

Original Paper

Higher Un-Learning and the Attack on Black Scholarship: The Political and Racist Demagoguery of David Horowitz

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Abstract

To say that popular writer David Horowitz is a staunch conservative is not very useful or important to the following discussion about this strange and confused Jewish man. Indeed, whatever happened to Horowitz's integrity and commitment (as a young man) to the cause of liberal ideas and principles, such as racial equality, equal rights for all; and specifically, justice for the poor and the downtrodden? Did Horowitz sell his soul to the devil for selfish reasons (and recognition), and/or for money? Horowitz, no doubt, enjoys his role immensely as an academic provocateur or troublemaker, and champion of the new conservative right. We are dumbfounded by Horowitz's neo-ignorance. But he is certainly making more money as a rabid conservative than when he was an avowed left-wing radical of the sixties. So Horowitz has essentially sold-out the traditional liberal cause with his hackneyed criticism of black, public intellectuals and black liberal scholarship. But he should know that all Americans do not share his conservative points of view and mistaken philosophy on many political issues.

Keywords

racial equality, inequality, racial disparities, racism and education, black politics, demagoguery, educational discrimination, racial segregation, higher education, black scholars, academician pedantic

1. Introduction: The Attack on Black Scholarship

At the outset, David Horowitz deserves critical reciprocity for his many cryptic, conservative writings. We must also reject his misguided and incorrect notions about minority education, religion, black people, philosophy, and *everything* else for that matter. Horowitz, for example, challenges the so-called *idolatry* of different multicultural teachings at the university level. But the truth of such unorthodox teaching does not depend on Horowitz telling us that multicultural or minority studies at the university

shouldn't be respected or accepted, because such criticism doesn't have *any* worth. Horowitz should know better. He should also know that what he personally thinks is not always important, especially to black liberal scholars. Perhaps only his conservative friends care about what he writes, as the "groupthink" philosophy controls the conservative movement today. No question, black, liberal intellectuals are likely to resist such foolish talk and notions by Horowitz, because much of what he writes is devoid of specific facts. Horowitz's continuous thesis is that new academic disciplines at the university lead to backward and irremediable thinking—and may even be responsible for the so-called downfall, or "dumbing down" of liberal arts education. For example, Horowitz writes (1999b):

The academy, once perceived as a redoubt of intellectual freedom and cutting-edge discourse, has become the butt of snickering jokes about political correctness and the font of Kafkaesque tales about bureaucratic censorship and administrative obtuseness.

What nonsense. Horowitz, unfortunately, is guilty of propaganda warfare, but he should know that, "the pluralist approach to multiculturalism" at the university, and education particularism, or *filiopietism* "promotes a broader interpretation of the common American culture and seeks due recognition for the ways that [our] nation's many racial, ethnic, and cultural groups have transformed the national culture" for the better. Pluralists also say, in effect, that, "American culture [and education] belongs to us, all of us; the U.S. is us, and we remake it in every generation (Ravitch, 1990)." To say the least, Horowitz sees such challenges to the traditional, academic orthodoxy as deplorable, and horrifying, but he is agonizingly incorrect about these educational issues.

Furthermore, contrary to Horowitz's harsh criticism about black scholarship and his narrow-mindedness about black scholars, they are not conspiring to make American universities conform to some kind of radical curriculum that would disband or replace the traditional Eurocentric course of study with something else, like Afrocentric education. This abrasive notion on Horowitz's part about education is just plain wrong. Indeed, his concerns about such matters are silly; and his many untrue or false statements can be excruciatingly painful to read. To be sure, multicultural studies will not usurp or trump the traditional liberal arts curriculum at the college and university levels. And this truth should matter to Horowitz.

Moreover, the unimaginative Horowitz must be challenged for his intellectual eggheadedness, naiveté, academic dishonesty, and outright ignorance. Furthermore, his vicious attacks, malevolent and cruel writings about liberal, black intellectuals are passé or out of date, and not well thought out, especially when he villainized black scholars and their brilliant scholarship. Perhaps Horowitz should be relegated to the academic "back-of-the-bus," to use the metaphor, because his arguments are not persuasive. Horowitz is also good at muddling the facts, as he is getting paid for being a conservative hack. So is he trying to convey some deeper message about his own inner biases and prejudices, instead of having an optimistic mindset about black scholarship?

