the moment and the either/or proposition decreed that one was part of the problem if one was not working toward a solution. The solution, as many campuses were to hire one or two black faculty and have them teach one or two courses on topics like "black literature" and "black history." Typically, these courses were fully integrated into the standing curricular offerings. But this was only one solution. One would be remiss to ignore the other path—and the debates that ensued—of that schools followed to inte-
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of Yale's program and the politics behind its formation are significantly less turbulent than those at Cornell or San Francisco State.

A breadth of scholars and foundation representatives points to the establishment of the Afro-American Studies Program at Yale—referred to throughout the literature as "the Yale Case"—as the best example of how a process that was committed to maintaining a scholarly approach to black studies (instead of a "therapeutic approach") could succeed that era's complicated race politics. As was true at other schools, the movement to start a black studies program at Yale sprang from undergraduate desire. Instead of occupying administration buildings, however, representatives from the school's Black Student Alliance met with Yale President Kingman Brewster, in early 1968 and then with various administration and faculty representatives on a weekly basis over the course of the following three months. By the spring of that year, students had organized a two-day conference that revolved around the question of black studies, its value to college curriculum, and its anticipated role at Yale. The conference featured white and black speakers who represented the breadth of the political and methodological spectrum.

The debate among Yale and non-Yale faculty resulted in a publication, Black Studies in the University, and, a year later, the formation of the Ivy League's first black studies program. In these early days of black studies programs, Yale's was seen as the role model. Other university administrators admired it if not envied what transpired in New Haven because it was done without threat of violence or even serious public displays of disaffection. Established scholars like Nathan Huggins praised the Yale model for its inclusiveness, "the constructive attitude of the university's senior faculty and the deft leadership in its administration." But tangled up in this sense of good feeling were some of the same antagonistic or defensive race dynamics that one found in other campus communities.

David Brion Davis, then in the History Department at Cornell but soon to move to Yale, felt compelled to declare in his closing remarks (a summation of the conference proceedings) that black studies, if it was to succeed as a discipline, could not close the door to white scholars. The ability to interpret a racialized past could not logically be limited to a native (right one say "natural") insiders' ability to interpret blackness. If blackness could trump training, knowledge, and the freedom to explore complex and even controversial ideas, Davis warned, the university would fail in its role as a "custodian as well as an innovator." Paraphrasing the political theorist Martin Kilson, another conference panelist, Davis concluded, "Oppression conveys no special intellectual or moral virtues." Nathan Hare countered Davis's claims to cross-racial interpretive ability. Elsewhere, he recalled his performance at Yale, "where I had the occasion to ponder the blank and (in a good
many cases) open-mouthed stares of ignorance on faces in the predominantly white audience when I related how all white students given a test by a black colleague and me had fundamentally flunked, being unable to identify such commodities as hog maws, fried beans, and butter roll." 

Here's point was simple: who better to know and interpret the full complexity of black culture and the black experience than black people? Here's suggestions were not well received. Huggins, for one, merely dismissed Hare and his fellow presenter at the Yale conference, the cultural nationalist Maulana Ron Karenga, as "deeply anti-intellectual and hostile to the academy." 

Huggins or Davis could have added that Hare's and Karenga's nationalist assertions also did violence to the actual history of black studies in the first place. Since at least the late 1930s the anthropologist Melville Herskovits, a student of Franz Boas and a prominent supporter of cultural relativist, had called for a sustained investigation of the retention of African culturalisms among American blacks. Granted, Herskovits was not literally advocating the formation of black studies programs, but his work, particularly his 1941 book, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, became the intellectual bedrock for future black studies advocates. A child of Jewish immigrants, Herskovits was an Africanist by training but became deeply invested in advocating the "Afro-American tradition." A people without an acknowledged history were a people denied their own humanity, and *The Myth of the Negro Past* (the myth being that blacks had no past) set out to correct this conscious oversight. It is unclear if Hare and Karenga would have been dismissive of a white Jew like Herskovits, who dedicated his career to "the reconstruction of the solidity and authenticity of a distinguishable Afro-American culture," but Nathan Huggins dearly thought they should have known the history of their own field better. 

If one did not want to fault Hare and Karenga for failing to acknowledge appropriately Herskovits's influence on the emerging discipline, one would have absolutely remiss a few years later to ignore the prominent role that white scholars such as Herbert Gutman, Lawrence Levine, Gerda Lerner, and Eugene Genovese played in fostering a deepening awareness of blacks as active agents in the making of their own identity and history. By the mid-1970s an honest and less politically driven assessment of black studies scholarship would have had to confess that some of its most important practitioners were white. 

