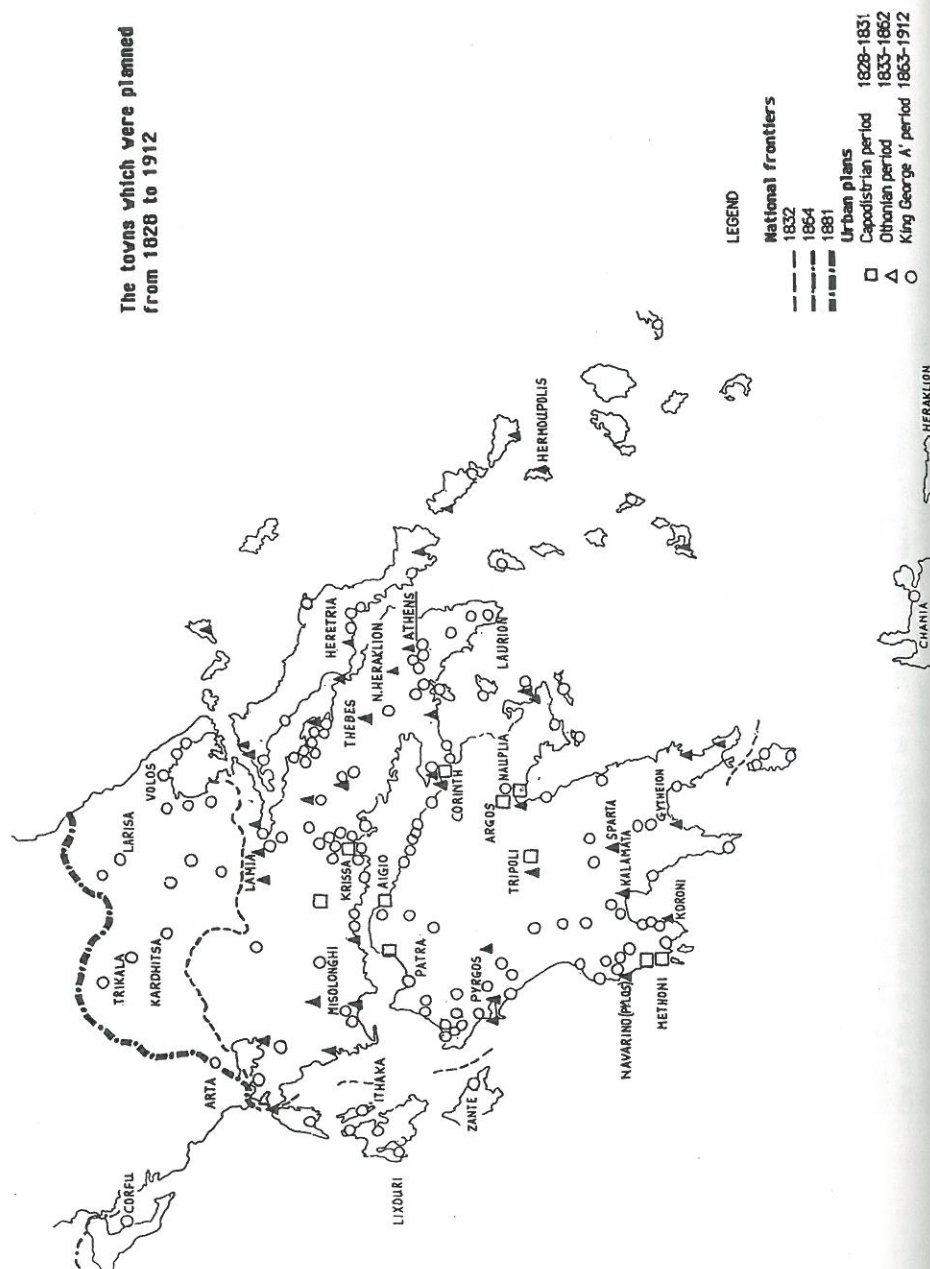


The towns which were planned
from 1828 to 1912

Was Athena Really Black?*

The Current Attack on the Western Tradition

JOHN E. REXINE

THERE IS A CRISIS OF IDENTITY AND A RELATED CRISIS OF PURPOSE in American education that reflects a greater and even deeper crisis in American society that is reflected in American politics. To a great extent that crisis is reflected in the recent New York State Education Department's Report of Social Studies Syllabus Review and Development Committee¹ which was reported nationally and to which there were national reactions and repercussions — both negative and positive — and which reflected the need to respond to the claims that America is a diverse nation whose diversity needs to be reflected at every level of education. Narrowly interpreted, this means that minorities, meaning Blacks, Asians, and Native Americans, should duly be represented in any Social Studies program, which really means the rewriting of history — but the question is whose history? Whose culture? Following naturally upon multilingualism is multiculturalism. The New York State report declares that "The position is taken that a few fundamental concepts should be the focus of the teaching and learning of the social studies, with applications, contexts and examples drawn from multiple cultural sources, differing perspectives and diverse identity group referents. Multicultural Knowledge in this conception of the social studies becomes a vehicle and not the goal. Multicultural content and experience become instruments by which we enable persons to develop their intelligence and to function as human and humane persons."²

*Originally delivered as the First Annual Greek Studies Lecture at Hellenic College, Brookline, Massachusetts on October 17, 1991.

¹Albany, New York: The State Education Department/The University of the State of New York, June 13, 1991.

²Ibid., p. ix.

Fundamentally, the report stresses inclusion rather than exclusion and recommends the removal of language that is insensitive, racist or sexist. The report identifies the following seven concepts as guides to social studies curriculum reform:

- a). Democratic ideals as the foundation of American society.
- b). Understanding and respecting diversity in the characteristics and values of self and others.
- c). Understanding personal and social responsibility for economic and social systems, and for justice and their effects.
- d). Globalism as the recognition of world citizenship and interdependence.
- e). Recognizing the importance of ecological balance.
- f). Ethics and values: The pursuit of fairness, the search for meaning and responsibility.
- g). Seeing and understanding one's self as member of and participant in society.

Who could disagree with such honorable goals (guides)? The problem arises in executing them.³

The Report goes on to give eight principles for implementing the desired changes:

1. The selection of subject matter should be *culturally inclusive*, based on up-to-date scholarship in history, the social sciences, and related fields.
2. The subject matter content selected for inclusion should represent *diversity and unity* within and across groups.