No doubt, Horowitz is a conservative *scoundrel*, as he wants to perpetuate the myth of white superiority in all academic things. In his mediocre writings and sad speeches, Horowitz is also

constantly on the look-out to attack (in writing) anyone who doesn't agree with him. More to the point, Horowitz is incredibly cruel when he can't understand what black authors have written. So is Horowitz a threat to our political discourse? Or is he just plain ignorant of his own intellectual limitations? Horowitz wants *everyone*, if possible, to know how smart he is. But he is not that great or brilliant. Indeed, much of what he writes, as mentioned, is hack work, with no real "authenticity." This is to say, the *objectivity* of his works are almost irrelevant to black politicians, academics and other black intellectuals.

Furthermore, Horowitz often pounces (verbally) on progressive black scholars with *vim* and *gusto*, probably thinking that he will score some points with right-wing conservatives. But his bitter writings about black people, in general, are frustrating and annoying more than anything else. Right-wing conservatives are comforted by what they read by Horowitz, especially his outright bigotry and attacks against black academics who question the old, limiting Eurocentric way of thinking about higher education, religion, social issues, politics, economics, and philosophy. But we must ask: What is so threatening about the views of black scholars? And why should we be saddled with Horowitz's racist ideas and bad intentions?

2. The Race-Baiting Demagoguery

David Horowitz makes no bones about his racial prejudices and personal biases. He certainly means to disparage *any* black scholar that disagrees with what he writes, as if only conservative black scholarship is all that matters; or that only black conservatives can write relevant books with ideas of lasting value. Indeed, Horowitz writes incessantly about public intellectuals and the worthlessness of liberal, black scholarship. Perhaps he thinks that there is no need for *any* discussion about radical or transgressive black scholarship. But Horowitz's perspective about such matters are limited, as he continues to *pooh-pooh*, and berate black scholars every chance he gets. This is to say that he critiques black scholars at every opportunity. The sad reality is that Horowitz has a very cursory level of knowledge about black scholarship.

Equally important, Horowitz is guilty of believing *anything* negative about black liberals, as his work is given to racial indignation and white people's victimhood. Moreover, he believes that conservatives have the moral and political high ground on almost every social issue—not liberal black intellectuals and others of good will. For example, Horowitz writes (1999a): "There is a whole generation of racially favored intellectual *water flies* [my emphasis]—[like] bell-hooks, Eric Michael Dyson, Robin D.G. Kelley, and Patricia Williams, to name a few—whose cultural elevation is not only unrelated to any serious intellectual achievement, but has eliminated the possibility of one." Clearly, Horowitz has been pushing back against a universal world view with his incorrect assumptions. What exactly is he trying to insinuate? No doubt, Horowitz thinks that he is smarter than most African Americans, and will never accept that he is not a genius. Indeed, he tries *adroitly* to make his readers believe that black intellectuals have it all wrong when it comes to discussing our modern-day social and political woes.

But we must ask: What is *exactly* wrong with black scholars voicing their displeasure with society in terms of race-relations? Horowitz really adds nothing of *any* substance to the civil discourse and debate of ideas with his disagreeable words and indifference to the real plight of poor black people and other minorities. And his negative suggestions and anti-intellectualism only breeds contempt of the black academic community. Nevertheless, Horowitz wants to be taken seriously about his generalizations about issues of race, and the necessity of white privilege. Indeed, Horowitz makes no apologies for his beliefs.

Additionally, David Horowitz is perhaps immune to the various horrors that black people and other minorities have had to face in educating themselves in the United States. Or so it seems. But many people of color have prevailed despite the obstacles placed before them by white supremacists and segregationists. Horowitz just doesn't get it. Perhaps he has no empathy. Furthermore, Horowitz believes that black scholars like Cornel West and bell hooks shouldn't be seen or heard at all, especially with his false and outrageous claims (and attacks) against them. But what exactly is the source of his anger and resentment? Why is Horowitz so angry, vexed, jealous and frightened? This is what he disparagingly writes about bell hooks:

Still a relatively young woman of limited intelligence, and modest talent, hooks has already achieved the kind of academic eminence once reserved for intellects of extraordinary reach. It is a position that any of her peers, white or black, would surely envy.... Her lectures on "white supremacy" and related battle themes take her across America and Europe, where she is able to advance her cause, not in the coffee-house venues of political vanguards, but in the temples of high culture once reserved for the intellectual aristocracy (Horowitz, 1999b).

