

# William H. L. Dorsey: An Interview and Lesson in Deliberate Protracted Activism

by

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*William H. L. Dorsey* [at the left] (whldorsey@gmail.com) is a board member (treasurer) of the African Heritage Studies Association; co-editor of *Dream and Legacy: Dr. Martin Luther King in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (University of Mississippi Press); and copy- layout editor of *Higher Learning: Hip Hop in the Ivory Tower* and *Out of the Fire: Readings in Africana Studies* (Black Classic Press). He is principal editor of *Out of the Fire: Readings in Africana Studies* (Black Classic Press, forthcoming). In May 2017, he retired from Atlanta Metropolitan State College. He has been professionally associated with Georgia State University, Atlanta University, University of Indiana, University of California at Berkeley, Shaw University, the Atlanta Board of Education, the Stanford Research Institute, Spelman College, Morris Brown College, and Morehouse College. He holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in Sociology from the University of California at Berkeley, and a B.A. in Sociology and Anthropology from Swarthmore College (Swarthmore, Pennsylvania). He lives in East Point, Georgia.

**Note:** The following questions were presented November 18, 2017, and answered November 24–29, 2017. In the interview, the interviewee responds to the above mention of his time at the University of California at Berkeley, and thus offers a correction, a correction acknowledged, but left in this presentation to provide a context to the wit and humor of the interviewee.

**IMZ** (Itibari M. Zulu): Thank you Professor Dorsey for this interview, I have seen your name throughout the years, but I only had the opportunity to talk to you at the 48th annual conference of the African Heritage Studies Association conference held in Long Beach, California at the Queen Mary in November 2017 in a meaningful way, although, after reading your CV, I see that we have attended some of the same conferences, namely the National Council for Black Studies, and the African Heritage Studies Association meetings.

**WHLD** (William H. L. Dorsey): Thank you.

Before I begin I need to make a correction. I am “ABD” (all but dissertation) from Berkeley, so I sometimes point out that I am not certified as intelligent. My research intent was much too ambitious — a study of gender role expectations and fulfillment on the part of African American men — largely because I’ve always been interested more in learning than in “achieving.” It also turned out that there was no salary incentive to acquire that terminal degree, so I devoted my time to other pursuits. Now that I am retired, however, I will write the paper because I do have a number of things to contribute to the world of ideas, and with the long view of advanced age, I have a *much* more comprehensive understanding that will necessarily be a part of the long-delayed study.

It was good to meet you. I’ve been following your online project since discovering it in 2008 when it was just *The Journal of Pan African Studies*. Two or three years ago a friend of mine, Prof. James Turner, founder of the Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell, urged me to write up something about my life, so your interest in conducting this interview also helps me begin that production.

My college and grad school years fit very nicely into the “interesting times” that are wished upon in the Chinese curse (“May you live in interesting times”), but I never experienced them as a burden. I graduated from Jack Yates (Colored) High School in Houston just as the civil rights movement was ramping up, eventually spending a total of ten years in “whiteland.” I started grad school at Berkeley in the most interesting year of 1968, with the strike that led to Black Studies just starting up across the Bay at San Francisco State, and with hippies and Reagan and the burgeoning anti-Vietnam war movement, as well as the beginnings of the environmental movement and the contemporary women’s movement. Not to mention the Panthers down the street on Telegraph Avenue in Oakland as well as the intense intellectual and activist crucible that was Berkeley at that time. My activities and interests are definitely a product of my times; not only the high, focused energy due to the intensification of the movement from civil rights to black power, but the path I had taken up to then, led me to recognize the salience of self-determination, even before I was aware of Du Bois and his ideas for the Talented Tenth.

**IMZ:** Since you have spent a considerable time in Atlanta, I will begin with a question concerning the city. I recently read a synopsis of a book titled *The Legend of the Black Mecca: Politics and Class in the Making of Modern Atlanta* by Maurice J. Hobson, an assistant professor of African American Studies and History at Georgia State University that argues that the city has been associated with Black achievement, earning it the nickname “the Black Mecca,” however, it has “mishandled the Black poor” as the authors draw on primary sources and oral histories of working-class people and hip-hop artists from Atlanta’s underbelly to suggest that Atlanta’s political leadership has governed by bargaining with white business interests to the detriment of ordinary Black folk in Atlanta. Have you found that to be true in your experiences living and working in the city of Atlanta; and if so, why do you think it is a phenomenon we should be concerned about?

