



Research Articles

The United States of America vs. The United States of America: Dissecting Systems of Oppression and White Supremacy

Tony Gaskew, Ph.D.

University of Pittsburgh at Bradford

Salathiel Thompson

University of Pittsburgh at Bradford

Professor Thompson - "Raw" was always the word I used when leaving your lectures. You were teaching us things that we as students should have been learning since elementary school. But what made your lessons most eye opening is that you not only taught us the histories, but why it wasn't being taught in traditional settings, and I think that was an important lesson on its own merit. Your lectures were always taught with passion, which often time was academically intimidating - in the best possible way. Never once did you come to class unprepared or without something intellectually stimulating to talk about. You kept us on our toes, and that is exactly what we needed.¹

For nearly a decade as the founding director of the UPB Prison Education Program (2018), I have worked side-by-side with some of the most brilliant incarcerated scholars in the nation, exploring the correlation between humiliation and humility (Gaskew, 2014a; 2017a). I proudly admit that my tenure in the program, with the guidance of my incarcerated colleagues, has evolved over the last ten years, from being an educator to being a student: from what is, to what could be. My incarcerated colleagues have taught me that educational programming inside of a federal prison is more about

¹ All quotes that appear in this article were taken verbatim from an anonymous University of Pittsburgh Teaching Survey completed by students enrolled in *ADMJ 1449-Special Topics in Courts: The United States of America v. The United States of America*, during the Spring 2016 Academic Terms. The questionnaire elicited open-ended responses to the following four questions: (1) What were the instructor's major strengths? (2) What were the instructor's major weaknesses? (3) What aspects of this course were most beneficial to you? (4) What suggestions do you have to improve the course?

perseverance than process. They taught me that learning, regardless of the setting, is an organic form of conscious revolution (Jackson, 1970; Jabari, 2002; Muntaqim, 2010). They taught me that higher education platforms and actors are ineffective unless pedagogical boundaries are pushed in uncomfortable directions. They taught me the term *white supremacy* should be communicated in some fashion, at least once in every lecture (Bell, 1988; Bell, 1990). Finally, my incarcerated colleagues taught me there is a window into finding the *dark matter* of my own truthfulness, fearlessness, and mindfulness in human potential (Some, 1998).

My incarcerated colleagues have taught me that educational programming inside of a federal prison is more about perseverance than process. They taught me that learning, regardless of setting, is an organic form of conscious revolution (Jackson, 1970; Jabari, 2002; Muntaqim, 2010).

In the Fall 2016 academic term, a vanguard set of incarcerated educators from Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) McKean, with subject-matter experience in counter-culture sociopolitical movements, co-designed and served as lead instructors for a University of Pittsburgh course: *ADMJ 1449: The United States of America vs. The United States of America*² to traditional non-incarcerated students (Thompson & Stevens, 2016). In the brief space of this essay, using a critical autoethnographic lens, this representation will expose some of the pedagogical nuances of this first-of-a-kind course, and share the voices of the course instructors and student participants.

I, Tony Gaskew, will discuss the essay methodology, an overview of the course setting, and a brief synopsis of the course. I will then share some introspection as a co-instructor, co-contributor, and metaphysical student on this journey. My colleague and formerly incarcerated co-instructor Salathiel Thompson will then share his own reflections.³ The voices of the University of Pittsburgh, Bradford student participants will also be represented, through the use of an anonymous quantitative/qualitative survey completed at the end of the course. The closing remarks of the essay, *what is, to what could be* is a collaborative voice between professor Thompson and myself.

METHODS

When Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin (1969) penned the words, “Every Black birth in America is political. With each new birth comes a potential challenge to the existing order. Each new generation brings forth untested militancy”⁴ he was proudly expressing the *cosmic uneasiness* that systems of oppression will be forced to navigate through, knowing that Africans in America would wage an ongoing revolution against constructs of white supremacy (Williams, 1971; Wilson, 1998; Wilson, 1999). He understood that the political violence that America had unleashed on its Black native sons, would be critiqued, unmasked, and deconstructed, and those involved in the calculated crimes against Black humanity held accountable (Williams, 1962; Nkrumah, 1968; Shakur, 1987). He understood that decolonization was an inevitable awakening (Sankara, 1988; Welsing, 1992). As someone who for the past

² Thompson was also the lead co-instructor on a second course along with Anthony Boyd and Chris Colon, *PEP 0250-Enrichment Special Topics: Just Mercy-A Transformative Criminal Justice Journey to Expose and Uproot White Supremacy*, which was offered in the Fall 2016 academic term. This course will not be examined in the brief space of this essay.