Horowitz admits that he is resentful of bell hooks, a black woman, for her "success and the accompanying accolades conferred on so young (and pedestrian) a mind... (Horowitz, 1999b)." Is this because Horowitz is threatened by her? And what about his own *pedestrian* mind? In the end, Horowitz's exaggerated remarks imply that bell hooks is a light weight in terms of scholarship. Furthermore, Horowitz doesn't like the idea of black scholars being critical of Jews or white people. Additionally, Horowitz's narrow minded views and lame analysis about Jews being killed and hated not only in Poland, but also in Japan, has nothing to do with what is actually happening along racial lines in the United States (Horowitz, 1991b). For example, the dominant group in America will always be "irretrievably hostile" to some people of color, as they are judged because of who they are. Indeed, how can *anyone* think otherwise, given the ongoing racism and discrimination still taking place in the United States? Perhaps Horowitz would like to go back in time when African Americans had very few rights and civil liberties, as well as limited political power and economic wherewithal. So how does Horowitz's account for the past discrimination of black people in our nation, and their many unresolved injustices? Black scholars, therefore, should feel obliged to challenge Horowitz's crude and insensitive remarks about them, in any context. In other words, Horowitz must be closely scrutinized or examined

in the same way that he views black liberal scholars – that is, his works should be open for critique and checked for accuracy too.

3. The Art of Political and Racial Warfare

There is no better way of familiarizing ourselves with the hyperbolic works of David Horowitz than first reading his book, *Hating Whitey and Other Progressive Causes*, because what he writes is not the voice of reason, despite what he might say to the contrary. Oddly enough, Horowitz believes that he has a lot of important things to say. But his supercilious tone in his aforementioned book is clearly offensive to black people. Moreover, we can easily accuse Horowitz of *racialism*, because many of his negative accusations about African Americans actually hurts the image of black people, in general, and reinforces the racial stereotype that blacks are inferior to all other ethnic groups. Moreover, what Horowitz writes is obviously harmful to black intellectuals in America. So does Horowitz fully understand the subtleties of his finger pointing rants and racist points of view?

Unfortunately, Horowitz is convinced that black liberal scholars will somehow take over at colleges and universities, and other institutions of higher learning by indoctrinating impressionable young students with their “ideological priorities.” But the issue isn’t really about what choices students should make; it is whether they are capable and willing to learn new, or different and *exoteric* things. Black scholars, of course, emphasize new juxtapositions of scholarship that encourage broader educational perspectives and new, educational narratives. Horowitz, however, seems to believe that he knows *everything* there is to know about black intellectuals; but clearly he does not; and his extravagant, exaggerated rhetoric, flawed scholarship, and racist generalizations are offensive and insulting to black intellectuals everywhere. In this regard, Horowitz has become the butt of many jokes in the black, academic community. It is also essential to remember where Horowitz stands politically, because he is an energetic “attack dog,” so to speak, and *mouthpiece* for far-right conservatives. Speaking very broadly, Horowitz’s discussions are contrived, superfluous, convoluted and derogatory toward black liberal scholars. But who made Horowitz the “grand inquisitor” when it comes to black scholars who report the facts and express their considerable opinions about race? And why does Horowitz like only conservative black scholars, like Thomas Sowell, Walter Williams and Shelby Steele, while discounting other black liberal scholars (Horowitz, 1999a)? Why is this so, we might ask? For obvious reasons, Horowitz tries to demonize black scholars that he personally objects to. And in a very condescending way, Horowitz complains over and over again about black liberal scholars who he believes are undermining our higher education system. For example, Horowitz (2003) writes that “the [intellectually] ruined Cornel West,” at Harvard, has single-handedly destroyed the “traditional [academic] disciplines.” What rubbish. Cornel West has done no such thing. More ominously, Horowitz (2003) goes on to write:

Intellectual authority [was] assaulted and deconstructed, and the university [Harvard] transformed into a quasi-political party. New disciplines and even entire institutions were

created—ideologically committed black studies and women’s studies departments, paganized theology schools, [as well as] Marxist and post-Marxist curricula in the fields of English and the humanities.

It is absolutely ridiculous to believe that Cornel West is responsible for many of the multicultural changes and diverse activities that have taken place at Harvard. Horowitz’s musings about West are simply not true. But this is how Horowitz twists the truth and exaggerate things as they relate to black people. Needless to say, it is completely inappropriate for Horowitz to criticize *any* black intellectual if he doesn’t know what he is talking about. Perhaps he does these things (or provokes) for no other reason than to upset people, which is unforgivable, and unprofessional. Indeed, Horowitz’s atrocious ramblings and writings are cleverly contrived, journalistic jargon, interwoven with random thoughts and other academic assertions, which are useless for those who are critical thinkers. Horowitz also attacks black political leaders when it suits him. For instance, Horowitz once made the absurd claim that, “Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson are destroying the civil rights movements started by [Dr.] Martin Luther King, Jr., blaming white people for the problems of the black community instead of taking action to correct them (Reynolds, 2003). What? Why would any of us believe in such nonsense? And what does Horowitz base this ridiculous claim?