**WHL:** My own observations had quickly led me to the same conclusions when I moved here, long before the 1970s were over. Actually, I was quite aware of the class divide in African America before I ever left Houston for school.

The most effective tool of exploitation is the mind of the oppressed, and through the denial of full humanity by the mythology of race, coupled with divide-and-conquer manipulations, goes very, very far toward explaining the degree of disorganization and in far too many situations, antipathy among sections of the community. It turns out that Atlanta is an especially, even stunningly relevant example, for the highs and lows and the egos and resentments and successes and pitfalls that necessarily arise from the harsh contradictions that Professor Hobson cites.

As one whose academic career is centered on the social and behavioral sciences, it has for decades been plain to me that certain issues have to be resolved from “the ground up” in order for African Americans to attain true autonomy over the lives of persons and communities. We won’t get anywhere until, first, individuals get themselves emotionally mature — not perfect, just “adult” — at which point they can form stable families and communities and institutions that advance psychological, social, mental, and economic health, which in turn would provide the base for a unified African American nation. I mean “nation” in the anthropological, not political, sense.

**IMZ:** In reading your CV, I read that you were involved with the Institute of the Black World (IBW) between 1974 and 1982 wherein you were: an adjunct Assistant Professor of the Atlanta Cluster of the University Without Walls Program of Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina; a mailing supervisor (maintaining files and organizing mailings), editor of the IBW journal, *Black World-View*; IBW bookstore organizer; staff council President;

consultant/researcher for “A Socio-Psychological Profile of CETA Title IV Participants” for the Atlanta Comprehensive Training and Employment Administration subcontracted to the Center for Educational Research of IBW; a regular participant at IBW 1981–1982 Black Studies Curriculum Development Project conferences; and between 2001 and 2002 you were chair of the Local Organizing Committee to launch the Institute of the Black World 21st Century, held in Atlanta, Georgia. Your involvement in the think tank was commendable, considering that it was born in the early era of the Black Studies movement in the U.S., sparked by the establishment of the first Department of Black Studies at San Francisco State University (1968–1969), and originally based at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta, Georgia. In reflecting on that time in history, what are some of your most remembered experiences, and why do you consider them important?

**WHL D:** Actually Vincent Harding started what would become IBW in the wake of the assassination of his very close friend on April 4 of 1968, while the strike at San Francisco State began a few months later, in August or so of that year, with the first departments and programs beginning a year later. The Institute soon separated from the nascent King Center when Mrs. King pressed the founding group to swear that there would never be any situation that could/would justify violence.

I came to Atlanta from Berkeley mostly out of curiosity and expecting to stay for a few years before moving to explore life in other cities, but Atlanta quickly became engrossing, perhaps best indicated by Maynard Jackson’s successful campaign for mayor. I moved here specifically to teach at Atlanta University but was not hired after my second year there (I had inadvertently embarrassed the dean by revealing a critical failure on his part to the president), which made further changes of city less likely, but, again, Atlanta was quickly becoming more interesting and attractive. I had met Howard Dodson in 1967 or so, then we had both been at Berkeley together, and in 1974 he, too, was in Atlanta as on-site director of IBW, so when I was out of a full-time job he invited me to come a couple of blocks down the street to work at the Institute. For two full years I was full-time there and teaching part-time at Georgia State. Being at the Institute afforded me an environment that worked like a social and intellectual hot house, in terms both of ideas and philosophies new to me as well as through the daily example of people from extremely wide backgrounds and ages simply working together to accomplish tasks with absolutely none of the egos and insecurities so distressingly common in academe and other realms of professional life: people who were elderly, middle age, young adult and college students, people who were formally and not formally “trained,” just people working together to accomplish good things for Black America.

I began there in 1974, so I began shortly after the heady period focused on by Derrick White in his study, *The Challenge of Blackness: The Institute of the Black World and Political Activism in the 1970s*, but I did get to meet the founders, there were still plenty of people passing through and deep discussions that provided me with information and understandings that became incorporated into my thinking and particularly significant when I began teaching Introduction to African American Studies four years later at Atlanta then “Junior” College, an institution for the vast bulk of Black Atlanta and one that was strongly opposed by the established Black bourgeoisie.

