

AWIS
Lecture
Series

The Falsification of Afrikan Consciousness

Eurocentric History,
Psychiatry and the
Politics of
White Supremacy

Amos N. Wilson

Author of Black-on-Black Violence



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Black-on-Black Violence: *The Psychodynamics of Black Self-Annihilation in Service of White Domination*

Awakening the Natural Genius of Black Children

Understanding Black Adolescent Male Violence

About the Author

Professor AMOS N. WILSON is a former social case worker, supervising probation officer, psychological counselor, training administrator in the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice, and Assistant Professor of Psychology at the City University of New York. He is currently adjunct Professor of Psychology at The School of New Resources, College of New Rochelle, Co-op City Campus, Bronx, New York.

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Editor's Note:

The lecture, *European Historiography and Oppression Exposed: An Afrikan Analysis and Perspective*, is part of a presentation by the author at Afrikan Echoes, a community-based cultural institution located in Newark, New Jersey, on February 5, 1989. The second lecture, *Eurocentric Political Dogmatism: Its Relationship to the Mental Health Diagnosis of Afrikan People*, a sterling critique of the criminal justice and mental health establishments, was delivered at Harlem Hospital on January 15, 1985.

From time to time, attendees at the aforementioned lectures and others within their resonances have asked whether they are available in print. Ably assisted by Adisa Makalani and Ralph King, these requests have been honored whereby these trenchant lectures have now been transcribed, edited, indexed, and readied for dissemination.

We at Afrikan World InfoSystems feel esteemed by your requests, inquiries and patronage, not to mention letters of suggestion and commendation — especially from our kin locked away within walls of incarceration. Encouraged by these communications we forge ahead, inducting, ever expanding the domain of discourse, providing insight and foresight to those seeking enlightenment and liberation.

Sababu N. Plata

Introduction

THE PSYCHOLOGY, CONSCIOUSNESS and behavioral tendencies of individuals and societies are to a very significant extent the products of their personal and collective histories. Both personal and collective psychology are constructed from those experiences which can be consciously retrieved from memory as well as those experiences which have been forgotten or repressed but which still represent themselves in individual and collective habits, tendencies, traditions, emotional responsiveness, perspectives, ways of processing information, attitudes and reflex-like reactions to certain stimuli and situations. Both types of experiences interacting with current perceptions are utilized by individuals and groups to achieve certain material and non-material ends.

The psychology of individuals and groups may also, in part, be constructed from "historical and experiential amnesia". That is, when an individual or a group is compelled by various circumstances to repress important segments of his or its formative history he or it at the same time loses access to crucially important social, intellectual and technical skills associated with that history which could be used to resolve current problems. Consequently, to some lesser or greater degree, the individual or group may be handicapped or disadvantaged by the resulting amnesia. Finally, individual and group psychology are in part constructed from the perception he or it has of his or its history, the inferences drawn from that history about the kind of person or group he or it may be, what other persons or groups think of him or it, and the destiny that awaits him or it.

The character of individual and collective consciousness and the range of their behavioral possibilities and very significantly

influenced by the quality of their recordings and recollections of their historical experiences. To manipulate history is to manipulate consciousness; to manipulate consciousness is to manipulate possibilities; and to manipulate possibilities is to manipulate power.

Herein lies the mortal threat of Eurocentric historiography to Afrikan existence. For what must be the form and functionality of Afrikan consciousness and behavior if they are derivative of an Afrikan history written by their oppressors? The history of the oppressed, as written by their oppressors, shape the consciousness and psychology of both oppressed and oppressor. It helps to legitimate the oppressive system and to maintain the imbalance of power in favor of the oppressor. Eurocentric history writing is essentially an exercise in publishing apologetics for the European oppression of Afrikan peoples; often a gross and crude attempt to create and shape a subordinate and inferior Afrikan consciousness and psychology. It seeks to impose a social/historical/cultural amnesic tax on the heads of Afrikan peoples and thereby rob them of their most valuable resources — their knowledge of truth and reality of self; their cultural heritage and identity, minds, bodies, and souls; their wealth, lands, products of their labor and lives.

