CHAPTER 8

What Happened to Black Studies?

After the creation of African American studies units, educators engaged in fierce debates about the field's academic mission and definition. The stakes were high, since in the eyes of many, legitimacy, status, and recognition in the academy hung in the balance. Many critics, both internal and external to Black studies, criticized it on two interrelated grounds: they claimed that it lacked curricular coherence, and that by not having a single methodology it failed to meet the definition of a discipline. As a result, many educators in the early Black studies movement pursued a two-pronged quest: for a standardized curriculum and an original, authoritative methodology. At the same time, many scholars in the Black studies movement questioned whether either of these pursuits was desirable or even attainable. In other words, while some scholars have insisted that African American studies must devise its own unique research methodology, others contend that as a multidiscipline, or interdisciplinary discipline, its strength lies in incorporating multiple, diverse methodologies. In a similar vein, while some have argued for a standardized curriculum, others argue that higher education is better served by dynamism and innovation. I argue that, in the final analysis, the discipline's acceptance in academe, to the extent that it has gained acceptance, has come from the production of influential scholarship and the development of new conceptual approaches that have influenced other disciplines. Pioneering scholarship and influential intellectual innovations, rather than a standardized pedagogy or methodology, have been the route to influence and stature in American intellectual life.

A tension between authority and freedom animates these debates. As late as 2000, an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* reinforced the idea that multiple perspectives and methodologies had retarded the progress of African American studies. The author criticizes the diverse character of African American studies courses at different universities. "The Ohio State class is chronological with a literary bent," she writes. "Duke's take: cultural studies. The Penn course filters everything through a W.E.B. Du Bois lens, and N.Y.U. combines pan-Africanism with urban studies." Of course, this sampling reflects the range one would find in the departments of history, sociology, or English at these same universities. But the author stresses disarray. "There's a reason 30 years after the discipline developed that people still wonder whether the black-studies curriculum represents a coherent subject or a smorgasbord," she concludes. In this view, the discipline's strengths—"eclectic, expansive, experimental curricula"—are also its weaknesses.[1]

James B. Stewart, a former president of the National Council of Black Studies, shares this anxiety about disarray. In his view: "We do everything—the diaspora, sex, history, language,

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economics, race." Yet he seems oblivious to the fact that each of these areas has been vital terrain for research innovation. "We don't have a paradigm," he laments. "That is why we don't make progress." If achieving this unified paradigm is the measure of progress, then Stewart, judging forty years of African American studies, must see little. Longtime Black studies educator Abdul Alkalimat shares Stewart's view that "standardization means the discipline exists."[2] Arthur Lewin, a professor of Black and Hispanic studies at Baruch College, agrees that Black studies lacks "a coherently stated rationale," a consequence, in his view, of having "burst full-blown upon the academic scene a generation ago."[3] Critics of African American studies often echo this view. Stanford scholar Shelby Steele calls African American studies "a bogus concept from the beginning because it was an idea grounded in politics, not in a particular methodology. These programs are dying of their own inertia because they've had 30 or 40 years to show us a serious academic program, and they've failed."[4] This view recalls that of Harvard political scientist Martin Kilson, that African American studies did not merit departmental status because it lacked its own unique methodology.

Much of the 1970s was spent formulating ways to standardize course content in African American studies across universities. For some, this impulse flowed from a view that greater cohesion in courses would better promote the social and political mission of the field. For others, standardizing the core curriculum signified professionalism and held the promise of elevating the reputation of the field. In a 1975 proposal, "Consortium for the Development of Black Studies Curriculum," Gerald McWorter (Abdul Alkalimat) noted with concern that "a uniform scholarly curriculum and pedagogy have yet to emerge and be accepted." This was particularly significant because "the heart of Black Studies is its curricular and pedagogical approach to the unique problems that it faces." Moreover, "the need for a model curriculum is growing because there exists considerable variation from campus to campus."[5] In 1980 the National Council of Black Studies adopted a model core curriculum, enshrining history, cultural studies, and social and behavioral studies as the three primary content areas for the field, and this tripartite approach continues to characterize the way many departments approach hiring and curricular development.

Assisting the effort to standardize teaching—especially for introductory courses—was the emergence in the 1980s of two popular textbooks. Abdul Alkalimat and his colleagues at "the People's College" published *Introduction to Afro-American Studies*, which included extensive discussion of Marxism, Pan-Africanism, and Black nationalism, while Ron Karenga's *Introduction to Black Studies* projected his cultural nationalist worldview known as Kawaida as a model for Black studies pedagogy. Many African American studies programs utilized these textbooks in the classroom. Yet these books—emerging in the midst of the field's incorporation, and penned by ideological partisans—bore witness to contradictory trends: both texts emphasized ideological positions that had waned, at least among intellectuals. Showing a fairly rapid move away from Black nationalism as a paradigm for the field, a 1980 survey of ten major Black studies programs found that only two identified Black nationalism as their "ideological rubric," while the other eight emphasized ideological diversity and rejected becoming "narrowly entrenched in any ideology." In the view of these eight programs, "a

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vibrant faculty dialogue is seen as a major stimulus" in the philosophical evolution of the field.[6]

In addition to seeking an authoritative curriculum, some sought to create a new methodology for the discipline. Scholars and teachers influenced by Afrocentrism have been among the most consistent advocates of creating a distinctive methodology. A school of thought within the larger universe of Black studies, Afrocentrism captured significant media attention in the 1990s. A variant of a long tradition of Black intellectualism focused on marking the achievements of African civilizations prior to European contact, contemporary Afrocentrism attracts a coterie of educators who often exist in an uneasy relationship with major scholarly developments in the discipline. Afrocentrism is most famously associated with Temple University professor Molefi Asante. Lamenting what he saw as "the absence of a comprehensive philosophical position" at the founding of African American studies, Asante developed "Afrocentricity," which stresses the need to recover and "center" African knowledge systems. In his view, this is "the only way you can approach African American studies."[7] Interestingly, the Black student movement was intensely engaged with contemporary struggles and riveted by Black Power, but it was not particularly focused on ancient Africa. There were exceptions: Askia Toure taught such a course at the Experimental College at San Francisco State; but as a rule, the students' Black nationalism was political as much as cultural, and as interested in contemporary struggles in the African diaspora as in Egyptian achievements.

