Black Canadian Studies and the Resurgence of the Insurgent African Canadian Intelligentsia

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Abstract: This essay seeks to account for the appellation, factors and forces implicated in the nascent articulation of Black Canadian Studies. I suggest that the emergence of Black Canadian Studies is a dialogic interplay of the African Canadian intelligentsia and community’s proaction toward appreciating the agency of African Canadians, and, a reaction to racist epistemology and research that objectifies them. I seek to account for this dialogue as a progression of the earlier development of African and Caribbean Studies by the African Canadian intellectuals. I speculate on what the field of Black Canadian Studies might look like, challenges it may encounter and propose steps for how its development might proceed. In doing so, I draw lessons primarily from African American Studies, but also Women’s Studies.

Introduction

As a practical matter, the study of Black Canada is an established fact, but it is not a contradiction to say it is not yet an officially designated area of study. This could easily be an essay on the sociology of knowledge, on how disciplines or fields of study come to be constituted and legitimated in the academy by processes of political action. That Durkheim for example was able to institutionalize sociology is no less an act of politics than say African Americans or feminists who achieved a similar end, but still with less legitimacy from the dominant order. Some of this will be addressed insofar as my aim is to account for the emergence of Black Canadian Studies as a description for the work of African Canadian and other scholars (some of whom may not wish to be included) by this insurgent appellation and also as a bona fide emerging area of study. Toward a sociological analysis of the forces at play, for further consideration are the following: What is in a name – Black Canadian Studies – and what are its characteristics – Pan-Africanism, Africentrism, Diasporic Studies? Compared to the 40-year time-line for African American Studies, why has this area of study not had an appellation until now, even if the content of its character are yet to be worked out? Finally, who and under what conditions have constituted this appellation and now seek to elaborate the emergent fields’ contents?

This essay is a descriptive and speculative social history of the people and social forces implicated in the
insurgent field of Black Canadian Studies – the African Canadian intelligentsia, broadly speaking, and the community of African Canadians. I suggest this move can be explained by: an insurgent and self-conscious African Canadian intelligentsia; a small “p” pan-Africanism\(^2\) that is the historical consequence of the dynamics of dispersion (forced and voluntary) and re-engagement with the African continent (Adeyanju and Oriola, 2011), anti-African racism and a pursuit of elaborating Black people’s place in the Canadian narrative; and, the fact that African Canadian communities are increasingly aware of the political implications of knowledge and research. This move derives also from the tireless work of Black Heritage societies across Canada, local historians, family genealogists and stalwarts such as Wilma Morrison\(^3\), Rosemary Brown\(^4\), The Hon. Jean Augustine\(^5\) and Senators Anne Coles\(^6\) and Donald Oliver\(^7\), among others, who have ensured government and school board recognition of Black contributions to Canadian society.

At this point, one may find across Canada individual courses on the African Canadian experience and a similar concern in sections of courses devoted to anti-racism, Canadian history, post-colonialism, urban education and of course, problematically, criminology. One may find also in African Studies and Caribbean and Latin American Studies courses and dissertations on various African descended communities in Canada.\(^8\) But as yet, there are no concentrations or degrees in African Canadian Studies. The Dalhousie James Robinson Johnston Chair in Black Canadian Studies and the proposed Michaelle Jean\(^9\) Chair of Black Canadian, Caribbean and African Diasporic Studies at the University of Alberta will likely move in this direction. Though a research institute, the Harriet Tubman Institute at York University adds weight to the drive for Black Canadian Studies. In view of Althea Prince’s (2001, 56) concern about other such initiatives at York University, it is not clear what role African Canadian academics played in the naming and founding of the Institute, its relationship to the African Canadian intelligentsia in general and community overall and orientation to an African centered, Pan-African worldview and diasporic worldview.

Since description and speculation contain normative assumptions, I aim to make the latter explicit throughout the essay by reference to small “p” and large “P” pan-Africanism, Africentrism and diasporic Studies. The emergence of Black Canadian Studies is a dialogic interplay of the African Canadian intelligentsia and community’s proaction toward appreciating the agency of African Canadians, and, a reaction to racist epistemology and research that objectifies them. As such, the field in its nascent constitution is not an anemic imitation of African American Studies. It is also a development arising from the earlier establishment of African and Caribbean Studies programs in the 70’ and 80’s founded in Toronto and elsewhere, by the likes of Drs. Fred Case, Rudy Grant, Althea Prince, Percy Anderson, Ato Sekyi-Otu, Winston
Husbands and Paul Idahosa (see Prince 2001, 55-56). While African American Studies and to a lesser degree Feminist/Women’s Studies offer vital lessons for issues to be considered in developing African Canadian Studies, it is important to consider that Black Canadian Studies, though informed by these inquiry, begins from a very different position. That said, African American Studies offers a sound body of referential ideology and theory as well as a socio-historical counter-point to explain why Black Canadian Studies emerges some 40 years after such a move in the United States. Extending the normative assumptions about Black Canadian Studies, I draw on lessons from African American Studies and Women’s Studies to develop four points for consideration toward concretizing Black Canadian Studies in Canadian universities more fully.

The African Canadian Intelligentsia?

In spite of the implied elitism, Du Bois’s call for the “Talented Tenth” to assert itself willed into being what was without form. That call, and answer, gave birth to the African American intelligentsia as a collective conscious of their shared existence, aspirations and objectives. Of course what we would call public intellectuals abounded: Ouladah Equiano, Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, Booker T. Washington, Phyllis Wheatley, Edmonia Lewis and Martin Delaney are but a few examples. The core point is that a self-consciously aware intelligentsia that emerged with the race man and woman of the early 20th century undertook the task of knowledge production as key to the political and socio-economic life of African Americans (Drake 1993). Thus, whatever the merit of Houston Baker Jr.’s contention that some African American intelligentsia have betrayed Dr. King’s vision, he writes his excoriation precisely because there is such a class of persons (2008). Benjamin (2010), Jackson and Greggory (2010) and Rockquemore and Laszloffy (2008) have also written about the African American intelligentsia and academic elite, but with attention to its experiences and resiliency in the academy. So much do African Americans constitute an intelligentsia, research into their numbers and training constitutes a subfield in higher education research (Anderson 1988; Edwards, Bennett, White and Pezzella 1988; Spalter-Roth and Erskine 2007). Different from Baker’s concern with ‘betrayal,’ the problem in Canada is not a question of collusion with capitalism and white supremacy but rather the production of an essentialist Black political philosophy that too narrowly construes the complexity of Black ontology. Aside from the fact that George Elliott Clarke is sympathetic to the necessity for a normative Black political philosophy given the context of white supremacy in Canada, what is striking about his work is that in producing one of the first thoroughgoing critiques of the African Canadian intelligentsia he has called attention to a self-consciously aware African Canadian intelligentsia..

