

BLST 10100

CCNY/JPoe F20

Notes on Manning & Marable: Prefaces & Introduction

Preface To First Edition

- Purpose:
 - Introduce text, explain background and goals
 - based on graduate seminar course at CUNY Graduate School & Columbia University (1995)
 - “identify significant and provocative **ethnographic historical** and **theoretical articles** and **sources** that **explored** the **complex connections between** the **imagined communities** such as those of race, gender, and nation, and **structures of social inequality**, state power and economic exploitation. (M&M xiii)
 - “comprehensive anthology of African-American social thought” (xiii)
- Main Ideas:
 - Center black people & experiences when considering history
 - “. . .the greatest weight in the judgements made by social scientists in researching the black experience should be given to the voices of black people themselves.” (Marable and Mullings, xiii)
 - “To **theorize issues of identity** of, or **questions about how any people understand the institution of power that circumscribe their lives**, scholars should **first listen and learn from the people themselves.**”
 - Few anthologies do this, special collection of **primary materials** (original words/writing of authors) vs. **secondary materials** (scholars or reporters analyzing their words)
 - “African-American people made themselves.” (M&M xiii)
 - “notions of identity, of who they were, were constructed over time through their collective struggles and experiences against inequality, as well as from memories and traditions they had brought from Africa.” (M&M xiii)
 - speeches, sermons, letters, political manifestos, editorials, creation/maintenance of common rituals/ ceremonies “that convey membership in kinship networks” (M&M xiii)

- *Let Nobody Turn Us Around* (1999)
 - **Social Thought** - bodies of knowledge through which black people theorized from their experiences and social conditions, and proposed strategies and programs to enhance their power.
 - “Politics begins at the moment when any group recognizes for itself its specific objective interests and aspirations, and seeks agency to realize these interests.” (xiv)
 - “Black social and political thought is the expression of how people of African descent articulated and constructed the means to permit their communities to survive, to resist and to reform, or transform the structures of white power all around them.” (xiv)
 - 100+ documents of widely different ideological and political perspectives, ongoing debate w/in black community about appropriate strategies and tactics to create social change.
 - “It is by examining diversity that we may discern the common ground that the vast majority of African Americans occupy.” (xiv)

Preface To Second Ed.

- Purpose:
 - Explain 2008 revision
- Main Ideas
 - Post Obama/44th pres. & major immigration that counters “bi-polar categories of white and black”) (xviii)
 - “New **racial ideology** — color-blind society”; “each individual is free to determine own destiny” (xviii)
 - **colorblind racism** - belief that civil rights struggle eliminated all forms of discrimination (xviii)
 - Similar to Latin America - racial discrimination maintained and perpetuated, but not “legal”; “vigorously denied” (xviii)
 - Freedom movement boundaries “contours” shifted
 - Electoral struggles increased
 - Black candidates (fed. & state) represent & answer to larger community, not just AA.
 - Shift from large orgs./unions to neighborhoods/local networks
 - focus on basic rights and economic issues/injustice faced by these comm.
 - women taking on major leadership roles.

- **Neoliberal Capitalism** unable to meet the basic needs of most people. (free-market, no regulations/hindrances by government, “trickle down”, sustained growth and trade most efficient allocation of resources; ignores issues dealt with in modern liberalism that examines impediments to individual “freedom”
 - response to poverty and economic stagnation in 1970s., (Thatcher/Reagan conservatives)
 - 400 years ago AA first to experience devastating globalization and even now, still problematic for most people of African descent.
 - “The sojourn of black people. . . defined by a crucible of exploitation.” (xviii)
 - 240 years of slavery, 100 years Jim Crow segregation, 45 years of desegregation
- Positives: Technology, new forms/means of communication, global community and resistance
- “**Global Apartheid**” - Anti-blackness/racialized inequality around the world
- **Diaspora** encompasses a broad range of imagined communities and reframes the context for social change projects led by blk people

