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Cultural Alchemy: the Lacuna of African Philosophy and Political Theory Towards Cultural Separatism

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**HONORS THESIS: CULTURAL ALCHEMY: THE LACUNA OF
AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICAL THEORY
TOWARDS CULTURAL SEPARATISM.**

BY: TOMMY J. CURRY

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Preface

Cultural Alchemy is an idea that centers on the use of culturally definitive practices and self-empowerment to define the methods and ideologies that are most productive and accurate for that culture. It revolves around the premise that culture is ontologically based and that that ontological basis of culture is the most prior evaluation that one must consider in any philosophical or political inquiry into the existence, nature and behavior of that culture. In this sense, it is strict culturalism.

Alchemy is a perspective. It lends itself to the correction and social approval of Africans philosophically before it makes culturally incoherent assumptions about the actions and thoughts of its people. It centers on the idea that Africans are Africans and that they act as Africans, so knowledge, thought and action have to be analyzed through this perspective. Culture regulates and frames the process of interaction and the assimilation of different values under the bounds of its ontological paradigm hence, the

retention of African qualities in Africans in America. The worldview determines the use and ultimate end of cultural practices in that culture.

I do not intend for this work to be a testament to the absolute proof of Alchemy as a method of inquiry, merely as an ideological perspective that can be used in evaluating African culture in America. As such, my thesis is reflective of my use of this perspective in evaluating culture and issues of race in America. Cultural Alchemy must be defined by its practitioners, if there will be any, and to defend it as a method when I lack the authority and full knowledge of its full theoretical complexities is foolish, and arrogant, but to defend and expand upon my experiential means of looking at culture seems to be more in line with the purpose of intellectual growth and an African centered way of life.

My thesis is written by way of verse. Verse one argues that ideological study into disciplines, namely political science and philosophy requires an understanding a cultural reformulation of the way in which ideology is used and protected by methodology. It is a polemical articulation against the structure of empiricism and traditional philosophical inquiry. Verse two argues specifically for the application of ontology in the evaluation of culture. It is the frame by which Cultural Alchemy can and should be viewed. Here we will be evaluating the role of ontological study in the analysis of behavior, ideology and philosophical thought. Verse three is the application of this theory as an evaluation of Hip-hop. The main issue with the philosophical discourse is that it creates and defends the abstraction before the abstraction can be shown to the world in application. African philosophy teaches one otherwise, and hip-hop in contemporary African culture is a testimony to this idea. Hip-hop is analyzed as functional experientialism in which very complicated ideas of identity, politics and social thought are articulated to Africans and

by Africans in a way that aims for simultaneous social approval before the philosophical can be accepted as valid and true. The philosophical is simultaneously social and abstract, again a function of tradition African culture analyzed ontologically as present in contemporary African culture. Verse four is the academic defense of the social ideology. It focuses on the argumentation necessary for understanding Alchemy and ethnocentric study as a means of liberation, and endorsing separatism for that purpose. The process of cultural negotiation, a mandated act of multiculturalism, must be reformed to allow for the acquisition of power by the African people, without the compromising of identity. Verse five merely points to a political action that could further the goals of Black participation and political interests, in the Supreme Courts reversal of Timmons and Abrams.

This thesis represents my thought, my research and a direction that my interests flow. I only hope that in its evaluation the perspectives are judged as cultural testimonies to the wish of equality, and not aberrations of clouded judgment.

Tommy J. Curry

VERSE ONE: Alchemy as a theoretical demystification of political science.

Introduction

One of the most significant areas of recent growth in political science is primarily in the realm of race and culture, the fundamental loci of political thought and theory. In the area of political science, the European racial dominance of political thought and theory is the most limiting methodological means of preserving idle empiricism and hindering reconstructive thought. This quandary exists largely because the methods employed by empiricism seemingly ignore the reality that theory and ideology lend to, if not define, the evaluations of race and culture that transcend normative behavioral studies, while simultaneously acting to protect the cultural perspective that formed its creation apriori. This manifests itself in the futile attempts of political science to explore profound questions of identity, without questioning the presence of an ontological perspective that frames the “behaviors” studied. The ontology frames the perspective by which the method and behavior is carried out—not only as practice, but also in route to the end.

The consequentialist nature of political science in the examination of race is centrally located in the existence of a linear cultural ideology that sees the end of an event as the reasonable framework by which that event may be framed. The discipline focuses on the end result of racial categories and pre-emptively studies the consequences of race, as they already exist socially, without examining prior ontological reasons responsible for the construct. It is in the re-evaluation of the ideological as the manifestation of the ontological that the strict evaluations of the methodological nature of inquiry and

verification in question and critique gains relevance. The empirical nature of political science as a discipline reifies, as most of the university, the theoretical claims of the status quo by default.

That science is indeed ideology is revealed by a close look at the logical structures of inquiring systems and the role of theory and method in them. Logical positivists attempted to save theory from dogma and separate domains of metaphysics and science. They advanced the verificationist framework as the criterion of meaningfulness for all scientific statements. Within that framework, claims are regarded as scientifically meaningful insofar as their verification is dependent upon the observation of material evidence. What is critical in the end is the extent to which the claims of science must be verified by data, which are sought within an empirical methodology. Empirical methods, then, provide the structure within which truth is sought through the confirmation of meaningful theoretical claims. All this sounds highly constructive, positive, and liberal. It was intended to salvage truth from the tyranny of rationalism, which sought communion with God as the ultimate method of verification. At the same time it was intended to preserve the icons of certainty and universality in knowledge, which were so acutely threatened, by skepticism and relativism (Banks 4).

As such, the cultural ideological basis of knowledge and its epistemological foundation is biased and require an ontological demystification by its very nature of inquiry. This is the role of philosophical questioning in cultural political studies and thought, especially considering its role in operationally defining the place of theory in these areas.

Clouds in my Coffee

Disciplines perpetuate themselves and political science and philosophy are not any different. They use their methods to alienate those not trained in the discipline and create methodological barriers guarding against theoretical advancements that may

undermine the integrity of the respective discipline. This acknowledgement recognizes the preservation, perpetuation of power, and the student's subjugation reproducing and paradigmatically reifying the authority and structure of the field. In this sense, the epistemological foundations are the parameters of inquiry and reinforce culturally based systems of rationality and privilege specific culturally familiar interests that result in preservation of the culture's hegemony. In other words, disciplines systematically construct knowledge to further their own end. African philosophy, an applied and social philosophy by nature, directly undermines this position. Cultural Alchemy as an application of ontology functionally deconstructs and redefined paradigms of operation, rupturing structures of futility and mystification.

The Empiricist have made methodological integrity their foremost preoccupation, believing in its ability to lead systematically to a knowledge base from which theory and ideological programmes can spring. And while we are all trying to be constructive in our push toward the growth of theory, method and knowledge, the traditional edifices continue to stand, to influence the scientific and political communities and to enjoy the protection of a perniciously defensive and destructive framework which too many of us still take to be the salvation of truth and objectivity.

As Frederick Nietzsche (1967) put it when he scared Western Philosophy half to death, "Nihilism stands at the door" and with that foreshadowing of the modern decline of Western thought he advanced an idea that African American scholars have come to regard as unquestionable—that the pursuit of knowledge is the will to power. In this regard I should quote William R. Jones, an African American philosopher, in his defense of African American philosophy: "Let us be clear in our minds what is at stake here...the authority of blacks to describe reality..." As Nobles has said, power is the ability to define that reality and to have other adopt and act on that definition as it were their own. But the role of power in knowledge is to advance claims, which no person is able to refute. It is ultimately the integrity of the system of justification and defense behind which ideas stand that accords them their power (Banks 7).

Philosophical and political thought exists as justifications of their higher ontological good. The European construction of knowledge inculcates the means and perspectives of

learning to such a degree that the internalization of method and ideology become inseparable in a non-decision in practically all cases.

To gain knowledge is to gain a worldview and the internalization of its practices as one's own. The failure of critical evaluation into the structures of ontology permit racism and white supremacy to be perpetuated in the methods that culturally parallel the intent and teleological goal of evaluation, regardless of the subject in question. If knowledge were a biological organism, methodology would be its immune system and ontology its spirit. To ignore the dynamic of survival and reproduction would be the concession of oppression and intellectual holocaust to cultural studies. This scenario places the African student as a cultural agent in danger. Experience is invalidated for objective truth and culture is replaced with tradition. So what is the alternative? What would a demystified area of political and philosophical thought look like?

The other side

The alternatives to academic dominion under the epistemological foundation of methodology lie in the organic formulation of African perspectives. In saying this, I mean that the culture must define the terms and meanings by which they are understood and the methods that create those terms. Some would argue that the present system through multi-culturalism readily accepts and answers this challenge, but the structures of the system that ideologically reinforce the ontological nature of the European culture remain in place. Philosophical thought and political theory must be reinvented from the perspective of those who aim to investigate the issues as it effects and interacts with their culture. We cannot afford to be limited and attacked by methods that erect walls of idle

tradition in favor a cultural worldview that seeks only to preserve European means of domination in the academy and society.

It is the responsibility of the African to change the ways in which the philosophical inquiries are conducted and to be critical of the unspoken ends and premises these inquiries are based upon and seek to achieve. In our complacency the path of genocide widens, but in our resistance armies of scholars are built. The African cannot afford to let the structuralism of the university to remain unfettered, because it is because of these academic constructs that the societal ones are legitimated and preserved. This does not mean that African philosophical or political thought becomes reactionary, however, natural this tendency may seem.