If George Elliott Clarke’s critique of the African Canadian intelligentsia is
a sound point of departure in recognizing the existence of an African Canadian intelligentsia, we are now afforded the opportunity to imagine the social history of Black intellectual life and culture in Canada. This is not to say that there have not been socially responsible African Canadian intellectuals in times past. Indeed, from the 1812 to the 1860’s among free and escaped African Americans were the earliest African Canadian public intellectuals who founded schools, established reading rooms, discussion groups, newspapers and undertook moral and temperance reform (Bristow 1994; Cooper 1994; Kitossa 2002; McLaren 2008). Among them are to be counted storied personages such as Mary Ann Shadd, Samuel Ringold Ward, Mary Bibb and Martin Delany *inter alia*. Despite the existence of gender bias, Black women as much as men of the 19th century played a lead role in the development of African Canadian intellectual life. For example, Peggy Bristow shows that Mary Bibb founded the Literary Ladies Society of Chatham at which members and invited guests gave and heard speeches ‘to improve their minds’. Moreover, this group deployed knowledge for broader civic purposes through its charitable work (1994, 122). Moreover, as noted by Marano (2010), the intellectual culture of African Canadians has drawn on and contributed to various political philosophies such as the Pan-Africanism of Garvey’s United Negro Improvement Associationism beginning in the 1920’s. And, if one chooses, one may go further back to the African centered and Pan-Africanist political of Martin Delany. To be clear, I make the foregoing points to suggest there have been African Canadian public intellectuals in all stages of African descended people’s migration and settlement in Canada.

Yet, there appears to be a decisive emergence of an African Canadian intelligentsia, connected by interpersonal and professional networks and this, I suggest, is qualitatively and quantitatively different than in the past. Indeed, increasing attention is being devoted to racism in higher education in Canada and what implication this has for students (Ryerson University Task Force 2010) and faculty of colour in general (James 2011; Stewart 2009). As to the numbers of African Canadian faculty, not much at present is known, but through the auto-ethnographies of Charmaine Nelson (2010), Althea Prince (2001), Anthony Stewart (2009) and George Elliott Clarke (2002) the flavor of their experiences are being, undeniably, heard. Moreover, fully recognizing the limits of my English-Canadian bias, there are many African and Haitian Francophone across Canada who make important contributions to African Canadian intellectual culture.

So, while I am sensitive to the fact that there were African Canadian intellectuals in the past, the subtle point I strive to make is that the category of persons about whom Harold Cruse wrote in *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (1984), both in their numbers, insurgent orientation and contribution to African Canadian ontology, has not existed in Canada until lately. Set against self-awareness among African Americans
that their intellectuals constitute a category of persons, we in Canada have no crisis of the African Canadian intellectual in the way described by Cruse and Baker – yet. My concern in this paper is not whether African Canadians intellectuals have a ‘crisis’. They do, but as described by Du Bois and Fanon, they have no more of a crisis than any other African Canadian confronted with the psychic fracturing and double consciousness produced by the effects of colonialism and white supremacy. Rather, to the extent African Canadians experience this collective sense of crisis, articulate resistance and explore strategies of adaptation, the emergence of Black Canadian Studies signals the emergence of a self-defining and insurgent intelligentsia class that deploys knowledge and research toward elaborating the complex evolution of the African experience in Canada.

If we then assume there is an insurgent African Canadian intelligentsia, this fact is inseparable from the nascent constitution of Black Canadian Studies. Seen from this perspective, African Canadian intellectuals are beginning to comprise a class of persons that are recognized as existing and which, dialectically, demonstrate consciousness of its existence and social responsibilities. They are seeking to define their role in elaborating the content and meaning of the African Canadian presence in its diversity, the relationship of African Canadians to the State and Canadian society, and, articulating the complex engagement of the diaspora with the Continent. It would appear that in the appellation – Black Canadian Studies – there is more than an effort to carve out a rarified field for a self-interested elite; rather, epistemology becomes a site for the debate, expression and recognition of a broader politic of Black existentialism and ontology that joins the African Canadian intelligentsia to their community/ies. From Education, the Humanities to the Social Sciences, the past decade has seen an explosion of scholarly work by and about African Canadians attesting to the existence of the field, though, until recently, without the appellation as such. Excluding journal publications, a non-exhaustive sample of such publications in 2010 indicate the gravity of these publications and their increasing volume (Adeyanju 2010; Austin 2010; Brand 2010; James, Este and Bernard 2010; Henry 2010; Nelson 2010; Shadd 2010; Walker 2010). This list suggests that since Robin Winks’ 1971, rich though problematic, The Blacks in Canada other standards not only followed (Hill 1981; McClain 1979; Thomson 1979) but the body of writing by and about African Canadians has grown to be diverse and substantive. There are two probable reasons for the dialectic I describe above.

First, despite highly differentiated waves of migration since the founding of British and French colonies in Canada, the past four decades has witnessed the rapid growth and stabilization of continental African and African Caribbean immigrant populations (Mensah 2002). In effect, the emergence of an African Canadian intelligentsia is the most recent chapter
in the story of African people’s patterns of migration, assimilation, adaptation, negotiation, reinvention and resistance in Canada (see Tettey and Pupamhu 2005, p.152). In part due to multiculturalism, African Canadian groups retain and celebrate their cultural distinctions. Because of their shared blackness, affiliated cultural worldview and subjection to the underbelly of multiculturalism (ie., white supremacy), the celebration of cultural distinctions shade into a small “p” pan-Africanism and creole\textsuperscript{11} idiom. One is therefore as likely to find Nigerians and Ethiopians celebrating Jamaica day as Caribbeans are likely to commemorate Ghana’s and Somalia’s Independence Day. Taking cultural integration seriously, one also finds a growth of intimate unions among various African Canadian populations as small “p” pan-African cultural exchange occurs and as African Canadians, regardless of nationality and length of stay in Canada, experience white supremacy and social exclusion in shared ways. None of this, however, denies conflict and tension between various African Canadian groups. The reality is that neither polarity, romantic ideal or the realism of intra-racial conflict, will neatly capture the historic accretions and the renewed mélange of African and transplanted diasporic communities that once typified the slave ship and plantation. To this end, George Elliott Clarke (2002, 198) notes in his incisive and ironic critique of Black nationalism:

\textbf{It is now impossible to understand Canadian blackness or blackness without accounting for both African-Canadian cultural production and history and the ways in which blackness and Canadianness have already blended (and are blending). It is the duty of African-Canadian intellectuals to undertake this work.}