The experience with University Without Walls, conducted in coordination with Shaw University in Raleigh, NC was exhilarating albeit short-lived. It was exhilarating to be able to craft a curriculum and choose instructors who had the whole student in mind but was cut short by the accrediting group, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, because IBW was not recognized as an institution of higher education. (I found it extremely instructive that the background, the “training,” the quality of teachers was subordinate to the institutional approval of the institution.) Despite that, however, several students did have the opportunity to experience the fruits of that branch of the tree of change and their intellectual and spiritual energy reflected that nurturance. For me, ultimately it was also an experience that not only further enhanced and even further emboldened my own teaching, but one that also gave me my first direct exposure to the problems inherent in the bureaucracy of higher education, an exposure that sharpened my ability to recognize the impact over the next three decades as that bureaucracy grew ever more ritualistic and interfering. This awareness, of course, grew out of my psychological, anthropological, and sociological perspective on human beings and our society.

My other duties played directly into, as I like to point out, the interests of a son of a librarian (my mother earned her Bachelor’s in Library Science from Atlanta University in 1929). The job of setting up the bookstore is clearly related to that connection. I appreciated working on the mailing because of the challenge of managing a mass of data. Editing *Black World-View* was more copy editing and also an additional source of new people and ideas poured into my mental hopper. The involvement in research fulfilled my graduate school education, even though I was not using it for personal research. And the leadership roles afforded me the opportunity to continue to grow my interpersonal skills, although I have no ego to be or become a “leader.”

In the same realm of personal relationships, I met Ron Daniels through Prof. James Turner. Ron was the organizer of the State of the Race conferences in the 1980s that eventually led to his founding IBW21 — Institute of the Black World 21st Century. It was this friend-to-friend connection that led to my involvement as co-chair in organizing the conference held in Atlanta, a kick-off severely hampered by events that took place on September 11th of that same year.

With respect to the National Council for Black Studies and the African Heritage Studies Association, I became involved with both as a consequence of the BSCDP (Black Studies Curriculum Development Project) but since I was not at a well-endowed top tier majority institution, I could not afford to go to most of the conferences. Consequently, I especially noted when NCBS got really big-time and held a conference on the continent. That was completely out of the question for me and the types of concerns the organization was dealing with had absolutely nothing to do with the Black 99% I was working with, so I experienced significant alienation from the group. In, I think, 1980, Abdul Alkalimat held a joint NCBS AHSA conference in Boston. I went in as NCBS and left as AHSA, particularly because of the latter's focus on developing Pan African relations. It would be Charles Jones' "version" of NCBS and the attention to the *Journal* that got me back in with that group. All in all, though, far too many of the young bloods who are "in" NCBS are there only for what Prof. Karenga calls "vulgar careerism," so when some petty issues among new leadership put an end to the production of the *Journal*, and soon thereafter the revival of AHSA was initiated by Prof. Shelby Lewis, I again gravitated from the former to the latter, and also began more involvement with ASALH, which contains a healthy mix of scholar and community activists. I suppose I could have taken my Swarthmore and Berkeley degrees to a prestigious institution, but a few years ago I realized that for four generations now my family's business has been Black education; my mother's father, my namesake, was born a slave but eventually was at Fisk, I think during the Du Bois' time there, and was something like the fourth president of Alcorn and has a junior-senior named for him in Jackson, Mississippi; both of my parents were teachers; I am a teacher and my brother, although he became a captain with TWA, always taught whoever was around; and now my niece, the fourth generation, is teaching at Morgan State.

A final point: it was my association with IBW that led me to a full understanding of the cultural significance of Pan Africanism. Already holding a good grasp of its political and economic significance, knowledge I gained there firmly put me on the road to the "formula" I laid out at the beginning of this interview: that Black liberation must be built from the ground up, beginning with the individual, encompassing the intimate group then the community and the nation, but those last two steps would require a sense of "we" that has a more substantial base than style or slang. What colonialism, both external and internal, has accomplished has been a chronic fracturing of the African world, so effective that the internal divisions themselves have been sufficient to facilitate centuries of ongoing oppression and exploitation. There are strong and understandable flows among African Americans that seek to (re-)claim humanity through any number of constructions, from arguing that Black folk were seeded from the stars on this planet to ego-assuaging assertions of power and primacy that are, sadly, mere reversals of the trick bag run on us by white supremacy.