The failure of most African thought now is based in this singular characteristic. While revolutionary and polemical, it is only that. The method of refutation becomes the only preserving tradition. Alchemy and other ontological essentialist movements must assume a proactive role in making some strict determinations of how African culture exists and how it should be protected and perceived. We must look to tradition to find the methods of contemporary philosophical and political thought, failure to do so dooms us to a fatal reliance on the ways that the Eurocentric academy created and the failure of us to destroy the guardians of European dominance. Our culture will create our methodology, and we must be ready to accept the means that our culture provides without comparing and reforming them to the European disciplines that we have been trained in. Our culture does not start in the degradation of America and oppression. Our knowledge has not always been counter-hegemonic or isolated to the boundaries of oppression. It is these histories of triumph that we must investigate and draw upon for models. It is in this

culture that we will seek to find the humanity taken away from us and the ideological basis of our identities restored for cultural investigation by our own experience. We fight for the relevance of our stories and the use of our own voice in speaking about ourselves. We cannot really on other storytellers. Jacob Caruthers (1999) argues that,

Political science and politics were exported by Arabs and Europeans to Africa and were superimposed on African life. For us, African politics is defined by a struggle to regain and maintain our national freedom. The question that remains is whether political science can be used in that regard and, if so, in what sense? Political science, which is nothing more than the study of one group and its interests over other groups must be studied by Africans. The study of political science is one way of studying the worldwide system of dominion that must be overcome. It is therefore useful to any pathology. However, such study in itself cannot provide the guidance necessary for formulating answers, or even questions, concerning the ultimate world organization for which we should strive. Nor is it capable of recommending actions in which black people should engage. These functions can only be provided when black scholars develop a foundation for national life. Such a foundation is provided by a return to the wisdom of governance in African life.

This wisdom begins with the elevation of governance itself above the clash of interests of national life. Interests are essentially private conflicts which are mediated by government, but which do not enter government itself. Party politics, even "one party politics," is inconsistent with African life and may well account for the present condition of national life in African and black America. This idea will require a lot of debate because black people have been entrenched in the Machiavellianism and Madisonianism; it is difficult for us to even imagine that a society can be free from the contest for governmental office or that such a society can exist, it would be desirable and not, by definition, despotic. However, we need frank and open study and discourse on the possibility of the wisdom of African governance as an alternative to political science (82).

Looking within ourselves creates the means of liberation and the refutation of European power. The question becomes one of empowerment and the answer resides in the legitimacy we find in our cultural methods of inquiry and our belief in BEING "African." Ideology defines the ends of methodology, regardless of our position, the decision must

be made whether or not our culture is “real” enough to institute its own practices, and challenge the dominance of empiricism and the European worldview in the academy.

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VERSE 2: Race, Culture and Ontological Perspectivism: A Reflection of Parametric Perspectives

Ontological Synergism: A Call for “Realness”

The distinction between race and culture has been a plague on the minds of social scientists and theorists for decades. The parallel between the social environment of a people and the practices of that people remain a barrier in distinguishing the realm of culture and the social political influences of race. In this essay, it will be my contention that race and culture are distinctly different and any attempt to use the terms interchangeably merely supports the academic abstraction in the understanding of culture as race based solely on the socio-cultural location of the individual and the group that individual belongs. Race must be acknowledged to be a mere social construct that gains relevance only in contrast to the European and as a perpetuation of “whiteness.” To accept that there is a social label that determines the identity of an African in America, namely that of “Blackness” furthers the idea that culture is merely a product of environment and is not contained in the individual or the group. Culture must be understood in terms of ontology. By this I mean that the culture of the “cultural group” cannot be evaluated a posteriori or separate from the group in the first place. Culture is essential to the identification and identify of the group itself. Race is merely a construct that culture seeks to interpret. It has no relevance to the ontological reality of a “cultural group.” Again, culture is the ontological lens by which all other values are determined and dictated for the survival and continuity of the group.

Section I of this paper will discuss the need for understanding the ontological relevance of culture, or it being synonymous to the being of the individual and thus the group by mere identification. Section II will seek to explore the relationship between race as a social construct and its ability to mirror a “social ontology” through the creation of an “experience of oppression.” And finally, I will elaborate on the implications of an ontological perspective between culture and race for Afrocentrism as a methodology in itself and the implications this view would have on multicultural psychology.

My name is: Culture as ontological identity parametricization

The means of understanding culture must come from a prior understanding of how to frame knowledge. If we actually seek to accept and reject the categories of race then we can only describe the world in terms that would eliminate “race” from the conversation and psyche of the orator. The means by which this reality is told is the key to understanding the rearticulation of culture as an “ontological determinate” in the conversations concerning groups of peoples, as well as worldview. It is not a secret that “race” was a fabrication of white supremacy and has absolutely “no connection to culture” (Locke 1924); the secret was that the social inculcation of “race” created ideological parameters in which the “epistemological” perspectives of social experience and “otherness” was framed. Racialism, the idea that groups of people can be separated into races, has been the category of choice in framing those outside of selective group designations (Appiah 1990), and as such has distorted the basis of evaluating culture in academia and society.

Understanding culture as a formative source of thought and action has been articulated before. Ideas of biogenetic inheritance (Kambon 1998) and cultural genes that create the personality and mood (the utamaroho and utamawazo) of peoples (Ani 1994) have been topics of most recent discussion. While the ideological premises of these arguments are sound and parallel they leave themselves vulnerable to questions of scientific verification and biological validity. We must remember that,

The practice of science...has not been to arbitrate theoretical claims through appeal to evidence, but to protect them from it. The purpose of theory has not been to expose ideas to falsification, it has been to justify the current ideological programme. Like a system of politics, science has sought foremost its own preservation...It is ideological programmes which are set forth and then justified by theory; and the role of methodology is to protect theory from falsification (Banks 1979).

With this said, we must come to understand the evaluation of culture separate from the methods employed by the canons of the status quo. Thus, “Being” is the only way to properly from the discussions of culture, because it supercedes the quandary of the sciences that give credence to race and parametricize the understanding and practices of culture.

Culture is determined in the being of the group (Ani 1994), absent any socialization processes that would teach the individual how to gain group membership. Culture is as essential to the understanding of the group as it is to the identity of the individual. To call myself—myself—is to acknowledge a cultural being that allows me to be myself. It is not a question of a “cultural practice” that allows individuality, rather it is a metaphysical essence that allows identity to be formed in a way that allows me to be me. Thus, the perception of an “I” that metaphysically involves agency is determined by

a cultural ontology that understands the world as medium I can conceivably alter. This is different from “culture” to “culture”, because a European would seek power and domination (Ani 1994, Kambon 1998), while the understanding of “T” in none European cultures reflects a balance and harmonization with all of “ME”(i.e. the world around me). This shows that there is a prior ideological basis for the practical understandings of an environment and demonstrates to some extent how socialization and the belief of culture as “the configuration of learned behavior and results of behavior whose components and elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society (Linton 1968), and all other social behaviorist ideas are ridiculous, because they fail to articulate the catalyst for behaviorism to arise from social interactions and random environments.

Culture frames the way that all values are interpreted and acted upon, as such, it is rightly understood as the perspective of the group that shape the environment around them. Many scholars argue that race and the Black experience is the appropriate frame of reference psychologically (Carter 1995) and philosophically in terms of socio-cultural experience and heritage (West 1994). This is, however, unsound. The ability to descriptively analyze a motivation of action and behavior based solely on socio-political location fails to explain the ability of an isolated and contemporary title to have the power to dictate and control the essences and psyche of a group of people. Race cannot account for the actions of the people before the title was applied and the continuations of those actions under the category of being “Black”.

To do this would assume that political labels have a deterministic effect on the reality of the individual apriori, and would not take into account ideological conflicts or value dissonance in the group or individual. We know this is not true for two reasons.

First, the intersections of race, class and gender all show how socio-political terms work against each other and contribute to multiple disadvantages, secondly we know that to label someone something does not change the essence of that person. If I was to call an “African male” a girl when he sees himself as a man, no matter how many people now call him a girl, even if he adopts the label himself, his experiences as a man will not change. He does not suddenly become a girl because the social construct changes, because he is located in an identity that would dictate his experiences absent social constructs. This is the space we must explore in identity and why the concept of “ontological essentialism” (Curry 2000) is of the utmost importance. To understand ourselves outside the realm of the oppressor means we have to escape the reach of their power. Culture provides the means to do so, once we realize and act as if social constructs are just that—constructs that are not true; idle labels that carry values of denigration and powerlessness.

Culture is the ideological framing of thought, action, and essence articulated through the very being of the people or individual of that respective group. This articulation of culture as a parameter of experience means that “race” as a social construct is subject to the interpretation of “culture”, therefore to seek to measure and validate the construction of a term determined by a cultural calculus while ignoring the cultural influence and deeming the “affected value” the culture is stupid or tautological to say the least. This is where the idea of race and how it is interpreted and used in study and depiction gains significance in our discussion. The deconstruction of race does not come in giving it new meanings or new intersections of interpretation; the deconstruction of race comes with its destruction as a social ontology and tool of essentialism that

commands attention as a locus of cultural experience for the “African.” Its destruction comes with the advent of “cultural rediscovery” and empowerment from an ontological perspective that is more than a descriptive and hopeful analysis of the “race” in America.

Racial Inculcation: Killing Us Softly

Race has evolved into a language all its own. One that has gained many listeners and admirers whom believe in the existence of race and use it as the main, if not only descriptor of “cultural experiences”. The location of race in the psyche of Africans as a self-designated form of identification as well as the European oppressor only re-establishes the social solidity of the term in the hegemonic boundaries of the status quo.

In the United States in particular, race is a constitutive element of our common sense and thus is a key component of our “taken-for-granted valid reference schema through which we get on in the world. And, as we are constantly burdened by the need to resolve difficulties, posing varying degrees of danger to the social whole, in which “race” is the focal point of contention (or serves as a shorthand explanation for the source of contentious differences), we are like wise constantly reinforced in our assumption that race is self-evident. (Outlaw 1990).

Even the “Elders” are guilty of this reactionary stance in which “race” is the battleground of a global phenomenon that all Europeans are participants in at the expense of the African. Race is a social construct that has absolutely no validity in a world without European social schemes. Race is merely a category of oppression and difference that allow for domination. This has historically been the case in all social sciences and most routinely psychology (Guthrie 1998). We must question the reality behind the social masks that have us believe and defend a cultural designation not our own.