3. The subject matter content selected for inclusion should be set within the *context of its time and place*.
4. The subject matter selected for inclusion should give *priority to depth over breadth*.
5. Multi-cultural perspectives should *infuse the entire curricula, pre K-12*.
6. The subject matter content should be *treated as socially constructed* and therefore tentative — as is all knowledge.
7. The teaching of social studies should *draw and build on the experience and knowledge that students bring to the classroom*.
8. *Pedagogy should incorporate a range of interactive modes of teaching and learning*, in order to foster understanding (rather than rote learning), examination of controversy, and mutual learning.⁴

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. x.

The classroom is to be used to “*recognize cultural interdependence*.” The Committee report underlines the need to teach from a global perspective from the very beginning; that the social studies are important for nation-building purposes, and in so doing, must pay attention “to those values, characteristics, and traditions which we share in common”; the curriculum must be informed by current scholarship; students need to see themselves as active makers and changers of culture and society; they must be helped to develop the tools by which to judge, analyze, act, and evaluate; a commitment must be made to honoring and continuing examination of democratic values as an essential basis for social organization and nation-building. The application of democracy to social organization should be viewed as a continuing process which sometimes succeeds and sometimes fails, and thus requires a constant effort; that one of the central aims of the social studies is the development of the intellect and should not be taught only as information but should involve a critical examination of ideas and events.⁵ All this was in response to the charge of the Commissioner:

The Social Studies Review and Development Committee is asked to review existing State social studies syllabi and to make recommendations to the Commissioner designed to increase students' understanding of American culture and history; the cultures, identities, and histories of the diverse groups which comprise American society today; and the cultures, identities and histories of other peoples throughout the world.⁶

Marginalization of women and people of color is decried and the January 1991 statement of the Executive Board of the Organization of American Historians is cited: “The history curriculum of public schools should be constructed around the principle that all people have been significant actors in human events” — a patently false claim that is so inclusive that it is absurd. It is based on the equally false but widely circulated proclamation that all cultures are equal — this is because of the condemnation of elitism in our democratic society, even though it is obvious that some people have to be excellent to provide the society with the expertise needed for the society to function properly. It is part of the trend to condemn all differences as evil and wrong and to describe all people in terms of group identity and not as individuals capable of achieving distinction.⁷ Ironically, in ancient Greek terms,

⁵Ibid., p. 4-5.