³ Incarcerated educator and co-instructor Connor Stevens was unavailable to participate in this essay.

⁴ From Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin [H. Rap Brown]. *Die Nigger Die: A Political Autobiography*, p. 1.

thirty-five years has closely observed, actively participated in, and openly critiqued the political constructs known as crime and justice, as a conscious African man in America in a constant state of revolution and a compelling sense of duty to the essence of Blackness, I have always written as an *Other*, and for an *Other* (Schoatz, 2013). I am cosmically linked to the cultural injustices on the African minds, bodies, and spirits of those arrested, prosecuted, and incarcerated (Gaskew, 2017b; Gaskew, 2017c). I am always moving from my African unconsciousness to my African consciousness.⁵

I am cosmically linked to the cultural injustices on the African minds, bodies, and spirits of those arrested, prosecuted, and incarcerated (Gaskew, 2017b; Gaskew, 2017c).

According to Madison (2012) critical ethnography begins with an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness and or injustice within a particular lived domain (p. 5). There is an obligation to resist domestication; to search beneath surface appearances in order to expose obscure constructs of power and control; and to move from what is, to what could be. Through the veil of my wokeness, critical autoethnographers must also accept their moral duty in representation to act against all injustices, based upon the connective human tenets of compassion, mercy, love, fearlessness, mindfulness, humility, and truth. This radical dharma involves an oath not to spread evil, to do good, and to do good for others, while at the same time, to share emancipatory knowledge of the systemic poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance (Williams, 2000; Williams, Owens, & Syedullah, 2016). Critical ethnographers fight for liberation through representation.

I would argue that using a critical autoethnographic lens to narrate the invisible and often silenced truths behind the awkwardly arranged marriages between higher education and prisons across the Nation, isn't just a methodology but an act of radical resistance.

The lived domains of a non-incarcerated Black educator under the umbrella of a prison education program, working side-by-side with incarcerated educators who are imprisoned for political crimes against the United States of America, to design and deliver a first-of-a-kind college course focused on examining counterculture sociopolitical movements in America, to non-incarcerated college students inside of a classroom behind the walls of a federal prison, is a journey that must be represented through the lens of critical autoethnography. In fact, I would argue that using a critical autoethnographic lens to narrate the invisible and often silenced truths behind the awkwardly arranged marriages between higher education and prisons across the nation, isn't just a methodology but an act of radical resistance.

Just as important, this essay will represent the voices of the University of Pittsburgh, Bradford students who participated in this course, through the use of an anonymous quantitative/qualitative teaching survey. Although an argument can be made about the overall effectiveness of anonymous student teaching evaluations in higher education settings, critical autoethnography places an emphasis on unraveling truths, critical layer by critical layer if necessary. I would offer that the lengthy, purposeful, and energized comments represented by these students by way of a survey, serve as this first critical layer. During this evaluation, the University of Pittsburgh questionnaire documented both a quantitative and qualitative student response. The quantitative section elicited a numerical rating, ranging from 1 (representing the lowest-ineffective) to 5 (representing the highest-excellent), to the following set of questions:

⁵ Being enlightened to the world around them, i.e., has their fourth eye open. Refer to Gaskew in *Unfriending the Policing Culture: The Reawakened Black Consciousness*.

- The instructor stimulated my thinking.
- The instructor was enthusiastic about teaching the course.
- The instructor presented the course in an organized manner.
- The instructor maintained an environment where students felt comfortable participating.
- The instructor maintained an environment where students felt comfortable seeking assistance.
- The instructor provided helpful feedback.
- Assignments contributed to my understanding of the subject.
- Express your judgement of the instructors overall teaching effectiveness.

The qualitative section elicited written, open-ended responses to the following set of questions:

- What were the instructors' major strengths?
- What were the instructor's major weaknesses?
- What aspects of this course were most beneficial to you?
- What suggestions do you have to improve the course?

The anonymous survey results were presented in a 4-6 page document entitled, *Student Opinion of Teaching Questionnaire Results*.