In Black historiography, there is a long and rich tradition of countering the distortion of African culture and history produced by European writers, and of vindicating the achievements of African civilizations prior to colonialism.[8] The earliest Black history writing frequently held up Egyptian and Ethiopian history to refute notions of Black inferiority, argue against slavery, and imagine a different future for Black people in the United States and around the world.[9] By J.A. Rogers, John Henrik Clarke, Carter G. Woodson, William Hansberry, and others, this scholarship was vital to the struggle against white supremacy and very influential in Black communities. In some respects the Marxist Guyanese scholar and transnational activist Walter Rodney continued in this tradition with his landmark 1973 text, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, which detailed the long economic exploitation of the continent and offered a framework for understanding contemporary underdevelopment. For many audiences today, the term *Afrocentric* simply signifies the rejection of Eurocentric approaches or paradigms, and Asante has described his goal as "the emancipation of African knowledge and people from the hegemonic ideology of white racial domination."[10] And he sometimes asserts that what Afrocentricity entails is simply an emphasis on African agency. But the stress on Black agency arguably characterizes all of Black studies. As noted earlier, the articulation and defense of a "Black perspective" defined the field from its inception. Rather, Asante advocates a particular version of Afrocentrism, or as he and others variously term it, Afrocentricity, Africentricity, or Africology. "Afrocentricity," he declared in one of his many texts devoted to defining the term, "is the ideological centerpiece of human regeneration, systematizing our history and experience with our own culture at the core of existence. In its epistemic dimensions it is also a methodology for discovering the truth about intercultural

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communication."[11]

The inclination to look for insights in the African past, hoping to escape or resolve the legacies of colonialism and enslavement, is fundamental to the approach of leading proponents of Afrocentricity. One of Asante's students, Greg Carr, now a professor of African American studies at Howard University, endeavors to draw upon "deep Africana thought" and the traditions of "classical and medieval Africa" to address the needs of Black people in contemporary society. A key mission of African American studies, Carr believes, is to reconnect "narratives of African identity to the contemporary era."[12] Maulana Karenga, founder of the us organization in Los Angeles, who coauthored the *Handbook of Black Studies* with Asante, believes that "the fundamental point of departure for African American studies or Black studies is an ongoing dialogue with African culture. That is, continuously asking it questions and seeking from it answers to the fundamental questions of humankind."[13]

Asante has undertaken extraordinary efforts to develop African American studies along Afrocentric lines, founding the important *Journal of Black Studies*, as well as the first PhD program in African American studies at Temple University, in 1988. He has been tireless in asserting and claiming influence. "I have written more books than any other African American scholar," he said in 1994. "I have written 36 books." As of 2009, that number had risen to seventy, and his followers often refer to this as "Asantian" literature.[14] Afrocentric students and educators convene at the Cheikh Anta Diop annual conferences sponsored by the Diopian Institute for Scholarly Advancement in Philadelphia. Afrocentric thinkers have also played significant roles in shaping the National Council of Black Studies and its annual conferences.[15]

While Asante and others insist that Afrocentricity is the field's most appropriate methodology, it has struggled to gain traction in Black studies and has inspired considerable criticism from within the discipline. Critics have offered various objections, notably that Afrocentricity reinforces troubling discourses and hierarchies, falls short as an actual research methodology, and lacks engagement with the actual history and culture of Africa. A common concern is that it rejects the hybrid nature of African American genealogy, culture, and identities, and—ironically, in light of its focus on agency—slights the Black contribution to the making of the New World. Scholar Tricia Rose agrees with Greg Carr that an important African intellectual tradition preceded European contact, but in her view scholars must confront the transformations wrought by processes of enslavement and colonialism. "We are in the West, in the so-called New World," she contends, and should "examine the circumstances we are in, examine the hybridities that have emerged from it."[16]

As Melba Boyd puts it, "In the Afrocentric haste to discard all things European or American they have also discarded that which is uniquely Afro-American." Moreover, echoing another widely shared critique, Boyd notes, "What the Afrocentrists fail to realize, in their quest to claim civilization, is that our struggle, fundamentally and above all else, is for freedom for the common people. We do not desire to be the "new" aristocracy. Monarchies were not democracies. We aspire to a new society that does not worship royalty, racial hierarchies, gold, corporate power, or any other manifestation that demeans the human spirit."[17] Literary scholar Joyce A. Joyce echoes this criticism. "Ironically," she observes, "some Black nationalists and hardened Afrocentrists share superiority complexes and desire for power

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(disguised as agency) with the very hegemony they allegedly oppose." For Joyce, Black studies is "a creative change agent" conceived "as an intellectual discipline to deconstruct the injustices rooted in a disrespect for cultural differences."[18]

Similarly, Erskine Peters finds that Asante's *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* problematically asserts that "all African societies find Kemet (ancient Egypt) a common source for intellectual and political ideas." Peters objects to this "imperialist logic" and finds it "dangerously like the erroneous historical paradigm which argues that European culture brought civilization to the rest of the globe." Moreover, he argues that Asante's theory had jumped ahead of his research, noting that "one comes away from Asante simply not having learned very much about African values."[19] Other scholars have objected to the definition of race "as some kind of innate biological bond" advanced in Afrocentric writings, as well as the portrayal of culture, which, historian Barbara Ransby argues, is "equally erroneous. . . . Culture is not something fixed, static, and ahistorical" but is "dynamic and constantly in flux." "Afrocentrists who look back and romanticize a fixed moment in the history of ancient Egypt as the source of our salvation from our current dilemmas," Ransby argues, "fail to fully appreciate this fact."[20] Likewise, Perry Hall argues that Afrocentrism promotes "a static view of culture and history. . . . For Blacks to discover who they were is important, but only part of discovering who they are, who they can be and where they can go."[21]

Afrocentricity has arguably had more influence in community-based pedagogy, cultural programming, and heritage tours than in the production of research. This is best exemplified by the influence of Kawaida, a worldview formulated by Maulana Karenga as a means of promoting self-determination, unity, economic cooperation, and creativity in Black American communities. Influential in some early Black studies programs, Kawaida's biggest influence by far has been its offshoot, the Afrocentric holiday Kwanzaa—which, falling in the school vacation week after Christmas, has spawned some of the most well-attended public programming at cultural institutions around the country. Afrocentricity has a didactic dimension that emphasizes the need to "recover" and "restore" lost value systems, ways of knowing, and cultural traditions more generally. The Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations—an organization founded by Chicagoan Jacob Carruthers, a longtime professor at the Center for Inner City Studies at Northeastern Illinois University—embraces this mission, which tends to distinguish it from more academic African American studies. Reflecting the mix of education, cosmology, and ritual that characterizes many grassroots expressions of Afrocentrism, the Association promotes spiritual development, the veneration of African ancestors, the application of ancient Nile Valley culture in contemporary life, and holistic approaches to healthy living.[22] As a result of this more didactic and spiritual orientation and the coincident incorporation of Black studies into the academy, a wider chasm than had existed during earlier eras has developed between Afrocentric teachers and writers and more mainstream African American studies scholars.

