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**THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEvised:
BLACK STUDIES AND THE TRANSFORMATION
OF AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION 1967-1972**

By

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines the emergence of the Black Studies movement in the late 1960s and explores the impact that movement had on American higher education. It seeks to place the Black Studies movement in the context of the long history of higher education in the United States and explore how the movement was influenced by, and in turn influenced, the patterns of institutional change. It argues that the depth and significance of the movement's impact was obscured by the intensity and political nature of the turmoil that surrounded the creation of Black Studies programs. It also argues that while the turmoil of protest and confrontation and the clamoring rhetoric of political revolution captured the attention of the news media and the American public, the Black Studies movement actually led a less obvious, "untelevised" revolution in awareness that changed the patterns of intellectual activity in academia.

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Dedicated
to my parents,

Vernon H. and Violet E. Jones,

who introduced me to
and taught me to love
the path of learning,

and to

Dr. Charles D. Moody,

whose patience and generosity of spirit
helped me to see the value
of exploring this part of that path.

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Introduction

The Untelevised Revolution of Black Studies

In Zen Buddhism, there is a proverb that goes something like this: Before I studied Zen, a tree was just a tree and a mountain was just a mountain. After I began to study Zen, however, a tree was no longer just a tree and a mountain was no longer just a mountain. But then I became enlightened, and I saw that a tree was just a tree and a mountain was just a mountain.

Many people are puzzled or even repelled by Zen because of proverbs like that, sayings that appear, on the surface, to be self-contradictory or just plain goofy. But that proverb points to a fundamental truth that underlies all of the intellectual activity of the academy: awareness matters. Despite the identical words, the tree and mountain seen at the end of the proverb represent something very different from the tree and mountain seen at the proverb's beginning. But what has changed is not the tree and the mountain. It is the observer who is different, who is now fully aware, who now views the tree and mountain in their complete and proper context, giving them neither too little importance nor too much.

I have sought in this dissertation to perform a similar function: to point

toward a different awareness of the Black Studies movement that seeks a deeper understanding of the movement's context, not just in the social and political turmoil of 1960s America but in the long and complex history of intellectual endeavor and institutional structure in higher education. My aim has been to explore how the Black Studies movement shifted the institutional and social consciousness of academia. I began from the strong impression I developed as a professional journalist covering higher education that discussions of Black Studies tended to focus overwhelmingly on issues of institutional and social politics, almost to the exclusion of broader epistemological questions that Black Studies raised about what we know, how we know it, and how we organize and apply that knowledge.

In April 1989, while I was covering higher education for the Detroit Free Press, I sat down to interview a white student at Wayne State University's Student Center. I was preparing to write a profile of the campus for the newspaper's annual Michigan College Guide, and I wanted to hear the student's opinions about the quality of education at Wayne State, the university's strengths and weaknesses, and his assessment of the overall campus atmosphere. We were both keenly aware, however, that at that moment, a group of black students was occupying the building next door to press their demand that the university's Center for Black Studies be elevated to full departmental status. The sit-in had already lasted nearly a week and would continue for a total of eleven days before the university administration agreed to the students' core demands. Near the end of our interview, I asked the white

student what he thought of the black students' protest. He said he was not troubled by the protest and had no objection to the university granting the students' demands. But he confessed to a certain confusion. "Why do they need Black Studies?" he asked. "We don't have white studies."

I was struck, first of all, by the offhand sincerity in the student's tone. He wasn't objecting to Black Studies, he simply didn't understand the reasons behind Black Studies. But I also saw immediately that his question was more than just evidence of the need for Black Studies. As a journalist, I began to question the effectiveness of my own profession in explaining a complex and important issue to the public. After all, here was a reasonably intelligent student at a major university in a black-majority city where the news media regularly and extensively reported on racial issues and he was unaware that Black Studies programs existed precisely because most black scholars — and a growing number of white scholars — considered the traditional curriculum (especially in social studies and the humanities) to be "white studies." Perhaps he was merely young and ignorant of what had been going on in society and higher education for the previous twenty years. Perhaps he simply did not read the newspapers or pay attention to television and radio news broadcasts. But as I examined my own experience and recognized how my awareness had been heightened and my understanding deepened by the professional demands of reporting on racial issues in higher education, I began to ask questions about how journalists carried out the task of explaining Black Studies — and other difficult issues — to the American public. Eventually, those

questions brought me to this work.

It seemed to me that Black Studies, because of its roots in social protest, often was disregarded or even dismissed by most journalists (and many academicians) as a merely political — as opposed to scholarly — phenomenon. That attitude, of course, not only ignores how thoroughly intertwined politics is with all scholarly pursuits, but also gives only superficial attention to the intellectual challenges with which Black Studies confronted higher education. On one level, that is understandable because the political assault on higher education embodied in the Black Studies movement was so powerful and emotionally charged. Black Studies always was, and remains today, intensely political. But Black Studies has always been about something more. It has also been about awareness: awareness of how narrow and limiting our accepted assumptions about the world can be. The battle over Black Studies was not merely about pacifying angry black students with promises that more black students would be enrolled, more black faculty would be hired, and more African American authors would be added to the approved literary canon and course syllabi. All of those issues were involved, but at its core, the real battle was about what it meant for African Americans to be a full and accepted part of the scholarly enterprise.

That question generated enormous, intense and passionate debates over difficult and sensitive issues. What is Black Studies? Is Black Studies a legitimate academic discipline? Who is qualified to teach Black Studies? What role, if any, should Black Studies have in programs aimed at economic,

political, social and cultural development in the off-campus black community?

Does the creation of Black Studies programs advance the participation of African Americans in higher education or does it merely establish an academic ghetto that marginalizes African Americans, their history, their culture and their concerns, and assures that they will not be taken seriously by institutions of higher education?

To a great extent, however, such questions and the heated debates that surrounded them, obscured a deeper impact of the Black Studies movement. Black Studies opened up the university by confronting it with a powerful critique of what the university was and what its purpose should be. Black Studies challenged the university to reconsider crucial questions: What and *who* constitute knowledge? How is knowledge organized; does specialization produce knowledge that is increasingly abstract and sterile or, alternatively, is a broad, interdisciplinary approach to knowledge even possible in an age when our base of information is expanding exponentially? What is the purpose of seeking knowledge; do pragmatic concerns inevitably taint the purity of intellectual pursuits or do scholars have a moral responsibility to work for the improvement of the society in which they live?

I have sought to examine those challenges in the broader context of the university's long and complex history. The Black Studies movement was not an aberration caused by the political and social turmoil of the 1960s. Rather, it was part of a long continuum of institutional transformation wrought by internal and external tensions that had been dramatically reshaping American

universities for more than a century before Black Studies programs appeared on the scene. In 1930, for example, Abraham Flexner chided American colleges and universities for their steadily increasing enrollments and growing emphasis on such distastefully practical trappings as business, nursing and journalism schools. Nearly a century earlier, however, Ralph Waldo Emerson had urged scholars, just as passionately as Flexner, to embrace the idea that intellectual inquiry and practical action were not only *not* antithetical, but mutually beneficial. Black Studies continued that debate and transformation, opening up the university to new possibilities and providing an inspirational model for similar programs, such as Women's Studies, Chicano Studies, Native American Studies and others that quickly followed.

I believe that transformation has helped produce a subtle but pivotal revolution in consciousness whereby we no longer discuss race in America strictly in terms of black and white — which was common throughout the 1960s and well beyond. We are no longer, as a society, even comfortable with what David Hollinger has called the ethno-racial pentagon — the demographic categories of black, white, Hispanic, Native American and Asian that have been fairly standard since the 1970s. Hollinger argues that we are moving toward a post-ethnic America where racial and ethnic boundaries are increasingly blurred and affiliation with racial and ethnic identities is increasingly a matter of choice. If that is so — and Hollinger's argument is compelling — I believe that shift in cultural consciousness is, in significant part, the result of the challenges Black Studies presented to the university in the late 1960s.

The Black Studies movement forced the university — the intellectual engine of society — to open up the American mind to new perspectives on higher education and American society, and to new visions of what the future might hold for both. Black Studies forced white institutions and their white administrators to look beyond old models of integration and assimilation and to confront radical ideas about the true nature of existing institutions and the scope of change required to make those institutions serve the entire American society. Many of the advocates of Black Studies saw themselves engaged in a revolution of black empowerment, and many of their demands on educational institutions were cast in fiery, rebellious rhetoric that often castigated and called for the destruction of existing institutional structures. The revolutionary rhetoric was accompanied often by impassioned demonstrations — marches, rallies, sit-ins and the like — and occasionally by violence, either actual or threatened. In the most dramatic incident linked to Black Studies, black students at Cornell University took over a campus building in 1969 to emphasize their concerns on a number of issues. Such sit-ins had by that time become commonplace, but many Americans were stunned when news coverage of the students ending their sit-in showed pictures of the students leaving the building in a military-style formation with some of the young men brandishing rifles, shotguns and ammunition bandoliers.

Small wonder, then, that revolutionary rhetoric, confrontation and violence came — in the minds of many, and not all of them white — to define the Black Studies movement. This was the political challenge, dramatic and visceral, that

Black Studies presented, questioning in some cases whether university administrations would be able to continue governing their institutions. This was the challenge that captured media attention and dominated the public debate — the struggle over the political power to control the direction of the university. This was the televised revolution.

But another revolution — a quieter, subtler, more profound revolution — was occurring at the same time. It was a revolution that in some ways was so obvious that it was all but ignored. It was an untelevised revolution — a sea change in the collective consciousness of people in academia, and in American society generally, brought about, in part, by the very presence of Black Studies programs on predominantly white campuses. Black Studies did not accomplish this revolution alone, of course, but Black Studies programs became a focal point for a changing awareness of what a modern university needed to be and who it needed to include. Debates still rage over the relative scholarly merits of Black Studies programs, but the question of whether Black Studies would be a part of the university was decided in a very short time.

The first Black Studies department to emerge on a predominantly white college campus was established in 1968; by 1973, only five years later, at least 300 to 500 Black Studies programs had been established. Some were strong, some were weak; some thrived, some did not. But the very presence of Black Studies in academia reshaped the way scholars thought about their institutions and their scholarship. White social scientists, for example, were challenged to consider whether they had sought far too often to describe African American

culture and society in terms of pathology, of something African American society lacked, relative to European American society. Later debates over "political correctness" notwithstanding, Black Studies programs added new or previously ignored perspectives to the realm of intellectual debate in academia. The intellectual balance of the university had been shifted.

Recently I had occasion to discuss this point with a white professor who wondered aloud how much had really changed on American college campuses. He said he was teaching a course on American intellectual history, and that he was, that week, beginning a series of lectures on W.E.B. Du Bois and other African American intellectuals. He noted, however, that all thirty of the students in his class were white. I replied that while that might be evidence that there had been relatively little demographic change within the university, it was, at the same time, evidence that there had been a significant change in awareness. In 1965, I said, it is likely that some other white professor was teaching another intellectual history course filled with thirty other white students. It is quite unlikely, however, that that white professor was spending much, if any, time exposing those white students to the thoughts of Du Bois or any other African American writer. That is the untelevised revolution.

It is possible to make too much of this transformation. But it is possible, as well, to make too little of it, and I think that is what has happened over the last thirty-five years. That is why I took my title from Gil Scott-Heron's poem. Heron's poem is double-edged. On the one hand, it ridicules the tendency of mass media to focus on sensational images, thereby trivializing the significance of

social turmoil and the desire for change. On the other, it reminds the activist that social transformation is not accomplished merely by defiant rhetoric and flamboyant gestures designed to capture media attention. Real revolution — the revolution that seldom makes it onto television — is a long, often obscure and always demanding struggle to make people aware of the unspoken assumptions that have limited them, and to get them to open their minds.

I have sought in this work to shed light and attention on that untelevised revolution, in hope that we might, as scholars and as a society, become more fully aware of the path we have traveled over the last thirty-five years, of the path that we are walking now, and of the trees and mountains that lie before us.

Chapter 1

The Ivory Tower and the Winds of Change

The 1960s earned their reputation for social turmoil. Nearly every institution of American society was being stretched in new and disconcerting ways, starting with the family, which was still in the throes of the post-World War II baby boom. That population explosion, in turn, had swelled elementary and secondary schools to the bursting point throughout the 1950s, and by the mid-'60s, the first wave of that tidal surge was crashing onto the shores of higher education.

This new generation of college students was coming of age in an era of agitation, violence and confrontation. On an international level, the cold war, with its superpower tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, dominated world affairs and set a chilling tone for the decade with the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. By late 1964, the United States was deeply enmeshed in the Vietnam War and an energetic and vocal anti-war movement was growing quickly. Divisions over the war intensified as the decade — and the war — progressed. Eventually, the dissension shook the country's political structure, prompting President Lyndon Johnson to drop his bid for reelection,

sparking insurgent candidacies on the left (Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy) and the right (George Wallace), and reviving the political career of Richard Nixon.

Violence shook America on the domestic front as well. The assassination of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 was the nation's first truly galvanizing public event of the television era. Although the gruesome images of Kennedy's death, captured on film by Abraham Zapruder, were not shown publicly for some time, millions of Americans did witness the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald by Jack Ruby on live television. Millions more saw the seemingly endless replays of the killing that followed on network news broadcasts, and were transfixed through that long weekend by coverage of the nation's mourning and the slain president's funeral. That shared experience did several things. First, it transformed Kennedy, whose energy, charisma and idealistic rhetoric had already established him as a hero for many young people, into a martyr for the cause of youthful idealism. Second, it established the power of television to shape what Marshall McLuhan called the "global village," a world where information and images of dramatic events were transmitted almost everywhere almost instantly. The importance of this development grew in clarity and magnitude later in the decade as campus anti-war protesters were able to use television to keep track of distant events, not only fighting in the war zone 10,000 miles away, but also strikes and demonstrations by their fellow protesters at colleges and universities across the United States. And third, it began the process of immersing American culture in a sea of vivid images of

real violence. From the murder of Oswald to the urban riots in Watts, Newark, Detroit and other cities, to the assassinations of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., and Robert Kennedy, to the daily chronicles of blood, burning villages and body counts from Vietnam on the evening news, television thrust violence and confrontation into the face of the American public.

In the process, television began to alter radically Americans' sense of their world and themselves. Before television, at most a few thousand people were direct, immediate witnesses to the earth-shaking events of history. The newsreel images of Japan's devastating attack on Pearl Harbor, which we now take for granted, took days to make their way before the American public, and even then, Americans who wanted to see them, generally had to leave their homes and pay to get into movie theaters where the newsreels were shown. People who relied on written news reports of world — or even national, state and local — events, were limited by their own experience and imaginations in perceiving the visceral reality of life outside their neighborhoods. Often, that reality was entirely beyond the experience, and even the imagination, of most Americans, as in the case of Pearl Harbor — or Hiroshima. In contrast, the filmed images of fire hoses and attack dogs being loosed on peaceful civil rights demonstrators in Birmingham, Alabama, were broadcast nationwide within a day, and anyone who had a television in his or her home — by 1960 that was more than 86 percent of American households — could see them without charge and without leaving the living room sofa.

No longer did Americans have to imagine a distant triumph or tragedy, they

could see it played out before them, if not live, then usually — even in the case of combat footage from Vietnam — within just a day of the actual events.

Sometimes these new images of the world were uplifting and inspirational, such as King's powerful speech at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963 or the moon landing in 1969. But more often — the nature of the news business being what it is — the events were shocking, disturbing and sometimes disillusioning. It became much harder for Americans to avoid unpleasant realities because television piped them directly into America's living rooms. Watching peaceful and unarmed civil rights marchers being attacked by police with hoses, dogs and clubs, it was hard not to perceive that an injustice was being done.

Watching Buddhist monks protest the South Vietnamese government by setting themselves on fire on the streets of Saigon, it was hard not to wonder whether the United States was truly on the side of the angels in that conflict. Watching the growing size and scope of civil rights and anti-war protests it was impossible to avoid the realization that increasing numbers of Americans were dissatisfied with the society's institutions and leaders.

Many Americans were stunned and confused by the upheaval around them. Many recoiled in shock and anger. Some adopted a defensive, Archie Bunker, love-it-or-leave-it mentality, a resentment of protest that fueled the police attacks on demonstrators — and even journalists — during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968. Many others turned their shock and anger in the opposite direction and joined the ranks of those who were challenging the social power structure. Confrontation and defiance of authority

quickly became matters of personal style as well as political identity. People marched, rallied, boycotted, chanted, shouted, sang, burned flags, burned bras, burned draft cards, smoked pot, dropped acid, turned on, tuned in, dropped out and sat in, all to express their independence from and rejection of a social order they had come to see as decadent and oppressive. It was a time of flamboyant and grand gestures — long hair, short skirts, loud music, topless swimsuits, paisley ties, bell-bottom jeans, psychedelically painted VW microbuses, actors and actresses standing naked on the Broadway stage, and hippies putting daisies in the barrels of National Guard rifles. It was a time of angry, extreme and inflammatory rhetoric on both ends of the political spectrum: "Hell no, we won't go!" "America, love it or leave it." "Burn, baby, burn." "Nuke 'em back to the stone age."

It was also a time of social movements, large numbers of people brought together by shared desire for change. Movements merged the individual impulse to rebellion with the idealistic belief in the possibility of social improvement and transformation. The anti-war movement was the largest, most visible and most widely recognized in the latter half of the decade but it was far from the only one. The Civil Rights Movement remained active, though its shift in focus — after victories of the 1950s and early 1960s had knocked down "whites only" signs across the south — made its aims harder to grasp for many white Americans, even if they were sympathetic. Some attention also was diverted from King and his followers by the rise of the more militant and more strident — and to white America, more shocking — Black Power movement.

Other movements also were emerging around the efforts of women, Hispanics, Native Americans and other groups to change the ways they were treated by society. In California, for example, Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers Association transformed a local effort to win better wages and working conditions for predominantly Mexican and Mexican American workers at Delano-area farms into a national crusade by launching a nationwide boycott of California grapes.¹ Native Americans, especially young, urban Indians disillusioned with the traditional, reservation-based tribal leadership, began organizing radical activism. The American Indian Movement, which grew out of an anti-poverty program in Minneapolis, consciously patterned its social programs and its militant style after the Black Panthers, and American Indians United, a West Coast organization, dramatized its resistance to the federal government's history of treaty violations by seizing the abandoned federal prison on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay in November 1969 and holding it for eighteen months.² Each new movement aimed, in one way or another, to challenge the existing social structure and its underlying assumptions, and each adopted, to one extent or another, the tactics of mass protest, civil disobedience and confrontation with authority.

All of those movements had been inspired by, and to a great extent copied the tactics of, the Civil Rights Movement, the dominant American social action movement of the 1950s and early 1960s. The Civil Rights Movement burst into the public consciousness in December 1955 with the Montgomery bus boycott³ and continued to capture intense public attention through the lunch counter sit-

ins, freedom rides and voting rights campaigns of the early and mid-'60s. The confrontations with injustice drew a lot of attention to the protesters' tactics, and the righteousness of protest and confrontation was reinforced by the brutality — the police dogs, fire hoses, billy clubs, beatings and killings — with which the demands of the civil rights activists were met. The televised images of that brutality contributed significantly to the atmosphere of violence that suffused American life through the decade, but they also helped turn public opinion against the segregation in the South; and as segregation crumbled, as buses, lunch counters and schools were slowly integrated, idealism and faith in the potential for a just society grew. Even President Johnson embraced the idealistic optimism, pushing for landmark civil rights legislation in 1964 and 1965 and proposing a vast web of social programs he said would produce "The Great Society."

The Civil Rights Movement was an inspiration to many idealistic young people, white and black, but it also was in important measure, a *product* of idealistic youth. The wave of lunch counter sit-ins that swept across the South in 1960, for example, was conceived and carried out primarily by black college students.⁴ That burst of student activism eventually led to creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which was the driving force in the Mississippi Summer Project voter registration drive of 1964. That project was a compelling and deeply influential training ground for many of the student activists — white and black — who led later on-campus and off-campus movements.⁵ For example, many of the leaders of the Free Speech

Movement at the University of California's Berkeley campus in the fall of 1964 — the first major white radical student protest — had participated in, and been inspired by, the Mississippi Summer Project. Black student activists, in turn, learned a lot about the tactics of confronting the academic power structure by observing and analyzing the Free Speech Movement and other white student protests. All of these forces were churning the atmosphere of academia in 1968 when the Black Studies movement erupted on predominantly white college and university campuses across the United States. Present in significant numbers on white campuses for the first time, inspired by the preceding decade of Civil Rights activism in the South, radicalized by growing urban racial rebellion in the North, and galvanized by King's assassination, black students began with growing determination and intensity to demand that white institutions of higher education integrate intellectually as well as demographically.

True to the spirit of the times, the rhetoric employed by black students demanding Black Studies was often heated and suffused with the revolutionary tones of the Black Power movement, which had grown out of SNCC after its divergence in 1965 from the integrationist Civil Rights Movement led by King. Black students denounced white universities as political, rather than educational, institutions and castigated them for their failure to enroll more black students, hire more black faculty and staff, and offer curricula that examined — or even recognized — the experience, achievements and contributions of African Americans. Like the nations of Africa that were gaining

independence from European control throughout the 1960s, many black students at white American universities saw themselves as rebellious subjects of a colonial power. As such, they demanded respect, a say in the allocation of university resources and autonomy that sometimes struck at the heart of the university's system of governance. If the truth of their criticisms was embarrassing — administrators were relatively quick to admit that university research and curricula gave only scant attention, at best, to blacks — the tone of the criticism was often even more unsettling.

"I see no difference between white universities and white people," Maulana Karenga told a national conference at Yale University in the spring of 1968, where predominantly white college officials, university administrators and foundation directors had come to discuss with black students and scholars the role of Black Studies in academia. "We have three roles for white people as well as for white universities. . . . There are three things: nonintervention, foreign aid, and civilizing committees." Nonintervention, he said, meant autonomy for blacks — outside and inside the university. Foreign aid meant financial resources provided by the university to support Black Studies and outreach programs for the black community off-campus. And the committees, Karenga said, were to civilize white students, faculty and administrators, to help them understand the depth and scope of their own racism.⁶ The Black Panther Party went even farther than Karenga's demand for white non-intervention, calling for profound, radical change of white institutions, on-campus and off. In a 1969 article on "Education and Revolution" in The Black Scholar, Eldridge

Cleaver, the Panthers' minister of information, said the white power structure must be smashed.

We have to destroy their power in the community, and we're not reformists, we're not in the movement to reform the curriculum of a given university or a given college or to have a Black Students Union recognized at a given high school. We are revolutionaries, and as revolutionaries, our goal is the transformation of the American social order.⁷

Compounding the abrasive atmosphere and raw feelings were a series of highly charged and widely publicized incidents in late 1968 and 1969 that permanently cast a cloud of suspicion, resentment and political taint over the issue of Black Studies. The most polarizing of the events took place in the spring of 1969, when black students demanding a Black Studies program, among other changes in the university, took over a building at Cornell University. When white fraternity members threatened to eject the protesters, the black students armed themselves with shotguns, rifles and other firearms. Although the situation was resolved without shots being fired, the photographic images of the black students brandishing guns became indelibly linked to the Black Studies issue. The image of Black Studies was further clouded by an incident at the University of California at Los Angeles, also in 1969, when a dispute over Black Studies between two radical black student factions erupted into gunfire that left two people dead. On top of that, throughout the 1968-69 academic year, the Black Studies program at San Francisco State College — the first such program at a predominantly white college in the United States — was at the center of heated, and occasionally violent, disruptions that engulfed

the campus and led, in the spring of 1969, to the dismissal of Nathan Hare, the program's first director.

Academia was ill-prepared to deal with such turmoil. For twenty years, American institutions of higher education had been struggling just to keep up with the flood of new students enrolling at colleges and universities. In 1939-40, at the onset of World War II, just under 1.5 million students were enrolled in degree programs at colleges and universities in the United States, representing about 15 percent of the nation's population in the 18-21 age group. But beginning in the late 1940s, college enrollments skyrocketed, driven first by a wave of World War II military veterans taking advantage of educational benefits under the G.I. Bill, and then, in the early 1960s, by the arrival of their eldest children on college and university campuses. By the fall of 1968, as the Black Studies debate was erupting in academia, 6.6 million students were enrolled in degree programs — more than double the number just a decade earlier and accounting for nearly 46 percent of the nation's population in the 18-21 age group. Many colleges and universities were overwhelmed, immersed in a frenzy of construction as they rushed to build new classrooms and dormitories, and struggling to hire scores of additional faculty needed to teach all the new students. Hundreds of entirely new colleges were established to handle the swelling student population. In 1939, the nation had a little over 1,700 institutions of higher education; by 1969, that number had grown to more than 2,500.

But beyond the complicated logistical pressures of handling this

demographic deluge, academia was neither philosophically nor psychologically attuned to the implications of absorbing all those new students. Administrators were so busy making physical room for the newcomers that little thought was given to whether a curriculum based on nineteenth century assumptions about how best to educate the nation's intellectual elite — which until about 1930 had always been less than 10 percent of the traditional 18-21 age group — was appropriate to the late-twentieth century education of students drawn from a much broader cross-section of American society. And even less thought was given to the implications of the increasing numbers of African American students and other ethnic minorities on college campuses. White scholars and administrators, raised and educated in a white society, were comfortable with the traditional curriculum and assumed that educating more students was simply a matter of doing more of what had always been done. If they considered at all the matter of an increasing African American student population, any potential problems were seen in terms of black students adjusting and assimilating themselves to the existing campus environment and curriculum. Rare indeed was the white administrator who considered the possibility that white academia might have to adjust itself to the black students. As white historian David Brion Davis put it after attending the conference at Yale in the spring of 1968:

We have assumed that we could admit increasing numbers of Negro students without modifying our traditional educational standards and our ideal of the educated man; we expected Negroes to assimilate our culture and to integrate on our terms. . . . Once universities

have committed themselves to admit more than a token number of blacks, they cannot evade the consequences.⁸

As black students enrolled in increasing numbers on white campuses, they found themselves deeply alienated, not just by racism and insensitivity they experienced at the hands of white students, faculty, administrators and bureaucratic institutional procedures, but by a curriculum that virtually ignored the lives and experience of African Americans. And so, raised on the Civil Rights Movement, inspired by the rising rhetoric of cultural nationalism and Black Power, enraged by the murder of King, black students began with increasing urgency to demand Black Studies programs.

The demands posed painful and complicated challenges for college and university administrations, and some of those challenges were only dimly perceived at first. It did not help that the situation was so thoroughly enmeshed in social politics, for academia had always seen itself as an oasis of thoughtful relief from the bruising and bloody arena of political action. That is what the time-worn metaphor of the Ivory Tower was all about. The scholarly ideal was one of detachment and intellectual objectivity. Most scholars perceived their job as analyzing society, not changing it. If society was an arena, scholars were not the players or coaches or even the referees; they were those serious, bespectacled statisticians in the distant upper reaches of the press box whose job it is simply to keep track of the gains and losses, the mundane details of the victories and defeats that are played out on the field far below.

But the Black Studies movement was having none of that. Black Studies challenged everything about the university that most academics held sacred,

starting with the article of faith that a university is an educational institution. No so, said many Black Studies advocates, who saw colleges and universities as political institutions for indoctrination of the dominant white-European culture with the aim of perpetuating the status quo of American society. Black Studies challenged the canon of accepted knowledge and the process by which it had been amassed over the preceding centuries. When white scholars asserted their commitment to the ideal of objective detachment in intellectual inquiry, black militants scorned the assertion as both untrue (How objective had it been to exclude blacks from the scholarly record of American society?) and unrealistic (How can a university be unconcerned with the ongoing life of the society around it?). Black Studies didn't just criticize academia for failing to live up to its ideal of objective detachment, it charged that the ideal itself was flawed. Where white academicians generally saw the university as being above ideology, the proponents of Black Studies asserted that any attempt to organize and purvey knowledge was inherently ideological. Black Studies also challenged the very nature and process of academic organization by seeking to create an entirely new discipline — outside the traditional structure of accepted departmental disciplines — through revolutionary demand rather than through intellectual evolution. That had never been done before, and the suggestion both frightened and offended many white administrators and scholars. Black Studies snatched white (and sometimes black) administrators and scholars out of their remote press-box perches and dragged them, often kicking and screaming, down onto the torn and bloody field of social responsibility.

Resistance to Black Studies took many forms. Sometimes it was overtly racist, as in some commentaries from critics (often non-academics) who dismissed Black Studies as illegitimate and not worthy of scholarly examination. More often, given academia's genteel traditions, the resistance (and racism) was couched in low-key discussions of academic rigor and in bureaucratic manipulations that quietly crippled Black Studies programs. It was easy enough for institutions that were not committed to, or even scorned, Black Studies to set up a minimal program with a minimal budget and an academic structure that virtually guaranteed that the program would wither away within a few years — after the heat of protest and confrontation had waned. But resistance could be purely structural, too. Creating a new program or department with new faculty, support staff, equipment, office space, supplies and other expenses, required real money, and in the zero-sum world of academic budgets, a gain for Black Studies — or any program — usually meant a loss for someone or some program elsewhere in the university. Bureaucrats — whether they be academic, governmental or corporate — are known for their tenacity in protecting their budgetary turf.

And sometimes resistance was the result of principled disagreement. Black Studies advocates, especially militant black students, often demanded things that administrators — as matters of conscience, and sometimes as matters of law — could not accept. Student control of autonomous Black Studies programs or departments was one such issue, where administrators believed they could not give in or even compromise to a great extent. Proposals that

included blacks-only courses or centers or dormitories also generated heated resistance, and not just from white administrators. Kenneth B. Clark, the famous African American sociologist whose research had been central to the court challenge that struck down school segregation as unconstitutional, resigned from the Antioch College Board of Directors in protest after the college set up set up a Black Studies institute that excluded whites.

The challenges with which Black Studies confronted higher education were complex, and the results were profound and long-lasting. But to a great extent, the significance of the changes wrought by academia's struggle over Black Studies has been obscured by the intense politics and inflammatory rhetoric that surrounded the debate. The supercharged word of that debate — and of that time — was revolution. In an era of indisputably intense social conflict, the word, "revolution," frequently was cast about like seed on a farmer's field. It was an incendiary word, romantically inspiring to some, repugnant and terrifying to others. But often the critics of social activism mistook agitation and strident rhetoric for true revolutionary intent; and often the self-professed revolutionaries failed to understand that social transformation required something more complicated and sustained than the provocative disruptions and slogans designed to put their cause on the evening television news.

Gil Scott-Heron, an African American poet and musician, engaged the ironies on both sides of the conflict in a wry, sardonic rap called, "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised." Artfully blending late 1960s politics with television and pop culture icons, Heron ridiculed the tendency of the mass

media to trivialize important issues, particularly when it came to matters of social conflict and reform.

The revolution will not be brought to you
by the Schaefer Award Theatre,
and will not star Natalie Wood as Steve McQueen
or Bulwinkle as Julia.

The revolution will not give your mouth sex appeal.
The revolution will not get rid of the nubs.
The revolution will not make you look five pounds thinner
because the revolution will not be televised, brother.⁹

But Heron's poem wasn't just a critique of the media's trivialization of social change. It was also a critique of traditional reformists who sometimes seemed more interested in their public stature than in accomplishing substantive improvements in the lives of everyday people. And it was also a critique of self-styled revolutionaries who were more interested in the superficial, attention-getting value of the revolutionary style than in the down-and-dirty, long-term work needed to accomplish real revolution. He was reminding activists that the real work of social reform wasn't what took place in front of television cameras. And his words remind us, looking back at that period, now many years distant, that it is important not to be so distracted by the flash and smoke of the surface conflicts — no matter how dramatic or important they appear — that we fail to perceive what was going on underneath the surface.

Judged by the objectives set in their own extravagant declarations, the revolution sought by Cleaver, Hare and others among the most radical militants was a failure. The universities were not smashed. Power relationships within the institutions were not turned on their heads. Black students never won any

lasting autonomous authority over academic programs. Separatist, blacks-only facilities and programs on college campuses were never established or sustained in significant numbers. And despite some increase in outreach programs, universities were never transformed into tools for the organization and economic development of black urban neighborhoods.

That does not mean, however, that there was no revolution. The revolution American higher education saw simply was not the revolution American higher education got. The revolution American higher education saw was an attempt to overthrow institutional structure, to transfer power from administrators and faculty to the students, to replace scholarly analysis with mere propaganda; in short, to turn the whole academic world upside down. The revolution American higher education got was a revolution of awareness, a revolution of consciousness, a slow and subtle but profound change in the attitudes and assumptions on which the entire structure of the scholarly enterprise is based.

The visible revolution was over quickly. From that first program in 1968 at San Francisco State, the number of Black Studies programs on predominantly white campuses swelled to well over 200 (more than 500 according to one estimate) by 1973. The militant black students had won on the issue of program creation, though few of the programs were actually set up in the way the militants would have desired: autonomy and separatism were overwhelmingly rejected by university administrations. And real acceptance was another matter altogether. Not all of the programs that were established thrived or even survived. Some critics dismissed Black Studies as an academic

ghetto, an intellectually unnecessary sop to militant black students motivated by bleeding-heart liberalism, fear, or, at best, a pragmatic desire to assure campus tranquillity.

But the furor over the social politics of the Black Studies movement — the militants' demands were indisputably and intensely political — and the excruciating sensitivity of racial issues in America have obscured the real contribution of Black Studies to higher education. The struggle over Black Studies forced America's colleges and universities to thoroughly reevaluate what they taught and why. It forced academia to reassess the role of the university in modern society and it prodded scholars to examine more closely the assumptions on which their research and teaching were based. It also forced scholars and academic administrators to reconsider the process by which knowledge is gathered, organized and sorted into disciplines. The result was a transformation of the modern university that did not approach the revolution of the black militants' demands but went well beyond what most white administrators could have anticipated. It was a quiet revolution, obscured by the noisy protest and conflict that surrounded it, which irrevocably altered the way scholars — and most Americans — think about America's history and culture. To understand this untelevised revolution, it is necessary to begin by examining the institutions whose barricades the radicals began to storm in the mid-1960s, to consider the history of academia's Ivory Tower.

Chapter 2

The Old Guard in the Ivory Tower

The Ivory Tower, as a description of the university, dates back at least to the nineteenth century. That the metaphor has endured so long in the public consciousness is due in part to the grace and economy of the phrase itself. The visual image it evokes is simple, elegant and concrete. But the metaphor works — and continues to be used — because it captures with great accuracy the university's sense of itself. The Ivory Tower is austere and dignified in its beauty, with a sweeping view of the vast world it surveys. It is serious in its demeanor, solid and imposing, not easily assailed by the storms of change. It is aloof in its outlook, rising above (and holding itself apart from) the tawdry turmoil of social strife that rages far below. It is also white.

Often, this last quality is only dimly recognized or acknowledged, even by those most fond of using the phrase. If it is noticed at all, the whiteness implicit in the ivory image tends to be interpreted as the symbolic color of purity and innocence, or regarded simply as an incidental, natural attribute of the ivory, whose glistening smoothness gives the tower its classic beauty. The whiteness is assumed.

The advocates of Black Studies set out to change that assumption. They did

not perceive the whiteness of the tower as mere accident. Nor did they consider it natural — or innocent. Ivory may be white by nature. But the design and construction of a tower is a human act, a matter of intent and the result of choices. Nature did not dictate that the tower be built of ivory (or at all, for that matter). And nature had no law against remodeling the tower or adding ebony to the design. The proponents of Black Studies challenged the whiteness of the Ivory Tower, starting with its foundations.

When Black Studies emerged as a campus issue in 1967, it was only the most recent in a series of powerful forces that had been shaking the Ivory Tower for nearly twenty years. By that time, the fabric of American higher education was being stretched and torn in ways that were transforming academia into something that scholars of just a generation before would have found almost unrecognizable. But even that previous generation of scholars had inherited an institution that was in the midst of profound change. To understand the scope and nature and complexity of the challenges that Black Studies brought to higher education, it is necessary to examine what the American university in the mid 1960s was and how it got that way. It is important to see the Black Studies movement in the context of a century-long shift in the structure, size and aims of universities that paralleled the revolutionary changes that had reshaped American society between the Civil War and World War II and had been growing in intensity since the war's end in 1945.

The American university of 1965 had its roots in the medieval European

universities that emerged in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in such cities as Bologna and Paris. Higher education — advanced instruction in such subjects as law, rhetoric and philosophy — had existed in the societies of the ancient Greeks and Romans, but it was not institutionalized in the way that the medieval European universities established permanent organizational forms.

Charles Homer Haskins argues in The Rise of Universities:

A great scholar like Socrates gave no diplomas; if a modern student sat at his feet for three months, he would demand a certificate, something tangible and external to show for it — an excellent theme, by the way, for a Socratic dialogue. Only in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries do there emerge in the world those features of organized education with which we are most familiar, all that machinery of instruction represented by faculties and colleges and courses of study, examinations and commencements and academic degrees. In all these matters we are the heirs and successors, not of Athens and Alexandria, but of Paris and Bologna.¹

Heirs and successors, yes, but hardly mirror images. The earliest universities owned no buildings. There was no overarching bureaucratic structure of administrators or disciplinary departments. Faculty members generally offered instruction in their own homes, or lacking sufficient space there, went out and rented neighborhood halls in which to deliver their lectures. The universities had no endowments and lacked the funds needed to create libraries, classroom buildings, laboratories or dormitories for the students. "Such a university had no board of trustees and published no catalogue; it had no student societies — except so far as the university itself was fundamentally a society of students . . ."²

The curriculum, too, was rudimentary by late twentieth century standards. What had survived the Dark Ages in cathedral and monastery schools were the simplified remnants of the ancient Roman curriculum: the trivium, which included grammar, logic and rhetoric; and the quadrivium, which included arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. These subjects were known as the liberal arts. "It was almost wholly as formulated in a few standard texts that the learning of the ancient world was transmitted to medieval times . . . It was a bookish age, with great reverence for standard authorities, and its instruction followed closely the written word."³ Instructors were required — by student-dictated regulations — to present course material systematically, without skipping chapters of the text.

But while they shared this fundamental curriculum with the schools that had preceded them, what lifted the early universities from the ranks of the cathedral and monastery schools was the rediscovery by western Europe in the twelfth century of large and important sources of knowledge that had long been obscured. This rediscovery, accomplished mainly by Arab scholars in Spain, reintroduced western Europe to "the works of Aristotle, Euclid, Ptolemy, and the Greek physicians, the new arithmetic, and those texts of the Roman law which had lain hidden through the Dark Ages."⁴ The introduction of Arabic numbers, replacing the cumbersome Roman numerals, also made mathematics much easier, and all the new knowledge led to the creation of advanced schools that specialized in medicine and the law.

In law and medicine men now possessed the fulness of

ancient learning. This new knowledge burst the bonds of the cathedral and monastery schools and created the learned professions; it drew over mountains and across the narrow seas eager youths . . . to form in Paris and Bologna those academic gilds which have given us our first and our best definition of a university, a society of masters and scholars.⁵

For the next seven centuries, that idea of a university as a society of masters and scholars defined the role of the higher education in Europe and in America.

The university was simply and purely about the transmission of knowledge; it was about teaching and learning. Research was seen as something separate from scholastic activity, and eventually separate scientific societies grew up, independent of the universities, to promote and pursue scientific research.

Application of knowledge to the practical problems of government or business or agriculture was not seen as a proper concern of a university. A scholar might leave the university and apply the knowledge he had gained in academia to the problems of business or government, but that was seen as an entirely separate activity; the scholar had ceased to be a scholar and had become a merchant or a public official or a lawyer or a physician. It was the university's aim to produce educated men. It was assumed, of course, that many of those men would become leaders in every sort of social endeavor, but that was beyond the university's purview. The university was about the transmission, not the application, of knowledge. Even the advanced degrees that came, in the twentieth century, to be so prized as credentials outside academia began solely as a way of indicating that the holder of the degree was qualified to teach. The degree was not initially intended to have any practical application

outside the university. The essence of the medieval university was the glorification of knowledge and learning for its own sake, and the education to be obtained in the university was available only to the sons of the aristocracy or wealthy merchants.