Horowitz also believes that, “Conservatives are, in fact, reformers demanding a universalist standard of one right, one law, one nation for all (Horowitz, 1998),” without providing *any* reliable information to back up this claim. Therefore, nothing could be further from the truth, as Horowitz’s statement is a myth. To say the least, black liberal intellectuals find it hard to believe such a confounded, fanatical idea, because conservatives (today) have never really been about protecting the rights of all Americans in our country. The reality has been that conservatives only look out for themselves. Yet, Horowitz (2013) writes:

The conservative vision does not exclude compromise; nor should it condemn every attempt, however moderate, to square the circle of political liberty and social welfare. A conservative view does not require that all aspects of the welfare state be rejected in favor of free-market principles. After all, conservatives are (or should be) the first to recognize the intractable nature of the human condition. The perfectly free society is as untenable as the perfectly just society, and for the same reason. We would have to rip out our all-too-human hearts in order to achieve it.

What exactly is he talking about? Horowitz should know that the *preamble statements* to the U.S. Constitution tells us that our republic must always try to form a more perfect union, where we should try to change the hearts and minds of all Americans, and take care of people, for the good of our nation. Nevertheless, Horowitz has helped shape the new conservative ideology, and wants us to believe that, “Conservatism... is not an ideology in the sense that liberalism is or the various forms of radicalism are.” He goes on: “Conservatism is not an “identity politics” whose primary concern is to situate its adherents in the camp of moral humanity and thus to confer on them the stamp of History’s approval

(Horowitz, 2013).” With such an inexplicable and confusing statement, Horowitz wants to keep liberal scholars off-balance; and to have feelings of dread and foreboding. Therefore, black people need a counterpoint when it comes to their ideological beliefs; and they should know that Horowitz’s voice as a *pundit* will be drown out one day by the forces of good, and what is right. A *caveat*: African Americans must also fight back against Horowitz’s attacks on black, liberal scholarship, which he believes is undermining our higher education and society. And this warped idea of blacks’ taking over the various universities is all in Horowitz’s mind, and sad imagination. It is also noteworthy that he (Horowitz) believes that liberals and:

Progressives are necessarily forced to choose between the future they desire and the reality they inhabit. The primary moral obligation of a revolutionary is to destroy the existing social and political framework in order to prepare the revolutionary future; and radicals perceive America as the principal defender of the capitalism they hate all over the world. Consequently, a radical politics generally leads to uncertain loyalties to country and community (Horowitz, 2013).

Horowitz’s malignant thinking about progressives, of course, also gets us nowhere in understanding libertarianism or *capitalism*, because conservatives consistently tell the American people that progressive liberals are undermining the principles of capitalism. This, of course, is just wrong, because this particular claim has never been substantiated by thoughtful economists. Equally important, conservatives cry foul or charge liberals with conducting “witch hunts” when they (conservatives) are investigated for breaking the law (e.g., Nixon’s Watergate scandal, where he had to resign the presidency, because of an abuse of power). Perhaps Horowitz fears the truth when it comes to protecting self-serving conservatives. Or maybe he doesn’t see their misconduct as a *real* problem. But we certainly don’t need to accept Horowitz’s foolhardy appropriation of racial issues concerning black people as his very own. In this regard, Horowitz’s racial generalizations are so much *poppycock* and self-indulgent nonsense. To be sure, Horowitz is certainly not content with his own (benighted) status as a civil rights crusader in the United States today. Or so it seems. Admittedly, Horowitz is disturbed by the ideological beliefs and attitudes of black liberal scholars, because he (somehow) believes that they are in some way against white people. Enlightened individuals, however, know better than to believe in such polarizing garbage and nonsense. Nevertheless, Horowitz (2013) writes:

Since ideologies of the left are commitments to an imagined future, to question them is to provoke a moral rather than an empirical response: *Are you for or against the equality of human beings?* To dissent from the progressive viewpoint is not a failure to assess relevant facts, but an unwillingness to embrace a liberated future.

What exactly does this mean? When Horowitz pretends to make a plausible point about progressives or (black) liberals that he dislikes, he is actually submitting his own ideological biases and sanctimonious beliefs and points of view. Moreover, his rash of ugly comments about such matters reflect a sentiment not uncommon among conservatives. Also, Horowitz obviously does not have *any* affection for black

liberal scholars (or black intellectuals, for that matter). And his scathing denunciations of them is par-for-the-course for him. Fortunately, none of the brilliant black scholars mentioned in this work really care about Horowitz's writings, and his narrow, political interests, because they see him as a controversial villain. Many simply ignore him. Undeniably, Cornel West, bell hooks, Eric Michael Dyson, Ta-Nehisi Coates and others are the type of black intellectuals that this nation need to encourage African Americans through their continuing struggles to make black scholarship more relevant to black people and others in the *Diaspora*, and the wider world. Indeed, Eric Michael Dyson's extraordinary talents are beyond measure. He makes sense about almost *everything* in which he writes about. Take, for example, what Dyson (2003) states about public black intellectuals:

Intellectuals [or black academics] have an obligation to be as smart as we can possibly be, but we have an even greater obligation to be good with the smarts we possess....The role of the black intellectual is to discover, uncover, and recover truth as best we can, and to subject our efforts to healthy debate and [rigorous] examination.