Introduction

- Purpose:
 - Introduce entire text
- Main Ideas
 - African Americans created themselves
 - Transatlantic slave trade/250 years of chattel slavery (inequality & brutality & ownership)
 - Cultural identity and notions of humanity in a country that denied them citizenship and basic human dignity
 - **Cultural memory** “not annihilated by the Middle Passage” (beauty/aesthetics, worship, values) p.xxi
 - “[C]onstrained by . . . racial and class structure of enslavement,” p.xxi
 - Social and political theory
 - “bodies of knowledge by which Afr. Am. attempted to analyze and address the social, cultural, and political issues they confronted—emerged from everyday practices to reform and resist the structures of oppression, and to renew their community through imagining and enacting its continuity.” p.xxi-xxii
 - **Reform, resistance and renewal** (subtle to overt rebellion) p.xxii
 - Focus always on survival and ability to thrive, liberty/freedom and equality
 - “creating and maintaining cultural forms” just as imp. as civil and economic freedom p.xxii
 - “search for meaning and voice” p.xxii

• **Reform/Resistance/Renewal**

- MAJOR THEMES of text
- “[R]eform, resistance and renewal formed the cultural and social matrix of black consciousness, community, and public discourse . . . foundations for the construction of a Black Am. society that was self-conscious and motivated to define and achieve its specific interests.” xxii
 - “political culture” and “web” of institutions (black churches, Masonic lodges, free African societies, schools, etc...
 - “competing strategic visions” for empowerment and self-organization.
- 1830-1865
 - “decisive historical period in the construction of black ideologies” xxii
 - <100K free blacks in the North
 - 4M enslaved, height of chattel slavery
 - Concerns
 - reality/possibility of freedom in US and anywhere
 - black identity: African? Africans and Americans?

• **Integrationism**

- one of two major black political ideologies
- originated in free black community in the North, prior to Civil War
- “free black leaders—journalists, teachers, ministers, small entrepreneurs, abolitionists” p.xxiii
- abolishing slavery possible, but only part of “greater struggle to expand the limited boundaries of Am. democracy to include people of African descent.” p.xxiii
 - employment, voting rights, full citizenship incl. serving on juries and running for office, property ownership, education, fair wages/entrepreneurship
 - “The goal of integrationists was a society where color was insignificant and where individual achievement and hard work largely determined the life chances of most black people.” p.xxiii

- “inner paradox” - must function w/in paradigm of racist Am. society, thru lens of race
 - black orgs. constructed outside of white society/in spite of segregation to “mobilize their supporters and appeal to sympathetic whites.” p.xxiii
 - using “racial base” to advocate for end of racialized society (colorism/caste privileges incl.) and full participation of blacks and others in “civil and political authority.”
 - A. Phillip Randolph’s Negro March on Washington, 1941; MLK Jr.’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 1957

- **Black Nationalism**

- “[T]he black nationalist tradition was built on a no-nonsense set of assumptions about the relative permanence of white supremacy.” p.xxiii
- energies focused on “building economic and social institutions that would provide goods and services to other black people.” p.xxiii
 - “utilize racial segregation as a barrier to create a black consumer market.” p.xxiii
- Some push further, believe Black territory or “resettlement to another country or continent” is only way to achieve full security and maintain integrity of black community.
- see themselves as “accidental Americans or Africans-in exile” p.xxiii
- prefer white supremacists to white liberals b/c believe supremacist views represent the true feelings of white majority
- race war in USA and globally is unavoidable; should be prepared
- 1850s, 1920s, late 1960s and early 1970s - periods of heightened popularity due to “white reaction” and lower commitment to racial/social justice
 - 1852 - Martin Delany pushes for AA emigration: “we love our country . . . but she doesn’t love us—she despises us, and bids us begone . . . but we shall not go where she desires us; but when we do go . . . we shall love the country none the less that receives us as her adopted children.” p.xxiv
 - 1920 - Marcus Garvey focuses on global anti-Black racism in “Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World”: “. . . nowhere in the world, with few exceptions, are black men accorded equal treatment with white men. . . but on the contrary, are discriminated against and denied the common rights due to human beings for no other reason than their race and color.” p.xxiv