When the earliest American colonial colleges were established in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they were modeled after the constituent colleges of the great English universities at Oxford and Cambridge. The English universities had diverged, in their organizational structure, from the continental universities; Oxford and Cambridge were loose associations of residential colleges while the continental universities were mostly nonresident graduate schools that offered advanced training in theology, medicine, law and the arts. Scottish universities also influenced the early colonial colleges, most notably in the tendency to give control of the institution to lay community representatives instead of the college's faculty. But while there had come to be some structural variation in European and American higher education, the core of the university curriculum had changed very little. In the American colleges, a few additional subjects were being taught, such as physics, Hebrew, politics and botany, but the heart of the college curriculum still rested on the trivium and quadrivium that harkened back to the ancient Romans. John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy assert in Higher Education in Transition:

This course, which was the only one leading to a bachelor's degree, was rigidly prescribed for all. There was no concept that the varying interests or professional plans of the individual student should be taken into account in constructing a curriculum. It was felt that there was a fixed

and known body of knowledge — the "liberal arts" as they came down from antiquity via the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation. This constituted absolute and immutable truth, and it was important that it be absorbed — not criticized or questioned — by every student.⁶

The purpose of the university was essentially unchanged, as well: to transmit knowledge and produce educated men who would serve society. The precise nature of that service or the specific technical problems those educated men would encounter in that service were not the concern of the colonial colleges, and did not generally make their way into the curriculum. It was enough that the college teach its students those immutable truths, the wisdom of the ages, with the faith that the properly educated man would be wise enough to apply his knowledge appropriately to the circumstances of the world outside of academia.

Such a reliance on faith in the value of knowledge as immutable truth should come as no surprise, given that many of the early American colleges were established by religious denominations that wanted to ensure themselves an educated clergy. But as Brubacher and Rudy argue, the colleges intended the same basic education for other professionals and lay students. The founders of the early colleges did not draw fine distinctions between spiritual and intellectual enterprises.

The view that the advancement and preservation of learning was one and the same thing as the training of literate ministers came easily to the New England Puritans; together with Presbyterians, Anglicans, and Lutherans, they accepted and carried on the traditions of the medieval Schoolmen. Like the Scholastics they took for granted the fact that piety could not be separated from intellect; that

religious faith should be rationalized. The Grace of God was indispensable, but not enough; philosophy and reason were also important, while knowledge of the arts and sciences was very useful.⁷

By the middle of the nineteenth century, American higher education was 200 years old and it was flourishing. More than 180 permanent colleges and universities had been founded.⁸ And still, despite administrative and organizational variation necessitated by the patterns of growth and development of the colonies and the young nation, the curriculum and philosophical underpinnings of American institutions of higher learning were little different from the medieval universities 700 years earlier. Although he was speaking to a new Catholic university in Dublin, Cardinal John Henry Newman spoke for the vast majority of scholars in Europe and America when he described the scholarly ideal in the 1850s. His discourses, brought together in The Idea of a University, defined the university's role very clearly and discretely.

The university, he said,

is a place of *teaching universal knowledge*. This implies that its object is, on the one hand, intellectual, not moral; and, on the other, that it is the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than the advancement. If its object were scientific and philosophical discovery, I do not see why a University should have students; if religious training, I do not see how it can be the seat of literature and science. (emphasis in original)⁹

Teaching and research, Newman wrote, are different functions and require different skills. Each is demanding in its own right, he asserted; the person who teaches all day would have little time or energy to conduct research, and the reverse is true of the scientific researcher. The university, he said, should

leave the advancement of knowledge to the literary and scientific societies and academies that had been set up specifically to pursue such inquiries. The university must focus on the fundamental task of producing educated men.

Our desideratum is, not the manners and habits of gentlemen; — these can be, and are, acquired in various other ways, by good society, by foreign travel, by the innate grace and dignity of the Catholic mind; — but by the force, the steadiness, the comprehensiveness and the versatility of intellect, the command over our own powers, the instinctive just estimate of things as they pass before us, which sometimes indeed is a natural gift, but commonly is not gained without much effort and the exercise of years. . . .

When the intellect has once been properly trained and formed to have a connected view or grasp of things, it will display its powers with more or less effect according to its particular quality and capacity in the individual. In the case of most men it makes itself felt in the good sense, sobriety of thought, reasonableness, candour, self-command, and steadiness of view, which characterize it. In some it will have developed habits of business, power of influencing others, and sagacity. In others it will elicit the talent of philosophical speculation, and lead the mind forward to eminence in this or that intellectual department. In all it will be a faculty of entering with comparative ease into any subject of thought, and of taking up with aptitude any science or profession.¹⁰

But such a clear and narrow definition of the university's role was already beginning to change as Western society was radically altered by the industrial revolution. The United States was growing rapidly, both in territory and population. The rise of industrial manufacturing, which gave the northern states a powerful advantage during the Civil War, was accelerated by the war and continued well into the twentieth century. In the process, the balance of the *nation's* population began shifting toward urban centers and the entire society became increasingly reliant on the advances in technology. And the whole

system, which was rapidly consolidating small companies into large combinations, increasingly demanded people who were trained in the professional and managerial skills to handle it all.

Beginning with the railroads and the federal government, bureaucratic organization spread to these combines. American business and manufacturing corporations began to hire new kinds of employees: a vast army of white-collar workers, such as bookkeepers and clerks, and a smaller number of professionals, such as corporate lawyers, accountants, engineers, and architects. Growing urban populations and greater wealth meant the increasing need of goods and services of all kinds and the more frequent resort to experts — doctors, dentists, architects, and lawyers. In the four decades after 1870 the number of professionals increased over four times to total 1,150,000 by 1910. In the same period, those in finance, real estate, and trade more than trebled, amounting by 1910 to 2,760,000.¹¹

Gradually, America's colleges and universities were drawn into this transformation, both as providers of professional workers with specialized skills to handle the technical problems of the new industrialized economy and as centers for research on which many of the necessary technological advances were based. The shift threw academia into an intense conflict between the old ideals of moral education and intellectual purity and the increasingly pragmatic demands of the industrial age.

Even before the Civil War the intellectual battle lines were being drawn. The Yale Report of 1828 was a staunch defense of the liberal arts tradition. While it did not reject the idea of advanced, specialized training, it argued that the *purpose* of an undergraduate education was to teach the student the core of knowledge — which was the same for everyone, and essentially unchanged

since medieval times — that would enable him to succeed in whatever field of endeavor he pursued.

But, why, it is asked, should *all* the students in a college be required to tread in the *same steps*? Why should not each one be allowed to select those branches of study which are most to his taste, which are best adapted to his peculiar talents, and which are most nearly connected with his intended profession? To this we answer, that our prescribed course contains those subjects only which ought to be understood, as we think, by every one who aims at a thorough education. They are not the peculiarities of any profession or art. These are to be learned in the professional and practical schools. But the principles of sciences are the common foundation of all high intellectual attainments. As in our primary schools, reading, writing, and arithmetic are taught to all, however different their prospects; so in a college, all should be instructed in those branches of knowledge of which no one destined to the higher walks of life ought to be ignorant.¹²

But less than a decade later, in 1837, Ralph Waldo Emerson gave voice to a growing cultural nationalism that called, among other things, for significant reimagination of the scholarly ideal. In "The American Scholar," Emerson challenged America's intellectuals to throw off the cultural domination of Europe, and rely on their own abilities and judgments. "We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe," Emerson wrote. "The spirit of the American free-man is already suspected to be timid, imitative, tame. . . . We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds."¹³ This declaration of intellectual independence called on educational institutions to adjust themselves to the needs of their students, recognizing *each* as an individual, and to discard European traditions and models of knowledge and the role of the scholar — traditions and models that were

centuries old. Emerson said colleges must broaden their vision of education and recognize that scholars learn as well from nature and from taking action as they do from books. He said that colleges must look beyond their traditional curricula to inspire their students.

Colleges . . . can only highly serve us when they aim not to drill, but to create; when they gather from far every ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and by the concentrated fires, set the hearts of their youth on flame. . . . Gowns and pecuniary foundations, though of towns of gold, can never countervail the least sentence or syllable of wit. Forget this, and our American colleges will recede in their public importance, whilst they grow richer every year.¹⁴

After the Civil War, higher education in America began to swing decidedly away from the old model, although American educators still looked to Europe for ideas. The German universities, which increasingly emphasized advanced graduate study and scientific research had a big influence in the United States, most notably in the establishment of Johns Hopkins University as a predominantly graduate, research-oriented institution. And following the lead of Harvard, an increasing number of American colleges and universities began making portions of the old, classical curriculum optional and increased the ability of students to shape their own academic programs. Harvard made such courses as Latin and Greek optional for juniors and seniors in 1867, and at his inauguration as president of the university in 1869, Charles W. Eliot made it clear that he was committed to an expanded elective system of coursework for students.¹⁵ By the end of the nineteenth century, these changes had brought about a fundamental transformation of American higher education. Brubacher

and Rudy observed that over a period of about fifty years, academia in America had expanded vertically, through the addition of graduate schools, and horizontally, through the broadening of the undergraduate curriculum.¹⁶

This expansion of the university — in both directions — was intertwined with an increasing specialization and compartmentalization of knowledge. As the old, broad categories of knowledge broke down new, more specific categories emerged, focusing on particular areas of knowledge such as history, physics, economics or chemistry. Gradually, these categories, and many others, became established in the academic structure as disciplinary departments, which also were strengthened by a growing sense of academics as professionals.

As the modern university took shape, disciplinarity was reinforced in two major ways: industries demanded and received specialists, and disciplines recruited students to their ranks. The trend toward specialization was further propelled by increasingly more expensive and sophisticated instrumentation within individual fields. . . .

Although the "Renaissance Man" may have remained an ideal for the well-educated baccalaureate, it was not the model for the new professional, specialized research scholar. Formalization of the pursuit of knowledge in various fields — history in 1884, economics in 1885, political science in 1903, and sociology in 1905 — paved the way for the "professionalization" of knowledge in the twentieth century.¹⁷

As the connections between academia and industry grew — through the advancements of research and the training of specialized professionals for roles in industry — and as scholars themselves came to be seen as professionals, the public's attitudes toward the university began to change. No

longer was a university education solely an esthetic, esoteric luxury for the social and cultural elite. By the start of the twentieth century, it had begun to carry practical implications that were not lost on the traditionally pragmatic American mind.

Once institutions like Johns Hopkins and MIT developed national reputations, they attracted intellectually ambitious young men who wanted to do what nobody had yet done or yet knew how to do. In due course, moreover, their graduates began to win preference in competition for certain kinds of work, so that attending a place like Hopkins or MIT became advantageous for the most pragmatic careerist as well as idealists.¹⁸

Still, a broad acceptance by the American public of the practical value of a college education did not really begin to show itself until after World War I. Before that war, the model of grand entrepreneurial success set by such tycoons as John D. Rockefeller and Henry Ford — which did not include college — continued to have a strong hold on the public imagination. Although a college degree might ensure one of a job, that job was not necessarily the key to rising to the top of the business world. After World War I, however, American business began to rely more on managerial and professional expertise than on raw entrepreneurial determination. And Americans fairly quickly perceived the shift and its implications for those considering college.

More and more people saw college as a place to meet "the right people." Since success in business (and indeed in American life) was widely believed to depend on "contacts," colleges came to seem relevant in a way they previously had not. This trend was exploited by many educators. new business curricula were established for students who found the traditional academic fare indigestible, and corporations began to consider college graduates as

potential junior management material. Conversely, the idea of a non-college man's either starting at the bottom and working up, or going into business for himself and expanding, seemed less realistic. The Depression compounded doubts about such possibilities, giving millions of young men the feeling that it was better to acquire credentials and work for a big, safe organization than to gamble in the open market.¹⁹

Of course, this growing view of the university as a practical tool for economic and social advancement was not universally accepted. Some scholars still clung to the old ideal of the university. In 1930, when he published Universities, his classic critique of higher education in the United States, England and Germany, Abraham Flexner decried the trend he saw in the American academy of enrolling increasing numbers of students in a rapidly growing array of programs that he considered inappropriate in a university; programs like business and journalism that he believed had little to do with the refinement of the intellect that was the purpose of a university and belonged more rightly in trade schools. He blamed this trend on the democratic cultural ideals that made Americans reluctant to sort people according to their abilities. The resulting problems were endemic to all levels of the nation's educational system.

The high school used to be a sieve of a certain kind. But American democracy objects to sieves. Would not selection and distribution of students on the basis of industry, ability, and capacity to go forward on intellectual lines be democratic? Most certainly, yes. Yet the high school cannot be democratic in this sense. It is, on the contrary, a kind of bargain-counter on which a generous public and an overworked and underpaid teaching staff display every variety of merchandise . . . leaving the student . . . free to piece together, under restrictions that sometimes amount to much and sometimes to little, a course of study that by

the end of four years will yield "counts" or "units of credit" enough to win a diploma or to enable him to satisfy the entrance requirements of the college of his choice.²⁰

Education, he feared, was becoming a sort of academic assembly line where poorly taught students were churned out of the nation's high schools and funneled along into colleges and universities to receive the sort of instruction they should have gotten in high school and, having obtained their bachelor's degrees, passed on into graduate schools that should have been reserved for only the most capable and serious scholars. The students' motives, he charged, often were pecuniary, not intellectual.

In vast throngs, American boys and girls go to college for social or prudential reasons; and so for prudential reasons they pass on to the graduate schools — for an A.M. or a Ph.D. degree is a merchantable asset in the educational market, because with higher degrees go higher salaries. The mere seekers for degrees throng the graduate school; and in order to meet the needs of the unfit, the graduate school has adopted a type of organization and administration that is quite irrelevant to higher education. In so far as this body of students is concerned, the graduate school is merely a kind of advanced teachers college with courses, requirements, methods of instruction and accounting, just as the college is something of an advanced high school.²¹

It is tempting to consider Flexner's dismay merely quaint and amusing, a relic of a bygone elitist age. But his criticisms were not without reason. Higher education was already undergoing major changes as Flexner issued his critique in 1930, and the transformation only accelerated over the next thirty years. College and university campuses in 1930 were indeed being flooded with students, compared with the preceding decades. The percentage of America's 18-to-21-year-olds enrolled in college degree programs had

increased by half in just the decade from 1920 to 1930, and the percentage had tripled since 1900. When Flexner first enrolled as an undergraduate at Johns Hopkins University in 1884, a little over 3 percent of Americans in the 18-21 age group were pursuing college degrees. By 1900, that number had risen to 4 percent, but higher education was still enrolling only that small group of elite students who had the academic skills, financial resources and intellectual interest to pursue the sort of advanced education that beyond medicine, the law and the clergy, bore little direct connection to specific professional pursuits. Over the next thirty years, however, that pattern began to change as enrollments increased steadily and universities expanded their curricula into areas — such as business, journalism, home economics, nursing, physical education, agriculture, pharmacy, advertising, and others — that were far more practical than abstract. Many of those changes had their roots in the establishment of land-grant colleges, starting in the 1850s, which emphasized agricultural and mechanical training and increased, through service, connections with the off-campus community, but by the early decades of the twentieth century, the focus on practicality was expanding to even the nation's elite universities, such as Harvard, Columbia and the University of Chicago.

As higher education came to be seen as more utilitarian, growing numbers of high school graduates began to pursue college degrees as a path to professional and financial success. By 1920, more than 8 percent of Americans in the 18-21 age group were enrolled in college degree programs; by 1930, the number stood at nearly 12.5 percent. Such dynamic growth was

putting an enormous strain on universities, Flexner wrote, because “expansion means increase of professors and students — the former difficult to obtain, the latter likely through sheer size to destroy the organic character of the institution.”²² But the flood of students was just beginning. It is illuminating to consider how Flexner might have assessed the impact of the next thirty years of campus growth; by 1960, the nation’s colleges and universities were enrolling nearly 35 percent of America’s college-age youth, almost three times the percentage Flexner considered so problematic in 1930. Moreover, the array of academic courses and programs that Flexner disparaged as unscholarly, the distractions of research and community service that he considered detrimental to the true purpose of the university continued to multiply and expand.

What Flexner failed to understand — or at least, refused to accept — was that the “organic character” of the university was, in fact, changing, for good or for ill — or perhaps for good *and* ill. Although he acknowledged that the university, like any social institution, is always “an expression of the age,” he did not recognize how profoundly the age was changing, and with it the fundamental nature of American life. In the decades between 1930 and 1970, the United States suffered through the Great Depression, three major wars, and twenty-five years of nuclear fear. Technological advancements made automobiles standard equipment for the typical American, established commercial air transportation as common, put televisions in nearly every home and enabled the United States to land men on the moon. Americans’ sense of themselves and all their institutions were changing dramatically, especially

following World War II, as affluence reigned, civil rights were expanded and the nation was thrust — as one of two superpowers — into a dominant role in world affairs. It is scarcely imaginable that in an era of such monumental change Americans' views and expectations of the university would have remained unchanged.

Flexner was correct, at least, in his perception that the dramatic change that was beginning to engulf higher education in 1930 had a lot to do with America's democratic ideals. Education — particularly a college education — had come to be seen as the key to improving one's circumstances in an increasingly urbanized and industrialized America. And America, from its beginnings, has always been about upward mobility. While the nation's popular mythology tends to emphasize the Puritans and their quest for religious freedom, the vast majority of colonists — including some Puritans — were at least as interested in economic advancement. They came to America because the social and economic structures of England and other European countries had boxed them in and prevented them from improving their circumstances. Land, which had always been a source and emblem of wealth, was extremely difficult to obtain in Europe, and the customs of primogeniture meant that even many of the second and third sons of rich families had to migrate to the colonies to get land of their own. Land was abundant in America, as were opportunities to make one's fortune from amassing sizable tracts and exploiting the land's resources. In the minds of some, improvement and development of the New World rose to the level of moral imperative, as John

Frederick Martin argued in Profits in the Wilderness.

Wilderness and garden thus were powerful symbols in Puritan cosmology, standing for the danger posed by idleness, the hope offered by improvement. But they were more than symbols. In the minds of seventeenth-century Englishmen, the wilderness was not only a metaphor for waste; it was a wasteland — without cultivation, fences, property lines, laws, morality, and all the other trappings of civilization — badly in need of improvement. Puritan divines spoke so often of the evil of wasting land and the good of improvement that these propositions acquired a unique cultural stature as self-evident truths.²³

For European colonists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, America was the place to go to rise in wealth and status; to improve not only the land, but the self. It is a pattern of hope and ambition that has endured even into the twenty-first century, though the points of origin of the countless succeeding waves of immigration have shifted dramatically. People from all over the world still come to America seeking to improve their fortunes because America is all about getting ahead.

From the 1920s onward, getting ahead increasingly meant getting a college degree. The nation's economy was coming to depend less on agriculture and more on the burgeoning industrial corporations that were feeding America's growing appetite for automobiles and other manufactured consumer goods. Although some colleges — notably the land grant institutions — had been emphasizing agricultural science since the 1850s, few farmers needed or wanted a college degree. Technological innovations coming out of the university through its extension agents might be useful, but on a family-owned farm, no one needed a college degree to advance; what the farmer needed

was land and the techniques to make it as productive as possible. As the American economy came to be dominated by industrial corporations, however, a college degree began to carry more benefits. People still spoke of the learned professions — law, medicine, clergy — but for those engaged in the world of business, employment was increasingly described not in terms of jobs, but in terms of a career. A job was for someone interested in merely making a living. A career was for someone on the rise.

In the boom of industrial and corporate growth that followed World War I, a college degree became a marketable commodity. Not only did it indicate a preferred social status — because of the economic and, often, social barriers that limited college education mainly to the sons (and a few daughters) of the wealthy elite — it also suggested a high level of intellectual skill possessed by the degree-holder. As college graduates advanced in the business world, their success — whether it was because of the skills they gained in college or the social connections they and their families possessed even before they enrolled — inspired ambitious young people to view the college degree as the key to success in business; the college degree opened the door to a business career.

The problem was opening the door to college. Higher education remained a prohibitively expensive proposition for the vast majority of Americans until the G.I. Bill blasted those doors off their hinges at the end of World War II. Flush with confidence and optimism after its triumph over the forces of fascism, America sought to reward the sacrifice of its returning war veterans by giving

them a shot at that key to social and economic advancement, the college diploma. Money was no longer a barrier to higher education for the veterans, thanks to the generous educational benefits of the G.I. Bill. Men, and to a lesser degree women, who before the war would have expected to spend their lives as farmers, auto mechanics, restaurant cooks or factory workers, suddenly had the opportunity to see how far an advanced education might get them. They enrolled in colleges and universities by the tens and hundreds of thousands. Enrollments, which had dipped sharply during the war, jumped dramatically at the war's end. In 1945, 17.5 percent of the nation's 18-21-year-olds were enrolled in a college degree program, up from 15.6 percent in 1940, and 11.9 percent in 1944. By 1950, enrollments had swelled to 29.6 percent of the age group and by 1960 to 34.9 percent.

No longer was higher education the sole reserve of America's social and financial elite. The elites may have remained dominant, particularly at the most selective private colleges and universities, but clearly, the "organic character" of the Ivory Tower had been irrevocably altered by rising middle-class expectations. An educational system that admits one of every three 18-21-year-olds unquestionably rests on a more democratic sense of academia's role than does a system that admits only one in twenty-five. And the middle class, which was growing rapidly both in numbers and affluence, increasingly had the ambition, the collegiate experience, and the financial resources to ensure the expansion of their children's opportunities. For the sons and daughters of college graduates, college ceased to be a dream and became an expectation.

By the middle 1960s, more than a century of open combat between the competing academic ideals of intellectual purity and practical application had transformed the leading institutions of American higher education into enormous and incredibly complex entities. Campuses across the nation were spending billions of dollars to build new dormitories to house the flood of new students, new classroom buildings in which to instruct them, new office buildings to house the growing faculty needed to teach thousands of new courses, new laboratories where those faculty members could conduct their research, and new administration buildings to house the swelling bureaucracy needed to manage it all. In a 1963 series of lectures at Harvard, later published as The Uses of the University, Clark Kerr, president of the University of California at Berkeley, described the vast expanse of his state's university system:

The University of California last year had operating expenditures from all sources of nearly half a billion dollars, with almost another 100 million for construction; a total employment of over 40,000 people, more than IBM and in a far greater variety of endeavors; operations in over a hundred locations, counting campuses, experiment stations, agricultural and urban extension centers, and projects abroad involving more than fifty countries; nearly 10,000 courses in its catalogues; some form of contact with nearly every industry, nearly every level of government, nearly every person in its region.²⁴

More than 4,000 babies had been born in the university's hospitals, he said.

The university's research functions had prodded it to become the world's largest breeder and seller of white mice and was on the way to giving it the world's largest colony of primates. "It will soon also have 100,000 students —

30,000 of them at the graduate level; yet much less than one third of its expenditures are directly related to teaching."²⁵

Kerr called this mammoth type of institution, which merged so many different functions, the "multiversity." And while the very title of his book suggests that practical considerations had gained dominance, Kerr saw three major threads of intellectual history still alive in this multiversity. He traced those threads back to ancient Greece, to Plato who was "devoted to truth largely for its own sake," the Sophists, who "were more interested in attainable success than they were in unattainable truth," and the Pythagoreans, who were concerned with such scientific pursuits as mathematics and astronomy. Those threads had come to be exemplified in three distinct styles of academic structure and emphasis: the British, the American and the German.

Out of all these fragments, experiments, and conflicts a kind of unlikely consensus has been reached. Undergraduate life seeks to follow the British, who have done the best with it, and an historical line that goes back to Plato; the humanists often find their sympathies here. Graduate life and research follow the Germans, who once did best with them, and an historical line that goes back to Pythagoras; the scientists lend their support to all this. The "lesser" professions (lesser than law and medicine) and the service activities follow the American pattern, since the Americans have been best at them, and an historical line that goes back to the Sophists; the social scientists are most likely to be sympathetic. . . . A university anywhere can aim no higher than to be as British as possible for the sake of the undergraduates, as German as possible for the sake of the graduates and the research personnel, as American as possible for the sake of the public at large — and as confused as possible for the sake of the preservation of the whole uneasy balance.²⁶

This, then, was the Ivory Tower that rose so grandly at the apex of American

culture in the middle 1960s. The American university was at once idealistic and pragmatic; aloof and engaged; a citadel of the old and a laboratory of the new; a promoter of democracy and a defender of the status quo. "The university," Kerr wrote, "is so many things to so many different people that it must, of necessity, be partially at war with itself."²⁷ How volatile that war could become Kerr would begin to discover the following year with the eruption of the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley. But the internal conflict over the ideals and purposes of the university would rise to new levels of intensity with the emergence of the Black Studies movement in late 1967.

The emergence of Black Studies as an issue on American college campuses challenged the Ivory Tower in three important ways. First and foremost, Black Studies challenged American higher education to open itself to real — not merely token — participation by African Americans. In this regard, Black Studies was an extension of the Civil Rights Movement, pressing colleges and universities to live up to the nation's democratic ideals, ideals of opportunity for advancement that had played such a key role in the tremendous expansion of college enrollments since the end of World War I. Black enrollment on white campuses had begun to grow after 1960 but the growth was painfully slow. The Black Studies movement provided a focal point for black activists' demands that white campuses recruit and retain increased numbers of African American students and faculty. Colleges and universities were forced to rethink who they admitted as students and by what standards they made their admission decisions. They were forced to reexamine how they

hired faculty and to consider whether the prevailing notions of scholarly qualifications were adequate.

The Black Studies movement also challenged deeply ingrained traditions of institutional process. It challenged the way academia decides what knowledge is worthy of being included in the curriculum, and it challenged the way that knowledge is pursued, organized and taught. Black Studies advocates looked at the curriculum of American higher education in the mid 1960s and found it singularly lacking in recognition of African American culture. In music, art, literature, sociology, history and other fields, the curriculum virtually ignored the contributions of African Americans and their role in American society. Advocates of Black Studies argued that African Americans had been ignored because all of the assumptions of academia — like the institution of the university itself — was deeply rooted in white, European culture. Black Studies challenged those assumptions and challenged academia to be more inclusive in the canons from which course syllabi and reading lists were drawn; Black Studies forced scholars to rethink the process and criteria by which literary works and other materials are selected for college curricula.

But the challenge to institutional process went well beyond the issue of canon development and selection. Black Studies also forced a rethinking of the academic structure of the university. Although the departmental structure that followed the emergence of specialized academic disciplines was a relatively new development in the nearly 800-year history of higher education, by 1967, the oldest disciplines had been established for sixty to eighty years, and

increased specialization had been the name of the game in higher education throughout the twentieth century. Advocates of Black Studies were seeking to establish an entirely new discipline that, because of its interdisciplinary nature, not only ran counter to the prevailing currents of increasing specialization but also impinged on the bureaucratic territory of several other established disciplines. Compounding the problems of inter-discipline and bureaucratic politics was the fact that even strong supporters of Black Studies disagreed on how the discipline should be defined — or whether it even constituted a separate discipline. And the norms of institutional process were further challenged by the fact that the movement for this new discipline was built on the power of political pressure brought to bear by black students, often through emotionally charged campus protests. Notwithstanding the fact that the earliest universities had been established by students — who dictated their faculty's terms of employment — since the advent of disciplinary departments, new disciplines had always been established through consensus, by groups of scholars who shared an interest in a particular area of specialization organizing and defining their own field of study. Departments had always grown out of the intellectual interests of the faculty; they had not previously been imposed by student demand. In short, Black Studies challenged the foundations of university process by questioning the entire structure of scholarly endeavor: what is researched, what is taught, and how the whole intellectual undertaking is organized.

In doing all this, Black Studies, confronted higher education with a third

profound challenge, a philosophical challenge: What is a university for? From the earliest European universities in the twelfth century until the early nineteenth century, the purpose of the university had generally been accepted to be simply the transmission of knowledge. The early university was where the children of the aristocracy and the economic elite — often the same thing — were sent to be taught the core knowledge, the established, immutable truths, they needed to know to lead society in their turn. The modern university that arose in the nineteenth century extended its sense of purpose to include the pursuit and discovery of new knowledge, though the thrust of higher education was still to prepare the children of the elite (which was expanding slightly to include the upper echelon of an emerging middle class) to lead society.

But Black Studies, at least as many of its advocates imagined the field, suggested a radical new possibility of purpose: to intentionally and aggressively work to change society. Whether its aim had been simply to transmit settled knowledge or to discover new knowledge, the university had generally held itself outside and above the fray of social action. That was, in essence, what made it the Ivory Tower. Black Studies advocates were unwilling to accept such aloofness as a given any longer. Regardless of the scholar's attempts at objectivity, they argued, the university was not so distanced and detached from the machinery of social policy as scholars wanted to believe. And the attempt to maintain distance and detachment worked to reinforce the social status quo and sustain the white European assumptions, values and traditions that had brought African slaves to America in the first place and had

excluded their descendants from a full share in American society for more than 350 years. The university, Black Studies advocates asserted, was inherently political; it was a full and active part of the society that had given it life, and could not be separated from that society. The question, they argued, was not whether the university should be political, but rather what should its politics be: to bolster and sustain the status quo, or to consciously work to build a better and more inclusive society? Black Studies challenged American colleges and universities to reexamine their entire mission: who they were for, how they operated and the very purpose of their existence.

The confrontations that arose over those questions were difficult, disconcerting and often painful, and many of the debates continue, more than thirty years later. But regardless of how specific issues that arose in those confrontations were resolved — or whether they persist, unresolved — the very act of struggling with them transformed the university in a profound way. The emergence of the Black Studies movement changed the intellectual calculus of academia. It became impossible any longer for colleges and universities to ignore the lack of scholarly attention that had been paid to African Americans. Arguments might rage over what constituted the best approach to correcting that problem or whether the efforts of one university or another were adequate; but on one level, it was almost irrelevant what solution a given institution chose.

The dramatic, but often overlooked, transformation came in the way that the demands raised by the black students who called for Black Studies prompted the vast majority of American colleges and universities to accept — in an

astonishingly short period of time — the proposition that *something* needed to be done. Moreover, that *something* clearly had to involve the intellectual core of the university's activities, not just the surface demographics of enrollments and employment; merely hiring more black faculty or admitting more black students to teach and be taught the same old white curriculum would not be enough. Some institutions did more than others. Some created independent Black Studies departments while others established more limited centers or programs; some sought to integrate intellectually by adding new courses in existing disciplines or simply by expanding the variety of texts and other materials used in their classes. Many scholars were inspired to devote new or reinvigorated efforts to research in the history and culture of African Americans. Few scholars could hold themselves completely aloof from the changing dialog and atmosphere on campus, and few institutions could afford the luxury of remaining entirely resistant to change.

Furor over the disruptive tactics of protest, inflammatory rhetoric suffused with rage and revolution, and provocative proposals that would have established blacks-only programs captured the attention of the media and the public. Anger, confrontation and chaos made for good television — engrossing, if not always edifying. But the untelevised revolution was the breathtaking and rapid shift in the fundamental assumptions of academia whereby African Americans (and thereafter other groups) could not only legitimately make demands *on* the university, but lay claim *to* the university. The Black Studies movement did not guarantee a particular role for African Americans in the

intellectual enterprise of higher education, but it did ensure that African Americans would occupy a distinct place in the *awareness* of the university. That such a profound change got little attention is not surprising given the tumult of the era. A farmer besieged by rising river waters may notice little but the strain of his battle to keep his home intact. Only after the torrents have receded — if then — is he apt to notice that the flood also brought with it renewed substance and fertility to the fields from which he draws his life.

Chapter 3

White Campus, Black Studies

To many white students, scholars and university administrators, Black Studies seemed to come almost out of nowhere in late 1968 and 1969. One day Black Studies was not even a blip on their radar screens, and the next, black students were demonstrating, occupying campus buildings, and demanding that colleges and universities establish Black Studies programs; not simply courses that included material about the African American experience, mind you, but full-fledged academic departments that would stand on equal footing with the established, traditional disciplines. Even well-meaning, white liberals on campus were taken aback by the vehemence of some of the protests, and many, if not most, were confused by the very concept of Black Studies. What did the term mean? What did it include? Wasn't it just a matter of inserting more material about African Americans in the traditional courses already being taught — acknowledging the 54th Massachusetts Infantry in Civil War history courses, for example, or adding more works by the likes of Phillis Wheatley, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Langston Hughes and Richard Wright in literature classes? Or were the advocates serious that Black

Studies represented a legitimate intellectual enterprise distinct from the traditional disciplines?

Even proponents were not in agreement about the definition of Black Studies, which added to the confusion. And the emergence of Black Studies from the field of student protest raised suspicions among many whites in academia that Black Studies was more about the demographics and diplomacy of racial integration than it was about scholarly endeavor. Even without the intense and emotionally charged influence of racial politics, few administrators and faculty members were prepared to take advice — much less direction — from students on what constituted a legitimate academic discipline or how the university's scholarly endeavors should be organized. Militant black students, for their part, tended to be impatient with any delay in institutional response to their demands, regardless of whether it stemmed from racist resistance or a genuine confusion about aims and means. The impatience was no surprise, of course, and not simply because the militant black students were young or unfamiliar with the traditional needs of institutional process. In truth, it was often impossible to tell the difference between racist resistance and genuine confusion, and beyond that, many of the militants saw the distinction as irrelevant because they considered the institutions inherently racist anyway and believed that any delay worked to the disadvantage of black people and to the advantage of the status quo. The militants were unwilling to have their dreams deferred any longer; they had no intention of becoming raisins in the sun.

But while many whites saw the demand for Black Studies as the fruit of recent developments in social protest, the roots of the Black Studies movement went much deeper and much farther back than the lunch counter sit-ins of the early 1960s or even the 1955-56 Montgomery bus boycott. African Americans had long placed great emphasis on education in general and on education about their own history and culture in particular. For well over half a century — inside and outside of academia — black intellectuals following the lead of such scholars as W.E.B. DuBois and Carter G. Woodson, had struggled to expand the body of knowledge about black history and to infuse that endeavor with a discipline that would achieve acceptance and respect in the intellectual world.

DuBois, who was the first African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard, began his groundbreaking studies of the history and sociology of African Americans in the 1890s, while still in graduate school. His doctoral dissertation, The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870, was an expansion of his master's thesis and earned him his doctorate in 1895. His faculty advisor, Albert Bushnell Hart, made arrangements to have the dissertation published in 1896 as the first volume in the Harvard Historical Studies series.¹ In 1899, DuBois published The Philadelphia Negro, a study of African American life in Philadelphia that provided statistics and analysis on such wide-ranging matters as crime, death rates, marital status and occupation. It was one of the first scientific sociological studies to be written by an American.² Hart was a strong supporter of DuBois, engineering his appearances at two conventions of the American

Historical Association and arranging for the publication of DuBois' work in the American Historical Review. Those appearances and publications "established precedents that would have no sequels for decades. But they symbolized the importance of the role of this black scholar in the emergence of Negro history as a research specialty."³ DuBois continued his examination of the African American life and history and continued to write passionately against the forces of racial oppression virtually until his death in 1963 at the age of 95.

Woodson was the second African American to earn a Ph.D. in history from Harvard — in 1912, seventeen years after DuBois. Though his research in graduate school did not focus on the history of African Americans, Woodson quickly turned his efforts in that direction after receiving his degree. In 1915, he published a monograph, The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861, which testified not only to his interest in the history of African Americans, but also to the length and the difficulty of the struggle African Americans had faced in obtaining education in the United States. In the fall of that same year, on Sept. 9, 1915, Woodson took a huge step forward in the study of African American history and culture by organizing the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History.⁴ Within four months, by January of 1916, the association was publishing a quarterly scholarly journal, the Journal of Negro History, which became an important forum for the publication of scholars interested in the nascent field of black history. In establishing the ASNLH and launching its journal, "Woodson created the black history movement."⁵

But before DuBois and Woodson, even before the Civil War, blacks had written about the African American history and culture. Some were former slaves, whose narratives of their personal experiences offered a detailed portrait of the realities of slave life and provided a perspective that was missing in the debates between Northern abolitionists and Southern apologists. Many of the early writers were ministers and much of their writing, especially in the antebellum period, was intended to justify emancipation. Few had significant scholarly training, and their work tended to be aimed more at building self-esteem among blacks and informing whites about the contributions and achievements of blacks than at scholarly investigation and analysis of the African American experience. But some of the works made important contributions to serious scholarship, most notably George Washington Williams' History of the Negro Race in America from 1619 to 1880, which was published in 1882 and has been called "the first scholarly account of the history of black Americans."⁶ And in 1913, just two years before Woodson organized the ASNLH, Arthur Schomburg, a self-trained historian and avid collector of documents, manuscripts and other materials bearing on African American history, called for colleges and universities to recognize and acknowledge the importance of the field:

We have reached the crucial period of our educational existence. . . . We have chairs of almost everything, and believe we lack nothing, but we sadly need a chair of Negro history. The white institutions have their chair of history; it is the history of their people and whenever the Negro is mentioned in the text books it dwindles down to a foot note. The white scholar's mind and heart is fired, because in the

temple of learning he is told how on the 5th of March, 1770, the Americans were able to beat the English; but to find Crispus Attucks it is necessary to go deep into special books. . .

Where is our historian to give us, our side view and our chair of Negro History to teach our people our own history. We are at the mercy of the "flotsam and jetsam" of the white writers.⁷

The efforts of DuBois and Woodson, particularly Woodson, paved the way for younger generations of black scholars — and some white scholars — to continue and expand the exploration of the African American experience. The years from 1920 to 1960 saw the emergence of a number of significant black historians, such as Rayford W. Logan, William Sherman Savage, Lorenzo Johnston Greene, Luther Porter Jackson, Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, Benjamin Quarles, Eric E. Williams and John Hope Franklin. Some notable white historians, such as Herbert Aptheker, C. Vann Woodward, Kenneth Stamp, David Brion Davis and Eugene Genovese also focused or began focusing their research on African Americans during this period.⁸ And yet, even as the numbers of scholars researching black history and their body of work were growing, little attention was being paid in white academia. Until the 1960s, acceptance of the idea that black history, black literature and black culture were subjects worthy of scholarly examination in the curriculum of higher education was limited mainly to traditionally black college campuses. Even there, material on African Americans generally was included in traditional classes, or became the focus of a few specialized courses, but was not organized into distinct programs or departments. In fact, the historically black colleges and universities have often taken sharp criticism from Black Studies advocates who

charged that those schools too thoroughly absorbed the patterns of white academia. Nathan Hare, who was the first director of the Black Studies Department at San Francisco State, wrote sarcastically in 1970 about the role of the historically black institutions. He mocked the worry, expressed by some, that the efforts of white universities to find qualified instructors for Black Studies programs would create a "brain drain" at black colleges and universities. "Just what brains they refer to I do not know," Hare wrote. "It is conceivable that these brains have been lying dormant all this time, but it is not likely in any case that they will suddenly come alive and function in an altogether different manner just because they migrate North to a white college."

Negro colleges should be setting the pace and providing models of scholarly excellence and inquiry into the problems of color . . . comprising laboratories for experimentation in the techniques and tactics of revolutionary change. But we do not believe in miracles. The Negro college is glued to the mores of its missionary origins. It is located invariably in the South, cemented to the prevailing cake of conservatism, and less free politically even than the typical white college there. Rather than address itself seriously to the solution of the problems of academia, the Negro college has been more inclined to ape and compound white trivia and miseducation.⁹

And in an analysis written twenty years after the Black Studies movement began, William E. Nelson Jr. charged that the historically black institutions were still lagging.

The institutionalization of the values, assumptions and methods of white social science has not been limited to the educational environment of predominately white universities. Historically Black institutions have slavishly imitated the Eurocentric emphasis of white dominated social science. In both public and private historically Black institutions,

curriculum programs in the social sciences have been, almost uniformly, mirror images of the curriculum designs emerging within the broader context of white social science inquiry and teaching.¹⁰

A few white universities had established African Studies centers, but as a rule those did not draw any direct connection between Africa and African Americans. It took nearly five decades after Woodson's creation of ASNLH for the dominant institutions and disciplines of white higher education to begin accepting the importance of African American history and culture. "For until well after mid-century — when the mainstream journals began to recognize the significance of the black past — the ASNLH and the JNH were the preeminent outlets for scholarly expression and institutionally personified the field."¹¹

The rise of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s began to change all that. The movement challenged discrimination against African Americans in all of the nation's social institutions. Many of the most noticeable and most violent battles of that struggle revolved around lunch-counter sit-ins, Freedom Riders, the Montgomery bus boycott — disputes involving matters of public accommodation. But from the beginning, education also was an important focal point for the movement. Starting with the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark ruling in Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954, public school integration became a central and volatile issue. In 1957, President Dwight Eisenhower underscored the importance of integrating the educational system by sending federal troops to Little Rock, Arkansas, to guarantee the right of black students to attend a previously all-white school. And it was not long before colleges and universities in the South — and across the country — were under intense

pressure to remove barriers that had long kept blacks out of higher education.