The Maafa (African Holocaust) is largely responsible for this cultural relocation of the Africans' sense of being as a social entity. The key is to concentrate on the cultural motivation and legacy. Kobi Kambon addresses this by explaining,

... the Maafa was actually only "yesterday" in its occurrence. The year 1865, the year of the so-called emancipation, was a mere 133 years ago. Using a rough scale of say 60-75 years for an average African lifespan in the United States, if all things were equal (but of course not under those conditions), this amounts to a mere couple of generations removed from the present. Thus, Africans in America are no more than perhaps two full generations removed from the plantation era of the barbaric system of European-American slavery, and around only six to seven generation removed from the first mass arrival of enslaved Africans on the North American continent (Bennet, 1963). This is an important realization as African/Black Psychology seeks to remove the "abstract" conception of this historic traumatizing experience in the minds of Africans as such a distant past event (as in the sense of the Ancient Kmt Civilization).

The African living in the Western hemisphere should be sensitive to the fact that the slave ships coming from Africa to the so-called new world brought no West Indians, no black Americans, no South Americans. They brought African people who had to adjust to the conditions where the slave ships put them down. It is by sheer accident that some are called Jamaican, Trinidadian, Barbadians, and some are called African Americans (John H. Clarke 1991, p.149.)

The socio-cultural location of the people is what created the "race" based identities, which we can see are heavily reliant on nation-state boundaries. If this is so, then we can understand the use of race as a socio-political strategy to limit the reach of enslaved individuals to their nation of origin. This is the supporting evidence of political social construction and constraint that seeks to limit the connection of cultural integrity and heritage through the stratagem of social order and identification. Race identification severs our understanding of "culture" as an ontological basis of identity by localizing cultural experiences and framing them in terms of social experiences.

This speaks directly to the issue of social construction. We know that race is a scientifically invalid construct that serves no useful purpose in designating importance of skin color as a biological determinate of genetic commonality, so the question remains “how can an illegitimate construct still survive despite the scientific invalidity of the term?” The only answer would necessitate evaluating the social benefit of the term in relation to its subject. In other words, it is useful in describing and affixing bio-social political definitions with the understanding of “races.”

Biological factors do not determine raciality, but in complex interactions with environmental, cultural, and social factors and processes they provide certain boundary conditions and possibilities that affect racion in terms of the development of distinctive gene pools from which are derived physical and biologically conditioned characteristics shared in certain frequencies by members of various groups. Further, the resources provided by concepts of “evolution” do not make for scientifically secure access to race-determining biological, cultural and social development complexes that fix each race’s rank-ordered position on an ascending “great chain of being.” Racial categories are seldom simply taxonomic, meant to catalog groups in some socially disinterested way; rather, they tend to be motivated by social and political concerns and always rest on the shifting sands of biological heterogeneity. The biological aspects of raciality are conscripted into projects of cultural, political, and social construction (Outlaw 1996).”

As such we must come to understand the political implications of “whiteness” in determining the meaning and evaluation of “race” as a reality. Under this view, race is merely a tool of domination by “Europeans” seeking to maintain the white imperialist project in academia (Curry 2000) and its respective social canons, specifically psychology (Hilliard 1997). Understanding the origin of race in its myriad of social phases allows us to understand the normalcy that “whiteness” has in the “racialized” context (Carr 1997, Katz 1985, and Westley 1995). Race only exists in the realm of

power and domination. There is not a Black race in which “race” forms a basis of perspective that dictates the value designation and worldview of the group, and as such is distinctly different from our understanding of culture. It is only by the situational basis of interpreting life and life-worlds that race can possibly be given any credence in being construed as a “cultural contributor”—this is however only a temporal description of any cultural experience, because “race” only lends itself to be an obstacle in the social sphere of the “cultural perspective” of the peoples involved, so race itself is subject to interpretive analyses and meaning. We see this in the rise of multiculturalism and older movements like Black power in which the meaning of race was changed to reflect cultural uses of the term and its ability to coalesce communal activism, which is totally in line with the realities of an African based world view or cultural ontology.

Race is merely a social category latent with values that is used to constrain and sever cultural understandings so that identity conforms to social reality as depicted by the European. Race is the tool of social domination and the assuage of cultural empowerment, by recognizing this and resisting its use as a methodological and political tool moves us as Africans closer to understanding the ontological basis of interpreting the world. This is not to say that “race” as a value is not “culturally interpreted” in line with our ontological position, rather it is stating that the social implications of a politically latent term cannot be redefined outside of our cultural space, when it is institutionally dictated to mean something contrary to our seeing of ourselves and the world.

The conclusion—Culture is Kronk like Whoa!

Understanding culture as the parameter of values and framing of life-worlds has profound implications on the understanding of Afro-centric thought and methodology and invalidate multiculturalism. The prior point is that the method of Afro-centric thought as consciousness raising in itself is helping to establish an ontological basis for confronting issues in the world, provided that the canon turns away from the methods and enclaves of scientism that the academy seeks to designate as being descriptive of the issues and agendas of the world. For example, there would be no African centered psychology, because the cultural interpretation of psychological health would be based in the formation of healthy group and social habits instead of a field that focuses on the use of methods to correct individual behaviorisms.

The task of the Afrocentrist becomes clarified as a mission to articulate the basis of “cultural experience” rather than “racial experience”. Diop elegantly emphasizes this issue and struck upon the premise involved with “cultural ontological” interpretations of experience.

I consider culture as a rampart which protects a people, a collectivity. Culture must, above all, play a protective role; it must ensure the cohesion of the group. Following this line of thinking, the vital function of a body of African human sciences is to develop this sense of collective belonging through a reinforcement of culture...Once this is attained, it would become more difficult to ‘divide and rule’ and to oppose African communities one against the other. (Diop 1976 in Carruthers 2000).

It is only by seeing our future, as one comprised of our visions that we will reign triumphant. It is in this epitaph that multiculturalism and its study becomes illegitimate

because the study of culture can only be self-reflecting. There can be multi-culturalisms in which different cultures discuss other cultures based on how they relate to themselves, but by no means can there be meaningful cross-cultural dialogues as understood now.

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VERSE 3: Coming to the Head: Hip-hop as Experiential cultural methodology and philosophical thought

"We're not just doing Hip Hop, we are Hip Hop."
KRS-One

"Rap music is a conversation." "Although we're heading into an information age, we're also entering a misinformation zone," "There are going to be a lot of people picking electronic cotton and digging digital ditches."

Chuck D

Introduction: The Condition of hip-hop: dialectic reflections

Hip-hop, the most widely recognized contemporary contribution of Africans to popular culture, has not been fully appreciated as an intellectual political movement by mainstream America. It has been mostly defined by those outside of the hip-hop community in terms of commercial rap music largely because of the marketability of African talent, and the need of the European industry to capitalize off of stereotypical images of the African in America.

Many hip-hop artists have commented on the historical distrust of the music industry and its European dominance. Chuck D, Krs One and Russell Simmons have made public statements about the imperial European monopolization of Africans' musical talents. There is a constant battle in the presentation of positive "flow" the young minds of Africans stuck in America. Bob Johnson's recently sold BET to Viacom and furthered the commoditization of the African hip-hop dynamic in the music industry. It is this consciousness in the industrialization of hip-hop and the de-authentication of the

art that makes the lyrics and messages, even of commercial rap political and profound to plight of Africans in America. The battle is over cultural authenticity and a strict social balance must be formed in the interests of entertainment and authenticity.

Three corporations control the ownership of urban radio stations in amerikka. Only concerned with the bottom line, they lay in cahoots with the 5 major record companies, corporate retail chains, and sponsors who depend on black media consumption. Television has been no exception as it has reduced black acting to a one-dimensional call and response game of canned laughter....Today one can consider oneself hip hop and give little honor to the people that it spawned from. Thus the term nigger flows from so-called heads, one in which the twisted logic is that it is a term of endearment. This real bottom line is that the pied pipers of our culture now are the radio and music video outlets that depict these unbalanced images. I'm tired of that unrepresented black age bracket of twenty-five to forty year olds rolling up to me asking for a better hip-hop balance like there was ten years ago. From this point we have to single out these networks; black in their marketing strategies, white in their ownership and demand balance and diversity (Chuck D 2001).

This is the environment in which consciousness and deconstructive rhetoric grows. The actions of Africans to preserve the authenticity of their culture in the interpretation and balance of their music points to an underlying social ethic that strongly guides the function and practice of hip-hop culture.

This ethic is by definition and tradition pro-active and political. It seeks to create a unity of idea based in the support of the African community. This is merely one example of the African worldview defining the parameters of action and the appropriate values in Africans in America. Chuck D continues that:

As a solution, I suggest this movement organization call Radio Attack Terrorists (RAT) and its companion website www.Radioattackterrorists.com. This movement will put balance into the hip-hop nation, and hopefully will change some artists' minds. Artists will still create whatever they so choose but radio stations playing heavily financed songs with adult themes will be held suspect. This is necessary because black radio's target audience might be ages sixteen through

twenty six but their most loyal audience is really twelve through nineteen year olds. Twelve through sixteen year olds ought not have choices that eighteen and nineteen year olds have. This ain't about me. Somebody gotta fight for the Commons, Goodie Mobs, Dead Prez, Talib Kwelis, Medusas, and others for equal airtime, as well as the positive material that most artists create but record companies are to afraid to market.

This environment gives rise to the need for serious analysis in this field. If it is the case of hip-hop not being more than entertainment one must question why the artists themselves are concerned with the message and influence of the African community by the de-authentication of the hip-hop culture. It is necessary to see hip-hop as political science and its speakers as philosophical thinkers to truly get a picture of the complex implications of the movement.