Acknowledging white scholars' growing interest in or even fascination with blackness or Herskovits's foundational role in black studies did not mean that black scholars were late to come to black studies or that they came to the field only in the wake of student protests or administrative or philanthropic fiat. If one took a more liberal approach to the institutional definitions of what constitutes black studies in an academic setting, one would likely share the opinion offered by the black studies scholars James Turner and C. Steven McGann. In their 1986 essay, "Black Studies as an Integral Tradition in African-American Intellectual History," Turner and McGann assert that black studies could trace its roots back to the young W. E. B. DuBois and Carter G. Woodson. DuBois created the Atlanta University Studies Series in 1913 and thus laid the foundation for black studies via the series' working papers on various aspects of the black experience. Woodson, the so-called Father of Negro History, created *Negro History Week*, established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, and founded the *Journal of Negro History* at almost the same time that DuBois's series appeared. Together, Woodson's actions demonstrated the humanistic contributions of black Americans to the larger society. For Turner and McGann, DuBois's and Woodson's actions constituted the intellectual structure upon which later black studies programs were built. 

Related to the diverse means by which they became institutionalized on college campuses in the late 1960s and into the early 1970s, black studies programs represented a range of political and theoretical approaches to the building discipline. A few programs were methodologically traditional as far as the disciplinary questions they entertained by linking new black studies programs to established humanistic fields such as English, history, and philosophy. Many more focused large aspects of their curricular agenda on constructing bridges between the campus and community. Still other programs were explicitly race-first in their consciousness, determined to reserve black studies for black people. These programs were disciplinarily traditional, community oriented, and militantly political, and their modes and styles reflected those of the individuals who were hired to run them. But no matter where they happened to find an institutional home, black studies programs and their teaching staff constantly lived on the edge of controversy. 

Figures like the ubiquitous Nathan Hare often seemed to do what they could either to seek out or to provoke controversy. More than once Hare declared that he thought black studies, if done right, represented a vanguardist movement that could revolutionize the university and society. This was education in service of a larger political goal. "To solve the problems of the black race," Hare announced, "African-American education must produce persons capable of solving the problems of a contiguity American society. To solve the problems of American society, African-Americans must first blackwash—remap—the existing educational system, and revolutionize America's youth—black, yellow, brown and white." 

This "blackwashing," in Hare's opinion, was the work of black studies departments and the black faculty who should staff them.
The theologian Vincent Harding, who attempted through his leadership of the Institute of the Black World (an Atlanta-based think tank established in 1969) to find ways to connect scholarship directly to the needs of the black community, we much more explicit in his depiction that black scholars had a duty to "speak the truth" to black America. While Harding allowed for the white intellectual examination of black life, he spoke about a moral calling that blacks had to heed. The calling of the black scholar is to move insistently beyond - indeed, whatever its cause. Let others study us if they will (although the studies slacken off when they become less profitable), but self-definition is an intrinsic part of self-determination. It is we who must understand our families, our churches, our works of art, the schools-our children attend, the campus, political, and spiritual structures which uphold - and oppress - the communities in which we live. It is we who must understand how all these structures and institutions are related to our oppression and our struggle for liberation. It is we who must painfully diagnose our own deepest illnesses and identify with great joy our most soaring aspirations toward new humanism. Together, together, here and Harding's comments created the intellectual space and rationalization for black studies programs that were oriented toward community service or police or military, if not separation.

White- and black scholars, as would be expected, reacted with great passion to these kinds of sentiments. We have already read David Davies's polemic insistence that the pursuit of knowledge be color-blind even when society, subject matter, and the politics informing the knowledge were not. Other white scholars were hardly so polite. Eugene Genovese, for example, raged on about the implications, scholarly, personal, and otherwise, of race-exclusive enclaves within academia:

Responsible black scholars have been working hard for an end to racial and to the scattering of the small number of black professors across the country. Among other obstacles, they face the effort of ostensibly nationalistic black students who seek to justify their decision to attend predominantly white institutions, with its of high prestige, by fighting for a larger black-majority staff. The overtones of these demands are the obstreperous nonsense that black studies can and should be taught by people without intellectual credentials since these credentials are "white" anyway.