Additionally, the brilliant bell hook's (or Gloria Watkins') insightful writings, such as *Teaching to Transgress* and *Outlaw Culture*, are mentally stimulating to say the least. She is certainly not taken aback, or disconcerted when Horowitz personally attacks her verbally and in writing. Hooks never prevaricates, however, as her published works have continued to respond to the new academic diversity, as oppose to the traditional (European) order of learning at the university. In this regard, bell hooks has been fearless about criticizing the status quo and the racial issues of the day, especially when she writes about what is *really* going on—that is, with some African Americans. About black men, for example, hooks explains in exquisite detail the following: "Today many smart black men who have been well-educated know that they are not supposed to be critical thinkers and they do not try to be." Hooks (2004) goes on, "A black man, even an educated one, who thinks critically is still regarded suspiciously in mainstream culture. Often times educated black males in well-paying jobs learn to assume a 'go along to get along' pose so as not to appear threatening to white co-workers." As we can perhaps ascertain from the aforementioned explanation of how educated black men stand in our society, bell hooks writes from the heart and offers unique understandings for the black community.

Evidently, Horowitz hasn't read all of the works by bell hooks. Perhaps it would serve him best to remain strictly *neutral* on black intellectual thought, or scholarship; and black aesthetics of which he knows almost nothing about—or simply doesn't understand. To be sure, Horowitz's general contempt and uninspiring criticism for liberal black scholars is nothing short of intellectual fanaticism. But Horowitz cannot eliminate or mute the truths of black scholars and black intellectuals. Besides, who is Horowitz to question the abilities of black scholars, academics, and black intellectuals? Moreover, his unintelligible attacks on black scholarship and black writing will never diminish their brilliant works. As black intellectual Ta-Nehisi Coates (2018) succinctly writes: "The tradition of black writing [and scholarship] is necessarily dyspeptic, [and] necessarily resistant," particularly when it comes to fighting back against conservatives (like Horowitz) and their stupefying words against black political thought

and scholarship. Horowitz certainly doesn't command *any* respect from black liberal scholars and intellectuals, as they see him as a misguided and *heartless* man. Therefore, black people, particularly in the academic community shouldn't waste time getting angry or addressing Horowitz's ideological impulses and racial prejudices. Horowitz is even more insidious when he tries to link his own personal life experiences to that of black people. Indeed, Horowitz is on extremely shaky ground when he equates his life to the collective struggles of African Americans. To be blunt, Horowitz will never know what it means to be a black person in a racist society. In other words, Horowitz should choose his words wisely and carefully when he tells us that he can see and empathize with his extended black family members.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with his lectures about his own black relatives, but talking about such matters is a typical rhetorical, misdirection trick used by racist thinkers and conservative writers of his (Horowitz's) ilk. To say the least, Horowitz's writings don't do African Americans a lot of good in terms of leveling the playing field in all sectors of American life. This is what is so maddening about Horowitz and his sad, political judgments. And he has done absolutely *nothing* regarding the hardships and unsettling plight of black people in the United States. Again, we must reject Horowitz's hackneyed notion that black people are intellectually limited in some way. Furthermore, Horowitz is not a champion of the "Have-Nots" in this country, because he must certainly know that there will always be an unbridgeable gap between the rich and poor – and between blacks and whites – that is, when it comes to personal wealth.

4. Demagoguery and the Attack on Cornel West

Another source of frustration for David Horowitz is professor Cornel West, who rankles him to no end. So disgusted is Horowitz by Cornel West that he can't think straight about this intelligent, proud black man. So he resorts to name-calling. Among other things, Horowitz has accused Cornel West of being a *demagogue*, and "playing the race card." He has also called West an idiot, a buffoon, and "the kingfish himself (Horowitz, 2004)." Also, according to Horowitz, Cornel West is one of the black professors behind the Black Reparations Movement, which he (Horowitz) considers a scam, and an "attempt to turn black America against this country (Horowitz, 2004)." But nothing can be further from the truth. Yet, Horowitz, without providing *any* evidence, makes such farfetched claims about Cornel West. Besides, what exactly is wrong about this country giving reparations to the descendants of black slaves in the United States? According to Professor William Darity, Jr. (2019), "Black reparations [encompass] the harms imposed throughout American history to the present moment—both slavery and post-slavery, both Jim Crow and post-Jim crow—on Black descendants of American slavery." Unsurprisingly, Horowitz doesn't support Black Reparations, no matter the circumstances; nor does he acknowledge the attack on the black community over the years by white supremacists. And why does Horowitz blame Cornel West for pushing the idea of providing Black Reparation "when 74 percent of African Americans today favor reparations (Williams & Nasir, 2019)?"