In the South, campus integration was met with overt defiance and violence by whites. Mississippi's white power structure, led by Governor Ross Barnett, struggled long and hard to prevent the enrollment of James Meredith at the University of Mississippi. U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy sent federal marshals to protect Meredith when he finally entered the university in the fall of 1962, but the campus erupted in rioting so severe that two people were killed and more than 100 of the marshals were injured. National Guard troops had to be called in to reinforce the marshals and ensure Meredith's enrollment. The following year, Alabama Governor George Wallace personally stood in the doorway of the University of Alabama's registration building to block two blacks from enrolling, despite a federal court order that they be admitted to the university. Wallace had mobilized his state's National Guard to support his act of defiance, but President John F. Kennedy federalized the Guard units and ordered them to enforce the court's ruling and protect the campus from disruptions. In the North, resistance was not so high-profile, but progress on integrating campuses was slow. In the fall of 1964, for example, the University of Michigan enrolled approximately 20,000 students, of whom about one percent were black. Nellie Varner, who later became a regent of the university, was one of 203 black students on the campus when she enrolled in a doctoral program in the fall of 1964.

There were so few black students on campus at that time that when we saw each other we'd speak. We didn't have to know each other. It was kind of like a country town. You

walked across campus or anywhere on the street and you saw another black student, you always said hi, you know. It was like, "Glad to see you here." . . .

In my graduate school . . . I was the black person, you know, in my classes. There just weren't many of us at that time. There were even fewer black faculty.¹²

Still, progress did occur, as the numbers and percentages of black students on white campuses grew slowly throughout the 1960s. Coherent, useful, national figures on enrollments of black college students — particularly at predominantly white institutions — are hard to come by for the 1960s and earlier periods. In large part, that is because until the debates over civil rights and minority enrollments of the mid-'60s, statistics were seldom gathered or kept in a way that reflected racial percentages on campus. Some extrapolation from various tabulations published by the U.S. Census Bureau, are needed to approximate the prevailing circumstances on white campuses in 1960. According to the 1980 edition of the Statistical Abstract of the United States, published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 227,000 black students were enrolled in degree-credit programs at the nation's colleges and universities in 1960. A footnote to that figure, however, indicates that the "black" category also included "races other than White," though there is no indication of how many Native Americans, Asians, Hispanics or others might be included in that number.¹³ Even if we assume that all 227,000 were indeed African American, other Census figures indicate that nearly 89,000 of those students were enrolled at predominantly black colleges and universities. That would mean there were, to estimate generously, about 138,000 black students at the nation's predominantly white colleges and universities in 1960. With a total

national college student population of about 3.5 million (not including the traditionally black institutions), that would mean black students accounted for a little less than four percent of the enrollments at predominantly white institutions in 1960. By the 1970 Census, statistics were being kept more clearly by racial groups. In that year, 522,000 black students were enrolled at colleges and universities nationwide, of whom about 208,000 were at predominantly black institutions. That means the number of black students at predominantly white institutions had more than doubled, to about 314,000. But because overall enrollments had swelled so dramatically, to a student population of more than 7.2 million (again, not including the traditionally black institutions), the enrollment of blacks on white campuses had risen only to about 4.4 percent of the total.¹⁴

But in addition to opening up educational institutions and pressing them to enroll more black students, the Civil Rights Movement also raised awareness — on both sides of the racial divide — of African Americans, their history and their culture. During the 1950s and on into the 1960s, black intellectuals began increasingly to express a black cultural nationalism — which also had long and deep cultural roots, through such figures as Marcus Garvey and Martin Delaney — that not only emphasized the study and appreciation of African American history and culture but called on African Americans to build self-reliance and to demand the greatest levels of independence and autonomy that could be achieved within American society. By the mid 1960s, the most radical black nationalists were advocating that white institutions be smashed to make true

liberation of black people possible. Although the publicity surrounding the Civil Rights Movement and the gains it had achieved had contributed much to increased awareness of and interest in African American culture, the nationalists increasingly rejected the integrationist ideals on which the Civil Rights Movement was based. The nationalists were not interested in assimilation because, in their view, assimilation necessarily meant that blacks had to give up parts of their culture to accept the forms and assumptions of the dominant white culture. Not only was that undesirable, in their view, but as a practical matter they considered it an impossibility because African Americans could never give up the central fact of existence that had always defined them and their place in American society — the darkness of their skin. No amount of embracing or copying white speech patterns, modes of dress, artistic tastes — or even educational attainment — could truly and fully assimilate African Americans into white society, because they could, in fact, never make themselves white. Nor should they want to. The black nationalists argued — often with revolutionary rhetoric and zeal — that the only true path for African Americans was to embrace themselves, their history and their culture and to insist that their culture be considered on and respected for its own merits. "To solve the problems of American society, Afro-Americans must first blackwash — revamp — the existing educational system and revolutionize America's youth — black, yellow, brown, and white," wrote Hare.

A black education which is not revolutionary in the current day is both irrelevant and useless. To remain impartial in the educational arena is to allow the current

partiality to whiteness to fester. Black education must be based on both ideological and pedagogical blackness. To implement a relevant black education we must overthrow and eliminate the bulk of current college and school officials who are unable to move with tidal change and shift the traditional gears of a business-as-usual complex. The racism rampant in America's schools, white and Negro, must be blacked out.¹⁵

For many of the militant black nationalists, the need to unify African Americans around their own cultural values and traditions and to reject white social structures and institutions was much more than a simple matter of bolstering self-esteem or achieving increased self-determination. For many it was a fundamental matter of survival. Michele Russell criticized even the revered DuBois for having such a "veneration for knowledge" that he accepted, and aspired to, the white view of what a classical education should be. She continued:

The contemporary articulation of this hope is that Harvard institute open admissions so that everyone will be allowed to participate in white ruling class culture. In DuBois's resolution, the part of ourselves we show white Americans to convince them that our use of time, air, and space won't be a threat is that part which strives to be like them at their best. Very flattering to the rulers. But what about the masses of black people who have neither leisure, nor reasonableness, nor shared ruling class tastes with which to bargain? How can we survive publicly?¹⁶

In terms of American institutions of higher education — especially the historically white colleges and universities, which was the vast majority — the black nationalists called for African Americans to insist on Black Studies programs that took the history and culture of black people seriously and that pursued knowledge about the African American experience with energy and

intellectual rigor. Perhaps even more important, the nationalists believed, was that such programs be given the respect, autonomy and resources that would put them on a par with other academic units within the university. Supporters of Black Studies often disagreed philosophically about the purpose of Black Studies and differed over structural matters and approaches to organizing Black Studies programs. The more conservative or integrationist supporters tended to emphasize the kind of scholarly approach that would win Black Studies respect in the academic world. Militant nationalists argued that the real purpose of Black Studies should be to uplift black people, and that Black Studies programs should be seen as a source of new, young black activists who would return to the off-campus black community with the organizational and technical skills needed to improve the quality of life in the ghettos of America. The most radical nationalists went so far as to assert that white scholars could not legitimately teach Black Studies courses and to insist on programs that excluded whites altogether. But all of the advocates were agreed that Black Studies programs would serve little purpose if they were not given the academic status and financial resources needed to assure their survival. The willingness of white institutions to grant that status and guarantee those resources were seen by black students, faculty and community supporters as benchmarks by which to judge a university's commitment, not just to Black Studies, but to the very presence of blacks in higher education.

By the mid 1960s, a few white colleges, sensitized by the Civil Rights Movement, were beginning to include more information about African

Americans or works by African American authors in their courses, though the effort was fraught with issues of sensitivity. At Michigan State University in the fall of 1968, for example, an introductory sociology course included on its reading list The Autobiography of Malcolm X, not because the book offered insight into the Nation of Islam or Malcolm X's black nationalist philosophy, but because the chapters covering his youthful criminal career were a compelling description of deviant social behavior.¹⁷ A few white universities had begun to offer a handful of courses concerning black people and their history. But it was not until 1968, when San Francisco State College established a Black Studies Department, that a formal program in Black Studies appeared on a predominantly white U.S. college campus.¹⁸

Given the fact that Black Studies — not to mention black students — were so new to the nation's white campuses, it is remarkable how quickly such programs took root. The debate over Black Studies was just beginning to take shape in late 1967 as newly organized black student groups at campuses such as San Francisco State and Yale started pressing administrations to institute Black Studies programs. Black students, who only recently had begun enrolling in significant numbers at predominantly white colleges and universities, often found themselves isolated within the institutions and alienated by curricula that took almost no cognizance of black people. Black students organized for a sense of community and support under names like, Black Student Association and Black Students Union, and began demanding that those institutions expand their curriculum to reflect a broader world, a world

that included African Americans, their literature, culture and history. The movement took on greater intensity and urgency in the spring of 1968, following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.¹⁹ A few schools, such as San Francisco State, the University of Michigan,²⁰ and Yale,²¹ adopted or began designing Black Studies programs in the fall of 1968, but the great profusion of such programs did not occur until 1969.

Within a scant five years, however, the number of Black Studies programs on American college campuses had swelled into the hundreds. In Black Studies: Threat or Challenge?, a survey of Black Studies programs published in 1973, Nick Aaron Ford produced a list of 218 colleges and universities that had established Black Studies programs. The list, which Ford carefully identifies as incomplete, includes a variety of major universities (such as UCLA, Rutgers, Cornell, Duke, Harvard, Indiana, Yale, Michigan, North Carolina, Mississippi and Ohio State), but also a range of smaller four-year colleges (such as Ball State, Bowling Green State, Colgate, Dartmouth, Iowa State, Western Michigan, and Montana-Missoula), and even some two-year colleges (such as Wayne County Community College in Detroit; Antelope Valley College in California; and Manhattan Community College in New York). The programs also were widely distributed around the country.²² Other estimates pegged the numbers of Black Studies programs even higher. Robert L. Allen reported that by 1971, "some 500 schools provided full-scale Black Studies programs," and cited another researcher's estimate that nearly 1,300 colleges offered at least one Black Studies course.²³ Yet another estimate suggested that as many as 800

Black Studies programs were in operation by the early 1970s.²⁴

The number of programs, obviously, can vary dramatically, depending on how a Black Studies program is defined. A university could — and some did — simply pull together a handful of courses that were already being taught, add more content about African Americans, rename the courses to reflect the new emphasis and call that a Black Studies program. At the other end of the spectrum were programs that constituted stand-alone academic departments offering dozens of newly designed courses and enabling students to pursue an academic major, or at least a concentration, in Black Studies. Some programs focused entirely on academic study and research, while other programs emphasized involvement with the off-campus black community. Definitions of Black Studies abounded in the early years of program development (and definition debates continue to rage), as did forms of organizational structure. Because there were few established models to draw from, and because each campus was responding to the needs of its own political situation, institutional character and academic structure, the result was chaotic and the impact was enduring. As Darlene Clark Hine reported in her analysis of the Black Studies movement published in 1990 by the Ford Foundation:

Few of these early endeavors were the result of careful and deliberate planning and analysis. Typically, they were established in response to political exigencies rather than intellectual and academic imperatives. These and other factors contributed to ongoing structural and organizational diversity. Today it seems that no two Black Studies programs are alike. Their diversity is evidenced in faculty size and composition, relations with university administrators and more traditional departments,

curriculum, degrees offered, budgets, spatial resources, range of special programs, and the nature of their community outreach.²⁵

A few of the programs were established as full-fledged departments, most notably at Harvard. Most, however, were set up as some form of research center or interdisciplinary academic program. Some had a great deal of authority and control over the faculty who taught within their programs; others had to rely on existing departments to loan faculty to the program — faculty whose advancement and tenure prospects usually depended on the lending department.

Interwoven with the questions of how quickly and in what form Black Studies programs emerged are questions about what motivated white university administrators in their handling of the Black Studies issue. Many white administrators clearly were sympathetic to the aims of the Civil Rights Movement, and oftentimes they agreed with the critique of black students that academia had ignored black people — in enrollment, in instruction and in research. Some were not merely willing but eager to increase the openness of their institutions and saw that as a way of strengthening the entire society. William R. Keast, for example, who was president of Wayne State University in Detroit when the issue of Black Studies arose on that campus following the devastating Detroit riot of 1967, worked long and hard to make the university more reflective of the nation's and the world's cultural diversity. Even after negotiations to establish a Black Studies college within the university foundered over black students' demands that they retain control, Keast

cooperated and supported the students' efforts to set up an independent program off-campus.

[W]e had all this ferment of interest in correcting our university's — most universities' — woeful inattention to the most salient aspects of the life and history of blacks in American and in the world generally. It was, and indeed remains, a pretty sparsely populated area, and every step forward is still taken against a hell of a lot of pressure . . .

I make no effort whatsoever to conceal my enthusiasm for this whole business. The testimony to that is the amount of time I spent on it. . . . I wanted to see something done, something happen. We had an enormous amount of energy and interest and there was a need. The question was what are you going to do and how are you going to do it. ?²⁶

Other whites in academe were intensely skeptical of, if not outright opposed to the efforts of students to make the university campus a focal point for social reform, though it is often difficult to be certain of the reasons. Bureaucracy is naturally resistant to change, and even well-meaning white officials, acculturated by white society to accept the foundational assumptions of white academic institutions, had difficulty perceiving the biases that were built into the system. White scholars, for example, who defended the university's need to support academic "standards," seemed not to recognize that there was a sound basis for questioning the objectivity and fairness of those standards. Whether the lack of recognition was sincere — perceiving our own, deeply internalized assumptions can be extraordinarily difficult — or a ploy to deflect the demand for Black Studies, the result was the same: resistance. There were enough plausible and/or legitimate objections stemming from university tradition and administrative process that racist attitudes did not lack for

respectable disguise. It is impossible to imagine that racial prejudice did not play a significant role, though most white administrators, regardless of their private views, were certainly aware enough and politically astute enough to avoid overtly racist language in their public statements.

And yet, for all the resistance, Black Studies programs quickly proliferated. Notwithstanding the genuine idealism of some administrators, the dominant reason for the rapid growth of the programs was politics. Even the most sincere of college presidents shuddered at the thought of armed student protests, like the highly publicized black student sit-in at Cornell, and was eager to avert the sort of tumult that disrupted San Francisco State for an entire academic year. That eagerness to avoid confrontation and ease conflict led to the creation of many programs that were poorly planned, ill-defined and inadequately supported — both financially and philosophically — within the institutions. In a 1982 postscript to The Uses of the University, Clark Kerr — who was president of the University of California at Berkeley at the height of the student protest movement — dismissed Black Studies and similar programs as failures imposed on academia by politics.

Some changes of the 1960's were based not on academic but on political concerns and were forced into practice by student pressure, changes such as programs in Black studies, Native American studies, and Hispanic studies. Faculty members generally never liked them; in fact, barely tolerated them. Born in the passion of student activism, they have mostly withered, or at least wilted, in the silent embrace of faculty committees.²⁷

In later editions of the book, Kerr revised his assessment of the endurance of

Black Studies, but not his appraisal of initial institutional response. The lack of commitment was not invisible to the supporters of Black Studies. And they did not chalk up that lack of commitment to the obtuseness of white administrators or to mere indifference. The noted African American scholar of slavery, John W. Blassingame, far from a radical on the Black Studies issue, wrote:

"The reasoning behind many of the black studies programs is more sinister than I have indicated. It is clear that in many cases predominantly white schools have deliberately organized ill-conceived programs because they are intended solely for Negro students. In short, a number of institutions are not seriously committed to Afro-American studies.²⁸

Kenneth B. Clark noted the potential for administrative manipulation even as he attacked what he considered the misguided efforts of militant black students who were demanding blacks-only Black Studies programs.

If a university administration can restore harmony and the image of innovation by a no-strings-attached financial grant to a separate black studies program that may cover a few salaries or subsidize a gas station, it need not move to transform itself into a genuinely nonracial institution dedicated to developing human beings and to helping them develop effective strategies for fundamental social change. No more power is granted than is necessary to yield.²⁹

But however many Black Studies programs there were, and however they may have been organized, they owed their existence in great measure to the strength of black student organization and protest. Although 1969 often is remembered as a year when America's consciousness was dominated by the war in Vietnam and the anti-war protests that convulsed campuses across the United States, at least one study indicates that demonstrations demanding

Black Studies programs were much more common. According to a survey by the Urban Research Corporation, there were 292 major student protests on 232 campuses in the first six months of 1969. Black recognition issues were raised in 49 percent of those protests, compared with war-related issues, which were raised in 22 percent of the protests. And while those black recognition issues covered a range of specifics, from increasing numbers of black students and faculty, to ending discrimination on campus, to general demands that blacks be honored by the institutions, 32 percent of the protests called specifically for more Black Studies courses or Black Studies centers.³⁰

The black students who led those demonstrations had learned well the lessons of social activism; in many cases, long before they ever set foot on a college campus. Many black students had already been active in civil rights protests, some before they even reached their teens. Stephen Lythcott, a student at Antioch College, who took on Kenneth B. Clark — a trustee of the college and an important figure in the Civil Rights Movement — during the debate over Antioch's Black Studies institute, took part in lunch-counter sit-ins in Oklahoma City in 1958, when he was 8 years old. By the time he was 12 he was attending NAACP conventions.³¹ If they had not all marched or rallied or sat-in at lunch counters, or participated in Freedom Rides, nearly all were related to or knew someone who had. They had learned from watching their elders how to organize protests and present demands, and how to dramatize and publicize their efforts. They had also learned from observing the campus protests of white radical students just a few years earlier, as Roger A. Fischer

argues in "Ghetto and Gown: The Birth of Black Studies."

The wave of campus confrontations that began at the Berkeley campus of the University of California in 1964 was essentially a white phenomenon, but it provided watchful black militants with an excellent practical education in the tactics of disruption. From such white radicals as Mario Savio, they learned that a great university could be literally immobilized by boycotts, sit-ins, and the "liberation" of administration buildings. They discovered the awesome secret of student power, that the university was pathetically vulnerable to the pressures that could be brought to bear upon it by a relatively small cadre of well organized, deeply dedicated student revolutionaries. Blacks began to organize, and soon groups known by such titles as the United Black Students, the Association of African and Afro-American Students, the Onyx Society, the Soul Students Advisory Council, and the Black Students Union appeared on campus after campus.³²

By the fall of 1967, those black student organizations on campuses as varied as Yale, San Francisco State and Wayne State University in Detroit were beginning to pressure white administrations to create black studies programs.

It is interesting to note, however, that even though Fischer is correct that the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley and many of the campus disruptions that soon followed were, at heart, the activities of white students, those white students drew much of their inspiration — and in some cases, experience — from the Civil Rights Movement. In Freedom Summer, Doug McAdam describes the influence that the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964 had on the events at Berkeley the ensuing fall. First of all, McAdam writes, most of the white students from Berkeley who participated in the summer project were active in Berkeley's Free Speech Movement.

Of the twenty-one volunteers known to have returned to Cal

for the fall semester, twelve show up on the list of those arrested in connection with the December 2-3 sit-in in Sproul Hall. Moreover, two of the returning volunteers played central roles in the unfolding conflict. Steven Weissman emerged as one of the principal strategists of the Free Speech forces. But it was Mario Savio, in his role as principal spokesperson for the movement, who emerged from the conflict as the first white activist "star" of the Sixties.³³

But beyond simple matters of personnel, McAdam draws key parallels between the rhetoric and tactics used by the white students at Berkeley and the approaches they had learned in the summer voter registration project led by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Although SNCC included both black and white students (and non-students), it was led primarily by blacks and had its origins on the historically black college campuses of the South. The focus of SNCC's efforts had been predominantly on waging battles for desegregation and civil rights off-campus.³⁴ In bringing the organizing principles and tactics of SNCC to bear on campus issues, Berkeley's white students saw themselves consciously operating in the tradition of the Civil Rights Movement. The Berkeley students set up "freedom classes," adopted a decision-making style based on consensus similar to that used by SNCC, and sang freedom songs from the Mississippi project during their own demonstrations. And of course, the sit-in became a standard tactic.

That we now regard the sit-in as a kind of obligatory feature of any serious demonstration obscures the fact that black students reclaimed it as a tactic only four years prior to the conflict at Berkeley. It is a measure of the Free Speech forces' identification with the civil rights movement, then, that the sit-in was the principal tactic employed during the events at Berkeley. . . . [T]here were five major sit-ins over the course of the three-month conflict.³⁵

Savio, himself, testified to the connection:

Last summer I went to Mississippi to join the struggle there for civil rights. This fall I am engaged in another phase of the same struggle, this time in Berkeley. . . . In Mississippi an autocratic and powerful minority rules, through organized violence, to suppress the vast, virtually powerless majority. In California, the privileged minority manipulates the university bureaucracy to suppress the students' political expression.³⁶

Black students just beginning their own organizing efforts on predominantly white college campuses took careful note of the Free Speech Movement and subsequent campus protests by white students. They observed and analyzed the weak points of university structure and gauged the relative effectiveness of protest tactics. However, black student protest also was shaped significantly by the students' connections with the off-campus black community. At campuses where black students were relatively isolated, with no substantial, nearby black community, the influence was less noticeable. But at some universities in urban settings, or where black students had ready access to an off-campus black community and black institutions, the influence was important.

At Wayne State University in Detroit, for example, black campus activists routinely consulted with leaders of the city's black community. Lonnie Peek was a founding co-chairman of the Association of Black Students at Wayne State in the fall of 1967. He had just enrolled in a master's degree program after two years of teaching at Detroit high schools. Early that fall, Wayne State was embroiled in a controversy over a symposium on racism that the university sponsored as a response to the riot that had torn the city just three months

earlier. Strenuous objections arose, however, that the university had excluded blacks in planning the symposium. The controversy led to creation of ABS, but Peek recalled the controversy went well beyond the campus.

During the latter part of the summer of '67, it was decided that there wasn't any community input into the formation of the Black Symposium, so community activists decided they wanted to boycott it and they organized inside of Wayne State. Right prior to me going on campus, a day prior, I had a meeting with [community and labor activists] Grace and Jimmy Boggs, Frank Joyce, several others, more revolutionary type individuals and they told me about boycotting the symposium. And I says, . . . when I get to Wayne State, yeah, I'll do whatever I can do.³⁷

Peek was thrust into the spotlight while taking part in a demonstration against the university's symposium. A white student identified Peek to reporters as a spokesman for the black students and in response to the reporters' questions, Peek said he represented the Association of Black Students with 700 members, a group he then felt compelled to start organizing.³⁸ The symposium protest was the launching pad.

[W]hat happened was that that was the first negotiation with the university. . . . And about two or three months later, we had our own symposium. We brought in national people . . . It was the first time black students at Wayne State had been involved in an event. That was the organizational catalyst. That allowed me to organize ABS because we had an issue.³⁹

An issue that had been defined, at least initially, by off-campus black community leaders.

Intense conflict and confrontation were not the pattern everywhere, of course. Those campuses where major protests did play out tended to get the lion's

share of the attention, but many of the nation's smaller colleges and universities established Black Studies programs without violence or great disruptions. Manning Marable, who was founding director of Colgate University's Africana and Hispanic Studies Program from 1983 to 1986 and was chairman of the Department of Black Studies at Ohio State University from 1987 to 1989, observed in his introduction to Dispatches from the Ebony Tower,

In truth, the militant student confrontations experienced at Cornell, Harvard, Berkeley, and other major research universities that initiated black studies departments was not always the norm. At many private liberal arts colleges and smaller state universities modest African American studies interdisciplinary programs were frequently started without controversy or conflict. Most liberal white faculty in the late 1960s and early 1970s were prepared to accept black studies as a legitimate part of the college curriculum. However, they opposed the notion that the black experience could only be researched or taught by African Americans or that whites should be excluded from black studies classes or black cultural centers. They rejected what they felt was the highly political content of black studies and sought to steer the new programs toward traditional standards of white scholarship.⁴⁰

And yet, that does not diminish the impact of those black students who did protest. The images of black protest carried by the mass media — especially incendiary situations like the gun-carrying black students at Cornell — left a powerful impression even at small institutions. No college president was eager to see similar protests on his own campus, and the black students were quick to recognize and use the administrators' fears to keep the university's feet to the fire. Peek, for example, did not shy away from manipulating

institutional fears in his negotiations with Wayne State. He told the campus newspaper in January 1969 that the university needed occasional prodding: "Whenever they balk at one of our proposals . . . We just say, 'Now look, you guys just had a riot here and none of us wants a new one, do we?'"⁴¹ Moreover, the leadership in academia of major research universities — such as Harvard, Yale, Michigan and Cornell — that were prodded by black student activists to establish Black Studies programs is undeniable. Once institutions such as those had established programs, it not only became harder to argue that Black Studies was academically illegitimate, it became more likely that other institutions would establish programs to keep up with the latest developments in higher education. In any event, the influence of the militant black students who pushed for the creation of Black Studies programs went far beyond the confines of their own campuses.

The establishment of Black Studies on white campuses did not come easily. Launched in protest and confrontation, Black Studies generated heated opposition on both sides of the racial divide. White opponents often challenged the legitimacy of Black Studies as an academic discipline, arguing that it was merely a clumsy combination of such existing disciplines as history, sociology, anthropology and English; information on black culture and history, they argued, should simply be added to existing courses in the traditional disciplines. Some black scholars also opposed Black Studies — at least in some of its manifestations — fearing that such programs would lead to renewed segregation, shift black scholars into academic ghettos, and

undercut the struggles and gains of the Civil Rights Movement. Even on campuses that quickly agreed to do something in the area of Black Studies, agreement over the precise nature and shape of a Black Studies program was much harder to come by. Issues of academic structure and status for Black Studies generated intense conflict throughout the organizational period between 1968 and 1973 — and on many campuses lingered to become a focal point of renewed black student protest twenty years later. But the debate over whether Black Studies programs *would* be created was settled, in effect, in 1969 when Harvard, Yale, Michigan, Cornell and other influential institutions accepted — and acted on — the fundamental proposition that *something* needed to be done.

Arguments over what that something was or should be raged for years, and re-erupted periodically over the ensuing decades; that was the televised revolution, the political turmoil and confrontation that imprinted itself so deeply on public perceptions of the issue. Often lost in the uproar, however, was the untelevised revolution — the recognition that a profound watershed had been crossed. However inadequate, wrong-headed, underfunded or perfunctory their responses may have been, America's colleges and universities were, at last, recognizing and addressing an important void in the intellectual fabric of higher education. The establishment of Black Studies programs — however limited their resources and however grudging their acceptance by the white academic community — constituted an acknowledgment that African Americans had been excluded from and largely ignored by America's scholarly institutions for three

hundred years. Creation of Black Studies programs marked a profound change in the intellectual calculus of American higher education. By their very presence as a focal point for scholarship and political debate, Black Studies programs ensured that the concerns and interests of African Americans could no longer be so easily and comfortably ignored by academia. A noticeable and clearly identifiable portion (however meager) of the university's intellectual and financial resources was now devoted (however unwillingly) to the examination (however enthusiastic) of African American history and culture.

There was no going back. In fact, Black Studies became the leading edge of an even broader wedge that pried open the mental door of the Ivory Tower to include Women's Studies, Chicano Studies, Native American Studies, Gay and Lesbian Studies and other such programs. It is a truism — but one worth recalling — that a mind, once stretched to accommodate a new idea never returns to its original shape. Black Studies changed the shape of the university's mind, a fact easily overlooked amid the emotional strains of the stretching.

Chapter 4

Standards, Structure and Curriculum

Once the question of including Black Studies was resolved — and it tended to be resolved in the affirmative fairly quickly — colleges and universities began to grapple in earnest with the practical considerations raised by that resolution. The simple presence of Black Studies challenged the old patterns of academic business in a variety of ways. First of all, while Black Studies was not directly connected to the admissions process, it did underscore the question of who would be accepted as part of the university — both as students and as faculty. Black Studies programs were sometimes seen as a way of attracting greater numbers of black students and faculty to universities that were eager to demonstrate their social responsibility and responsiveness. At other times, Black Studies programs became focal points — as a critical mass of black students and faculty coalesced around the programs — for pressuring universities to do more to attract and enroll increasing numbers black students and to hire more black faculty. The programs also became lightning rods for the debate over who was qualified to be a student or faculty member. Militant black students and faculty members charged that traditional measures of qualification — for both students and faculty — were often unfair or even racist

and limited the ability of the university to both attract students and hire faculty who truly understood what was necessary to teach Black Studies courses.

Beyond the question of who could be a part of the university, Black Studies programs also forced scholars to rethink the scope of what was being taught in courses throughout the curriculum. Some institutions responded first by dusting off old courses in literature or sociology or history and giving them a Black Studies spin by simply adding new material. That was clearly the quickest and cheapest way into Black Studies. But it also required scholars — many of them white and many unfamiliar with African American culture — to think about and identify those new materials. The process generated enormous debates that continue to the present day, particularly in the humanities, over what should be included in the literary canon taught by institutions of higher education. It also generated enormous amounts of new scholarship as researchers, both black and white, turned their attention to areas of African American culture that had long been ignored by white academia.

Black Studies also challenged academia to reconsider its traditional notions of disciplinary and departmental structure. The frequent demands of militant advocates that Black Studies programs be established as departments — as intellectual and structural equals of the established disciplines — forced the university to reexamine the idea of what constitutes a discipline and to reconsider how knowledge is accepted and formalized in the administrative structure of the institution. In the case of Black Studies, that process was

complicated by the fact that Black Studies advocates often saw themselves as standing intentionally outside the existing pattern of disciplinary formation.

While the existing disciplines had developed over decades through a process of increasing specialization, Black Studies advocates demanded immediate recognition of their field and sought to define it as an interdisciplinary endeavor, an undertaking that aimed to break down barriers between the traditional disciplines by working against the prevailing trend toward more specialized intellectual inquiry.

So the advent of Black Studies posed at least three general challenges to the intellectual and administrative processes of the university. Black Studies questioned how the university decides who can study or teach there. Black Studies questioned what is taught and how decisions about what is taught are made and justified. And Black Studies questioned how the university recognizes and reifies knowledge through its structural processes of disciplinary differentiation and endorsement.

In The Academic Revolution, Christopher Jencks and David Riesman describe the rise of modern American universities in the context of an "organizational revolution" that for the first time generated truly national institutions. These institutions — whether in business, government, education, social affiliation or other areas — were far more expansive than those that had existed before. They tended to centralize power, allowing a small number of individuals in key positions to exercise control over increasing numbers of people. These new institutions both resulted from and reinforced a broad

social trend toward an increasingly specialized division of labor. The development of the university, for example, was intimately connected with the differentiation, in the 1880s and 1890s, of academic disciplines and the establishment of the departmental structure that still dominates university organization. With these new institutions emerged new ways of sorting and grouping people for the purposes of institutional organization and management, which evolved into the idea of the meritocracy.

The old nineteenth-century divisions between Irish and Yankee, Baptist and Episcopalian, North and South, country and city seem to be losing their significance. Even the struggles between Negroes and whites and between Catholics and non-Catholics, while certainly far from settled, strike us as legacies of a vanishing past rather than as necessary features of the contemporary American system. This system is increasingly meritocratic . . . It tries to divide people according to competence, interest, and achievement rather than according to origin. . . . While there are still plenty of exceptions to the general meritocratic rule, and plenty of reasons for ambivalence about its increasing acceptance, it seems to us an inevitable feature of highly organized societies with a very specialized division of labor.¹

Jencks and Riesman argued that the increasing influence of the meritocratic ideal also emphasized and reinforced what they called "the national upper-middle class style: cosmopolitan, moderate, universalistic, somewhat legalistic, concerned with equity and fair play, aspiring to neutrality between regions, religions and ethnic groups." They acknowledged that those values were far from uniformly accepted or practiced, and that there were serious weaknesses in the meritocratic ideal itself, exemplified by "poor people's failure to meet 'objective' middle-class standards." But, they argued, "the ethic

we are describing, like the institutions which encourage it, is growing stronger rather than weaker."²

Black Studies offered a powerful critique of the meritocratic ideal and the middle-class values on which it was built. Black Studies advocates were quick to point out that the meritocracy's values weren't merely middle-class, they were *white* middle-class, and black students and scholars were at a decided disadvantage when it came to being judged by the "standards" derived from those values. At the 1968 Yale symposium, for example, Gerald A. McWorter argued that the ideal of scholarly detachment was based on white values and assumptions that blacks did not share.

I find here that people have different sets of assumptions and are asking black intellectuals rather than to rationalize positions on basic assumptions *black* people hold, you're asking that black people make rationalizations of positions based on the assumptions that *white* people hold. I could also make the same point when we raised the whole question of science and ideology: the "race relations" debate that white people carry on about "science" and "ideology" is something that we feel, basically, is a closed question. Whatever you do, the *fact* is that this is a racist country and that the scientists who have operated in this country, by and large, have been racists. Intentionally or unintentionally, the fact is that they have functioned as such and so have their theories. This is something that we have reacted to on the basis of survival needs. So, when black social scientists speak, if white people are confused as to whether or not they are speaking ideologically or as "detached scientists," that's not something that black people are concerned with.³

At the entry level of admissions policy, those white assumptions and standards tended to reinforce the status quo, enabling white students whose cultural experiences had immersed them in those middle-class values easier entry

than black students who came from different cultural backgrounds.

Standardized admissions tests, such as the SAT and ACT, which had been increasingly used in the admissions process since the 1950s as an "objective" criterion, came under attack by critics who said the tests were culturally biased and an inaccurate measure of students' abilities. And if those middle-class values did, as Jencks and Riesman argued, "aspire to neutrality" in racial matters, it was clearly an aspiration, not an accomplishment. Universities, Eldon L. Johnson argued in "Race and Reform," had "sown the whirlwind — generally without malice but surely with colossal indifference. Their record in educating black youth is scandalous. If black youth were not often enough 'qualified' for admission, the universities, as vaunted social critics, said little enough about it and did even less."⁴

Johnson pointed out that blacks accounted for slightly more than 2 percent of enrollments in predominantly white colleges and universities and only 1 percent of graduate school enrollments, whereas they accounted for 12 percent of the "college-eligible age group." Half of all black college students still attended predominantly black institutions, he wrote, and there were "more foreign students than native blacks in the predominantly white American universities."⁵ The problem was not the abilities of black students, he said, but the standards of an admissions process whose assumptions guaranteed that *only* those who already exemplified the system would be chosen to participate in it. The Black Studies movement confronted higher education with the necessity of rethinking that process. Johnson asserted:

[T]he black presence challenges the university as no other criticism has. It challenges the idea that an institution of higher education derives its uniqueness from being a meritocracy. Merit, yes, but by what standard? Grades? Tests? Conventionality? The challenge is twofold: whether there are not other equally or more relevant criteria which should at least be combined with time-honored tradition and whether the right objective is being served. . . . Awareness is at last fixed on the circularity of confining the system to those who already fit the system, thus educating the risk-free.⁶

But while the students and faculty members involved with Black Studies programs frequently engaged in debates and protests aimed at forcing their universities to admit more black students, Black Studies was not, essentially a tool or function of the admissions process. By providing a unifying focal point for black students and faculty, Black Studies programs supported the drive to challenge admissions standards, but the programs became much more directly involved in the question of standards when it came to the hiring of new faculty members. From the outset, faculty selection for Black Studies programs was problematic. White universities generally had few faculty members who specialized in African American history or culture, and many of the existing specialists were white, which diminished their ability to gain acceptance from the militant black students who were demanding that Black Studies programs be established. Moreover, many of those specialists — black as well as white — were reluctant to give up their existing positions or risk damaging their career advancement in their current disciplines to commit themselves to a new, poorly defined field that as yet offered little security or assurance of substantial development. Black Studies programs were generally being given little

budgetary support and even less institutional stature. Only a handful were established as full academic departments, and a young ambitious scholar who accepted a joint appointment between his home department and a Black Studies program ran the risk of splitting his or her focus in ways that could damage prospects for advancement and tenure.

And if the existing, internal supply of faculty was small, the external market of new doctorates with appropriate specialties was extremely tight — in absolute numbers, but especially relative to the swelling demand for Black Studies instructors. African American scholars were at a particular premium; demand for black scholars in general was growing as white institutions sought to integrate their faculties, but the demand was especially intense when it came to Black Studies programs. The black students whose protests had launched the programs in the first place often demanded that black instructors teach Black Studies courses. The students regularly disputed the ability of white instructors to teach about — or even understand — the experience of African Americans. For the university, then, the hiring of African American faculty for Black Studies programs was important for two reasons: African American scholars were a key source of expertise and interest in the academic subject matter that was the basis for the programs, and African American faculty were necessary to establish the programs' credibility with black students, thereby reducing the likelihood of student-led disruptions of the university.

But the supply of African American scholars was severely limited. As Johnson pointed out, the numbers of blacks in graduate schools was

extremely small, and as those young scholars received their doctorates they found themselves increasingly sought after by business and government, not just by institutions of higher education. All of America's institutions were under pressure to integrate, to recruit and promote African Americans in areas where they had historically been excluded, so the competition to hire African Americans with advanced degrees was often intense. That meant that the demand for Black Studies faculty far exceeded the ready supply. Some white institutions worked to recruit African American professors from historically black colleges and universities, to the point where some observers raised concerns about a "brain drain" that was harming the black institutions.⁷ But the pressure to find and hire black faculty for Black Studies programs also forced colleges and universities to hire — or consider hiring — instructors whose credentials did not include the traditionally expected terminal degree. This had an impact on not just the make-up of the faculty, but also on efforts to develop standard curricula for Black Studies programs, as Darlene Clark Hine described in her report for the Ford Foundation:

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Black Studies units simply drew into [their] domain whoever happened to be available and willing to join them. Thus, little uniformity in curriculum could be achieved across the country. With the economic difficulties and retrenchment of the late 1970s, many Black Studies faculties declined in size, producing an even more fragmented curriculum. To ensure that existing courses were offered on a reasonable and routine basis, Black Studies administrators had to rely heavily on part-time, visiting, or temporary appointees. Most often those available to accept such positions were in the creative arts — musicians, dancers, poets, and fiction writers.⁸

The debate over what constituted adequate credentials for teaching in a Black Studies program was often heated. Black student militants and nationalist intellectuals argued that the insistence by universities on strictly academic credentials not only excluded from consideration many potential teachers who were extremely knowledgeable about the African American experience, but also put blacks in the position of having to win a questionable stamp of approval from racist white institutions before they could teach about subject matter they knew intimately from personal experience. One of the black student organizers of the Yale symposium in 1969 explained what many of the students had in mind:

We want an opportunity to learn about things that are relevant to our existence and we want to learn in the best possible ways, experiencing the expertise of *all* those who have something to offer. This means exposure in the classroom to men of controversial qualification — on the one hand, eminently qualified to instruct because of *what* they know; yet, on the other hand, grossly underqualified because of *how* they came to know it. Perhaps faculties and administrations will view demands for such men as less of a dilemma if they realize this one central fact: as much as black students repudiate those “academically qualified” purveyors of the traditional white racist perspective, they do not want to see the void which is perpetuated by these “scholars” existence filled with black charlatans who have little to offer besides their “front.” We look for no pedants, either black or white, with magic formulas; instead we look for men who can offer a range of information and insight that effectively provides alternatives from which we can choose. Since we are dealing with matters which have been long ignored or abused by whites, while being studied and experienced by blacks, it should be no surprise that most of the experts — though without degrees — whom we find will be black. If knowledge is as important to the university as the “Ph.D. count” of its faculty, then it will work with its black students

on this issue rather than raise unreasoned and overemotional objections.⁹

Debates over suggestions that universities hire individuals without the usual academic credentials raised the thorny issue of what standards are used to evaluate a person's qualifications and who determines the standards are. But those debates also took place in an atmosphere charged by black students' distrust of the white institutions and the values embodied in the institutional process, and by university administrators' resistance to students' demands for power and control. The students did not trust the university to select the appropriate faculty; the university was unwilling to let students make the selections. At the Yale symposium, Nathan Hare described one such dispute:

At San Francisco State College recently there arose a contention between the black students and the white administrators because the white department of history wanted a white boy with a Ph.D. from a major university and a string of scholarly publications in "learned journals" (as they kept stressing), whereas the black students wanted a black fellow who hadn't any degrees at all but who knew more about African history than the white historian. This much was admitted by the white professor himself and it was known that the black applicant had spent two years, for example, searching through the Schomburg Collection: So there was a lightweight confrontation, with both sides calling the other's applicant "unqualified." The black students felt that if a white professor of history couldn't understand that it's anachronistic in the present day — just now anyway at this particular point in the black-consciousness movement, though maybe not ten or twenty years from now — for a white professor to teach black militant students black history, then this white professor doesn't quite understand the recent black movement. Consequently he doesn't understand black history, and therefore he's unqualified to teach black history, regardless of how many Ph.D.s and publications he has in learned journals.¹⁰

But the insistence of the more militant nationalists that traditional academic credentials not be considered necessary met strong resistance among black as well as white scholars. Most administrators and faculty acknowledged that in some cases, where the potential instructor had specific and significant non-academic expertise, lack of an advanced degree should not bar an individual from teaching at the university. But the exceptions were limited and generally fit into familiar categories — such as artists, musicians, literary writers, and journalists — where such exceptions had been made in the past. To expand that practice, in the way and to the degree the students demanded, cut to the core of the university's notion of scholarship. Established scholars, black and white, rejected the idea. Some, such as historian Eugene D. Genovese, argued that radically changing the existing process of faculty qualification would have undercut the effort of Black Studies programs to gain acceptance and respect in the academic world.