Emerging from this complex picture is that anti-African racism and class inequality are acting as a push toward a common sensibility, hybrid identity and communal cooperative institution building as ‘African Canadians’. There is little doubt that there is class antagonism among African Canadians and this is a moderating effect. But, given the subjective experience of leveling caused by exposure to the ‘wage of whiteness,’ for example with upper class African Canadians being stopped and searched for driving “nice cars,” high SES stimulates rather than insulates against racism (Kitossa and Deliovsky 2010, 518-520). The realities of anti-Black racism in Canadian society (Lewis 1992; R v. Parks 1993), systemic racism (ie., the criminal legal system, schools, work) and the ‘racialization’ of the vertical mosaic (Foster 2009) facilitate the convergence of social justice activism with the extant cultural memory of Pan-Africanism and Black nationalism in the Americas. Concrete trans-African Canadian inequality is pushing the envelope of hybridity as much as there is a desire for these different groups to explore their shared worldviews as Africans in the diaspora. For example, the push factor can be
found in the experiences of African Canadian males. Regardless of country of origin and length of stay in Canada, Torontonian African Canadian males with a university degree experience employment advantages no greater than non-African Canadian males with a grade 10 education (Torczner 2003, 52). And, on aggregate African Canadian males, both immigrant and Canadian born, suffer a 22% income penalty: the highest for any negatively racialized group in Canada (Hum and Simpson 2007, 104). Moreover, compounding gender inequality experienced by African Canadian women, African Canadian men’s economic exclusion impacts the stability of African Canadian families and the poverty levels for African Canadian women and children. As a consequence of inequality and demographic factors, African Canadians have drawn the attention of academicians and public policy makers. But, more importantly, as African Canadian communities pull and are pushed toward (small “p”) pan-Africanism and creolization, the polyglot African Canadian intelligentsia is emerging to provide explanations and policy recommendations that address the experiences and complex identity/ies of African Canadians (Foster 2009; Gosine 2007; James, Este and Bernard 2010; Kelly 1998; Tettey and Puplamplu 2005). There are those also who attend to questions of development and policy issues regarding the Continent as well (Ezeonu 2008a; Smith 2010). In so doing, they are beginning to exhibit and experience their identities as a class of individuals within the dynamic of small “p” pan-Africanism and the collective creolization of African Canadian communities, and, within universities and Canadian intellectual life more broadly.

Second, as a consequence of the embededness of African Canadians in Canadian society and because educational attainment is highly valued by Black Canadians, Canadian universities have graduated more African Canadian PhD’s than at any other time in the nation’s history. Comprising what may constitute a ‘critical mass’, these graduates along with more senior researchers and African Canadian public intellectuals are exploring subject matters such as the contributions of African Canadians to Canada, examining the social problems affecting African Canadian communities and explicating the multiple meanings of blackness and identity in Canada (Prince 2001; D. Clarke 2011; G. Clarke 2002; Foster 1996; Walcott 2003;). It is vital to appreciate also that the African Canadian intelligentsia consists of artists, activists and scholars who, by choice or compulsion, research and write outside the university. Despite their independence from the university, some of these individuals remain connected to the university through a web of professional and social networks, partnership in research grants, fellowships and scholars in residence. These public intellectuals such as Lawrence Hill, Lillian Allen, Dionne Brand, Afua Cooper12, Adrienne Shadd, M. Nourbese Phillip, Rosemary Sadlier, Itah Sadu and Sheldon Taylor, inter alia, are having a profound impact on the content and tone of knowledge about
English-speaking Black Canadian life. Others yet, such as Zetta Elliott undertake their artistic and public intellectual work in the US. This list is by no means exhaustive given there are many more African Caribbean, continental African, African Francophone and ‘legacy’ African Canadians I know little or not at all about. Nevertheless, there is a certain degree of fluidity in the spatial flow of the emergent African Canadian intelligentsia with the University. In Ontario for example, some have moved from community-based organizations (eg., Drs. Ralph Agard, Akua Benjamin and Carl James), politics (eg., Drs. Grace-Edward Galabuzi and Howard McCurdy) and the civil service (eg., Drs. Lorne Foster) into the academy.

In addition to engagement by those in the Humanities and Social Sciences, the African Canadian intelligentsia and diverse scholars interested in the life conditions of African Canadians, from social work to the sciences, are affecting public policy and the social experience of African Canadians. For example, Dr. Francis Jeffers, a noted private sector Toronto chemist of Trinidadian heritage, who founded Visions of Science and the Black Inventors Museum, has helped to popularize science, technology and innovation not only for African Canadians but other communities as well. Similar work is being done elsewhere by African Canadian scientists. For example, founded on an African Centered approach to science learning, Dr. Kevin Hewitt of Dalhousie University, has established the Imhotep Legacy After School Program. Both programs should be seen as instances where the intentions of the emergent African Canadian intelligentsia cross disciplinary lines and draw their focus from the intent of highly influential individuals who give self-conscious direction to the life experience of the African Canadian community.

The foregoing provides a simplified explanation for the explosive growth in scholarly work by and about African Canadians as well as the role of African Canadian scientists in community based learning initiatives. But, given that inquiry about the Black experience in Canada is well-established and African Canadians are not strangers to the ranks of the professoriate, why has a call for Black Canadian Studies as a distinct field of inquiry emerged only now? This is a complex question that cannot be separated from the fact that African Canadian intellectuals did not, until recently, imagine themselves as a category of persons. It must be considered that until recently, the White academics that were dominant in writing about the African Canadian experience made no moves toward developing African Canadian Studies as its own field of inquiry. As St. Clair Drake noted of Melville Herskovits (1993, p. 486), it might be that the fidelity of White academics is to their subject matter and disciplines even if they are empathetic toward African Canadians in general. Moreover, because of the ways in which the wage of whiteness and systemic racism functions in the academy and the granting of research awards, the relationship between Black and White
academics in writing about race and African Canadians wavers somewhere between ambivalence and misapprehension. Some White academics, instead of respecting the principle of academic freedom, take their “tutelage” of some African Canadian academics as a proprietary right on their consciousness. On a more generous note, it may be that some White academics who contribute to research on African Canadians may feel that to take a leadership role in formulating African Canadian Studies is an act of appropriation. Whatever the case may be, the past and present contributions of White and other researchers of Black Canada is invaluable (Backhouse 1999; Frost 2008; Pachai and Bishop 2006; Shepard 1997; Walker 1985; Yee 1994). If the foregoing credibly accounts for why the move toward African Canadian Studies emerges only recently, it begs the question why.

An answer may be ventured assuming this emergence is a progression and “maturation,” even if the insurgent African Canadian intelligentsia is only now asserting itself through the vehicle of Black Canadian Studies. This does not deny the point I have stressed thus far, since it affirms rather than negates the dialectic between the African Canadian intelligentsia and the rise of African Canadian Studies. Althea Prince noted the role played by African Canadian faculty and students in the 70’s at York University and University of Toronto toward the development of African and Caribbean and Latin American courses and programs. That she said nothing of the relationships between African Canadian faculty and students with the African Studies Association as well as that of Centre for Latin American and Caribbean Studies is an important silence that will have to be written about by others. In fact, more needs to be known about similar initiatives and the role of African Canadian faculty and students at other Canadian universities that developed African and Caribbean/Latin American Studies programs. The key point here is that we are dealing with a situation of the progression and maturation of ideas along with an insurgent intelligentsia in which there is meaningful intergenerational exchange and mentoring. To be sure as noted by Prince, there are African Canadian academics who do not imagine themselves a part of such insurgency (2001, 60). Related to the abovementioned is certainly the question of ‘critical mass.’ We have little sense as to the numbers of African Canadians currently in the professoriate ranks and with PhD’s. Nor do we have any idea whether the numbers and percentages of the African Canadian professoriate has increased, decreased or remained stable. Whether ‘critical mass’ is a question of numbers or consciousness, at least in the Humanities and Social Sciences, the last 25 years has seen the graduation of many undergraduate and PhD’s who took courses with African Canadian, South Asian and White professors with expertise on Africa and the African diaspora. Such graduates, in addition to public intellectuals with an African centered consciousness have come to imagine themselves as a specific category of knowledge brokers.
connected to institution building, memory and the health and well-being of African Canadians. The central point here is not to claim that African Canadian academics and public intellectuals were not interested in the well-being of people of African Canadians before this time. They clearly were as the work of African American expatriate pan-Africanist Clarence Munford (1996) indicates. Rather, my claim is that African Canadian academicians and intellectuals did not until recently imagine themselves as a category of specialized persons connected to transitional flows and invested in staking claims as Canadians on the life experiences of the communities from which they came and which are now being constituted as (small “p”) pan-African creoles. I may well be wrong on this point but the national rather more localized scope of what I suggest cannot be denied.