- 1964 - Malcolm X speaks on reality and permanence of Anti-blackness: “. . . it is not necessary to change the white man’s mind. We have to change our own mind. You can’t change his mind about us. . .” p.xxiv
- “integrationist-nationalist ideological axis”
 - most blacks shift between these two ideas/ends of spectrum during Civil War and Civil Rights movement, depending on socio-political conditions

- **Transformationism**

- 3rd strategy generated by “developing consciousness of the black working class” and US labor struggles p. xxiv
 - **ECONOMIC FOCUS** (total social and political shift through major change to a new economic structure)
- “This perspective neither accepted the structure of the contemporary society nor called for a separate black society, but rather advocated for a **radical transformation of the US based on a fundamental redistribution of resources.**” p.xxiv
- challenges “basic inequality” of capitalist structure; “dismantle all forms of class hierarchy and social privilege” p.xxiv

- **Major Figures/Movements**

- **1880s - T.Thomas Fortune** writes about importance of class issues in “understanding” and shifting social conditions: “The iniquity of privileged class and concentrated wealth. . . every man born into the world is justly entitled to so much of the produce of nature as will satisfy his physical necessities.” p.xxiv
- **1912 - Hubert Henry Harrison** - advocates for socialism: “socialism stands for the emancipation fo the wage slaves.” p.xxiv
- **1915-1954** movement is solidified with “consolidation of the black working class and its struggle for jobs and for access to employment at an equitable wage.” p. xxiv
- **1922 - African Blood Brotherhood:** “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work”, Harlem during Great Depression
- **Sleeping Car Porters** and rise of “working-class ‘organic intellectuals’ . . . associated with Communist party, such as southern organizers Angelo Herndon and Hosea Hudson” p.xxv

- **Integration/Nationalism/Transformation**

- socio-political visions
- “not mutually exclusive, but . . . broad, overlapping traditions”; “spectrum of views” p.xxv
- Still present and have guided, “to varying degrees, in virtually every major mass movement in which black people have been engaged.” p.xxv
- Individuals begin in one place but shift to another: Hubert Henry Harrison, W.E.B. Du Bois, MLK Jr., Malcolm X
- “competing paradigms continue to underlie the Black Freedom movement” p. xxv
- Black Power movement - “ a move toward nationalism that arose when the weaknesses of integrationist became evident” p.xxv
 - dissenting and directly contradictory views w/in ideology
 - **capitalist** (Floyd McKissick- Soul City) vs. **Marxist** (Black Panthers- Huey P. Newton & Fred Hampton)
 - Che-Lumumba Party- Angela Davis: “I am a Communist because. . . black people, with whose labor and blood this country was built, have a right to a great deal of the wealth . . . hoarded in the hands of the Hughes, the Rockefellers, the Kennedys, the DuPonts, all the super-powerful white capitalists of America.” p.xxv-xxvi