To me, the sword to cut this Gordian knot is an awareness of the humanity of Black folk through appreciation of the parameters of humanity as defined and practiced by Black people. The work done by Black psychologists and anthropologists and other social scientists has developed a body of cross-societal, intra-cultural characteristics that I have run by my students for years, as a means of getting them to see what they are always looking at: the (cultural) nature of Black people. When a critical mass of Black people recognize their distinct, unique humanity *as a people*, Pan African unity is inevitable. At *that* point Garvey's instruction can begin to be fulfilled: "Up ye mighty race; you can accomplish what you will." In many critical ways the descendants of enslaved Africans in the United States are a linchpin, since we are the population upon which most of white supremacy and divide-and-conquer/divide-and-rule are developed and road tested, thus we *have* to come up with effective responses, and so become models for the rest of the Black, and increasingly the entire nonwhite world. And a large minority of the white one, too. Yes, it was an extremely rich and rapid two years.

**IMZ:** Now more to the present, congratulations on your recent retirement (May 2017) from Atlanta Metropolitan State College in Atlanta, Georgia, a four-year unit of the University System of Georgia, formerly Atlanta Junior College, a journey that began in 1976, if I am correct. During your stay there you had an opportunity form an articulation with the department of African American Studies at Georgia State University, 2002 and 2003. I am sure that was an interesting process, especially considering that the '*heavy lifting*' in African American Studies (Black Studies) had generally been done nationally, years before. How was that experience, and why did it come about, years after the national formation of the discipline?

**WHLD:** Starting when I did at Berkeley brought me into the concept and need for Black Studies very quickly; in the wake of the strike at San Francisco State, a year or two later there was a strike at Berkeley in support of starting a Third World and Women's Studies department. I was already full-time at Atlanta Junior College when IBW held the Black Studies Curriculum Development conferences, led by Doug Davidson, a partner from Berkeley, and that basically served as a crash course in what had been and what was in development regarding teaching Black Studies, as well as a golden opportunity to meet many of those who had begun blazing that path. Also, as mentioned, I was already teaching the course by then. Regarding the connection with the department at Georgia State, that began, as do most such involvements, years earlier with other personal relationships. I had met Michael L. Clemons in the 1980s when he was an assistant in the Title III office at my College while working on his Ph.D. in Political Science at Atlanta University under Mack Jones.

He eventually wound up teaching at Old Dominion and, Atlanta being the air hub that it is, he and another political scientist would often pass through changing planes; that “other” was Charles E. Jones, who became the founding chair of the Department at Georgia State, and since mine was at the time a two-year school, and Georgia State was *much* cheaper than any of the colleges in the Atlanta University Center, most of our students went to Georgia State for their junior and senior years. As I mentioned, I took over teaching our Intro course in 1978, which was still a time period when interest was quite high and students were older and resonating quite strongly with the social movements of the time, so Charles and I coordinated a transfer program that would make it simple for a student to take her or his Associate degree in African American Studies and flow right into the senior college program. It was especially important to me to have the opportunity to introduce critical concepts and perspectives and insights to those who for most of a century had been thoroughly excluded from the “Black Mecca,” so I found myself with tremendous energy and creativity in not only my own teaching but also in encouraging and facilitating students moving on with the potentialities I wanted to stimulate in them.

Prof. Clemons started the *Journal of Race and Policy* in 2005 and, since he knew I already had had lots of experience with especially copy editing — mostly smoothing out and clarifying sometimes awkward or dense academic writing — I began working on that with him. Being the founding chair of a strongly growing department, Prof. Jones became president of NCBS (National Council for Black Studies) and for a period of years we worked on putting out their journal, the *Journal of Africana Studies*, developing a print schedule that created a solid base of professional regularity.

**IMZ:** I read that you were a co-chair of the first Review Committee on Promotion and Tenure at Atlanta Metropolitan State College in 1990. How was that experience and what was can be learned from that you think can be relayed to those presently engaged in this critical process in academe?

**WHLD:** This brings me back to the pitfalls of bureaucratic organization so aptly laid out by Max Weber well over a century ago. I watched an institution initially populated by a high percentage of dedicated teachers slowly sink into conventional me-too-ism with respect to the criteria and evaluation of portfolios presented for tenure and promotion. And it was not merely local institutional bureaucracy borne by people trained in and devoted to the conventional, but also steady pressure from the other two conventional bodies, the University System and SACS, the accrediting group. Regression toward the mean in real life.