SETTING

Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) McKean is a medium security prison with an adjacent minimum security satellite facility, Federal Prison Camp (FPC), located in rural Western Pennsylvania. As 1 of only 122 federal prisons across the country, FCI McKean houses nearly 1200 men who have either pled guilty or were convicted of crimes against the United States of America (BOP, 2018a). Nearly 50 percent of those being housed at FCI McKean are incarcerated for drug offenses, and just over one-third are being imprisoned for weapons/explosives and/or homicide/kidnapping related incidents. As well, nearly 80 percent of the men are Black American or Hispanic, averaging 37 years of age, with a period of incarceration ranging from 84 months to life without the possibility of parole (BOP, 2018a). However, FCI McKean is “unique” among federal prisons in that nearly half of those being incarcerated participate in *transitional programming*,⁶ which includes one of the only on-site higher education programs in the BOP. The University of Pittsburgh at Bradford Prison Education Program (2018) offers college courses and higher educational programming at both the FCI and FPC facilities. As of September 2007, over 1000 incarcerated students at FCI McKean and FPC McKean have participated in higher education programming offered in conjunction with the UPB Prison Education Program.

Before engaging in the course, itself, it is imperative to discuss the *cultural DNA* of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The BOP (2018c) arguably, incarcerates some of the most high-profile and socially constructed human identities on the planet. The acknowledgement that every single human in BOP custody is corporately synergized as a *very special being*,⁷ given the fact that they are only 1 of 180,575 people federally incarcerated as of November 29, 2018 (BOP, 2018b) making up less than 5 percent of the total

⁶ Programming designed to provide an incarcerated person a life-based skill-set that will assist in their transition back into a community setting outside of the formal penal control of the BOP.

⁷ In contradiction to the Buddhist mantra of “being” which recognizes the importance that all of life is universally connected and that no being is more or less important than the next.

number of people imprisoned across the nation (Wagner & Rabuy, 2016); having been specifically singled-out and hand-picked for federal prosecution; and finally, having been convicted or pled guilty to a crime against arguably the most powerful and systemically oppressive ethnospheres in global history, the United States of America, is unquestionably a breathtaking understatement. Over the past fifty years, federally investigating, prosecuting, and imprisoning these *very special beings* have cost a staggering half a trillion dollars (Meagher, 2015). The BOP is widely known as the *Area 51*⁹ of correctional management, with tightly controlled and very limited access to its facilities. In fact, only one sitting U.S. President has ever entered a federal correctional facility.¹⁰ The BOP not only houses the historical physical casualties of 400 years of white supremacy, marginalization, oppression, direct and structural violence, but also the historical, ideological, religious, political, and cultural manifestos designed to initiate, oversee, and implement the uprising, liberation, and decolonization of America. As a result, compliance with custodial management policies, specifically at high or medium security institutions, are tightly controlled with little or no discretion (BOP, 2018c). Thus, the BOP offers to the world the most secure prisons ever constructed, such as the supermax at United States Penitentiary (USP) Administrative Maximum Facility (ADX) Florence, to secure the custody of the likes of unabomber Ted Kaczynski; Atlanta Olympics bomber Eric Rudolph; 9/11 conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui; 1993 World Trade Center bombing conspirator Ramzi Yousef; Oklahoma City bombing conspirator Terry Nichols; and the co-author of this essay, formerly incarcerated educator, Salathiel Thompson.

The BOP not only houses the historical physical casualties of 400 years of white supremacy, marginalization, oppression, direct and structural violence, but also the historical, ideological, religious, political, and cultural manifestos designed to initiate, oversee, and implement the uprising, liberation, and decolonization of America.

THE COURSE

During the Spring 2016 academic term at the University of Pittsburgh (Bradford), *ADMJ 1449-Special Topics in Courts-The United States of America vs. The United States of America*, was offered from January, 6, 2016 to April 30, 2016.¹¹ This three-credit course was taught at BOP FCI McKean and would meet for two and a half hours each week, on Wednesdays from 9:00am-11:30am. The lead instructors for the course were incarcerated educators Salathiel Thompson and Connor Stevens.^{12 13} The enrollment for the course was restricted to traditional non-incarcerated undergraduate students;¹⁴ all student applicants were formally screened;¹⁵ and instructor approval was required. Admission into the course

⁸ Ethnosphere as being the sum total of all thoughts and dreams, myths, ideas, inspirations, intuitions brought into being by the human imagination since the dawn of consciousness.

⁹ The United States Air Force facility commonly known as *Area 51* is a highly classified remote detachment of Edwards Air Force Base, within the Nevada Test and Training Range.