⁶Ibid. p. vii. Social Studies Review and Development Committee Charge). Also p. 6.

⁷For the Greek concept of *Arete*, see Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek*

arete, the Greek pursuit of individual excellence, is condemned because it makes distinctions and we must not make distinctions — distinctions are discriminatory and our identity must be linked with a group and/or gender.

This current trend, for example, is exemplified by the assertion that those who are not Black, Hispanic, Asian or Native American or Pacific Islanders are Euro-Americans and are responsible for all of the evil in the world, not just in the United States. I quote from a portion of a letter by a woman from Syracuse, New York who recently publicly acknowledged her guilt for all Euro-Americans in a letter to the editor:⁸

We, as Euro-Americans, Anglos, Gringos, Wasps and whites, don't want to admit that we are on the wrong course of life, or that other people have suffered for our position of privilege, or that something about us is fundamentally harmful and bad. Yet when atrocities are committed — killings, tortures, sacrilege, broken promises, bad intentions, deception, rape and crime — who is responsible? The historian for telling us or the people who did these acts? The ignorant immigrants or the government that represented and conscripted them?

.....
Perhaps our people, as Europeans, are responsible for creating a cultural frame work for perceiving reality that perpetrates death, destruction deception, and denial.

.....
We, as European Americans have a bloody history with a morality on the level of might equals right, where the "winner" of a fixed game acts superior and makes up the rules for the next play. Our positions of privilege, monetary wealth and "high" standard of living have been appropriated at the expense of the blood, sweat, tears, and broken backs of indigenous people all over the world. To be free of such a past requires that I study the whole truth and not deny the point of view of those whom my ancestors and my government hated. I am a bigot with inclinations toward arrogance, false pride and identity based on making myself look "better" than others. No European Americans can escape the internalization of sexism, racism, elitism and ecocide.

⁸*Culture*, translated from the second German edition by Gilbert Highet, Oxford, 1939, 3 volumes.

⁸"Letters to the Editor," *Syracuse Herald-Journal* August, 14, 1991.

Sexism, racism, elitism and now ecocide are without a doubt the cardinal sins of 20th century America and this letter of characteristically liberal American Protestant self-flagellation makes no distinction among whites — all are Euro-Americans (meaning Anglos and Northern Europeans) and *ipso facto* oppressors and suppressors of all others, not only here but everywhere. There is no doubt that the traditional presentation of history, in this case, American history has been incomplete, if not downright false. We are told that the writing of history has been fabricated in support of the oppressor and that a new more comprehensive history must be taught to new generations that takes into account the diversity of American society. The New York State Social Studies report stresses the necessity for pursuing "The whole truth and nothing but the truth."

Thucydides long ago noted that history is concerned with the investigation of the truth when he said "On the whole, the conclusions I have drawn from the truths quoted may, I believe, safely be relied on. Assuredly they will not be disturbed either by the lays of a poet displaying the exaggeration of his craft, or the compositions of the chroniclers that are attractive at truth's expense; the subjects they treat being out of reach of evidence, and time having robbed most of them of historical value by enthroning them in one region of legend. Turning from these, we can rest satisfied with having proceeded upon the clearest data, and having arrived at conclusions as exact as can be expected in matters of such antiquity."⁹

The Greek historian is concerned that his work be judged as "useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble it if it does not reflect it . . . In fine, I have written my work, not as an essay to win the applause of the moment, but as a possession for all time" (I 24).¹⁰ Thucydides continues to this day to be viewed as the first scientific historian but the New York State Education Department report warns that "what is even more problematic for the teaching and learning of history and the social studies is the ease with which information, ideology and belief become commingled in the minds of many of those whose interests are served by these ideas . . . Although we were generally in agreement that histories tend to reflect the interests and perspective of those who write them, there was a ubiquitous undercurrent of concern for the recognition of historical and other truth."¹¹

⁹From the unabridged Crawley translation in *The Complete Writings of Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War* (New York, 1951) p. 14 (Book I.22).