Large groups of Europeans have afforded criticisms of hip-hop culture as being unoriginal, materialistic and violent, and while these prima facia interpretations of African music may seem to be true to European peoples the connotations of the music and the lyrics of the music mean quite different things to Africans participating in hip-hop culture. The "commercial rap" or rap commonly seen on BET or MTV are either descriptions of socio-economic status or the glorification of survival in an environment largely due to white supremacy and police brutality. In this sense, they act as honor stories that emphasis social obligations and the need of respect to the group or "clique" and counter the emasculatory nature of American society on the African male and the dehumanization of our people. However, this is only one aspect of the urban philosopher. Underground rap, the basis of all hip-hop culture, I would argue, makes the more traditionally accepted political and "truth" based thought that Europeans deem to be paramount and examples of rational thought.

African hip-hop culture is actively involved in the reconstruction and critique of social mores in the African community in America and in America as a collective. It seeks to bring critical discussion and information to the peers and audience of the movement by constantly involving in debate and profundity of ideas. This is not very different from Kleinsthenes and the use of rhetoric to find truth. In a dialectical sense, hip-hop is a means for the African to exercise wit and integrate extemporaneously the issues of the environment as they relate to the individual at any given point of that individual's existence. It also proves that the environment is inextricably linked to contextualization of the thought and seeks to target the obstacles that are dangerous to that thoughts existence. In other words, the ideas are conscious of themselves and seek to inoculate themselves against the ideological inconsistencies of the art form solely based on the responsibility of the message to inform and be interpreted by the "social."

Hip hop as Experientialism

Hip-hop cannot be defined in terms of essences or the categories that European nomenclature has deemed appropriate in labeling and analyzing terms. The most recent example of this abstraction is in the limiting of hip-hop to four elements. Many observers, many Europeans and social admirers have defined hip-hop to include and be strictly defined by rhyming, dancing, scratching, and painting. All are very important but what about the social aspect and the participation of the audience. I believe that as other African practices, the theory and function of hip-hop are in constant flux in the momentum of the peoples and their use of the tool (i.e. hip-hop) in the community.

An elemental approach cannot describe the ethic of the population or the spirit that moves the artists to create. The world view of the African is diunital and collective, and as such the observable manifestations of that worldview cannot deviate from the core pillars of its existence. If there is not a dichotomous logic in the African worldview, then one cannot apply dichotomous logic to the social manifestations of that worldview in analysis or understanding of the phenomenon. The participation of Africans in hip-hop culture is to ecumenical to isolate four practices to the essence and religiosity of the experience.

If you define an element as a component that must be present in order for something to exist (like without the element oxygen, you can't get water) then the theory still doesn't hold. Most MC's I've come across cannot paint and don't know anybody who can. Graffiti does not effect their rhyming, at all. The same is true for plenty of legitimate DJs. At the same time graff writers might listen to rap, but how much does that effect the way they paint? All this is debatable of course, but eve if I agreed with every assumption the element theory makes, the theory still has holes. Describing hip-hop in terms of elements is pseudo-science. It's an attempt to legitimize the social phenomenon of hip-hop. People think if you can name the component of it and explain them, you have effectively studied hip-hop, but if you define the four elements, you have only touched on what hip-hop is about. The first person to talk about the elements may not have been trying to compress hip-hop into a nutshell. They may have used the terms to illustrate a point and it just happened to catch on. However, using four elements to explain something as dynamic and complicated as hip-hop limits the way outsiders see it. It's counterproductive, like modern legislators arguing that the Bill of rights encompasses all human rights when it's really just the best list its framers could come up with at the time (8-Rock 2001).

Hip-hop can only be defined by its practice and its pervasiveness in the psyche of the African. It is the consciousness by which the social etiquette of the people is determined and at large the means of African culture to perpetuate itself aesthetically and generationally; it is *Ashe*. This also indicates the resonance of a cultural motif that frames the aesthetic in the social experience of that beauty and how that beauty functions

between the “head” and the admiring fan. This is very common to African aesthetics and something the African community seeks to historically represent in terms of their innate Africinity.

She continues that:

If you ask somebody who really understands, someone who grew up wit the spirit and hunger and the circumstances that spawned hip-hop in the first place as opposed to someone who just listens to rap all the time) they will break it down in the concrete terms of life, not abstract theory. That doesn't mean that you can't be a real head if you're not from the South Bronx, but it does mean that “real” hip-hop cannot be defined by all its fans. It's like the difference between autobiographical and biographical documentary. It's like the difference between nature and science. It's like J-Live says, “Don't step to me with your stats and your date smarts/ you know your neighborhood by street signs or landmarks?”

This connection must be noted to be an indication of the means of which hip-hop is lived and an aesthetic that is social in origin. Experientialism is the most adequate term for the development and observation of the phenomenon. It is only in the articulation of a message that is based in the organic creativity of an African people that the method of analyzing that phenomenon and its subjects becomes a relevant task. Two things should be noted. First, the use of abstraction is inappropriate in the evaluation of hip-hop. This is the case in many African experiences and philosophical thought because the idea of separating the idea of (Platonic form) from the social is impractical and anti-thetical to the ways of Africans in living and in our understanding of the world. Africans, as shown by the existence and practice of hip-hop, see the philosophical discourse to be significant in terms of collective input and reflection of the idea by the group. Secondly, Hip-hop creates the consciousness and collective forum for these ideas to gain acceptance and

approval by the African community at large. This is how hip-hop gains credence in terms of a social methodology guiding the periodization of African thought in America. It is only by the imprint of the community that the ideas gain authenticity and become debatable.

Experientialism also gains a certain amount of reflective credibility in understanding the saliency of an identity based in the African aesthetic. Rap caught on because it offered young urban New Yorkers a chance to freely express themselves, and the concerns they had in the community, descriptive or not. It was a free form of expression that conveyed the message of the environment and the presence of the people in that environment. It is an adaptive art form that takes the shape of its beholder, and gauged by the social approval of one's peers. There is no limit on the creative powers of the individual and is only regulated by the goals of the peers, i.e. the audience. As such it is not an individual talent that can be practiced without the decree of the community, but still gives the individual power of interpretation parallel to that of the audience and determined simultaneously, as in synergy with the demands of the listeners. In this sense, the rapper and the audience are the same.

Rap [also] became popular because it offered unlimited challenges. There were no real set rules, except to be original and to rhyme on time to the beat of music. Anything was possible. One could make up a rap about the man in the moon or how good his dj was. The ultimate goal was to be perceived as being 'def (good) by one's peers. The fact that the praises and positive affirmations a rapper received were on par with any other urban hero (sports star, tough guy, comedian, etc.) was another drawing card. [...] rap, because of its inclusive aspects, allowed one to accurately and efficiently inject their personality. If you were laid back, you could rap at a slow pace. If you were hyperactive or a type-A, you could rap at a fast pace. No two people rapped the same, even when reciting the same rhyme. There were many people who would try and emulate someone's style, but even that was indicative of a particular personality (Davey D, *The History of Hip-Hop*, <http://www.daveyd.com/raptitle.html>).

Regardless of the diversity in style, the substance and criteria of success is purely collective. This creates an environment in which the meaning of the lyrics is directly related to the appearance or the aesthetic value of the song. As such, the “truth” is gauged in relation to the function of the aesthetic to the audience and their acceptance of that “truth.” While this may seem relativistic, it does create some probabilistic rules and ethics governed solely by the location of the music in the experience of the audience and its congruity to reality. The experience of the African is the method of interpretation and the process by which reality is perceived. The lyrics from “Humble Mumble” by Outkast show how the experiential is prior and thus a definitive parameter of the ideal.

"I met this critic I almost made her sh-t her draws
She said she thought Hip-Hop was only guns and alcohol
I said aw hell naw, but yeah it's that too
You can't discriminate because you done read a book or two"

The perception and assigning of characteristic can never be essentially limiting in hip-hop, because it is the ethic that is all inclusive but absolutely discriminatory. The wholeness of the culture accepts all but can be designated by none.

This idea is obvious also in the expression and format of rap. Rap being experiential in nature eliminates the hierarchical or theoretical statuses that are associated with the dominance of rap. It is only in the determination of the social that the abstract gains any meaning, thus no status can be assigned or fixed because the social is constantly in flux. Take Daryl Nelson's analysis of rap music.

Okay let's get one thing out of the way; rap, the musical component of Hip-Hop culture, is comprised of many formats. Yet none are superior or inferior to the others. In fact, rap music's diversity has always been its very strength. Regardless of what your taste or your personal

experience, rap speaks to it. "... For the most part, rap music formats and its listeners have been defined by the many philosophers of the sidewalks. (Nelson, 2000).

This shows how the nature of the of hip-hop can only be understood in the African sense of the noumena. It is the spirituality of the art that defines the ideological connotation of the practice and guides the function and perception of it in harmony with the nature of the people, so the question of the best or the most definitive style is irrelevant.

Experientialism, defined as the description and knowing of reality based on the spirituality and understanding of experience as metaphysical, adequately describes the situation and understanding of hip-hop culture as a frame of "social determination" that guides not only the individuals that participate in the culture but the culture as it is defined and understood as the thing *as* itself.

Only by analyzing the worldviews of the people can we understand the contortions of the environments in the ways the cultures see fit to live and shape reality. Cultural worldviews become the catalyst by which the manifestations of the people and the processes used to inform the decisions of the people can be understood and appreciated in any informative sense. Outsiders views must merely be as observers, because the lack of the experiential will only reproduce the abstract, lending itself to the mutual exclusiveness any accurate perspectives on the culture.

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VERSE 4: An Appeal to the Muntu: A Proposition of Cultural Exclusivity

Introduction

In framing the context for a discussion of culture and the seclusion of its practice only to the people of that culture, many values and terms become indeterminate and conflicting. The use of racism and hate become synonymous with the “race conscious” individual and “ethnocentric” group. This discussion largely ignores the predominance of an underlying norm or standard of “whiteness” and seeks to frame the relationship of race and social activism as a universal evil that seeks to separate and divide humanity, and the romantic realization of integrationist peace.