¹⁰ In 2015, President Obama visited FCI El Reno, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

¹¹ Due to undisclosed security protocol, two of the fifteen classes were canceled.

¹² Additional information on Connor Stevens can be located at <http://www.cleveland4solidarity.org/>

¹³ The racial demographics of the incarcerated educators consisted of one Black Afrakan/Caribbean and one white American instructor.

¹⁴ In the final round, only criminal justice majors were selected due to security protocol.

¹⁵ The final group of students selected to participate in this course were screened for security purposes and attended mandatory BOP training.

required an interview and a written essay. After receiving hundreds of requests,¹⁶ seven students were selected: five (5) seniors; one (1) junior; and one (1) freshman,¹⁷ which included three (3) male and four (4) female students.¹⁸

The course description was atypical for a criminal justice course, and immediately set an academic tone of an ambiguous social uncomfortability:¹⁹

*This special topics course will critically examine law enforcement's historic response to counterculture movements within the United States of America. This course will explore the psychosocial impact and response of social movements regarding COINTELPRO, covert surveillance, and other domestic counter-terrorism operations. Special emphasis will be placed on Black American, American Indian, and Occupy social movements.*²⁰

The required course readings again, were atypical for a criminal justice course, as they gave a historic *supplemental voice*²¹ to the first-hand accounts of state/governmental critiques lived by professors Thompson and Stevens. As well, the incarcerated instructors provided extensive lecture notes.²² The required readings were as follows:

- *Christopher Columbus and the Afrikan Holocaust: Slavery and the Rise of European Capitalism*; John Henrik Clarke
- *To Die For the People*; Huey Newton
- *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement*; Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall
- *The Terror Factory: Inside the FBI's Manufactured War on Terrorism*; Trevor Aaronson
- *The Occupy Movement Explained*; Nicholas Smaligo

The course involved several layers of very interactive student participation and personalized interaction with the incarcerated instructors.²³ Office hours were scheduled at FCI McKean, 30 minutes prior to the official start of the course.²⁴

The course involved several layers of very interactive student participation and personalized interaction with the incarcerated instructors.

¹⁶ The course was never formally advertised. “Word of mouth” resulted in hundreds of informal and formal requests to participate in and/or audit the course. This included graduate and doctoral candidates from other universities.

¹⁷ Special approval was required to admit the first-year undergraduate student.

¹⁸ The racial demographics included two Black students, and five White (non-Hispanic) students.

¹⁹ Uncomfortability was a term often cited by Salathiel Thompson during the course design, which he distinguished as a social construct.

²⁰ This description was taken verbatim from the course syllabus and created in conjunction with the incarcerated educators.

²¹ Both Thompson and Stevens have extensive subject-matter expertise in building counter-culture social movements critical to the government, and shared their personal experiences/stories in this regard to supplement the course readings.

²² The lecture notes will not be featured in this essay.

²³ Some of the activities included completing in-depth essay questions, legal debates, small group exercises on leading social movement, and a one-on-one question/answer session with an incarcerated instructor.

²⁴ A BOP staff member was present during the entirety of each class session.

THE INSTRUCTORS

Tony Gaskew, Ph.D.

Introducing this “once in a lifetime”²⁵ post-secondary course into a BOP setting was a culmination of a ten-year long journey. As already noted, the UPB Prison Education program has been building a partnership with BOP FCI McKean for over a decade, offering college courses and transitional programming to over 1000 men. But probably more importantly, we’ve worked incredibly hard to try to convince our partners to transform the cultural climate of their institution from a hopeless and high security confinement facility, to one of empowerment and a highly engaged college campus. In fact, we don’t even recognize the labels of inmate or convict under the UPBPEP mantra, just incarcerated men in transition: transitioning from humiliation to humility. To becoming incarcerated students and/or incarcerated educators. In fact, BOP FCI McKean is sometimes referred to as the *University of Pittsburgh (FCI McKean) campus* by people inside and outside the facility. Again, this is only a reflection of our transformative relationship, but please keep in mind we’ve also proudly had many soul-searching and deep-seated disagreements on a variety of topics related to transitional programming. However, introducing the use of incarcerated professors into the higher education platform of our prison education programming, especially with their high-profile backgrounds and given the specific curriculum/content of the course, was an extremely risky venture for all the stakeholders involved, especially for BOP FCI McKean.