Responsible black scholars have been working hard for an end to raiding and to the scattering of the small number of black professors across the country. Among other obstacles, they face the effort of ostensibly nationalist black students who seek to justify their decision to attend predominantly white institutions, often of high prestige, by fighting for a larger black teaching staff. The outcome of these demands is the obscurantist nonsense that black studies can and should be taught by people without intellectual credentials since these credentials are 'white' anyway. It is true that many black men are capable of teaching important college level courses even though they do not have formal credentials. For example, the Afro-American tradition in music, embracing slave songs, spirituals, blues, jazz, and other forms, could probably be taught best by a considerable number of articulate and cultured, if sometimes self-taught, black musicians and

free-lance critics who are largely unknown to the white community. But few good universities have ever refused to waive formalities in any field when genuine intellectual credentials of a nonacademic order could be provided. What has to be resisted firmly is the insanity that claims, as in one recent 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 particular contempt for black studies as 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.¹¹

Far more volatile than the issue of non-traditional qualifications for a few African American faculty members, however, was the demand of some black students and nationalist intellectuals for Black Studies programs that would enroll exclusively black students and/or be taught exclusively by black instructors. The idea was embedded in the Black Power ideology articulated by Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, which asserted that "Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks." The ideology was built around the idea of "internal colonialism," which saw African Americans in the same sort of relationship with America as the newly independent nations of Africa shared with the European colonial powers that had dominated them. In that view, liberation was as important as education, or rather, education was the means to liberation. But education would not lead to liberation if it were the same education that for three hundred years had worked to reinforce the subjugation of African Americans by white people, white institutions and white values. Liberation meant standing on one's own and finding the strength to do that through unity within the African American community. Separatist programs,

it was argued, would help black students overcome the alienation they often felt on overwhelmingly white campuses by giving them a source of unity and mutual support. Such programs would encourage black students to throw off the shackles of white-oriented thinking and analysis, and help them build the self-confidence and awareness they would need to improve the circumstances of the African American community. But the idea of racially separate programs for black students outraged many in academia and much of the established off-campus African American community leadership. Separatist Black Studies programs were attacked furiously as a return to segregation, which the Civil Rights Movement had fought so passionately to end. Separatist programs, opponents argued, would not only undercut fifteen years of gains by the Civil Rights Movement, but guarantee that the black students enrolled in the programs would receive an inferior education and ensure that Black Studies was not taken seriously by academia.

Perhaps the most notable separatist program to be established was the Afro-American Studies Institute at Antioch College. The institute, which included a blacks-only residence on campus, touched off an intense controversy that led to the resignation of the noted black sociologist Kenneth B. Clark from the college's board of directors. The students who pushed for and supported the program rejected the idea that a separate program for black students constituted a return to segregation. One of the students, Stephen Lythcott, argued that in at least one respect, the Civil Rights Movement had done a disservice because not all of the integration activists were truly committed to

black liberation.

The most regrettable consequence of this protest movement is that Black people, during the nineteen-fifties and sixties, were effectively conditioned to think in terms of a dualism. Their responses were polarized between two concepts: Segregation and/or Integration. Most Black people, and whites too, came to be incapable of conceiving alternatives to this situation. The Antioch Afro-American Studies Institute does not intend to become entrapped by this kind of polarized mentality.¹²

Black students were unmoved, he said, by arguments that pleaded the case for opening Black Studies to whites as a way of promoting a better society. That was not the responsibility of black students, he argued; the quest for liberation required that black students focus on obtaining the kind of education that would best serve *their* needs, not the needs or desires of the dominant white society.

It is often argued that white people need to learn about Black people more than do Black people themselves. Although I could not endorse this formulation of the problem, I will say that white people have a vast ignorance of the Black man and his history and burdens in America. However, the fact remains that the major task of reorienting the Black college student, creating a new value system for him, and additionally putting his knowledge and skills at the disposal of the people he has forgotten in the Black community — these claims have the highest priority for us, are far more pertinent to our situation

AASI does not presume to have either the time or the resources to meet the cultural needs, minister to the residual guilt, or deal with the subtle inbred racism of hundreds of white students within the Antioch community. Neither does it wish to participate in the paternalistic white effort to redeem the ghettos of this country with generous infusions of suburban values. . . . Black students have their hands full already, without assuming the extra burdens of white education!¹³

Clark and others repudiated the argument as impractical at best and

profoundly dangerous at worst. In his letter of resignation from the Antioch board, Clark said he opposed creation of the blacks-only program for the same reasons he had fought public school segregation in the *Brown vs. Board of Education* case. Segregation and racial prejudice always hurt people, he said, regardless of who was doing the discriminating, and regardless of the reasoning used to defend the practice. There was no valid rationale by which educational institutions could justify making decisions that were based on race or color, he said.

To exclude someone of one race — or to admit that it would be appropriate to do so — on the grounds that his background or experience are irrelevant, that they render him unable to achieve is precisely what white segregationists have been doing to blacks for centuries. Yet this seems to be the burden of rationalization at Antioch for a black separatist policy.¹⁴

Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, sympathized with the black students in their desire to smash racism and cultivate strength and unity among African Americans, but he was adamant that in seeking to achieve those goals through establishment of blacks-only Black Studies programs, the students were making a serious mistake.

Who can declare them completely wrong? Certainly they are right about the strength that comes from being with their brothers. Certainly they are right about the usefulness of a study of Afro-American history and culture. They are right, also, in calling for increased enrollment of Negro students and in requesting more black faculty members. But in demanding a black Jim Crow studies building within a campus and exclusively black dormitories or wings of dormitories, they are opening the door to a dungeon.¹⁵

Wilkins said blacks-only programs were a return to the racial segregation that

had hurt African Americans so severely in the past. He cited a situation he had witnessed in the 1920s in Kansas City, Mo., in which the city's school board spent \$985,000 for athletic facilities for a junior high for white students while allocating only \$27,500 to convert a factory into an elementary school for black children. "This was the ugly face of segregated education," Wilkins wrote. "The system must not be revived. It must not be invited back at the request, nay, the ultimatum of black students themselves."¹⁶ Moreover, he said, separatist programs were bound to fail for a variety of practical reasons.

The key word in the current spate of similarly worded demands of black students is "autonomous." No university administration faithful to its trust can grant this. There is substantial informed opinion that tax money cannot be used to set up racial enclaves within campuses. . . . And all this is apart from the practical difficulty that it costs more money to establish real studies centers than most colleges can afford and that the qualified personnel — black or white — is simply not available at this time.

The demanding students might well find themselves saddled with a poor substitute for a center, foisted on them by an administration ready to buy peace at any price. Thus would segregated education once more run true to form.¹⁷

In a 1971 article, "Ghetto and Gown: The Birth of Black Studies," Roger A. Fischer provided a trenchant analysis of the integrationist/separatist debate that was dividing the Civil Rights Movement as well as complicating the efforts to establish Black Studies on white college campuses. The controversy at Antioch, he said, was emblematic of the dilemma confronting Black Studies and underscored the need for compromise among the various factions that supported Black Studies but held radically different views of what Black Studies should be.

If it is ever going to develop into a meaningful academic discipline, traditionalists and black militants must somehow reach understandings on such basic issues as curriculum, control, and interracial participation. Accommodation will probably be difficult to achieve, for the rhetoric of revolution is seldom conducive to the realities of compromise. If confrontation is allowed to escalate beyond the point where reasonable debate remains possible, black studies will be the inevitable victim. . . . Every indication points to a rising tide of social reaction, to a climate in which repression would be welcomed by regents, legislators and a public which remembers too vividly the guns of Cornell. If reaction and repression ever become the order of the day, black studies will surely die the death of a sacrificial lamb.

It is most unlikely that many colleges will permit the militants to define the curriculum in terms of the philosophy of black revolution. To grant any ideology such privileged status would be a gross violation of the traditional concept of the university as a laissez-faire marketplace for the free exchange of ideas. . . . It seems equally unlikely that black autonomy will be taken very seriously by most college administrations. Most regents and administrators believe that their surrender of control would lead to out-and-out anarchy. Few of them, needless to say, are anarchists.

The militants must also abandon the notion that white students and professors should be excluded from participation in black studies programs. This latter-day apartheid is legally questionable and morally indefensible. Moreover, separatism could well prove suicidal to the black studies program. . . . Black studies programs also need qualified white professors, for such programs will need all of the academic talent they can muster to survive their infancy and justify their existence as a discipline.¹⁸

But, Fischer said, it wasn't just the militants who needed to compromise.

Despite the faults and weaknesses of their proposals, he said, the sense of urgency they conveyed was both rare and important in academia. The militants were saying things that needed to be heard: "Autonomy may be unrealistic, but black students certainly deserve a meaningful voice in determining the faculty

and curriculum of black studies programs. Above all, the courses must attempt to meet contemporary needs.”¹⁹

As polarizing as the issue of separatist Black Studies programs was, however, it had little structural impact on higher education. That is because few separatist programs were actually established — despite the frequency of militants’ demands — and the few that were did not long sustain their exclusivity. University officials were overwhelmingly unwilling, and perhaps legally unable, to grant the sort of autonomy that separatist programs demanded or implied. And the idea of *establishing* segregation in an educational setting when the entire nation had been in turmoil for nearly two decades over efforts to *end* school segregation was more than most colleges could even contemplate. There may have been weaknesses in the integrationist ethic, as Harold Cruse argued, and the integration/segregation dichotomy may not have described the full range of social possibility, as Stephen Lythcott maintained, but their arguments were not persuasive at the vast majority of institutions. Add to that the growing pressure from a federal government that promised to withhold money from institutions that practiced racial discrimination, and few college administrators were willing to face the legal and financial risks, even if they were otherwise disposed to grant separatist demands for the sake of campus peace.

The debate over whether whites could teach Black Studies courses was as intense as the debate over blacks-only programs for students. Black students demanded black professors because white professors were responsible, in

the students' view, for the disregard, even animosity, with which academia had always treated African American culture. How, the black students asked, could whites now be expected to fairly and accurately teach about a subject they had so long ignored and disparaged? Besides, they argued, white professors could not adequately understand either black culture or black students.

Sometimes, as in the case at San Francisco State described by Nathan Hare, the arguments could become a sort of Catch-22. If a white professor couldn't understand that it was inappropriate for a white professor to be teaching black history to black students, then he clearly did not understand contemporary developments in African American thought and therefore, just as clearly, did not understand black history. If he didn't understand it, he shouldn't be teaching it. Put another way: Any white professor who was aware enough to teach Black Studies courses must be aware enough to willingly refrain from teaching them.

It was not just the teaching of whites that was under attack. Radical black intellectuals sometimes challenged whether white scholars had any business conducting research into African American culture. The issue was especially heated in the field of history because it collided with the desire of many African Americans to rescue their history from the distortions of white scholarship.

History is crucial because it is so fundamentally connected with identity. African Americans were struggling mightily to reshape and assert their own identity, as a group and as individuals. Establishing a new, black perspective on the history of African Americans was central to that task. Blacks were tired of being defined by whites, and to many, white scholars exploring black history would

only reinforce and extend the distortions.

Resentment toward white scholars investigating and writing about African American history erupted into heated public exchanges on a number of occasions. At a May 1969 event at Wayne State University in Detroit, the Convocation on the Black Man, white historian Kenneth Stampp was assailed by black militants "insisting that because he was a white man he had no right to do The Peculiar Institution." When another white historian, Robert Starobin, presented a paper on slaves who had served as houseservants and drivers, the radical black historian Vincent Harding walked out and two others black scholars, Julius Lester and Sterling Stuckey, delivered stinging critiques of Starobin's work. And in October of the same year, at the convention of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, black militants shouted down whites who tried to speak "on the grounds that [the whites] could not understand what it felt like to be black."²⁰ Also in 1969, at the convention of the Organization of American Historians, Harding, Lester and Stuckey delivered papers of their own, "insisting that blacks alone were the ones to interpret their own past."²¹ The organization's president, white historian C. Vann Woodward, delivered a speech entitled, "Clio With Soul," that addressed the issue. Woodward acknowledged that white scholarship, marked by "moral neutrality and obtuseness," had contributed to distortions of African American history. Instead of the history of Negroes, he said, white historians had frequently written "what the white man believed, thought . . . and did *about* the Negro." But while he agreed that a reclamation by blacks of their African heritage could

provide a valuable correction to American history and have a healing effect for African Americans and the whole nation, Woodward worried about the effects of radical black nationalism on the process. The separatist tendency could lead to "an inverted segregation, a black apartheid" as damaging as the white racism it sought to overthrow. And, he said, the militants' insistence that only blacks write and teach about black history was flat-out wrong.

They cannot have it both ways. Either black history is an essential part of American history and must be included by all American historians, or it is unessential and can be segregated and left to black historians. But Negro history is too important to be left entirely to Negro historians. To disqualify historians from writing Negro history on the grounds of race is to subscribe to an extreme brand of racism.²²

John W. Blassingame, a black historian, said the rejection of white scholars by black students and radical intellectuals would ultimately damage black studies and posed a threat to all black intellectuals. In "Black Studies: An Intellectual Crisis," he said he sympathized with the black students. "It is certainly asking a lot," he wrote, "to expect one to accept cheerfully a man who has continuously embezzled from him his pride, culture, history and manhood for more than four hundred years." But in his view, the black students went too far, and were imposing an ideological tyranny that could cripple Black Studies programs.

All white teachers are not racists. I submit that some of them have more "soul" than some blacks. "Blackness," in all its shades, represents no mystical guarantee of an "understanding" of the black man's problems, life or culture. Neither color nor earnestness but training must be the test applied to any teacher. . . .

The threat to black intellectuals is real. Not only do the black students demand that the teachers in black studies programs be Negroes, they also want them to have the right shade of "blackness." In essence, this means that the black scholar must have the right ideological leanings. As some of us succumb to the persuasive arguments to hop on the treadmill and try to keep up with the mercurial changes in the black "party line," serious scholarship is likely to suffer. It is in this regard that the control of black studies programs by black students is most dangerous.²³

But as with the debate over separatism in student programs and facilities, the debate over excluding whites from teaching and scholarship about African Americans dissipated relatively quickly. In the short term, many white scholars who had been interested in teaching Black Studies courses backed off rather than face the tension and outright animosity from black students in the classroom. And the pressure — as well as desire — to increase overall numbers of black faculty prompted some institutions to see new Black Studies positions as an opportunity to accomplish that goal by hiring almost exclusively blacks for those jobs. But eventually, the demand for exclusivity fell victim to the practical reality that there were simply not enough African American doctorates to go around. That meant that whites were still needed to contribute to the growing field.

The larger impact of the separatist controversy was psychological. Few schools were ever able — or even had realistic prospects — to achieve an all-black faculty for their Black Studies programs. Few were willing, in the end, to exclude white students from Black Studies courses. Some did experiment with separatist dormitories, or black floors within individual dorms, or with cultural centers for black students, but separatism, as a structural policy matter, was

neither extensive nor long-lasting. The passions stirred by the separatist debate, however, were widespread and enduring. The intensity and often outright hostility of the separatists' demands caused most whites, and not a few blacks, to recoil. It hardly mattered that the militants were responding to what they perceived as the hostility of white institutions. Whites, inside and outside academia, did not perceive themselves or their institutions as hostile, even when they acknowledged that blacks had been hurt by racism. In white eyes, the separatist agenda appeared irrational, bigoted, potentially violent, and frightening, and those perceptions have lingered, shaping and perpetuating the attitude of many people — especially among the general public outside the academy — that Black Studies is not a legitimate intellectual enterprise.

That attitude was further underscored by debates that arose over what should be taught, particularly in the humanities — the debate over the literary canon. Actually, the canon debate did not fully emerge until more than a decade after the first Black Studies programs were established.²⁴ When it did erupt, at the beginning of the 1980s, it quickly developed into what came to be called the culture wars, which captivated not just academics but politicians as well for most of the next two decades. Though the intensity has abated in recent years, the debates continue over what sort of society America should be: a nation devoted to the core values and traditions of the white western European culture from which it emerged, in which newcomers and members of minority groups are expected to assimilate themselves to the dominant culture; or a nation that is constantly remaking itself to include, reflect and make room for the traditions

and values of the diverse cultures represented among the nation's population. It is a profound question, and the answer will shape America's future in fundamental ways.

The debate goes far beyond disputes over the canonical literature accepted by academia and owes a great deal to another developing intellectual current — the metacriticism that emerged from the work of Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and others — and it came to the foreground of national consciousness well after Black Studies was established in higher education. But Black Studies lit the flame. By insisting that African American culture be considered seriously by academia, Black Studies forced the dominant white culture of the academy to reconsider whether the familiar literature of the accepted Western canon was an adequate representation of the complexity and diversity of contemporary American culture. Black Studies challenged the conventional notion that the "classics" of Western literature captured the essence of all true wisdom and knowledge.

The chief curricular target of militant black students, wrote Nathan I. Huggins in a 1985 Ford Foundation report, "was the parochial character of the humanities as taught. They saw the humanities as exclusive rather than universal. They saw humanists as arrogant white men in self-congratulatory identification with a grand European culture."²⁵ They wanted to see something they could identify as being part of themselves in the curriculum. The response of scholars in the humanities was often dogmatic and defensive. For them, the liberal arts curriculum represented the best ideas that can be taught, ideas that

disciplined the mind, ideas that embodied the greatest achievements of Western culture. And the humanities scholars already felt as though they were under siege after nearly a century of academic change that had increasingly acceded to utilitarian demands and diminished the role of the liberal arts.

To the embattled humanists, black students arguing for courses "relevant to our blackness" sounded much like engineering students demanding that they be exempted from courses not "relevant" to their professional training. Humanists thus saw themselves as holding the line against a new wave of Philistines.²⁶

The attitude could still be seen clearly much later, as the canon controversy flowered in the 1980s and 1990s, in the despairing analysis of Allan Bloom's, The Closing of the American Mind: "It is difficult to imagine that there is either the wherewithal or the energy within the university to constitute or reconstitute the idea of an educated human being and establish a liberal education again."²⁷ Or in the beleaguered tone of William Casement's description in The Great Canon Controversy:

At most schools there is only a minimal place in the curriculum for a smattering of great works. A few schools and programs, however, operating out of the mainstream, have kept the tradition alive, and a few prominent educators and promoters have managed to bring it occasional visibility within academia and among the intellectually inclined elements of the general public.²⁸

But that was much later. It took a decade or more for the canon debate to erupt into the national consciousness for several reasons. First, because the field of African American culture had been so widely ignored, the ready supply of literature and critical publications with which to challenge the established

canon was relatively small, and it took time for scholars who had not specialized in the area to become aware of it. Second, for the first decade at least, Black Studies programs were just getting established, and the focus of their efforts was, of necessity, more on organizational and instructional issues than on research and the gathering or production of literature. That is not to say that research and publication were insubstantial, only that the emphasis on that part of scholarship was diminished while organizational issues took the top priority. And third, it took some years for the intellectual critique represented by Black Studies, similar critiques offered by other ethnic studies and Women's Studies programs, and the growth of metacriticism to combine into the intellectual force that so threatened the cultural standards and values that Bloom and other conservative intellectuals revered.

One way to gauge the impact of the Black Studies movement on the content of curriculum and the literary canon is to look at the publication of new books and articles that bear on a particular field of scholarship. Most scholarly publications, particularly in social studies and the humanities, are produced by scholars who also teach. New scholarly publications, therefore, not only provide potential new material to be included in course reading assignments, but also give some insight into where the attention of scholars is focused; if scholars are writing about particular topics, the chances are good that at least some of that material is going to make it into their teaching.

One area where the shifting interests of scholars in the late 1960s and early 1970s are clearly evident is in the field of African American literature, a core

element of Black Studies. In 1965, for example, the annual bibliography of new scholarship published by the Modern Languages Association identified 818 new books and articles that had been published in the field of 20th Century American literature. Of those books and articles, only twenty-seven — about 3.3 percent of the total — were clearly identifiable as focusing on African American literature or African American authors.²⁹ The 20th Century American literature section, which covered fourteen pages in small type, began with a listing of articles and books on thematic topics. That was followed by a listing of articles relating to particular authors — with bold-faced subheads organized in alphabetical order. The usual suspects dominated the list. Eighty articles and books were devoted to William Faulkner and his writings. Ernest Hemingway was the subject of thirty-eight articles and books, while F. Scott Fitzgerald was the topic of twenty-eight. At least nine other white authors — Willa Cather, J.D. Salinger, Tennessee Williams, Eugene O'Neill, William Carols Williams, Robert Frost, John Steinbeck, Edith Wharton and Katherine Anne Porter — had been the subject of ten or more articles and books. Only four African American authors — James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and Countee Cullen — made the alphabetical list, and only Baldwin, with eleven citations, was the subject of more than ten books and articles. The other three authors were the subjects of four or fewer articles each.

By 1975, however, the situation had changed significantly. The total number of books and articles in the field of 20th Century American literature had more than doubled; the total number of publications that were clearly about African

Americans or African American literature had nearly quintupled; and the portion of the total publications that were about African Americans or African American literature had nearly doubled to 6.4 percent.³⁰ White authors still dominated the list. Faulkner scholarship, for example, had swelled to 119 books and articles; ninety-one were about Hemingway; sixty were about Fitzgerald; Cather, Frost, Steinbeck, Flannery O'Connor, John Berryman, and Saul Bellow all were the subjects of twenty-five or more books and articles. But of the 2,042 books and articles listed, at least 131 were about African American authors or literature. And while only two African American authors — Jean Toomer and Richard Wright — were subjects of ten or more articles and books, at least twenty-four other African American authors had been the subjects of at least a single article each. In addition to Baldwin and Ellison, the subject listing included such African American authors as Arna Bontemps, Gwendolyn Brooks, W.E.B. DuBois, Lorraine Hansberry, Robert Hayden, Langston Hughes, LeRoi Jones, Malcolm X, Paule Marshall, Claude McKay, Toni Morrison, Gordon Parks, Ishmael Reed and Alice Walker.

As with the enrollment of black students in white universities, the growth in scholarship about African Americans and their culture was slow and the percentages — relative to total production of scholarship — remained small, but change was evident. Precisely how much of the change can be directly attributed to Black Studies is unclear, though as Darlene Clark Hine made clear in her 1990 study for the Ford Foundation, the production of scholarship by Black Studies professionals was substantial.

[O]ne fact deserves underscoring. Black Studies departments and their faculties have proven to be a continuing source of intellectual stimulation on many American campuses. Black Studies has opened up vast and exciting new areas of scholarship, especially in American history and literature, and has spurred intellectual inquiry into diverse social problems affecting the lives of significant portions of the total population.³¹

Many of the new scholarly publications were the work of Black Studies scholars themselves. Some were the work of scholars in traditional academic disciplines; and given the dramatic rise in the numbers of people going into academic life, it could be assumed that even a few white scholars would have gravitated toward the study of African American culture in any event. But the Black Studies movement had laid down the challenge in a dramatic and insistent way, and in less than a decade, the African American experience was claiming an increasing share of scholars' attention.

Beyond the problem of what was to be studied and taught in the field of Black Studies, however, was the equally problematic consideration of where the field would fit into the academic structure of the university. By the mid 1960s, the established academic disciplines often exuded an aura that suggested they existed by natural law. No one seriously questioned whether the history department, say, or the physics department deserved a place in academia or constituted a discrete and fairly well-defined area of intellectual inquiry. For most scholars, it would have been difficult — as it is today — to imagine a university without such departments. The departments are familiar, their boundaries are reasonably clear and their legitimacy is accepted. In fact,

those departmental distinctions provided an important function by giving people — outside as well as inside the academy — an intellectual framework with **which** to organize, absorb, understand and manage the constantly expanding **body** of knowledge about the world.

But the comfortable — and comforting — solidity of the disciplinary structure **that** existed in 1965 was deceiving. The oldest of the specialized disciplines **had** only been around for about 80 years, and many of the familiar disciplines **were** much younger. They had emerged slowly, almost imperceptibly to the vast **majority** of people, and by the mid 1960s, there was no one still active in higher **education** who could remember when the core departments did not exist. They **had** also emerged through consensus, defined by academicians who **perceived** through their own analysis an area of inquiry that was interesting and **worthy** and would support — by yielding substantial insight on valuable topics — **the** research of numerous scholars. Disciplines were defined by identifying and **gradually** refining the limits of intellectual territory and methodology that **would** differentiate one from another, but that process had consumed decades.

Black Studies turned that entire model on its head. It was sudden and new; **confrontationally**, defiantly so. It did not assert its claim to legitimacy merely by **describing** the intellectual benefits of focusing and intensifying scholarly inquiry on a **particular** area of human experience; in part, Black Studies' claim to **legitimacy** was based on an intense critique and rejection of the deficiencies of **the** existing disciplines. Advocates were, in essence, saying to academia: We **need** Black Studies because you other disciplines haven't been doing your job.

As Armstead L. Robinson put it at the Yale symposium in 1968:

"[B]lack students and black parents all over the country are tired of an educational system which is fundamentally racist and which does not speak to their needs. More than being tired, however, they are refusing to accept passively the continuation of an educational policy which excludes their legitimate concerns from decisions which vitally affect them. As a result, colleges, universities, and school systems across the country are facing escalating black protests against curricular irrelevance, irresponsibility, and negligence."³²

Black Studies did not emerge by consensus, it emerged by schism. At the **same** time, while rejecting the adequacy of the existing disciplines, Black **Studies** laid claim to parts of all of them, at least those disciplines in social **studies** and the humanities. Rather than defining itself by narrowing **perspective**, breaking off a more specialized chunk of a single existing **discipline**, Black Studies defined itself as transcending the existing disciplines, **pulling** them together to study facts and ideas that were connected by theme **rather** than subject. Black Studies would not be a subspecialty but a **metaspecialty**, a consciously interdisciplinary undertaking that sought to blend the **approaches** and methods of history, literature, economics, sociology, **anthropology**, art, music and other disciplines into a single discipline. It would be **organized** not around examining one part of a culture, but around examining one **culture** in all of its parts. In its move toward interdisciplinarity, Black Studies **went directly** counter to the trend of increasing specialization and disciplinary **differentiation** that had dominated higher education for almost a century.

Despite the ascendancy of specialization, however, the Black Studies

emphasis on interdisciplinarity did draw on a significant and long-standing **a**lternative vein of philosophy in higher education. Specialization began to **d**ominate academic organization in the last half of the 19th Century, but the **c**onflict between specialization and interdisciplinarity in higher education **p**redates the 19th Century by a millennium or two. Even among the ancient **R**omans, the issue generated debate.

Although rhetoric prevailed at the core of Roman higher education, some doubted whether one discipline was in and of itself a satisfactory form of advanced education, and Quintilian openly advocated more advanced studies over the whole range of the traditional curriculum. As the modern university evolved from the medieval cathedral schools, a unified whole had come to include both letters and sciences in the customary divisions of the *trivium* (grammar, logic and rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy). The idea was not that a student should study everything and forgo specialization but that specialization would occur in a community of general studies . . .³³

By **the** 12th and 13th centuries, when the medieval universities emerged, the term **"discipline"** was generally used to describe one of three areas: medicine, law **or** theology. Those disciplines were responsible for producing the **specialized** professionals — doctors, lawyers, and clergy — demanded by the **society** outside the university. In contrast, the powerful shift toward **specialization** in academia in the latter half of the 19th and early 20th centuries **was driven** as much by the expansion of knowledge that grew out of scholarly **research**, though the industrial revolution added plenty of its own demands for **university** production of specialists.³⁴ In Interdisciplinarity: History, Theory, & Practice, Julie Thompson Klein argues that the efforts of many scholars to

pursue and define systems of thought that were capable of integrating all knowledge was an established vein of academic development well into the 19th Century. However, she notes, the drive "to achieve scientific and value-neutral theories in the nineteenth century only accelerated the movement away from grand philosophical systems" that sought to emphasize integrated knowledge.³⁵

The modern connotation of *disciplinarity* is a product of the nineteenth century and is linked with several forces: the evolution of the modern natural sciences, the general "scientification" of knowledge, the industrial revolution, technological advancements, and agrarian agitation. As the modern university took shape, disciplinarity was reinforced in two major ways: industries demanded and received specialists, and disciplines recruited students to their ranks. The trend toward specialization was further propelled by increasingly more expensive and sophisticated instrumentation within individual fields. . . .

Although the "Renaissance Man" may have remained an ideal for the well-educated baccalaureate, it was not the model for the new professional, specialized research scholar. Formalization of the pursuit of knowledge in various fields — history in 1884, economics in 1885, political science in 1903 and sociology in 1905 — paved the way for the "professionalization" of knowledge in the twentieth century.³⁶

Some 19th Century universities, such as the University of Berlin, tried to emphasize the idea of universal education but ran into difficulty. The problems of applying the concept, Klein points out, were the same ones interdisciplinary programs face today: "the structural organization of universities, the politics of individual disciplines, the question of whether connections can be made between individual disciplines, and the question of whether any one concept could be so general as to include all the disciplines."³⁷

As the general pattern of increased specialization and disciplinary differentiation continued to grow, many institutions — especially the liberal arts colleges, but universities, too — began developing general education programs. The so-called "great books" curriculum at Columbia University was one example. The aim was to balance the effects of the drive toward specialization, particularly at the undergraduate level, and to educate the "whole person."³⁸ Organizations also began to emerge — such as the Social Science Research Council, which was established in the 1920s — for the purpose of promoting the integration of knowledge across disciplines. And some scholars began to discuss the idea of interdisciplinary research. The movement started with the simple borrowing of techniques, such as quantitative methods, by one discipline from another. But by the late 1930s, seriously interdisciplinary programs were beginning to emerge. American studies, which sought to provide a new perspective on American culture by blending the approaches of English and history disciplines, was the most notable. After World War II, universities also began to experiment with "area studies," which focused on particular geographic areas, such as Africa or Asia. The programs tended to be small, research-oriented more than curriculum-oriented, and relatively few in number. They suffered from resistance by the dominant disciplinary structure of the university and also from the fact that because they were new, matters of theory and methodology were ill-defined. Many of the scholars involved in interdisciplinary studies also tended "to fall back on their disciplinary perspectives instead of creating new synthetic perspectives."³⁹

World War II added to the drive for interdisciplinary studies in a very practical way: by generating the demand for cooperation between university scientists and the military. Because the military's goals were to solve problems and win the war, the cooperation was problem-focused and research-oriented.

"The most famous mission was the Manhattan Project to build an atomic bomb, a cooperative effort among science, industry, and the United States Army. It was the beginning of a mission focus that would, by the 1960s and 1970s, create a visible interdisciplinary presence on campuses in the form of organized research teams, institutes, and centers. They focused, most often, on problems of defense, aerospace, and industry."⁴⁰

But while those programs were mainly focused on research — not curriculum — by the 1960s, interdisciplinary programs were coming to be seen as a way of reforming the university in terms of curriculum as well. Dissatisfaction with the increasingly specialized academic structure merged with a broader unhappiness over the problems of American society to generate an explosive increase in the number and nature of interdisciplinary programs being established on the nation's campuses.

The majority were alternatives to the traditional curriculum. They were "telic" institutions in the sense that [Gerald] Grant and [David] Riesman used the term to describe purposive reforms charged with a sense of mission and distinctiveness. Telic reforms approached the status of social movements or generic protests against contemporary life. They pointed towards a different conception of the ends of undergraduate education, ends that could not be met by simply reforming existing curricula or inventing new instructional technology. New programs, and, in some cases, entirely new institutions were required.⁴¹

David Halliburton identified three broad categories of interdisciplinary

programs that were applied to curriculum reform. The first type, which he called "Heritage-Based Curriculums," were based on cultural heritage, "with a Western European emphasis." "This type of curriculum exists in an unusually pure form at St. John's College, where students discuss great books on a well-established reading list, and at Columbia University, where the problem of 'general education' is consciously linked to 'the reintegration of the university.'"⁴² Another type of interdisciplinary program was the "Thematic Curriculum," such as the curriculum at Alice Lloyd College, which focused on the study of Appalachia or the Third College at the University of California, San Diego, which dealt with urban problems. The third type of interdisciplinary program was the "Future-Oriented Curriculum."

A 1974 survey discovered that more than 500 future-oriented courses were being offered throughout the country, and in view of the increasing attention given to futuristics in education circles and the media, it is likely that the number has grown. At Davis-Elkins, a course called The Future provides the capstone to a four-year sequence called The Liberated Life. At Pacific Lutheran University, participants in Integrated Program Studies, which has recently focused on The Dynamics of Change, may take as one of their main "tracks" a future-oriented two-course sequence.⁴³

Halliburton argued that interdisciplinary programs are valuable because they "can stimulate creativity in both students and educators."⁴⁴ Interdisciplinary programs, he said, also tend to be more flexible and problem-oriented than the traditional academic structures. He also complained that interdisciplinary programs are often held to stricter performance standards than are traditional disciplines because of a bias toward the traditional disciplines.

Departments may draw their power from paradigms that are unexamined and from rules that have less to do with any public reality than with a discipline's internal history. . . . To put it another way, a given discipline predicts the phenomena it intends to handle. The methodologies it employs, the language it speaks, the traditions it accepts as legitimate — all these largely predetermine the very reality it sees. . . . A discipline held together by these paradigms, rules and terminologies can be seen as a reflection of reality. But precisely because it is something made up — an invented set of assumptions and practices — it selects reality; and selecting means leaving things out — perhaps a lot of things. Thus, while the discipline reflects reality, it also deflects reality. That is why no single discipline can claim to be equal to all tasks.⁴⁵

Interdisciplinary programs "all challenge the narrow disciplinary approach," **H**alliburton acknowledged. But, he argued, it should be the disciplines that are **r**equired to demonstrate their ability to deal adequately with the questions **r**aised by the interdisciplinary programs.

That defiant challenge to the old disciplines and the old ways was implicit in **a**ll **t**he interdisciplinary programs — including Black Studies — that proliferated so **q**uickly in the late 1960s. Interdisciplinarity, by its nature, was an attack on the **i**ntellectual status quo. And so, understandably, the entrenched disciplines of the **e**xisting academic power structure were reluctant to acknowledge the **v**alidity or accept the establishment of interdisciplinary programs. To some **d**egree, it was a simple turf battle; a program that crossed disciplinary borders was **p**oaching on that discipline's intellectual territory. But it was also a war of **i**deas, **o**f paradigms by which we make sense of the world around us. As **W**illiam **V**. Mayville asserted in Interdisciplinarity: The Mutable Paradigm:

Interdisciplinarity does pose a threat to the idea that

knowledge can be divided into discrete paradigms that only infrequently overlap; it also raises the issue of whether disciplines can reasonably insist on the absoluteness of their methodology or the uniqueness of the problems they address. There is no doubt that interdisciplinarity has proven to be a useful tool in confronting issues of national and international significance, which usually require the opinions of individuals from a myriad of disciplines. It is this reality that makes it urgent to consider how to build interdisciplinary experiences for students that they can refer to later when they assume responsibility for solving problems beyond their discipline as it is now defined.⁴⁶

The growth of these rebellious interdisciplinary programs was dramatic in the late 1960s. Entirely new theme-based colleges were created. Universities established experimental colleges or created new or updated core curricula for undergraduates based on interdisciplinary approaches. Problem-focused research sparked interdisciplinary cooperation, often with a view toward the needs of industry or the military. Klein traced the extent of the growth spurt in a survey of the literature on "interdisciplinary problem-focused research." Growth in the literature was gradual, she said, from the early 1950s to the mid 1960s.

After 1969, however, the literature grew significantly: doubling from 1969 to 1972, then growing 120 percent from 1973 to 1977, and an additional 95 percent from 1978 to 1982. There has been a corresponding increase in the discussion of interdisciplinarity across disciplinary, professional, and general literatures. The changing nature of that literature is quite striking. Whereas earlier work tended to focus primarily on educational programs, the social sciences, and traditional ideas about unity, the focus has now widened. Since 1970 scholars have been paying closer attention to the problems of designing and managing interdisciplinary curricula and research projects, the practical and philosophical consequences of relations between particular disciplines, the dynamics of interdisciplinary problem-solving, and the nature of interdisciplinary theory and method.

The momentum is undeniable. The discussion of

interdisciplinarity is becoming both broader and deeper. However, the institutional obstacles to interdisciplinary programs remain formidable.⁴⁷

Black Studies programs were a big part of that momentum. The hundreds of Black Studies programs created on college campuses between 1968 and 1972 inspired the drives by other groups to establish Women's Studies, Chicano Studies, Native American Studies, and other similar interdisciplinary programs. A survey of ethnic studies programs and scholarly literature in the field conducted by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in 1972 found that 477 institutions of higher learning offered some kind of Black Studies program. Black Studies was by far the largest specialty among the ethnic studies programs. Jewish Studies, the second most-numerous category of program, was offered at 180 colleges and universities. Chicano Studies programs were offered at 104 institutions; American Indian Studies were offered at 62; Asian-American Studies were offered at 43; Puerto Rican studies were offered at 14; and 45 institutions offered various types of multi-ethnic programs.⁴⁸ A solid majority (267) of the institutions offering Black Studies, however, offered courses only. Another 141 of the colleges and universities offered programs that enabled students to establish a major or minor concentration in Black Studies. Fewer than 15 percent of the institutions (69) granted degrees in Black Studies, and only a handful offered master's degrees; none offered Ph.D programs.

Evaluating the scope of Black Studies programs in the early years of the movement is difficult because of the lack of a common definition of Black

Studies, and because of the confusing array of organizational structures that arose. Some schools established Black Studies departments, while others created programs, centers or institutes. In her 1990 overview of the field for the Ford Foundation, Darlene Clark Hine described the range of programs and some of the problems related to program status:

Black studies "departments" are best characterized as separate, autonomous units possessing an exclusive right and privilege to hire and grant tenure to their faculty, certify students, confer degrees, and administer a budget. Black studies "programs" may offer majors and minors but rarely confer degrees. And perhaps more importantly, all faculty appointments in programs are of the "joint," "adjunct," or "associate" variety. These professors are in the unenviable position of having to please two masters to secure appointment and tenure.

"Centers" and "institutes defy easy categorization. As a rule, they tend to be administrative units more concerned with the production and dissemination of scholarship and with the professional development of teachers and scholars in the field than with undergraduate teaching. Unfortunately, considerable confusion surrounds the name "center." Many people view centers as merely cultural or social facilities designed to ease the adjustment of black students to predominantly white campus life. Thus, centers are often denigrated and dismissed as having little or no relevance to black studies, which is imagined to be purely an academic or intellectual endeavor, albeit with political-advocacy overtones.⁴⁹

That centers, institutes and programs greatly outnumbered departments as the preferred structure for Black Studies is not surprising. Departmental status is emblematic of full acceptance into the academic structure of the university. That is why so many of the militants demanded it; anything less was, in their eyes, second-class citizenship, and the refusal to accept a secondary position in society was what the Civil Rights Movement had been all about. But that is also

why few institutions established departments; the idea of Black Studies was so new, the definition was so vague, and the interdisciplinary approach was so foreign to the prevailing disciplinary structure that administrators — and the established departments — were reluctant to grant Black Studies full departmental status. Moreover, establishing programs rather than departments was both faster and cheaper. Universities could show their responsiveness to the concerns of black students and faculty quickly, but without the large (and long-term) commitment of financial resources associated with a full department. And at a time when the demand was intense for a relatively short supply of black faculty who could teach Black Studies, the smaller size of a center or program, minimized the difficulty and expense of faculty searches. In essence, universities dealt administratively with Black Studies in much the same way they had with other, earlier interdisciplinary programs: start them small, in both staff and budget, and establish them at the periphery or under the control (directly or indirectly, through the allocation of loaned faculty) of already established departments or other administrative units. That left Black Studies programs, Carlos Brossard argued in "Classifying Black Studies Programs," pretty much to struggle on their own with the complexities of profession development and program organization.