Eurocentric historiography is the most formidable ally of White racism and imperialism. Its treacherous role in this regard must be explored and reversed by an Afrikan-centered historiography written by Afrikan historians dedicated to historical accuracy and truth — historians who are unafraid to speak truth to power.

The clarion call for the writing of a restorative Afrikan-centered historiography — a critical undertaking — is a call for the healing of the wounds of Afrikan peoples; for Afrikan unity; for the freeing and expansion of Afrikan consciousness; for the reconquest of Afrikan minds, bodies, lands, resources, and Afrikan autonomy.

Every Eurocentric social institution conspires with Eurocentric historiography to handcuff and incarcerate Afrikan consciousness, to justify and facilitate the subordination and exploitation of Afrikan peoples.

One such institution is the Eurocentric mental health establishment.

A product and functionary of European imperialism this establishment promulgates explanatory systems, diagnostic techniques, labeling and treatment regimes which obscure the true origins of Afrikan mental *diseases* and maladaptiveness — the effects and aftereffects of White supremacy. By these means this establishment makes its most important contribution, along with Eurocentric historiography, to the falsification and misdirection of Afrikan consciousness and behavior.

In the context of a racist social system, psychological diagnosis, labeling and treatment of the behavior of politically oppressed persons are political acts performed to attain political ends. For oppression begins as a psychological fact and is in good part a psychological state. If oppression is to operate with maximum efficiency, it must become and remain a psychological condition achieving self-perpetuating motion by its own internal dynamics and by its own inertial momentum. ^{BET}

The Eurocentric mental health establishment, a beneficiary of the White domination of Afrikan peoples, is a very important cog in this self-perpetuating machine. Its reason for being is to nurture and sanction the imperialist and racist regime which fathered it. Thus its explanatory systems and its treatment approaches ultimately must be exposed as political ideology and oppressive political governance parading as empirically validated principles of psychological and medical science, and as “objective” psychotherapeutic and psychiatric practices. The Eurocentric mental health establishment consequently cannot provide adequate explanations, rationales, preventative and remedial practices for Afrikan peoples whose psychology is derivative of a singularly unique history and cultural experience and of a necessarily revolutionary drive to achieve liberation from subordination.

Definition Eurocentric historiography — the biasing and falsification of history in ways which justify White supremacy — is not merely the fiddle-faddle of absent-minded professors ensconced in academic ivory towers. It involves a deliberate and serious exercise in myth-making, in the development of Eurocentric

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cultural mythic thought which rationalizes a concrete social order founded on the perpetual subordination of Afrikan peoples to European peoples. Moreover, the Eurocentric social order, which the European historiographic and behavioral science establishments legitimate and support, is essentially a “social machine” which manufactures a consciousness and behavioral orientation in Afrikan peoples designed to serve the purposes of White supremacy. In this volume we begin an exploration of the working mechanisms of the machine and the means by which it is to be dismantled.

The healing of the collective Afrikan body, mind and spirit, the expansion of Afrikan consciousness, calls for the accelerated advancement of Afrikan-centered historiographic, social and natural sciences, the development of incisive critical disciplines which can make decisive contributions to the establishment of a new world social order in which all humanity are free of oppression and degradation.

It is our hope that the two lectures and the appended essay included herein will make positive contributions to this end.

Amos N. Wilson

PART ONE

**EUROPEAN HISTORIOGRAPHY
AND OPPRESSION EXPOSED**

An Afrikan Analysis and Perspective

I

AFTER LERONE BENNETT, JR. in his book, *Black Power U.S.A.*, reviewed [Black political] history and presented it so magnificently, I looked for the summary chapter which would tell us that what we had during Reconstruction was not *real* power. In fact, the name of the book is a misnomer. I was looking for him to say that the rights and the freedom of a people are not protected by law only. That, to me, seemed to be the lesson that was taught there: laws in and of themselves will not protect us; laws are words written on paper; laws protect no one.