Still, Afrocentricity's forceful critique of European "civilization," its emphasis on Black achievement, and its mistrust of white-led education have strong resonance. And context is crucial. The continuing assault on Black humanity in post-Jim-Crow America is central to its appeal. Afrocentricity gained visibility in the 1990s, a time when journalists, sociologists, and

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politicians promoted narratives of inner-city drug use, rampant criminality, and family breakdown. These narratives appeared to indict individual behaviors yet suggested a communal failure, all the while ignoring the post-civil-rights history of urban disinvestment, regressive taxation, massive job loss, and aggressive policing targeted particularly at young men of color.

Whether it is Afrocentricity or something else, most scholars in Black studies reject the effort to impose a single methodology, seeing it as unrealistic and stifling. Rhett Jones, cofounder and longtime chair of the Department of Africana Studies at Brown University, was an early critic of the "one size fits all" approach to the discipline. "In its early years, Black studies wasted considerable human, intellectual, and material resources in battles over finding the master plan for the study of Black people," he argues. Similarly, he feels that "much energy was also wasted on responding to the charge by America's Eurocentric, racist disciplines that Black studies had no methodology of its own. Neither did the Eurocentrists. And they still don't. . . . Historians are no more agreed on methodology or theory than are anthropologists, sociologists or philosophers."[23] In contrast to those who see pluralism in Black studies as a weakness, Jones believes that this characteristic has been vital to the development and staying power of the field. Pluralism was "a credit to black studies" he observes, as "its founders realized there could be no master plan as to how the discipline should serve black Americans."[24]

Historian Francille Rusan Wilson similarly resists the effort to impose a single approach. "There's not one way to be black or to study black people," she asserts. "The discipline is quite alive," in her view, "and the differences indicate that."[25] Political scientist Floyd Hayes concurs, stating, "One must ask whether there should be conformity to a model curriculum and a single theoretical or ideological orientation in African American studies." Hayes believes it is important to cultivate "a more flexible and innovative atmosphere" so that "African American studies can continue to grow and develop."[26] Reacting to criticism of the eclectic philosophies in early Black studies, philosopher Angela Davis observes that it was "precisely the lack of unitary theoretical definition during those early years" which made the field so "intellectually exciting." In her view, it was fruitless to imagine transcending the very real contradictions and disagreements in the early Black studies movement.[27]

While the significance of teaching to the rise of Black studies in the United States cannot be minimized or discounted, ultimately it has been the quality of research and scholarship that has fueled the development and stature of African American studies within academia. Despite persistent portrayals of Black studies as intellectually barren and steeped in racial essentialism, scholars in the field have produced work that has broadly influenced academic scholarship. It is beyond the scope of this book to catalogue and assess the groundbreaking works by literary theorists, sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers, historians, and others in the broad field of African American and diaspora studies that were published in the 1970s and 1980s. Scholars such as Robert L. Harris, Vincent Harding, Sterling Stuckey, Joyce Ladner, Henry Louis Gates, Darlene Clark Hine, Mary Helen Washington, Robert Stepto, John Blassingame, Mary Frances Berry, Andrew Billingsley, and Ronald Walters, among scores of others, continued the long tradition of Black scholarly innovation. However, this point needs to

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be stressed: a Black scholarly tradition did not begin with the creation of Black studies programs, but these programs provided a new infrastructure and incentive for its growth and development.

One important example of scholarly innovation in Black studies was the rise of diaspora studies. Defining the scope and subject of Black studies was a point of contestation in the early years of academic incorporation. Despite the efforts of university administrators to confine the field to the United States, a persistent desire to encompass the global African diaspora ultimately spawned considerable conceptual innovation and scholarly productivity.[28] Black studies scholars have from the movement's inception been international in their origins and much more diverse than the Black American population as a whole, which in the late 1960s was overwhelmingly U.S. born. Notwithstanding the nomenclature of their university unit, many scholars in Black studies have embraced Pan-Africanism, the Black World, or the African diaspora as a guiding paradigm for teaching and scholarship.

As illustrated in the case studies throughout this book, the Black nationalism of this student generation was internationalist; the Black Panther Party saw itself as part of a global upsurge. Nineteen-sixties Black nationalism was forged amid rising critiques of the U.S. war in Vietnam and in explicit identification with, and admiration for, leaders of African liberation struggles and new nation-states. Two leading icons for this generation—Muhammad Ali and Malcolm X—exemplify this twin thrust. Both embraced their African origins, traveled extensively on the continent, and criticized U.S. efforts to suppress Black diasporic affiliations and anti-imperialist stances. Related to the turn toward Black Power, or variations thereof, was the decisive break from cold war strictures that had narrowed the terms of dissent in the United States. Activists challenged the idea of "American exceptionalism," which had worked both to deny the centrality of racism in the United States and to sever earlier transnational alliances and identifications.

This internationalist Black consciousness continued, even accelerated, in the 1970s. The early Black studies movement coincided with major anticolonial struggles in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau; struggles against white settler regimes in southern Africa; and a widening African solidarity movement among Black American radicals. According to St. Clair Drake, "The country was deeply mired in the Vietnam War but many black youth were much more interested in how the war against Portugal was going in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau than in the war in Vietnam." In his view, it was critical to understand that "*the modern Black studies movement emerged within this international context*."[29]

As a result, it was fairly common to find Pan-African in a program's name or in its course offerings. At Lehman College in New York City, remembers Charlotte Morgan-Cato, "the rallying cry 'Portuguese wine is African Blood' was well-known among the students as we regularly hosted African scholars, Black nationalist leaders, radical public intellectuals and local political leaders who espoused the Pan-African cause."[30] According to Drake, "Newly organized Black studies programs contributed to the raising of consciousness with regard to Africa between 1970 and 1974, and to the emergence of the group that organized a very effective lobby," the African Liberation Support Committee.[31] The committee organized annual African Liberation Day demonstrations and played a leading role in planning the Sixth Pan-

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African Congress in Tanzania. Many in the African Liberation Support Committee orbit, including Owusu Sadauki/Howard Fuller, Nelson Johnson, Abdul Alkalimat, Jimmy Garrett, C.L.R. James, James Turner, Lerone Bennett, and Haki Madhubuti—were deeply connected to the Black student and Black studies movements. The strong activist commitment to African solidarity by scholars in the early Black studies movement concretely and dramatically illustrates the field's international focus. The defeat of Portugal in 1974 brought to a close one chapter in the long career of U.S.-based Pan-Africanism. The struggles against apartheid, white rule in Zimbabwe, and the South African occupation of Namibia continued, but the African Liberation Support Committee disbanded in the ideological conflict between Marxists and Black nationalists. Additionally, Morgan-Cato, at Lehman College, felt that "student interest in the movement of international liberation" was also cut short in the mid-1970s as a result of fiscal crisis, retrenchment, and shifts in student outlooks and priorities.[32]