• RACE & GENDER

- “Race, and to a lesser extent class, have been central to theorizing AA liberation.” p.xxvi
- Gender always closely tied to and discussed as part of liberation movement, only recently getting more attention
 - **Positionality** of black women crucial
 - leaders in and outside of home
 - don’t receive benefits of “**private patriarchy**”; forced to do same work as black men during slavery, both must work outside home during Reconstruction
 - **intersectional identities** (gender/race/class) “triple oppressed” p.xxvi
 - distinct experience from black men and white women
 - “occupy a creative space from which to critique U.S. social structure from multiple sites.” p.xxvi
 - **1892- Anna Julia Cooper**: “To be an African-American woman was ‘to have a heritage. . . unique in all the ages.’” p. xxvi
 - significance of role of Black women in “slave community” and as activists may have translated to larger support from black men for the equal rights of black women than white women received and non-traditional gender roles
 - however, more concerned with protecting their ability to be mothers than individual freedom; 1852- M. Delany: “Let our young women have an education. . . Our females must be qualified, because they are to be the mothers of our children.” p. xxvi
 - Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Du Bois leaders in consistent and visible support for rights of black women.
- Struggle “framed in masculine terms”; conflicts w/in community and movement based on gender
 - Abolitionist William Wells Brown: “If I wish to stand up and say, ‘I am a man,’ I must leave the land that gave me birth.” p. xxvi
 - Frederick Douglass: “what the **black man** wants” = **all black people**
 - less “semantics” and usage of “man” to represent humankind than embedded and accepted patriarchy, “luxury that black women never had. p.xxvi-xxvii
- Black female analysis of race, class, and gender based on their specific experience

- 1892 - Anna Julia Cooper notes lack of inclusion of Black female perspective in socio-political equation: “confronted by both a woman question and a race problem, as is as yet unknown or an unacknowledged factor in both.” p.xxvii
- **Intersectional feminism** based in labor issues; sophisticated analysis of working conditions incl. “double day and the unpaid labor of women.”
 - 1938 *Crisis* article describing s. workers in cotton fields, rediscovered in 1980s: “woman was compelled to reproduce a large number of children because a large labor supply was in demand. . . ‘overhead’ falls on family instead of landlord, enforced monopoly by letting farm to tenant or cropper with largest family. . . tenant croppers charged with ‘overpopulation’ by economists and agriculturalists who disregard economic factors increasing farm tenancy (sharecroppers). . . one solution. . .sterilization.” p.xxvii
 - 1949 - Claudia Jones, Communist Party leader pushes for class and race-based feminism, anticipates race, class and gender theorists of 1980s and 90s, incl. negative representations of black women, “personal is political” and union/organizing of domestic workers.
- Powerful women in leadership roles in Civil Rights & Black Power movements (SCLC, SNCC, Black Panther party); must constantly grapple with race, class, gender
 - Fannie Lou Hamer: “we are here to work side by side with this black man in trying to bring liberation to all people.” p. xxviii
- 1980s major focus on gender that addresses intersectional experience of Black women and critiques Euro-Am. feminist view of “essentialism” centering gender only.
- Spectrum of views exist, paralleling and combining with different social visions
 - diversity of black thought; various class backgrounds and experiences

- **Outline of Anthology p.xxviii-xxix**

- collection of “social *theory*”
- reflects range of political thought of black Americans from colonial times - end of 20th c.
- not examination of social and political movements, but of the THEORIES that inform them
 - Section 1 - 1768-1861; era of slavery, abolitionism, reform, resistance and revolt against slavery, birth of African American culture and society
 - Section 2 - 1861-1915; Civil War, Reconstruction, Jim Crow segregation, majority of AA community is rural/Southern; two generations coping with aftermath of slavery and war
 - Section 3 - 1915-1954; “great migration” from rural South to urban North, 2 world wars, “Red Summer” of 1919, modern black working class, rise of black radicalism and emergence of Civil Rights movement
 - Section 4 - 1954-1975; Black Freedom movement (Civil Rights and Black Power movements)
 - Section 5 - 1975-2000; “second post-Reconstruction era”, rapid class stratification in USA and globally, creating new divisions and ideological debates

- **Resistance has major consequences**

- exile - Marcus Garvey, Claudia Jones
- harassed and denied passports - W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson
- jailed - Henry Winston, Angela Davis, Angelo Herndon
- brutally beaten - Fannie Lou Hamer, John Lewis
- death (mysterious to clear executions): David Walker, Nat Turner, Malcolm X, MLK. Jr., Fred Hampton, Attica Brothers