Laws are no stronger than those who enforce them. President Rutherford B. Hayes taught us that lesson quite clearly. The day that the federal government decided not to enforce the Reconstruction laws, the so-called freedom of Black people came to an end. Laws were on the books, but who cared? The Supreme Court reneged in the 1870s and we were almost back where we started.

The Supreme Court can and does change its mind. It can rule one way at one point and reverse its ruling at another. Where does that leave us? We see it happening to us all the time. Ultimately, it means that we can only protect our rights and interests as people, not through laws written by other people and laws enforced by other people, but through the power to prevent other people from having their way with us. The emphasis, then, should be on the development of *true* power: military, economic and otherwise. That is our ultimate salvation.

If it arises at some point in the future that Whites have to make a decision between feeding their children and ours, irrespective of what kind of laws are on the books they are going to feed theirs and starve ours. We can apply to the Supreme

Court and anywhere else we choose, nevertheless, the situation will be exactly the way they wish it to be. Therefore, relying on laws — *new* Reconstruction laws — and promises almost exclusively are a very poor sort of salvation and assurance for our survival as a people. There is no way around it. We have to attain true and real power. This should be our goal. Allow me to indulge in a brief review of the first Reconstruction 1867-1877.

Progression and Regression in Reconstruction History^a

Many of us in Black Studies who are reconstructing history (the history of the United States) think that we are entering a new era in American history. We may think that the things we are witnessing today, i.e., the election of Blacks to political office and their appointments to various positions, their accomplishments in various corporations and so forth, are something new in American history. Yet the study of Reconstruction history should quickly convince us that we are currently undergoing *deja vu*.

Many of us view history as a continuing progression upward and onward. We have bought the American concept of progress: the idea that things must over time necessarily get better. There is no law in the universe that tells us our future survival is assured; that we will continue to exist now and into the future. There have been races and ethnic groups who have been virtually wiped out on this planet. There is no guarantee that our own group will not be wiped out as well. The idea that we must necessarily arrive at a point greater than that reached by our ancestors could possibly be an illusion. The idea that somehow according to some great universal principle we are going to be in a better condition than our ancestors is an illusion which often results from *not* studying history and recognizing that progressions and regressions occur; that integrations and disintegrations occur in history.

History is not a fairy tale wherein certain things are accomplished and people live happily ever after. Many of us think the accomplishments we have made up to this point mean that

we are only going to expand them in the future. We had better think about that again. I will point out today why we must not be so optimistic as to be foolish.

Let us go back for a moment to an article written in *Ebony* magazine, October 1981, wherein Lerone Bennett wrote (I think) his conclusion to his book *Black Power U.S.A.* When I finished reading that book, I felt that the last chapter was missing. It went on to laud Black Power during the Reconstruction era and so forth and yet, somehow, its logical conclusions weren't arrived at. The lessons that the book brought to mind were not expressed openly and completely. Consequently, I think some people would have been left with the wrong impression. But lo and behold he did write the final chapter, not within the book itself but in *Ebony* magazine under the front cover heading "The Second Reconstruction: Is History Repeating Itself?"

He titled the article, "The Second Time Around. Will History Repeat Itself and Rob Blacks of the Gains of 1960s?" So he's dealing with the issue again. We gained it [freedom] once and we lost it. Is there any law in the universe that says that we will not lose it again? He introduced the topic:

OVER.

It was, at long last, over and done with. How could anyone doubt it? How could anyone fail to see that the race problem had been solved forever?

One man who had no doubt said, "All distinctions founded upon race or color have been forever abolished in the United States."

Another who saw things this way said the category of race has been abolished by law and that "there [were] no more colored people in this country."