¹⁰*Ibid.* pp. 14-15.

¹¹*The Report of the New York State Social Studies Review and Development Committee*, p. 69.

New York State Education Commissioner, Thomas Sobol, in his cover letter to the SED report under the heading "Tell the Whole Story," states that "No society, no people, no culture can escape the grace and the stain of human nature. Greece, for all its glory, denied citizenship to women; Rome, for all its grandeur, turned to decadence and decay. As much is true of the other great civilizations of Africa, Asia, India and the Americas, each with its own instances of attainment and struggle. No culture corners the market on enlightenment (sic) and justice; none embodies fully the qualities of ignorance and cruelty."¹²

He continues:

Social studies syllabi should be written so as to reflect these truths. Our history and the story of our many peoples must reflect not only our achievements, but our shortcomings; not only our triumphs, but our pain; and not only our failures, but our successes and ideals. This is not to say that all cultures or civilizations are "equal"; but it is to say that students are capable of understanding the complexity of human nature and the human experience and an education which does not help them do so sells them short.¹³

The Commissioner does recommend "asserting the centrality of our Western political and legal values and traditions." Nathan Glazer in his comments on the report warns of the danger of hypostatization of race, ethnic group, culture, people. By hypostasize he means "to make into or regard as, separate and distinct substance; . . . to assume a reality." "There are no fully distinct cultures in America, aside from American culture,"¹⁴ he claims and multiculturalism is too complex to teach to children and adolescents. Kenneth T. Jackson of Columbia University insists that "we should celebrate the common culture that Americans share . . . The report highlights the notion that all cultures are created equal . . . But I cannot endorse a 'Declaration of Cultural Interdependence' . . . within any single country, culture must be accepted as the standard."¹⁵ He agrees with Arthur Schlesinger Jr's comment that the report is "saturated with *pluribus* and neglectful of *unum*." Schlesinger faults the report because it does not point to the influence of European ideas of democracy, human rights, self-government, rule of "law" and does not acknowledge that the democratic ideals come from Europe which is "The *unique* source of

¹²Memorandum to the Honorable Members of the Board of Regents from Thomas Sobol entitled *Understanding Diversity*, dated July 12, 1991, p. 8.

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴"Additional Comments" by Nathan Glazer, *Report of Social Studies Syllabus Review and Development Committee*, pp. 75-76.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, Kenneth T. Jackson, "A Dissenting Comment," p. 81.

these ideals."¹⁶ Europhobia plays up the European colonization and deplores "the eradication of many varieties of traditional culture and knowledge" but does not acknowledge infanticide, slavery, polygamy, the subjection of women, suttee, veil-wearing, foot-binding, and clitorectomies in non-European cultures. Schlesinger feels that students who understand the nature of the western democratic tradition will move naturally to social criticism on their own.¹⁷

In a very recent article called "All is not Equal: A Question of Values,"¹⁸ Gerald F. Kreyche, professor emeritus of philosophy at De Paul University in Chicago, has said that "If, in a given society, the values of one are as good as another, it follows that any society is as good as another . . ." Kreyche unequivocally declares that the values of some are better than those of others:

The bongo drum of a tribal dancer is hardly the equivalent of a church organ, and the bark painting of an aborigine is no match for Rembrandt's "Night Watch." Nor is the shaman's effigy on the same plane as Michelangelo's "Pieta." A voodoo chant in no way teaches the grandeur of Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony," and a witch doctor's brew is hardly the equivalent of modern medicine.

Historically, certain cultures have advanced, while others have declined or died out, just as chemistry has replaced alchemy and astronomy has superseded astrology. Although each culture serves its own needs and produces its own institutions, some have done and continue to do so better than others.

One need make no apologies for Western civilization, which, despite its flaws, represents a high point of culture unequalled in human history.

No doubt, it is clear from all this that the lines have been drawn, many think too sharply. In an effort to show that diversity equals truth, there seems to be a desperate, even irrational and unhistorical attempt on the part of those needing a clear identify and their supporters to overstate their case (Who in education or anywhere else can oppose the idea that we need to see things in a total perspective and not only in part?), and in fact, to appropriate from other sources and claim as their own what is only their own in an unrelated and indirect way — that is, through learning.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "A Dissenting Opinion," p. 92.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, Schlesinger, p. 92.