[For] good universities have ever refused to waive faculties in any field when genuine intellectual credentials of a non-academic order could be provided. What has to be resisted firmly is the illusion that claims, in one instance, that experience as a SNCC field organizer should be considered, more important than a Ph.D. in the hiring of a professor of Afro-American history. This assertion represents a general contempt for all learning and a

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particular contempt for black studies in a field of study requiring disciplined, serious intellectual effort - an attitude that reflects the influence of white racism, even when brought forth by a black man. Using a less strident tone, but one still bristling with rage about racial politics run amok on the college campus, the social psychologist Kenneth Clark expressed his dismay over the decision of Antioch College administrators to cave into black student demands for a new black studies program. Clark's anger did not spring from the idea of such a program but from the mode of articulation in Antioch's case. There, campus officials politically and financially supported the establishment of the Afro-American Institute and an undergraduate house that were racially exclusive. For someone who had staked his career on integration, Clark felt his principles violated by Antioch's decision. Clark responded to his violation by resigning from Antioch and issuing a public statement about the proper role of race on college campuses: "The white liberal for his part who conceives black separatism to hastily and hesitantly must look to his own reasons, not the least of them perhaps an exquisite relief. To encourage or endorse a separate black studies program has academically equivalent to the college curriculum generally, indeed to endorse any such program, is to reinforce the Negro's inability to compare with whites for the real power of the real world. It is no excuse to justify the deed by citing the demoralizing. Invoking the same language of cautioning that motivated David Davies's opinion, Clark continued, "Colleges and universities must be the custodians of the rational and intellectual approach to the study and eventual solution of complex human problems. To succumb to any form of dogmatism, to institutionalize the irrational is to fail in fulfilling this important obligation." This is only a sampling of the angry rhetoric, denunciations, and celebrations that reverberated throughout that era. Critical questions, almost always politically motivated, there in social, educational, and racial knowledge affected the curricular, pedagogical, and institutional landscape on the nation's campuses. Was black studies a legitimate field of inquiry? Was it a discipline? Who should teach black studies courses? Do black studies programs drain black faculty away from black colleges and universities? Do these programs relieve other departments from having to teach topics related to race? Are black studies programs not more of a pressure valve for student discontent? Are black studies programs conceived as a strategic means to diversify a faculty? Who should major in black studies? And so forth.

These were the questions that dogged many black scholars who may have been reluctant to engage the topic or who even had nothing to do professionally with black studies. These were also the questions that other black
scholars addressed eagerly, seeing in the reception and consumption of their own answers recognition of their expertise in at least one topic. The sense among black faculty that they were going to be "allowed" to be expert in only one particular field of inquiry and the fact that there was a major institutional push, for all manner of sessions discussed in this chapter, toward the development of black studies programs combined to create a great opportunity for a series of new scholarly initiatives. These initiatives often came in the form of academic journals.

The most important new journal in this regard was the Black Scholar (first edition in 1969), edited by Nathan Hare. Other scholarly efforts include the Journal of Black Studies (1969), Afro-American Studies (1969), and the Journal of Afro-American Issues (1969). Like the individuals who ran them and the institutions that supported them (G, indeed, institutional support was forthcoming), these journals underscored the breadth of opinion on the theory and substance of black studies. Preliminary statements and mission statements in the first issues reflect their sponsors' political orientations.

The Journal of Afro-American Issues was the least doctrinaire. Privately published by Educational Community Consultants Associates, an organization run by the education consultant and author Roosevelt Johnson, merely said that it was "devoted to the scientific determination and explication of issues affecting blacks in America." The journal published essays by academics who were mostly concerned with issues regarding professional development and the social sciences. Essays with titles such as "Urban Teachers as Change Agents" and "Teaching Black Studies in Social Change" (an essay on teaching methods other than didacticist ones) were commonplace.

The Journal of Black Studies (JBS) and Afro-American Studies (JAS) were more representative of mainstream humanistic scholarship. Instead of essays that focused on professional development, the JBS and JAS brought together an interdisciplinary collection of essays written by political scientists, historians, literary critics, sociologists, and psychologists. Sponsored by the City University of New York and the University of California at Los Angeles, respectively, these two journals expanded upon the pedagogical thrust and political position of black studies within the academy. At least once an issue readers would encounter such pieces as "In Defense of Black Studies," "Teaching Afro-American History," "Black Studies: Interpretation, Methodology, and the Relationship to Social Movements," "Black Students and the Impossible Revolution," and "The Significance and Challenge of Afro-American Studies."

