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Journal of African American Studies

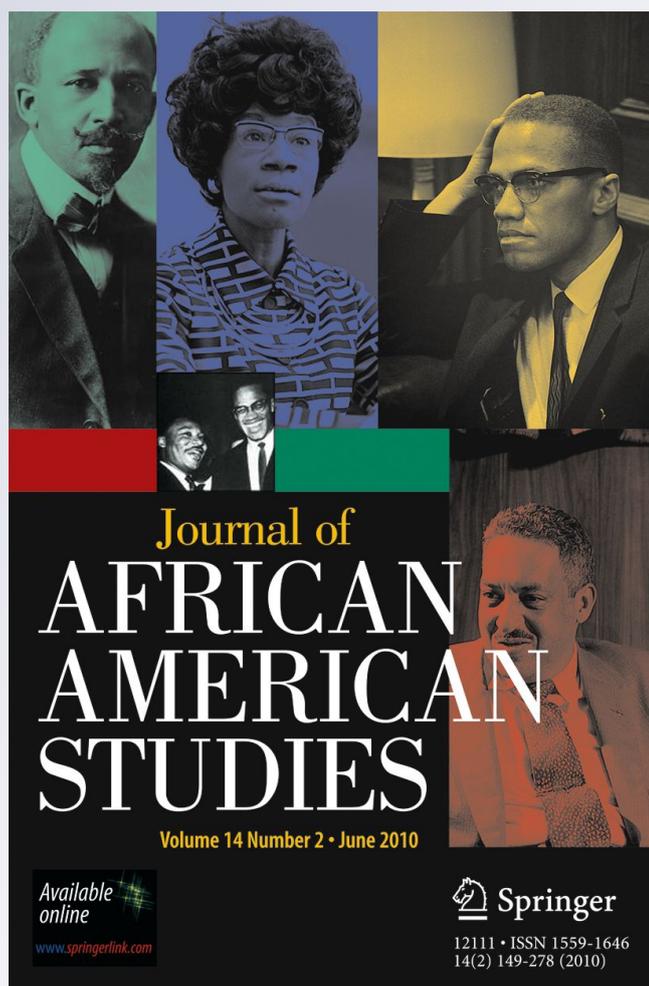
ISSN 1559-1646

Volume 16

Number 1

J Afr Am St (2012) 16:1-20

DOI 10.1007/s12111-011-9200-3



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Expanding the History of the Black Studies Movement: Some Prefatory Notes

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Published online: 11 November 2011
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Abstract With a beginning remarkably different than conventional academic disciplines, Black Studies emerged on the American college campus amidst Black Power protests and student demands. Now more than forty years old, Black Studies exists as an established discipline constituted by a robust scholarly discourse, an ever-expanding body of innovative interdisciplinary literature, hundreds of collegiate programs at the undergraduate level, a growing number of graduate and doctoral programs, and some of the world's most well-known intellectuals. This introduction—and special issue of the *Journal of African American Studies*—explores the origins and history of the Black Studies Movement in the United States. Our aim in this volume is to bring the political history to the forefront. Based on historical detail and deep archival research, the works ground the history of Black Studies in the radical Black politics of the late 1960s and 1970s, while emphasizing local materiality and ideological developments. The contributions in this special issue recover some of the names (and faces) of Black Studies' founders, offering a range of perspectives on the movement to establish the field both within and without the American academy.

Keywords Black Studies · African-American Studies · Africana Studies · African Diaspora Studies · Black Power Movement · Black Student Movement · Black Campus Movement · Student protest · Student activism · 1960s · Black Radicalism · Black Colleges

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As the discipline of Black/Africana Studies continues to evolve, it is appropriate to fix a focused gaze on the past as a means to provide guidance in confronting contemporary issues and identifying and pursuing future possibilities.¹ During the first two weeks of May 1968, three noteworthy events occurred in the political and developmental history of Black Studies in the United States. These events underscore the discipline's unique emergence and history. The first occurred on the 4th of Saturday, when some 90-plus Black students at Northwestern University successfully exited the Bursar's Building, which they had occupied for almost forty hours. The occupation, spearheaded by For Members Only (FMO) and the Afro-American Student Union (AASU)—the respective Black undergraduate and graduate student groups at the university—was well-organized and, from the administration's perspective, unexpected. The event garnered local (and national) media attention and ignited the subsequent occupation of the office of the vice president and dean of students by supportive White radical students, including members of Northwestern's chapter of Students for Democratic Society. In the weeks leading up to the demonstration, Black students lobbied for extensive changes in university policies in the areas of admissions, financial aid, student housing, curriculum, counseling, student facilities, and Northwestern's practice of de facto segregation in the surrounding community of Evanston. The takeover of the university's central business office effectively dramatized the Black students' rift with a recalcitrant White administration which had, up until that point, been unreceptive to the students' call to improve the university by systematically dealing with its institutionalized forms of racism both on and off campus. As evidenced by the takeover of the building, the peaceful statements and cordial petitions of the previous month had given way to demands. Black students duly warned Northwestern administrators that, "If our demands are impossible, then peace between us is impossible too." As they successfully exited the building, Northwestern's insurgent Black students expressed "solidarity" with Columbia University's Student's Afro-American Society (SAS) and the Barnard Organization of Soul Sisters (BOSS), who were also embroiled in their own rebellion in Harlem. Thus, students used their successful protest, taking place just north of Chicago, to effectively amplify and corroborate the efforts of another student demonstration unfolding in New York City—an early signal of the broad geographic push for change that would develop (Harsh 1968a, b, c, d; Waters 1968a, b; Bourdreaux 1968; Northwestern University Black Students 1970; Black Student Statement and Petition to Northwestern 1968; *Daily Northwestern* 1968).