The bedrock foundation for the emergence of contemporary Black Studies was laid by Black urban, lower-class students as they tried to get better Black Studies courses from traditional departments. These departments and their representatives, especially in sociology, refused to extend manpower and built-up intellectual resources, forcing protesting Black students to insist on alternative structures

for handling Black Studies. Consequently, allied disciplines and professionals sparingly and grudgingly helped the organizational, curricular and institutional building tasks of the new academic specialization. Intellectual integration and effective and efficient organization could have resulted from cooperation with friendly disciplinary neighbors. Instead, unexpected and unanticipated Black Studies departments widened the social distance between allied disciplines and professionals. New pioneers stood alone in resolving intellectual integration and discovering organizational building without shared support or prior role modeling of professional peers.⁵⁰

The missions of most of the early Black Studies programs were not even as clear as the confusing structural variation. Many did not control their own budgets and had to rely on the willingness of established disciplinary departments to loan faculty. To the extent that they had their own budgets, they were forced to compete for money with long-established departments, and slim finances required Black Studies programs to rely more heavily on "the cheaper labor of graduate students and new doctorates."⁵¹ Some programs, such as the Center for Black Studies at Wayne State University, were not authorized to offer their own courses, but served primarily as research centers and clearinghouses for information about courses offered by other departments in the university. Moreover, the faculty and administrators engaged in Black Studies programs, who tended to be young and inexperienced, were faced with the daunting task of building and operating programs while simultaneously creating a field of study they were still struggling to define. As Brossard points out, by beginning with a focus on undergraduate instruction rather than graduate-level training and research, Black Studies programs were, in yet another way, developing counter to the prevailing paradigm. Most

disciplines began with research scholars focusing their efforts on a particular intellectual field, training graduate students for advanced degrees and producing the scholarly articles and books that only later became the basis for generating undergraduate curriculum. The process took time, but it built strong foundations for the traditional disciplines. Black Studies, however, did not have the luxury of time; the demands for substantive change in undergraduate curriculum were powerful and immediate. The development of Black Studies as a profession was made more difficult by the necessity of attending to undergraduate instruction rather than devoting the full attention of Black Studies scholars to graduate instruction and research. Black Studies programs also were called upon to perform a variety of functions — such as student counseling and support services — that strained the capacities of staff and required fluid definitions of program mission. Brossard described the situation as difficult and fragmented:

Considered from its functional roles, Black Studies, since 1968, has rarely been permitted to be a single-task, highly goal-focused, exclusively academic enterprise. Consequently, no single behavioral definition of Black Studies prevails. At best, a collection of organizational strategies, varied research goals, unsettled content domains, and multiple formats crossing and cutting humanities and social science permutations characterize Black Studies programs today. Essentially, any definition of Black Studies emerges from pluralistic praxis, not grand theory.⁵²

The competing demands of research, teaching, student services and program-building put enormous strain on Black Studies faculty. The needs of students — and the faculty's desire to share knowledge of the African American

experience through teaching, often was at odds with the pressures to produce the research needed to win advancement and tenure in the academic world. And in programs where faculty members' appointments were based in or shared with other departments, Black Studies faculty often were faced with a choice between sacrificing their own personal advancement for the good of the Black Studies program, or sacrificing the strength of the Black Studies program for the sake of assuring themselves tenure and career advancement. And the needs of the students could be considerable, as Brossard pointed out.

[T]he dominant clientele imposed immediate needs for compensatory education, since many poorly prepared inner-city students came to Black Studies departments. Ipso facto, the mission of Black Studies departments had to include support services, i.e., academic social work and mediating embedded conflicts between students of poor backgrounds and their often hostile reception in the formerly segregated settings where Black Studies programs were formed. In very few places, a division of labor separated these tasks. Involuntarily, Black Studies became a multi-task operation with added compensatory education pressures extending the real domain of work.⁵³

Black Studies presented awkward structural difficulties for the university. For one thing, it was profoundly problem-focused; many supporters considered one of its primary justifications to be that it would seek solutions to the economic, social and political difficulties facing the African American community. To the extent that the university previously had been involved in such specific problem-solving, that kind of activity had been seen as something happening at the periphery, not as a core disciplinary function. And despite the fact that research responding to the specific needs of industry or government

might logically be seen as reinforcing the dominant social structure, it was not considered by most academicians to be delving into social politics in the way that Black Studies was perceived.

The intensely political nature of the demand for Black Studies and its challenge to the established disciplinary structure of academia was often shocking, if not downright offensive, to many white administrators and scholars who saw themselves as exemplifying and defending an honorable and virtuous intellectual tradition. The black student activists who were demanding the programs often rejected the traditional disciplines, in part, because they felt the disciplines had rejected black people. As Donald H. Ogilvie put it at the 1968 Yale symposium: "[T]he bodies of knowledge of which we speak have been criminally ignored by the majority of the intellectual community."⁵⁴ Distrust of the existing academic structure also expressed itself in demands for student control over Black Studies programs, demands that were anathema to university administrators. At Wayne State University in 1972, for example, when a new university president pushed through creation of a Black Studies center, black students angrily protested the move. Even though students had been demanding a Black Studies program at Wayne State for nearly four years, they attacked the president's plan because the students were not consulted in designing the program and would have no control over it. As one leader of the Association of Black Students had told the campus newspaper in 1970: "ABS believes that if the university controls the program it will provide nothing important . . ."⁵⁵

In addition, as a matter of basic institutional process, Black Studies, confounded the norms of disciplinary formation. It started from the bottom up rather than from the top down, responding to demands for undergraduate instruction before establishing the traditional, if sometimes esoteric, forms of theory and methodology that traditionally had been generated through research and scholarly writings before being introduced into the curriculum. The discipline also was created by student demand, not by the long-considered scholarly insight of the faculty.

Moreover, its interdisciplinary paradigm meant Black Studies faced a particularly difficult path to follow in its quest for legitimacy, acceptance, and respect within the academic structure. Nor did Black Studies have the support of an outside industry clamoring for specialists in the field or seeking to underwrite research. And to the extent that Black Studies had a supportive constituency in the off-campus African American community, the connections with the Civil Rights Movement added to the discomfort of white academics who considered academia — or at least wanted it to be — thoughtful, objective and above the fray.

Higher education, generally, responded to this litany of problems in predictable ways. If the demands and demonstrations of black students became outrageous — as in the case of the gun-wielding protesters at Cornell — Black Studies could be disparaged as violent or merely political. If Black Studies programs were forced to focus on remedial education for African American students who had been ill-prepared for admission to the university,

the intellectual standards of the programs could be questioned. If budgetary constraints forced Black Studies programs to rely more heavily than other departments on inexperienced faculty, and if those faculty members were deflected from their research duties by their responsibilities to students, the legitimacy and scholarly quality of the whole enterprise could be called into doubt. People do not like to be put on the spot. Even academics. Some might say especially academics. And Black Studies put the university squarely, adamantly and most uncomfortably on the spot. The university responded — as people tend to respond to that which makes them uncomfortable — by holding Black Studies at arm's length. But no matter how reluctant, restrained or marginalizing the institutional response, the presence of Black Studies programs ensured that the university would be forced, on a continuing basis, to confront the challenges embodied in Black Studies. To most, the face of revolution was defined by the nature, content and controversy of the challenges. But the untelevised revolution was the simple and irreversible fact that Black Studies had come to stay, establishing a permanent shift — however small or overdue — in the intellectual and institutional processes of the university.

Chapter 5

The Soul of Black Studies

The political conflict surrounding the demand for Black Studies programs, to a great extent, overpowered and obscured the deep philosophical challenge with which Black Studies confronted the university. This is not surprising. As an extension of the Civil Rights struggle, the Black Studies movement focused, of necessity, on the concrete, quantifiable issues by which one could assess the inclusion of African Americans in academia. A university's willingness (or unwillingness) to establish a Black Studies center or program or department — and the level of funding provided — was a very visible measure of its commitment, not just to Black Studies but to the acceptance of African Americans, socially and intellectually, on campus. New courses bearing on the concerns of African Americans could be counted, as could the texts and literary works by and about African Americans that were being added to the instructional canons of various disciplines. And all of this was inextricably linked to the constant debates over university efforts to increase the enrollment of African American students and the hiring of African American faculty — not to mention the standards by which the enrollments and hirings would be

determined.

Though conflicts over these issues were often painful and intense, they were at least relatively clear-cut and easy to frame in terms of numbers — enrollments, faculty levels, budgets. And solutions, though not easily crafted, were susceptible to political influence and negotiation. Protests could be staged and demands presented. Administrators and governing boards could be pressed by students and off-campus African American communities to modify policies and budgets. Factions of supporters or opponents could be defined on a familiar spectrum from conservative to moderate to liberal to radical. Compromises could be forged through the sort of traditional political mathematics that if not truly agreeable to all, was at least comprehensible to all. In fact, it was the relative clarity of these political elements of the debate that fed the lingering and dismissive view of Black Studies as an essentially political enterprise.

It is true that from its emergence as a recognizable force in late 1967, the Black Studies movement was a political enterprise. It had to be. The vast majority of American colleges and universities in 1967 were as much in need of desegregation as any lunch counters, city buses and elementary schools in the Deep South. Fighting the political battles necessary simply to establish a substantial African American presence in overwhelmingly white institutions was the first priority. But the Black Studies movement was always much *more* than a political enterprise. It was also an important intellectual effort to reform the university's understanding of itself as an institution. Black Studies

challenged the prevailing — though often unexamined — philosophical assumptions that governed academia. That debate was often complicated by disagreements among supporters of Black Studies and the tendency — common to the era — to focus on the incendiary rhetoric of the most radical participants in any debate. But in their own way, the philosophical challenges carried the most profound implications for the evolution of higher education in America. At its heart, the Black Studies movement was not about simply making the university ethnically more diverse, including more people in the existing scholarly enterprise. It was about radically changing the philosophical vision that was the foundation of higher education in America.

To their credit, many white college and university administrators were serious about making their institutions more open to African Americans. That is why so many Black Studies programs were established so quickly. Certainly there was resistance to Black Studies, just as there were cynical administrators whose aim in establishing programs was appeasement, to restore or ensure calm on their campuses. But many, like William Keast, president at Wayne State University in Detroit, sincerely believed in the objectives of the Civil Rights Movement and accepted the idea that intellectual honesty required universities to give more attention in their curricula and research to the history, contributions and concerns of African Americans. But even the most supportive of white administrators generally came to the issue from the integrationist or assimilationist perspective. In this view, the problem was frequently defined as a matter of bringing more black students and black

faculty members into the university and including more material by and about African Americans on course reading lists. Even sincere liberals, however, often did not consider that merely increasing participation of African Americans in the existing system might not be enough. In his reflection on the history and development of the Black Studies movement, In the Vineyard: Working in African American Studies, Perry A. Hall observed:

The discourse around African American Studies was often framed in terms of political ideology and/or organizational structure; but it was, in fact, a set of underlying epistemological issues — determining what (and who) constitutes valid knowledge about black people and black communities — that united the various groups of the Black Studies movement opposing the integrated, inclusionist model based on traditional disciplines and the epistemological framework they embodied. For them, the "epistemic renovation" that Russell [Adams] spoke of required a totally restructured analytical framework. Mere inclusionism and contributionism regarding the experiences and achievements of blacks were insufficient for these purposes.¹

William E. Nelson Jr., in Africology: From Social Movement to Academic

Discipline, describes the philosophical challenge of Black Studies in stark terms:

The demand for Black Studies was more than just a call for construction of new courses. At bottom Black Studies represented a powerful critique of traditional American values, institutions and political arrangements. Black Studies questioned both the methods and the epistemological assumptions of traditional social sciences. It called into question not only the content of specific courses, but the ideological network which undergirded the fundamental approaches to human questions of entire disciplines.²

To understand the nature of this epistemological challenge to the university,

it is useful to examine the debate that raged among supporters of Black Studies over what, exactly, Black Studies was. Advocates of Black Studies programs had profound disagreements over the nature, purpose and scope of Black Studies. Those disagreements complicated, and often confused, the broader debate between the advocates and college administrators because they underscored the fact that there was no clear, single definition of Black Studies. The lack of a clear definition was hardly surprising, given that the whole concept was so new. But beyond complicating the practical negotiations over program creation, the lack of definition also worked to obscure the full scope of the philosophical challenge the university faced.

While they differed on matters of ideology, programatic focus and organization, there was no disagreement among Black Studies advocates about the value of education or the importance of including in that education a full discussion of the contributions and achievements of black people. All of them shared a certain degree of cultural nationalism. Martin Luther King Jr., for example, had acknowledged the need for black awareness when he wrote, "The tendency to ignore the Negro's contribution to American life and strip him of his personhood is as old as the earliest history books and as contemporary as this morning's newspaper. To offset this cultural homicide, the Negro must rise up with an affirmation of his own Olympian manhood. . . . As long as the mind is enslaved the body can never be free."³ In that statement he does not seem so far removed from Stokeley Carmichael and Charles Hamilton's assertion in Black Power that

Black people must redefine themselves, and only they can do that. Throughout this country, vast segments of the black communities are beginning to recognize the need to assert their own definitions, to reclaim their history, their culture; to create their own sense of community and togetherness.⁴

And neither position seems at odds with the proclamation on education contained in the Black Panther Party's 1964 platform: "We believe in an education system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If a man does not have knowledge of himself and his position in society and the world, then he has little chance to relate to anything else."⁵

And yet, there developed a very strong ideological split among Black Studies proponents, a split that separated reform-minded intellectuals and political moderates from the militant advocates of Black Power and the radical revolutionaries. All three factions understood the importance of education and believed that black history and culture should have a prominent place in academia. But whereas the reformers envisioned Black Studies as a vehicle to bring black culture and black people into the mainstream of the existing social and academic structure, the critics of integrationism and the radical revolutionaries saw Black Studies as a way to entirely reshape academia or eradicate that structure altogether.

In an article in Black Scholar in 1974, Robert L. Allen described three competing visions of Black Studies.

One school of thought viewed Black Studies as a purely academic field concerned with researching black history and illuminating the contributions of blacks to American society. Others, such as Harold Cruse, considered Black Studies to be an instrument of cultural nationalism

specifically concerned with critiquing the “integrationist ethic” and providing a counterbalance to the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture. Still a third viewpoint, best expressed by Nathan Hare, saw Black Studies as a vehicle for social change, with a functioning relationship to the black community to break down the “ebony tower” syndrome of alienated black intellectuals.⁶

In practical terms, this meant that the integrationist reformers generally supported efforts to inject more African American content into existing disciplines across the curriculum or new programs that emphasized research and traditional models of intellectual rigor and achievement; they strenuously opposed programs that were aimed at black students only as a new form of segregation. Cultural nationalists, like Cruse, often agreed with the integrationist reformers when it came to intellectual standards, but saw Black Studies as a way to forge a new cultural awareness among African Americans that would move the social debate away from the old concepts of integration and assimilation and toward a more pluralistic model. The radicals, on the other hand, were more interested in social revolution and believed that traditional institutional models were useless and oppressive. They insisted that Black Studies programs must transform society by liberating blacks and other oppressed people, and to accomplish that must be committed to social action through close links with the off-campus black community. In some cases, they advocated programs on white campuses — centers, dormitories, and specific courses, for example — that would be for black students only.

To some degree, the divisions among supporters of Black Studies mirrored the divisions that had arisen within the Civil Rights Movement around 1964.

The older wing of that movement, led by King, was committed to the idea of integrating African Americans into America's existing socio-political system. This was the movement of the Montgomery bus boycott, the Freedom Rides, and the March on Washington. King's "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial resounded, not just with the cadences of the black Baptist church, but also with the conventional symbology of American liberty. King was not fomenting revolution or seeking a radical revision of the American Ideal; he was calling on America to live up to that ideal and to become the nation it had always promised to be. The answer to America's problems, he said, was to let everyone share in the nation's political heritage and economic bounty.

But around 1964, a younger, more militant group that was disenchanted by the movement's lack of progress in improving the lives of African Americans had split from King's leadership. The group, led by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and following the black nationalist philosophy articulated by Carmichael and Hamilton, formed the Black Power movement, which rejected the assimilationist model of the older generation. Assimilation was not possible, Black Power advocates argued, because the existing social structure was built upon white ideals that would never accept black people. Instead of seeking a token share of the existing system, they said, blacks needed to demand and fight for autonomy in ways that would force the white power structure to deal with black people on their own terms. In this view, blacks needed to reject white values and definitions, embrace their own and insist that the white society respect the right of blacks to define and control their

own lives by their own cultural values.

Other, more radical activists, also rejected any possibility of assimilation but believed that even the self-reliance and assertiveness of the Black Power movement did not go far enough. The most militant activists, exemplified by the Black Panthers, called for outright revolution to overthrow repressive social institutions. In the Panthers' view, America was waging war on blacks and blacks needed to organize to fight back, with violence if necessary. White-dominated social and political institutions could not be reformed, they argued; those institutions had to be destroyed and replaced. Dressed entirely in black with black berets and sometimes brandishing firearms, the Panthers exuded a calculatedly paramilitary aura — as a symbol of power and to inspire fear in the white society. Panthers aggressively monitored white police activities and established a variety of programs aimed at improving the quality of life in the black community.

The debate between the Black Studies factions closely paralleled the broader political struggle between the reformist, integrationist forces of the traditional Civil Rights Movement, the younger militants of the Black Power Movement and the radical Panthers. In some cases, the players were the same. For example, a pamphlet on Black Studies published in 1969 by the A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund included an introduction by Bayard Rustin and articles by Kenneth B. Clark and Roy Wilkins, among others. This group supported the concept of Black Studies in broad terms, but generally defined the concept in integrationist terms, whereby the history and culture of African

Americans would be merged into existing academic programs across the university curriculum. Rustin, Clark and Wilkins were all important figures in the Civil Rights Movement, and the pamphlet was consistently critical of the radical approach to Black Studies. Rustin expressed the reformist perspective most succinctly in his introduction when he described the nature of the debate between the reformists and the radicals as a series of questions:

Is black studies an educational program or a forum for ideological indoctrination? Is it designed to train qualified scholars in a significant field of intellectual inquiry, or is it hoped that its graduates will form political cadres prepared to organize the impoverished residents of the black ghetto? Is it a means to achieve psychological identity and strength, or is it intended to provide a false and sheltered sense of security, the fragility of which would be revealed by even the slightest exposure to reality? And finally, does it offer the possibility for better racial understanding, or is it a regression to racial separatism? The power — and also the danger — of “black studies” as a slogan is that it can mean any or all of these things to different people.⁷

Rustin’s last question is particularly significant because it underscores the fact that Rustin and other reformists were committed — on the question of Black Studies as on other issues — to an integrationist philosophy.

Clark’s contribution to the pamphlet was his letter of resignation from the Antioch College Board of Directors. Clark, whose groundbreaking sociological studies laid the foundation for the successful legal challenge to the “separate but equal” doctrine of school segregation, quit the board after the college created an Afro-American Studies Institute for black students only. “To encourage or endorse a separate black program not academically equivalent to the college curriculum in general, . . . is to reinforce the Negro’s inability to

compete with whites for real power in the real society," Clark wrote. "It is no excuse to justify the deed by citing the demand."⁸ And Wilkins, in a short essay, also assailed the idea of separatist Black Studies programs as "Black Jim Crow." In demanding such programs or racially exclusive dormitories, he wrote, black students "are opening the door to a dungeon. They do not see that no black history becomes significant and meaningful unless it is taught in the context of world and national history. In its sealed-off black-studies centers, it will be simply another exercise in racial breast-beating."⁹ Far from advocating the widespread creation of stand-alone Black Studies departments or centers, Wilkins argued that to avoid the dilution of high-quality scholarship, only "two centers of genuine stature" should be established, one on the east coast, one on the west; at the same time, all colleges should establish courses in Afro-American history and culture "to the extent that qualified faculty, black or white, can be found."¹⁰

But the integrationist ideal that drove the established Civil Rights Movement was coming under increasing attack from intellectuals — not all of them radical revolutionaries — who considered the ideal inadequate for dealing with the real problems of American society. Harold Cruse, for example, argued that the ideal of integrating blacks into the dominant white culture was actually counterproductive because it "has subverted and blocked America's underlying tendency toward what I would call a democratic ethnic pluralism in our society." He continued:

This ethic has been a historical tendency stimulated both

by Anglo-Saxon political ideology, rampant industrialism, racism and an Americanism whose implied goal has been the nullification of all competing subcultures indigenous to North America. . . . But the present internal social and racial crisis we are experiencing proves beyond a doubt the failure of this integrationist ethic. As a result of this failure, at this present moment we have no viable black philosophy on which to base much-needed black studies programs.¹¹

Cruse argued that Black Studies should, from a base of cultural nationalism, examine the development of black institutions "on all levels — political, economic, cultural and social." But while he rejected the concept of integration, which was based on the value assumptions of the dominant white culture, he believed that there were problems inherent in focusing solely on black history, culture and social institutions. While he criticized integrationism, he was not advocating separatism. For Cruse, Black Studies was an intellectual counterbalance to the prevailing biases of white scholarship.

Black studies must make the dominant particularism, the dominant racial creed, more capable of dealing with the internal crisis facing us all. . . . I think that those who would institute the black studies program must not only understand their own particular black history but must also grapple with, and understand, the dual tradition that has been nurtured in this society and that has given our society its unique character. I think the question of a black studies program is intrinsically a two-way street: a black studies program — even if it expresses black particularism — is a kind of particularism which understands its own limits and its social function. Its social function is not to replace one particularism with another particularism but to counterbalance the historical effects and exaggeration of particularism toward a more racially balanced society, a society which would include expectations regarding the democratic creed.¹²

Militant radical proponents also rejected the integrationist ethic as a basis for Black Studies but were less worried about the problems of a black

particularism. Frustrated and angered by the intransigence of white academic institutions and what they saw as the glacial pace of change achieved under the integrationist model, the radicals increasingly defined their aims in revolutionary terms and increasingly leaned toward the use of separatist approaches they believed would promote social change by encouraging unity and self-determination among blacks. If the Black Studies rhetoric of the reformists echoed King's criticism of Black Power in Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?, the ideology of the radicals was infused with the spirit of Carmichael and Hamilton's assertion that,

The concept of Black Power rests on a fundamental premise: Before a group can enter the open society, it must first close ranks. By this we mean that group solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society.¹³ (emphasis in original)

In Black Power, Carmichael and Hamilton took the metaphor of internal colonialism that had been devised by more moderate scholars — Cruse and Clark¹⁴ — and transformed it into an activist philosophy. That philosophy put great emphasis on group identity, unity and autonomous action in much the same way that African independence movements had sought to shake off European colonial rule. It was, after all, the African colonial experience that had inspired the internal colonialism metaphor. Black revolutionaries like Eldridge Cleaver and radical scholars like Maulana Karenga and Nathan Hare sought to apply that philosophy to academia in concrete ways. Hare argued that Black Studies programs had to connect directly with the off-campus African American

community and focus on community development.

Black education is black-community centered. At the least, the educational process must involve the black community, transforming the community while educating and training the black student. For example, students in a course in black history — let alone black politics or black economics — might be required to put on a panel discussion for younger children in church basements. A course in black education would contain tutorial assignments. . . .

This would tend to increase the commitment of black students to the community while simultaneously permitting them to "learn by doing." At the same time, their mere presence in the community would provide role models not generally available to black youths. Thus education is made relevant to the student and his community while the community is, so to speak, made relevant to education.¹⁵

Karenga told participants at a Yale symposium in 1968 that white universities had three things to offer black people: "non-intervention, foreign aid, and civilizing committees" that would encourage humanitarian values among whites. Karenga's analysis was blunt and direct:

What you have to understand is that you should not fool yourselves by thinking that education is an academic thing; it is basically a political thing, and it provides identity, purpose, and direction within an American context. . . . We say that we are another country — you have to accept that. We are a colony ruled by a mother country — that's the outside world — we live in another world. What we have to do, then, is to try desperately to keep the outside world from imposing its authority and its value system upon us.¹⁶

The Black Panther Party went even farther than Karenga's demand for white non-intervention, calling for fundamental, radical change of the white institutions. In a 1969 article on "Education and Revolution" in The Black Scholar, Eldridge Cleaver, the Panthers' minister of information, said the white

power structure must be smashed.

We have to destroy their power in the community, and we're not reformists, we're not in the movement to reform the curriculum of a given university or a given college or to have a Black Students Union recognized at a given high school. We are revolutionaries, and as revolutionaries, our goal is the transformation of the American social order.¹⁷

And in his own Black Scholar article the following month, Panthers Chairman Bobby Seale urged black students to take themselves and their Black Studies programs off-campus, "to move out and be more a part of the community, to educate the masses of people of the need to end the racist, brutal war that has been going on against black people for hundreds of years."¹⁸

Black student activists tended to align themselves with the most radical interpretations of Black Studies and demand that the programs have a strong emphasis on community action. They also did not shy away from separatist concepts when they believed separatism would benefit black people. Stephen Lythcott, a black student at Antioch College, responded to Clark's criticism of the college's blacks-only program by rejecting the integrationist model that Clark championed. Black students could not afford to worry about the benefits that an integrated program might have for the whole society, he wrote, because their first responsibility was to their own growth and development.

"[T]he major task of reorienting the Black college student, creating a new value system for him, and additionally putting his knowledge and skills at the disposal of the people he has forgotten in the black community — these claims have the highest priority for us, are far more pertinent to our situation. . . . Black students have their hands full already without assuming the extra burdens of white education!"¹⁹

Antioch's program, Lythcott argued, was designed to break out of the either/or dilemma posed by the 1950s segregation/integration model. Clark, he said, was trying to cope with 1969 problems while trapped in a 1954 mindset.

One obvious legacy of all this debate is that there still is no clear, consistent, widely shared vision of what a Black Studies program should include, how it should be structured, and what its role is within the university. That much is clear from the divergence of names — Black, Afro-American, Africana — and the variety of structures — departments, centers, programs — that characterize the differing institutional approaches. And those programs have not uniformly thrived. In a survey of Black Studies programs undertaken for the Ford Foundation in 1987, Darlene Clark Hine traced the programs' structural diversity to their origins as a "response to political exigencies rather than intellectual and academic imperatives." She continued:

Today it seems that no two black studies programs are alike. Their diversity is evidenced in faculty size and composition, relations with university administrators and more traditional departments, curriculum, degrees offered, budgets, spatial resources, range of special programs, and the nature of their community outreach.²⁰

Because Black Studies programs arose in an intensely political environment and in response to political pressure from black students and faculty, the programs' diversity may be seen as an expression of the unique interactions of individuals and institutional character that occurred on each campus. On campuses where the black students and faculty members pressing for Black Studies were influenced more heavily by the reformist ideal, Black Studies

reflected a more traditionally intellectual approach. Where the leading black advocates were more radical, the Black Studies programs adopted a stronger community orientation. Likewise, institutional character had an important impact on Black Studies. Universities that saw themselves as intellectually elite were more likely to adopt strongly academic programs, while those with a tradition of greater openness and community service were more accepting of programs with a significant community emphasis.

Of the two variables, however, institutional character was by far the more dominant. After all, the relatively small numbers of black students and faculty on white campuses in the late 1960s may have been able to influence administrative policy but they did not have the power to control it. Nellie Varner helped design a Black Studies program at the University of Michigan in 1968 as a young black faculty member and junior administrator. She later became a U-M regent. In a 1992 interview, she said that U-M's graduate research Center for Afro-American and African Studies was designed to fit the university's traditional and academically elite mold. She recalled that there were strong feelings, particularly among the activist black students, that the center should be more community-oriented than it eventually became. But that vision of Black Studies went beyond the university's limits. "I think that the nature of the institution and 'what was possible' at Michigan didn't allow it to take that kind of turn," Varner said. "In other words, . . . it was a choice of, 'You're either going to do something that was in the Michigan tradition or we can't have it here.' "²¹

The white university administrators also controlled the effectiveness and

success of Black Studies programs through the allocation of institutional resources. Regardless of what philosophical model a given college might adopt, a program's ability to grow and prove itself as an academic enterprise depended in large part on the institution's commitment to the program. With adequate funding and staff, a Black Studies unit could attract high-quality scholars and underwrite the high-quality programs that would win it acceptance and respect in the academy. Without adequate funding and staff, the most carefully conceived program could find itself diminished and marginalized.

Some of the reformists, who favored the approach of making existing university curricula more inclusive, cited the potential for marginalization as a strong argument against the radical approach. Wilkins worried about "the practical difficulty that it costs more money to establish real studies centers than most colleges can afford and that qualified personnel — black or white — is simply not available at this time." Activist students, he warned, "might well find themselves saddled with a poor substitute for a center, foisted on them by an administration ready to buy peace at any price."²² And Rustin assailed the "patronization, self-flagellation, and pusillanimity" he perceived in many white administrators.

Many of these would-be liberals feel that by submitting to the wildest fantasies of Negro students they are doing them a service, but in reality they only exhibit their lack of concern for the education of those students. And by permitting black studies to be opportunistically used for political and propagandistic purposes, they reveal their disdainful belief that the study of the Negro is not a subject worthy of serious intellectual attention.²³

Nelson said the issue of financial resources also was an important motivation for white scholars and administrators who opposed Black Studies. In the highly developed, and very political bureaucracies of the university, he said, Black Studies posed a very real threat to the financial turf of existing departments and programs.

[O]n a practical level, Black Studies threatened to siphon away both students and financial resources from traditional departments during the period of an emerging fiscal crisis in higher education. Thus from the very beginning the demand for Black Studies was met with strong resistance by individuals deeply committed to preserving the historic character of higher education. On many campuses the resistance was designed to keep Black Studies from coming into existence at all. On others, the strategy was to establish a program to placate student demands, but limit the reach and impact of the program. This was usually accomplished by keeping the staff and the resources of the programs small and maintaining the programs as coordinating units rather than autonomous departments.²⁴

In her examination of Black Studies programs, Hine found that many of those programs had suffered from lack of institutional support or active administrative efforts "to thwart growth and development." Some programs also had been undermined, she said, by their origins as hasty responses to campus unrest, which forced them to rely on untrained directors unable to build academically challenging programs. Sensationalized media coverage of shootings that erupted at the University of California at Los Angeles in 1969 during a dispute between two black radical groups over the school's Black Studies program and a campus protest by armed black students at Cornell University that same year also hurt the image of Black Studies, she said.

"University administrators who valued 'peace' and 'campus rest' had little inclination, courage or will to insist on quality," Hine wrote. "Thus, black studies units seldom were held to the traditional modes of evaluation and scrutiny observed elsewhere in the academy."²⁵

And yet, it was precisely those traditional modes of evaluation and the Eurocentric values they represented that were at the heart of Black Studies' challenge to the university. Whether they accepted the integrationist ethic or advocated social revolution, supporters of Black Studies were in agreement that white institutions of higher education had excluded not just black people, but black ideas, black cultural values and black philosophical perspectives. They all agreed that that needed to be changed. They differed over the degree of change that was necessary as well as over strategy and tactics for accomplishing that change. But they shared the goal of remaking the cognitive world of higher education.

As a practical matter, scholars who accepted the integrationist/reformist ideals generally gravitated toward the traditional academic disciplines. They aimed to make the entire university curriculum more reflective of the black experience by broadening the scope of individual disciplines and making them more inclusive. Some turned down opportunities to work in, or even lead, Black Studies programs or departments.

That left the job of defining Black Studies, its philosophy and theoretical underpinnings, to the more militant advocates who opposed the integrationist ethic and who were charged with the institutional task of setting up Black

Studies programs. Although early scholars in the field regularly acknowledged the need to examine and refine the theoretical and methodological parameters of the discipline they were creating, efforts at disciplinary definition were haphazard throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s. That was largely because the logistical demands of setting up programs and departments were so overwhelming. Curricula had to be designed, courses identified and planned; faculty had to be recruited; staff had to be hired; instructional materials had to be assembled; bureaucratic resistance had to be overcome; administrative procedures had to be developed and coordinated in keeping with institutional mandates — and often all of this had to be accomplished in a very short time. Under such circumstances it is no surprise that theoretical considerations were not the highest priority. In fact, it was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s, after the early organizational drive had established Black Studies programs fairly widely in academia, that scholars in the discipline began to engage in concerted debate to develop a theoretical framework for Black Studies. The leading paradigm to emerge from that debate was the concept of Afrocentricity, articulated in the work of Maulana Karenga and Molefi Asante. In Introduction to Black Studies, first published in 1982, Karenga discussed the need for Black Studies to establish a new intellectual foundation for understanding and analyzing the experience of African Americans. The existing structures and processes of Western scholarship were so biased, he said, that they were programmed to exclude African perspectives and could not shed useful insight on the reality that African

Americans faced. The aim of Black Studies, he wrote, was to provide an intellectual alternative that was adequate and responsive to the needs of black people.

This enterprise is self-consciously Afro-centric, critical and corrective in response to the internal demands of the discipline itself, whose subject matter and academic and social mission clearly demand this approach. An Afro-centric approach is essentially intellectual inquiry and production centered on and in the image and interest of African peoples. This responds to the early and continuing demands for academic and social relevance of the educational process and its contents. The critical thrust is the advancing of severe and ongoing criticism of the established order of things in order to negate myths, mystifications and insubstantialities of traditional white studies on blacks, society and the world.²⁶

Asante has had somewhat more influence within the academic arena. In part, that is because much of Karenga's energies, as befits a community activist, were aimed at extra-academic activities, such as creating and promoting Kwanza, an African American holiday that celebrates the heritage of African peoples. But Asante also was responsible, as chair of the African American Studies department at Temple University, for establishing the first Ph.D. program in the field. He also produced a series of books that define his vision of Afrocentricity. Asante argued for the need to analyze the history and experience of African Americans from a consciously African-centered point of view.

We walk the way of a new level of freedom. We seek to no longer be victimized by others as to our place in the center of world history. We do this not because of arrogance but because it is necessary to place Africa at the center of our existential reality, else we will remain detached, isolated,

and spiritually lonely people in societies which constantly bombard us with anti-Africa rhetoric and symbols, sometimes from Africans themselves who have been trained by the enemies of Africa.²⁷

The concept of Afrocentricity attracted many avid supporters who saw it as a foundation for shaking off the mistakes and distortions of Eurocentric scholarship. It also has prompted critics to charge that some Afrocentric formulations are based on questionable analyses of the African past and that "the concept encourages racial chauvinism and inter-group conflict by asserting the superiority of peoples of African descent relative to other populations."²⁸ But whatever the strengths or weaknesses of particular formulations of Afrocentric theory, the central point is that by 1980, little more than a decade after the founding of the discipline, Black Studies scholars were working hard to define a theoretical framework, rooted in African elements of African American culture, that would provide a powerful, alternative perspective for the examination and analysis of the African American experience.

The fundamental assumptions of Afrocentric theory were implicit, if not clearly defined, in the early demands for Black Studies. From the outset, militant Black Studies advocates criticized the entire scholarly enterprise of higher education for operating on Eurocentric assumptions that could not explain — and often seemed not even to perceive — the unique experience of African Americans in American culture. The Eurocentric bias, especially in the social sciences, always seemed to result in research and analyses that measured black people against white standards and defined African Americans in terms of pathology. Whether the issue was economic status,

academic achievement, family structure or social behaviors, blacks routinely were defined in terms of what they lacked, relative to the norms of white society. White scholars seemed most interested in expressing the situation of blacks in terms of problems, as if the end of their research was to answer the question: Why aren't blacks in sync with the overall society? The thrust of Black Studies was to respond with another question: Why should they be?

Rather than looking to the assumptions of the dominant white culture, Black Studies scholars looked to the cultural heritage of African Americans themselves for models of understanding the African American experience. A key touchstone for their analysis was W.E.B. DuBois' description of the "two warring ideals" within the consciousness of black people: the conflict between what it meant to be American and what it meant to be black. White scholarship had never quite grasped this idea, but Black Studies scholars often looked to DuBois' formulation as an organizing principle for their own research and analysis. As Johnella E. Butler put it in Black Studies: Pedagogy and Revolution, "Identity, the foundation of a pedagogy of Black Studies, is rooted in a recognition of the sensibility of the two warring ideals, the adventure of Blackness and Western culture, the modes created by the various interactions between Black and White sensibility."²⁹ Being black in America, Black Studies scholars asserted, gave African Americans a distinctly different world view from that of the dominant white culture; any scholarship that did not take that into account was inevitably flawed. "Black studies must be taught from a black perspective," wrote Nathan Hare.

The spirit of blackness must pervade black education. Many white professors — and consequently, of course, professors at Negro colleges — are beginning to dust off old race relations and Negro history courses and call them black. These are collected, usually remaining scattered under the control of existing — and frequently racist — departmental chairmen. Such programs are not black studies; they are Negro studies or polka-dot studies. Nor is the blackening of existing white courses or white-oriented courses alone enough. Black education must be based on both ideological and pedagogical blackness.³⁰

This differing world view was expressed in a number of ways. First and foremost, Black Studies scholars tended to reject traditional ideals of objectivity and detachment that were the foundation for the Western scientific method. Not surprisingly, that rejection sparked considerable criticism from scholars who argued that objectivity was necessary to keep ideology from obscuring the search for truth that was the purpose of scientific research. But Black Studies advocates responded that the scientific method itself was inherently ideological, that it was suffused with the political and cultural assumptions of the dominant white Western society. In fact, they charged, the scientific method had worked to objectify black people and deprive them of their humanity. In an examination of the development of theory in Black Studies, Philip T.K. Daniel criticized analytical models based on the concept of objectivity because they "expect members of the black family to be understood in terms of adjustment or maladjustment to their surroundings." Moreover, he said, debates about objectivity missed the point of Black Studies.

The whole emphasis on objectivity and empirical theory as opposed to normative theory is out of place in Black Studies and the arguments concerning it should be

dropped. We scrutinize as we live. Analysis in Black Studies is a purposeful activity and the conditions of the black community involve questions of right and wrong. To emphasize only objective behavior or to resort only to investigations that involve the scientific method is like trying to equate human nature to the movements of a puppet. The appendages only move when they are manipulated by some outside force.

This is no argument against scientific objectivity. However, we must move away from the kind of objectivity which tends to emphasize empty verbalization which is characteristic of many of the present day social sciences. They steer us into abstractions rather than practical problems. We are told that a practical problem may bias an investigation if it is carried out to provide justification for a policy. But the determination to exclude from an investigation the data and hypotheses pertaining to practical conditions may be just as much an expression of bias.³¹

Part of the humanity stolen by scientific objectivity, some believed, was the idea of community that connects individuals with one another, that provides the basis for all human activity. In glorifying scientific objectivity and valuing the individual over the community, they asserted, the university had devalued African American culture. The objective of Black Studies, in this view, was to restore the humanity of African Americans, or, as June Jordan put it, "bring back the person."

We, we know the individuality that isolates the man from other men, the either/or, the lonely-one that leads the flesh to clothing, jewelry, and land, the solitude of sight that separates the people from the people, flesh from flesh, that jams material between the spirit and the spirit. We have suffered witness to these pitiful, and murdering, masquerade extensions of the self.

Instead, we choose a real, a living enlargement of our only life. We choose community: Black America, in white. Here we began like objects chosen by the blind. And it is here that we see fit to continue — as subjects of human community. We will to bring back the person, alive and

sacrosanct; we mean to rescue the person from the amorality of time and science.³²

Butler identified the either/or approach to analysis — so fundamental to Western science — as a central part of the problem facing African Americans. It was, she said, at the root of the dilemma DuBois described as the two warring ideals. American society presented black people with an either/or choice: be black or be American. It was the dilemma of that choice, Butler argued, that had kept African Americans in a position of colonial subservience. The way out of the dilemma, she said, was to reject the duality assumed by the impossible choice, reject the either/or world view and embrace a both/and world view.