Thus spoke the dreamers and the prophets — and victims — in the first Reconstruction of the 1860s and the 1870s.

I don't think I have to elaborate on this kind of attitude. We run into too many youngsters today who say, "Oh, that was in slavery time. Oh, those were things we talked in the 1960s

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and 70s; we're in a new day now." We're not in a new day, ladies and gentlemen. The same words that we are saying today are the same words that people were saying over 100 years ago. Why are we in a new day saying the same thing that someone said 100 years ago? Bennett goes on to say:

Political History
Patterns

And it is worth emphasizing here, at the very beginning, that these flights into fantasy were based on the same "hard" facts that grip the imagination of Blacks in the second Reconstruction of the 1960s and 1970s. There was, for example, a Black man in the U.S. Senate in the 1870s and there was a Black governor in Louisiana. In the 1860s and the 1870s — as in the 1960s and 1970s — there were Black sheriffs and mayors in the South and there was open speculation about a Black vice presidential candidate. [So the Jesse Jackson run is not new in Black American history].

There was, moreover, a network of civil rights laws that seemed to settle the issue *beyond* all possibility of dispute or recall. (Emphasis mine)

There are so many of us who believe that fair housing laws, anti-discrimination laws, civil rights laws, voting laws and so forth, guarantee our freedom. That is an illusion. What a flight into fantasy!

Laws are no stronger than their enforcers. The same people who pass those laws are the same people who are responsible for enforcing them. If the people who enforce the laws no longer decide to do so, the laws are of no value and have no power. Ultimately, then, fairness rests not in laws but in the activities of people and in the attitude and consciousness of people. Therefore, if the people who are responsible for enforcing those laws change their attitudes then the treatment of those people whose freedom is protected by those so-called laws is changed as well.

We cannot put our faith in White man's law and the laws enforced by Whites. I have warned and it bears repeating that if there comes a day when the society has to make a choice between feeding White children and feeding Black children,

no amount of civil rights laws or any other laws on the books will prevent those people from feeding their children first. It is a silly faith we have in laws. For Black people in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s to still rest their freedom on the basis of laws when history itself shows us that this cannot be done, we must question our sanity and what we have learned from the study of our history.

Back there, 100 years ago there was a federal law protecting voting rights in the South — Does this all sound vaguely familiar? — and there was a national public accommodations act.

So the public accommodations law didn't begin with the freedom rides in the 1960s. We had those rights in the 1860s and 1870s as well.

Such, in broad outline, was the racial situation 100 years ago — in the 1860s and 1870s — when racism was “forever abolished” in America for the first time.

It was a short “forever.”

I'll just read other selected excerpts from Bennett's article.

As almost every schoolboy knows, the first Reconstruction ended in a major historical catastrophe that wiped out the gains of the 1860s. As a consequence, *it required 100 years and oceans of blood for Black people to climb back up to the political plateau they had occupied in 1860-70.*

So, as I stated earlier, history contains both progress and regress. However, regressing at this point in history will not be a situation where we will be able to fight the battle all over again. Regressing at this point in history essentially spells annihilation for Afrikans, not only in America but for Afrikans the world over.

For as I said in *Black Power U.S.A.*, and as DuBois said before me in *Black Reconstruction*, “Reconstruction in all of its various

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facets was the supreme lesson for America, the right reading of which might still mark a turning point in our history.”

The election of Black mayors and governors and our getting jobs in White corporations can in no way ensure the survival of Black people. We cannot make the progress of Black people synonymous with our qualifying for degrees and our getting jobs downtown. We must wake up to this because we’ve had this game played upon us before. Lerone Bennett mentions the founding of,

...a prototypical War on Poverty [from the 1860s-1870s] (the Freedman’s Bureau) and putting on the books civil rights laws which were in some instances stronger than civil laws passed in the 1960s and 1970s. In the wake of these events, there was an explosive growth in Black consciousness, and Blacks made many gains which surpassed, in many instances, the political gains Blacks made in the 1960s and 1970s.