In this essay, I will explore the relationship between the integrationist camp that seeks to eliminate race as a socially significant factor and the nationalist camp that believes race to be the defining aspect of all socially reality in relation to the practice of race consciousness. This discussion becomes as profound as it will be obstreperous, because the implications of its resolution are as local as the individual and far-reaching as the American society. This is the context by which all other social questions of race for the “African in America”¹ become significant. The existence of Historically Black Colleges and Universities become liable to the claim of the integrationist that they are racist and should be dissolved, as do Black social organizations such as ABPsi (Association of Black Psychologists), and ASCAC (Association for the Study of

¹ This term “African in America” is a representation of an ontological or fundamental “being” of a people that is based on their worldview and metaphysical existence. The need of a term that moves beyond the understanding of the “African” people as a race is embodied by the definition of the people in terms of their thought and behavior (i.e. their worldview). I use this only to describe the people and use the term Black in the political context of organizations, or institutions, and recognize that the people that form these categories that describe the action, purpose and function of the organization, and institutions are “African.”

Classical African Civilizations). This is a penetrating question that holds the determination of “African’s future” in its grasps. Is the existence of a “race consciousness” racist in itself and mutually exclusive to the American dream? My argument will be an overwhelming yes. The clash between the “African in America” and the American is in the understanding of the American values to be synonymous to the ideology and practice of white supremacy. This is the context of this article and the parameters for contemporary discussion concerning this consciousness.

The Fallacy of Intergrationism ad populum

When thinking in terms of a “race consciousness,” we must be aware of the conditions that formed the movement for integration and the means by which the term of race came to imply “otherness” and separation from the dominate white race. The mainstream race reform that emerged from the late sixties and early seventies was one by which the “African in America” resolved racial conflict through integration. The thought was that the “replacement of prejudice and discrimination with reason and neutrality” would lead the way to racial justice, and eliminate the power and domination of white supremacy(Peller 1995). One can only conclude through the recent events of racial profiling, Amadou Diallo, and the dragging of the African in Jasper, Texas that they were wrong.

Our discourse in the description and discussion of racism and exclusion must change, not only for the liberation of the “African people” but for the destruction of white dependency that the “white” person draws from the “African” with charges of racism and “reverse discrimination.” These labels are disempowering to the will of the “African” and

uses the position of ethics and morality to make the “African” feel as if they are the perpetrators of the greatest evil and tyranny the world has known, and that those who believe in the defining term of American can take the moral high ground and are more enlightened individuals. In other words, the whites use “racism” as a reason for “Africans in America” to not know and respond to the “white norms” that surround and marginalize their life world and experiences in America. Present day discourse reflects this historical misperception and propaganda that maintains white supremacy.

Today the story of the civil rights struggle is commonly told in a linear fashion, as if progress in race relations followed a teleological evolution—from an ignorant time, when racial status was taken to signify real and meaningful differences between people, to the present enlightened time, when race properly is understood in mainstream culture not to make a difference except as vestiges of unfortunate historical oppression or in terms of a vague and largely privatized “ethnic heritage.” This sense of linear evolution has lent an aura of inevitability to the story, as if progression from the racial caste system of American slavery to the widespread acceptance of integration and the transcendence of race consciousness as the unquestioned goals of social progress were historically determined. The process has been neither linear nor inevitable: the institution of racial integration as a social norm results from a cultural struggle played out in various theaters of social power over the meaning of racial domination and racial justice in America. The sense of integrationism as the inevitable means to achieve racial enlightenment reflects both the institutionalization of a particular understanding of what racism means and the marginalization not only of white supremacists but also of the opposing analysis, which is represented in the sixties by Malcolm X and other Black nationalists....(Peller 1995, p. 128)

This is the underlying structure that frame discourse in the status quo. This analysis is the description of the hegemony that undermines the independence of the “African” because its seeks to have us understand the articulation of a “racial identity” as being synonymous to the evils of “white supremacy.” This is a gross misperception that relies on the instilling of docility in the “African people” by taking away any consciousness that could make them act and recognize the utility of being “color blind.” It does not allow the

“African” to realize a ubiquitous “African” experience and reduces all actions based on the interests of the African to be identified as hateful and anti-American. Under this view, any idea that treats race as a significant social factor will be used to perpetuate hate and *racism*. Integrationists believe that racism is a consciousness that only manifests itself in terms of discrimination. The unconscious aspect is attributed to a biasness or prejudice-ness that is influenced by subjective factors. To the integrationists, acting out based on stereotypes is wrong (Peller 1995, 129), hence the reciprocal application of “racism” to “Africans.” This is all based in a will for blanket and neutral standards that seek to evaluate all people as the same and facilitate cross-cultural dialogue to bridge the gaps of human experience. Ideally this sounds wonderful to the white people, but is it beneficial or desirable? One can only conclude in a critical evaluation that the belief in a harmonious racial future rooted in integration is neither possible nor desirable for several reasons.

First, the practice of neutrality and “colorblind” policies are racist in themselves. In *Plessy vs. Ferguson* (1896), the standard of “racial neutrality” and “colorblindness” was cited and referred to for the first time in terms of the government action and constitutionality. A dissenting opinion by Supreme Court Justice Harlan is the basis for the ideological movement that exists today. In Harlan’s dissent, he does say that the constitution is colorblind and should not be interpreted with the consideration of race, or color in mind, however, the unarticulated part of his statement is:

The White race deems itself to be the dominant race in this country. And so it is, in prestige, in achievements, in education, in wealth, and in power. So, I doubt not, it will continue to be for all time, if it remains true to its great heritage and holds fast to the principles of constitutional liberty. (Carr 1997, ix-xi)

This is the basis of color-blind policy, because it is what the white people have used to enforce and maintain an ethic of oppression. This understanding of race, does not allow any movements of self-determination to define the struggle of resistance for the African and allow the acquisition of economic and political benefits.

This understanding of racial neutrality shows how the participation of a group in a hostile society can still believe in a dream of equality and live under a system of poverty, and discrimination and support its underpinnings. This is the understanding being neglected in American society and the groups of individuals that comprise the African culture. This means that the integrationist's criterion of racism is inadequate and latent with historical dispositions toward racist domination of the African and power preservation by the white. One must conclude by this that racism cannot only be understood in terms of discriminatory practices and extend into unconscious understandings of a group of people that are just as disempowering and damaging. This analysis is related to the understanding of positions of people regardless of race, but solely based on their relative positions in society defined only in terms of race.

A manifestation of this racism is evident in the routine slip of the tongue by whites in describing an African and their situation. Take the 1997 Cantera World Team Tennis competition. A broadcaster when speaking of the Williams sisters said, "They speak as if English was their first language." Would one say this to any American? Would one really think that the regions are that diverse in this country that other languages are spoken, that would make English a delicacy to know, or is it that these two African women who were in the top 10 in the sport spoke contrary to the image of what whites had seen and constructed for Africans? This is an example of how there are

underlying assumptions and unconscious values that influence the routine slip of the tongue that must force Africans to except the unconscious assumption of what they are and how integration furthers that binary.

This also translates into discrimination based on the decision calculus of individuals that control the access to major economic markets and societal resources. While these may seem to be unrelated applying this understanding to the larger social context makes this a dire situation for the African, because the existence of slavery and segregation isolated the African from economic progress and the acquisition of resources necessary to control their own economic future. Take Charles R. Lawrence III example of unconscious racism affecting equal opportunity and employment.

A crucial factor in the process that produces unconscious racism is the tacitly transmitted cultural stereotype. If an individual has never known a black doctor or lawyer or is exposed to black only through a mass media where they are portrayed in the stereotyped roles of comedian, criminal, musician, or athlete, he is likely to deduce that blacks as a group are naturally inclined toward certain behavior and unfit for certain roles. But the lesson is not explicit: It is learned, internalized, and used without an awareness of its source. Thus, an individual may select a white job applicant over an equally qualified black and honestly believe that this decision was based on observed intangibles unrelated to race. The employer perceives the white candidate as “more articulate,” “more collegial,” “more thoughtful,” or “more charismatic.” He is unaware of the learned stereotype that influenced his decision. Moreover, he has probably also learned an explicit lesson of which he is very much aware. Good, law-abiding people do not judge others on the basis of race. Even the most thorough investigation of conscious motive will not uncover the race-based stereotype that has influenced his decision (Lawrence 1995).

This is the most fundamental basis of the Africans' understanding needed to delineate between racism and its application to our establishment of separate institutions that seek to eliminate our subjection to this type of oppression. It is only in our consideration in the unconscious motive that we will be able to understand our need and right to self-determination.

Secondly, the construction of race as a term of mediation and cross-cultural dialogue is both misleading and a social category that limits the understanding of African oppression. Race itself is a term that implies a social construct that is separate from an assumed standard of being. We can see examples of this throughout history, because the era of civil rights were all about showing that "the race of Blacks" deserved the same privileges as the white people. Dr. Leslie G. Carr takes the argument further arguing that the concept and term of "race" excludes the affected group from having rights of self-determination and self-rule. This is a very persuasive context to evaluate the destruction of autonomy and self-identification in terms of institutions and "race specific" traditions and customs as being anti-American. This helps us understand why the "Black" communities and traditions are attacked as being anti-American and full of hate, because anything that seeks to give a "race" the right to determine their destiny and cultural practices would have to be anti-American by definition of those included in the nation.²

Finally, the understanding of race to be a conscious forming parameter requires one to give credence to its constructing power and defy social limitations of what an "American" can be. It is only understanding the demarcating effect of a term that

² Leslie Carr argues "self-determination is the freedom of a people to determine the way in which they should be governed and whether they should be self-governed." The American Revolution for her resulted in the establishing of a *white nation* that sought to exclude groups only classified as a "race" and not citizens that could participate in the process and institutions of society.

eliminates the characteristics of normality and human grace that one can begin to examine the situations that rise to protect the cultural integrity of ostracized groups of people that will never claim the resources of whiteness because they are labeled races. It is in this binary that intrinsic oppression rests and gains social relevance in the minds of all Africans, regardless of socio-economic location.