There are no provisions of *academic freedom* within the BOP. Words, whether written or spoken, can be weaponized very quickly into instruments of war in a federal prison setting, where everyone is held accountable for their own words and incarcerated educators do not get a pass. Would traditional non-incarcerated University of Pittsburgh students accept the metaphysical reality of having incarcerated educators serving as the primary instructors in their college course? Would the incarcerated educators produce a high enough level of collegiate erudition and scholarship to silence their critics who see this course as just another academic gimmick, in the profitable merry-go-round of prison education programming?²⁶ To be very clear, this would be the first-time in BOP history where prison education programming would take such a radical pedagogical turn, empowering two highly politicized incarnated educators with an official platform to share their own intellectual manifestos on specific subject-matter that in many ways, led them down life’s crossroads with the United States of America. So, why would FCI McKean place themselves in a position where so many things could go wrong? Because the invisible humans who live underneath the BOP badges at the institution trusted that their partners in prison education programming, would only place them in a position where so many things could go right. Trust is the most important virtue in building and sustaining any relationship and has been the driving force behind the collaborative successes between the University of Pittsburgh Bradford Prison Education Program and BOP FCI McKean. On a very personal level, my friends in motion²⁷ at the institution, trusted in my abilities as a ten-year volunteer at the facility and criminal justice career professional to *manage the process*, because we had crossed this path before.

Would the incarcerated educators produce a high enough level of collegiate erudition and scholarship to silence their critics who see this course as just another academic gimmick, in the profitable merry-go-round of prison education programming?

²⁵ Quote taken from student survey.

²⁶ For a more in-depth examination into the nuanced representations of prison education and pedagogy, please see *Rethinking Prison Reentry: Transforming Humiliation into Humility*.

²⁷ A phrase used in jobs that may require someone to transfer to multiple locations in their professional careers, where you develop short but very meaningful friendships.

In 2015 for the 5th Annual National Conference on Higher Education in Prison (NCHEP), I arranged a series of live-video linked presentations, a first-of-its-kind in the history of BOP, highlighting the scholarship of five incarcerated educators at the facility. The presentations, which included a live-video linked question and answer session with the audience, was a remarkable success and garnished national recognition not only for the UPB-Prison Education Program and the incarcerated educators involved, but this event also served as a catalyst for opening up Pandora’s box on the pedagogical nuances of prison education at the facility²⁸ as well as shaping my vision of an organic learning environment.

Just two days before the *USA v. USA* was scheduled to start, I received an email from a student enrolled in the course, requesting a brief meeting on an undisclosed matter. I agreed and to my surprise, fifteen minutes later there were three students from the course at my office door. They each shared the same thematic concern, which could only be described as an excited, lucid fear of the unknown. Initially, it was easily recognizable to me as performance anxiety, or what is commonly known as pre-game jitters. I had seen this many times before in students who were enrolled in courses at the federal prison, specifically if they were aware that one or two of their incarcerated student counterparts were recognizable and well-known entertainers, sports figures, television personalities, etc. It’s very normal. However, this was different. There were no nervous smiles or meaningless chatter, just a controlled stoic fear. For the very first-time in their lives, they were faced with an assignment that could not be googled on a smartphone or explained away by a previous class lecture. Clearly, the University of Pittsburgh did not prepare them for this type of interpersonal contact, because there was no precedence, and they knew it. First, they inquired if any “ground rules” would be established on what they could say or ask regarding the incarcerated educators specific crimes against the United States, as they directly related to the course content. They openly admitted conducting research on the incarcerated educators, as I knew they would, and wanted to know if they could use this personal and case-related background material as foundational information for discussions and debates. Second, they wanted to know if I could offer any advice on how they should process their emotions, that is, the what, where, when, how, and who they could they share their thoughts and feelings with outside of the confines of the class? Finally, they wanted to know, why I would arrange this type of course, and given their high-profile status, why would these incarcerated educators agree to teach this class?

For the very first time in their lives, they were faced with an assignment that could not be googled on a smartphone or explained away by a previous class lecture.