Both journals were clearly conceived as reflexive and critical supplements to the development of black studies programs throughout the country. Indeed, from the very start, Afro-American Studies made its purpose plain: "Interdisciplinary in approach and outlooks, Afro-American Studies serves educators and professionals in colleges and other educational institutions initiating and developing curricula, programs, and methods."

Arnold Smith, the director of UCLAS's Afro-American Studies Center and the editor of the Journal of Black Studies, was more expansive in enumerating his journal's proposed role: even though it was not substantively different. Smith opened the first issue with a signed editor's message. He observed: "Seldom in the history of academic disciplines has an area of study been born with so much pain and anguish as Black Studies. Also called Afro-American Studies, discussions initiated, for the most part by university students, produced significant revaluations of curricula, research, and pedagogy."

Later, in the same message, he became more specific about his journal's mission: "It is hoped that the founding of the Journal of Black Studies will mark an important juncture in the synthesis of the field. Capitalizing on the enormous body of literature, with its concurrent scholars, who are finding new streams and enlarging upon existing ones, the Journal seeks to encourage dynamic, innovative, and creative research. It plans to nurture the expanding community of scholars whose immediate interests are in aiding to the factual, analytical, and evaluative bases upon which Black Studies must be established." Thus, from the greater detail in JBS's mission statement, the only thing that substantively distinguishes the two journals' opening statements is that Smith's JBS statement evinced a style that was suggestive of what one associated with the political radical and civil rights. Given the fairly traditional nature of the articles in the Journal (Baker beyond their focus on black studies, that is, it would seem that the Journal of Black Studies was trying to do two things at once: present itself in the most academically accepted ways and deploy a language that pointed to what Houston Baker calls the "moral panic" associated with the development of black studies programs."

It is this moral panic, this sense of heightened stakes for all concerned, this sense of realizing that one identified a threat too late to stop its advance, that one witnessed in the debates and protests in places like San Francisco State and Cornell and that one heard in the massive declarations of someone such as Eugene Genovese. But no scholar was more effective than Nathan Hare at addressing and fomenting a moral panic regarding this issue. As we have seen, his work was published widely and he appeared, just about everywhere, debate on black studies was being enjoined. It is safe to say that much of his desirability as a speaker or contributor to journals grew out of his willingness, if not tendency, to take controversial stances and out of his role as publisher of the Black Scholar, the premiere journal of criticism related to the field of black studies.
Inside the front cover of the first issue, an unsigned statement (by either Carole or the Black Scholar's editor, Robert Church) announced the Black Scholar's agenda and made plain that black artists and writers had a moral obligation to embrace this agenda as well. Among other things, black academicians had to "shape a culture, a politics, an economics, a sense of our past and future history." The Black Scholar would serve as "the best space where black intellectuals could present their analyses that would attend to these needs." The authors' words were grave and absolute: "We cannot afford division any longer if our struggle is to bear fruit, whether those divisions be between class, caste or culture. Nothing black is alien to us."9

Opening up the pages of the Black Scholar revealed an unmistakable political agenda that was, from the first, both universalist and nationalist. Each number of the journal carried a special theme around which that issue's essays were organized. Looking over the themes for the Black Scholar's first year brings the reader immediate clarity about the journal's political orientation. The seven numbers to appear in the Black Scholar's first year were titled "The Culture of Revolution," "Black Politics," "In Memoriam: W. E. B. DuBois," "Black Psychopathology," "Black Cities Colonies or City States," "Black Revolution," and "Black Culture." The essays inside each issue were substantively similar in tone.

Taken together, the Black Scholar, Afro-American Studies, the Journal of Black Studies, and the Journal of Afro-American Issues accurately reflect the broad scope of possibilities that defined black studies and black intellectual production despite attempts to ignore or limit the field's or individuals' development. What does it mean that the most important of these journals and the longest lasting as well, the Black Scholar, was committed to a line of reasoning that extended the race bar further and possibly exacerbated tensions between black and white groups? What did it matter that black intellectuals were still being called to serve a community or risk being seen as irrelevant? Were the politics of racial knowledge unavoidable? Were the dynamics of inclusion—the means by which blacks became incorporated into the system—too complicated or simply too forgiving to think that black scholars ever could be fully integrated in meaningful ways?

