oppression on colonial subjects, and his advocacy of direct political—even violent—action as a remedy. Although the Black Panther Party would send delegates to the First Pan-African Cultural Festival, held in Algiers in 1969, African American participation in such international gatherings was largely insignificant after the mid-1950s.

By the time of the 1969 Algiers festival, the former French colonies in Africa had become established independent states. Conference participants from the African continent were more likely to be officials from cultural ministries than individual artists. But those cultural ministries failed to build a climate or the necessary mechanisms for an independent African publishing industry. The dependence of African institutions on the technology and distribution networks of the West continues to afflict publishing on the continent, and to deny African writers the opportunities they can enjoy abroad.

More than two-thirds of *Black Paris* is devoted to interviews with, and analyses of, the works of contemporary African writers in the city among whom the concept of Parisianism holds sway. Jules-Rosette contrasts it with negritude: "While negritude idealizes images of Africa, Parisianism questions their existence. In Parisianism, the return voyage to Africa culminates in a disappointing fantasy. In spite of their emphasis on Paris as a setting and an ideological space, the writers of Parisianism reject the notion of responsible assimilation in favor of solitary rebellion. They eschew labels and limits without denying the persistence of discrimination, blockage, and racism" (p. 193). Analyses of these works would have benefited greatly from comparisons of Jules-Rosette's findings and conclusions with those reported in earlier studies; moreover, excessive repetition of quotes from the interviews mars her own analytical material. Despite these drawbacks, however, Jules-Rosette has deftly illuminated part of the African Diaspora's landscape and set forth plainly why the search by individual African artists for identity continues. □

Losing The Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America. John H. McWhorter. New York, NY: The Free Press (a Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc.), 2000. xv + 285 pp. *(Cloth US$24.00)*

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John McWhorter, a black Linguistics professor at the University of California, Berkeley, maintains that affirmative action contributes to lowered expectations for African American students, and compromises their intellectual efforts in American universities. Affirmative action should be abolished, he concludes, because it prevents black students from achieving their true academic potential. McWhorter theorizes that the root of this problem cannot be traced to structural inequalities in the United States, especially unequal power relations, between black and white people, but to specific African American ideological and behavioral patterns that undermine Black American well-being. His central hypothesis is that these patterns coalesce in three "cults" which are endemic to Black American culture: Victimology, Separatism, and Anti-Intellectualism.

The Cult of Victimology, the belief that all black people suffer and are injured by racism, explains why African Americans have not been as successful as other racial and ethnic groups. The Cult of Separatism refers to what McWhorter considers the narrowness of Black American scholarship, exemplified by a lack of commitment to the objective assessment of intellectual issues, and rigorous debate of relevant theories and methods, as well as by an obsession with topics which pertain only to Blacks, Africa, and the African Diaspora. The Cult of Anti-Intellectualism is a tendency among African Americans to attribute low course grades or poor performance on standardized tests to racially marked cultural differences, and to characterize book learning and the pursuit of knowledge as peculiarly "White" endeavors. McWhorter contends that these defeatist cults have been woven into the very fabric of Black American life. Deeply embedded in the ideologies, rituals, and everyday practices of a peculiarly African American culture, the effects of the three cults are evident in language use, speech inflection, hairstyles, dress, and body language among Blacks.

For McWhorter, culture is learned behavior shared by a social group, and transmitted from generation to generation. Thus, under the influence of the three cults, black culture ultimately prevents African Americans from enjoying the possibilities of freedom, opportunities for success and high academic achievement, and full integration into American society. None of these ideas will be new to readers familiar with the static concept of culture, and understanding of its effects, popularized during the 1960s by anthropologist Oscar Lewis.

In influential books on Mexican and Puerto Rican families, Lewis (1959 and 1966) argued that the poor adapted to a set of objective conditions, poverty its chief element, established by the larger capitalist society, and transmitted these adaptations intergenerationally as learned behavior through primary and secondary socialization. The result was a "culture of poverty" (Lewis 1968). Having applied this conceptual framework to two

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Hispanic groups, Lewis encouraged its use in comparisons of adaptations to poverty among non-Hispanics. Sociologist Daniel Patrick Moynihan, an adviser to Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, and later a United States senator, appropriated the culture-of-poverty concept for his policy research on African American families, explaining their supposed social deviance in terms of culturally transmitted values and behaviors (Moynihan 1965). This nefarious view of culture helped to produce discourses on poverty, and on African Americans, that deflected attention from fundamental economic and political inequalities in the American social order preventing full black integration, or more widespread black success. McWhorter resurrects this discredited approach to understanding the connections among culture, performance, or achievement, and the structure of society.

McWhorter occasionally makes compelling arguments that African Americans follow and reproduce cults that help them to construct a collective racial identity around victimhood, separatism and anti-intellectualism. For example, the generally poor performance of Blacks on the SAT, regardless of social class, appears to support McWhorter's assertion that the Cult of Anti-Intellectualism is alive and well. But his method is problematic. He reports and analyzes three disparate kinds of data: statistics; personal experiences that range from childhood memories to encounters with black undergraduates at Berkeley; and accounts of black experiences in America by leading cultural critics. Then, based on an analysis of a small number of observations, he generalizes about an entire population. Similarly, McWhorter observes that black Berkeley undergraduates performed poorly in his classes, submitting incomplete assignments, and failing to show up for final examinations. He takes these observations as both evidence and proof of his theories about anti-intellectualism, victimology, and separatism. Meanwhile, his constant references to the Black American community and Black American culture, mislead the reader to believe that Black Americans are completely segregated from the rest of American society.

For McWhorter, black culture is insular and homogeneous; he conveys no sense of black diversity by class, gender, or region. Where are the adoptions, deletions, and transformations that characterize more fluid, ethnographically based depictions of culture? A detailed ethnography of black Berkeley undergraduates would reveal more clearly the intricacies of how they interact with one another, relate to non-black students, and adapt to their environment. Instead, the reader is left with a view of blackness that is bounded, impermeable, static—and dysfunctional.

Overall, McWhorter relies on an antiquated concept of culture, and his analysis of disparate data (statistical and narrative) fails to address the complexity of power relations in the context of which Black Americans create and reproduce culture. Consequently, his arguments fall short of convincing the reader that "self-sabotage" by Black cults or Black culture explain why African Americans think, talk, and behave differently from other Americans, let alone how those differences affect African American educational achievement and socioeconomic well-being.

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Maroon Arts: Cultural Vitality in the African Diaspora. Sally Price and Richard Price. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1999. 369 pp. (Cloth US$37.50)

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Anthropologists Sally and Richard Price have dedicated more than thirty years to research on the intricacies of Maroon societies within the geopolitical boundaries of Suriname, and more recently, French Guiana. By paying close attention to the details of Saramaka culture, history, and social organization, they have contested the prevailing image of Saramaka woodcarvings or other creations as an African art in the Americas. Much of the evidentiary material evaluated in *Maroon Arts* has been elaborately analyzed in the Prices' earlier publications. However, what sets this study apart is their re-contextualization of data assembled over three decades, and of themselves as anthropologists, within current epistemic trends in anthropology, social theory, and art history. In an aesthetically pleasing book, the Prices locate Maroon aesthetic practices within the glo-

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