Still, a global consciousness in Black studies was not simply a product of solidarity struggles in the postwar era. It has marked Black historical writing ever since its origins in the nineteenth century. As many studies of Black historiography have shown, writers from the early nineteenth century forward have been invested in rewriting the Western distortion of African peoples and societies, as well as keenly interested in erecting a powerful counterdiscourse to the statelessness, dispersal, subjugation, and dehumanization of Africans in diaspora. W.E.B. Du Bois is most famously associated with this effort, but its practitioners are numerous.[33] In addition, the most important Black community institutions—notably churches and newspapers—paid attention to the African diaspora. Until McCarthy-era repression undermined African American anticolonial organizations and networks, major Black newspapers, especially the *Chicago Defender* and *Pittsburgh Courier*, gave extensive coverage to developments in Africa and the Caribbean.[34]

Although the Black studies movement is often thought of as resolutely U.S.-based, many of its early scholars tried to persuade universities and funders to connect formally the study of continental Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States. There was widespread agreement that the typical American curriculum had "ignored the African heritage of African Americans, characterizing them as having begun their existence in North America as a tabula rasa—blank slates to be imprinted with Euro-American Culture." This was a difficult battle, in part because African studies had been programmatically established after World War II as a result of cold war pressures to develop knowledge about an area of the world that the United States viewed as part of Soviet strategic designs. These programs, in the words of historian Robert L. Harris, "had no real link to Black people in the New World." African studies "became wedded to a modernization theory that measured African societies by Western standards. African history, culture and politics were explored more within the context of the colonial powers than with any attention to African cultural continuities in the Western Hemisphere." In contrast, according to Harris, Black American intellectuals had long resisted this "compartmentalization of knowledge about Black people."[35]

The Black studies movement unleashed a salvo against the colonial paradigm, but faced resistance from administrators and faculty in African studies. White scholars, many of whom objected to the focus on identity and politics in Black studies, dominated African studies

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programs in the United States. When Afro-American studies began at Boston University, its director, Adelaide Hill, wanted to forge ties with the already existing African studies program. "The problem of the relationship of the two areas has agonized both faculties," she reported. "Some Africanists," she found, "do not see a relationship between what they are doing and the new Black American emphasis." In the end, the two units agreed that there are "common and autonomous zones between the two areas." Similarly, Harvard's Department of Afro-American Studies sought to include African studies under its purview, but met administrative resistance, in part because the department was seen as too political and too influenced by Black nationalism.[36]

American-born sociologist St. Clair Drake labored his entire academic career to promote the study of the Africa diaspora in all its scope and complexity. He often reminded his audiences that "the first African Studies programs were at Fisk and Lincoln, but these received no grants from the foundations," in contrast to the white-run African studies programs at elite universities that were lavishly funded during the cold war era. The push by some scholars in the Black studies movement to unify the two fields produced tensions. The Africanists "fear the political impulse associated with Afro-American Studies and the possibility of the lowering of standards," Drake found, and "in their effort to maintain their own preserves" sometimes shifted from undergraduate to graduate education. At Drake's Roosevelt University, however, African and African American studies were taught together.[37]

Never a monolith, Black studies has given rise to varying conceptions of diaspora. In 1969 Drake proposed a summer institute in Jamaica. "This location serves to emphasize one of the objectives of the institute, that of teaching Negro history and culture in its cosmopolitan pan-African and South Atlantic context," he noted. The workshop intended to emphasize "cultural continuity" between Africa and "the black diaspora" in South, Central, and North America. "The institute will be concerned with the cultural, historical, and political connections between Africa, the United States, and the Caribbean," Drake wrote.[38] In contrast, at a seminar of Black studies directors, the director of Princeton's program advanced several rationales for a global approach, including illustrating diversity in Black life. His framework, which emphasized difference as much as commonality, shows the varied approaches to the study of diaspora that have always marked the discipline. "The black experience varies geographically and culturally and therefore falls within the study of comparative racial and ethnic relations," he argued. "There is a common denominator in being black," he felt, "but race is a lesser factor in the definition of the person in some situations. For example, in the Caribbean area generally, class is more definitive of who a person is than race. In the United States the opposite is the case."[39]

The early Black studies movement was unable to immediately achieve the goal of encompassing African studies.[40] Nonetheless, courses in Afro-American studies departments often extended beyond American borders. A 1980 examination of ten major programs found that all of them "encompass the Diaspora in their scope," and that all "address their curricular attention in some measure to Africa" even while putting most emphasis on the experience of Black people in the United States.[41] The Program in Afro-American Studies at Brown pioneered coursework in the African diaspora beginning in the 1970s at the initiative of

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Ghanaian scholar Anani Dzidzienyo.[42] In a 1977–1978 survey of Black studies programs, Drake found that "all give some attention to the implications of an African origin for Black people in the New World, and increasingly a "diaspora" frame of reference focuses some attention upon the Caribbean and Latin America for comparison with the United States."[43] When Roscoe Brown was appointed to direct the new Institute of African American Affairs at New York University, he announced that "the term 'Afro-American' will include our Black brothers from the various parts of the Caribbean, such as Haiti, Puerto Rico, the West Indies, the Virgin Islands, and other Caribbean peoples who are of African descent." His attention to "brothers" and omission of "sisters"—certainly ironic in light of the stress on subjectivity and identity in the Black studies movement—was common in these years before feminist assertion dramatically affected language and consciousness. Still, Brown put resources behind this pledge, convening a yearlong seminar in 1971–1972 on the Black experience in the Caribbean and South America.[44]

The Center for African and African American Studies at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor was an important exception to this early failure to formally include African studies under the rubric of Black studies. At its founding in 1970, Niara Sudarkasa, a professor of anthropology and future director of the center, "ensured the new center would deal not only with African American experience, but also with sub-Saharan Africa itself." Godfrey Uzoigwe, an Africanist at Ann Arbor, noted, "CAAS is one of the few black studies programs in which the comparative emphasis was built into its structure from the beginning."[45]