Answers to these questions, of course, depend on whose one asked. Certainly, the Black Scholar and its brethren were not the only sources for these questions or answers. Other scholarship from the 1960s demonstrates that there was no shortage of individuals offering their own opinions in the debate.10 Two of the most important texts in this regard are Joyce Ladner's anthology The Death of White Sociology: Essays on Race and Culture and Gloria Hall, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith's collection All the Women Are White, All the Black Women Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies.11

Ladner's and Bell Scott, and Smith's anthologies are critical to this conversation because they remind us of the political consciousness that drove much of black studies scholarship and call our attention to the relationship of this scholarship to disciplinary boundaries and geodeded ideologies. Ladner's Death of White Sociology set out to address the ideological shifts that accompanied the changing face of American universities in the 1960s, the increasingly effective and potent alliances that would attend to these needs, and the recognition that the long-standing exclusion of the black experience in scholarly discourse was an injustice. Ladner was not forecasting the end of mainstream sociology, but she wanted to call attention to the fact that the sociological discourse that typically branded blacks as deviants would no longer go unchallenged. The Death of White Sociology is a panegyric to a transformative social science, spurred on by the rising popularity of black deviant narratives written by the 1960s, but it also needed to be seen as a generative text.12 In her own contribution to the anthology, "Tomorrow's Terrorors: The Black Woman," Ladner criticized mainstream scholarship for looking at blacks as problems and called for new social science approaches that were significantly more introspective and sensitive to structures of inequality instead of outer behaviors patterns. Ladner argued that there had to be a "strong concern for defining the problem. Instead of future studies being conducted on problems of the black community as represented by the deviant perspective, there must be a redefinition of the problem as being that of institutional racism." Ladner concluded, "Studies which have as their focal point the alleged deviant attitudes and behavior of Blacks are grounded within the racist assumptions and principles that only renders Blacks open to further exploitation."

Ladner did not invoke black studies scholarship by name, but her critique of the state of current disciplinary practice was absolutely consistent with the collective sense among academics advocating for the establishment of black studies scholarship norms. This was a politics of racial knowledge unavoidable. Were the dynamics of endorse the movement for the study of black culture and the complexity of their experience. This was also a scholar-

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Although The Death of White Sociology was clearly a reaction to the populism of social science studies that viewed the matriciabld black family structure as pathological, Ladner's work also appeared at a moment of a rising independent black feminist consciousness. In the world of academics, Hall, Scott, and Smith captured much of this 1970s consciousness in their anthology.
Like The Death of White Sociology, All the Women Are White is a work that is simultaneously reactive and generative. Halli, Scott, and Smith felt the need to act on behalf of generations of ignored black women scholars and black women's scholarship. Aside from the fact that the book made an important contribution simply from the standpoint of including new voices in scholarly discourse, it sheds valuable light on black studies by the way in which it offers an incisive critique of the formative impulses behind the discipline, Halli, Scott, and Smith enthusiastically embraced the new attention that blacks were receiving in lecture halls, seminars, journals, and books, but theirs was a qualified-enthusiasm. Revisiting the lead editorial in the first issue of the Black Scholar (1968) reveals the kind of mis-set that had to infuriate black women intellectuals and give feminists pause. In that issue the editors called for a collective black struggle for independence and recognition and highlighted the black intellectual's role in that fight. "A black scholar recognizes this fact," the editors concluded. "He is a man of both thought and action, a whole man who thinks for his people and acts with them, a man who honors the whole community of black experience." Black women scholars also wanted to honor the whole community of black experience but understood with unshakable clarity that racial exclusion meant gendered erasure."