The case for Institutional Opposition in Pedagogy and Scholarship—the Merits of Cultural Exclusivity

The need for the reaction against literature and European scholarship that seeks to act for the individual assimilation of Blackness into American-ness and the eradication of the African culture in the process is the fundamental aspect of preserving culturally political institutions that seek to exclude diverting ideology and cultural aspects in the existence and functioning of the institution. It is the need of institutions to form texts that give voice to the African experience in America and challenge the universality of the white experience and tyranny of racial categorization. It is in the existence of these cultural organizations that the vitiation of the African people, both academically and socially, can be eradicated.

This theory is faced with strict criticism from liberals and conservatives alike, because it uses race as the basis of culturally essentialized and *exclusive* practices and ideology that in its core makes distinguishing values against the “white” norm of American society. The main critique of this view is that it is racist, but failure to practice this theory in praxis only results in the maintenance of the status quo, and the color-blind racism that institutionalizes unconscious and overt discrimination. When dealing with

this criticism, we must be ready to defend the articulation and practice of the term “racism” in a totally different light than the European constituents and white people are ready to engage upon.

First, we must distinguish the apriori understanding of “racism.” This is the most commonly used argument against the functionality or experiential aspects of “reverse racism” as being needed and justified. I will argue that this apriori understanding of *racism as understood as the bias of any person based on race* is artificial and must be grounded in the understanding of *racism as the historical oppression and abuse of the “races” by “Europeans” to maintain the constructed supremacy and exclusivity of their people based on power*. This definition considers how the apriori term and definition of “racism” is not based on any realistic existence of racism in the world. There is not anything that corresponds to the idea of racism as individual hate against a group of people based on skin color that has the same effect as the historical meaning of racism against African people in America. To do this, we simply must ask our selves two questions. Are white people understood as a race? If they were then we would not have their standards being used to judge other groups of people as the norm, because races are based on local shared characteristics from each other. So it is impossible to consider the historical abuse of a race by those who do not have the power to abuse a people not considered a race. White people are considered the people of a nation, because they have the right to self-determination(Carr 1997, p.21), and are the basis by which human property (individual existence) and society is structured around (Harris 1995). Secondly, we must ask can racism being understood as racial bias understand the existence of the hate intrinsic to that term? The answer would have to be no, because the hate whites have

against Africans is the result of a theory of superiority, while the understanding of racism that Africans have against whites are based solely on the protection of the African from white oppression. If one fails to accept this argument then any action by an African to escape oppression would be racist, because it seeks to bias, and take power away from the oppressor solely based on race, and the effects race has on the distribution of power and resources.

This argument definitely does not hold true in terms of function, because even the individual actions of an African hating a white person is not based on the maintenance of power it is based on the resentment of oppression and being oppressed. People speak as though the racism of Africans is the same as the racism against them. It is not the same in its effects or the experience, and the laws and traditions that seek to treat unequal people equal regardless of the racial barriers that enforce inequality merely elevate the consequences of racism to an idea based on concoction and over-emotionalism experienced by everyone even the oppressor and perpetrators of discrimination. Even if we understand the terms in the context of the original function we see that they are different.

Race is an ideological misnomer that continues to hide the oppression of the African American nation just as it did in the heyday of evolutionary racist ideology. If then we replace the term racist with the terms "White nationalist" and "African American nationalist," a number of problems described previously can be avoided. First, "nationalism" will not be confused with prejudice. Second, as long as White nationalism (oppressing) is understood as the opposite of African American nationalism (liberating), the two cannot be equated. (Carr 1997, 156)

We see it is ridiculous to make the oppressed accountable for the resentment for the oppressor.

It is this argument against understanding “race conscious” institutions as perpetrators of racism that allow us to see the merits in furthering the cause of oppressed groups and moving these type of criticisms into institutions that move theory from polemic to practice and ideology. Culturally exclusive institutions move beyond criticism into methodology that is sustainable because the criticism of the environment must make ways to correct the environment and the people inhabiting the hostile situations. The scholarship must move beyond the traditional polemic that the African voice has taken in America.

The use and formulation of structures to support the values of liberation must be built so that the values can be inculcated and have an innocuous effect against multicultural doctrines that disempower the African cultural movement. It is the lack of methodology that leaves the ideology in the African polemic unstable and unverifiable. We must create the environment that scholars study the methods that justify and perpetuate the ideas of African ontology and liberation through the essentializing or exclusivity of cultural participation. This becomes the agenda and structuralism that only African institutions or “Black” organizations (the name given to the status quo structures) can fulfill. If the African constantly relies on the goodwill of the multicultural camp to validate and incorporate the means of liberation for the African people, then the arguments above concerning the unconsciousness of racism will co-opt the movement and debase the inspiration of the people to seek liberation, reducing the African to the apathetic participant in multicultural racism and integrationist genocide.

The appeal to the Muntu—the Conclusion

Institutions that exist to perpetuate the culture of African people in respected field are both necessary and ideologically sound. It is only by understanding the need for such institutions as preliminary steps for the liberation of the African people and means for launching preemptive strikes against the white supremacist project that Africans can feel comfort and belief in their system of thought and against the tyrannies of racism. It is the Muntu (the intelligent being) that our people are that gives us warrant in establishing self-determined practices and means to establish practices (methodology) that furthers our worldview and confronts the discriminatory voice and power of the Europeans in their move to oppress more individuals and disempower more groups classified under the label of "races."

Only by recognizing and critiquing the move of the imperial project to "whitewash" the African out of existence by saying that they are equal and race is not a significant social category that forms experience or parameters of thought can the world be changed and the institutions of our socio-political experience be effective. This is the justification of separate institutions of study that legitimize and structuralize the scholarship that seems to have only been viewed as a polemical struggle without any base in method or institutionalization in the African people.

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VERSE 5: The Justification of a Separate Black Political Party: Transformative Politics and their Application to Supreme Court Jurisprudence in Timmons and Abrams.

Introduction

In the analysis of the Black political behavior in the two-party system, the African-American political attitude must be evaluated in the course of activism and the appeal of the two-parties to their needs and their existence as a shadow interest group. This paper will ask two major questions. First, does the exclusionary effect of the two party system in regard to race explain the rise of a Black only party that considers the African experience in America to be a warrant for political exclusion on the base of a racial interest, and secondly, does the local examples of racial politics and the evaluations of Abrams and Timmons provide regional models that can feasibly be extended to the national level. This paper takes perspective in line with the critical race theorist tradition and formulates an ideology and evaluative framework in evaluating the need and social justification of a Black political party. An exclusive Black political party is necessitated by the marginalization of the Black voice in politics and the isolation of Black participation as shadow interest groups. Section I is a brief description of the exclusionary effects that the two party mandates on Blacks through "electorate capture". Section II will be the discussion of the Timmons and Abrams cases in light of the strict constructionist views of the Supreme Court and their rulings' perpetuating the "Black exodus" from the two-party system. Finally, I will argue in Section III that the adoption of a transformative political view is necessary and that Supreme Court activism on these matters reversing their decisions in Abrams and Timmons is necessary to prevent a Black

exodus and backlash against the Courts and the political system. The effect of these precedents will be the local movements toward a Black political party by allowing the redistricting of Black Congressional units and mobilizing fusion candidates allowing for substantial political cross-over.

Black political participation and the ideas of a Black political party cannot be limited to the dependable swing vote in the major two party system. Historically this has been the case. In 1855, Blacks sought to form the New York State Suffrage Association, and the purpose and intent of this organization was to be the swing vote in the midst of the two political parties, hoping to draw attention and consideration in the election of their representatives³. We can see the reoccurrence of this issue in modern politics in which the two major parties bid for the consideration of the Black population by making promises to alleviate their horrid conditions.

Even now the question of Black political party identification is being raised and debated(Richmond Times Dispatch 2000). These questions must be centered on the ability of the Black community to mobilize behind a ideological base established in the experience of their people, not the bidding of the two dominate parties for the closest parallel to their interests or concerns or the relationship that the Black experience shares with the contemporary performance of the Democrats and the historical ties to the Republicans.

The Duality of America: Questioning the two party system.

³ Raymond Hall. (1978). *Black Separatism in the United States*. University Press of New England: Dartmouth College. p.28.

The two party system in America seeks to isolate core American values and place them on a spectrum ideologically limited between conservative and liberal. This two party system has served to disadvantage the major interests of the Black people in America and destroy experiential cohesion in political activism. The recent loyalty to the Democratic Party is not any better.

Although voters of color substantially benefited from partisan politics in the 1880s and 1960s, "it is important to recognize... that these two examples are quite exceptional, and they occurred during periods notable for the absence of a strong, competitive two-party system." According to political scientist Paul Frymer in his study of black Americans' relationship to the major parties, the normal status quo relationship between blacks and the major parties is one of "electoral capture," in which blacks have no choice but to remain in a party:

The opposing party does not want the group's vote, so the group cannot threaten its own party's leaders with defection. The party leadership, then, can take the group for granted because it recognizes that, short of abstention or an independent (and usually electoral suicidal) third party, the group has nowhere else to go. Placed in this position by the party system, a captured group will often find its interests neglected by their own party leaders.

African Americans, according to Frymer, are the victims of electoral capture within the Democratic Party because national party leaders of both major parties fear that public appeals to black voters will lead white voters - the median voter - to defect. Party leaders believe these median voters will defect not simply because they oppose the political goals of blacks, but also because the disagreement is over the issue of race, an extraordinarily divisive question(Smith 2000).