Unfortunately, the issue of Black Reparations will be forever with us, but it did not start with Cornel West; and Horowitz should know this if he was honest with himself. To be bluntly clear: there is something ugly, sinister and disturbing about what Horowitz writes about Cornel West. According to journalist Marc Morano (2002), Horowitz has stated that “Cornel West is extravagantly public in his buffoonery, so it is hard to ignore him.” What exactly is he trying to say? It seems Horowitz attacks on West never flag, as he relishes putting down the man (Cornel West). Perhaps to Horowitz’s chagrin, Cornel West is one of the black community’s most critical and persistent, original thinkers, as he has become a sort of black intellectual and academic prophet, which many conservatives seem to hate. This is to say that Cornel West explores racial issues with intelligence, courage; and unflinchingly delves into the complex notions of eradicating racism in the United States. Indeed, what Cornel West writes exposes the dangerous and underlying reality of white supremacy, as he is a transgressive and fearless author who confronts “white evil” head on. But Horowitz is absolutely *incensed* about West’s rise to a plateau of greatness in the academia. Horowitz (1999b) writes that Cornel West is “an intellectual of modest talents whose skin color has catapulted him into academic stardom with a six-figure income.” So what? Is Horowitz just jealous of a successful black man? Perhaps.

More importantly, has Horowitz even read all of Cornel West’s work? Probably not. A needed caveat: Just mentioning some of the books by black, liberal scholars doesn’t mean that Horowitz has read their complete works, or even understand them. Equally importantly, we must understand that such black intellectuals like Cornel West make people passionate about their ideas, and feelings of *agency* and life. To be brutally honest, Horowitz is abysmally ignorant about black scholarship. And he is confounded and put off by Cornel West and other smart, black scholars, because they are so exacting and popular. Cornel West, of course, writes with conviction, not like Horowitz’s wishy-washy ramblings and take on black scholarship. Cornel West’s published works, when compared with Horowitz, are incomparably more profound and interesting. Moreover, the significant brilliance of West’s critical writings, such as presented in his most famous work, *Race Matters*, shouldn’t be ignored, either, as he writes about the strength and beauty of black people, who are capable of deep thought and great things. Furthermore, West has done more for the self-esteem of black scholars and African Americans in the academia than Horowitz. And although Horowitz doesn’t exactly say it, perhaps he thinks that the writings of Cornel West are like the ramblings of a mad man. But who is the *real* mad man? To the contrary, Cornel West’s books are invaluable to the history of political thought and philosophy, as he clarifies what many black people want to convey to the dominant group and the American public. So is Horowitz trying to deflect attention from his own poor, meager and marginal intellect by denigrating black scholars like Cornel West? Horowitz knows all the tricks when it comes to consistently attacking the scholarship of black liberal scholars, as he tries to portray them as uneducated, intellectual boogiemens—to bring attention to himself. Indeed, is it Horowitz’s job to relentlessly criticize such black scholars as Cornel West, to cut them down a notch? Or does he just want to put them in their so-called place?

Perhaps Cornel West and other black scholars and intellectuals should shrug off Horowitz's prolific criticisms. What he (Horowitz) should know is that many black liberals are not particularly impressed by Horowitz's rants and ravings, which he calls "critical thought." In fact, his style of writing is troublesome, confusing and disjointed at best. Take for example this odd passage from his book *Radical Son*:

It had come to seem inevitable to me that my political testament would have no impact on the [liberal] community I had left behind. It was—after all was said and done—a community of faith, hermetically sealed from knowledge that might wake it from its dream. (Horowitz, 1997)

What is Horowitz talking about? Or what exactly does he mean by this confusing insipid statement? Perhaps he should get his own academic act, and scholarship together, rather than criticizing black scholars. To say the least, Horowitz is extremely jealous of Cornel West's superlative intelligence and extraordinary achievements, as he is much maligned (in some unknown way) by the man. Horowitz also belittles and denounces Cornel West every chance he gets. Nevertheless, Cornel West is an articulate black social critic of the first order, who will be remembered, especially in the black community, as he is leaving a legacy that will be hard to ignore or duplicate in the future, unlike with Horowitz. And West's pragmatic voice is more relevant than ever; and his important philosophical writings are highly quoted. Horowitz protestations aside, there is much for us to glean from West's prophetic works, in the grand scheme of things, as he continues to challenge social conventions. Finally, Cornel West and other black scholars are preparing the intellectual ground for future black scholars and black students everywhere in the United States.