Just five days after Black students at Northwestern successfully forced the administration to cede to several of their demands—one of which called for curriculum changes through the establishment of Black Studies courses—the Yale University campus in New Haven, Connecticut would be the site for a different kind of event orchestrated by Black students. On May 9 and 10, the Black Student

¹ Throughout this volume the contributors use a variety of different terms to refer to the discipline of Black/Africana Studies. These include but are not limited to Africana Studies, Black Studies, Afro-American Studies, African-American Studies, African Diaspora Studies, and so forth and so on. As editors, we acknowledge this variety and recognize the importance of the debate regarding nomenclature. And though we use the terms interchangeably in this volume, we encourage scholars interested in this debate to see the special issue of the *Journal of Black Studies* edited by Patricia Reid-Merritt of Richard Stockton College of New Jersey (Reid-Merritt 2009).

Alliance (BSA) at Yale welcomed an audience of predominantly White educational powerbrokers, university administrators, and a small handful of Black activist-scholars to their 2-day symposium, titled “Black Studies in the University.” In their correspondence with Yale administrators, BSA members pitched the event as “an educational experience for professional educators” (Robinson Papers 1968a). Without directly alluding to the rash of protests breaking out on America’s college campuses, BSA members reassured the administration that “measures are being taken to insure the maintenance of [a] completely free and open atmosphere.”² Critical to this effort was the BSA’s guarantee that “there will be no large scale student participation” (Robinson Papers 1968b). And in fact, there was not (Fig. 1). With about 100 predominantly White representatives of some 35 colleges, universities, and K-12 public school systems in the audience, conference speakers grappled with “the essential intellectual objection to Black Studies, namely, whether such studies are valid, academically responsible, and intellectually defensible” (Robinson Papers 1968a).³ Although the original list of speakers was set to include renowned sociologist St. Clair Drake, Vincent Harding of the Institute of the Black World, and *Black Power: the Politics of Liberation’s* co-author Charles Hamilton, the final lineup consisted of a small handful of Black Studies radicals (including Abdul Alkalimat, Maulana Karenga, and Nathan Hare), Harvard’s quasi-conservative Martin Kilson, the Ford Foundation’s McGeorge Bundy and the University’s own academic byproducts—Robert Thompson and Sidney Mintz, among others (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967; Robinson et al. 1969).⁴ While often referred to as ground zero for the Ford Foundation’s lengthy and costly role in domesticating Black Studies, the symposium would also prove to be a highly visible

² This use of the word “insure” could easily be replaced with “ensure,” as in “to make certain,” “guarantee” or “to secure someone or protect against.” It could be argued that BSA organizers were *guaranteeing* the administration that there would be no large student protests or problems during the course of the symposium. The BSA representatives were *securing* the administration and the university from the type of Black Student unrest that had characterized so many campuses, and been a cornerstone of the Black Studies Movement.

³ The invited list of attendees included administrators and/or representatives from: Albertus Magnus, Amherst, Barnard, Bennington, Boston, Brandeis, Brown, Bryn Mawr, Bowie State, Cheyney State College, City College of New York, Columbia, Connecticut College for Women, University of Connecticut, Cornell, Dartmouth, Fairfield, Hampton, Harvard, Haverford, John Hopkins, Howard, Hunter, Lincoln, Long Island, Maryland State, University of Maryland, MIT, University of Massachusetts, Morgan State, Mount Holyoke, New Haven College, Pembroke, New York University, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, Quinnipiac, Radcliffe, Rutgers, Sarah Lawrence, Simmons, Smith, Southern Connecticut College, Swarthmore, Temple, Tufts, Vassar, Virginia Union, George Washington, Wesleyan, Williams, State University of New York, and administrators from D.C. Public Schools (Robinson Papers 1968c).

⁴ In terms of his politics and intellectual posture, Martin Kilson could probably be better described as someone who vacillates between “Black liberalism” and “Black conservatism,” using the definitions described by Michael Dawson (Dawson 2001). Nevertheless, on the issue of Black Studies, Kilson initially took a conservative position, aligning himself with Bayard Rustin, A Phillip Randolph, Kenneth Clarke, and Roy Wilkins, who once argued “Black Study [sic] programs in the schools about our Negro ancestors is a lot of nonsense” (New York Times 1969b). Though Kilson did not adopt the same extreme right-wing position as Wilkins (who also vacillated on the topic), he could hardly be described as an early advocate for Black Studies or radical Black student protest. Ironically, in more recent times, Kilson has become more of an outright supporter of African-American Studies and, surprisingly enough, a vociferous critic of his departmental colleague Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

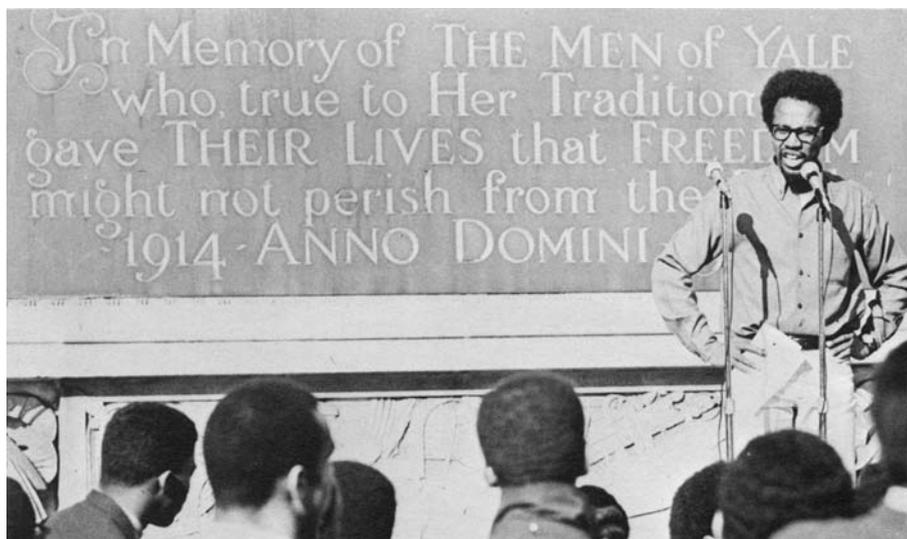


Fig. 1 Armstead Robinson, one of several key organizers of the “Black Studies in the University” Symposium, addresses fellow members of the Black Student Alliance at Yale (BSAY) 1969. Yale Classbook. Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University