* * * *

At one time, in fact, Black legislators were in the majority in the South Carolina legislature. In the same period, as in the comparable period in the 1960s and 1970s, poor Whites received social and economic benefits rich Whites had denied them.

Once we got in we were even good to poor White-folks. We set up school systems and whole lot of other things.^b I’ll conclude this portion by reading this:

Long discussions about the morals and educational equivocations of Blacks obscure the main point — power or the lack of power. The worst thing that can be said about some leaders of the Reconstruction period is that they did not seem to understand that the only issue was power.

We don’t talk about that issue very much today either; it seems to frighten many of us.

One final point is relevant to an understanding of the power realities of the social movements of both the first and second

Reconstructions. In both cases, social and political leaders failed to provide the economic ballots that made political ballots viable.

No one understood this better than the Black masses of the 1860s who said in marches and demonstrations that their freedom was not secure without a firm economic foundation.

40 acres and a mule never received

Therefore, think again when we celebrate Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, King, and others. We should begin to look at the central issues. If our study of Black history is merely an exercise in feeling good about ourselves, then we will die feeling good. We must look at the lessons that history teaches us. We must understand the tremendous value of the study of history for the *re-gaining* of power. If our education is not about gaining real power, we are being miseducated and misled and we will die “educated” and misled.

Why Study History

The study of history cannot be a mere celebration of those who struggled on our behalf. We must be instructed by history and should transform history into concrete reality, into planning and development, into the construction of power and the ability to ensure our survival as a people. If not, Black History Month becomes an exercise in the inflation of egos; it becomes an exercise that cuts us further off from reality. Ironically, we now see even other people who are not our friends joining us in this celebration, which means that they must see in it some means of protecting their own interests, and see in it something that works for them, and possibly against us. If they can celebrate our history and see it as something positive, then it means that we are not using it in a revolutionary sense. They do not see our study of it as a threat to their power. If we are not studying it in a way that it is a threat to their power then we are studying it incorrectly, and our celebration of it is helping to maintain us in a state of deception. So let us make sure that we look at and study history in a light such that it advances our interests, not inflates our egos and blinds us to reality.

Now let's look at European History and what I call *Historiography and Oppression: Its Functions and Outcome*. By historiography I refer to the writing of history.

We see in many of today's newspapers and popular media that many people are complaining about the state of the study of history — the fact that it's not being studied that much in high school, or that "Western civilization" is not being studied enough. Now we see a number of universities and colleges re-instituting as a part of their core curricula the study of Western civilization. I'm sure some of us are familiar with the controversies that are going on because the feminist movement is saying that feminist history should be interjected into the study of so-called Western civilization. Of course, Afrikan history advocates are also demanding that Afrikan history and non-Western civilizations be included in this area.

Sociopolitical Role of Historiography

We have an issue here that I call the *projection and image of history*. History has been down-played in this society. History has a poor reputation; often it is looked upon by too many people as essentially a set of dates and events. People ask: "Why should I study these dates; why should I study these events; what does it have to do with today?" It is as if they say, "OK, it may be used to explain how some things came about in today's world, but probably we could live without it." Often history — among even many of our people — even so-called Black History itself, has been looked upon as irrelevant and unprofitable. The idea is, "Why study Black History; it's not going to make me any money? It's not going to get me a job; what can you do with it? You should get yourself a degree in computer science; get yourself a trade. I'm not interested in Black Power; I'm interested in Green Power." These statements express foolish concepts. When we hear them we recognize that the individual has not seen the connection between history, power and money. There is a direct connection between history and economics.

I often say in this regard that if there were not a direct relationship between history and money, a direct relationship between history and power, history and rulership, history and domination, then why is it that the European *rewrote* history? Why is it that the European wants to take our history away from us? Why is it that the European wants to *rewrite* our history and distort it? Why is it that he doesn't want to present it at all? Apparently the rewriting, the distortion and the stealing of our history must serve vital economic, political and social functions for the European, or else he would not bother and try so hard to keep our history away from us, and to distort it in our own minds. Let us meditate on these issues and I think we'll come to realize that there is a direct relationship between history and economics, political and social development.