I must admit, it was a very transcendent moment as a college educator. I recognized that as undergraduate students, they clearly understood the significance of this moment, and that this was not going to be “just another class” at the university or in our Prison Education Program. In self-reflection, based upon the countless informal conversations I’ve had with some of these students since the course ended nearly two years ago, I now recognize that they simply wanted to immerse themselves into the *cultural moment*, and needed a road map to help navigate this portion of the journey. My response to all three questions were a simple representation of the radical truth, “ask your professors.” I explained that they were the students of professors Thompson and Stevens, thus as students, they held an obligation, a sacred pact, to clarify whatever their relationship was or would become over the next several months, only with the instructors. On the very first-day of the course, professor Stevens solidified this pact, providing the following response to the class, which not only set the tone for the next fifteen weeks of the course, but also provided an insight into the radical critical pedagogical discourse that lay ahead:

²⁸ The incarcerated educators involved in this live-video-link included Keith James, Adam Clausen, Arturo Cantu, Chris Clemmons, and Anthony Boyd.

I will answer all of your questions. But if you take this course, you all agree to go down a rabbit hole that will either force you to question all of contemporary history and leave your chosen fields of study, or to become part of the enslaved masses, executing the will of the government and its political police agency, the FBI. Do you really want to ask the tough questions and lose your concept of life and everything you've wasted four-years learning? Just know, there will never be a successful strategic plan to control the liberation of people. The government will ultimately lose....what I offer is a crash course on anti-civilization theory and the potential end to the Anthropocene.²⁹

Stevens then proceeded to cite verbatim thirteen additional readings that would “inspire” his students to understand how totally unprepared they actually were for his lectures and to “translate their criticisms into meaningful action.”³⁰ The course itself, again a BOP historical first, will serve as a constant reminder to me that life is truly an art form and that compassion, mindfulness, and fearlessness connect all beings, continue to inspire spontaneous debates on issues of race, crime, and justice everyday on both campuses.³¹ My fieldnotes,³² which chronicled over 300 hours of *self-reflection* on various aspects of the cultural setting, i.e., curriculum meetings, classroom interactions, instructor and student debriefings,³³ etc., are still being *digested*. Future co-authored publications with other incarcerated colleagues³⁴ are in-progress.

Professor Salathiel Thompson

My journey as the first incarcerated college educator in BOP history,³⁵ serving as the lead instructor for two University of Pittsburgh courses, one specifically directed at traditional, non-incarcerated students, should give every professor in higher education incredible pause. I earned my subject-matter expertise inside various supermax correctional facilities across the United States of America, including United States Penitentiary (USP), Administrative Maximum Facility (ADMX) Florence, Colorado, where I was locked inside the solitary confines of a 7 x 10 classroom twenty-three hours a day. For those of you not familiar with ADX Florence, it is the most secure prison in the world and houses what the United States of America defines as the most dangerous men, in need of the tightest control. After spending sixteen years inside supermax facilities, I was reintroduced into the open population on June 18, 2007, when I was transferred to United States Penitentiary (USP) Lewisburg. There, I spent seven years walking the yard and sharing life stories with incarcerated Native American activist Leonard Peltier. On August 15, 2014, I was transferred to FCI McKean. I was released from the custody of the United States of America on November 22, 2017.

²⁹ Fieldnote representation.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Bradford and FCI McKean.

³² This course was not affiliated with or represented as part of any study or research project. It was not a research project. “Fieldnotes” is a generic term used in this essay for documenting any random thoughts and feeling for the purpose of self-reflection, self-actualization, and mindfulness.

³³ We met on weekly basis as an exercise of self-reflection and self-actualization, to order to share our thoughts and feelings on the progress of the course.

³⁴ Inclusive of all the incarcerated educators I've worked with, spanning ten years at BOP FCI McKean.

³⁵ Stevens co-taught the first course as well.

My journey as the first incarcerated college educator in BOP history, serving as the lead instructor for two University of Pittsburgh courses, one specifically directed at traditional, non-incarcerated students, should give every professor in higher education incredible pause.

There was never a day during my twenty-seven-year odyssey being imprisonment by the United States of America that I did not read or write about something, anything. To suggest that solitary confinement does not create metaphysical demons, would be an inhuman untruth, but I used the silence of solitariness to give birth, grow, and saturate the intellectualism of my Afrikan spirit. It is in the solemn truth of this reality, that the foundational curriculum for this college course was born. The ADX put me in a space to see my dark truth.

Due to the brevity of this essay, I will share a small portion of my pedagogical foundation that was used to establish the core curriculum for the course.³⁶ As well, I will also briefly share my thoughts on being an incarcerated educator, teaching non-incarcerated college students.