starting point for the dual program model in Black Studies (Rooks 2006).⁵ During the conference, Yale administrators and members of the BSA voted to approve the first Black Studies program that required students to plant their academic roots in a traditional discipline as a way of supplementing (or legitimizing) a course of study in the African-American experience (Lukas 1968; Borders 1968; Hechinger 1968; Henry 1968; Linden 1968; Darnton 1969). Heralded as a great success by several college administrators and major newspapers, the two days at Yale gave birth to an institutional model for Black Studies and was seen as a more “sophisticated” way to deal with Black student concerns, via “civil discourse” and “enlightened liberal exchange.” As one of Yale’s book editors would later put it, “One of the reasons for Yale’s relative freedom from student disruption has been the administration’s recognition of areas of possible discontent and its willingness to encourage open discussion of problems before they become issues” (Robinson Papers 1969d). The

⁵ During the Ford Foundation’s first wave of grants in support of Black Studies, Yale received the second largest grant of some \$184,400, which partially came as a result of the personal relationship and rapport that Robinson had cultivated with Bundy during the symposium and through several correspondences the subsequent year (Robinson Papers 1969a, b, c). And one can be certain that the conference played no small part in shaping the decision of Bundy and the Ford Foundation. The largest grant of \$315,500 went to the graduate program at the Atlanta University Center, under the helm of Richard Long. This was to offset the more radical agenda put forth by Gerald McWhorter, then a sociologist at Spelman College, and the Black students that had taken the Board of Trustees hostage at Morehouse during April of 1969. While McWhorter was also part of the early planning of IBW, who received a smaller Ford grant of \$100,000, Vincent Harding and Stephen Henderson (two key figures in the formation of IBW) were forced to part ways with the radical sociologist or watch the Institute have a stillbirth as a result of pressure from the Atlanta University Center administrators, Trustee members and the King Family (See Britton 1969; Rojas 2007, 137; Ford Foundation 2007; New York Times 1969a, b; also see White in this volume).

New York Times (1969a, b) would echo this sentiment and add to the ballyhoo with a front-page article that declared:

Unlike some other universities where Negro students' demands have led to open confrontations with the administrations, and sometimes to violence, Yale has been carrying on a quiet, unpublicized dialogue with its Negro students and the symposium was the first result (Lukas 1968).

Indeed, at its outset, Black Studies at Yale was deemed exceptional, and the BSA's Symposium on "Black Studies in the University"—which was eventually published by Yale University Press—was granted a special (though perhaps overstated) place in the developmental history of the fledgling discipline (Robinson et al. 1969).

The same weekend of the Yale Symposium, *Jet*, a cornerstone of the Black counter-public, issued a "Special Report On Student Unrest At Black Colleges." The dramatic cover of the May 9th issue of the magazine boldly read, "Black Students Revolt!" In the overall history of Black Studies, the appearance of this volume of *Jet* was far less important than the two preceding events. However, by drawing our attention to the heightened political activity of Black students at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), the *Jet* article reveals (and helps us to recover) significant historical precursors to the conventional narrative that begins with the emergence of Black Studies at historically White campuses. The article chronicled Black student rebellions at Howard, South Carolina State, Texas Southern, Cheyney State (PA), Bowie State (MD), Tuskegee (AL), Virginia Union, Kentucky State, and Shaw (NC)—all of which occurred prior to the events at Northwestern and Yale. Black students at the HBCUs were insisting upon changes in everything from restrictions in student life, inequitable state funding practices, and lack of representation on policy-making boards. They also called for service-learning opportunities, improved campus facilities (including student housing), teacher evaluations, extended library hours, representation on judicial committees, policy changes in regard to campus speakers, and an end to standardized testing and compulsory ROTC. And of course, one of the recurring demands called for changes in the curriculum through the inclusion of courses on Black history and literature—or Black Studies (Morris 1968, 46–50).

These protests at the HBCUs also inspired the then budding sage Gil Scott-Heron to write the widely underappreciated novel, *The Nigger Factory* (Scott-Heron 1972). Written during the peak years of the rebellions, the book creatively captured the mood and political maneuvering of Black students struggling to change the conservative administrative restrictions over social activity, which was prevalent at many HBCUs. Like the fictive students in the novel, Black student protesters at Black colleges often faced suspensions, scholarship revocations, individual expulsions, mass expulsions (of the entire student body), and in the worst cases, violent repression doled out by state and local police. Perhaps the most interesting (and overlooked) aspect of the *Jet* article (and the history in general) is the emergence of what writer Steven Morris referred to as "Inter-Campus Black Unions," which were intercollegiate student organizations formed by Black students across various colleges and universities (and high schools in some instances) in a particular state. Morris' examples included the Black Unity League of Kentucky—which tied together movements for Black Studies at Kentucky State, University of

Kentucky and University of Louisville—and similar groups in North Carolina (the Grassroots Association of Students) and South Carolina (the Black Awareness Coordinating Committee) (Morris 1968, 50). While all of these groups were animated by immediate localized issues they were also, for the most part, bound together by a common call for Black Studies courses, among other things.