With little to go on besides Prince’s (2001) brief account of the issue, the demand for African and Caribbean Studies appeared to be institution specific rather than part of a general trend. This is not, however, the case of the instantiation for a Pan-African approach to youth education across Canada. The channeling of African Canadian communities’ cultural and intellectual assets into their youth’s educational experience likely arose from the psychic violence of their children’s encounter with White education. For example, in the late 60’s and early 70’s, especially in central Canada and the Maritimes, Canada saw the concurrence of Pan-Africanism, Black power and civil rights activities led by individuals such as Rocky Jones to develop educational programming that would counteract the epistemic violence of the educational experience (Oliver 1973). This period also saw the emergence and flowering of organizations such as the Harriet Tubman Centre, the Black Education Program and the African Canadian Heritage Association not only in Toronto but in other Canadian cities such as Montreal (e.g. The Alfie Roberts Institute), Edmonton (Marcus Garvey Centre for Unity) and in another places where sizeable African Canadian populations are found. Years later, concern with African Canadian children’s educational experience is still perennial (Hampton 2010). The Africentric School in the Toronto District School Board, which opened in 2009, came about through great community effort that was reminiscent of the struggles of the past decades. With the support of the Toronto District School Board’s Director of the Education, Dr. Chris Spence and African Canadian academics such as George Dei and Carl James who played central roles with the provision of robust and critical research data, the Africentric school initiative was successful.

It may well be the case that Black Canadian Studies did not develop because the protest conditions that formed the basis for the foundation of African American Studies were substantially undermined by the Canadian state in the early 70’s. For example, it is likely that just such a move could have developed out of the 1969 Sir George Williams affair where
Caribbean students mobilized against racism on the campus by taking over the computer room. But, at the time, with the Canadian government ever ready to deport politicized African and Caribbean students this was likely a dampener. It should be borne in mind also, that aside from the disciplinary effects of status insecurity, there were many a student who were strategically depoliticized as much as there were those whose elite class consciousness obviated racial politics (see Winks 1997, 442). Significantly, some students, mostly Caribbean, influenced by a mélange of Garveyism, Black power, civil rights and Pan-Africanism took an oblique approach to Black Studies entirely consistent with the pastoral concern for the communities youth. Those like Horace Campbell, Zanana Akande, Ken Jeffers, Margaret Gittens, Carl James, Judy Jackson, Ken Alexander and many others channeled their proclivities into artistic, educational, cultural and social experience of African Canadian children by founding successful school/cultural-based programs such as the Black Education Program and Harriet Tubman Centre (see Prince 2001, 57). Moreover, as Toronto’s Caribbean population moved into parts of Scarborough and North York, Ontario, individuals such as Drs. Inez Alliston and Avis Glaze were instrumental in setting up night and summer school for African Canadian children. In Nova Scotia, Montreal and Edmonton there were parallel individuals and organizations working toward similar educational purposes. While there were also those who were devoted to the cultural dimensions of Pan-Africanism, others yet, such as Dudley Laws, Milton Blake, Akua Benjamin and Dari Meade undertook questions of justice in the formation of the Black Action Defence Committee. In protests, such as those against the Royal Ontario Museum’s racist “Into the Heart of Africa” (1989), the North York School Board’s sponsorship of Live Entertainment’s mounting of “Showboat” (1993) and the anti-Apartheid movement, individuals like Stephanie Payne and Lennox Farrell and numerous unnamed students were a bridge between cultural and political p/Pan-Africanists.

With the confluence of factors I list above, it is probably logical that confronted with the persistence of anti-African racism in Canadian society, an emergent and “maturing” African Canadian intelligentsia is staking claims on the epistemologies and research that affect the life of their families and community. This move reflects the earlier African and Caribbean development of African and Caribbean Studies but is also qualitatively different. Indeed, with being too frequently the object of pathologizing crisis oriented research and African Canadian community/ies resultant feeling that they have been ‘studied to death,’ there is an emergent consciousness among African Canadian intelligentsia about the politicality of knowledge and research. It seems a subtle intellectual transformation has been made from aspiring toward higher education as the great equalizer and the chief bulwark against racial discrimination to recognizing that research and knowledge must be infused with the normative
claims of African Canadian aspirations altogether. Uniquely poised as interlocutor between the world of academia and the lives of African Canadian individuals, the move toward Black Canadian Studies is a work in progress in part led by a nascent intelligentsia class with a highly politicized consciousness and background of social justice activism.

It must be noted that the move toward Black Canadian Studies does not follow the developmental patterns of African American Studies in the late 1960’s, nor can it. As I show below, the emergence of African American/a Studies was contingent on a set of conditions unique to the United States. As an ‘indigenizing’ intellectual movement both concretizing the role of the African Canadian intelligentsia in Canada and drawing on the African diaspora as features of its consciousness and scholarly inquiry, the demand for Black Canadian Studies should be seen as unique to the current moment in Canadian socio-political and intellectual life. Both the latter and the former are instantiations of the theory of “cultural remittance[s]” that Tettey and Puplamu borrow from Jenny Burman (2005, 150-1). That is, African Canadians exercise cultural and social-political linkages with the memory of home places and spaces to a contingent and modified articulation of ‘new’ and historic space of settlement in Canada. Naturally, there are those for whom place is embedded in pre-Confederate Canada. In all, the ‘new’ African Canadian intelligentsia class reflects both a current reality as well as mirroring racial and immigrant dynamics central to the formation of the Canadian nation-state as a mosaic rather than melting pot (see Bannerji 2000; Warburton 2007). Reflecting the complexity of the African Canadian experience, some members of the intelligentsia raise questions about what it means to be Black and yet party to settler colonialism (Madden 2010). Others yet on this very point, debate the cultural and political implications of prefixes that enable identity distinctions between African Canadians.16

Lessons from African American Studies and Women Studies
Interest in the study of Black Canada is by no means novel. I noted earlier that as of the early 1970’s scholars in Canada established the basis for serious study that now forms the foundation for ongoing inquiry. The emergence of Black Canadian Studies, however, has and will continue on a different footing from African American Studies in the United States. The existence of African American Studies and the fact that such programs have been the chief medium by which African Americans (intelligentsia, students and community) have shaped knowledge production casts an inviting shadow on Canada. African American Studies is a product of place and space and it will not be reproduced in Canada for reasons of history demography and role of the state in managing political struggle through multiculturalism. No doubt for some, any effort to model African American Studies in Canada will be undesirable, if
only because it is perceived that like the broader United States culture of which it is a part, African Canadians must resist the tendency to be engulfed by the idioms and experience of African Americans. Such opposition can overreach itself by denying historical parallels, allegiances and issues to be worked out among diasporic Africans (G. Clarke 2002,73). While African Canadian experience is simply not reducible to the African American experience nor is there one African Canadian experience for that matter, there is no doubt that scholars such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Patricia Hill Collins, Cornel West, bell hooks, Henry Louis Gates and Afrocentrists such as Molefe Asante and Marimba Ani, among others, will continue to impact the thinking of the African Canadian intelligentsia as much as Kwame Toure, Kwame Nkrumah, Marcus Garvey and C.L.R. James.