Quite unconsciously, black men's blindness combined with a white feminist racism that ignored or even disparaged black women's feminist consciousness in the early 1970s. As a result, black women's studies scholars were left with few opportunities, in which to present work or collaborate with like-minded academicians. Halli and her coeditors urged their readers to combine the best aspects of feminist and black studies scholarships in order to fashion a black feminist movement that would, in turn, lend its political strength to the development of black women's studies courses, programs, and research and to the funding they require." This call for a structural shift in the work of the university echoed perfectly the call made just over a decade earlier by black studies advocates like Nathan Hare and receive undergraduates. It also came at a moment of astonishing growth in the number of attention being paid to black women's place in society and in academia. In the introduction to their anthology Halli, Scott, and Smith hail the 1970s renaissance in black women's art and literature, pointing to the novel and poet Alice Walker as one of the critical figures of that moment. While acknowledging Walker's important literary contributions, Halli, Scott, and Smith are more focused in calling attention to the pedagogical and disciplinary change that Walker initiated in 1973, when she taught the first course on black women writers at Wellesley College. More precisely, this was the first course on the topic taught at any college. That barrier was broken so late in the century is shocking, perhaps, but that fact falt in comparison to the intensity of the literary renaissance that came to full bloom shortly thereafter. Black women's literature—-at least, some black women's literature—went from a virtual and unexpected country in college classrooms to a well-mapped landscape of required reading. Again, Walker gets credit for much of this transformation because of her efforts to bring Zora Neale Hurston's work to the public's attention. Through Walker's literary anthology, Hurston, who died in poverty and essentially forgotten, was placed at the center of black women's and black studies literary discussions, near the center of feminist literary discussions, and in the larger circle of most introductory American literary discussions. Indeed, Hurston's tremendous transatlantic popularity in the 1950s, an era of so-called nihilistic crisis in black America, caused the literary scholar Hazel Carby to wonder if Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God was the most frequently taught black novel because it serves as a mode of affirming that, really, the black folk are happy and healthy."

We can hear in Carby's question a sense of the dangers that lock within every success. Black women's literature, for example, may have become tremendously popular and, in its way, transformative with its use of English and black studies courses, but its very popularity could have signaled to some that it was doomed to become a passing fancy, an interesting thought experiment that was largely a reflection of the heightened sense of possibility that accompanied a rising black feminist consciousness. This is certainly something that Carby did not want to see happen, but the fact remains that an increased scrutiny surrounds those discipline fields or intellectual projects that emerge out of political and social activism. "Relevance" in the most traditional rooms of the ivory tower might well be discussed as "faddism." There is no debating the fact that since the 1970s black scholars across the disciplines have enjoyed, in principle, much greater potential for professional freedom. Black scholars are free to study what they desire, and there are increasing numbers, though still small, who work in fields closely associated with "blackness." Black students, without controversy, now attend graduate school to which they gain admission and, again in principle, can look forward to the possibility of teaching anywhere in the country upon graduation. In so many structural ways, it seems that there is no end to the potential for black scholars to live a full and rich intellectual life, free from, or so many of the burdens of past ages. But "potential" always operates in the abstract. Today, the great majority of black scholars still teach at historically black colleges and universities—schools that remain seriously underfunded, often
operating μ second-class citizens in the world of higher education. Black fac-
ulty representation at the nation’s leading universities is pitifully low and,
despite the literal freedom to study what one wants, the expectation that black
scholars exclusively specialize in black topics remains alive and well.
Black studies programs have a permanent presence on college campuses
but still serve as political lighting rods in an age in which prominent comb-
batants in the "culture wars" cite struggle in their area studies and cultural relativism as
antithetical to the mission of the university. (And when black studies pro-
grams are not explicitly named in a struggle over the intellectual integrity
of the university, black people often take their place as targets. Speaking to
this point directly is the fact that at the turn of the twenty-first century legal
challenges to affirmative action in college admissions—and, for many,
these challenges are implicitly about the "right" of minority students even to attend
certain colleges—have become an annual ritual.) Even among their most ar-
dent supporters, black studies programs and scholarship remain in struggle.

In February 2003 a conference on black studies was held at the Schomburg
Center for Research in Black Culture. The purpose of the conference was to
assess the state of black studies roughly thirty years after the field's establish-
ment and in light of the 2000 federal census report that showed Latinos had passed
black Americans as the nation's largest minority group. Some participants voiced
concern that the country's changing demographics suggested a looming crisis
for black studies. Others were less worried, citing the centrality of slavery to the
country's history and the tortuous history of racialized struggles over citizen-
ship since emancipation. Before the conference began, however, Howard Dod-
son ignited a controversy with his comments concerning the latest generation
of black studies scholars. Dodson, the director of the Schomburg and one of the
key figures in the history of the creation and institutionalization of black studies
programs he was, for example, the executive director of the Institute of the
Black World for much of the 1970s, had not been unhappy with the direction
of the new black studies scholarship. He could not understand, for example, the
"social utility" of scholarship that studied black homosexuality and felt that a
"commitment and clear sense of direction seems to be missing" from black stud-
es scholarship in general. For those black studies scholars who work in lesbian,
gay, bisexual, and transgender studies and who are convinced that they are work-
ing at the cutting edge of black studies scholarship, this comment was a slap in the
face. It also amounted to a kind of intellectual policing that black studies scholars
could anticipate from certain quarters in academia but were less prepared to ac-
cept from within the black studies community.22