Taken together, these three occurrences in the first two weeks of May 1968 provide us an opportunity to interrogate the unique (and complicated) emergence of Black Studies in American higher education. Drawing on the work of Paul Zeleza, and articulating one of the larger aims of this special issue of the *Journal of African American Studies* (JAAS), we contend that the discipline's history can be understood through a series of *moments*, *models*, and *entanglements* (Zeleza 2009). Moments refer to pivotal historical instances (junctures or events) that epitomize a critical aspect of this history. As the opening example makes plain, the student takeover of the Bursar building at Northwestern typified Black student protest in the late 1960s on American college campuses. It is this lasting iconography of Black student protests and building occupations that stands as the dominant narrative of Black Studies' birth (Fig. 2). The Yale Symposium, however, was not characteristic of the kind of Black student protest that fits the dominant narrative of Black Studies' genesis. Nevertheless, out of the Yale Symposium emerged a dual degree model of Black Studies, which remains with us today in the joint doctoral degree programs of Yale's Department of African American Studies and Harvard's Department of African and African-American Studies. The logic of this Yale model required all intellectual work in Black Studies to be anchored in a traditional discipline (i.e.,



Fig. 2 Cornell University's Afro-American Society, led here by Edward Whitfield (*front right*) and Eric Evans (*front left*), stride across the Arts Quad after leaving Willard Straight Hall, which they had occupied for nearly a day and a half (20 April 1969). Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library

History, English, Politics, Sociology, etc.). In this sense, models reference institutional arrangements, programmatic structures, and designs for courses of study in the discipline, all of which reflect a particular vision of Black Studies as an intellectual project.

The notion of entanglements has several functions in this volume. Picking up on the *Jet* magazine article, one meaning of entanglement refers to the way Black student groups at any particular campus saw their fate (and the fate of their institution) tied to that of other Black student groups. This becomes evident in the examples of the inter-campus Black Unions emanating from HBCUs; and Northwestern Black students' expression of "solidarity" with Columbia's SAS and BOSS. The idea of entanglements also draws our attention to those instances when the Black student movement in a particular area was propelled by a set of interwoven student bodies clustered in close proximity. Such was the case in the Five College areas of Western Massachusetts, when Black (and progressive) students from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst College, Smith College, Hampshire College, and Mount Holyoke College leveraged support from one another, formed coalitions and protested in solidarity on each other's respective campuses—leading to a unique Five College Black Studies experiment. Similar entanglements emerged in North Carolina between students in Greensboro, Raleigh, Chapel Hill, and Durham (at UNC-Greensboro, UNC-Chapel Hill, Duke, Bennett & North Carolina A&T); and in South Carolina at South Carolina State and Claflin College (Figs. 3 and 4). There were also a number of instances when these Black student entanglements included local Black high school and junior high students—as was the case of Southwest College, California State Dominguez Hills, and Carver Junior High in Los Angeles (Weekly Bull 1969a, b).

The push for Black Studies was also tied to, or entangled with, other progressive (and radical) social solidarity issues, including worker's rights, desegregation, anti-war, anti-militarism, and peace movement activism. For example, Northwestern's FMO and AASU made demands for Black Studies courses and changes in the University's segregationist practices in the community of Evanston (Bracey et al. 1970; Black Student Statement and Petition to Northwestern 1968). At Tuskegee, Black students in a group called "Unity" demonstrated for "a Black University" and worked to untether American higher education from the military industrial complex by calling for an end to compulsory ROTC (Turner 2010; Morris 1968). Similarly Columbia's SAS fought for a Black Studies institute and an end to university dealings with the Institute for Defense Analysis and other American intelligence agencies, like the CIA (Bradley 2009). Members of UNCG's Neo-Black Society worked to establish Black Studies courses and participated in the food service workers strike against the privately contracted ARA-Slater food provider on-campus (Fisher 1968; Ferguson Papers 1969; Morgan 1969). Rutgers' Student Afro-American Society insisted on a "Black Experience Course" and a raise to a \$100 a week minimum wage for all full-time employees at the university (McCormick 1990). And even James Garrett, the head of one of the nation's first Black Student Unions at San Francisco State College in 1966, consciously made connections to the labor movement when he envisioned the modern Black student organization closely resembling a workers union, consisting of Black "students, faculty, security people, buildings and grounds landscapers, gardeners, [and] maids who worked the dorms" (Rogers 2009, 35). In sum, Black students understood the push for Black Studies to



Fig. 3 Black women students in North Carolina protest in solidarity with fellow students at Duke and other colleges in the vicinity (1969). University Archives and Manuscripts of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

be inherently tied to other social justice issues, particularly those related to the political struggles of Black and “Third World” people.⁶

Of course, some might argue that this idea of entanglements really obscures the aims of the larger movement for, what Stefan Bradley calls, “Black Student Power,” by making Black Studies the central issue, when in fact, Black Studies was only part and parcel of this broader movement (Bradley 2009). The establishment of Black Studies courses was usually one demand on a list of many put forth by Black students. Indeed Black Studies was not the be-all and end-all of Black student participation in the Black Power Movement. Still, there is particular value in returning to these broader aims on behalf of Black students, when thinking specifically about the history of the Black

⁶ In his autobiography, titled *My Life With SDS and the Weathermen Underground*, Mark Rudd recalls a speech given by William Sales—one of the leaders of Columbia’s SAS—that perfectly encapsulates the last meaning of entanglement used here. In one of the chapters discussing the student occupation of Columbia, Rudd recalls Sales saying, “If you’re talking about revolution, if you are talking about identifying with the Vietnamese struggle...you don’t need to go marching downtown. There’s one oppressor—in the White House, in Low Library, in Albany, New York. To strike a blow at the gym, you strike a blow for the Vietnamese people...You strike a blow at the gym and you strike a blow against the assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. You strike a blow at Low Library and you strike a blow for the freedom fighters in Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea, and Zimbabwe, South Africa” (Rudd 2009, 63).