...this class was taught through the eyes, voices, and spirits of Afraka, and once the students accepted that they too were Afrakan, they awakened, and for many of them, for the very first time in their lives (Ani, 1995).

Just to be clear, this class was taught through the eyes, voices, and spirits of Afraka, and once the students accepted that they too were Afrakan, they *awakened*, and for many of them, for the very first time in their lives (Ani, 1995). It is from this pedagogical reality, that we dissected the criminal justice system in America and its marriage to the self-preservatory concept of white supremacy. My course curriculum was designed around three premises:

Premise 1. I start from the rarely-acknowledge contemporary, but however, immensely paramount premise, that, world history is Afrakan history. That proceeding races' histories only comes about at their first and thereafter, contact(s) with the Aboriginal Afrakans. That, the high global civilization the Aboriginal Afrakan produced, the deep thoughts they cultivated, the sciences that they birthed therefrom, and the educational system they developed in disseminating this information: all races and peoples has been the beneficiaries of (Diop, 1974).

Education has never been the original development, creation, product, or domain of white people, which is inclusive in all the pale races or, ethnicities. In fact, the impartial empirical study of nature reveals that education, is a natural principle of group-self-preservation prompting all living species. That is, species are hardwired, from its cellular-imprinting; of what it means to be, involving ancestral-seed inherited information, which prompts it to develop ways and means to ensure its continuity into perpetuity: biologically, chemically, physically, and psychologically. Ergo, education is a prominent factor in the development of species to preserve themselves. And to affect a species, genus, group's ability to practice self-preservation, one needs only infect their educational development (Ani, 1995).

³⁶ I discovered that an Afrakan-centered pedagogy, in its purest form, challenges the primary historic barrier to the critical exchange required in the collective learning process: white supremacy.

Education has never been the original development, creation, product, or domain of white people, which is inclusive in all the pale races or, ethnicities. In fact, the impartial empirical study of nature reveals that education, is a natural principle of group-self-preservation prompting all living species.

Premise 2. We start with the second premise that all living things are genetically hardwired to practice group self-preservation: that is, procreation, food, water, clothing/shelter. Naturally, no species, genus, or, group would educate properly, the other it deems its enemy. Indeed, the natural enemy of the lion's cub is the hyena. The hyena cannot and will not educate the lion's cub into what it means to be a hyena, or, a lion. And any information exchange from this intercourse can only prove a deficit to the continuity of the lion.

White people cannot educate the Black child or adult into what it means to be Afrakan – having been far-removed or diluted from what it means to be its original-self, and thus, can only impart to the Afrakan child or adult, what it means to be European. This is paramountly dangerous, because what it means to be *white* was a direct forging out off a developmental-incubator process: extending out off an environmental and climatic conditions of the forward and retreating ice age, when the northern regions of the globe was covered by ice and cold: in which, original Afrakans, trapped in these areas, would become de-pigmented in hue and appearance, with a corresponding effect of an attendant philosophy, psychology, and psychosis developed therefrom. The Aboriginal-Afrakans, having developed in a diametrically opposite environment of sun, foliage, life, and plenty developed a corresponding philosophy, psychology, and national consciousness developed therefrom (Ani, 1995).

White people cannot educate the Black child or adult into what it means to be Afrakan—having been far removed or diluted from what it means to be its original-self, and thus, can only impart to the Afrakan child or adult, what it means to be European.

And since one's educational system is a direct derivative of one's self-preservation system: where the blanch race and ethnicities were preserved separate from its parent stock, i.e., ice, Eurasian steppes, desert – European, pale Asian, and pale Arab; versus foliage, life, green, plenty, sun – Aboriginal Afrakans of the continent, India, Australia, Pacific Islands, Southern Europe's original Afrakan inhabitants – what it means to be, developing its educational system would be group-specific, out of the environmental and climatic conditions that their natures were forged in (Ani, 1995).

Premise 3. The third and final postulation from this premise reasoning says – Afrakan education starts with their ability to practiced healthy self-preservation: which can only be achieved by their attendant proper education concerning their true past, which extends beyond the recent 500 years' holocaust of genocide, kidnapping, stolen, false imprisonment, etc.: misnamed 'slavery'. Accordingly, education in the United States has been touted as culturally-neutral, and by this dissemination, there is the pretense that it can and has addressed the educational concerns of its multicultural society in a purely objective way. Indeed, the trail of the un- and under educated attest to a different reality (Ani, 1995).