5. Conclusions

The American people need to know about contemporary black intellectuals and black scholars who can write about the black community with righteousness and true feelings, like Ta-Nehisi Coates, in his powerful book on race, *Between the World and Me*. Indeed, their thoughts and writings are absolutely necessary. Besides, why should we only care about Eurocentric interpretations of black scholarship, if it is not important to their particular lives? Black scholars are infinitely more qualified to write about their own lives and predicaments in a racist society, rather than David Horowitz. In this regard, should we forget about the past, where blacks never had a real voice in America; or where they were locked-out of the political, intellectual and academic circles? Black people were also denied input and participation into the higher education debate, where they were denied human agency. Therefore, for these reasons and other inhumane acts by the dominant group, white Americans need to know that African Americans need to have their own intellectual heroes, with the specificity of their human experience. For example, the uniquely talented Cornel West has done a remarkable job in keeping white supremacists on their proverbial toes by providing a sense of outrage and concern for black people in his published works and lectures. In fact, Cornel West is still admired by black and white academics and intellectuals in the United States today, whereas Horowitz remains relatively unknown,

especially by African Americans. And we are much more likely to hear from Cornel West or Ta-Nehisi Coates than David Horowitz in the future.

Moreover, there is considerable evidence that black scholars today benefit mightily from the many works written by African Americans. Horowitz, however, continues to mock and dismiss black studies and other minority disciplines in the academia with his holier-than-thou and sanctimonious criticisms. His vague arguments get even more convoluted. For example, Horowitz (2013) writes:

Under the banner of expanding rights, they [or liberals] have transformed the idea of America from a covenant to secure liberties to a claim for entitlements. They have expanded the powers of the state and constricted the realm of freedom. They have eroded the private economy and stifled individual initiative. Through race-based legislation and the concept of group rights, they have subverted the neutrality of the law and the very idea of a national identity.

Why should we accept Horowitz's standards of right and wrong as he writes above? To be sure, Horowitz considers his *hodge-podge* of exhortations and anecdotal writings, as well as his critical approach as a means to an end—to interdict the so-called radical, liberal-leaning black man. But Horowitz, with his specious analogies, put himself between a rock and a hard place. Truth of the matter is: Individuals of his conservative ilk are a dime a dozen, to use the metaphor. Indeed, his scholarship is not only controversial, but his writings are limited in the sense of content and meaning. Furthermore, Horowitz manages to find time to drag black liberal scholars through the intellectual mud, particularly if it is for his own amusement and personal benefit. And he is loyal to the conservative cause. So is this why Horowitz is contemptible of black scholars and their success? Or is he of the mind that black scholars and intellectuals reek with some kind of intellectual depravity, because of their liberal and pragmatic beliefs? Question: Why shouldn't black intellectuals today be allowed to standup for their scholarship and beliefs—that is, in terms of calling out discrimination and racial injustices? It seems that Horowitz never really get to the heart of his grievances against African Americans and black scholars. Why shouldn't he try to bridge the partisan and racial divide? Moreover, Horowitz's obsequious tactics are typical of the far-right machinations, which collectively tries to discredit the scholarship and writings of notable black scholars. Therefore, Horowitz's criticisms and verbal attacks on black intellectuals deserve to be met with derision and suspicion.

Equally important, what are Horowitz's experiences which make him qualified to make certain judgments about black scholars? It is clear that Horowitz believes that some black scholars (like Cornel West or bell hooks) should be somehow casted aside, or totally eliminated from the higher education academy for showing or pointing out intellectual heresy and new, political ideas (Berlinerblau, 1999). Horowitz seems, of course, incapable of saying *anything* positive or constructive about black liberal scholars; and he is unapologetic. So is Horowitz so jaded that he can't see *any* value in black scholarship? Unfortunately, Horowitz has only abrasive points of view, which are no better than any other conservative notions. To state the obvious, Horowitz is a leading conservative voice and opponent to liberal causes, and he will continue to fight the perceived and so-called left-wing

dominance on American campuses at the college and university levels, especially when he openly attacks black scholars with his abusive rhetoric. But black intellectuals shouldn't be angered or afraid of his illogical musings. Perhaps Horowitz sees most things as being a political war between liberals and conservatives. And as a staunch conservative Republican, Horowitz has stated: "If you [conservatives] don't come to the arena ready to fight a political war the [liberal] Democrats will. And they will win (Brennan, 2002)." He goes on to say:

The rhetorical artillery of class, race and gender warfare put [conservative] Republicans on the defensive and pins their forces down. Unless this attack from the left can be effectively blunted, [liberal] Democrats will continue to have the advantage going into combat (Brennan, 2002).