The history and miscues of African American Studies present a counter-point and valuable lessons for developing African Canadian Studies. As a counter-point, we cannot miss the fact that Black Studies emerged in the United States from the crucible of a massive social upheaval in which the state accommodated in the least expensive way to the demands for civil and human rights. If granting educational opportunity meant absorbing epistemic conflict in matters of race so that equality of opportunity prevailed over equality of condition, this was a price the state could afford to pay. Moreover, the ruling elite through the various foundations (eg., Ford Foundation) sponsored the development of African American Studies programs in part because that knowledge was vital to the development of social programs that demobilized the Black power movement. So, if having Black Studies courses mollified angry African American youths and communities, why not? In short, the story of how African American Studies came into being is a good deal more complicated than the romantic image of Black Spartacus overwhelming the barricades of white supremacy and the racist White settler colonial state (Rojas 2010; Rooks 2007). Nonetheless, the fact that only about 9 percent of undergraduate institutions have Black Studies programs offering degrees, most such programs have less than 7 cross appointed faculty members and there are some with only one faculty member (Rojas 2007, 3), stands in stark contrast to the paranoia of the conservatives. These paltry numbers, however, belie the impact African American Studies and African Diasporic Studies in general has and will continue to have on the political culture of knowledge production in the United States and elsewhere (Drake 1993).

One of the earliest statements on the impact of Black Studies on epistemology and methodology, as well as representing a framework for its development, is that of Joyce Ladner. In the introduction to the Death of White Sociology, a collection of essays from 1973, Ladner points to the significance of the civil rights and Black power movement on the development of inquiry centered on the African American experience. She alluded to the
fact that while there was a long standing intellectual tradition from both African American and European American academics that challenged the Eurocentric pathologizing discourse, of which the Moynihan report was then a current example, mainstream sociology and other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities constituted enterprises of epistemic violence against African Americans. As Ladner points out, the very existence of African Americans is taken as a problem in need of correction rather than capitalism and racism constituting a problem to which African Americans were compelled to develop adaptations. As students such as Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) and Angela Davis moved from the agenda of civil rights with its emphasis on exclusion to a Black Power politic that raised issues of exploitation, police violence, imperialism, and, the role of racist ideas in perpetuating colonialism, imperialism, environmental degradation, class exploitation and patriarchy, they set the tone for a smug academia to come up with credible responses.

What was unlike prior social movements in the United States, the revolutionary ferment of the late 60’s explicitly launched a counter intellectual narrative for environmental and social justice paralleled by grass roots street demonstrations, protests and rebellions. This period, Ladner reminds us, saw the restoration of African and Caribbean American intellectual titans: W.E.B. DuBois, Oliver Cox, Marcus Garvey, Ida B. Wells, Carter G. Woodson and Fanny Lou Hamer among others. Demanded by African American students, the reclamation of those like DuBois led to a clarification of the role of epistemology and research in political struggle against the state and oppressive ruling relations. Long anticipating C. Wright Mills’ “The Professional Ideology of Social Pathologists” (1943), students drew on DuBois classic Black Reconstruction in America (1992, 634) to articulate their skepticism about the formal limits of bourgeois politics when confronted with collusion between the state, capital and the rationalizers of mainstream epistemology:

...there began to rise in America in 1876 a new capitalism and a new enslavement of labor. Home labor in cultured lands, appeased and misled by a ballot whose power the dictatorship of vast capital strictly curtailed, was bribed by high wage and political office to unite in an exploitation of white, yellow, brown and black labor, in lesser lands and ‘breeds without law.’...The immense profit from this new exploitation and world-wide commerce enabled a guild of millionaires to engage the greatest engineers [and] the wisest men of science...

While proponents of the Black Power movement saw clearly the power of epistemology and correctly identified higher education as a prime locus for capitalist, racist, and, in the case of Angela Davis and Elaine Brown,
patriarchal ideology, they missed that the demand for greater educational access was in some ways a Trojan horse gifted by a state, ruling class and a system in crisis. Nonetheless, with a politicized consciousness that celebrated Black cultural nationalism, the children of Jim Crow demanded courses of study that provided them with a vocabulary and method to explain their social reality. Under these conditions Black faculty were at a premium. To meet the demand, mainstream institutions poached historic Black Colleges, hired organic community intellectuals and artists as adjunct faculty and in sizeable numbers, hired continental African professoriate (Asante 2007; Drake 1993; Ladner 2003). This move forced an open schism among the African and African American professoriate. Some of the more established faculty would reject the radicalism of the students. The actions and consciousness of those faculty that failed to admit the political nature of knowledge and research, signaled an open breach of class conflicts among African Americans famously apprehended by Harold Cruse’s 1967 classic *Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (1984). But, the lesson of the internal class conflicts among the African and African American intelligentsia had the benefit of instructing students to be wary of the insistence on what Fanon (1967) called “an epidermal schema”. Reflecting on the demand for more African American professors and the emergence of an of epistemology that would be defined as African centered, Molefi Asante (2007, 95-6) points to an ideological error in the students approach in the early going of Black Studies:

In the first place...the emphasis on the race of the professor to be hired led African American students into a dead-end when some black professors, continental and diasporan, were less knowledgeable than some white professors...Insistence on biology always leads to a misunderstanding of the cultural, social, and psychological experiences that are necessary for empathetic relationships. One might say that biology, at some point, is important but it is not defining in terms of who should teach African American Studies.

Indeed, the work of Herbert Aptheker, Bettina Aptheker, Leon Litwack, David Wellman and Sidney Willhelm, and others, were central to the intellectual drive of African American students to reinterpret their history and reality. Indeed, to this day, many are not aware that the classics *Who Needs the Negro* (1971) and *Black in White America* (1982) were both written by a White man: Sidney Willhelm. Significantly, in view of the economic and production crisis facing the United States, Willhelm’s dual thesis of the economic disutility of African Americans (see Rifkin 1995) and the legitimation of their genocide through mass incarceration and other means (see
Gibson 2006) is undergoing a renaissance.