Yet other avenues for forging networks and affinities among scholars of Africa and the diaspora emerged, most notably the African Heritage Studies Association, which was founded in 1969 after John Henrik Clarke and others led a protest at the annual convention of the African Studies Association (ASA) in Montreal. Black scholars of Africa had long felt marginalized in the ASA and had been pressing for greater Black leadership in the organization and for the ASA to play a more active and progressive role in influencing American policy toward Africa. In Montreal, the Black Caucus of the ASA declared the Association "fundamentally invalid and illegitimate" and even "injurious to the welfare of African people." It assailed the group's scholarship, leadership, and affiliations. "This organization which purports to study Africa has never done so," the caucus declared, "and has in fact studied the colonial heritage of Africa." They condemned "the intellectual arrogance of white people, which has perpetuated and legitimized a kind of academic colonialism and has distorted the definition of the nature of cultural life and social organization of African peoples."[46]

A major point of conflict was the demand for "racial parity" within the ASA, with an equal number of board seats designated for whites and blacks. Several radical whites, like Immanuel Wallerstein, supported the Black Caucus, but most white Africanists objected to many or most of their demands. As John Henrik Clarke recalled, the white Africanists "resented the projection of an African people as a world people with a common cause and a common destiny. More than anything else they resented the Afro-Americans being linked with the Africans in Africa." In Clarke's view, the white Africanist scholars possessed the sense of dominion and paternalism that had been generated by European colonialism and Western imperialism more generally. "Africa to them was a kind of ethnic plantation over which they

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reigned and explained to the world." The conflict at Montreal gave rise to the African Heritage Studies Association (AHSA), which in the early 1970s, prior to the creation of the National Council of Black Studies, served as an annual gathering and institutional network for Black studies scholars. Dr. Clarke, its founding president, defined the AHSA as "committed to the preservation, interpretation, and creative presentation of the historical and cultural heritage of African people" throughout the world. "We interpret African history from a Pan-Africanist perspective that defines all black people as an African people," he insisted. "We do not accept the arbitrary lines of geographical demarcations that were created to reflect colonialist spheres of influence."[47]

The meetings of the AHSA reflected the various currents of Black nationalism in the 1970s, as well as the continuing interest in "relevance," or contemporary policy and political issues. The 1978 conference in New York illustrates these concerns and the global character of the AHSA. Most of the presenters were university scholars, but also on panels were the Nigerian ambassador, the African National Congress representative to the United States, and several attorneys and filmmakers. Politics and culture dominated points of discussion at the conference. Session titles included U.S. Foreign Policy in Southern Africa; Blacks in American Politics; Caribbean Nation Building; The Military in Post-Independence Africa; Forum on Southern Africa; A Decade of Assessment of Black Studies; Black Artists in America; Caribbean Literature; Black Men, Black Women and the Black Family; Affirmative Action and Social Change; Integrating Black Music into the Curriculum; and Legacy of Colonialism.[48] Notwithstanding what the Association's name might convey, the conferences of the African Heritage Studies Association during the 1970s were contemporary in emphasis, and they strongly demonstrated the interest of the Black studies community in the United States in African liberation struggles and new nation-states. Yet, like the ASA from which it had bolted, the AHSA remained predominantly male and seemingly oblivious to the rising tide of feminism. On this score, its Black nationalism offered a circumscribed vision of postcolonial change, protecting male leadership prerogatives and forgoing discussions of alternative visions of postcolonial leadership and liberation.

Notwithstanding efforts by administrators or others to limit the scope of African American studies to the United States, these early efforts to formally include Africa as well as the diaspora in Black studies departments and professional organizations ultimately bore fruit. Four decades later it became increasingly common to encounter Departments of African and African American Studies or Departments of Africana Studies, which explicitly take Africa, the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America as their subject. Campuses as diverse as the University of Illinois, Dartmouth College, the University of Minnesota, Duke University, Harvard University, Pennsylvania State University, the University of Kansas, Stanford University, the University of Texas, and Arizona State University join together African and African American studies. Of course, the limitations of budgets and faculty size may interfere with fully realizing the promise of interdisciplinary, truly global coverage. And to be sure, there continue to be significant challenges in integrating African and African diasporic studies in the same units, as well as tensions and divergences between Africanist and African Americanist scholars. The process of defining African diaspora studies, indeed of defining

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blackness, is ongoing and the subject of lively debate. But the crucial point is that the Black studies movement ultimately achieved a degree of success in undoing the colonialist compartmentalization of research and knowledge that had insisted on severing African studies from African American studies.

In addition to diaspora, another development in the Black studies movement that generated innovative research and helped to propel the discipline forward in the midst of an ongoing discursive climate of "crisis" was the rise of Black feminism and its influence in both Black studies and academia more generally. Black feminist scholars insisted on the need to move beyond a monolithic focus on the racialized subject and take into account interconnected, and multiple, subjectivities and oppressions. They argued for the significance of gender, but also brought heightened attention to class and sexuality, an interpretive move that influenced other disciplines in addition to Black studies. However, this outcome was by no means easy or assured. Black women intellectuals had to wage a fight to legitimate their perspective, and they often encountered withering criticism from male—and sometimes female—scholars in their effort to cultivate a feminist revision of the Black studies movement. According to Rhett Jones, a Brown University Africana Studies professor, "Our discipline also failed to address Black women's issues," which he feels is "surprising in a field claiming to take a new perspective on scholarship."[49] Many Black women have argued that this failure flowed from the male chauvinist, homophobic tenor of the nationalist 1960s. "The truth of it is," Toni Cade reflects, "a whole lot of organizations back then in the sixties floundered, fell apart, and wasted a lot of resources in the process, due in large measure to male ego, male whim, and macho theatre. That story needs to be told."[50]

Many scholars of modern Black feminism have characterized its emergence as a reaction, on the one hand, to the sexism of the Black Power movement, and on the other hand, to the racism in the white women's movement and broader U.S. society. But more recently, historians have argued that the racial identity politics of the Black Power movement were a generative influence for the rise of gender identity politics in Black feminist organizing and assertion.[51] Both perspectives provide useful insight on developments in the Black student and Black studies movements. These movements had blithely embraced male leadership and conventional gender roles, but at the same time, they had also encouraged not only critical consciousness, self-affirmation, and a group-based identity but also individual empowerment and personal agency. And all these phenomena stimulated the rise of Black feminism(s) and, later, Black women's studies.