History and Psychology

History is projected in this culture as being irrelevant, I don't think by accident. Again, if it is made to look irrelevant, if it is made to look unprofitable, then making it appear so must serve some profitable purpose. When courses in college or university are apparently presented "nonpolitically," "objectively," "neutrally," they are actually presented in the most political way. We must understand that it is in the nature of this racist culture to hide its political agenda. Therefore, it presents so-called facts and information as if they have no political connections or implications.

I often try to show how making something political creates knowledge and information that can be of great value. I often use the concept of the "Skinner rat" to show how that concept is presented "nonpolitically" in the psychology of learning: how the rat is put in a box and can only eat if it performs a particular behavior. So if it pushes a lever — it is only as a result of pushing that lever — that it is allowed to eat. The experimenter determines when this rat is going to eat, when it is going to drink; he determines the living conditions under which this rat must survive. The rat becomes conditioned and

changes as a result of the fact that the man has control of vital things in its life. Thus, we can present this paradigm in a very sterile way, in terms of learning and reinforcement principles. We can write a whole book about them, with graphs, arcane language and the whole bit.

I often point out how a Black student can learn Skinnerian psychology better than a White student and still as a result of having learned it be made dumb by it. Because, it is taught on a “race neutral,” nonpolitical level. But I often ask my students whether there is only one way of looking at this situation. Why not look at it politically? This rat is conditioned; i.e., it reflects the conditions under which it is forced to survive as the result of a set of power relations. So why not analyze this experiment in terms of power relations? Based on these terms we may reach the conclusion that the conditioned rat is socially created; its personality is a social creation. What it learns is the result of a power differential between the rat and the experimenter, because the experimenter has power over the rat and uses that power to transform and create something new in the rat.

As a result of the conditioning experiment the rat is different from other unconditioned rats. It shows the effects of its conditioning. The experimenter is able to do this because the experimenter has control over the rat's circumstances. If we will go further and identify with the rat we then begin to learn something about ourselves — something of value. We will then have grasped something that can lay the foundation for revolution and change; not a sterile bit of knowledge and information that we can't use.

I've often asked my students: “Who has control of your food? Who has control of your electricity? Who has control of your water? Of your jobs? Who tells you what to wear when you go to work? Who tells you when to come to work...when to leave...when to go to lunch...how to speak...how to write...how to do this...how to do that...and how are these things taught, and how they are conditioned?”— It is by reward and punishment. “You do this you get paid; you don't do this you don't get paid; you get a raise, you get docked.” What do we have

here? We see the same basic situation and the same basic principles for conditioning rats are now transferred to life and reality itself. Therefore, to live in the “ghetto” under the power of another people is to be created by that people. To be rewarded or punished by that people is to be created by that people. What would happen if these “ghettos” we live in today are surrounded by a force that blocks the food and the water, cuts off the electricity and the other things? What kind of situation would we be in? But even with the water coming in, the food coming in, we are still created and conditioned by the circumstances under which we live. We are living under them as the result of the exercise of the power of another people over us. Therefore, if we wish to change this situation (i.e., the conditions under which we live), then we must change the power relationships. If we are to prevent ourselves from being created by another people and are to engage in the act of self-creation, then we must change the power relations.

With the political approach to Skinner’s rat the Afrikan student not only learns what the White student learns, but learns more and learns something of value to himself. What he learns becomes a basis for self-understanding and knowledge, a plan for the future and a means by which he or she can change his or her situation. Without the lesson being taught in this way we will have a bunch of educated people who wonder why we cannot get out of the condition that we are in. We thus produce a bunch of educated people, as I have expressed before, who, the more degrees they get in business administration the fewer businesses they have to administer; who, as they go into the colleges and the Wharton Schools of Finance and the Harvard Schools of Finance, etc. find their communities being inundated by Asians and other groups. Apparently their degrees are not designed for them to control their own economic situations and circumstances. But because the information in the courses in economics are seen as “neutral” and “non-political,” the student is more radically politicized than in any other way.