Yet, standpoint predicated on the embodiment of experiencing white supremacy in its overt and covert forms embedded in cultural signs and the social system cannot be denied its place in intellectual substantiation. To this end, reflecting Ladner’s critique of Eurocentric academic pathologizing of African American women, Patricia Hill Collins (2000, 10) reminds us that “[e]very social group has a constantly evolving worldview that it uses to order and evaluate its own experience”. Developing a theory to account for the social experience of that group, even if the experience of individuals in that group may have unique valences within the life of that group, requires complexity and appreciativeness of difference without eradicating all sense of that groups’ cohering elements. Phenomenology, in effect, cannot be denied its place. The message here is that there are twin elements for the meaning of bodies doing the theorizing for African American Studies. On one hand, the race of the theorists is less relevant than their application of theory and the depth and breadth of their knowledge. On the other hand, if worldview is to mean anything at all, then it is vital to appreciate that Africa and the creolized cultures of the diaspora contain experiences and cosmologies that are derivative of African roots. Retrieving and elaborating these roots as explanatory media for the ontology of African descendants in the West requires theory that draws on embodiment. Thus, Asante’s articulation of Africentricity, while it is formally delinked from biologism of the “epidermal schema”, cautions against relativistic de-essentialization that rejects essentialism only to enthrone its own particular variant – an identity without identity – that, like a loop in time brings us back to the very essentialism of Eurocentric particularism masquerading as universalism. Asante (2007: 17) says:

Afrocentricity…is a theory of agency, that is, the idea that African people must be viewed and view themselves as agents rather than spectators to historical revolution and change. To this end Afrocentricity seeks to examine every aspect of the subject place of Africans in historical, literary, architectural, ethical, philosophical, economic, and political life.

Effectively, Africentricity is a social theory of embodiment. In centering the African as historical agent, it requires that academics engage in epistemology and research that is inclusive of their own embodiment and experiences.

The question of embodiment is a serious matter that is either not well understood, under attack or, as life usually has it, a bit of both. Feminists, too, are seriously grappling with this issue as their epistemology has drawn them to examine masculinity and patriarchy. Some feminists aiming to delink the identity of women from the binary oppositions of female and male
have been led to a dead-end no less dangerous than the biological absolutism of the students Asante describes. On the other hand, men also, undertaking to examine masculinity and patriarchy from a feminist perspective are contributing to a study of gender that delinks feminist epistemology from women’s embodiedness. It seems one of the deepest cracks in feminism right now is the tension between Gender Studies and Women’s Studies. As feminist scholar, Tania Modleski (1991, 113) points out:

...[I]t is easy to see how an anti-essentialist deconstructive move could banish the material implications of living in a body defined as woman, and hence how women within feminism could entirely disappear.

In a similar fashion, moves to disembody race and intellectual production affirmatively leads to Black inquiry without Black people. Suffice to say, a line in the sand is the insistence that bodies matter in the production of knowledge. Indeed, long before Patricia Hill Collins articulated a theory of embodied knowledge, Joyce Ladner (1973: xvi) spoke of a “Black perspective” which demands “Black sociologists...act as advocates of the demands the masses are making for freedom, justice and the right to determine their destinies”.

Even as African American Studies and Women Studies programs come under attack, the growth of market-oriented education challenges the merit of these programs. As with many Departments and programs, African American Studies and Women Studies must contend with the question of their relevance for the post-graduate job market. Not only is the issue one of having enough “bums in seats” to justify the economic viability of these programs, the relationship of these programs to the market is a troubling one. Given that these programs are predicated on a political project that enables African Americans and women to develop theories and frames of reference that enhance their struggle for equity, the employability of their graduates is a growing concern. Both programs have long faced doubts about their legitimacy because both challenge the canons and norms of Eurocentrism and patriarchy. The question of employment not only concerns students of these programs but also the staffing of these programs themselves.

Both programs must confront the nature of multi, inter and even anti-disclipinarity in an academy that mouths these as virtues but whose narrow disciplinary preoccupations limits the broad comprehension of their enterprise and the limited availability of publication outlets for such work. As such, with scarce resources to go on, these programs draw their faculty from a range of departments and Deans willing to support them. This fact raises special challenges for junior untenured faculty. For them, publication and the pursuit of tenure dominate the early part of their professional lives and so many are understandably reluctant to undertake a
teaching regimen that might undermine securing tenure. Institutional inertia and the special criteria by which academics secure their hold on employment increasingly discourages young academics from taking risks that may defy intellectual conventions and canons. In short, to teach or research in peripheral areas of the academy seem to be a route to unemployment. Should African American Studies and Women Studies concede to the demand to be ‘relevant’, this is the surest route to their destruction; critical thinking, social history and knowledge of self are the foundation of liberal arts education and it should be understood that these are the necessary creative forces for a transformative and vibrant economy, intellectual and political culture.

**Issues for the Advancement of Black Canadian Studies**

Both African American Studies and Women’s Studies provide lessons that ought to be considered for the advancement of Black Canadian Studies. These lessons can be articulated in the form of: 1. Institutionalization; 2. Ideology and Theoretical perspectives; 3. Praxis: a) Methodology and b) Analysis and critique; and finally, 4. Community engagement.\(^{17}\)

**1. Institutionalization.**

Institutionalization involves three related but independent and inclusive initiatives. First, establishing Black Canadian Studies as a coherent program of study is an essential task. A program of this nature will necessarily be multi and interdisciplinary in nature. At designated universities where there are sufficient faculty to draw from various departments, a degree granting program can be organized with a complement of chair, administrative support, and a committed budget line from the administration. As is typical of programs of study, there has to be one or two departments that strongly endorse the program and will have a stake in the survival of the program. By and large, these departments have a large enough faculty complement and support from the Dean to ensure that where tenured and tenure-track faculty conduct teaching in the program, money will be available to pay for sessional instructors for electives not taught by regular faculty. A second alternative to a stand-alone program will be to offer a degree within an established department. This option will be most effective if it can mimic some of the characteristics of a stand-alone program with an established relationship with other departments. Presumably, the degree will include electives in its course banks from other departments in the Humanities or Social Sciences.

The second aspect of institutionalization is the endowment of research chairs. Ideally, an endowed chair would work within the framework of one of the options just listed. But, where an intra-departmental program or a degree within a department does not exist, a central task of an endowed chair will be to work with the administration or committed departments to establish a program or a degree within a receptive department. SSHRC (Social Science and
Humanities Research Council) and NSERC (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada) should be lobbied to sponsor five year Canada Research Council Chairs that address a wide range of issues regarding African Canadians. As an aside, this would require establishing adjudicating committees of scholars who are expert, yet sensitive and appreciative of the range of research concerning African Canadian scholars. Finally, African Canadians of means and general members of the community should invest in endowing Chairs of African Canadian Studies with agreement of matching funds from universities. This was the case with Bev Salmon and others mobilizing personal and community funds to endow the Robert Johnston Chair of African Canadian Studies at Dalhousie University. Other Canadians, corporate sponsors, and endowments of goodwill should also be solicited through university advancement offices.