The publication of the landmark text *The Black Woman* by Toni Cade in 1970 opened a period of growth, questioning, and assertion in Black women's activist, literary, cultural, and academic organizing. Notably, the paperback appeared at a time when the major media characterized feminism as a white woman's movement of little relevance or concern for Black women, and when the majority of Black men and women readily agreed with this assessment. In these years, white feminist activists evinced little awareness of, or interest in, the particular experiences or needs of women of color. Moreover, the ethos and political strategy of the Black Power era was indisputably race first. Widely recognized as a writer and literary figure, Cade was also a leader in the Black studies movement, having advised protesting students

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while a professor at City College and designed an innovative plan for a Black studies department there. The *Black Woman* was an eclectic volume of activist writing, and it featured three essays by Cade. In one she denounced conventional gender roles for what she described as their debilitating impact on the movement. Instead of trying to prove one's manhood or womanhood, she asks, in a creative turn, why not just seek "blackhood"? In response to critics who might call patriarchy a white system, she cautions that "we have not been immune to the conditioning; we are just as jammed in the rigid confines of those basically oppressive socially contrived roles. For if a woman is tough, she is a rough mamma, a strident bitch, a ball breaker, a castrator. And if a man is at all sensitive, tender, spiritual, he's a faggot." The worst part was the effect of such thinking on a liberation movement. She called it "a dangerous trend" to "program Sapphire out of her 'evil' ways into a cover-up, shut-up, lay-back-and-be-cool obedience role."[52]

Her essay "The Pill: Genocide or Liberation?" frankly explored the tensions and debates between Black men and woman over contraception in light of the long history of reproductive abuse and theories of Black genetic inferiority, on the one hand, and patriarchy and conservative sexual norms on the other. The Nation of Islam, for its part, denied a woman's right to control reproduction. Leader Elijah Muhammad famously said a "woman is man's field to produce his nation."[53] Still, Cade's advocacy of a Black woman's right to reproductive self-determination was resolute. Her essay exemplifies the kinds of discussions that feminists were committed to having and the kinds of topics they insisted were political. Yet Cade entered a political minefield.

A striking feature of Black studies units when they first formed on hundreds of campuses was their male character—although, to be sure, every academic discipline was overwhelmingly male in the early 1970s. A 1968 survey of doctoral and professional degrees conferred by Black institutions found an extraordinary gender gap: 91 percent of the degrees were awarded to Black men, and 9 percent to Black women.[54] This translated into a stark gender disparity on collegiate faculties. At the University of Pittsburgh in 1972, for example, 8 percent of the professional staff was Black, and of this group just 14 percent were women. Among the white professionals, the presence of women was, at 17 percent, slightly higher, but this number too showed the disproportionate male presence in academe. The distinctions were sharpest in the upper ranks. White males filled half of the associate and full professor positions at the university; Black men held 31 percent of them, white females 19 percent, while Black women held just 3 percent of these higher paying, more prestigious positions. In the University of Pittsburgh's Black studies department, only three women numbered among the seventeen faculty members.[55] As one observer noted, this large differential reflected broader social patterns, as signified dramatically in a 1971 *Ebony* tabulation of the nation's one hundred leading Black Americans, which listed only nine women.[56]

When asked in the 1990s whether women in the early Black studies movement had been given their due, Mary Jane Hewitt, who had directed various affirmative action programs at UCLA, responded, "Well, there weren't that many opportunities, given or offered, for black women to do much of anything." In "the late sixties," she explained, "there weren't that many women around, very few, and certainly not in top positions."[57] To be sure, this scenario was

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changing, as women of all backgrounds began to enter the academic profession in greater numbers. But the small numbers of Black women scholars and administrators in the academy encountered marginalization, consternation, and resistance. Constance M. Carroll, a Black woman who later served as a college president, wrote in 1972: “Black women in higher education are isolated, underutilized, and often demoralized.” Denied the same opportunities for mobility and networking, they faced numerous challenges and obstacles. “Black women have had very few models or champions to encourage and assist them in their development,” Carroll wrote. “Black women have had to develop themselves on their own, with no help from whites or Black men, in order to ‘make it’ in academic institutions. This has taken its toll on Black women,” she found, “in all areas of life and work.”[58]

It is important to note that Black women scholars raised critical questions about the male character of the Black studies movement from its inception. At a 1969 conference of Black studies directors, Lillian Anthony from the University of Minnesota remarked that some faculty at her institution said, “We don’t need a woman,” after her name had been put forth by the search committee. “I am very much concerned about the Black woman’s role in Afro-American studies departments or Black studies departments,” she said. “I think it negates much of who we really are, and when men participate in that kind of deliberation, they are also negating themselves.”[59]

The passage of the Education Amendments Act in 1972, prohibiting discrimination in federally funded institutions of higher education, and an investigation by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare of several hundred universities for noncompliance with federal guidelines regarding equal treatment of minorities and women, raised expectations, awareness, and discussion about hiring practices in academe. Universities had to submit written affirmative action plans in 1972 specifying their goals and timetables for achieving equal treatment of women and minorities. Many Black women feared that unless they asserted themselves, Black men and white women would be the prime beneficiaries of affirmative action policies. While some people claimed that Black women had an advantage, as their hiring would do “double duty” and fulfill a race and gender mandate, Black women knew the more likely outcome was their falling through the cracks. This legal/employment/policy circumstance encouraged Black women to define the uniqueness of their status in American life and to emphasize their commonalities as well as differences with the positions of Black men and white women.

The early to mid-1970s saw the appearance of courses, campus lectures, and programming devoted to Black women, including what was reportedly the first class on Black women writers, taught by Alice Walker at the University of Massachusetts in Boston in 1973.[60] At the University of California, Los Angeles, a group of Black women students, faculty, and staff came together as the Black Women’s Research Committee and launched a petition campaign demanding that “the university become more sensitive to the needs of black women on campus, and demonstrate that sensitivity via immediate action” in creating courses, lectures, and programming focusing on the Black woman. They “were appalled at the lack of programming for black women at UCLA” and noted that there had never been any courses anywhere in the university focusing on Black women.[61] In May 1973, the Black Women’s Research Committee,

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in conjunction with the Center for Afro-American Studies, held the first Black Women's Spring Forum, a monthlong series of panels and lectures titled "Images of Black Womanhood." The primary objective of the forum was "to present an exhaustive, in-depth exploration delineating the recurring philosophical themes contributing to the development of Black womanhood in the United States." Titles of the panels and lectures included: Women in Africa, Women in America, Black Women in the Media, Black Women in Theater Arts, Black Women in Law/Politics, and Black Women at UCLA. In 1977, Toni Cade delivered the keynote address at a Black Women's Conference at the Institute of the Black World. This Atlanta-based think tank had been founded in 1969 as a bastion of mostly male scholars, who for many years generated complex analyses of the politics of race and class in the United States. By decade's end, the IBW, too, was feeling the impact of Black women's demands for a voice in Black activist and intellectual programming.[62]

An outpouring of Black feminist organizations, manifestoes, cultural production, literary anthologies, and polemical writing marked the 1970s, helping to set the stage for a new generation of academic scholarship in Black women's studies. The National Black Feminist Organization was formed in 1973, and in 1977 the Combahee River Collective boldly asserted the importance of a Black lesbian perspective amid the widespread disavowal of the Black lesbian experience in the Black liberation movement. In 1981 Bell Hooks published *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, followed in 1982 by the landmark anthology *But Some of Us Are Brave: All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men: Black Women's Studies*, edited by Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith. Hull and Smith's introduction called out the racism in the women's studies movement, and sexism and homophobia in the Black studies movement. "Only a feminist, pro-woman perspective that acknowledges the reality of sexual oppression in the lives of Black women, as well as the oppression of race and class, will make Black Women's Studies the transformer of consciousness it needs to be."[63] The rise of Black feminism strongly influenced the rise of Black women's studies, yet it is important to recall that the two are not synonymous. Not every scholar of Black women necessarily subscribes to the radical politics of Black feminism or produces scholarship in a feminist idiom.