Fig. 4 Black women students in North Carolina March for “more Power to Black students” at UNC, Duke, UNCG and other colleges in the vicinity (1969). University Archives and Manuscripts of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro



Studies project. These historical examples of entanglement are useful in helping us consider Black Studies’ intrinsic relationship to today’s political issues such as the struggle around collective bargaining rights in the Midwest (and larger U.S.), mass incarceration, the American empire’s dependency on the economy of war, unbridled “accumulation by dispossession,” privatization and destruction of the commons (i.e., natural resources—land, air, water, etc.), and the emergent nativist, anti-immigration laws—especially Arizona’s SB 1070 that fuels the anti-Ethnic Studies bill (HB 2281), and the federal Secure Communities Program (Harvey 2003).⁷ They remind us of the

⁷ For an excellent discussion of the Arizona Senate Bill 1070, House Bill 2281 and their dire consequences for racialized minority populations and Black (and Ethnic) Studies see the special issue of the *Black Scholar* titled “Defending Ethnic Studies in Arizona” edited by Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua, the current president of the National Council for Black Studies (Cha-Jua 2010). For a good discussion of mass incarceration—which “refers not only to the criminal justice system but also to the larger web of laws, rules, policies, and customs that control those labeled criminals both in and out of prisons”—see (Alexander 2010, 13).

inherently political nature of Black Studies, and force us to engage with the “movement” and “activist” dimensions of the history. These aspects of the Black Studies project are often overlooked when scholars sublimate the history into an academic enterprise in toto, or place it squarely in a longer intellectual genealogy tracing back to previous epochs in African world history; thereby reducing and/or recasting Black Studies’ initial (and *sui generis*) rationale for existence.⁸ Such scholarly moves—even when they are intellectually sound—tend to divorce Black Studies from its Black radical origins and subversive leanings.

Contents, Contributions, and Interventions

Instead of decoupling Black Studies from the broader movement politics, our aim in this volume is to bring the political history to the forefront and ground the history of Black Studies in the radical Black politics of the late 1960s and 1970s, while emphasizing local materiality and ideological developments, based on historical detail and deep archival research. The contributions in this special issue recover some of the names (and faces) of Black Studies’ founders, offering a range of perspectives on the movement to establish the field both within and without the American academy. The articles tell the stories of the students who struggled to democratize American higher education and remake the American political landscape to reflect a more just order. Taken in its entirety, the volume complicates, complements and, in some instances, contradicts the recycled narrative that Black Studies moved from “protest to program to department” on each and every campus. This special issue also seeks to capture the ways that Black students theorized education as a fundamental right, and potentially redefined other American institutions by emphasizing progress, reform and, in many instances, radical change. Far from being in universal agreement, the articles in this collection reveal a number of contested and perhaps discrepant points, while also divulging a common group of national players, whose impact on the intellectual and institutional trajectory of Black Studies extended beyond their respective campuses. In this way, the articles begin to outline the major figures in what we should understand and refer to as “the Black Studies Movement,” which was constituted by a collective discourse, common ground, shared strategies, and broad Black student initiative to establish Black Studies courses and an eventual network of individuals, programs, departments, institutes (and various other academic units), cultural and community centers, and activist outposts. In its most basic sense, the Black Studies Movement was part of the scaffolding of the larger Black Power Movement; the former being the fruit of Black Power’s engagement with the American campus and its drive to remake American education.

Ibram Roger’s article paints a broad national picture of what he refers to as “the institutionalization of Black Studies.” Utilizing a national lens allots Rogers’ room to make insightful assessments that escape scholars working within a case-by-case

⁸ For a discussion of the long intellectual genealogy approach to Africana Studies, see (Carr 2007, 2011). For a discussion of Black Studies as a solely academic enterprise, see (Marable 1998).