2. Ideology and epistemology. One can read accounts of the history of other marginalized groups in Canada where police surveillance, imprisonment and criminalization are not enduring themes. Pick your author of choice who has written on the African Canadian experience, past or present, and one consistently encounters two related problems: poverty and criminalization. In spite of the distinct geo-political immigration patterns of African Canadians, White Canada, institutionally and culturally, has been ambivalent toward the African presence. Perceived as non-Canadian (ie., where are you from?) and judged by the effects of discrimination imposed by White Canada, African Canadians are perceived as both alien and a social problem in need of a solution. Repeatedly, prisons and/or deportation are the solutions offered by the state. From an African centered perspective, then, knowledge of the African Canadian experience must be grounded on assumptions that affirm an African diasporic worldview. Thus, citing Ama Mazama, I take Asante’s (2007, 9) assertion that Africentrism, and by extension, Black Studies contribute to the “...reconceptualization of the social and historical reality of African people...”. With Africentricity as a predicate, Black Canadian Studies will not only elaborate on the role of African people’s in Canadian history and society, it will contribute to epistemology and research that orients public conscious toward African Canadians as agentic and thus fully human, rather than a social problem in need of expulsion or repressive control.

Because African peoples are generally perceived to be objects rather than subjects of history, far too much research on African Canadians is predicated on the alien and problem theses. In response, anti-racist research in the arts and humanities have in part aimed to redress this Eurocentric bias: first by articulating the ways that White privilege is systemically reproduced and articulated in everyday practice and second, by demonstrating the rootedness of the African presence in Canada. But, while anti-racist scholarship has aimed to reframe debates about inclusion and
exclusion and nation-building, emphasizing social structure rather than the common-sense of Eurocentric biological or culturalist accounts, the field is noticeably reticent to advance comparative analyses of oppression. One can well appreciate on the surface the rationale here; which is that given the inertia of White privilege, colonialism and white supremacy, a white historic bloc is created independent of explicit initiative and intent of White individuals. Challenge to this order requires a solid and unified front of resistance. The problem with this approach is that in assuming there is no justifiable basis upon which oppressions can be symbolically and materially hierarchicalized, glaring aggregate differences between negatively racialized groups are subsumed under the amorphous “racial minority” category. Because African Canadians are subsumed under “visible minority” or ‘people of colour’ we have little knowledge or explanation for their health disparities (Etowa and Keddy et al., 2005; Rodney and Copeland 2009), higher incarcerations rates (Gittens and Cole 1995) and higher levels of joblessness irrespective of higher education and immigration patterns (Hum and Simpson 2007), higher rates of exposure to hate-crime physical assault (Statistics Canada 2011), higher rates of single parenthood (Torczner 2003; Torczner 1997), and higher rates of poverty (Colour of Poverty 2007) than other “racialized” groups, excluding First Nation and Aboriginal peoples.

Black Canadian Studies, like its counterpart in the U.S, must begin from a premise that centralizes the experience of African peoples as agents of history. In addition, Black Canadian Studies must note that people of African descent are distinct in their relationship to European culture, no matter the ethnic differences between African people. In support of this notion I cite Joseph Washington Jr., (1984: xi) who argued in his masterful Anti-Blackness in English Religion, 1500-1800 that “No other people have been denigrated for so long and by so many because of the name by which they are identified and its primordial symbolism”. Now, this is not to say that African people take their definition of who they are by how they are constructed in the White social imaginary. Rather, as Asante (2007: 24) notes, the issue

...at the heart of Afrocentricity...[is] the recentering of the African person in the center of his or her own historical context, reality, and time. We are not on the margins of any other people’s history; we are profoundly in our own time and space and if we view ourselves outside of this reality, we are disoriented and centered.

To centre the African Canadian experience means Black Canadian Studies will need to take seriously both Pan-Africanism and Africentricity as organizing ideological propositions in which the intellectual and social experience of African people are recast from one of a social problem to one of
social agency in response to the material conditions of a white supremacist culture that is anti-African.

Framed this way, crime and other assorted pathologies will cease to be an organizing principle of research concern, instead, investigations of adaptation to deformed social conditions will be the priority. Instead of lamenting and lambasting young Black drug dealers, we will see entrepreneurs foreclosed from licit economic opportunities by a state and economy which not only has no use for them as laborers but also commodifies them as feed for the criminal industrial complex (Gibson 2006; Kitossa 2011; Willhelm 1971). As an alternative to a narrative that constructs young Black men as gang-bangers, we will see spontaneous micro organizational responses to state and capitalist initiatives that have corroded and undermined effective parental and communal socialization capacities. To believe that imposed social problems of drugs, guns and “crime” can be solved by ratcheting up the states repressive capacities and to conduct research toward this end as is currently being done with millions of dollars being thrown into “gang research”, is to effectively reinscribing into public policy a discourse of Black pathology that is already current in popular culture. Now, I am not suggesting anti-racism has nothing to offer African Canadian Studies because this is clearly not the case. Rather, I suggest that to avoid anti-racisms homogenizing imperatives, Black Canadian Studies must take account of how and where different African Canadian groups converge and diverge in Canada and where as an aggregate they differ from other groups.

3. Epistemology: a) Methodology and b) Analysis and critique. Closely related to ideology and epistemology is the political economy of epistemology and research. Any and all research methods, theories and explanations must be predicated on the African centered principle of African Canadians as subjects of history. But, in addition to these elements, an African centered theory must consist of a strong principle of corrective critique as it pertains to the reality of African Canadians. This means the epistemological and methodologically premises of the Eurocentric academy that prides itself on distance, neutrality and objectivity must be fully confronted. Though the issue of value-free sociology as the handmaid of state social control and repression was subject to rigorous and compelling critique in the late 60’s and early 70’s, it nonetheless endures as a vital principle of the academy. A disingenuous feature of the value-free assumption is that it casts its academic practitioners as rational and objective. This approach, which obscures the relationship between epistemology and material reality, is duplicitous from the African centered perspective. Enough has been written about the relationship between anthropology, sociology and psychology with respect to Western imperial domination to make this clear (Agozino 2003). Reminiscent of Joyce Ladner’s critique of Eurocentric and colonialist research methodology, African centered scholars such as Marimba Ani (1994:7-8) have elaborated the cultural
foundation of Eurocentric epistemology and assumptions that scholars consciously and unconsciously use to reproduce the hidden cultural assumptions of the European worldview.

Thus, prior to the full elaboration of African centered theory in the U.S, African American academics such as Joyce Ladner (1971) followed DuBois’s lead and rejected notions of scholarly neutrality and objectivity in research methods and their outcome. This epiphany is vital in a Western cultural context that pathologizes African people (Gordon 1995; Mills 2003) and demands a normative standpoint consistent with the agency of African peoples. Hence, analysis of the condition of people of African descent must proceed from a theory that appreciates the dialectics of agency and structure. By such means, analysis will be steered away from white supremacist moralist explanations and will produce knowledge that has an affirmative impact on the lives of African Canadians by the way in which it elaborates anti-oppressive strategies to social problems. Core to affirmative analysis, is that critique is central to the politics of knowledge.