By the 1980s a new generation of Black women scholars, especially in the humanities, insisted on gender as a category of analysis and began to place Black women at the center of their research. An examination of the emergence of the first generation of Black women scholars after the creation of Black studies illuminates Black studies' highly gendered landscape, as well as the various triggers for the cultivation of Black women's studies. Historian Sharon Harley underwent a political awakening as a student in the late 1960s: wearing an Afro, leading her college's small Black student organization, selling copies of the Black Panther Party newspaper, reading poetry from the Black arts movement, and attending the Congress of Afrikan Peoples in Atlanta. "Nothing to that point," she recalls, "approximated the euphoria I experienced at the Atlanta event." Close to three thousand participants attended sessions in Atlanta. But Black Power was complex and contradictory. Harley may or may not have attended the workshop on Black women, but the coordinator, Amina Baraka, began by quoting the cultural nationalist activist Ron Karenga: "What makes a woman appealing is

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femininity and she can't be feminine without being submissive." Baraka advised women to submit to their "natural roles," learn to cook better and improve their personal hygiene. Apparently, Black women's bodies needed to be disciplined, improved, and strikingly, made cleaner.[64] Still, as Harley's story illustrates, the Black Power movement was important in shaping the consciousness of a future feminist historian. Harley also considered herself a leftist and studied at Antioch College with veteran labor and civil rights activists Jack O'Dell and Bob Rhodes, who had also exposed graduate students in Chicago to Marxist theories of political economy in Saturday classes at the Communiversity on the city's south side.[65]

As part of a cohort of graduate students at Howard in the 1970s who would publish pioneering work in Black women's history, Harley had a vibrant and supportive graduate education but quickly encountered racial and gender exclusions in the profession. At conferences of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, the American Historical Association, and Organization of American Historians, she found few sessions that focused on women. Owing to this neglect of women's and specifically Black women's history, Harley and fellow graduate student Rosalyn Terborg-Penn found a niche in the new Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, and in the Racine Conference on Women organized by the white historian Gerda Lerner. A postwar Communist, Lerner was a pioneer in both Black and white women's history and published the important documentary collection *Black Women in White America* in 1972. "Although Lerner was the major force behind integrating black women into the profession and the scholarship of history," Harley still found that "the field at-large effectively made black women invisible or insignificant." She eventually concluded that only through the concerted agency of Black women historians would a new scholarship emerge. This was a critically important insight. "I was part of a movement of early black women historians who understood that our effort to encourage white women historians to adopt a more inclusive women's historical discourse was too laborious and that we had better do something about it on our own." As graduate students, Harley and Terborg-Penn coedited a groundbreaking volume, *The Afro-American Woman: Struggles and Images*, published in 1978, which featured essays by young scholars who would go on to be leading researchers in African American women's history.[66]

Rosalyn Terborg-Penn's scholarship has transformed scholarly views on Black women in the suffrage movement, but it took nearly twenty years to get her book published, not only because of the heavier teaching load at an HBCU, but also, more significantly, because of the effects of racism and sexism in academe and the publishing world. Entering graduate school in 1972, Terborg was the first person in Howard's history department to declare a dissertation topic in Black women's history. "I would have an uphill struggle," she wrote, "because I had to convince the faculty that black women's experience was viable." One professor called her topic "Mickey Mouse" and urged her to study something serious, such as Eleanor Roosevelt. In the professional circuit, she encountered white women historians who challenged her findings of racial discrimination in the suffrage movement, and Black male scholars who argued that "women's history was feminism and that it distracted us from the struggle to legitimize black studies." Terborg-Penn recalls that she and several of her Black female colleagues "noted this phenomenon—racism from white feminist scholars and sexism from black nationalist male

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scholars—and we tried to develop strategies to overcome the prejudice we discerned." In response, she and historian Elizabeth Parker began a series of conversations among colleagues across the country, which culminated in the formation of the Association of Black Women Historians in 1981. Terborg-Penn still struggled to find a publisher for her manuscript. One editor wanted her to give more attention to white women in the suffrage movement, but Indiana University Press, in a series under the direction of Darlene Clark Hine, a pioneering scholar of Black women's history, finally published the highly anticipated *African American Women and the Struggle for the Vote, 1850–1920* in 1998.[67]

Black women scholars had to struggle against the white male academy, as well as with condescension and opposition from within Black studies, simply to justify research on African American women. In writing her pathbreaking study of enslaved women, *Ar'n't I a Woman?* Deborah Gray White faced numerous hurdles. Many white historians criticized her for using the WPA slave narratives rather than traditional plantation sources, which of course were authored by slaveholders. But White was also challenging the core gender politics of Black nationalist scholarship, and she suffered retaliation. Her chair in African American studies at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, made a contemptuous remark about her work and, she later learned, failed to support her bid for tenure. Evidently he was displeased that she had declined to perform the role of "official hospitality hostess" when their department hosted a meeting of the National Council of Black Studies. As a commentator on a panel discussing a book on Black nationalism and slavery, White endured twenty minutes of "an unrestrained verbal thrashing, the likes of which no scholar should have to endure," for merely suggesting that an examination of women and gender would have enriched the analysis.[68] These experiences show how the patriarchal politics of Black nationalism circumscribed the intellectual potential of the new discipline. Deborah Gray White, Darlene Clark Hine, Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, Sharon Harley, and many other Black women scholars have all been instrumental not only in redefining the fields of history and African American studies but also in doing the difficult and bruising breakthrough work that has helped the discipline of Black studies come closer to achieving an inclusive counterhegemonic vision.