¹⁸*U.S.A. Today*, vol. 120 no. 2556, September 1991, p. 98.

In 1987 there appeared a massive work (575 pp.) entitled *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, vol. 1 (Published by the Rutgers University Press). A second volume (1991) has now appeared. It is a book that has been quoted and misquoted by minority voices that see it and its author as providing scholarly support for their unrecognized contributions. It is a book that is a vehement attack on the classics and traditional classical scholarship and its role in the Western European and American Traditions.

Martin Bernal, whose field is government studies, who is currently at Cornell University and whose training was in Chinese studies, an area that he taught for twenty-years, has now devoted himself full-time to debunking the traditional view of the ancient Greeks, a view that he (as one who has discovered his own Jewish roots) finds anti-Semitic and racist and seeks to create a new Semitic view of the Greeks that leaves them little that is Hellenic or ideal. Bernal claims that he was inspired by the work of Cyrus Gordon and his student Michael Astour and impelled to expose the Aryan model of the Greeks created by an essentially anti-Semitic and racist German classical scholarship of the nineteenth century. The three volumes of his argue that 1) the supersession of the Aryan model over the ancient can be explained in terms of the Weltanschauung of the early nineteenth century — a model “conceived in sin”; 2) that the Aryan model is corrupt; 3) *Black Athena* is an attempt to use the revised ancient model to throw some light on previously inexplicable aspects of Greek religion and mythology and especially the names of heroic or divine beings (vol. 1, pp. 62-63). Bernal sees himself as going well beyond Gordon and Astour and proclaiming a massive Semitic component in the Greek vocabulary, Egyptian colonization of Greece, and the hypothesis that Egyptian culture and language played an equal or even more central role in the formation of Greek civilization. He also contends that there is a genetic relationship between the Indo-European languages and those of the Afroasiatic “super family” and there must once have been a people who spoke Proto-Asiatic-Indo-European. The juxtaposition of Greek with Egyptian and Canaanite religion for Bernal would seem to make comprehensible what had previously been misunderstood or only partially understood. Bernal’s political purpose, in his own words, is “to lessen European cultural arrogance,” something that can now conveniently be done after the fact. His book (vol. 1) has already had enormous impact, shaken the field of classics to its very foundations, and become the basis for a totally new approach to teaching about the ancient Greeks.

Bernal challenges the traditional view of the Greeks as exemplifying “The best,” “The human universal.” He asserts that “It was

precisely this and their supposed transcendence of historical and linguistic laws that made the Greeks the central concern of *Bildung*, through which the young leaders of Germany were to understand and remake themselves. It was for equivalent purposes that *Altertumswissenschaft* and the classics spread to the rest of Europe and its offshoots beyond: despite its scholarly trappings, its role in the ideological formation of the ruling class has continued to be more important than historical or linguistic inquiry. Thus, while early nineteenth-century Philhellenism — though consistently racist — had both radical and reactionary aspects, the discipline of Classics was conservative from the start. The education reforms of which it formed the centerpiece were systematic attempts to avoid or prevent revolution” (vol. 1, p. 228). Even Karl Marx is castigated for his Philhellenism because he accepted the view that “in every aspect of its civilization Greece was categorically different from — and superior to all that had gone before” and that “Greece towered over its posterity” (vol. 1, p. 295). After all, even Marx was originally a classicist, and had rejected Bernal’s argument that Greek mythology was an Egyptian contribution. Surely, even Bernal must concede that the Greeks qualitatively transformed whatever they may have received. To argue that Greek philosophy, for example, is Egyptian is nonsense even though people like Plato had enormous respect for the wisdom and antiquity of the Egyptians. Bernal associates *Hellenomania* (note — not Philhellenism) with Romanticism and Romanticism with racism. He cites as the height of Hellenomania Percy Bysshe Shelley’s famous and oft quoted statement, “We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts all have their roots in Greece. But for Greece . . . we might still have been savages and idolaters . . . The human form and the human mind attained to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its images on those faultless productions whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which can never cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to enable and delight mankind until the extinction of the race” (vol. 1, pp. 290-91).