Black scholars and black studies programs, once so invisible, now exist in
a contradictory state: they operate under the lens of a microscope and are si-
multaneously hypervisible. We can see from the example with Howard Dod-
son that the field and its practitioners can still be embroiled in political and
intellectual controversy for even trying to expand the interpretive boundaries of
black studies focus. In this way, black scholars and black studies still seem to
enjoy only minimal operating room. But as much as they may feel over-
 scrutinized, black scholars and black studies programs also enjoy a kind of
exaggerated prominence.23 Part of this hypervisibility is due to our post–civil
rights urge to reward black excellence wherever we find it; much of this hy-
previsibility is due to the ways in which university administrators still look to
black studies programs and their very diverse but typically majority black fac-
ulties to stand for something more than mere scholarship. That black scholars
are heard best when speaking to blackness has not changed since John Hope
Franklin's angry observations in 1969. There is precious little to indicate that
this fast will be any different come tomorrow.

Notes
1. John Hope Franklin, "The Dilemma of the American Negro Scholar," in Race and
History, Selected Essays, 1937-1966, ed. John Hope Franklin (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Uni-
versity Press, 1961), 199. 2. Ibid.
3. Jonathan Scott Holloway, "The Black Intellectual and the 'Crisis Canon' in the Twenti-
4. The following list of essays and books to discuss black intellectuals throughout the
twentieth century is illuminating in this regard. James Weldon Johnson, "The Dilemma of the Negro
Author," American Mercury 6 (December 1928): 477-189; Sterling Brown, "The
American Race Problem as Reflected in American Literature," Journal of Negro History 2 (July
History 21 (1936): 17-28; John Hope Franklin, "The Dilemma of the Negro Scholar," in Seven
Morning: Neo Writing by American Negroes, 1920-1962, ed. Herbert Hill (New York: Knopf,
1965); E. Franklin Frazier, "The Pull of the Negro Intellectual," The Negro Intellectual in
204-310; Vincent Harding, "The Vocation of the Black Scholar and the Struggles of the Black
Community," in Education and Black Struggle: Notes from the Colonial World (Cambridge: Har-
Cultural Critique 1 (Fall 1981): 153-167; Harold Cruse, The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: A
93-94.
6. In 1990, to cite one of the more recent and public examples, the philosopher and critic
Cornel West found himself at the center of a controversy when a New York University conference
in honor of Sidney Hook's one hundredth birthday almost disintegrated because of West's announced
participation. (One joined the conference late as a replacement for his fellow philosopher Richard
Rorty.) Upon learning of this change, four professors, including Kemal, Gershove Himmelfarb, Hil-
ton Kramer, and John Patrick Dagnen, withdrew. Kemal, Himmelfarb, and Kramer refused to par-
ticipate in the conference, claiming that West "knew nothing about Hook" and that West wasn't
The humanities academy in the 1940s was an overwhelmingly masculine enterprise, more so, indeed, than it had been a generation before, because of the success of "professionalization": women were moved out of jobs in English, history, and philosophy, even at many women's colleges. Mary Calkins, for example, the philosopher and psychologist who trained with William James in the 1890s and spent her career at Wellesley College, was elected president of the American Philosophical Association in 1918, but she, along with women in other fields, enjoyed declining influence in later years, as men who were less "amateur" shoved women aside. Women were not able to reverse this trend until the late 1950s, when government funding and an expanding economy finally helped them begin to increase their share of Ph.D.s and faculty positions. Women did more than increase their numbers. Inspired by the civil rights and feminist movements, in which they became central actors in the 1970s, they founded journals, created new academic programs, and questioned traditional approaches to scholarship in every discipline, from English to philosophy. They challenged traditional canons, attacked accepted disciplinary distinctions, called for greater diversity, and pioneered new methods. Above all, in an intellectual community that celebrated Olympian detachment, they championed personal engagement. In the beginning the work they chose to do contributed further to their marginalization, focusing as it often did on women, but by the end of the century women across the humanities had come to define their projects in more ambitious terms, not simply as a reclamation of lost lives and texts, but also as a reconceptualizing of the world as a place in which gender structured power relations and even perspective.

The Fall and Rise of Women in the Humanities

Women first entered academe in significant numbers in the late nineteenth century, and they steadily increased their share of all faculty positions into the 1930s. But a long-term trend toward professionalization—marked by the