Horowitz's political sentiments are strong among conservatives; but if African Americans become conservative Republicans as he suggests they should, will they be better off? Probably not. It is telling that what Horowitz recommends for black America is patronizing. Without doubt, there is also something irrational and twisted going on in the depths of Horowitz's mind and tortured soul. Nevertheless, his combative and unimaginative books are what some conservatives probably want to read, as it affirms their narrow-minded beliefs, biases, and prejudices. Maybe Horowitz makes such inappropriate comments about black scholars and intellectuals, because they don't really read his works. And for Horowitz, this is hard to take. Moreover, he doesn't really care about his confrontational tone, style, and the ugliness of his writings. And if *everything* that Horowitz writes is exclusively *Eurocentric*, does he truly believe that he has more relevance to a black audience?

No matter how inconsequential, Horowitz sees himself in the mix when it comes to racial and cultural politics, because he believes that his story and published works can be inspiring. To say the least, Horowitz is pleased with his cultural ignorance, because he is mostly ill-informed. More importantly, Horowitz has delusions of grandeur. And for these reasons, as senior lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School, Richard A. Posner (2003) has written:

When academics operate outside their areas of specialization [like with Horowitz], and particularly when they write for the general public about issues of or fraught with politics or ideology, they operate without guidance from their training and experience and without the constraints imposed on academic work by the norms of the university community. In the public-intellectual arena, they operate without *any* significant constraints; there is nothing to call them to account.

The above passage by Professor Posner is very much true of Horowitz, especially as he thinks of himself as an academic, without constraints. Indeed, Horowitz's conservative beliefs should be continuously scrutinized in the academia, because how can *anyone* believe in some of his absurdities; or his harsh opinions, which he sometimes passes off as facts. Additionally, Horowitz is an enthusiastic, conservative brawler, but his kind of arrogant nonsense only misleads the reader, particularly with his old ideas about racial politics, which he sees as a means to an end. Meanwhile, Horowitz likes to "pour

salt” on the proverbial wounds of black people who feel aggrieved by the dominant American culture. Does Horowitz think he can get away with such academic nonsense, without challenge? We must also note that Horowitz is unclear in his own intellectual mediocrity. Some black American scholars certainly believe that Horowitz is an evil “wolf in sheep’s clothing,” as he tries to undermine them. Or should black Americans forgive his cultural ignorance? At the end of the day, Horowitz writes negative things about what he personally perceives about black scholars for purely political (or financial) ends. The embittered Horowitz, who was the former “editor of *Front Page Magazine* and a Los Angeles-based advocate for conservative causes (Stanley, 2004)” is now a *de-facto* spokesman for the Republican Party. It is unfortunate (and regrettable) that Horowitz has taken such a sad course in his life, given his former liberal background, because he is now playing an unwitting role in spreading conservative, racist propaganda. For example, Purdue University President Mitch Daniels, a white man, made the recent, asinine remarks in describing an African American scholar as “one of the rarest creatures in America (“Highlights,” 2019).” Perhaps Horowitz might believe in such a lazy, stereotypical trope. Later, however, Daniels apologized for making such a foolish, untrue statement. All in all, Horowitz is infuriatingly egoistical, and will *never* be able to impose his limited, bitter ideas on black intellectuals and African American scholars in higher education. And no matter how fetching Horowitz’s explanations, and weak, insufferable writings may be, it is difficult to side with him, especially given his dubious, liberal past. Furthermore, many black people in this country will never accept the fact that white academics and authors, like Horowitz, and *hardcore* conservatives know what is best for African Americans, and other minorities. Finally, Horowitz remains fiercely proud of his questionable achievements; and he has become a hated figure in the black community. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the conservative, racist entrenchment persists in the United States today. And as discussed, Horowitz is leading this political *bandwagon* with possible dangerous consequences. Needless to say, Horowitz should be subjected to harsh criticism because of his offensive language and pernicious, racist views when it comes to black scholars and liberals. Finally, Horowitz should spurn the idea of criticizing black intellectuals if he is not absolutely certain about what he writes, particularly as he tries to further ingratiate himself to conservative Republicans. Fortunately, black scholars are in a position today – to challenge the onslaught of Horowitz’s old-fashion, conservative, racist ideas.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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