The bulk of Bernal’s book (Volume 1) is dedicated to demonstrating in as much tedious detail as possible that classical scholarship has been racist and anti-Semitic because, for example, “It was unthinkable that such an object of beauty and purity as the Greek language could have developed in the Mediterranean; still less could it be the result of Hellenes mixing with Egyptians and Semites” (Vol. 1, p. 335). In the case of historians, German and British, Bernal concludes that “There is also no doubt that all — with the possible exception of Grote — were racist and that all were Romantic with a passionate love for the images of Greece” (Vol. 1, p. 336). There is no way for Bernal that there could

be a love for things Greek or the Greeks that was not evil for "Philhellenism has always had Aryanist and racist connotations, and Classics its conservative bias." (Vol. 1., p. 38). Bernal rejects the view that Greek civilization ever had an integrity or purity of its own and sees the categorization of PreHellenes before the Greeks as a refusal to acknowledge the primacy of Phoenicians and Egyptians in Greek history.¹⁹

Black Athena is not a work to be taken lightly, even though the author insists that the use of *Black* was the publisher's idea and *African* would have been more to his liking (meaning Egyptian). There was even a special session in 1989 of the American Philological Association devoted to his book, the papers of which were published in a special issue of *Arethusa* (Fall 1989) and the papers of nine scholars reproduced, including that of Frank M. Snowden, Jr., the senior black classicist from Howard University, a graduate of Boston Latin School and Harvard University, whose *Blacks in Antiquity* (1970) and *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks* (1983) have become widely circulated and reflect more than fifty years of research. Snowden takes issue with Bernal for equating Egyptians with Blacks. I quote only one section from his "Bernal's Blacks, Herodotus, and other Classical Evidence":

Professor Bernal's assumption that "black" (*melagchroes*) as used by Herodotus, is the equivalent of "black" or "Negro" in twentieth-century usage is contradicted by Herodotus himself and the copious evidence of other classical authors. Greeks and Romans differentiated between the various gradations in the color of Mediterranean peoples darker than themselves, and made it clear that only some of the dark — or black-skinned fringes of northwest Africa were Ethiopians (*Aithiopes*, *Aethiopes*), a term the Greeks and Romans used regularly to designate peoples with black or dark skin, flat noses, woolly or tightly curled hair, thick lips and variations thereof: in other words where ancient authors meant Negro or black in twentieth Century usage they used the word Ethiopian. The physical trait regularly associated with the classical word Ethiopian are in general the same characteristics included in modern classification of Negroes.

As for the claim that Egyptian = Black, Snowden cites Egyptologist David O' Connor who has written: "Thousands of sculpted and painted

¹⁹See the review by John E. Rexine in *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook*, vol. 5, 1989, pp. 534-535 and Michael Poliakoff's survey of reviews on Bernal, "Roll Over Aristotle: Martin Bernal and His Critics" in *Academic Questions*, vol. 4, No. 3, Summer 1991, pp. 12-28.

representations from Egypt and hundreds of well preserved bodies from its cemeteries show that the typical physical type was neither Negroid nor Negro."²⁰

But Bernal insists that the history of classical scholarship is tainted by racism and anti-Semitism and he would destroy the fundamental view that the ancient Greeks or ancient Greece would have anything of their own to contribute (not even the word *sophia*). In his own racist fervor to make a case for African (meaning principally Egyptian) and Asiatic (meaning principally Semitic) influences and origins for virtually everything Greek, he would deny the ancient Greeks their language, their literature, their philosophy, their mythology, history, their political institutions, their art, their very culture. A veritable modern Fallmerayer this Bernal!