Higher education has fallen prey to the mindless measuring of meritocracy. An example: when the College was going through one or another accreditation process, the Academic Dean wondered if my teaching the intro course was or would be appropriate, since my “training” had been in sociology. The unrecognized contradiction in this, of course, is that the field was only around 10 years old when I started teaching it; to require that I have graduate “training” in the field in order to teach it would be the same as, at the beginning of medical professionalization, refusing to allow a physician to teach aspiring doctors because s/he had not been certified by an external authority. In other words, slavish and thoughtless application of externally-imposed criteria were followed to the exclusion of any measure of common sense.

Particularly at this historical stage those black scholars who are seeking stability and promotion in academe need to be particularly conscious of implementing Du Bois’s double consciousness, providing the process with achievements that will be uncontroversial to the keepers of “tradition,” while, hopefully, providing a growth-oriented energy and emphasis in African America — not only double consciousness, but an active implementation of the “Academic Excellence and Social Responsibility” slogan.

**IMZ:** In relationship to the issue of promotion and tenure, a task force developed out of a National Council for Black Studies roundtable discussion in March 2017 that is seeking support for a measurement tool in Africology that would measure the impact of journals in the discipline which can be used for the purposes of academic promotion and tenure at institutions of higher education. The measurement tool is called an ‘Afrifactor’, and it has been approved by several scholarly journals (*A:JPAS* included), and presented to professional associations, which includes the National Council for Black Studies, and the recently formed national and internationally constituted California Africology Association. In a preliminary way, do you think such a process is warranted or needed in Africology, and if so, why, and if not, why not?

**WHLD:** I did have the chance to review that paper and I am wholeheartedly in agreement that the academic work is not done until we have not only introduced the topics and theories of the field to higher education, but also have set forth African-centered values as guidelines for evaluating and rewarding teaching and scholarship.

In psychology the concept of *autonomy* is of great significance since it is an indication of the power of an individual over her/his own life. For a people, autonomy — literally “self-naming” — is precisely the aspect of empowerment most harshly policed by those who act to maintain, in our case, racial stratification; one need only to note the rapidity with which a black-defined activity is renamed and that re-definition then popularized by conventional representatives of the majority such as the mainstream news media.

It is also true that for the vast majority of people the definitions of reality imposed by experts and their “superiors” account for the bulk of their unthinking conformity to the status quo. One of the things that has been happening to education, including or even especially higher education, in this nation is a “dumbing down” that grows from both an ongoing reaction to the student activism of the 1960s and 70s — the intent to prevent that happening again — and from the “professionalization” of both fields of study and institutions. The great folk philosopher Curtis Mayfield presaged this development in a line from one of his compositions (“If There’s a Hell Below, We’re All Going to Go”): “educated fools from uneducated schools.”

In one of the all-time historical ironies, whiteness defined itself in opposition to blackness, thus providing its bearers nothing more than the lack of melanin in their skin to give them self-esteem, and, following a semantic quirk of the English language, defined black as opposite of white not only visually but, much more critically, opposite in terms of character and morality, but that oppositional thinking also reflects a substantial underlying dynamic necessitated by the dehumanization associated with the manufacture of these opposites: African Americans more readily recognize the humanity in others, including the white majority, and steadily that approach to interacting with others is seducing white folk into true humanism. A coping strategy necessary for our survival is also hollowing out the trunk from which the branches of our affliction flow. Which reminds me of one of my favorite observations: Every problem contains its own solution; every system contains the seeds of its own destruction.

In both expressive culture and intellectual endeavor, the introduction of/exposure to Africentric perspectives and values has transformed the behavior and thinking of people afflicted with Eurocentric limitations. Introducing and implementing A-factors, as you call them, will be an exceedingly heavy lift, but offers the brilliant promise of humanizing and revitalizing a higher education system that is quickly becoming ossified.

**IMZ:** You have been involved with editorial work since you were a college student as a photo editor to positions with scholarly journals via *The Berkeley Journal of Sociology* (1969-1970); *International Journal of Africana Studies* (associate editor), *Black World-View*, *Journal of Race and Policy* (copy editor); and also in book production. With regards to scholarly journals, specifically in Africology, what do you see today in terms of content, scope mission and access points that you consider commendable or perhaps an outright deterioration in those attributes?

**WHL D:** From the moment I heard the term *scholar activist*, I knew that was the that described my calling. This means that empirically and epistemologically grounded work must be produced that can be placed in the edifice of Kujichagulia — self-determination, autonomy — that we are building. This work must adhere to the principles of academic excellence and social responsibility; fortunately, the vast body of work of black scholars is centered on social responsibility, even that of intellectually honest black conservatives. The production of such work that is also academically excellent is the *main* reason I entered into each of the editorial projects with which I am and have been involved; a lot of academics have good ideas and conduct good studies, but need help when it comes to presenting their writing in a form that invites thought instead of doubt or even ridicule. Breaking down the implications and demonstrations from academe into forms that “Jesse B. Simple” (Langston Hughes’ iconic character) understands is one manifestation of social responsibility.