[A]n either/or world view (corresponds to Western sensibility) maintains the dichotomized duality of matter and spirit, feeling and intellect. A both/and world view provides the perspective and the impetus for the unification of the dichotomy . . . in the dialogical interaction of contradictions. This dialogical interaction of contradictions allows for resolution not through an either/or negation, but through the interaction and the subsequent evolution of generative themes . . . Built upon the recognition of equal importance of the physical and the spiritual, and upon the resultant entity of their constant interaction, it is a world view that recognizes humankind's oneness with nature. It diametrically opposes Western thought in its emphasis on the intuitive, subjective, and communal and is essential to a liberating pedagogy.³³

This alternative world view represented by Black Studies went directly counter to the prevailing world view of academia. Instead of objectivity and detachment, it proposed subjectivity and engagement. Instead of emphasizing the individual, it emphasized community. Instead of pursuing knowledge for the sake of knowledge — abstract, "pure" research — it pursued knowledge for consciously practical purposes. The main purpose was the liberation of black

people from the dominance of white society — and the intellectual structures and processes that worked to sustain that dominance. This world view was shared, at least in broad outline, by most scholars in Black Studies programs. Certainly there were intense disagreements among Black Studies scholars over ideology, modes of interpretation, methodology and theory, but black scholars who did not share at least some affinity for the world view generally gravitated toward the established disciplines, and many who went to those disciplines did so as a matter of personal interest or professional practicality, not because they objected to the Black Studies world view.

White scholars, even those who were sympathetic to the idea of Black Studies, were often profoundly uncomfortable with such a view of the university's intellectual enterprise. Even when they recognized the political power of the university and its tendency to reinforce the prevailing, Eurocentric ideology, many whites opposed the idea that Black Studies could legitimately inject its own ideology into the academic mix. Historian David Brion Davis, for example, in delivering his assessment of the Yale symposium on Black Studies in the spring of 1968, acknowledged that the debate over Black Studies had forced white scholars to recognize their own biases and the biases of the university.

Clearly the liberal academician is caught in the middle between militant blacks and a fearful white majority, between his commitment to truth and scholarship and an awakening feeling of social responsibility. While the reputable scholar strives for objectivity, he knows that knowledge represents power and often serves and ideological function. It would appear that our greatest

danger is not from a black upsurge but from a potential tidal wave of white reaction which could extinguish all the values we live by. . . One cannot deny either the importance or validity of black separatism, which has revealed our own unconscious paternalism and smug ethnocentrism and which is giving blacks a long-needed self-confidence and sense of manhood. Nor can we warn the blacks of the danger of backlash, since this is the very brickbat that has always been used to defeat their aspirations.³⁴

Black Studies scholars, of course, did not agree that there was a necessary conflict between the commitment to truth and social responsibility. But white scholars, schooled in the values of objectivity and detachment, were reluctant to abandon those values. Sympathetic whites generally ascribed the oppressive aspects of Eurocentric university systems to human weaknesses rather than weaknesses in the values themselves. As Davis put it, "To charge that universities are not living up to their ideals is not to say that they have no ideals." He continued:

It is true, of course, that blacks have long been excluded from our institutions of higher education. It is also true that our curriculum, administrative framework, and educational goals are reflections of white middle-class society, and as such, strike many blacks as foreign and hostile. . . . Too often, appeals to truth and objectivity have been used to undermine legitimate aspirations. . . . Yet we must insist on maintaining the distinction between political ideology and education. There is a serious danger of allowing our educational machinery to become an instrument of propaganda. On this issue we must hold firm and not retreat behind procedural and administrative evasions. It will be all too easy for whites who are burdened by fear and guilt to shrink from defending their essential beliefs and values and to offer lame excuses about the proper procedures for setting up courses or hiring professors. One must be absolutely clear about distinguishing free intellectual inquiry from a party line, no matter how justified the party line may be.³⁵

At the same symposium, McGeorge Bundy, chairman of the Ford Foundation, which financially backed the symposium and eventually gave considerable support to the examination of Black Studies, expressed his own defense of objectivity. He said that the appropriateness of the African American experience as a subject of study within the university was without question. But the university needed to remain objective and detached, he argued, to perform properly its social function as critic and generator of knowledge, without regard to the practical value or purpose of that knowledge.

The university is not as political as radical critics suggest. The university is not, for example, in its teachings about the nature of the economic system, the instrument of large-scale corporate organizations: their complaints about the way *their* part of things are taught are noisy and continuous and a reasonable test of the health of any economics department. The university should give offense, at regular, carefully chosen, reasonably paced intervals, to every element in society — including itself . . . Because if you are going to study the black experience, you must expect the university to study parts of it that you don't like. To close it off to the parts that serve immediate political purpose is to do something else. You must also expect, if it is to be studied in a university, that it will be studied by men and women without regard to nationality or color or specific commitment to a particular political cause.³⁶

Bundy also appeared to be put off by the passion of black students and some radical scholars who were pressing hard for the establishment of Black Studies programs as a way to foster a sense of black identity. Clearly, he was uncomfortable with the notion of purposefulness that drove so many Black Studies advocates. Although Bundy acknowledged some value in encouraging the "quest for identity," he dismissed the idea of courses that were merely

"therapeutic." "If you undertake to study a subject because of the *subject's* importance, then at least you are doing something real," he said. "If you undertake to study a subject because of the importance of the act to *you*, then in the long run what you are doing is unreal."³⁷ These concerns of the white establishment about purposeful intellectual inquiry made little sense to the black students and scholars who were pushing for Black Studies. As Perry Hall, who was a black student activist during the period, explained in his analysis of the symposium 30 years later:

First, a sense of purpose, identity, and direction . . . was exactly what the university experience has always provided for many of its students, in accordance with the dictates of a white, middle-class, Anglo-American cultural framework. It was not a perversion for black students coming from a cultural nationalist perspective to expect similar forms of education in curricula more attuned to their cultural background. . . .

Second, the sense of major social crises in the world outside the halls of academia was what created the need for purpose and direction among the thousands of young blacks "caught up" in these crises at this very critical stage in their lives. The conditions of inequity and crises to which Yale student Armstead Robinson spoke were too stark, too immediate to be discarded, minimized, or even looked at with so-called "objectivity." For many, to study and pursue some kind of ivory tower abstract knowledge without concerning oneself with how that knowledge was related to understanding, changing, overcoming, or even just surviving such conditions would just be too "irrelevant."³⁸

And not all white scholars found the notion of purposefulness anathema to the academic enterprise. Eugene D. Genovese, a white historian who was conducting extensive research into the lives of African Americans during the period of slavery, had praise for the black student movement, which he called

"an authentic effort by young people to take a leading role in the liberation of an oppressed people."³⁹ Genovese said the intellectual claim of Black Studies for a place in the university was undeniable, based on "an awareness of the unique and dual nature of the black experience in the United States." His concern with the purposefulness of some Black Studies advocates was not that it would inject ideology into academia, but that if engaged in recklessly it could degenerate into mere factionalism.

There is no such thing as a black ideology or a black point of view. Rather there are various black-nationalist biases, from left-wing versions such as that of the Panthers to right-wing versions such as that of Ron Karenga and other 'cultural nationalists.' There are also authentic sections of the black community that retain conservative, liberal, or radical integrationist and antinationalist positions. Both integrationist and separatist tendencies can be militant or moderate, radical or conservative (in the sense generally applied to white politics in relation to social questions). The separatists are riding high today, and the integrationists are beating a retreat; but this has happened before and may be reversed tomorrow.

All these elements have a right to participate in the exploration of black historical and cultural themes. In one sense, the whole point of black studies programs in a liberal arts college or university ought to be to provide for the widest and most vigorous exchange among all these groups in an atmosphere of free discussion and mutual toleration.⁴⁰

Genovese identified two legitimate purposes he saw for Black Studies programs beyond the simple pursuit of knowledge. Both involved social action and a sense of the need to develop communities, white as well as black.

First, they can, by their very nature, provide a setting within which black people can forge an intelligentsia equipped to provide leadership on various levels of political and cultural action. . . . [O]nly the emergence of a fully developed

intelligentsia, with training in every field of knowledge, can ultimately meet the deepest needs of the black community.

...
Second, black studies can help immeasurably to combat the racism of white students.⁴¹

To some extent, this debate over the willingness of Black Studies advocates to reject objectivity and detachment, and to emphasize purposeful inquiry contributed to the dismissive attitude toward Black Studies of many white scholars, administrators and the broader public. The willingness — even insistence — of black scholars to discuss Black Studies in terms of ideology and political power suggested to some whites that Black Studies was *only* about politics and ideology. That being the case, whites could easily put down Black Studies as illegitimate because their concept of the university did not recognize a legitimate place for politics and ideology — except, of course, as an object of detached study by political scientists.

But seen in another way, Black Studies simply underscored the extent to which politics and ideology had *always* been a function of the university. In the view of many black scholars, ideology was inextricably interwoven with the experience of African Americans. Acknowledging a role for ideology in the study of that experience was merely a recognition of reality. The concerns about the propriety of injecting purposeful inquiry into the scholarly process also need to be seen in the context of a movement toward increasingly pragmatic higher education that by the mid-1960s extended back more than 125 years — at least as far as Emerson's call in "The American Scholar" for the integration of intellect and action. Abraham Flexner had been appalled by the willingness of

universities to add such practical programs as business and journalism schools. But in a society that increasingly saw a college education as the key to advancement and success, the university had, for decades, been busily expanding programs because they had practical applications beyond the mere pursuit of abstract knowledge. What was different about Black Studies as a discipline was that it sought to apply that practicality to the lives of an entire community within the overall society. In its concern with a community (not merely individuals) that did not fit the prevailing Eurocentric mold, a community that had always been looked upon by white scholarship as something to be examined and evaluated by its deficiencies relative to white society, Black Studies programs challenged the dominant paradigm of higher education in America.

Black Studies forced the university to open its mind. In finding a place, however grudgingly, for people and ideas that refused to fit neatly into the Western traditions of scholarly activity and organization, the university was unavoidably and irreversibly changed. Black Studies set the stage for the creation of other programs that emphasized the history and cultures of other ethnic minorities and women. The pump was primed for the post-modernist debate over the possibility of objectivity. No longer could the university be so totally Eurocentric in its values, philosophy, research and institutional process. This is certainly not to say that Eurocentric attitudes have disappeared. The university remains deeply rooted in its white European values and traditions. But since Black Studies came to the university, the university has become more

aware of its institutional biases than it ever was before. The awareness — as expressed in campus and scholarly discourse — became so acute that in just two decades a renewed debate emerged that disparaged that awareness as “political correctness.” Many Black Studies advocates sought to rescue the university from what they saw as the dehumanizing tendencies of Eurocentric science. Some aimed at intellectual and cultural transformation. The extent of their success is open to debate, but not the fact of it. Black Studies may not have achieved the political and social revolution that some of the most ardent supporters desired. But by forcing higher education to find a place for — to accept as a legitimate part of the intellectual enterprise — a different paradigm of scholarly activity, Black Studies accomplished a less obvious revolution in the university’s awareness, and thereby changed the character of the university.

Chapter 6

Acceptance and Appeasement

Many issues and problems were common to any college or university that created, or considered creating, a Black Studies program. Likewise, there were similarities of structure and approach among many of the programs that were created. But the Black Studies programs that emerged so rapidly on American college campuses in the late 1960s and early 1970s were anything but carbon copies of each other, or even approximations of some standard model of what Black Studies should be. There was no such model. Each university was essentially on its own to figure out what Black Studies was — or was supposed to be — and each had to fashion its own solution to the philosophical, pedagogical and political problems that Black Studies presented. As Darlene Clark Hine noted in her 1990 examination of Black Studies programs for the Ford Foundation, almost no two programs were alike because each campus had to deal with its own unique circumstances, considering such matters as location, student and faculty demographics, institutional nature, community relationships, and the susceptibility of the university to political pressure, both from within and without.¹

Variation in those circumstances was huge, and seldom was there time for

the extended studies and discussions so common to policy debates in academia. Pressure was often intense. Because the movement for Black Studies programs was driven by black student demands — often involving public protests and disruptions of university functions — questions about academic or intellectual matters often took a back seat to political considerations. University administrations faced heated criticism from elected officials and the public if they did not maintain peace and quiet on campus — or if they were perceived as giving in to rebellious students. At the same time, black students, who were alienated by white academia and were thoroughly schooled in the techniques of the Civil Rights Movement, were not easily mollified. They were extremely suspicious of administrators' motives — often with good reason — and were determined to change the character of the institutions they attended. It was not an atmosphere that encouraged calm and reasoned discourse. Even sympathetic administrators encountered difficult philosophical conflicts with the students, whose demands sometimes went beyond the bounds of what a university president — particularly at a public institution — could legally agree to. And not all university officials were sympathetic. Some were willing to make a show of creating a Black Studies program to restore campus peace, knowing that it could easily be eliminated, or restricted to the point of irrelevance, through budgetary processes that were often hidden from public view and in any event would do the deed after the furor had died down.

To understand how these real-world considerations affected the emergence

of Black Studies it is necessary to examine several of the early programs. Because each university's situation was unique, there is no way to select a truly representative sample of the great diversity of programming created by the several hundred colleges and universities that set up programs between 1967 and 1972. But by looking at three institutions — San Francisco State College, which established the first Black Studies program at a predominantly white college and suffered through tremendous turmoil in the process; Harvard University, a major private university and a policy leader in higher education; and Wayne State University, a midwestern, urban university that established its program late in the period — we may gain some perspective on how the range of political, social, academic and intellectual variables shaped Black Studies programs.

San Francisco State College

Amid the chaos that surrounded the creation of San Francisco State College's Black Studies Department in 1968 can be seen all of the elements that influenced the Black Studies debate at campuses across the country — black student protest; concerns about enrollment levels of black students and hiring of black faculty; intensified and sometimes inflammatory rhetoric; acid philosophical critiques of the university and its role in perpetuating the power of the dominant white culture; the association with violence that tainted public perceptions; demands for departmental standing to give the program structural status equivalent to other disciplines; demands for student control and black

exclusivity; the emphasis on community connection and activism; and the inextricability of the Black Studies movement from the broader atmosphere of political confrontation that engulfed the campus. As the first predominantly white institution to establish such a program, San Francisco State set much of the agenda and the tone of the public debate over Black Studies. Unfortunately, that tone was set largely by a bitter strike that forced the college to close for significant periods of time, generated hundreds of arrests and began the association in the public mind between Black Studies and violent protest.

As on most campuses, the movement to establish Black Studies at San Francisco State began with the black students. Black students at the college began organizing much earlier than their counterparts at most other campuses. Many predominantly white colleges and universities did not have active black student organizations until 1965, 1966 or even later, but black students at San Francisco State established the Negro Students Association in September 1963. By the spring of 1966, the organization had changed its name to the Black Students Union, reflecting an important change in the group's philosophical and political orientation, and by December of the same year, the BSU had submitted a formal request that the college establish a Black Studies department.² Even before that, in the 1965-66 academic year, a number of courses on African American culture had been offered in San Francisco State's Experimental College. The Experimental College — the first successful program of its kind in the nation — was a student-initiated, student-controlled program that offered a variety of (mostly non-credit) courses designed to

respond to student concerns and interests that were not addressed in the course offerings of the traditional departments. Most of the Experimental College courses were taught by the students themselves.³

Ironically, the initial response of faculty and administration to the proposal for a Black Studies department was fairly positive — despite some questions and concerns that were not unusual, considering that the idea was so new. In fact, to go from first proposal to establishment of a new academic program in less than two years is quick action, in institutional terms. But students do not operate on the same time scale as administration and faculty; what seemed fast action to adults accustomed to bureaucratic process seemed unreasonably slow to students who proposed the department when they were freshmen and still did not see it implemented as they began their junior year. In addition, a variety of factors, many of which had nothing directly to do with Black Studies, combined to generate confusion and discord that rapidly degenerated into confrontation and violence. The result was that the new department, once it was launched, was immediately cast into a long period of turmoil, and Black Studies came to be seen by the public at large — and by many on campus — as a political, rather than an educational or intellectual undertaking.

The problems began with the fact that by 1968, San Francisco State College was an administrative shambles. Between 1960 and 1970, the college had seven presidents, two of them only acting presidents, and in the crucial year of 1968, there were three presidents in a span of six months. The lack of continuity made it extremely difficult to get anything accomplished at the

college, especially a project as large and resource-intensive as the creation of a new academic department. Moreover, it weakened top administrators at a time when they faced increasing pressure for action to deal with matters of dissent and student protest on the campus. In addition, the college's faculty was deeply divided, with six different organizations vying to represent the faculty in collective bargaining. The competition added to the general confusion on the campus, reduced the effectiveness of faculty input on college policy, and inhibited resolution of such faculty concerns as compensation rates, academic freedom, disciplinary procedures and course loads.

All of those problems of the local San Francisco State campus were magnified by a 1960 master plan, adopted by the California legislature, that set up a three-tiered system of higher education for the state. Under that plan, the multi-campus University of California would have primary responsibility for research, graduate instruction, professional programs in such fields as medicine and the law, and undergraduate education for elite students — those who were among the top eighth of the state's high school graduates. The eighteen state colleges — of which San Francisco State was one — were designated as primarily undergraduate institutions for the top third of high school graduates, though they were allowed to offer limited graduate programs. California's public junior colleges would offer two-year programs and would have open-door admissions. The plan was logical, in theory, but had some uncomfortable consequences in practice. For one thing, it generated great dissatisfaction among state college faculty members, many of whom felt

that the plan assigned them to second-class status and deprived them of the opportunity to conduct research and teach at the graduate level. It also undercut the authority of the local campus presidents by making them subject to a statewide board that often did not fully appreciate the significance of an individual campus' unique circumstances. That particular aspect of the problem intensified, as student protest accelerated, because of the influence of statewide politics on the board's decisions.

One particular — and disturbing — consequence of the statewide reorganization plan, at least for San Francisco State, was a dramatic reduction in black student enrollment at the college. For some years, black students had enrolled at San Francisco State at a rate significantly higher than at most other predominantly white colleges in the country. Before the master plan, the student body at San Francisco State was about 12 percent black. After the plan — and the more restrictive enrollment criteria it imposed on the college — black enrollment dropped to about 4 percent. White administrators at the college were slow to notice the change, but black students and leaders in the African American community of San Francisco were not.

The reason may have been the inferior education provided for blacks in ghetto high schools, but to the blacks it seemed that the establishment had deliberately erected a barrier against them. No longer could they attend the state college that was within commuting distance of their homes. Furthermore, they did not like being relegated to the junior colleges, which were regarded as providing inferior education; they had had enough of that.⁴

The concerns of the black students about access to the college, and the quality

of education offered to black students at San Francisco State — and in the public schools of the surrounding city — were an important spark to the increasing activism and militancy of the Black Students Union. The organization's name change signaled an increasingly nationalistic orientation, and the creation of a tutorial program for public school students off-campus — organized through the Experimental College — symbolized the BSU's commitment to community service. Both were key elements in the Black Studies movement. In "Black Studies at San Francisco State," John H. Bunzel noted that after the adoption of the new name in the summer of 1966, the BSU

. . . almost immediately became a major force in the student government. During the following year, it turned its attention to the educational problem of black and other minority students on the campus, which they saw in its broadest terms as the problem of relevance, estrangement, and identity. The high drop-out rate, low grades, and general lack of motivation among large numbers of these students was due, they said, not only to a general feeling of separateness, but to the more compelling fact that education from kindergarten through college under the authority of the white community fails to focus on subject matter that is germane to the life experiences of the people in the minority community.⁵

Accompanying the new sense of organizational identity and the commitment to community was increasingly heated rhetoric, used by black student leaders to confront institutions, and whites generally, with their demands for change. "We see ourselves being basically servants of the community," 1968-69 BSU Chairman Ben Stewart said in an interview with the campus newspaper.

That is to say, we go to a college campus and we learn academic skills and we see ourselves as returning back to that community to enhance the progress of that community

rather than to exploit or misuse it as the traditional Third World lackey, Uncle Tom bootlicker students have done in the past. . . . We will return to our communities and by our struggle we will achieve liberation for all our people.⁶

The revolutionary and defiant tone intensified as black students became increasingly impatient over the slow pace of progress and the resistance they perceived from the college. After the BSU proposal for a Black Studies department in December 1966, it took six months to get a resolution passed by the college's Council of Academic Deans that the college accepted "the judgment of a significant number of its students and faculty that the present curriculum does not adequately meet the needs of black students and other minority group students nor adequately confront and comprehend the history and present realities of the cultures and communities of Negro-Americans and other minority groups in the United States and the world."⁷ The resolution appeared to anticipate the creation of a Black Studies department, but by the following fall semester, no specific action had yet been taken to create the department. A report on the events at San Francisco State prepared by the staff of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence noted: "[I]t took a year for any substantive progress toward the department the BSU wanted. During that year, the polite demeanor of the BSU on this issue slipped away."⁸

And the overall atmosphere of the campus was steadily descending into perpetual discord. White students were focused primarily on protest against the war in Vietnam in the fall of 1967. That concern expressed itself in anti-war protest rallies, but also in protests against on-campus recruiting by the military,

the CIA and corporations, such as Dow Chemical Co., that were seen as important supporters of the war. But racial issues also were emerging. A particularly inflammatory incident occurred on November 6, 1967, when a group of black students went to the offices of the college's daily student newspaper, the Gater, to protest articles that they charged had included racial slurs and to complain about several other newspaper actions they charged were racist. The paper's editor was beaten and kicked, touching off a melee that wrecked the paper's offices. A few days later, President John Summerskill suspended four of the black students, including George Murray, a graduate student and part-time instructor in the English department. Murray was an especially controversial figure because he was also the education minister for the Black Panther Party, traveled to Cuba, and had a habit of making incendiary speeches, such as one in which he reportedly encouraged minority students on campus to carry guns for self-defense. Murray's performance as a teacher was generally accepted to have been good, but over the next year, the state board pressed for his removal and eventually demanded that he be fired.

A few weeks after the newspaper melee, black students charged the college with racism when several white students were suspended, then immediately reinstated, after they published a poem and a photograph that the administration considered lewd. A protest demanding that Murray and the other suspended black students also be reinstated resulted in some highly publicized property damage but no arrests or injuries. The incident prompted the state board to hold a very public review of President Summerskill's

handling of the incident; Summerskill announced in February 1968 that he would resign, effective the following September.⁹ But despite his lame duck status, Summerskill accelerated the pace of action on Black Studies. Also in February, he hired Dr. Nathan Hare, a sociologist who had been fired by Howard University for his militant activities. The appointment, which was recommended by the leader of the BSU but was opposed by Summerskill's staff and other academic officials, was made without consulting anyone in the college's sociology department. Summerskill said he had to take fast action "if we are going to keep the lid on this place."¹⁰ Hare was an intense, and sometimes strident, advocate for Black Studies. He was not averse to using language that implied violence and his attitude toward Black Studies was strongly nationalistic. "Black people must declare void what the white slave masters have written and must begin to write their own history and direct their destiny," Hare said in a speech at Stanford University. "Black historians, presenting other than the white viewpoint, are forced into copious footnoting and must accept the conventions of the white academic overlords in order to make our history valid and get it published in white journals." He also advocated a separatist approach to teaching Black Studies. "It is anachronistic for white men to teach black history to black militant students," he said. "The white man is unqualified to teach black history because he does not understand it."¹¹ Hare was soon on campus, developing a two-phase plan for creation of the Black Studies department. Phase one would pull together the various courses offered through the Experimental College into a separate department by

September 1968. Phase two, scheduled for implementation in September 1969, would enable students to major in Black Studies. The department would begin with three faculty members in September 1969 and expand to at least eleven faculty positions in succeeding years.

But Summerskill left abruptly in May, forcing Robert Smith, a former head of the school's education department who had been appointed to replace him, to take over earlier than expected. As a result, many things did not get done over the summer, and development of the Black Studies department was one area that suffered. There were eighteen Black Studies courses assembled from the Experimental College and approval had been given to offer a degree in Black Studies starting the next academic year, but as the students saw it, there was no concrete department in place. And Hare, who was the one visible advancement toward the department the students wanted, had been working without even a secretary for months. The black students, accusing the college of engaging in delay tactics, declared a strike on November 6, 1968 — the anniversary of the campus newspaper incident — issued a list of ten demands and launched efforts to shut the college down. Four of the ten student demands, including the first three, were aimed directly at solidifying the status of the Black Studies department. Three more demands were aimed at increasing black student enrollment and financial aid. The students also demanded that Murray be allowed to keep his teaching position, that students not be punished for taking part in the strike, and that the state board be prevented from dissolving any black programs, on or off the college's

campus.¹²

Several weeks after the strike began, the college issued a list of the steps it had taken toward establishing a Black Studies department and insisted that the school's administration favored its creation. But, as the violence commission's staff report noted:

By that time . . . neither the BSU nor the black community was listening. They were not laying all blame on the administration. Both academic senate faculty committees and the Board of Trustees, dominated by appointees loyal to Governor Reagan, were given a larger share in many cases. Their argument, however, was that 2 years of approaches to a problem which they knew to be so crucial was either inexcusable inefficiency or racism, depending on how radical you were.¹³

And the black students were growing increasingly radical. The first week of the strike saw escalating violence with rampant vandalism, dozens of small fires, on minor bombing, and efforts by strikers to intimidate other students who continued to attend classes. But a violent confrontation between police and striking students on November 13 prompted President Smith to close the campus. The school remained closed for the next two weeks despite intense and growing pressure on Smith from the state board. A convocation called by Smith in an attempt to reopen the campus accomplished little, other than to make clear the inflamed feelings of the black students, in rhetoric even more strident than they had previously employed. Joe Alexis, a BSU leader, told the assembled crowd that a Black Studies department was essential to develop "a whole new education, so that we can begin to have education that is relevant to us."

Education for the elite is not relevant for us. . . . If a structure is decadent, you must destroy it before you can build. The role of black people is to build. That's what black studies is all about. Black studies must be controlled by black people in a large role because it's our thing, it's our baby. Maybe in a couple of years we'll be able to open it up to everybody. Our objectives are to contrive to define and refine the expressions of our community and to contrive to explore ways of integrating the community into our activities.¹⁴

Another BSU member, Leroy Goodwin, emphasized that the students weren't just demanding a program, they were demanding power. The students weren't interested in perpetuating the existing structure, he said, in language that suggested even further escalations of violence if the students' demands were not met.

Our major objective is the seizure of power. . . . As things now stand you must present your program to the pigs in power and they must approve it. Until we have power, everything else is bullshit. The dog believes we want to participate in his political games and that if we demand 10 things all the niggers really want is five. Each day the demands are delayed we will escalate our tactics. If armed struggle is what is needed for us to control our lives and our educating, then that is what we will use. Peace and order are bullshit issues.¹⁵

Efforts to achieve legitimate goals through peaceful means, he said, had accomplished nothing. At least two black administrators spoke at the convocation and issued sharp criticism of their own against the college's practices. Elmer Cooper, who was dean of student activities, responded to concerns raised by the state board about the Black Studies department having an all-black faculty.

They didn't mention that there are departments with all-

white faculties. These people are scared of giving black people control over their own destinies. Does the college plan to do something about institutional racism or is it just going to fire black power advocates? I haven't seen anybody fired for being a racist.¹⁶

And Joseph White, dean of undergraduate studies, spoke to an entrenched attitude that he said was blocking progress for blacks at the college. "The machinery of the college is not set up to deal with black demands, it is set up to deal with white reality," White said. But he added that the reality was being irrevocably changed. "We will never return to normal," he said. "You can forget about that."¹⁷

Finding himself unable to calm the protests and under increasing pressure to reopen the campus, Smith abruptly resigned on November 26, 1968. He was replaced immediately by S.I. Hayakawa, a well-known expert in semantics and a part-time English professor at the college. Hayakawa took a more hard-nosed approach than Smith or Summerskill had, at one point climbing onto a sound truck at a rally and pulling out wires to kill the sound system. He banned rallies on campus and was much more willing to use police force to open the campus and keep it open. After police arrested 457 people, including Professor Hare, at a defiant rally on January 23, 1969, much of the strike's strength dissipated. Eventually, on March 21, Hayakawa announced that the college and the BSU had reached a settlement to end the strike. The administration agreed to establish a School of Ethnic Studies, of which the Black Studies department would be part, insisting that the hiring of staff would be non-discriminatory. Hayakawa also agreed to student demands for the admission of more minority

students. But Hare was let go, and Hayakawa refused to rehire Murray, who had been fired.¹⁸

The strike was over and the violence done. San Francisco State and President Hayakawa had publicly committed themselves to the continued existence of the Black Studies department that Summerskill and Hare had established in such chaotic fashion the previous fall. But damage caused by the confrontation was serious and long-lasting. The images that emerged in the media from San Francisco State focused overwhelmingly on the violence — the closing of the campus, the vandalism, the bombs and fires, the incendiary and revolutionary rhetoric, the demonstrations and confrontations between students and police. Little insight into the intellectual rationale for Black Studies made it through the clamoring conflict. And after the glare of publicity had passed on to other campuses — most notably Cornell, with the gun-brandishing black students — residual bitterness continued to taint the atmosphere at San Francisco State. In June 1969, just three months after the agreement was announced, four of the six black administrators at the college accused Hayakawa of racism and resigned. For his part, Hayakawa threatened at least twice in the late fall of 1969 to dissolve the Black Studies department, charging that it had engaged in a “reign of terror.” And in March 1970, the department’s entire faculty was dismissed.¹⁹

Harvard University

Compared with the conflict that engulfed San Francisco State College, the

early stages of Black Studies development at Harvard University appear positively sedate. In part, that is due to the fact that Harvard was more typical of large white universities in its low level of black student enrollment when Black Studies emerged as an issue. At San Francisco State, a long-standing pattern of higher-than-average black enrollment had been broken by structural changes in the California higher education system, which left blacks at the college feeling like they were being pushed out. Harvard's black student population was much smaller, even compared to the reduced levels at San Francisco State, but it was growing not shrinking.

Harvard's debate over Black Studies also was moderated, at least in the beginning, by the unique academic atmosphere of the university. As an institution, Harvard has always prided itself on being an intellectual icon of American culture. One recent history of Harvard is subtitled, "The Rise of America's University."²⁰ The grandiosity of the claim may rankle academics at other outstanding universities — in much the same way that the Dallas Cowboys' claim to be "America's Team" irritates fans of other professional football franchises — but the irritation only serves to underscore the significant element of truth in the claim. Harvard's place atop the hierarchy of America's higher education system is built not merely on seniority, but on a nearly universal recognition that it is a university of, by and for the elites of the nation. It can be an intimidating atmosphere for anyone. That was particularly true for black Harvard students in the mid 1960s, when the university was just beginning to increase minority enrollments. Most of those students were the

elite of the African American community, the children of affluent families that had embraced at least some of the values and aspirations that Harvard represented. They may have felt isolated and alienated in many ways, but they also were willing to engage in reasoned discourse — so central to Harvard's self-image. Interestingly, the turmoil that reshaped Harvard's approach to Black Studies emerged indirectly, from white students' anti-war protests, not from black students' anger over administrative inaction or intransigence; though the perception of black students that they had been betrayed by the university at a crucial point in the development of Black Studies compounded the tensions and radically altered the shape of the program that emerged.

By the mid 1960s, Harvard was making serious efforts to increase its enrollment of black students and its hiring of black faculty. However conservative the university may have been in a structural sense, it was socially liberal and considered itself to have an obligation to promote justice, equality and integration. Morton and Phyllis Keller assert in their history of Harvard:

By the mid-1950s, genteel liberal integration was the norm. The dormitories were integrated, Harvard teams did not play against segregated colleges. . . . School spokesmen concentrated on prejudice and discrimination outside, such as Cambridge landlords who excluded black and Jewish graduate students. In 1960 an antidiscrimination pledge was required for all rentals listed with Harvard.²¹

And yet, Harvard's black student population remained extremely small, no more than 1.5 percent of undergraduates in 1964. Henry Rosovsky, an economics professor who joined the Harvard faculty in 1965 and later chaired the Faculty Committee on African and Afro-American Studies, recalled that one of his first

jobs at the university was to serve on the committee that chose which candidates would be admitted to the economics department as graduate students. The admissions committee, he discovered, selected relatively large numbers of foreign students under what he called an "implicit quota" system.

By this I mean two things: if students had been selected simply on the basis of formal academic qualifications, far fewer individuals from underdeveloped countries would have gained admission; furthermore, we somehow recognized our social obligation toward the less developed world and set aside certain places for these students. Another thing that became clear was that we had almost no black American graduate students. (A subsequent survey revealed that out of a total enrollment of over three thousand, there were about twenty black graduate students in the entire Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.)

In my opinion this was an absurd situation. If we had social obligations to foreigners, clearly we had at least equally urgent obligations toward American Negroes — sometimes described as foreigners in our own midst.²²

Rosovsky and other faculty members began, about 1967, to push for the establishment of special graduate fellowships for black students as a way "to cut the vicious circle of black academic frustration: the only way to get more black professors is to get more black graduate students."²³ And in spite of their small numbers, black students were beginning to pressure the university to accommodate more of their needs. A request in April of 1963 to establish an organization for African and Afro-American students at Harvard was initially rejected by the students' Council for Undergraduate Activities because the council considered its membership policy discriminatory. The issue sparked eight months of intense debates, a similar rejection by a faculty committee and a final agreement that gave the organization the same status as Harvard's

exclusive "final clubs" and enabled the group to admit members by invitation only. At first, the organization was essentially a social and cultural discussion group. Eventually, however, as black enrollment increased and the Black Power movement began to exert its influence, the group became more assertive, going so far as to publish The Harvard Journal of Negro Affairs for the open discussion of black issues.²⁴ Black students pressed for change, in course offerings, in institutional services and policies, and especially in admission and hiring practices. As Keller and Keller described it: "The administration's efforts to recruit black students, faculty, and employees fed on a steady diet of white guilt and black pressure."²⁵

Pressures on the university intensified in the spring of 1968, after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and the urban riots that followed. Black student enrollments rose to about about 6 percent of the undergraduate student body by 1970, but King's assassination and pressure from the Association of African and Afro-American Students (Afro) also prompted the university to take a closer look at its curriculum. Afro members gathered outside an April 9, 1968 campus memorial service for King (which was attended almost exclusively by whites) in a demonstration that challenged the university to act. "If they come out of there with tears in their eyes," said Afro President Jeff Howard, "we want it to be plain that we don't want their tears. We want black people to have a place here at Harvard."²⁶ Later that same day, the organization issued its first formal call for the university to establish a Black Studies program. In May, Rosovsky was appointed chairman of the Faculty

Committee on African and Afro-American Studies, a nine-member panel that worked for nearly a year to prepare its report. Only one committee member was African American but the black students' group was active in the formation of the faculty committee, and two black student representatives took part in all the committee's deliberations. The black students were offered voting rights on Rosovsky's committee but chose to remain observers.²⁷

Rosovsky wrote that "the concerns of black undergraduates that led directly to the creation of our committee . . . fell . . . into two broad categories: the quality of black student life, and Afro-American or black studies."²⁸ The structure of the committee's report reflects that emphasis, with the first two chapters focusing on "The Quality of Black Student Life at Harvard" and "Afro-American Studies." Two additional chapters, "African Studies" and "The Recruitment and Financing of Black Graduate Students," rounded out the report, but clearly the emphasis is on the first two chapters. It is clear, also, that the black students had impressed the committee with the intensity of their desire for a Black Studies courses.

Indeed, it seems likely that the absence of such offerings is the single most potent source of the black students' discontent at Harvard. The lack of such courses can strike the black students as a negative judgment by Harvard University on the importance of these areas of knowledge and research, and, by inference, on the importance of the black people themselves.

More pointedly, there is the problem faced by the black student, who, coming to Harvard, may feel more or less consciously, something of a dislocation from the black community. Many students who addressed the committee expressed the need to legitimize, inwardly as well as publicly, their presence at Harvard while other blacks

remain in the ghetto, confronting its problems. Herein lies one of the major sources of the demand for courses "relevant" to the black experience. What the black student wants is an opportunity to study the black experience and to employ the intellectual resources of Harvard in seeking solutions to the problems of the black community — so that he will be better prepared to assist the community in solving these problems. Such educational opportunities at Harvard would help the black student to justify his separation from the larger black community — and would attest that the separation was by no means radical or permanent.²⁹

Here again we see the emphasis on community connection that was so prominent in the thinking of Black Studies advocates, as well as the critique of the traditional academic mindset that had for so long ignored African Americans. The report also noted the desire of most black students for some sort of "all-black experience" at the university, adding that "only a few are presently urging a more separatist structure, such as a dormitory solely for blacks."³⁰ That desire might be addressed, the report said, by creating an African American social and cultural center similar to the Hillel House and the Newman Center (both based on religious affiliation) and the International Center (for foreign students) that already existed at the university.

This center would be, it is assumed, independent of the University, both in location and financing. But obviously students cannot, by themselves, develop or maintain such a center. . . . [I]t is recommended that the Dean urge all appropriate elements of the University to use their good offices in securing and financing a building and providing continuing support to the activities of such a social and cultural center.³¹

The black students who proposed the center, the report emphasized, saw the center not as a means of withdrawing from the general life of the campus, but

as a way to help black students feel "more involved and less isolated." The report also urged the university's residential houses to make a greater effort to bring black speakers, artists and writers to campus.

But the heart of the report was its recommendation for the creation of undergraduate and graduate degree programs in Afro-American Studies. The committee found that many faculty members already included a substantial amount of material about African Americans in their courses. But the committee's report also noted that that material was generally included in the context of broad issues in American society. Only one social science course and a handful of tutorials in government and social relations were devoted entirely to African American culture and history.

Most departmental requirements for concentration permit students to do considerable work in Afro-American Studies. Head Tutors reported that courses, tutorial and independent study dealing with Afro-American material could, under present rules, be counted for concentration and "related work." . . .

It should be noted, however, that the relative absence of middle level courses dealing entirely or primarily with Afro-American material makes it difficult for students to act on the freedom implied by these rules. Moreover, there are at present no special fields in Afro-American Studies within existing departments or committees of instruction.³²

The report called on the university to establish degree programs in Afro-American Studies at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and to create a research center or institute that would focus on Afro-American Studies. Under the proposal, an undergraduate student could declare a "combined" major that included a concentration in Afro-American Studies plus any other standard

concentration in the social sciences or the humanities. The university should create at least ten new faculty positions to conduct the degree programs (with at least five of the new faculty members in place by September 1969), encourage greater emphasis on African Americans in courses across the curriculum, stimulate more research into the African American experience, and undertake the fundraising efforts necessary to implement the recommendations, the report concluded.

In our opinion, the *status quo* with respect to Afro-American Studies at Harvard is not satisfactory. Quite a number of courses recognize the existence of black men in the development of America; quite a bit of expertise is already available. However, merely recognizing black men as integral segments of certain overall social processes is not good enough. We are dealing with 25 million of our own people with a special history, culture, and range of problems. It can hardly be doubted that the study of black men in America is a legitimate and urgent academic endeavor. If this be so and if we are determined to launch this field of study successfully, farsighted goals and programs are required. These goals and programs should maintain and even raise academic standards; should avoid considering the black experience in isolation; and finally, should have meaning for all serious students — black and white.³³

Rosovsky's committee issued its report in January 1969 to general — though certainly not universal — approval. There was criticism from some members of the faculty and the general public who considered the report purely political. The critics challenged the intellectual validity of Black Studies and charged that the committee's report was aimed at political accommodation to the demands of black students rather than at strengthening the university's academic programs. Rosovsky answered the charge in an *American Scholar*

article.

Since the 1940s the United States has poured many millions of dollars into Russian and Chinese studies. Is this because our society had suddenly developed a passion for Tolstoi, Dostoevski and/or Ming vases? Or is it that we faced certain national needs in which the help of the universities was essential? If this is the meaning of political motivation, Afro-American studies undoubtedly fits the bill. At the same time, I would conclude that more political activity of this type would be highly desirable.³⁴

Notwithstanding the criticism, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences adopted all the report's recommendations on February 11, 1969. The report initially won praise from students, as well; spokesmen for the black students said they were satisfied by the faculty's action, and even the student newspaper, the *Harvard Crimson*, expressed a positive reaction.³⁵ But the agreement quickly faltered through poor communications amid an atmosphere of confrontation and violence that initially had nothing to do with Black Studies.