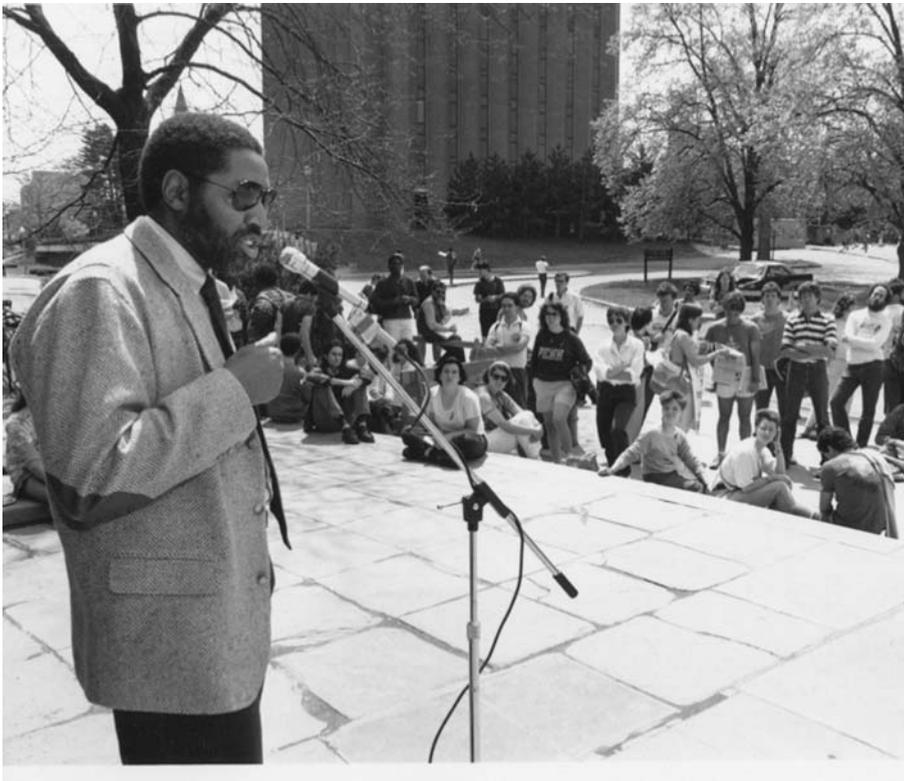


Fig. 5 William Strickland, a key member of the Institute of the Black World, addresses a rally at the University of Massachusetts, where he would also become a pivotal faculty member of the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro American Studies (date unknown). Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst

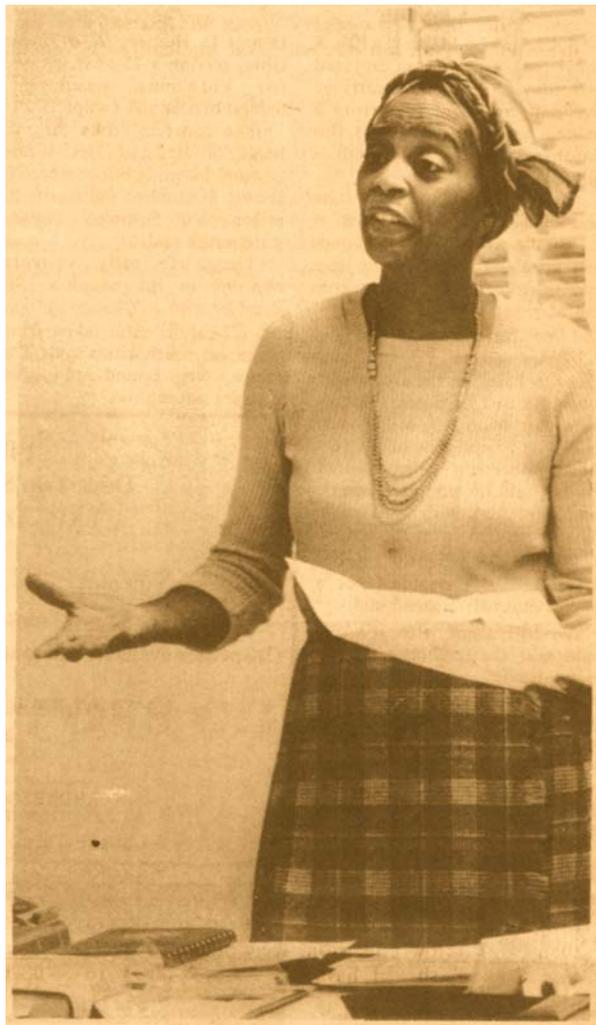
framework. For example, the broader outline allows him to identify February 13, 1969 as “the most intense day of the Black Campus Movement as protests occurred in almost every region in the United States.” He refers to this day as “Diversity Thursday,” part of the spring 1969 climax semester in the movement. The national unit of analysis also obliges him to account for the establishment of key Black Studies journals, like *The Black Scholar* and *The Journal of Black Studies*, which added to the discipline’s activist stature, academic legitimacy, and institutional longevity. Lastly, Roger’s article jogs our memory of a rarely discussed *arrière-garde* that caused considerable birth pangs for Black Studies, including Bayard Rustin, Kenneth Clarke, and Roy Wilkins, who he describes as “the major Black antagonist” of the Black Studies Movement. Joined by several others, the major contentions of this group appeared in a small volume titled *Black Studies: Myths & Realities*, which was subsidized by the A Phillip Randolph Institute (1969).⁹ Incorporating both

⁹ While most of the individuals who published in this volume did not oppose the establishment of Black Studies, they did openly resist Black student demands for Black dorms, Black cultural centers, and anything that could be perceived as “reverse segregation.” Several members of this group, including Kilson, also argued that Black Studies was not a valid area of study on its own terms, and that students needed to twin a degree in Black Studies with a more conventional discipline.

supporters and adversaries of Black Studies, while also juggling examination of a considerable number of campus upheavals, building occupations, student demands, mass expulsions, conservative counterattacks, and instances of police brutality (and murder), Rogers takes the first stab at outlining a truly national movement.

Offering a glimpse of his recent monograph, *the Challenge of Blackness: The Institute of the Black World and Political Activism in the 1970s*, Derrick White explores the indispensable role played by the Institute of the Black World (IBW), and queries the activist-oriented think tank's role in the evaluation and early support of Black Studies (White 2011). White reminds the reader of the proximity of the think tank to the Atlanta University Center—another cluster site rich with historical significance for the Black Studies Movement—which employed Vincent Harding and Stephen Henderson, the institute's founding members. He challenges us to extend the history of Black Studies beyond the college campus and into the local

Fig. 6 Vivian Gordon, a sociologist and passionate advocate for Black Studies, lectures to her class. Gordon was one of the early directors of the University of Virginia's budding Afro-American Studies program (Circa 1975). Courtesy of the Cavalier Daily, the independent student newspaper of the University of Virginia



community, while also drawing our attention to national conferences and a host of international players. Rooted in Vine City, one of Atlanta's historically Black neighborhoods, IBW acted as an informal clearinghouse for Black Studies units emerging throughout the country. As its name suggests, the Institute of the Black World was also an international hub that attracted scholar activists from all over the world (Ward 2001; Strickland 2006; Grady-Willis 2006). As a result of what White describes as the institute's "pragmatic nationalism" and praxis of "collective scholarship," students, activists, and scholars of various ideological and political orientations saw IBW as a training ground, site of scholarly production, and important locus of radical activity. Drawing from several archives and primary sources, White presents a compelling assessment of IBW's place at the heart of the early history of Black Studies (Fig. 5).