Even though Bernal has a point when he claims that there were interactions between Egyptian and Semites and that we should look at the Greeks in relation to others, Cyrus Gordon of Brandeis University and New York University has for years been trying to make this very point by calling one of his most influential works *The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilizations*,²¹ but to do it in the highly ideological way that Bernal does, despite his obviously impressive command of a number of Asian languages and his severely critical examination of the history of classical scholarship, is an affront to scholarly civility, and even more so to the Greeks themselves who were well aware of what they owed to other people and even more aware of their own distinctive culture. It is not enough to argue, as Bernal does, that in his present book "The Ancient Model was destroyed and replaced by the Aryan Model not because of any internal deficiencies, nor because the Aryan Model explained anything better or more plausibly; what it did do, however, was make the history of Greece and its relations to Egypt and the Levant conform to the world-view of the 19th century and, specifically to its systematic racism. Since then concepts of 'race' and categorical European superiority which formed the core of this *Weltanschauung* have been discredited both morally and heuristically, it would be fair to say that the Aryan Model was conceived in what we should now call sin and error" (Vol 1., p. 443). There is obviously need from time to time to look objectively at what we have been taught and to correct any misconceptions that we ourselves may have developed because of deficiencies in our education and outlook. *Black Athena* certainly uncovers for us many areas that we need to

²⁰D. O'Connor, "Ancient Egypt and Black Africa — Early Contacts," *Expedition: The Magazine of Archeology/Anthropology*, 14 (1971) 2.

²¹Cyrus Gordon, *Before The Bible: The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilizations* (New York, 1962).

explore and redefine but its own strong ideological stance makes the author read history and rewrite history in his own *peculiarly* dangerous way and from a twentieth century sociological stance that comes dangerously close to being an unfair misreading.

In the course of preparing this lecture, *Newsweek* in September 23, 1991 came out with an issue on whose cover was "Afrocentrism: Was Cleopatra Black? Facts or Fantasies — A Debate Rages Over What to Teach Our Kids About Their Roots." Under the headline was the declaration: "African Dreams: Black Americans were robbed of their history. Now they are reclaiming it for future generations." The second section entitled "A is for Ashanti, B is for Black . . . and C is for Curriculum which is starting to change," Afrocentrists claim that Egypt was black and they made it clear that in matters of controversy "African scholars are the final authority on Africa," while anthropologists may say that Ancient Egypt was not a black culture in the way we understand such distinctions today, but rather a multiethnic society. In the third section, "Out of Egypt, Greece: Seeking the roots of Western Civilization on the banks of the Nile," the question is raised directly, "Was Cleopatra Black?" Was Socrates Black? Did Nile legionnaires conquer the Aegean, setting the cradle of civilization in motion?" Martin Bernal, needless to say, is featured with a photograph of himself smugly looking out at the reader, leaning on his elbow beside the bust of an Egyptian queen. We are told of the claims that Minoan Crete was colonized by Egyptians; the art of Thera is Egyptian; half of all Greek words are derived from Egyptian or Semitic; and that Athena is derived from Egyptian NT; that the Sphinx's face is black, and by inference Euclid, Homer, Socrates; and Egyptian royalty from Tut to Cleopatra were African blacks. Egypt is obviously in Africa but the Egyptian cultural emissary at the Ramses the Great exhibit in Dallas, March-August 1989, in response to a group called the Blacology Speaking Committee that Ramses II was black, was reported by the *Washington Post* (March 23, 1989 D8) to have said in some bewilderment:²²

This is an Egyptian heritage and an Egyptian civilization 100 percent. We are part of the African continent. We cannot say by any means we are black or white. We are Egyptian, with culture and traditions and religions.

Still, Afrocentrists persist, as exemplified by, Greg Tate in "History: The Colonized Version," in, "Everything you Learned in School was

Wrong" in *Village Voice* (28 March 1989, 48), when he said, "What color were the Egyptians? Blacker than Murbarak, baby . . . If you figure different, it is because the Egyptians' complexion was bleached out of your liberal arts curriculum by the eighteenth and nineteenth century white supremacist philosophers who tried to rub out the massive African contribution to that oxymoron, Western civilization (their disciples even went so far as to scrape the Negroid noses off the Egyptian statuary."

Tate is persuaded that Socrates was an initiate of the Egyptian mysteries, and Aristotle came by all his wisdom from books stolen from Egyptian libraries.

What are we to make of all these claims on the ancient Greek tradition and of the related attacks on the Western tradition? In their own search for identity, the attackers are ironically seeking to coopt for themselves a significant part of that tradition, not in a historical but a polemical fashion, that would deny to the Greeks themselves any significant positive contributions to that very culture. It would seem that it is high time that the record be set straight.

²²Cited by *Newsweek*, September 23, 1991, p. 11.