Afrikan-centered education recognizes that the whole of human life is a political system and, therefore, it interprets

its materials politically. It is through political, economic and military action that we must change our circumstances. If those things are not applied in the context of our education then we are being educated just to be servants — educated servants! Because it is the intention of Europeans that Blacks never escape their condition of servitude. A higher education means that we will just be educated servants — nothing more, nothing less.

Hence, we have to look at our situation politically and socially.

So when history is projected as irrelevant, as unprofitable, as a system of dates and events, as a system of rarified causes and effects, it is projected that way, I think, because it helps to maintain the political and social status quo, and because it serves a politicoeconomic function. (People who are ahistorical, who have little knowledge of history, are people who are more gullible, more easily manipulated and people who can be more easily adapted to the capitalist machine than people who are historically knowledgeable.) History can become a basis for self-criticism, a basis for self-understanding, and more importantly, the basis for the understanding of the motives and the psychology of others. When history is not taught appropriately we are left to just follow orders, and to just trudge to our work, our jobs, without knowing the reasons why. Yet trudging to our jobs has not secured our futures at all. We must recognize that merely going to work, merely studying computer science, merely going to the office, is not enough. We are going to have to understand the psychology of the people who run this world.

We can only understand our oppressors' psychology by understanding their history. They rob us of a knowledge of history and want us to think that history is irrelevant and unimportant so that we cannot see through their deadly games. We must recognize that history is at the very center of life. As I go on I will indeed try to demonstrate more profoundly the relationship between history and life itself.

Because European history often is seen as unworthy of study in many high schools and is not at the center of the high school educational curriculum, how much more so are we, as Afrikans,

tempted to see Afrikan history as unworthy. We usually take our cue from Europeans: "If they're not studying much history and their kids don't care about history then why should ours care about it? If they say it's not relevant, then how relevant can our own history be?" Watch out!

I will show that our ignorance of our history has a different outcome from the Europeans' ignorance of their history. We must also recognize that history is not only written in books, but that history is contained in every facet of life. We are interacting in the context of history right at this very moment. This church, this building is a historical event and represents historical evolution, and inside this historical structure people's minds and bodies are changed and created. History is everywhere written in the streets that we walk down, in every building, in every highway, in every yard, everywhere we go it's there; it's shaping; it's transforming; it's creating; it's blocking; it's constructing. So even though the European may stop reading his history in the books, the history of the European is still "fine and dandy" and operating everywhere we turn and every place we go. In fact, one of the reasons why it may have been reduced in terms of history books per se is because it is hidden everywhere else. It is inextricably linked and wrapped into every situation, circumstance and event of life. We study math and we would think it originated in Greece. It is usually introduced that way. We get the Pythagorean theories and Euclidean geometry and Boolean algebra and other European names spread throughout mathematics. The names and the concepts and who "first" discovered it are *history*; images being projected. We're not learning just neutral science and mathematics; European history is inculcated right in their study.

Euro History

Every course we go into is intertwined with European history. We can't escape it. So simply because we don't show up in some class that calls itself the History of Europe, don't think we're escaping European history. Not by a long shot. In every discipline we study in the college/university/school we're going to run into European history: it is intimately intertwined with all disciplines.

As long as our own history is not intimately and inextricably entwined with everything we do, with every study we undertake, is not represented in our Universe, in our buildings and on our walls, in our houses and on our streets, then we need to study history more consciously than do the Europeans! We cannot always follow the route of European people. They build history in the books and then they build it into the world, or vice-versa. They may reduce their attention to the book, but history is still there and still functioning in the world. Therefore, we must forget about what the Europeans are doing and how Europeans are studying or not studying history, because we are not in their situation. Therefore doing things their way leads to injurious and different outcomes for us.