The contributors in this volume also raise queries regarding chronology and locality. According to the work of both Rogers and White, the narrative of the Black Studies Movement should begin with HBCUs. Both authors place HBCUs squarely at the center of their essays. White laments the fact that, "research on the history of Black Studies has not paid significant attention to the field's origins at Historically Black Colleges and

Fig. 7 A more matured Armstead Robinson, during his days as the founding Director of the Carter G. Woodson Institute for African American and African Studies at the University of Virginia. He held this position and cultivated the Institute for more than a decade (date unknown). University of Virginia Visual History Collection, (RG-30/1/10.011) Special Collections, University of Virginia Library



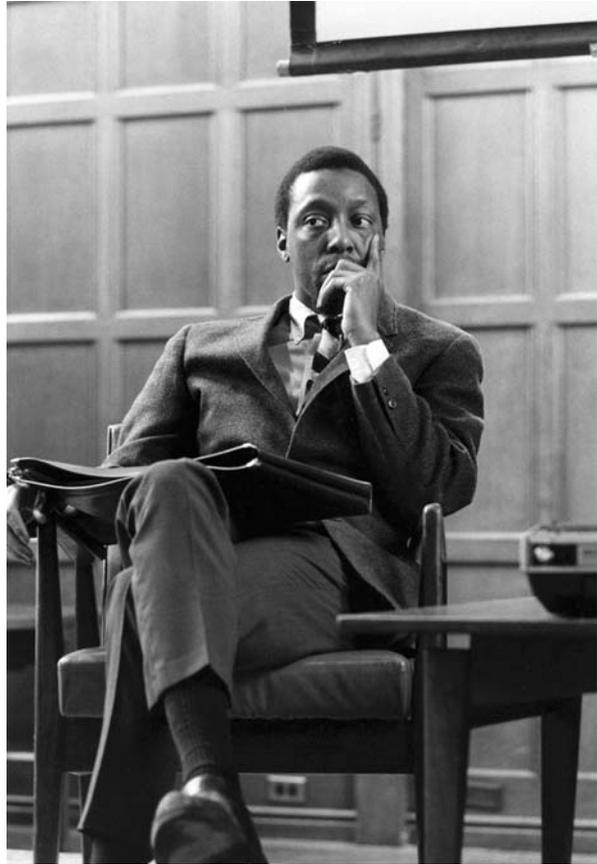
Universities.” Echoing the sentiments of White and building momentum for his forthcoming book—*The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965–1972*—Rogers troubles the idea of the San Francisco Bay Area as the epicenter of the Black Studies Movement. Pushing the chronology to as early as 1965, he begins with “on-and-off campus matters at Tuskegee, Howard, Southern, and a sit-in at Hampton in March.” If Rogers and White invite us to rethink the origins of the Black Studies Movement, others prompt us to come to terms with the anti-apartheid movement years of the 1980s as period of rejuvenated interest in Black Studies on the part of Black students.

Claudrena Harold offers the first institutional history of a struggle that eventually led to the establishment of the Carter G. Woodson Institute for African American and African Studies in 1981. Harold’s work is innovative in several ways. First, by perceptively drawing on one of Du Bois’ essays in *Souls of Black Folk*, she challenges us to think about Black Studies within regional contexts (Du Bois 1903). Using the South as her particular vantage point, she reminds us of the University of Virginia’s “reputation as one of the South’s most intellectually rigorous centers for research” and “its proximity to the nation’s capital,” effectively grounding her local story within a broader regional context. In addition, she utilizes the article to perform

Fig. 8 The Luther P. Jackson Cultural Center (LPJCC) and Office of African American Affairs at the University of Virginia. This building remains one of the major hubs for Black students on campus and is described by Claudrena Harold as, “an important *intellectual center* for the dissemination of information on the major figures and ideas associated with the ever-growing and increasingly diverse field of African American/Africana/Black Studies” (date unknown). University of Virginia Visual History Collection, (RG-30/1/10.011) Special Collections, University of Virginia Library



Fig. 9 James E. Turner, the founding Director of Cornell University's Africana Studies and Research Center. Turner was also a key organizer in the Afro American Student Union (the Black graduate organization), who along with students in For Members Only (the organization of Black undergraduates) orchestrated the May 1968 takeover of the Bursar's building at Northwestern University (1970). University Photography, Cornell University



an important act of recovery by successfully recuperating two figures that are often forgotten or overlooked in Black Studies scholarship—Vivian Gordon and Armstead Robinson (Figs. 6 and 7). Both individuals played integral roles in the Black Studies Movement, and remained engaged with the Black Studies project during the length of their professional and adult lives. In the same vein as the work of Harold, future acts of recuperation need to resituate pioneering individuals like Curtiss Porter of the University of Pittsburgh, Bertha Maxwell Roddy of the University of North Carolina, Rhett Jones of Brown University, Talmadge Anderson of Washington State University, Ewart Guinier of Harvard University, Johnella Butler of Smith College, and others in the history of Black Studies.¹⁰ Lastly, Harold's work nudges

¹⁰ This initiative is already being taken up and was the driving force behind a panel titled, "Towards A Radical Scholarly Praxis: Architects of the Black Studies Movement," at the Schomburg Center's conference titled "The State of African American and African Diaspora Studies: Methodology, Pedagogy, and Research," co-sponsored with the Institute for Research on the African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean (IRADAC) of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Participants included Claudrena Harold (UVA), Sonya Ramsey (UNC-Charlotte), Corey D.B. Walker (Brown), Jonathan Fenderson (Washington University in St. Louis), and Cheryl Hicks (UNC-Charlotte), who acted as chair.