By the 1980s, male scholars in African American studies were feeling the effects of Black feminism and Black women's scholarship more generally, and a few began to rethink their own research and pedagogy. At the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, John Bracey participated in a two-year faculty seminar on the differences, similarities, and underlying assumptions between Black studies and women's studies, and he later developed three new courses devoted to Black women's history.[69] Teaching a course in Black women's history in the Black studies department at Ohio State prompted Manning Marable to publish the essay "Groundings with My Sisters: Patriarchy and the Exploitation of Black Women" in 1983. "Black social history as it has been written to date has been profoundly patriarchal," Marable concluded. "The sexist critical framework of American white history has been accepted by Black male scholars."[70]

In Marable's view, this serious problem required that Black male intellectuals and activists engage in a rigorous retraining and rethinking. "Black male liberationists must relearn their own history," he argued, "by grounding themselves all the time in the wisdom of their sisters."

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While the essay's brief overview of history illustrates Black women's oppression and resistance, and shows the prevalence of patriarchal gender roles in Black nationalist movements, Marable was also intent upon emphasizing a counter-Black-male feminist tradition. He highlighted especially the vigorous advocacy for women's suffrage and equality by both Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Du Bois.[71] Rhett Jones later argued that "Black studies was miraculously rescued by Womanist scholars of both genders, various races, and not—as some would have it—by those copycatting white feminists." This view perhaps spreads the credit too thin, as particular recognition is due Black female intellectuals, but his framing of the new scholarship as a rescue is instructive.[72]

The emergence of scholarship in African diaspora studies and Black women's studies, to take just two examples, exemplifies a critical point about the recent history of African American studies: on balance, its stature in the academy has rested on the production of innovative and influential scholarship. The quest for curricular standardization and a single authoritative Black studies methodology has generated interesting debates and useful materials, yet tellingly, neither ever seems to have been achieved, and still the discipline develops and moves forward.

The early Black studies movement opened a broader space for subaltern discourses in academia than many of its founders initially expected. The Black student movement and the rise of Black studies inspired a push by other marginalized groups for representation in research and teaching, including Asian Americans, Native Americans, Latinos and Latinas, all women, and gays and lesbians. As one scholar put it, "Just as the larger Black liberation movement has catalyzed activity against various facets of oppression, Black studies has given rise to calls by other groups—Puerto Ricans, Mexican Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, white ethnics, women and gays among them—for scholastic treatment of their experiences."[73] This is an extremely important legacy of the early Black studies movement. Yet, at the same time, Black studies has had a vexed relationship to these other developments, and a particularly fraught relationship with ethnic studies. On the one hand, Black studies has been an inspiration and fellow traveler to Asian American and Latino studies, yet on the other hand it's a wary coethnic and questioning ally. Since it was in the vanguard of the campus struggle, Black studies generated an image of power and clout in the eyes of many Latino and Asian American activists, yet Black people, especially in the housing and employment markets and certainly in the criminal legal system, have often felt vulnerable, even expendable, in relation to other nonwhite ethnic groups.

Ethnic studies first emerged in California and New York in the late 1960s. Typically, Asian American, Mexican American, or Puerto Rican students joined campus revolts launched by Black students, and made their own demands for curricular inclusion. Administrators in California often sought to group Asian, Latino, and African American studies together as ethnic studies. Sometimes this term arose following unsuccessful efforts to constitute a separate college of Third World studies. The shift in terminology itself reflects a process of rising administrative design and control. Sometimes, as at Los Angeles and San Diego, Black student leaders welcomed such joint efforts, but at other campuses the proponents of Black studies objected to unified consolidation. This was most famously true at Berkeley, where the original

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demand for a Third World college was ultimately incorporated into the university as the Department of Ethnic Studies, which Black studies faculty seceded from in the mid-1970s. They desired autonomy.

The scholar Alan Colon argued that grouping these diverse units together under ethnic studies "while clearly providing the chance for comparative study, would tend to make for conflicting agendas in program content to the disadvantage of all. No racial or ethnic studies program," he believed, "should lose sight of its specific intellectual-cognitive goals and tasks for the sake of a tenuous universal ethnic studies program unity." He stressed the pitfalls of having to compete for scarce resources, a view that was particularly widespread in the cash-strapped 1970s. "To introduce the element of racial-ethnic groups competing for diminishing resources under the same administrative umbrella has no positive advantage and may be viewed in some instances as a central administrative tactic to divide and conquer in some institutions hostile to Black studies." Yet this chronicler ended by advising that "possibilities for inter-racial and inter-ethnic cooperation in other projects on and off campus" should be "explored, nourished and actualized."[74] An assessment of the field conducted in 1994 for the Ford Foundation conveyed a continuing ambivalence. "In the coming years," Valerie Smith and Robert O'Meally predict, "The question of where African American studies will stand in relation to ethnic studies and revamped American studies programs will be prominent and difficult." They urge supporting collaborations but caution that many in Black studies fear losing ground unless its visibility and autonomy are preserved. In the words of a Black studies scholar, "When people say 'ethnic' they don't usually mean Blacks."[75]

At most institutions, ethnic studies arose after African American studies and has been incorporated separately into the academy. Yet, on many other campuses, especially those with smaller student-of-color populations, African American studies is grouped together with Asian, Latino, and Native American units to form a single ethnic studies programs. The newer programs, such as many Asian American studies programs established in the Midwest and East Coast in the 1990s, face the numerous challenges of being small, understaffed, and intellectually marginalized or misunderstood.[76] Still, it seems that when the questions of turf, existence, and administrative form are settled, the possibilities for greater intellectual discussion and collaboration along the lines of comparative race and diaspora can develop. A cutting-edge infrastructure for interdisciplinary, transnational ethnic studies has begun to emerge, including journals such as *Social Text, American Quarterly, Small Axe*, and *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, as well as numerous conferences. These collaborations and conceptual innovations have exerted a powerful intellectual influence in African American studies and ethnic studies in the twenty-first century.

In the early 1970s, many skeptics of various political persuasions had questioned whether African American studies would have longevity in colleges and universities. Some more conservative scholars predicted that its lack of intellectual reputation and overly political orientation would consign it to a short life, while many Black scholars questioned whether the academy would ever truly incorporate an intellectual insurgency led and defined by Black people. As we have seen, many of the more radical, expansive, community-connected visions for Black studies were defeated before they even had a chance to get off the ground. Moreover,

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the United States has a diverse and localized system of higher education, and many colleges and universities traversed this era relatively untouched by the Black studies movement. But despite numerous obstacles and challenges, African American studies has not only survived but also grown to have international stature and presence.[77] Crucially, despite ongoing rumors of its demise, African American studies continues to attract intellectuals who have produced the scholarly innovations and breakthroughs that have helped bring longevity to the discipline.

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