**IMZ:** You have participated in many professional conferences for decades, such as the African Heritage Studies Association, Association for the Study of African American Life and History, American Anthropological Association, National Council for Black Studies, Georgia Sociological Association, Southern Sociological Society and the American Sociological Association. Why do you think it is important to attend and participate in professional national or regional meetings, particularly those dealing with the history, culture and politics of the global African community?

**WHL D:** For me, there are two attractions in conferencing: seeing friends I otherwise would not likely get to spend time with and, in that socializing, along with the panels and paper presentations, the second attraction is the opportunity to hear new ideas and new findings; never knowing what new understandings can or will arise from the exchanges. More objectively, as I mentioned to Dr. (Charles) Jones a couple of NCBS conferences ago, as an item in the sociology of knowledge, it occurred to me that a simple content analysis of paper topics presented over the years would provide a fascinating record of the intellectual flow of Black scholars over several decades. That is a project we might well work on once the current Inbox has been emptied.

**IMZ:** Considering the different trends/developments in Africology, for example, the scholar/community activist tradition, the advent of Afrocentric theory, professionalization, and general acceptance in higher education in the U.S. of the discipline, what do you envision the future being, and in an ideal context, what should it be?

**WHLD:** Essentially I'll be summarizing most of my previous discussions, but to start off I want to point out that if a people stop struggling, they die. Though there be the normal ebb and flow — viewed with unnecessary alarm by those whose historical vision is myopic — Black folk have a solid record of not only struggle but transformation of adversity and disadvantage. From this vantage point the empowering movements of the 1960s and -70s were clearly a lift-off stage from extremely powerful booster rockets that were centuries old and powered by a largely unrecognized cultural perspective that has seen an ever-increasing number of descendants, but also an increasingly large share in desirable material situations (not to ignore the 35 – 40% who are not). The late 20th century expansion sank into complacency (which only makes sense since cycles are part of Nature herself) and loss of ground through pushback from the forces of white insecurity, and the constellation of things you listed, to me, constitute the crystallization, on the academic side, of the next stage of resistance and proaction. The folk side has all manner of local and now, in the form of Black Lives Matter, national crystallizations, growing in such a way that they will begin to merge their activities and aims, but academe has its particular encumbrances, and the development and imposition of clarity and the sharpening of intents and constructions of reality are necessary (and eventually, upon completion, sufficient) elements toward moving out of the doldrums caused by inertia and pushback.

As I said at the outset in answering this question, a people must respond effectively or they die as a people, though they may live on individually. Therefore, the quickening that is taking place throughout African America is as it must be if African America is to continue to exist. But it might not yet be time to look hopefully toward an ideal.

When I think of human beings as paralleling the growth stages of an individual, it usually seems to me that the human race is between 8 and maybe 12 years old, still subject to predations and victimizations that distort or even destroy the likelihood of emotional maturity, still subject to jealousies and attacks to bolster one's ego, still all too easily bullshat into beliefs that are comforting and, in the degree of outlandishness, a measure of just how much comfort some people need, which reflects back on the destructive nature of the way human beings do society. A lot of pro-Black folk like to talk about Black people as though we have all the humanity and whites have none — an example of the one extreme or the other set up by the construction of this particular thing called race — while abuse, molestation, rape and murder continue to infest the national community. Pretending that these things are alien to Black America is a present-day illustration of one of the slogans of the 1960s: If you are not a part of the solution, you *are* a part of the problem. If I could get just one understanding through to *everybody*, that would be it. I think that once a critical mass realize, accept and appropriately respond to that point, the rest would take care of itself.

**IMZ:** Thank you for this interview. Before we end, is there anything that you would like to especially share with our readers that we haven't discussed which need to be highlighted? And if yes, you 'have the floor'.

**WHL D:** There's just one last observation I'd like to share. I was watching the PBS series on the Vietnam War and recall the point that the Vietnamese resisted external impositions for 300 years, then I thought of the fact that 2019 — just two years away — will mark our 400th year of resistance. To quote Sister Sonia Sanchez, "We a bad people."