Fig. 10 Bernard Bell was among a handful of Black graduate students in English at the University of Massachusetts Amherst who participated in the discussions among undergraduate students, faculty, and administrators that led to the establishment of the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies. Instead of taking a position in the fledgling department, Bell opted for a tenure-track assistant professor position in English (date unknown). Special Collections and Archives, W.E. B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst



us to begin to think about the institutional histories of Black Studies beyond the department, program, or established academic unit. Towards the end of her article, she respectfully turns her lens away from the Woodson Institute—the recognized academic unit for Black Studies at the University of Virginia—and draws our attention to the student-oriented Office of African American Affairs and the Luther P. Jackson Cultural Center, which she describes as “an important *intellectual center* for the dissemination of information on the major figures and ideas associated with the ever-growing and increasingly diverse field of African American/Africana/Black Studies” (Fig. 8). Harold’s goal is not to downplay the Woodson Institute, in which she is currently a key faculty member, but instead to account for the multidirectional flow of ideas. She shows how Black Studies units can be thought of as nodules in a larger network of Black student life and Black intellectual activity on campus.¹¹

Bringing the method of oral history to bear upon the origins of Black Studies, Candace Katungi and Jonathan Fenderson offer an extensive interview with James Turner, the founder of Cornell University’s Africana Studies and Research Center. The exchange not only explores the contours of Turner’s remarkable activist and professional life in relation to Black Studies, but it also grants insight into the ways a

¹¹ A similar observation could be made about the larger Black Studies project at Cornell University which would not only include the Africana Studies and Research Center as ground zero, but would also include the Ujamaa Residential College and Wari House (on campus), and the Ithaca Southside Community Center (off-campus).

Fig. 11 Ekwueme Michael Thelwell was the founding chairman of the Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and has remained a faculty member ever since. Thelwell, who was a member of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), was at home and comfortable in the activist environment of the early Black Studies Movement (date unknown). Special Collections and Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst



number of young Black students nurtured and refined Black Studies deep into their respective individual lives, eventually helping it become the established discipline and robust discourse that exists today (Fig. 9). Aside from addressing what Katungi and Fenderson believed to be a sparse body of scholarship on the invaluable contributions of James Turner, the motive behind this interview was to encourage similar projects in the future.¹² When one thinks of active Black Studies advocates like William “Nick” Nelson, Abdul Alkalimat, Barbara Smith, Vincent Harding, Delores Aldridge, Nathan Hare, Shirley Weber, Robert Chrisman, Sonia Sanchez, Amiri Baraka, William Sales, and others, it becomes apparent that there is a wealth of living history in our midst. If we are ever to arrive at a solid history of the Black Studies Movement, oral history interviews will play a critical role in this scholarship.

Written in the spirit of such individual accounts, which however, are not to be mistaken as definitive or exhaustive histories, Bernard Bell’s piece is a personal recollection and a provocative taste of his forthcoming memoir. In it, he reflects upon his role in the formation of the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass) (Fig. 10). As part of a

¹² Scot Brown is currently working on an edited volume of James Turner’s writings, along with Kimberlé Crenshaw. The book is tentatively titled, *To Free Your Mind: James Turner and the Struggle for Africana Studies*, and is forthcoming on Diasporic Africa Press. There is no doubt that this book will prove to be an extremely timely and indispensable work on one of the chief architects of the discipline.

dialogue with Ernest Allen's extraordinary documentary *Look Back and Wonder: the Rise of Black Studies at the University of Massachusetts*, Bell's work gestures toward a complex historical formation that is going to require even more historical analysis and deeper scholarly assessment in the future (Allen 2008). And as Bell points out, this future research must engage the ways UMass' Du Bois Department is historically intertwined with Black Studies at other sites in the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts. Indeed this richer, more complex history will certainly deepen and, perhaps even, challenge the story that Bell provides here. Most importantly, future research on Black Studies in the Five College area will reveal the multiple narratives of what may be one of the more energetic and inventive sites for Black Studies in the United States. Gesturing towards this complex history, which is constituted by multiple narratives, and in the spirit of healthy debate, collegial exchange, and intertextual banter, the editors have also included Michael Thelwell's critical rejoinder to Bell's work. Along with Esther Terry, Thelwell remains a key player in the memories Bell reconstructs here in this volume. Needless to say, the contribution of Thelwell—someone who has been a part of the Black Studies project since its earliest days—amplifies this issue of the *Journal of African American Studies* and makes it all the more “special” (Fig. 11).

Finally, in the spirit of collegiality and sound (collective) scholarship, we felt it important to acknowledge (and engage) the extant and ever expanding body of literature focused on the history of the Black Studies project. While the books by Fabio Rojas and Noliwe Rooks are perhaps the most popular as a result of their provocative assertions, scholars interested in this area should also draw inspiration from the works of Joy Ann Williamson, Wayne Glasker, Jeffrey Turner, Richard McCormick, Lewis and Jane Gordon, and Stefan Bradley—whose recently published book, *Harlem vs. Columbia*, is reviewed in this special issue by Jasmin Young—and the ongoing “Documentary History of Black Studies” project being led by Abdul Alkalimat (Williamson 2003, 2008; Glasker 2002; Turner 2010; McCormick 1990; Gordon and Gordon 2006; Bradley 2009; Rooks 2006; Rojas 2007).

Enjoy!

In honor of Ron Walters, Manning Marable, Gil Scott-Heron, Talmadge Anderson and Queen Nzinga Ratibisha Heru, who—each in their own way—struggled to bring greater clarity to the world and improve the lives of (Black) people.

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