This issue of political capture is especially important in the consideration of a two party system and its ability to perform for the interests of the Black American. The dualism in the American political process makes it difficult for the voices of the minority to ever be heard. It also asks whether it is possible for the imprisoned interests of the Black American to escape the marginalizing effects of an oppressing system that only considers its voters' interest in terms of the "swing vote". This is the problem outlined above and the failure of the two-party system for the Black American. The fear of moderate backlash against perceived liberal policies do not contain the probable hope for Black

equality and political gain in this parameter. The Black voter is not making a decision for a candidate or party that supports their interests, rather the question becomes who will harm the interests of the group less.

It is understood by definition that the two-party system excludes voices, because it is the strict understanding of a system of politics focusing on two main ideological stances that sequester and categorize the interests of a population. The question becomes whether or not the minority can exist in this type of system. The racial interests of Blacks have been diluted based on the access to resources of the Democratic party and American environment; this is what has affected the Black people's relationship with the parties, and encouraged apathy and motivation for separate political organizations. The response of political parties to white discontent about Black empowerment has necessitated historical resistance to the parties with specific Black organization and political activism(Hall 1978, p.6-7). A separate Black political party is the best means to remedy this disparate treatment and preference of the white majorities interests. Third parties usually arise from the lack of attention to specific social issues or concerns, so the mobilization based on the invalidation of an experience should prove to be impetus enough for transformative politics based on racial identity.

Supreme Court Haterism: The issue of Black party participation.

In comparing and evaluating the status quo and the conceptual arguments for an exclusive Black Third Party, one must evaluate the inherent barriers that Court precedent

establishes in the organization of the such a party. Two rulings become significant in this evaluation. The first of which is Timmons.

In Timmons, the New Party, a liberal party with multi-racial constituents desired to co-nominate Andy Dawkins, a member of the Democratic Farmer Labor group ran for a seat in the Minnesota legislature. Under the proposed and accepted arrangement, Dawkins would appear as the nominee of both the Democratic Party and the New Party. This is called a fusion candidacy and is illegal in Minnesota¹. Dawkins had already filed a nomination petition as the nominee of the Democratic Party, and was refused by the local officers over Minnesota's election process. The New Party sued in federal court, and argued that Minnesota's ban on fusion candidacies stopped the freedom of association rights of their party. The Court ruled that in,

Purporting to balance the burden of Minnesota's anti-fusion rule against the state's interests in enacting its law, the Supreme Court in Timmons acknowledged that the New Party had a right to select the candidate of its choice. That right, however, did not inexorably lead to the right to select a particular candidate, such as one who was already the nominee of another party. According to the Court, "that a particular individual may not appear on the ballot as a particular party's candidate does not severely burden that party's association rights." Because the burden imposed on the New Party's associational rights was not severe, Minnesota was not required to provide a compelling justification for its law. Instead, the state was required only to assert regulatory interests commensurate with the law's impingement. This required no empirical verification of its concerns. Ignoring the largely partisan genesis of anti-fusion laws, the Court uncritically accepted Minnesota's reasons for forbidding fusion politics and even supplied reasons of its own. Although the state advanced a number of rationales, such as fear of voter confusion and overcrowded ballots, both the majority and the dissent gave the most serious and extended consideration to Minnesota's interest in preserving the stability of its political system. That interest, according to the six-justice majority, "permits the Minnesota Legislature to decide that political stability is best served through a healthy two- party system." Thus, the New Party's desire to nominate its chosen candidate did not outweigh Minnesota's need to "temper the destabilizing effects of party -splintering and excessive factionalism(Smith 1999)."

¹ Anti-fusion laws, reduce the number and potential impact of third parties on a two-party system , many of which empirically benefited from fusion. Minority political parties formed electoral coalitions with Democrats and were totally subsumed under the Democratic Party when anti-fusion legislation was common and enforceable. Anti-fusion laws, reduce the number and potential impact of third parties, many of which empirically benefited from fusion. minor political parties eventually formed electoral coalitions with Democrats and were totally subsumed under the Democratic Party banner after anti-fusion legislation was common and enforceable.

This has been the court's reliance in the local example of traditional satellite parties using the two-party system to their advantage and seeking to make a difference in the political process by forcing the Democratic Party to meet the needs of the disadvantaged racial party. This ruling shows that the strict constructionist political ideology of the Supreme Court is taking toll on the political means that Black Americans have in getting their interests heard in a two-party system.

These local motivations to involve the interests of minorities in the two-party system show a motivation and a judicial predisposition against the progression of political ideology and processes in favor of Black interests. One must ask, "How can the Black American make any led-way in a system that systematically limits participation in favor of the status quo, and legitimize the decision based solely on the assumption that a two-party system would equal more stability than a constructive minority party fighting for Black issues. This precedent, taken in light of the most recent presidential situation, only confirms that the trends of Black participation in setting the agenda of the two-major parties will become more peripheral and distant from the center of the ideologically based and issue focused concerns of the Democrats, and wholly ignored by the Republicans. Abrams, however, raises a different issue.

In Abrams, the Supreme Court ruled that the newly redrawn congressional districts were done with the excessive consideration of race. The Court ruled that this was impermissible and went beyond traditional means of participation in the two party system.

...the Court in *Abrams*, including Justice O'Connor, rejected the Davis Court's conception of redistricting as a normal part of politics, insisting that black legislators' and voters' successful efforts to influence the apportionment process were infected by an impermissible emphasis on race(Smith 1999).⁴

This ruling constrains the ability of the Black voters to ever get a majority and compete directly against the members of the majority party with no based support in each district. Considering the Courts attitude toward Black interest in the two-party system and their obvious predisposition in favor of the two-party system's maintenance, one must ask if there is any hope at all for Blacks in the political process at all. Smith even concludes that the consequences of the Courts actions would be more dangerous for the prior concern of stability than the gerrymandering of one district in Georgia. He argues that,

This consequence flows from the ingrained two- party bias of our political system. Even where a state's interest in two- party politics is not directly at issue in a case, it is almost always implicated. Political participation does not occur in an abstract vacuum but rather in the two- party system that the states have been allowed to perpetuate. Thus, the failure to defer to state legislative choices in the redistricting realm - choices which are presumptively consistent with two- party politics - may not only defeat the particular redistricting plan at issue but may also harm the underlying two- party Process(Smith 1999).⁵

Abrams holds that the consideration of race in any form of the redistricting cannot be allowed because it draws from the normal aspects of party participation and formulates a preferential system giving favor to race and its results in voting. Smith continues to argue that these precedents pave the way for a Black exodus from both of the political parties and would severely undermine the two party system because you are not getting democratic competition in the parameters of the political system. One is now dealing with

revolutionary forces that marginalized participants in society see as their only alternative to being heard.

We must understand what is going on here. It is the discrimination of the Black interest based on adumbrated judgments inscribed on the decision calculi of this Court that have created these type of tensions. The fleeing of the Black American from the dominant political structure must be seen and evaluated this light. Blacks have traditionally been a party within a party. They have been parallel or satellite groups that focus on the use of a majority party to get some of their interest considered and politically dealt with in the course of policy and political agendas. This has resulted in the unity of the Black interest with the Democratic Party and the depiction of that party as the ultra-liberal party by Republicans.

The Court's control of these two cases clearly show a bias in favor of the dominant white two party system for two reasons. First, it is showing the Court's willingness to label any political group with a majority of Blacks a racial group and control these political entities even though they were voluntarily established by function of the districting and determining their political interests based solely on race and secondly, it shows the Court is ready to deny ample opportunity to Blacks and racial groups because it is against the interest of the two party system that is dominated by whites. We do not see the same charge raised against the Republicans for a racially homogenous membership, nor does the Court limit their ability to practice and redistrict. This clear and distinct bias only alienates the interests of the Black people in the two party system, and in many ways encourages the motivation to leave it. Ideally, this is the proposal of the paper and would be welcomed. While it is true, that the marginalization of Black

interests in the two party system would encourage the exit of the Blacks from the system and the establishing of a Black independent party, but my argument throughout the paper is that the need of the Supreme Court to view race under a paradigm of transformative political thought and reverse the rulings in Timmons and Abrams, because failure to do so still eliminates the ability of an independent Black party from having Congressional voting districts and not encounter an extreme version of the problems that Third parties usually encounter when competing against the two dominant parties. Considering the Court's recent rulings I would not be surprised if it sees the independent Black party as inappropriate by the precedents established in Timmons and Abrams because two party stability would always be apriori for the Court and thus eliminate the possibility of an independent third part based exclusively on race. This "exodus" must be understood as the racist elimination of Black interests from the participation in the two party system and sanctioned by the Supreme Court. This is political tyranny and should be reversed by Supreme Court activism. Failure to do so only destroys the system the Supreme Court is apt in preserving.

Perhaps a fair - or at least doctrinally consistent - response to the threat of black exodus from the two- party system is a non-response. Political factions, after all, enjoy a right to exit from (and to move within) the two- party system that is fundamental to maintenance of a liberal democracy: "Citizens may, of their own volition, move away from other citizens - based on whatever reason they have for moving - and still govern themselves as a public entity." Thus, it is not unconstitutional for the government to grant ballot access to or otherwise to recognize the Republican Party even though its modern incarnation consists of racially conservative whites who exited the Democratic Party because of its embrace of racial liberalism. As long as membership in the Republican Party continues to be available on a race-neutral basis, the party may constitutionally exercise public power despite its views and the racial homogeneity of its membership. The same is true of those whites who exit the two- party system, voting, for example, for George Wallace's American Independent Party, or Ross Perot's Reform Party: they exit of their own volition, and, no matter what their reasons for exiting, we cannot divest them of political or policy authority simply because of those reasons, or because of the racial composition of the parties for which they vote. Thus, the liberal democratic

argument for non-response asks: since we have allowed whites to exit freely from the two-party system, why should there be special concern with a black exodus?