History as Psychohistory

We should look at history, more accurately, as Psychohistory, i.e., the psychological result of undergoing certain historical experiences. We, as individuals, are our history. I'll show later on that history is not that which is forgotten and left behind. We don't leave history behind. History is the present, history is the future. Those of us who are Afrocentric and mystical must know that the division of past, present and future is false, Eurocentric and political. The world is not a linear structure. Past, present and future are one and the same. When we have been made to believe that the past is separate and in some straight line with the future then we've already been brain-washed and set up. Our past never forgets us and is never left behind.

If you forgot your past you would not be able to understand me right now. You would not be able to walk or talk. You did not learn to walk, talk and do the things you're doing at the moment you entered here; you learned to do them in the past. Forget that then! Since that is history, leave that behind. You will see that you also have no future! Past, present and future are one, and that proposition is at the center of an Afrikan-centered history and approach.

As men with their knowledge and desire ultimately make history, so does history make men.

This is quoted from Joel Kovel's *White Racism: A Psychohistory*. When we go to see a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker or psychotherapist, one of the first things they do is to take a so-called *case history*. They recognize that they cannot appropriately understand us as individuals unless they understand something about our unique experience as individuals. They cannot take the history and experience of another person and apply exclusively the psychology that flows from that history and experience and accurately describe you as an individual and person. That's why each person that walks through the door of helping-professionals must provide his or her own case history, and must be dealt with in terms of his or her own case history. *Case history leads to people history*

The same thing is true about a people. We cannot take the psychology of Europeans — and often I've stated this as a rationale for my writing of the book, *The Developmental Psychology of the Black Child*, which is based upon their history and experience, upon their values and their goals — and apply it unmodified to ourselves. This leads to misunderstanding and misdirection. One of the major problems I often point out in this context, in the area of education, is that we have a situation where the educational psychology that's taught to teachers and others who are in charge of our children is a psychology based on the history and experience of another people, and despite the best intentions of these educators they will miseducate our children in terms of that psychology.

To a very great extent the problem with the education of Black children, the crack epidemic and all of these other things we complain about day in and day out, are the result of a psychology that flows from a particular type of historical experience.

We have a school system that is based upon the psychology of White children and White people. We are trying to educate our children in that system; they are bound to fail. The very structure of the educational system itself is based upon a White

model and therefore it has a built-in failure mechanism for us, one way or the other.

We must develop a psychology of our children based upon our own history and experience. It is only then that our pedagogical and educational approaches will be in line with their personalities. Only then can we move our children forward to fulfill our needs and our desires as a people. If we wish to understand ourselves and wish to understand other people's psychology we must then understand our history and their history. We must be very clear about this matter.

For us to come to understand ourselves as individual units we must ultimately come to understand not only our own personal history and experience but the history and experience of our people, since they overlap and are connected. Therefore, it is through studying the history of our people that we come to understand ourselves as individuals and as a people.

Although each person in a society is unique in the detail and fine structure of his/her life, all members of that society share certain common styles of action or ways of knowing. In other words, to the degree that we share history and experience, we share common styles of thinking and knowing. There is no such thing as an "individual" in the absolute sense of the word.

Language and Power

When we get ready to create revolution we must *redefine* the world, and *redefine* words; there's no way around it. In Genesis, we see Adam being given the power to name things. Through being given the power to name things he is given dominion. There is a connection between naming and dominion, between naming and bringing into reality. When we permit another people to name and ~~define~~, we permit another people to gain dominion and control over us.

The languages that people learn and speak are most frequently directly related to the power relations between them. Many people will now learn Japanese, as for a while they learned Russian, as for a while they learned German, Latin, etc. Why? Because the people who speak or spoke those