Shortly after the report of Rosovsky's committee was approved by the faculty, Franklin Ford, dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, appointed the seven-member Standing Committee on Afro-American Studies called for in the report. The standing committee, chaired by Ford, would oversee the Black Studies program. The university, hoping to make the new degree available for the current freshman class, which would graduate in 1972, also set up a committee composed of three faculty members and three students to seek out qualified individuals to fill the new faculty positions to be established for the Black Studies program. But the pattern of extensive consultations with black students that had characterized the work of Rosovsky's committee broke down

as the new standing committee began to develop its outline of the new Black Studies major. What apparently began in early March 1969 as a simple miscommunication between faculty members of the standing committee and student representatives of Afro over "tentative" and "temporary" decisions about the structure of the program left the black students feeling that they had been excluded from the process of program design. Faculty members believed they were only doing what they had committed themselves to do in February; Afro members believed they had been deceived and betrayed.³⁶ When the committee's outline of the Black Studies major was presented to a group of black students on April 9, the students were incensed. Not only did the outline include an unusually large list of program requirements — even by Harvard standards — but many of the students considered the requirement that Black Studies be tied to another traditional academic discipline an insult. As one black Radcliffe sophomore later put it:

This communique presupposes that Afro-American Studies is less than a legitimate and valid intellectual endeavor. We reject this notion. Afro-American Studies needs no prop from so-called allied fields.³⁷

Black students began meeting and working furiously to devise strategy and develop a proposal to counter the committee's plan. Afro began circulating copies of the committee's outline and fliers calling for a meeting that bore the heading: "Brothers and sisters — We are being sold out!"³⁸

Meanwhile, the campus around them was erupting. Earlier on April 9, members of the white radical group Students for a Democratic Society

marched into University Hall and ejected the administrators whose offices were there. The occupation of the building was the latest development in a campaign by SDS to force the university to end immediately the military's Reserve Officer Training Corps program and to halt university construction plans that would displace low-income residents of surrounding neighborhoods. The protest had nothing to do with Black Studies, but the entire campus atmosphere was inflamed when, at 5 a.m. on April 10, nearly 400 state troopers and local police stormed University Hall and forcibly removed the protesters. Even though many students had not supported the SDS tactics in seizing the building, most students — and many faculty members — were shocked by the violence of the police action, in which dozens of students (including several black students who were merely bystanders) were clubbed and beaten by police and some were dragged from University Hall by their hair.³⁹ In protest of the police raid, SDS declared a strike against the university. Moderate students declared a strike, too, and Afro announced its own strike. The University Hall incident intensified the anger the black students felt over the actions of the Black Studies committee, which was vented at an April 10 strike meeting.

The members of Afro were angry; they were ready to do anything. Even the possibility of taking over a building was considered. If the blacks had seized a building, they would have taken guns with them to protect themselves from "white racist cops." But few blacks were yet prepared to do battle with police. Someone asked, "How many of you know how to use guns?" Few did, and the idea was dropped.⁴⁰

In the eyes of the black students, the betrayal of the faculty committee had rendered negotiations meaningless, and Afro began to focus more on the

strategy of confrontation.

Afro drew up its own proposal for the structure of the Black Studies program. Under the Afro plan, Afro-American Studies would be an independent department, not just a programmatic major allied with other disciplines. The plan also called for guarantees of student representation, not just on the committee charged with setting up the program (which would be expanded by adding three Afro members and three students who intended to major in Black Studies), but also in the permanent governing structure of the department. Students would have an equal say in curriculum design and in the hiring of faculty.

The Afro proposal was presented initially at a faculty meeting on April 17. The issue was scheduled at the end of a lengthy agenda and was poorly explained by the faculty member who agreed to sponsor the Afro proposal. Given the complexity of the issue, the limited time for discussion, the inadequate explanation and the emotional atmosphere on campus, it is not surprising that the meeting descended into confusion. When the faculty decided to defer action until its next meeting five days later, the black students were further enraged.⁴¹ On April 22, when the faculty reconvened, the black students came prepared to exert pressure, politically as well as intellectually. About 70-80 Afro members — one of them brandishing a meat cleaver for dramatic effect — gathered in the lobby of the Loeb Drama Center, where the faculty was meeting. Several of the students were allowed to speak during the faculty meeting. One of the students, Myles Lynk, addressed the students'

demand for representation in the governance of the Black Studies program.

Black people, students or otherwise, know more about what a Black Studies program could be than most members of this Harvard Faculty. And because a university community should be less concerned with past precedents that are inadequate to the present than with constructive change applicable to the future, the Afro proposal should be passed because it best meets the needs of the Afro-American Studies Department. It must be passed if black people are to maintain faith in this segment of white America.⁴²

Afro's president, Skip Griffin, took a different tack, speaking to the oppressive atmosphere of confrontation and violence that had suffused the campus since the SDS seizure of University Hall and the police raid that had ended the sit-in. To some — perhaps many — in the meeting, Griffin's comments sounded like a threat.

I think, and it wouldn't be unfair to say before this body and before the world, that at one time this week we had the power to seriously disrupt this university, and I don't think we used it because that wasn't our goal, our goal was a meaningful Black Studies program. I think we held off because we wanted just such a program. . . . Not to make a decision in favor of the proposal that we have put here before you is to commit a serious mistake, to perhaps play a part in creating a tragic situation which this university may never be able to recover from. I just hope that you would consider seriously the gravity of the situation before acting.⁴³

Whether the faculty was persuaded more by Lynk's appeal to reason or Griffin's implied threat was unclear, but in the end, the faculty voted 251-158 to approve the Afro proposal and establish an Afro-American Studies Department with substantial student representation. In reality, the faculty's decision to reverse itself and adopt the Afro plan was the result of a complicated blend of

motives. In The Harvard Strike, four young reporters who covered the events for WHRB-FM, an independent, student-operated campus radio station, asserted that the faculty may have been as surprised as anyone by the results of their April 22 decision.

Certainly, fear was an element in the vote. Just one day before, professors had seen in the *New York Times* the frightening picture of armed black students leaving a seized building at Cornell. They could easily visualize the same thing happening in Cambridge. Skip Griffin's speech to the Faculty and the intimidating presence of 70 Afro members in the lobby must have made that threat even more real. But Afro also appealed to the Faculty's sense of reason and fairness; for the most part Afro's presentation was clear, calm, and rational, even in the Faculty's own terms. Clearly, some faculty members were convinced that the Standing Committee had broken its brittle covenant of faith with the blacks. Others wanted to restore a sense of community to Harvard by dramatically reasserting their faith in a group of students. Finally, the actual vote showed a preponderance of natural scientists voting in favor of the Afro resolution. Natural scientists, always suspicious of social scientists, were prepared to endorse such academic experimentation precisely because they considered Black Studies to be less than a legitimate field of intellectual endeavor.⁴⁴

The black students were elated. Jeff Howard, a senior and a former president of Afro, called the faculty's decision "a hell of a victory" for Harvard as well as for Afro. "It's going to recreate a trust that was failing, and I hope that together the faculty and students can move on and take control of this university."⁴⁵ But Rosovsky was appalled. In his *American Scholar* article he described the faculty's action as "an academic Munich," and criticized his colleagues for caving in to threats. "In effect, black undergraduate students have been given powers hitherto held only by Harvard *senior faculty* and denied to junior faculty,

graduate students and nonblack undergraduates," Rosovsky wrote. The decision set a bad precedent that would provoke other students to demand similar power, might hurt Afro-American studies and could "ultimately hinder the progress of black people in this country."⁴⁶ Rosovsky's fears proved to have some validity, at least in terms of the impact of the April 1969 events on the development of Black Studies. The turmoil surrounding the creation of the department and problems raised by the department's structure helped persuade John Hope Franklin, a distinguished African American historian, to turn down an offer to head the program. Other prominent black scholars also declined to join the department for similar reasons.⁴⁷ It took nearly thirty years for the department to establish itself in a position of prominence at Harvard.

Wayne State University

Wayne State University's efforts to establish a Black Studies program were complicated, protracted and frustrating. Although the university began to face black students' demands for a Black Studies program in the spring of 1968, and despite the fact that black enrollment at Wayne State was dramatically higher than at the vast majority of America's predominantly white colleges, it took the university nearly five years to get a program established. Even then, the way it was created locked WSU's Center for Black Studies into a 17-year decline that lasted until a major new black student protest in 1989 prodded the university to grant the center full departmental status. The difficulties of Wayne State's struggle with the issue of Black Studies stemmed from the university's

complex and delicate relationship with the city of Detroit. Black Studies emerged at a time when the university's growth and evolving mission were extending its focus well beyond its traditional urban base. At the same time, Detroit was undergoing profound change and increasing racial tensions as the departure of tens of thousands of white residents for new homes in overwhelmingly white suburbs meant the city's population would soon be 70 percent black. It is a peculiar irony that in a majority-black city, a major public university that had long been more open than most to African Americans had such difficulty establishing a Black Studies program and ended up with a program that nearly withered away. And yet, the experience of Wayne State sheds some valuable light on how complicated the issue of Black Studies could be.

To understand the process by which Wayne State arrived at the creation of a Black Studies program, it is critical to understand the unique environment in which the university functioned. Although Wayne State celebrated its centennial in 1968, in reality, the university was created in 1933, when several unrelated small local schools and colleges were united into a single institution under the control of the Detroit Board of Education, which ran the city's public schools. The university was operated by the school district until 1956, when it was given a state charter and began shifting its emphasis to become, along with the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and Michigan State University in East Lansing, one of Michigan's so-called "Big Three" research universities. The university's origins as a local institution had infused its atmosphere with

community interaction. The transformation from a city college to a major state university that not only drew increasing numbers of students from outside the city but was shifting its emphasis from its traditional teaching orientation toward specialized research was not universally welcomed.

Wayne State had for years been unusual among predominantly white colleges and universities in its relatively high levels of black student enrollment. In a self-study Wayne State prepared in 1976 while seeking reaccreditation by the North Central Association, the university reported the results of a fall 1974 survey of incoming freshmen, part of a national study.

"These data show that Wayne State University continues to be exceptional in the percentage of black students admitted. Of the 764 students who stated their ethnic background, 21.1% are black. For freshmen at other public universities, this percentage was much smaller (3.1%).⁴⁸

In 1968, black enrollment at the university was already at 10.5 percent. But even as black enrollment was growing, the percentage of Wayne State students who came from within the city was on the decline. In 1966, 52.3 percent of the university's students were Detroit residents; by 1975, the number had fallen to 47.2 percent.⁴⁹ To a great extent, this change simply reflected the shifting realities of a growing and rapidly suburbanizing metropolitan area. But those shifting realities were deeply infused with racial politics. The explosion of suburban growth, which erupted in the 1950s, was fed largely by the migration of white residents — and white-owned businesses — from the city of Detroit. Although the early waves of suburbanization may have been inspired by dreams of an idyllic, semi-rural lifestyle, there was also a strong element of

racism. That was especially true in the wake of Detroit's devastating 1967 race riot when the pace of migration accelerated and the phrase "white flight" became a standard element of public discourse.

In this context, the shifting focus of Wayne State and the increasing percentage of students from suburbia was looked at with considerable suspicion by blacks in Detroit, despite the increasing percentage of black enrollment. That suspicion was reflected in the attitude of black students, such as V. Lonnie Peek, a co-founder of the Association of Black Students at Wayne State in the fall of 1967. In a 1992 interview, Peek said that while the university may have been more amenable to change than other white institutions, blacks at the time definitely considered it part of the white power structure. "The university was seen as an enemy," Peek said. "I can't downplay that. It was seen as an oppressive, white-oriented, Eurocentric-valued institution . . . Wayne State University was viewed just as the police department."⁵⁰

The debate over Black Studies at Wayne State also was profoundly influenced by the fact that the university was an overwhelmingly commuter school. There was only one small dormitory on campus. Most of the university's black students, who ultimately provided the impetus for Black Studies, commuted from neighborhoods where they had grown up and thus retained close ties with family, friends, churches, labor unions and other community groups they had been involved with for years. Moreover, for smart, young, energetic students with any interest in political or social activism, the black community of Detroit offered a vast supply of opportunities. In a 1992 interview,

Patricia Coleman-Burns, a black Detroit native who received three degrees from Wayne State, joined the Center for Black Studies as a graduate assistant in 1976 and taught courses there as an instructor through the 1980s, remembered the atmosphere as intensely community-oriented:

Whether it was the League of Revolutionary Black Workers or the rising Shrine of the Black Madonna or the Republican [Republic of New Africa] rap of the Henry brothers, . . . all of those, the Panther Party, all of those organizations were strong. . . . My feeling was this university didn't have anything to teach the youth. They were being taught in the movement.

I mean, I think about all the meetings. . . . I never went to hear Malcolm, but many of my peers did. Malcolm came through here frequently, frequently. . . . Ed Vaughn and his bookstore and the study groups. I mean, you were politicized in the community. You didn't go to the university to get politics. You went to study groups in the community.⁵¹

Because they were based in the community, rather than on campus, the students were profoundly influenced and often directly guided by the activist leaders of the city's black community. But the community orientation also served, sometimes, to shift their focus away from campus, and in the end, that had a profound impact on the issue of Black Studies at the university.

Although the first serious proposal for a Black Studies program at Wayne State did not emerge until April of 1968, the university had been under increasing pressure for at least three years to expand its curriculum to be more representative of the African American experience. In October 1965, for example, a group of black students gathered about 800 signatures on a petition asking the university to establish a course on Afro-American and African History.⁵² In the early fall of 1967 — just a few weeks after the riot, which

had killed 45 people and burned large parts of the city very close to the Wayne State campus — the university had been awash in controversy over a symposium on racism that drew protests from Detroit's black community. Community activists charged that the university had excluded blacks in planning the symposium, and the dispute sparked the creation of the Association of Black Students at Wayne State. The ABS organized its own symposium, and in April 1968 approached President William R. Keast with a proposal to establish a Black Studies program. What followed were four years of discussions, negotiations, studies, leadership changes and dead ends until Keast's successor, acting President George Gullen unilaterally ordered that the Center for Black Studies be created.

The core of the problem was a fundamental disagreement between black students, such as ABS leaders V. Lonnie Peek and Ozell Bonds, and Keast over the nature of the program they wanted to create. The students' proposal was astonishingly ambitious. In a sixteen-page document — followed quickly by a request for \$632,900 in funding — ABS called for creation of the W.E.B. DuBois Institute of Black Studies, to be an entirely new college within the university.⁵³ The proposal rested on "a radically different theory of education, a theory that will prepare the student to be an effective servant of the community." Under the plan, the institute would have been composed of six departments, organized around concepts that were not constrained by traditional disciplinary boundaries: Community Problems Department; Cultural Studies Department; Development of American Institutions Department; Historical Department of

Radical and Political Thought and the Afro-American Department; the Department of Applied Knowledge and Research; and the Department of Education. Each department would offer a range of courses and/or workshops and most of the proposed departments would cross traditional disciplinary lines. The institute would have operated with a faculty of 60, and at least 30 other non-instructional staff positions (such as counselors, secretaries, payroll clerks, an accountant and a full-time attorney) were included in the budget request. Thus, the Black Studies institute conceived by the black students would have cast aside the university's traditional disciplinary approach, adopted a far more consciously community-oriented curriculum than the university had ever contemplated, and required an enormous commitment of financial resources.

Ultimately, however, it was not the community orientation or the radical concept of departmental structure, or even the huge budgetary implications that proved to be the biggest roadblock. From the beginning, President Keast's response was generally favorable. Although he immediately perceived some serious problems — primarily the students' insistence that they retain control over curriculum and faculty appointments — Keast publicly supported the institute idea and encouraged an atmosphere of negotiation between the black students and the university. He helped obtain private funds to send Peek and four other black students on a fact-finding trip to California, where they examined the efforts of several other colleges to design and implement Black Studies programs. After the students' return, Keast arranged a seminar at

which the students shared their findings and proposals with members of the faculty, administrators, other students and people from the community.⁵⁴ ABS also obtained a \$34,000 grant from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit to underwrite planning for the institute. But in the end, negotiations over the students' proposal ran aground on the issue of control: the students demanded it; the university would not give it up.

For almost nine months, all through the fall of 1968 and into the early winter of 1969, discussions continued. But in January 1969, when the black students realized that Keast and the university would not budge on the issue of control over finances and faculty hiring, they abruptly broke off negotiations and announced that they would attempt to establish the DuBois Institute off-campus in the community. Peek charged that both Wayne State and the University of Detroit (where parallel negotiations had been under way) had been "dragging their feet" on the issue of a Black Studies program.⁵⁵ Keast issued a non-committal statement expressing Wayne State's willingness to consider "the question of possible relations between the University and the Institute."⁵⁶ In retrospect, Keast said, the students' decision to focus off-campus may have been "a natural consequence" of the clash of differing traditions and attitudes, "namely the traditional notion of the way in which the university operates . . . and the perfectly understandable desire on the part of this group of activist students to have a program they could call their own."⁵⁷ Peek said the students' decision was ideological, a choice to embrace the community self-determination philosophy of black nationalism that was very much in step with Carmichael

and Hamilton's call in Black Power for black people to assert their own definitions.⁵⁸

But the students' efforts to establish a program off-campus soon fell into disarray. The first director hired by ABS was fired within two months, and personal differences led to Peek's departure from the effort. Bonds continued, however, to push for the institute and Keast continued to look for ways to encourage the effort and find points of cooperation. Black community leaders, too, kept the pressure on the university; a group of 13 black state legislators, all from Detroit, urged Keast to accept a series of guidelines toward establishing a relationship between the university and the institute. But by early 1971, the institute was a fading dream. The issue of control — and the financial implications of that issue — had never been resolved. No other source of money had been found to pay for the institute. And Keast, who had always been the institute's main supporter in the university administration, could do little more to help because he had announced his resignation in September 1970.

Circumstances took a sharp turn in another direction, however, when George Gullen took over as acting president of the university in July 1971. Gullen came to the post after five years as Wayne State's vice president for university relations. He was a Wayne State graduate and former president of the WSU Alumni Association who joined the university's administration after a 30-year career in corporate labor negotiations. He shared, on a personal level, Keast's genuine concern for social justice and institutional responsibility, but his approach was dramatically different. Whereas Keast was the philosophical

scholar, lending his discussions with black students the aura of an academic seminar, Gullen was a mediator and arbitrator, steeped in the pragmatic art of the contract negotiator. And he assumed his position amid a new upsurge in black student activism. A new generation of student leaders had replaced Peek and Bonds at ABS, and in the 1970-71 academic year ABS members had managed to capture 13 of the 20 student seats on the university's Student-Faculty Council. The black students recognized that the council had little real power, but they were determined to use the council as a forum from which to pressure the university for a Black Studies department. The students were demanding that Wayne State establish an undergraduate degree program similar to the ones that had been created at the University of Michigan and Harvard, although they had not given up their insistence on student control and community orientation.

Gullen soon began crafting an answer to the question of what the university should do about Black Studies. The immediate call to action appears to have been a frustrated memo from the chairman of the university's Sociology Department, Alvin Rose, an African American who also chaired a committee that had been meeting for more than three years in an attempt to design an African Studies Center. The committee's efforts had focused mainly on research and faculty exchanges with several universities in Africa, but the work had been hampered by administrative inaction and a lack of money for implementation. Shortly after taking over as acting president, Gullen saw a copy of Rose's memo, written four months earlier, expressing frustration to the verge

of bitterness over the university's inaction. By late August, following a flurry of memos and consultations involving Gullen, Rose and several other key administrators, the proposal of Rose's committee had been transformed into a proposal for a Black Studies Center. The plan called for substantial student representation on the center's governing committee, but it appears that the proposal was essentially Rose's alone.

By early December, university officials were beginning to consider Black Studies as the first part of a more elaborate plan for ethnic studies at Wayne State. But once again, budget problems intervened. State appropriations cuts and a federal government ruling that blocked tuition increases forced the university to release 115 faculty and staff members in early January 1972, and to notify 281 more that they would be released in June. Still, Gullen was determined to get a Black Studies center established. He took his proposal to a meeting of the University Council Policy Committee on January 31, presented it to the full council two days later, and won approval by Wayne State's Board of Governors on February 10, a scant seven months after taking over as president of the university. But while Rose praised Gullen's commitment to speedy action at the governors' meeting, the black students were not impressed. At a meeting with Gullen two days before the board's action, black students angrily attacked Gullen's proposal because students had not been involved in the planning and because the center would be controlled by the university administration.

"Speaking for the Black population here at Wayne, This will not do, Mr. Gullen," said ABS Chairman Duane Lewis. "We will not accept this."⁵⁹

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And yet, the deed was done. The center was established, and though the black students continued their protests and demonstrations throughout the spring of 1972, the die had been cast. However well-intentioned Gullen's aims — and there is considerable evidence that his motives were sincere — the speed with which he rammed the Black Studies program through the institutional process set the program up for failure. Gullen was a negotiator, a contract bargainer. His impulse, when others disagreed on how to achieve a goal he desired, was to split the difference, to get the issue resolved. When it came to Black Studies, that meant taking an existing entity that had been stagnating (Rose's African Studies Committee), giving it a new charge (Black Studies), cranking a proposal out of a few quick ad hoc sessions, grafting on a few organizational considerations the University Council had been working on separately, and pushing it through the Board of Governors in less than seven months.

But in his rush to bring the idea to fruition, Gullen made only superficial efforts to involve students and faculty in the process. The students had almost no input and Gullen's discussions with the University Council appear to have been much more informative than consultative. It may have been easier and faster to establish a program that way, but the result was a program that had little organized support outside a few key administrators. The faculty had no vested interest in a program that it had not helped create, and the center's first true director, Edward Simpkins, had to spend considerable effort in gaining the confidence of students alienated by their exclusion from the center's planning.

Gullen's action guaranteed the center's creation, but the lack of broader support did little to ensure its survival beyond his tenure as president.

The center's isolation was compounded by its administrative structure. A center was quick and easy to establish, but because it was prohibited from offering its own courses and degree programs, it lacked academic stature. The decision to create a center stemmed from the belief Gullen clearly held that Black Studies was not an academic discipline in itself, but a force to influence and provide supportive direction for the traditional disciplines. That underlying assumption guaranteed the Center for Black Studies a place outside the academic mainstream, making it far more difficult for the center to compete with the established departments for money from the university budget. In 1989, for example, when a new generation of black student activists demanded — and won — departmental status for the center, their chief evidence of university neglect was that the center's budget of \$163,000 was only 9 percent higher than the initial budget allocated in 1972. In that same 17-year period, the Consumer Price Index had risen nearly 120 percent.

Black students, faculty and community observers were left with resentment over the fact that on some levels, the center was not really theirs. It certainly was not the center that they had envisioned and struggled for. And though Gullen was acting from a need he perceived to be responsive to the black community of the campus and the city that surrounded it, the creation of the center did little to gain the confidence of African Americans. Simpkins said, in a 1992 interview, that Wayne State's Center for Black Studies "was a concession

to the times, and it was not a concession that was made because the university believed in Black Studies programs."⁶⁰ It was, he said, a concession that the administration was very unsure of.

I believed that those people were doing the best they knew how to do. But they didn't believe in Black Studies. They didn't know what it was, and I don't blame them for not believing in Black Studies because nobody knew what Black Studies was. I didn't fault them for that. . . .

If you understand that, then you understand how you fund programs that you're not sure of is you give it something, you know, you put it out there. I believed that after a year the program deserved to get additional funding, but they started to cut it the second year. I think they cut it to \$140,000. And I think they continued to cut, even after I left.⁶¹

Simpkins may have been closest to the heart of the matter when he said that nobody knew what Black Studies was. ABS had one definition, but even that was not shared by all, as the split between Peek and Bonds and the others demonstrated. Keast had a different view, and Rose had a vision of his own. Simpkins frankly opposed Black Studies, which raised doubts among black students when he was chosen to direct the center. Gullen believed a Black Studies program was needed and found himself in a position to impose the definition he thought would be most expedient. But in his sincere effort to make the university a more open and representative institution, he undercut the progress he sought. Acting more like an arbitrator than a mediator, he cut off debate over the issue of control — which was, after all, about who would define Black Studies. By dictating a definition that lacked broad support within the university, or in the surrounding community, Gullen assured the Center for Black Studies a tentative existence for a long time to come.

Chapter 7

Framed: The Media and the Message

To accuse the news media of distorting the truth is a little like scolding the grass for growing green. By its very nature, the journalistic process distorts events — selecting, sorting and prioritizing them to determine which ones will receive more or less attention or none at all. Even the most cautious journalist cannot avoid the truth discovered by physicists who set out to determine whether light was a wave or a particle: the very act of observing affects what is observed. During the summer of 2002, for example, the news media were awash in reports involving the kidnap, and sometimes murder, of young girls. It appeared that the nation was being swept by a swelling wave of violence against defenseless children. The incidents were heart-rending: the vulnerability and innocence of the victims; the desperate grief of their families. As each new case came to light, it was hard not to be fearful and puzzle over what was fueling this new trend. Except that when journalists finally got around to interviewing experts in the field, it was discovered that there was no trend: there had been no increase in child kidnappings, compared to previous years. A year earlier, in the summer of 2001, the hot phenomenon had been shark

attacks. Scary reports of swimmers attacked in Florida and other Caribbean locales began to sound like excerpts from a novel by Peter Benchley — or Stephen King — until, again, it was uncovered that there had been no real increase in the frequency of shark attacks, only in the reporting of them. This does not diminish the reality or seriousness of child kidnappings or shark attacks. In either case, the suffering of the victim or victims is gut-wrenching and severe. And telling the story of human experience in all of its manifestations — grief as well as glory — is the valid and valuable purpose of journalism. In both cases, however, the truth was distorted, not because of inaccurate reporting on specific incidents, but because the intensity of media scrutiny overemphasized the incidents and inflated them out of proportion.

Black Studies suffered at the hands of the media as the flip side of that coin: the substantive intellectual issues and challenges raised by the movement to establish Black Studies programs on predominantly white college campuses appear to have been lost amid coverage of violence (both actual and implied) and racial tension that shook so many campuses in the late 1960s. Sometimes there was a direct connection between the violence — particularly as it related to black student protest — and Black Studies. At San Francisco State College, for example, several of the key demands of the student strikers who disrupted the campus for more than two months were focused on the establishment and structure of the college's Black Studies program. But the initial protest that launched the strike was sparked by what black students perceived as inequity in the way the school's disciplinary policies had been

applied to several black students suspended for an incident at the campus newspaper's office. Black students also were angry over what they considered to be foot-dragging by the white administration in launching the Black Studies program, but it was not Black Studies that ignited the strike and the violence it entailed. Nor did the confrontational behavior of the protesters negate the critique of Black Studies advocates that academia had suffered from narrow-mindedness and Eurocentric bias in its scholarship. Still, as the situation spun out of control; as fires were set and buildings vandalized; as the campus was closed and classes canceled; as one president resigned and a hard-liner replacement was appointed; as hundreds of protesters were arrested in bitter confrontations with police; the presence of Black Studies at the top of the students' list of demands guaranteed that Black Studies would be associated in the minds of those who followed the events at San Francisco State with the violence and disruptive tactics of the student protesters.

If the black militant students came to be seen by many Americans as dangerous, unruly youths seeking to defy and usurp legitimate authority, that image was, to a great degree, transferred to Black Studies. News coverage did little to dispel that image and much to reinforce it. Nor did journalists draw many distinctions between black student protest as social politics and Black Studies as an academic or philosophical matter. There are a variety of reasons for that failure. Some stem from the nature of the news business and the ways in which journalists define and approach their task. Some stem from the very novelty of Black Studies in the late 1960s; if advocates could not agree on what

Black Studies were, how could journalists accurately represent Black Studies to the broader public? Still others stem from the chaos and confusion of the time: If you walk into the kitchen and see that the wine sauce in which some food was simmering has burst into flames that threaten to engulf the room, it is not likely that you will stop to ask whether the food in the pan is meat or vegetables. The distinction may have very important dietary implications, but you may find it difficult to focus on your long-term health if you perceive that your immediate safety is threatened by the crisis at hand.

In Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality, Gaye Tuchman writes about the power of mass media to shape perceptions of the world we live in. "News is a window on the world," Tuchman asserts. "Through its frame, Americans learn of themselves and others, of their own institutions, leaders and life styles, and those of other nations and other peoples."¹ But as Tuchman goes on to point out, that very quality of news coverage as window can lead to problems and distortions.

The view through a window depends upon whether the window is large or small, has many panes or few, whether the glass is opaque or clear, whether the window faces a street or a backyard. The unfolding scene also depends upon where one stands, far or near, craning one's neck to the side, or gazing straight ahead, eyes parallel to the wall in which the window is encased.²

Consider, then, the view from the journalistic window that opened on the field of Black Studies when American scholars began to examine the idea seriously in late 1967. Reporters were scrambling to keep pace with events that defied easy understanding or characterization. Steeped in traditions — both social

and professional — that had grown out of an earlier era, journalists were confronted with the necessity of examining and accurately reflecting social and cultural change that appeared to be accelerating at an unheard of pace and in breathtakingly divergent directions. The turmoil of the 1960s forced journalists to reexamine what they do and how they do it; it forced them to reconsider the ways in which they try to make sense — for themselves and for their readers — of the world around them.

Journalists are products of the society and the culture in which they live. Media organizations, like universities, in the mid-1960s were overwhelmingly white. The vast majority of reporters, photographers and editors were white and male and in most cases had been raised to accept the assumptions of white Euro-American culture that Black Studies was reacting against. Even those who had not attended college themselves would have been influenced by the established structure of academic disciplines that guided the division of classes into such familiar subjects as English, History, Mathematics, Chemistry and the like, even at the high school level. Few would have been likely on their own to perceive, as the militant black college students did, that the prevailing curriculum constituted "white studies."

Journalists tend to view the world and to organize and present their perceptions of it in ways they have been taught by the demands of their profession and by the assumptions of the society in which they live. First and foremost, journalism is about telling stories. Unlike poets and fiction writers, however, reporters generally view their story-telling as being constrained by

literal facts. Notwithstanding the literary aspirations or pretensions of some journalists, the profession as a whole insists that news reports be structured around verifiable pieces of information. Assertions of fact must be independently provable (e.g., through video or audio tape, or written documents) or be attributed to recognized authorities, such as officials of government or other established religious, social, economic or political organizations. While this approach is designed to assure the integrity and reliability of news accounts, it also may limit the range and depth of reporting by encouraging an overreliance on "official" news sources and a reluctance to consult and seriously consider sources that do not carry some socially approved endorsement of their authority — whether it be intellectual, social, moral or political. In the mid-1960s, news organizations were just beginning to shake off a long-standing tradition of coziness between reporters and "official" news sources that has never been completely eliminated. By the end of the decade, the antagonism between journalists and government over the conduct and reporting of the Vietnam War would shatter the atmosphere in which reporters had cast a blind eye toward Franklin Roosevelt's need for a wheelchair or John F. Kennedy's sexual dalliances in the White House. How far the pendulum could swing in the opposite direction would be demonstrated in the Watergate scandal that brought down Richard Nixon's presidency. But in the last half of the 1960s, reporters — like the rest of American society — still looked to governmental officials, whether they be presidents, legislators, governors or university administrators, as the primary source of definitive

information on almost any issue of public concern.

The problem, in the case of Black Studies, was that there was no single established organization or authority to which journalists could refer for definitive explanations. The traditional sources — university administrators — were not the primary advocates of Black Studies. Often, those administrators were predisposed to dismiss the idea of Black Studies as an independent academic discipline, though they may have supported efforts to include more information about African Americans in courses offered by the established disciplines. Black student activists did not always present clearly the best arguments for Black Studies because they were young and inexperienced and because their focus was split among a complex variety of issues concerning the status of black students on campus. Black faculty members may have been considered by journalists to be more reliable sources than the students, but those professors did not always agree on the rationale and proper direction for Black Studies programs. Some black scholars, for example, strenuously opposed Black Studies as an independent academic enterprise, preferring, instead, to promote greater attention to African Americans and their culture within the established disciplines. And so, the emergence of Black Studies posed significant issues of information gathering for journalists who undertook to explain the issue to their readers.

In at least one important respect, however, the journalist's role as storyteller is the same as the writer of fiction: all stories revolve around conflict. The more clearly defined the conflict, the easier the story is to write. The more intense the

confrontation, the more appealing the story will be to the reader. The more visceral the issue, the more compelling the drama. Journalists know these truths and therefore tend to focus their efforts on those conflicts that are most compelling, most intense and most sharply delineated. Black Studies had difficulty attracting attention under these criteria. To begin with, Black Studies was not clearly defined. Even supporters disagreed over what the term meant. At times, there appeared to be relatively little disagreement over Black Studies; many schools set up programs without disruption or opposition, and at other schools, debates often seemed to focus on the form a Black Studies program should take, rather than whether a program should be established. The conflict that did revolve directly around Black Studies tended to be either esoteric (should Black Studies be established as a program or a department?) or conveniently deflected into other issues (black separatism or student power) that were more starkly defined and more easily expressed in news stories. In an atmosphere where student demands and protests were provoking power struggles that frequently involved police — and occasionally military — intervention to determine who would control a campus, it was unlikely that many journalists would take time to explore how Black Studies might change the intellectual culture of the university.

Journalists also often resort to genre and other familiar formats in conceptualizing and writing their stories. Just as a novelist may choose to write a mystery or a romance or a rite-of-passage novel, a journalist may adopt any of a number of fairly standard approaches, depending on the circumstances of

his or her subject. A profile, for example, tends to have a flow and structure that is noticeably different from that of a meeting report or a human interest story. By the time the movement to establish Black Studies programs emerged on white college campuses, the nation's news organizations already had nearly fifteen years' experience in covering intense racial conflict between blacks and whites. The Civil Rights Movement had established certain patterns of activity that journalists could recognize, understand and report with confidence. A group of black activists (NAACP, SCLC, SNCC) would confront a white institution (Topeka school board; Montgomery bus system; Greensboro lunch counters) with a set of demands (freedom to ride buses, attend school, eat in restaurants), using protests (marches, boycotts, sit-ins) to publicize their demands, and eventually achieve some negotiated or court-ordered resolution. The Civil Rights Movement was a socio-political movement in which African Americans sought ways to exert political power to guarantee themselves full and free access to the benefits of citizenship in the United States. The battles of that movement were essentially a struggle for social, political and economic power; they were easily described in terms of who is challenging whom over what, who is outside trying to get in, and who is inside trying to keep the other out. It was a struggle peopled by good guys and bad guys (Martin Luther King Jr. vs. Bull Connor), and it lent itself easily to portrayals in terms of virtue and evil (peaceful, singing marchers vs. fire hoses, attack dogs and hooded cross-burners). In short, the Civil Rights Movement fit well with the patterns of conflict reporting with which journalists were familiar. In a structural sense, covering a

civil rights protest was similar to covering a labor strike; the dynamics of confrontation and negotiation were understood.

It is not surprising, then, that journalists would see the advent of black student protest at white college campuses as merely an extension of the Civil Rights Movement and report on it accordingly. To a great extent, the Black Studies movement and the black student activism that surrounded it were an extension of the Civil Rights struggle. The black students, first and foremost, wanted to open up the nation's colleges and universities to greater African American participation, to increased black student enrollment, increased hiring of black faculty, and increased promotion of blacks to positions of authority in campus administration. In that context, the university was just one more public accommodation where the "whites only" signs — physically visible or not — needed to be taken down. And in that context, Black Studies and black student activism fit easily into the models of reporting that had been established through years of covering civil rights protests.

But the Black Studies movement was never about access alone. Black Studies advocates were never interested simply in obtaining the same education that white students obtained at white universities because they saw that very education as a key element in the systematic oppression of African Americans that had been going on for three and a half centuries. The black students and established scholars who lobbied so passionately for the creation of Black Studies programs were seeking to transform the intellectual environment of the university. They wanted to smash the old Eurocentric

mindset that for so long had denied, dismissed and denigrated black people. In **its** place, they sought to establish a model of scholarly pursuit that would **give** full and honest attention and respect to African and African American **culture**. They might not have put it this way — because their focus, **under**standably, was on winning the acceptance and acknowledgment of black **people** and their culture as legitimate topics of intellectual inquiry — but in **real**ity, Black Studies advocates were trying to reform academia's entire vision of **the** world. A world view that takes Africans and African Americans seriously is **pro**foundly different from one that pretends they have never been significant **actors** in American society or on the world stage. And adopting such a world **view** is not a matter of merely adding Africans and African Americans to the mix in **the** way one might add a single item to one's grocery shopping list or add one **more** chair to a classroom. It is much more akin to putting a new student in **that** **a**dditional chair, a student who will interact with the instructor and every **other** student in the classroom, increasing exponentially the complications of **person**ality, social dynamics, knowledge and personal perspective that come to **bear** each day on the activities of learning.

Journalists were not well prepared to recognize and assimilate an issue of **that** nature and complexity. In fairness, they were far from alone. Amid the crush **of** daily events, the political, economic and social pressures bearing down on **their** universities, few college administrators had much time to reflect on the **deeper**, long-term philosophical implications of Black Studies. Even many **Black** Studies advocates were focused, of necessity, on immediate goals and

objectives that posed such difficult problems of political organization and mobilization that contemplation of long-term issues had to be deferred. It was not until the late 1970s, for example, that a truly rich discussion of theory and methodology in Black Studies began to emerge in the academic literature because for the previous decade, Black Studies scholars had more than enough to contend with just getting their programs set up and doing what was necessary to assure their continued survival. Everybody had immediate crises and conflicts to attend to, and in the maelstrom of conflict, violence and agitation that was America in the late 1960s, it was not easy for an issue to rise to the threshold of public attention.

So the journalistic window was not an ideal one through which to view Black Studies. The frame of the window was shaped by the tendency of white journalists to share the traditional assumptions of white institutions. It was shaped by the reliance of journalists on conflict as an organizing principle. And the view of Black Studies from that window was obscured by the abundance of intense conflict that dominated the foreground: anti-war protests, the Vietnam War itself, sit-ins, demonstrations, confrontations with police, civil rights struggles, generalized student power demands — the full range of social turmoil that was demanding Americans' attention, both on-campus and off. To the extent that Black Studies was connected or associated with a more dramatic or violent outburst — such as a student strike or a sit-in demonstration — it got noticed, but seldom thoroughly explained, by the media. Absent some additional element of conflict — violent protest or racially

separatist demands — Black Studies generally remained in the background, its intellectual import and implications ignored and unexamined.

To understand how the frame of the journalistic window affected the view Americans got of Black Studies, it helps look at how the three most prominent weekly news magazines — Time, Newsweek and U.S. News & World Report — covered the issue between June 1967 and June 1970, the most fertile period of Black Studies growth on U.S. college campuses. In that three-year period, the three magazines published a total of thirty-eight articles that in some noticeable way addressed the issue of Black Studies and/or black student protest on American college campuses. Of those thirty-eight, only six — three separate articles in U.S. News and three wrapped into a single package in Newsweek — gave more than brief references to the contents of Black Studies courses or the rationale for Black Studies programs. And even those six articles were far from thorough in their explanations of Black Studies. Most of the articles focused on the political conflict, disruption and violence attendant to black student protest, with relatively little attention given to the reasons behind or objectives of that protest. Frequently, the articles and their headlines used language that emphasized negative elements of the situation, encouraging the impression (intentionally or not) that the aims of black student activists were unwarranted or even irrational.

Time, for example, published six articles bearing on black student activism during the period, the first appearing Oct. 6, 1967 and the last in the issue of Sept. 19, 1969. The first article, under the headline "Black Pride," was typical of

coverage in all three magazines, giving only passing attention — and no **substantive** explanation — to black students' demands for curriculum changes **while** emphasizing racial tensions on campus and the potential for violence. All **of the** elements are wrapped up together in the article's lead paragraph:

After a summer of race riots, Negro students are returning to college campuses with a new and aggressive pride in being black. It shows up in a revival of all-Negro fraternities, surging membership in "Afro-American" student-action groups, demands for more "black culture" in the curriculum, and a growing scorn for the white, middle-class world that lies within reach of the college-trained Negro. The new mood ranges from angry militancy to a brotherly desire for mutual improvement — and it does not reject violence as one way to make the black presence felt.³

Note that the paragraph begins and ends with violence, starting with the race **riots** that had shaken the nation only three months earlier and closing with the **generalized** assertion that black students accepted violence as a legitimate **tactic** for achieving their aims on campus. The mood of black students is **described** as "aggressive" and "angry" and increasingly scornful of white **society**; the sole positive adjective, "brotherly," is sandwiched between "angry" **and the** threat of violence. Demands for curriculum reform also are linked to the **notion** of racial separatism because they are lumped into the same sentence **as the** "all-Negro fraternities," and the quotation marks around the phrase **"black culture"** suggest, at least in one sense, some question as to the validity **of the** term.