The circumstances under which racial minorities would exit the system, however, differ significantly from those under which whites do, particularly after Abrams. First, "African-American political choice is [unusually] constrained" because black voters almost uniformly support candidates and parties that represent racial reform. Yet the threat of white exit constrains the degree to which a party or candidate is willing to stand for racial reform. White exit, whether from or within the two-party system, has a capacity to transform a major party - particularly on matters of race - that minorities manifestly lack. The transformation of the Republican Party from the black-supported party of Lincoln to one of racial conservatism attests to the transformative capacity of white movement. By contrast, Democrats' steady movement to the political center (and at times to the right), reflecting the party's uneasiness with the appearance of being dominated by blacks, evidences the check that the threat of white exit exercises even on the black-supported party. Thus, even before Abrams, black options within the traditional two-party system were severely limited. Abrams, however, more drastically differentiates racial groups by imposing on minorities unique disabilities in the apportionment process: white homogeneity is not taken into account in assessing the constitutionality of white voters' demands in the redistricting process, but black homogeneity is weighted prominently. Under these circumstances, blacks do not enjoy the same right to exit from and within the two-party system as do whites. Blacks' potential exit from the two-party system cannot be viewed as an ordinary exercise of liberal democracy's right to exit. Their actions must instead be viewed as the product of discrimination - more akin to the formation of South Carolina's United Citizens' Party than to voluntary disaffiliation (Smith 1999).

This is a clear indication of the subversive nature of two party politics and the need for Court precedent and opinion to move to a more substantiated calculus that takes race considerably more important and see it as a framing issue for political discussion and conversation in upcoming situations that have the undertones of part separatism. Smith's analysis of the Black exodus is important because it sets the forum for the discussion of the possibility of a Black political party if the Supreme Court changes its interpretations of "race" in political party terms. Historically, discrimination and racism have led to the establishing of separate Black organizations and associations (Hine 2000).

Many scholars have argued that this is just the process of "exiting" and preserves the democratic process, but in fact it is not because it has a racial impact disproportionate to the coincidental choices that the Black people would make in switching parties. In

other words, there is a cause based in discriminatory practice that motivates and dictates the actions of a group. This means that the occurrence of racism directly hinders the ability of the Black people to mobilize within the two party structure, which absolutely destroys their rights of participation and political alignment with either party. This exodus could mean the end of Black interests being considered in politics at all, and a white backlash resulting in the isolation of the Black voter from the booth and political platforms. Conservatism in response to the actions that Blacks felt was necessary would ensue and public policy ignoring the realities and lack of opportunities for the Black American would follow. This would radically undermine the two party structure that Supreme Court precedent seems so interested in preserving. The move to create a Black political party in the midst of Supreme Court opinion and a Black exodus would only marginalize the Black voters and their political interests even more than in the status quo. Democrats and Republicans would be enraged and react solely on the fact that race has become a political issue and the foundation of a reactionary political party despite the Supreme Court's intent. It is here that the intersection of race and politics become most important when dealing with political parties and a transformative perspective of race becomes most useful in considering the establishing of a Black political party for the sake of preserving a democratic political system.

A move to the Transformative Political perspective: The use of race in Supreme Court opinion and the establishing of a Black party.

There are a few things that we know to be true at this point. First, the two party system is exclusionary and holds the Black voters as political captives in a battle to

appear the most moderate, effectively silencing and marginalizing Black concerns.

Second, the Court has opted in favor a the dominant two party system in all instances that have tried to allow a infiltration of Black concerns in setting party agendas in both Timmons and Abrams and finally, the move to establish an independent Black political party in the midst of a Black exodus would be undermining the political party system as we know it. The question now becomes what is to be done. Clearly the Supreme Court has to be the first obstacle tackled.

The Supreme Court must understand that the inevitability of race as a experiential model of voter identification is a natural part of Black political participation and the rational voter model of the electorate(Jackson and Crotty 2001). Transformative politics, or the use of race as a constructive and positive determinate of parties and party participation is necessary to understand the need for an independent Black Party. Smith argues that the common political scientist's approach and understanding of the political parties is inadequate for a transformative political view. The political scientist's understanding of political parties to reflect the preference of the voters is not applicable to the question of how the voters ideas about issues get reinforced. His argument then extends to the parallel of my explication of the Supreme Court and the two party system. Parties that ignore the race consciousness of its members and the issues this experience brings merely reproduces that effect in the populace and the electorate making the moderate white voter see these issues as illegitimate and defaulting to the racist nature of the two party system.

This is why the reversal of Timmons and Abrams is so vital to the establishment of an independent Black party. The consciousness of the moderate white voter can be

changed to accept the possibility of race constituting agendas and even a political party. The practice of the political party can be extended into the population as the acceptance of value divergence and a race calculus in the Black voter that necessitates separate or specific considerations from the party. Fusion candidacy and gerrymandering become key instruments in this scheme, because the influx of Black issues in the major parties would allow the membership to become more sensitive and share in supporting the independent Black party even though it is exclusive. Smith explains that ,

...this one-dimensional view of the function of parties as purveyors of the voters' opinions neglects the genuine potential of political parties to change public attitudes on questions of race. There is, for instance, substantial evidence that political parties were the catalysts for changes in public opinion on civil rights in the 1960s. Parties are capable of practicing transformative politics not only by advancing remedial policies on the race issue but also by reshaping public perceptions about such policies (Smith 1998).⁶

He continues by saying that,

Transformative politics, however, are only possible in a legal environment in which courts recognize their validity and necessity. It is fair to characterize the combined force of the Court's reverse-racial gerrymandering and affirmative action jurisprudence as an implicit rejection of the validity of transformative politics. The Court, however, has failed to grapple with their necessity. One could take solace in the Court's even-handedness if the disability on transformative racial politics were balanced by an equally effective prohibition on the negative use of race. The pernicious use of race, however, permeates partisan politics in both the legislative and electoral spheres, and most such conduct is immune to the Court's Fourteenth Amendment jurisprudence (Smith 1998).

The Supreme Court must act to reverse its decisions and allow some form of equity and participation for Black Americans. Its lack of focus when dealing with race and its arbitrary and vague justifications can no longer be tolerated and must be annulled to ensure the proper course of action and justice for the Black American. Transformative politics is the perspective that should be used to in examining this relationship between

race and political participation. The need of a Black separation from the two dominant parties in light of Court precedent that supports it is invaluable to the preservation of Black political activism in this country.

The anti-discrimination jurisprudence of the Supreme Court only suppresses the people of color more and affords disproportionate benefits to the white voter. The Supreme Court's anti-discrimination jurisprudence offers citizens of color no remedy when a disproportionately white, conservative legislative body such as the United States Senate plays racial politics with minority nominees or refuses to pass legislation to protect their interests. This is the overarching effect of political marginalization and justifies the need of a transformative ideology that sees race in a positive and constructive light.

The failure of the Supreme Court to adopt a transformative ideology only furthers legislative discrimination, specifically in the electoral process would only make the discrimination in the electoral process and party structure worse.

Nevertheless, the electoral process - more specifically, candidates' perceptions of white voters' susceptibility to racial stimuli - encourages the deployment of non-transformative racial politics. Responding to a seemingly basic question about the propriety of the State of South Carolina continuing to fly the Confederate flag over its capitol, Texas Governor George Bush refused to denounce the flag as a racist symbol and refused even to say whether the flag personally offended him. Similarly, Senator John McCain of Arizona, also a contender for the Republican presidential nomination, chose to appease white racial conservatives by calling the flag "a symbol of heritage." It is this virulent persistence of anti-black electoral politics and its consequent legislative manifestations that render the Supreme Court's skepticism of transformative politics irrational on its face and unequal in its application (Smith 1998).

The need of this reconsideration and focus of Supreme Court opinion on race and not the apriori reasons of political stability must be overturned by the use of transformative politics and the establishing of local Black participation in the name of a Black political

party. The need for this is undeniable considering the elimination of Black political concerns from the center of Democratic and Republican political practice. The conceptualization of an independent party is the best way for Black individuals to establish candidates and influence the crossover and support of the Democratic Party without having to compete with it as a major party and escape the fate of most third party movements.

Conclusion

The establishment of a Black political party must be done under the legitimacy of the Supreme Courts clarification and tolerance of race as a deciding factor in party membership and constitution. Failure to allow the maneuverability of the political party and make it the product of a reactionary Black exodus from the two major parties only dooms the political system as we know it and the ability of Black people to politically activate in this country. The need and use of an independent Black party to remedy the lack of representation and agenda constitution in the parties is the best indication of its feasibility.

The Supreme Court in *Abrams* and *Timmons* reified its commitment to a two party system , but fails to articulate clear reasons for its decisions, other than its colorblind evaluations that should be reconsidered under a transformative viewpoint in dealing with political parties. The activity of the Black voters and their participation in the major parties should provide a clear and distinct reason that the decisions should be reversed and the ability to evaluate and substantiate race as a core interest of the Black

voter be seen to legitimize a separate Black political party. This idea has always been on the mind of Black intellectuals and political activists.

A Black political party would speak to the needs of the Black voter, but more importantly the needs of the Black community. It is the best means of political activism and the remedy to the lack of Black participation (Hall 1977, p.104). Many scholars will argue that the Black voter will and can decide candidates based on issues and perception and that a Black political party will do nothing to effect their rational decisions. They will most likely point to the increase in turnout in this years presidential elections, however, this criticism fails to account for Smith's articulation of "Black electorate capture" by which the increase in turn out is only demonstrative of an cost-benefit calculus that asks "who will hurt us less." It is this type of decision-making that the two party system cannot escape and only perpetuate in the midst of Timmons and Abrams as the Supreme Courts standards for evaluating race in political parties and politics. The need of a separate Black political party that feeds off of the two major parties to gain crossover support, not membership, and nominates candidates without sole purpose of being the "swing" vote, is the best chance that Black Americans have in achieving equitable political participation and competition in America.

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