By implication then, scholars who contend that African Canadians are both predisposed to committing ‘crime’ and who use the claim of racial profiling as an excuse to ‘commit more crime’ (Gabor 2004; Gabor 1996; Gold 2003; Melchers 2003) must be exposed as a damaging anti-African canard. Not only for undertaking epistemic violence against African Canadians, but for more broadly legitimating the new scientific racism that exposes African Canadians to higher levels of state surveillance, police brutality and miscarriages of justice founded on the proposition that they are criminogenic by culture or genetics. African centred analysis of the so-called Black crime and gang problem must be considered a vital intervention in the mainstream discourse (Baker 2006; Crichlow 2005; Benjamin 2002; Ezeonu, 2008b; Kitossa 2005; Lawson 2002; Williams 2005).

4. Community. Black Canadian Studies will depend significantly on the extent African Canadian communities mobilize around the political implications of epistemology and research and the communities’ disquiet about being objects of study (see G. Clarke 2002, 203). In part, this will depend on the effectiveness of the African Canadian intelligentsia to engage the community on the implications of knowledge production. As I noted earlier, epistemology and research were explicitly politicized by the civil rights and Black power movements in the U.S. Questions were raised about research data that merely confirmed the presuppositions of the status quo, whether the quality of analysis was relevant to the experience of the African American masses. In short, based on the U.S experience, the more effectively African Canadian communities can organize around knowledge production as a powerful force that shapes democracy and Canadian institutions, the more likely it is that Black Canadian Studies can be established in a way to democratize knowledge production leading to healthy communities. We
have in Canada a few models implicitly predicated upon generative role of the community in epistemology and research. These include reports produced by: the African Canadian Legal Clinic, the African Canadian Community Coalition on Racial Profiling and the McGill Consortium for Ethnicity and Strategic Social Planning. Yet, in all these research endeavors it is not clear whether African Canadian communities have sought to influence the production of affirmative knowledge through research protocols such as that articulated by a variety of First Nations communities (ITHARES 2005). Such protocols serve notice that First Nations will not be subject to predatory research practices that do not serve their interests. Finally, the establishment of programs of African Canadian Studies in the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, the prairies and British Columbia will not only work to ensure ongoing research, they will be training grounds for young scholars who will advance an African centered epistemological and research agenda to the betterment of African Canadians.

**Conclusion**

Black Canadian Studies is an endeavor that has been underway some 40 years. Yet, the call for its constitution as an area of study is connected to the re-emergence of an African Canadian intelligentsia. This intelligentsia, working within and outside the university, mirrors the growing dialectic of the ‘creolization’ of African Canadians and the dynamics of a small “p” pan-Africanism. The expansion of research and scholarly work by and about African Canadians will not of its own lead to the formalization of Black Canadian Studies in Canadian Universities. As African American Studies and Feminist Studies have shown, there will need to be concerted and collaborative action taken by communities and the intelligentsia to give form and substance to this area of inquiry.

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Endnotes

1 An original version of this paper was delivered at the second meeting of the Black Canadian Studies Association, University of Alberta, 2010. The Association was formed in 2009 at the Knowledge Production and the Black Experience, which was organized by Dr. Afua Cooper, then Chair of the Ruth Wynward Women’s Studies at Simon Fraser University.

2 Following St. Clair Drake (1993, 463-464), small “p” pan-African is used throughout this paper to signal an organic approach to the struggles of African peoples that is socio-cultural rather than traditionally political in nature. The latter is the pursuit of elaborating the connection between Africa and its diaspora but, while similar ends are desired the means by which its achievement will arise is politically differentiated from socialism to Black capitalism. The latter, which may have outcomes consistent with the traditional approach to Africa and the diaspora, is predicated upon challenging the denigration of African descended peoples and engaging interpersonal and cultural ties between Africans on the continent and in the diaspora.

3 Dr. Wilma Morrison is a legacy African Canadian and local historian extraordinaire. She is a leading advocate of Black history in the Niagara region and was a core figure in the 1982 official recognition of Black Canada in the Ontario public school curriculum. She was awarded an honorary doctorate by Brock University in 2010 and was a recipient of the Order Ontario in 2011.

4 Brown was a Jamaican émigré to Canada. Elected to the British Columbia legislature (1972) she was first woman of African descent in Canada to have accomplished this feat. She was a stalwart feminist and committed to elaborating the contributions of African Canadians.
Grenadian born, Augustine is the first African descended woman elected to the Canadian Parliament (1993-2006). Following prior lobbying by the Ontario Black History Society the Hon. Augustine introduced the motion in Parliament that led to the federal government’s official recognition of Black Heritage Month (Institute Historica 2011). She is currently Ontario’s Fairness Commissioner. As Chair of the Ontario Bicentenary Commemorative Committee on the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act and in advocacy capacities, the Hon. Augustine has been at the forefront of elaborating the contributions of African Canadians.

Senator Ann Cools is a Barbadian born Canadian stateswoman. She was appointed to the Senate in 1984. She is a strong advocate of families and issues concerning African Canadian.

Senator Donald Oliver, Q.C., is a legacy African Nova Scotian appointed to the Senate in 1990. He is a strong advocate of equity hiring for African Canadian and other equity seeking groups.

Althea Prince (2001) succinctly describes the insurgency of African Canadian students and faculty to institutionalize African Studies and Caribbean and Latin American Studies. The emergence of African Canadian Studies continues this insurgency and in fact draws on the direct participation of faculty who spearheaded these earlier movements.

Michaelle Jean is the Haitian born stateswoman who was Canada’s 27th Governor General, the British Crown’s representative to the Canadian Parliament (2005 - 2010). Ms. Jean is currently UNESCO Special Envoy for Haiti.

It is instructive that the emergence of Black Canadian Studies is largely traceable to the work of historians. See for example the collected essays in the Special Issue of the Canadian Review of American Studies, 30:2.

Creolization signals the adaptation and modification in cultural styles and political organization by diasporic communities to dominant hegemony. Following David Sealy, George Elliott Clarke (2002, 203) more specifically calls this “Canadianization”.

In 2011, Dr. Cooper was appointed to the Robert Johnston Chair of Black Studies at Dalhousie University.

A core aspect of future social histories of the African Canadian intelligentsia must explore the African Canadian ‘brain drain’. That is, African Canadian PhD’s, such as Edmund Abaka, Charles Simon-Aaron and many others, who have, for various reasons, sought their fortunes in the U.S and abroad. Further, we know little publicly of the experiences of the professoriate like Bernard Moit who found appointments in the US and others such as Annette Henry, who have returned to Canadian academe from the U.S. One wonders whether the likes of Charles Mills, a graduate of the University of Toronto, would ever have been appointed to a philosophy department in Canada. In short, given that the likes of Horace Campbell, Linda Carty and Ebo Hutchful are graduates of Canadian universities there is considerable research to be done on the wonderful African Canadian academic talent in the U.S and abroad.

In private conversation Dr. Afua Cooper describes that this trend was much earlier. She directed me to the knowledge that in 1950’s (Judge) Stanley Grizzle, the sleeping car porters and the Canadian Negro Women’s Association of Toronto held Negro History Week events in Toronto (see Institute Historica 2011).

As a child growing up in Toronto and Scarborough, the author benefited from the various programs just listed.

Publishing through the creation and development of a journal to be called the Journal of Black Canadian Studies in addition to conferencing were recommended at the 2010 Black Canadian Studies symposium at the University of Calgary.