Setting aside the question of whether the paragraph was entirely accurate (**some** of those scornful black students might have questioned whether the

white, middle-class world truly was within reach of black college graduates; **others** might have objected strenuously to the suggestion that they approved of **violence**) it is important to see the context in which Black Studies made its **way** into general public view. From a journalistic standpoint, the recent race **riots** in Detroit and elsewhere certainly were pertinent to an article about the **attitudes** of black students on American college campuses in the fall of 1967. **And** the remainder of the article cites several comments from African **Americans** on campus that support the opening paragraph's assertions. But on **the** whole, the article links the idea of Black Studies with controversial **ideas** of violence and separatism without offering any explanation that would **help** readers differentiate Black Studies from those other issues or assess the **merits** of Black Studies programs. The only other reference to Black **Studies** in the article is a description of efforts by black students at Columbia **University** to push "quietly for more Negro faculty appointments, more black art, **music**, literature and history courses. 'We have had to learn the white **man's** way of thinking,' argues Senior Reginald Thompkins. 'He must learn the **black** man's way of thinking.'" ⁴ That is hardly the most potent pedagogical **rationale** that could have been presented, and it was followed immediately by the information that the Black Student Union at San Francisco State College **had** been accused of engaging in "reverse racism." A few paragraphs later, the article quotes a black graduate student at the University of Wisconsin: "Let **me** tell you how it is, baby. When I get out, I have two choices — to **exterminate** the white man or to prostitute myself to the white man. I haven't

decided what I'll do."⁵ The quote captures very pungently the extreme rhetoric that was percolating on campus. But the lack of explanation about the black students' curricular demands and the juxtaposition of those demands with such extreme rhetoric, leaves the impression that the demand for Black Studies was merely another part of an irrational and violent agenda and that there was no solid reason for curricular reform beyond the petulant demand of unreasonable black students.

Another Time article, in the Nov. 22, 1968 issue, summarized developments that had led to the closure of San Francisco State. The article traced the origin of violence and disruption on the campus to the activities of Black Student Union members who "wrecked the offices of the student paper and beat several staffers for printing what the blacks called racial slurs."⁶ About halfway through the article, there is a reference to Black Studies that again places the concept of such programs in an unfavorable light by associating it with undemocratic and violent assertions by some of the militants:

All 800 blacks at S.F. State are counted as members by the B.S.U., whether the students concerned agree or not. And the disruptive B.S.U. tactics, designed to force the administration to build up minority enrollment and black studies programs, annoy many of the 16,300 white students, who want only to complete their education.

Last month, [suspended black graduate student George] Murray urged students at Fresno State College to "kill all the slave masters," among whom he counted President Johnson, Chief Justice Warren and Governor Reagan. A few days afterward he told students at S.F. State to bring guns on the campus for "self-defense."⁷

Once again, the facts may be accurate but the lack of explanation of the

reasoning for Black Studies and the setting of the reference in the context of such inflammatory other elements could lead a reader to conclude, logically, that there was no legitimate rationale for Black Studies; that the only people who supported such programs were violent thugs who went around beating up white students and advocating the killing of public officials. Even if the article fairly represents the views and behavior of George Murray and the BSU at San Francisco State, it does not paint a fair portrait of Black Studies. The author of the article or the editors at Time might reasonably argue that it was not the purpose of the article to explain Black Studies; its purpose was to examine the violence and disruption at San Francisco State, which is what the article does. But that is precisely the point: absent separate and detailed reporting on Black Studies, the readers of Time, in this case, were most likely left with a misleading impression of Black Studies. The article, however accurate in its facts, distorted the reality of Black Studies.

Subsequent Time articles did little to change the impression readers of the first two articles may have formed. An article in the Jan. 17, 1969 issue reported on protests by black students at eight colleges and a high school. Under the headline, "Engulfed by Black Anger," the article noted: "Practically all of the disorders shared a common feature: often extravagant demands by black students."⁸ Demands by black students for Black Studies programs at San Francisco State and Brandeis University were noted in passing as reasons for disruptions at those schools, but again, no further explanation of the programs was provided. Several incidents of violence and clashes between students and

police were mentioned, and the article demonstrated that students were not the **only** ones capable of intemperate rhetoric:

Governor Ronald Reagan . . . called for legislation that would curb "these criminal anarchists and latter-day fascists." Said Reagan: "Those who want to get an education, those who want to teach, should be protected at the point of bayonets if necessary."⁹

Another article carried the headline, "Black Is Beautiful — and Belligerent," and **included** information about the fatal shooting of two black students at UCLA in a **dispute** between two black student factions. The same article recited a litany of **black** student protests and asserted that in recent weeks:

U.S. higher education seemed to be the victim of an artfully orchestrated conspiracy of disruption. At campus after campus, militant black students slammed down lists of nonnegotiable demands on presidential desks, threatening to shut down colleges that would not comply and organizing protests, picket lines and strikes.¹⁰

The article later dismissed the idea of a conspiracy and noted that Black **Student** Unions "do not always use violent means to achieve their ends and not **all of** their demands are unreasonable." But the negative construction ("not **always**," "not all") of that statement clearly implies that the opposite was the **norm**. And while the article suggests that one of the results of those "not **unreasonable**" demands had been to force "the universities to rethink their **obligations** to Negro students," it balances that statement with the observation **that**, "Faculties are unanimous in denying the black students the right to set **their** own standards and hire their own teachers." And once again, the article **ends** with a quote from a black student suggesting the likelihood of violence.

Accompanying the article are two photos: one of black students occupying the campus switchboard at Brandeis and the other of black students being forcibly arrested by police at San Fernando State College. Nowhere is there a clear and even-handed explanation of Black Studies and the rationale for Black Studies programs. Time's readers saw the protests and the violence and saw that Black Studies was associated with those events, but without some further explanation, they might logically have concluded that there was nothing more to support the idea of Black Studies than the most inflammatory comments of the most radical militants.

In the same three-year period, Newsweek published eighteen articles pertaining in some way to black students or black student activism on white college campuses. Of that number, however, less than half even mentioned Black Studies or efforts to reform college curricula to include more information about African Americans and African American culture. Fewer still offered any substantial explanation about Black Studies. Of the ten articles that did not mention curricular issues, most focused on issues of campus racial tension or protests involving black students; two focused on the efforts of colleges to increase their enrollment of black students. For example, "May Queens and Effigies," in the June 5, 1967 issue, explored the atmosphere at white colleges in the South that were opening their doors for the first time to black students. The article notes that, "With a few notable exceptions, Negroes are encountering little overt discrimination or hostility on Southern campuses," but then describes harassment of black students at the University of Mississippi,

where "KKK" was frequently sprayed on black students' dorm room doors with shaving cream and a white student dressed in a sheet had recently confronted a black student in a shower room.¹¹ Another article described a heated debate among black and white students at a convention of the National Student Association over a resolution endorsing black power and defining it as "the unification of all black people in America for their liberation by any means necessary."¹² The phrase "by any means necessary" had sparked opposition from some white students, one of whom said that such a resolution would give "an entirely blank check to the black men of America to commit insurrection and violence." In the end, the black students won the battle over wording after threatening a walkout. Three other articles — bearing the headlines "Guerrillas on Campus," "Agony at State" and "Unsteady State" — focused on the turmoil at San Francisco State and highlighted the role of the Black Student Union in the protests and violence there.¹³ The first article, interestingly, was accompanied by a photograph that carried the caption: "Riot at State: Opening battle?" The photograph appears to show a crowd of students standing quietly, listening to a speaker. The most dramatic article, "The Siege of Greensboro," describes a three-day running gun battle between black student snipers, police and National Guard troops at the Agricultural and Technical College of North Carolina. One student was killed and one student and five police officers were wounded; two hundred students were taken into police custody. A photo above the article shows three National Guardsmen crouching by a brick wall, aiming their rifles at a campus dormitory.¹⁴ Black Studies was not mentioned in the

articles, but the connection between black student activism and racial tension, controversy and campus disturbances — occasionally extreme violence — was clearly established.

Of the eight Newsweek articles that mentioned Black Studies or related curricular reform, five included only brief or passing references. An article in the March 30, 1970 issue, for example, examined changes in the racial climate at the University of Mississippi and included a single reference to Black Studies, bundled together with several other issues: "This month, after two years of trying to work through normal channels for the introduction of black studies, black faculties and black athletic participation, black students have begun to demonstrate."¹⁵ No further explanation of Black Studies is offered, but the article notes the arrests of 71 black students by state police after the students disrupted a concert. An April 28, 1969 article that discussed recent disruptions at Harvard, Columbia and the University of Chicago reported on a black student sit-in at Columbia and noted a vote of support from white students at Harvard for "the demands of the Afro-American Society that Negroes be permitted, in effect, to help set up and run their own black curriculum."¹⁶ Nothing further was said about that curriculum or the reasoning behind it. A third article, entitled "Black Against Black," was a report on the violence that erupted between two black student factions at UCLA and resulted in the shooting deaths of two black students.¹⁷ The article focused on the violence and the black radical politics that surrounded the incident but included a brief reference to the dispute involving the selection of a director for the university's new Afro-American Study Center.

Once again, a Black Studies program gets mentioned in the context of extreme violence, but is given no further explanation.

By far the most dramatic such example, however, was the report in Newsweek's May 5, 1969 issue of the black student occupation of a campus building at Cornell University. The story captured the cover of the magazine that week; under the headline, "Universities Under The Gun," the cover displayed a photograph of black "Militants at Cornell" carrying rifles and shotguns, with one of the students wearing ammunition belts around his waist and over his shoulder. Inside, the magazine's five-page report on the Cornell sit-in and its aftermath devotes just three sentences to black student demonstrations "for a separate black college" and white backlash to them.¹⁸ Ten additional sentences focused on developments at Harvard, where the faculty had agreed "to give black students power in choosing professors and curriculum for a new, black-studies program — the first time Harvard students have ever had such a voice." But those sentences focused entirely on the politics of the Harvard situation with no additional explanation about the Black Studies program.¹⁹ The vast majority of the article was given over to a detailed description of the Cornell protest, the negotiations that ended the sit-in, and the tensions that had been heightened as a result.

The three Newsweek articles that provided more insight into Black Studies were, in fact, part of a single extended package of articles, published in the Feb. 10, 1969 issue, that were presented under the overall headline, "Black Mood on Campus," whose double meaning emphasized the atmosphere of anger and

confrontation. The central piece of the seven-page package was actually a sequence of ten short reports from different college campuses. The vast majority of the material in the collected reports focused on race relations, campus politics and the socio-political attitudes of black students. References to Black Studies tended to be presented in the context of other related issues, most notably separatist attitudes of black students. For example, a passage describing the separatist attitudes and behavior of black students at Wayne State University is introduced by a paragraph that refers to "Cornell's black students who are seeking an autonomous black college financed by the university where they would select courses, students and faculty."²⁰ The section on Wayne State also mentions plans by the Association of Black Students to launch an independent Black Studies institute, but again, offers no explanation of what that institute would entail. A report from Fisk, written by a junior at the historically black college, mentions the students' efforts "to broaden the black-studies program" but adds only that the aim is to "make this educational institution speak to the needs of the black community; that is, structure the curriculum so that it educates and frees a black mind to deal with the system." Why Black Studies was necessary or how such a program would further that aim was not explained.²¹ A section about Black Studies courses at Merritt College focused overwhelmingly on debate over whether the courses should be for black students only,²² and a report on a black history course at Harvard zeroed in on controversy over whether white instructors could teach Black Studies courses.²³ The most neutral information about Black Studies was a

brief report from the University of California at Berkeley that summarized the focus and reading lists of three new Black Studies courses at that campus.²⁴

Two substantial sidebar stories — one written by Nathan Hare, chairman of the Black Studies department at San Francisco State, and the other written by Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP — provided some important perspective on Black Studies.²⁵ But even here, the emphasis was more on debating the related issue of separatism than on exploring the question of what distinguishes Black Studies as an academic enterprise. Readers not already familiar with the concept of Black Studies would have gained only limited additional insight from either article.

The most startling part of the entire report, however, was a section on the situation at San Francisco State, which quoted extensively from Jerry Varnado, a 24-year-old campus coordinator for the BSU. Varnado was described as wearing fatigue jackets, blue jeans and black beret . . . “a soldier of sorts.” His description of his role in the college’s Black Studies program was stridently in keeping with that image:

“I am now a graduate student and a lecturer in the black-studies department. What we are involved in here at State is not a reform movement. That is what the civil-rights movement was. This is a revolution. . . .

“We will use any means necessary to uphold the principle that people of the third world have a right to determine what kind of human beings they want to be. Violence is the best means. It disrupts and terrorizes so that if people of the third world are not allowed to determine their own kind of education, then nobody else on that campus can get any kind of education.

“One course I teach is the sociology of black oppression . . . Once during class we were talking about what napalm

was and how it was being used. I told them how it could get on the skin and burn a hole all the way through. And for all who didn't believe it, I put a formula for napalm on the board so they could make some. They could pour it on a piece of meat or on the police or somebody and see exactly how it works."²⁶

It is hard to imagine how any rational reader could examine that passage and not come away with serious doubts about the legitimacy of Black Studies. And yet, Varnado was not the typical Black Studies instructor, and instructions about how to use napalm on police was anything but standard content for Black Studies courses. Extreme rhetoric, such as Varnado's, makes great copy for journalists; it grabs the reader's attention and it defines conflict in very stark terms. But how well it serves the reader to portray the sides of a conflict in terms of their most extreme advocates is another question.

Coverage of black student protest and Black Studies in U.S. News was somewhat more critical in tone than were the articles published by Time and Newsweek. In the same three-year period, U.S. News published fourteen articles that touched, in some way, on Black Studies or black student activism. And, as with its competitors, U.S. News generally gave only passing attention to Black Studies; only three articles provided any significant explanatory material aimed at helping the reader understand what Black Studies was or make sense of where it fit in the curriculum of higher education. Most often, Black Studies was mentioned in connection with black student sit-ins or other disruptive protests, but then merely as one item on a list of demands or black student concerns. A report in the May 20, 1968 issue, for example, listed "courses in Negro literature and Negro art taught by professors approved by

Negro students" as one demand of black students at Northwestern University. No further explanation of the courses was given, and the article referred to the University's acceptance of black student demands as a "surrender."²⁷ A roundup of campus disturbances published in the Jan. 20, 1969 issue cited four colleges — San Francisco State, San Fernando Valley State, Brandeis and the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh — where Black Studies programs had been a factor in black student demonstrations. None of the references gave any significant explanation of Black Studies, although the section of the report concerning San Francisco State noted student demands that the Black Studies department be allowed to operate "without interference of the fascist administration and the chancellor."²⁸ Just five weeks later, another roundup of campus unrest included incidents at two colleges — the University of Wisconsin at Madison and Duke University — that were linked to demands for Black Studies, among other issues.²⁹ Particularly interesting is the portion of the report concerning the Duke incident:

Authorities said it was the first such "black power" uprising on a predominantly white Southern campus.

The Negro rebels — an estimated 30 or 40 of the 100 Negroes at the private university — had threatened to set school records afire unless their demands were met. What they were asking:

Initiation of a "black studies" program controlled by Negro students, a Negro dormitory, reinstatement of Negro students who have flunked out, an increase in Negro students, a Negro adviser elected by Negro students, a summer program for incoming Negro freshmen, an end to "police harassment" of Negro students, no more "racist policies" at the university, and a change in the grading system for Negroes.³⁰

The references to the incident as an uprising and the black students as rebels clearly signals the magazine's disapproval, and the use of quotation marks around key phrases also suggests that the students' concerns are suspect. Disapproval verged on contempt three months later, after the sit-in by armed black students at Cornell. The magazine's report of the incident in its May 5, 1969 issue began:

Gun-toting Negro students challenged one of this nation's great universities — and won.

Under threats of violence backed by rifles and shotguns, the faculty and administration of Cornell University surrendered to the Negroes' demands.

With this surrender, the revolution on American college campuses entered a new and potentially dangerous phase. Armed force had become a winning form of student protest.³¹

The remainder of the report is heavily weighted with expressions of outrage from public officials and newspaper editorials. But while the article mentions developments in the debate over Black Studies at Harvard and traces the unrest at Cornell to black student demands for a separate black college, there is no further explanation of Black Studies.

In one respect, however, U.S. News was more attentive than its competitors to the question of Black Studies. Three major articles during the period were devoted in significant part to examination of Black Studies. The first of the articles appeared in the June 24, 1968 issue of the magazine.³² Although it begins with references to threats, capitulation and black power demands, the article takes the black militants' demands seriously and consciously poses the question: "Just what do they want the universities to teach about the 'black

experience'?" One answer was presented from Charles J. Hamilton, a junior at Harvard who served as managing editor of the Harvard Journal of Negro Affairs.

"Firstly," he said, "we want courses dealing specifically with Afro-American history, culture, literature, music and so forth.

"Secondly, we want to see the basic elements of these worked into the general curriculum to provide the general run of student with a better knowledge of the Negro in America.

"Thirdly, we want a program of African studies dealing with Africa's history, economics, religions and so on.

"As we see it, there has to be a reeducation of whites. What do most of them know about the black man in America?

"They may have heard of Booker T. Washington, but how many now of W.E.B. DuBois? How many know Richard Wright and other Negro authors?

"Our history courses ought to retell the story of Lincoln, give him fuller dimension. This doesn't mean we have to paint him as a proslavery man. But he isn't just the man who issued the Emancipation Proclamation, either. At various times he made it clear he did not favor equality for Negroes and he even said once he favored sending them back to Africa.

"In other words, he was a complex man operating in a politically complex situation, and this ought to be known."³³

Hamilton's statement is followed by a response from Sidney Hook, a New York **University** professor who was heading a committee overseeing the **establishment** of a Black Studies program at that school.

"The primary justification for expanding the curriculum to provide a picture of the black experience is educational. To understand the world more adequately, we must know something of the black experience as well as that of the other minorities.

"This is the sole justification. . . ."³⁴

Taken together, these two statements amount to the most thorough expression of the **philosophy** behind Black Studies to be presented in any of the articles in

the three magazines. The remainder of the article is mainly an examination of the status of Black Studies programs at a number of different colleges.

Another of the articles, published in the Feb. 24, 1969 issue, looked broadly at the growth in demand for Black Studies programs and touched on such related issues as the short supply of qualified instructors, the insistence of militants on black instructors and the lack of agreement about what should be included in Black Studies courses.³⁵ But while the article gave plenty of attention to what was being done at various institutions to establish Black Studies programs, it gave virtually no attention to the philosophy behind the movement.

The final article, a report on developments at Federal City College in Washington, D.C., emphasizes the school's Black Studies program in an *almost* adversarial tone.

Drawn up by the faculty for next year is a black-studies department that would be more antiwhite and separatist than anything yet seen on a U.S. campus.

It offers a four-year program providing "total immersion" in black nationalism. This ranges from a freshman course aimed at eradicating white values, to physical-education classes in karate, riflery and stick-fighting.³⁶

In essence, the piece was an examination of political infighting at the college and an attack on the growing influence of a black radical faction of the college's faculty. Because the radicals (including a former leader of the black student strike at San Francisco State) were congregated in the school's Black Studies program, the program and the political cast the radicals gave to it were central to the article. But while the article quoted extensively from the black nationalist

rhetoric of the radicals and offered in detail their political vision for the Black Studies program, it offered little in the way of alternative views of what Black Studies could or should be. A single paragraph noted that student government, though sometimes supportive of the radicals, had disavowed the radicals' plans for the Black Studies program. "Instead, it has offered support to black studies that are academically sound, nonracist and 'responsive' to student needs," the article said.³⁷ The lingering impression left by the article was that the radicals *were* Black Studies, for all intents and purposes; that the perceived problem was with the concept of Black Studies, not merely the implementation of the concept by a particular group of people at a particular campus.

It seems clear, from the articles published in these three magazines, that Black Studies was less than adequately explained by the media. Perhaps other media outlets did a better job; local newspapers, for example, are likely to have given more attention — or at least more space — to such issues on the college campuses in their coverage areas. A more expansive examination of news coverage of Black Studies in its formative years would be interesting and, I *think*, useful. But even local newspapers are likely to have been limited by the *same* conceptual — and factual — considerations that influenced the reporting *of* the big three national news weeklies. First of all, Black Studies was not even *clearly* understood, or at least explained, by its supporters, so it would have *been* difficult for journalists to perceive and understand the nuances of *philosophy* at issue in the Black Studies movement. Second, Black Studies *tended* to get lost in the background because it was only one of several issues

that revolved around black student protest; incidents of blatant racism or violence were much easier for journalists to understand and describe, and, the journalists knew, more commanding of the reader's attention. And third, because of the journalist's pattern of basing stories on conflict and describing the conflict in terms of its most extreme expressions, Black Studies was unlikely to get the attention necessary to make it well understood. Unless it was the source of conflict, Black Studies barely got mentioned at all, and only if it involved radical rhetoric — whether it was demands for blacks-only programs or instructors who advocated the use of napalm on police — did it get more substantial attention.

Black Studies only got attention when it was on the black students' lists of demands and when those students were disrupting a campus to win acceptance of those demands. In a way, it was almost irrelevant what the demands of black students were or what their rationale was. What seemed important was merely that there were demands and that a disagreement over those demands was causing disruption to the institution. The underlying nature of the disagreement got little attention from the news magazines. That, I think, trivialized the students' demands in a subtle way. Because journalists did not elaborate on and explore the demands, reporting on the issue gave the impression that the dispute was simply a case of youthful rebellion against authority, a point on which the kids always lose. Unfortunately, in the struggle for public awareness and understanding, Black Studies lost as well.

Chapter 8

The Revolution Will Not Be Televised

In 1903, W.E.B. DuBois declared: "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line."¹ One hundred years later, many of the difficulties that underlay that problem persist, but the issue, I think, needs to be restated for a new era. The problem of the twenty-first century is the problem of the color spectrum.

When DuBois wrote The Souls of Black Folk — and for many decades thereafter — the discussion of race and racial issues in the United States was built on the simple foundation of the black/white dichotomy. That color division, and the question of whether it could be used to justify human slavery, had been at the heart of the nation's most traumatic and devastating war. The Civil War was still fresh in the memories of those who had lived through it, never mind that the war had been over almost forty years. About the same span of time has passed since the assassination of President Kennedy and it is unlikely that anyone who was old enough to take note of that event (far less wrenching than a nearly five-year war) has forgotten. Moreover, as DuBois wrote, America was still struggling with the black/white racial fallout from the Civil War, through the

lingering effects of Reconstruction, the enactment of Jim Crow segregation laws, and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan.

Certainly there were other racial minorities in the United States at the time: Native Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans. But they were all much smaller than the African American population, and for a variety of reasons were generally disregarded. Native Americans, for example, were widely dismissed as mere savages and had, in some cases, only narrowly avoided the extermination that appeared to be federal government policy in the last half of the nineteenth century. Those who remained were relegated to reservations where they had little contact with and little impact upon the general American populace. Native Americans were already coming to be seen as quaint and insignificant relics of the nation's youth, of the frontier that Frederick Jackson Turner had so recently declared closed. Asian Americans, likewise, were relatively few in number and tended to be clustered on the West Coast (far from the population centers of the East) or in relatively small urban enclaves. They spoke non-European languages and were perceived as foreigners (witness the internment camps of World War II) rather than as real, however marginalized, members of American society. Hispanics — mostly Mexican Americans — were a conquered people and, like Asian Americans, tended to be concentrated in the Southwest and in small urban enclaves, which diminished their claim on America's public awareness.

A century later, the problems of racial division persist. Racism remains widespread in American society; racially based hatred, bigotry, prejudice and

violence show no signs of disappearing, though their frequency and intensity may have abated. The racially motivated lynchings that occurred on an almost weekly basis in America throughout the second decade of the twentieth century may no longer be a rampant plague, but the disease has not been eradicated either, as the vicious murder of James Byrd Jr., who was dragged to death behind a pickup truck in Texas in 1998, demonstrated. What has changed dramatically is the way America, as a nation, *thinks* about race. The word itself has been diminished in some ways; in recent years, public discussions have focused less on "race" and more on "race and ethnicity," reflecting the growing belief, championed by many anthropologists, that the very concept of race is of dubious scientific value. At the same time, Americans find themselves in a society that no longer measures itself by the black/white dichotomy that predominated through the mid-1960s, but in terms of what David Hollinger called "the ethno-racial pentagon."

This is the set of categories Americans most often confront when asked to identify themselves by a multitude of public and private agencies. On application forms and questionnaires, individuals are routinely invited to declare themselves to be one of the following: Euro-American (or sometimes white), Asian American, African American, Hispanic (or sometimes Latino), and Indigenous Peoples (or sometimes Native American).²

This five-part categorization of America's racial/ethnic landscape is new since **1970**. The emphasis on ethno-racial demography began in the mid-1960s as a **way** to measure progress toward compliance with federal civil rights and **anti**discrimination legislation by schools, businesses and governmental

agencies. At first, the focus was on distinguishing adequately between black and white. (As I noted in Chapter 3, for example, the 1960 Census did not differentiate between African Americans and other racial minorities when it came to enrollments in higher education.) The categories were expanded as other ethno-racial groups and women began to assert themselves in the late 1960s and demand attention to their grievances and concerns about discrimination.

As America's population boomed and as Americans became increasingly mobile, communities and neighborhoods often became less homogenous. More and more, Americans encountered people from different ethno-racial groups in the course of their daily activities, and the encounters were not always pleasant or welcome. Resentments grew as many whites came to perceive the attention paid to minority groups as an effort to give minorities "special rights," rather than as a means to redress past repression and denial of equal rights. Universities, in particular, came under fire in the 1980s and 1990s over affirmative action programs aimed at increasing the numbers of **m**inority students on campus. Critics began to challenge affirmative action **p**rograms as "reverse racism" or "racial quotas" that sought to promote blacks **a**nd other minorities by discriminating against whites. Words like diversity and **m**ulticulturalism took on political significance. "Culture wars" erupted over **s**ocial values; what liberals promoted in the name of cultural pluralism and **u**nderstanding, conservatives attacked as an oppressive political correctness. In **a** society that was increasingly aware of its cultural diversity, the categories of

the ethno-racial pentagon became universally familiar, if not always appreciated, and were enshrined in law and public awareness.

The old black/white dichotomy of American society has been replaced by the ethno-racial pentagon, but as Hollinger points out, even that paradigm is breaking down under the pressures of continuing immigration and growing public awareness of cultural distinctions. Until fairly recently, for example, it was common to discuss America's Hispanic population as though it were composed of three subgroups: Mexican, Cuban and Puerto Rican. But that model does not begin to describe the contemporary range of cultural variation among Spanish-speaking peoples of the United States. Since the 1970s, the United States has absorbed substantial Hispanic immigration from such Central American and South American countries as Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Columbia and Bolivia, each with its own distinct cultural heritage. In the same way, the ethnic and cultural differences between immigrants from Japan, China, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, India, Tibet and the Philippines belie the superficial unity of the single Asian American category. And where did Arab Americans ever fit within the stiff confines of the ethno-racial pentagon? Moreover, intermarriage between ethnic groups has profoundly complicated the simple categories of the ethno-racial pentagon and heightened public awareness of the extent to which Americans are becoming multiethnic in ways that the ethno-racial pentagon cannot account for and that the black/white dichotomy could not even contemplate. Attention paid to the multiracial descent of celebrities such as Tiger Woods, Mariah Carey, Keanu Reeves, Derek Jeter

and Ben Kingsley has further illuminated the public's awareness of America's changing ethno-racial makeup.

Hollinger sees that as an encouraging sign that America is moving toward the freedom of a postethnic society in which each person's ethnic identity is fluid, flexible and self-determined by voluntary and revocable affiliations, not by rigid definitions of ethnicity derived solely from one's history of biological descent. Others are less optimistic. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. looked at the same demographic trends, as well as the dissolution of whole countries into ethnic conflict, and was prompted to ask: "[W]ill the melting pot give way to the Tower of Babel?" The danger, he said, is particularly acute in America's public schools.

The bonds of national cohesion are sufficiently fragile already. Public education should aim to strengthen those bonds, not to weaken them. If separatist tendencies go on unchecked, the result can only be the fragmentation, resegregation, and tribalization of American life.³

But whether one's analysis is optimistic or pessimistic, it is hardly in question that the awareness of the American public concerning the complexities of the nation's racial diversity has been elevated dramatically since the mid-1960s. Black/white conflict still gets the lion's share of the public's attention; that is where the special burden of America's history most squarely rests. But increasingly, Americans are coming to see that the challenge that lies ahead for the nation is the struggle to build a single society that can accommodate not two, not even five, but a multitude of ethno-racial definitions. To an important — if somewhat ironic — extent, that new awareness is a result of the Black

Studies movement.

The activists who set out to create Black Studies programs at white colleges and universities were not looking to cultivate multicultural awareness. Their aim was to liberate African Americans from the social, political, economic and intellectual oppression of the past. Even the most conservative integrationists, who decried the separatist tendencies of the militants, agreed with that much: the ultimate objective was to improve the circumstances of the African American community. They disagreed on means to that end. And because many of the integrationists preferred to work within the existing departments, and because the intense rhetoric and in-your-face tactics of the militants generated such discomfort — inside and outside academia — Black Studies came to be identified with the confrontational demands and aggressive style of the militants. Black Studies, the public believed, was about revolution. The militants said as much, the sit-ins and confrontations with authorities reinforced the militants' claim, and if there were any doubts in the public mind about the implications of that revolution, the images of armed black demonstrators at Cornell erased them.

The vivid images of conflict, confrontation and violence that suffused the news media served to reinforce in the public's mind the perception that the struggle was precisely what the combatants said it was: either a revolution to destroy white racism and white racist institutions or a defense of society and intellectual integrity against the forces of chaos. There was enough truth in both claims to lend plausibility to either analysis of the conflict. Universities, in their

history of excluding African Americans and in their failure to undertake the honest study of African American culture or the contributions of African Americans to American society, were certainly racist and sometimes oppressive. At the same time, the tactics of the black militant students were often chaotic, occasionally violent and sometimes ludicrous. The issue of Black Studies — like so many other contentious public issues — came to be defined by the extremes of the debate.

But the revolution that the militants sought and the public saw was not the revolution that America got. As with all revolutions, the collision between ideals and practical realities produced unanticipated — and sometimes unrecognized — outcomes. Mass media have never been good at communicating subtleties in public discourse because subtleties by their nature are indistinct, murky and hard to grasp. The media want images that are sharp, clear, easy to express and easy to understand. Whether that arises from an inherent incapacity of the media to explain subtle distinctions, as some might argue, or is simply a reflection of the reading/viewing public's demand for easily digestible information hardly matters. In either case, the result is news coverage that oversimplifies, that overlooks variation of opinion, that expresses conflict in the most polarized terms, that emphasizes the extremes, that is heavy on the enumeration of demands and light on the explanation of intellectual rationale. Gil Scott-Heron assailed the tendency of the mass media to oversimplify and trivialize social protest and explored those discrepancies between image and substance, between the perceived and the actual in his poem, "The Revolution

Will Not Be Televised.”

**The revolution will not be brought to you by Xerox
In 4 parts without commercial interruption . . .
The revolution will not give your mouth sex appeal . . .
NBC will not predict the winner at 8:32
On the count from 29 districts . . .
The theme song will not be written by Jim Webb,
Francis Scott Key, nor sung by Glen Campbell, Tom
Jones, Johnny Cash, Englebert Humperdink, or the Rare Earth . . .
The revolution will not be right back after a message
About a white tornado, white lightning or white people . . .
The revolution will not go better with Coke.
The revolution will not fight the germs that cause bad breath.
The revolution WILL put you in the driver’s seat.
The revolution will not be televised, WILL not be televised,
WILL NOT BE TELEVISED.
The revolution will be no re-run brothers;
The revolution will be live.⁴**

Scott-Heron was speaking to the demand for social transformation that was shaking America far beyond the confines of academia, but the struggles within American higher education were a part of that. Whether it was academia or the broader cultural milieu of American society, the mass media sketched the outlines of the conflict, the stark contrasts, the arresting details on the surface but often missed the deeper — less dramatic but more profound — shifting currents of change.

The revolution that was happening live, that was moving under the radar of the mass media, the real revolution in higher education — and in the entire society — the revolution that was not generally being noticed in the pages of *Time Magazine* or on the nation’s television screens was a revolution of perception. America was slowly awakening to the fact that it was not a white nation, that it was not even a black-and-white nation, that it was a truly

multicultural nation whose challenge lay in the necessity of reshaping society to accommodate the tremendous variety of ethnicity and cultural heritage. The awakening has been painfully slow and even now is far from complete. It did not start or end with Black Studies, but Black Studies played an important role in reshaping America's awareness of itself.

The birth of the Civil Rights Movement was the first big wake-up call. From the 1954 Supreme Court ruling on school desegregation and the 1955 bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, the United States was immersed in a war between a new vision and an old way of thinking. The genius of the Civil Rights Movement was the way in which it forced America to confront the paradox of its own injustice toward African Americans. It held up a mirror in which the nation that prided itself on being "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" could not avoid seeing that it denied liberty and equality to African Americans. Martin Luther King Jr.'s emphasis on nonviolent protest confronted racism and discrimination in a way that laid bare the brutality of white America's domination of black people. King's movement was a call to conscience, a demand that America see reality and act — on the very principles it claimed to revere — to correct injustice.

And if King and the Civil Rights Movement had succeeded in prying open America's eyes, the Black Studies movement continued the struggle to pry open America's mind. Black Studies was, on one level, simply a continuation of the Civil Rights Movement, an effort to get higher education to open its doors to African Americans, to enroll more black students, to hire more black faculty. But

it was always, because of the nature of academia, about much more. The university has, since the earliest medieval institutions were created, held a unique place in Western society as the center of intellectual life. Of course not every great thinker has been an academician and not every thought emerging from the ivied halls of the university has been brilliant, but the university is the one institution whose fundamental role has been the accumulation and transmission of knowledge in all its forms. A central part of that function has been a responsibility for careful examination and analysis of society itself. Black Studies challenged the university to live up to that responsibility, to look at society in a new way, to consider previously ignored perspectives — to quite literally change America's mind.

In Black Studies: Pedagogy and Revolution, Johnella E. Butler asserted that Black Studies aimed not just to decolonize African Americans politically, socially and economically but intellectually as well. One source of oppression, she argued, was the dualistic thinking that forms the foundation of the Western intellectual tradition, the Cartesian approach that constantly divides the world into polar opposites and works to separate the mind from the emotive and the physical realm of human experience. African Americans could begin to throw off that oppression, she suggested, by looking to African cultural patterns and modes of thought, modes of thought that sought similarities and connections rather than differences and divisions.

Central to decolonization then is the ultimate unification of the duality. What may be termed an either/or world view (corresponds to Western sensibility) maintains the

dichotomized duality of matter and spirit, feeling and intellect. A both/and world view provides the perspective and the impetus for the unification of the dichotomy. . . . This dialogical interaction of contradictions allows for resolution not through an either/or negation, but through the interaction and the subsequent evolution of generative themes . . . Built upon the recognition of equal importance of the physical and the spiritual, and upon the resultant entity of their constant interaction, it is a world view that recognizes humankind's oneness with nature. It diametrically opposes Western thought in its emphasis on the intuitive, subjective, and communal and is essential to a liberating pedagogy.⁵

Not every black intellectual or even every Black Studies advocate would necessarily agree with Butler's analysis. But it is not necessary to agree that the "both/and world view" is typical of or peculiar to African American or African intellectual culture to recognize that the issue Butler raised involves the fundamental structure and process of the academic enterprise. From this perspective, the Black Studies movement wasn't just about expanded access to the same old higher education, or merely broadening the content of courses, it was about reshaping the way academia looks at the world. It was about challenging the fundamental assumptions that guide the work of scholars. That was the real revolution, the revolution that to a great extent succeeded.

The rhetorical revolution, the revolution that demanded complete autonomy for Black Studies programs, that demanded intense community involvement, that pressed separatist demands for blacks-only courses, dorms and cultural centers, that demanded student control over faculty appointments; that revolution did not work out as many of the militant black students had so ardently hoped. Black Studies did not become established on every university

campus; hundreds of programs were launched, but the United States has several thousand colleges and universities. Some of the programs that were begun did not survive more than a few years. Many programs were chronically understaffed and underfunded, and relatively few were ever given full departmental status. None ever had the complete autonomy that the more radical militants demanded. Black Studies programs never became the large, aggressive, training centers for community activists that many of the militants envisioned. And despite all the turmoil of the late 1960s and early 1970s, despite the incendiary rhetoric, the confrontation, the violence — threatened and real — the white institutions of academia were not smashed.

But they were changed. The American college campus of the early twenty-first century is a very different place from the campus of 1965. There are more African Americans and other minorities in the student body, on the faculty and in the administration. The history, literature and culture of African Americans and other minority groups are far more thoroughly examined in the college curriculum than they were a generation ago. Scholars spend much more time and energy in their research studying and addressing the concerns of African Americans and other minorities than they did in the early 1960s. Today it is not merely common for scholars in the social sciences and humanities to reflect an awareness of America's cultural pluralism in their research, it is *expected* that they will. The university is a different place because scholars and academic administrators came to recognize the breadth and depth of America's cultural diversity and accepted the notion that both academia and the

whole of American society would benefit from ensuring that the university reflected that diversity.

Of course, Black Studies was not solely responsible for that change in institutional perspective. But it played a big part. As an extension of the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Studies movement was a lever for institutional change. Black Studies was a focal point for pressure on universities to increase the presence of African Americans on campus. The rapid proliferation of Black Studies programs inspired women, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian Americans and others to demand similar programs to address their cultural history and concerns; it provided, as well, a model for establishing and organizing those programs. And despite heated debates over the question of whether Black Studies is a legitimate academic discipline, scholars in Black Studies programs have produced a substantial body of research and analysis. As Darlene Clark Hine noted in her examination of Black Studies programs for the Ford Foundation:

[O]ne fact deserves underscoring. Black Studies departments and their faculties have proven to be a continuing source of intellectual stimulation on many American campuses. Black Studies has opened up vast and exciting new areas of scholarship, especially in American history and literature, and has spurred intellectual inquiry into diverse social problems affecting the lives of significant portions of the total population.⁶

Hine noted in her study that she found little evidence to support the justification of Black Studies by early proponents on grounds that the interdisciplinary nature of Black Studies break the confines of traditional

disciplines. "Actually, as far as I have been able to discern, most of the individual scholars in these programs and departments have published works that are very much in keeping with the mythological canons of the disciplines in which they were formally trained," Hine wrote.⁷ But even if Black Studies did not exactly break the traditional disciplinary mold and establish itself as a truly interdisciplinary field, it seems clear that the presence and scholarly production of Black Studies programs prodded scholars in the established, traditional disciplines to take more seriously the study of African American history and culture. Black Studies emerged in the first place because the traditional disciplines had largely ignored African Americans and African American culture. Thirty-five years later, scholars in the traditional disciplines count more African Americans among their numbers and regularly address African American culture in their research and scholarly writing. That is at least partly a result of the pressure brought to bear on academia by the Black Studies movement.

More than one commentator has observed that part of white America's willingness in the 1960s to respect and respond to the civil rights leadership of Martin Luther King Jr. was the recognition by whites that if they did not deal with the dignified and respectful demands of King, they might have to deal with the frightening and defiant anger represented by Malcolm X. Both men were intelligent, articulate and charismatic leaders who struggled to achieve freedom and justice for African Americans. Both were assassinated. Both are widely revered within the African American community. But while King is honored by a national holiday and his life and speeches are studied even in

predominantly white schools, Malcolm's stature still suffers, among whites, from the lingering image of his militancy, inflammatory rhetoric and association with separatist ideology.

To some extent, Black Studies has played the role of Malcolm in the academic world. The militants did not achieve the revolution they set out to ignite. The programs they got established have struggled for three decades to achieve acceptance and respect — not to mention budgetary support — within the university. Black Studies programs were forever tarnished in the minds of many by the manner and tone of the political conflict that led to their creation, and by the ideological excesses of their most radical advocates. But all the while, the fundamental tenet of Black Studies — that African Americans and African American culture are worthy of serious scholarly study — has been increasingly absorbed by and reflected in the traditional academic disciplines.

Black Studies prodded the university to open its mind to a world and a world view that included African Americans. Once that door was pried open there was no going back; a mind once stretched to contain a new idea never returns to its former shape. An intellectual world that suddenly included African Americans quickly expanded to include women, Native Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans and others. Now it is even possible to consider, as Hollinger does, a society (and an academy) whose intellectual currents overflow even those expanded boundaries. It may not be the new world imagined by the activist black students who fought so hard for Black Studies so many years ago, but it is a new world nonetheless.

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