Education has and will always be linked to its cultural-specificity, that is, linked and colored by the racial-ethnic homogeneous history of the group. And in the case where one group is most dominant in demographics and influence; would reflect such educational lack of parity, as it relates to a different racial-ethnic group(s). As such, there is such a characterization as a "Black" educational system and standards

and a “white” educational system and standards. It isn’t much verbalized, but their existence is concrete and the results of both are felt. And by their very antithetical nature to each other, they are competing.

Education has and will always be linked to its cultural-specificity, that is, linked and colored by the racial-ethnic homogeneous history of the group.

For most people, the question of what constitutes an educational system, how it is created, and why does it function in the manner in which it does, are questions rarely asked and answered. For most people, having been born into a society of which education is compulsory, is fact linked and taken for granted as belonging to an industrial, first-world, civilized interpreted “white” invention (Ani, 1995). As discussed earlier, such suggestions are complete and utter falsehood, debunked soundly by historical records.³⁷ Indeed, all native societies possess educational systems. It was a necessary part and parcel of their daily and continual survival. It was one for the significant principles of the group-self-preservation, absent which the social fabric of the group would disintegrate.

You see, whenever I am asked, “what was it like to be an incarcerated college professor, teaching nonincarcerated college students” I immediately know the question originates from a person who has never been incarcerated. You see, all prisons are universities, all universities have students, thus all universities have professors. I have been an ancestral professor for over twenty years, teaching the truths of self-preservation to countless students. What do you think Dred Scott v. Sandford, 60 U.S. 393 and the 13th Amendment was really about? It was about the self-preservation of the whiteness. The fantasy of white superiority and Afrakan inferiority. One of the course assignments I introduced was a role-playing exercise where I set up a mock courtroom, and my students had to legally, morally, and philosophically argue Dred Scott. Three student’s role-played Supreme Court Judges and the other four role-played adversarial attorneys. I provided all the background material of the case. All the students had to do was be themselves: colonized. Initially, the students thought we were doing this exercise to conjure up some pointless space of “white guilt” but as the weeks went by, they began to see the truth of what self-preservation really means. Even with the progressive masks given to them by a formal college education, they saw the brilliance in what the Supreme Court Justices had done for them, preserving their future as white Americans and the legal standard by which Afrakan people would be judged. In the end, the students understood that they would not have changed a thing the Supreme Court had said or done in their decision, because it represented the truth of their own white self-preservation.

I ended the class shortly afterward, and one of the students approached me and said, “that was unbelievable... I didn’t want it to end.”

The class was a balance between the Afrakan worldviews of Connor and myself, which were actually quite different. Each of us had six weeks as the primary instructor and six weeks as the secondary instructor. The primary instructor was responsible for all the classroom lectures, readings, assignments, in-class exercises, etc. that occurred that given week. However, the secondary instructor, in my opinion anyway, served a much more critical purpose. He would be tasked with assessing, challenging, and providing a counter-argument on everything the primary instructor had delivered the previous two hours. For example, on the very first day of the class, Connor and I were involved in an uncomfortably direct verbal disagreement on the concept of “citizenship” in America. The students all had stoic expressions on their faces and didn’t utter a word during our 10-minute exchange. I ended the class shortly afterward, and one of the students approached me and said, “that was unbelievable...I didn’t want it to end.” I had to explain to her that it

³⁷ See *Yurugu: An African-centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior: African-Centered Critique of European Thought and Behavior*.

wasn't a gimmick and that Connor and I see Afraka through two different sets of eyes, and that I could see clearly and that Connor was still blinded by white supremacy.

Thus, I did not teach this course with the goal of stimulating critical thinking, advancing knowledge, or challenging the worldviews of white undergraduate University of Pittsburgh students. That is, all the students were white, even the two students who identified as Black American. They were colonized Black Americans, which is white, but even more dangerous at times (Lorde, 1985). I helped in the decolonization of all the students. Colonialism destroyed the concept of education. Colonization synergized the pedagogical tenets of a Eurocentric voice that has produced lie after lie, and a failed educational narrative. It is my duty to introduce an Afrakan consciousness, a bridge between the individual micro and the societal macro, the only universal language of *truth*. Hearing these truths, most of the student responses in class were transitional in nature: that is, disbelief, incredulity, astonishment, and ultimately disappointment and anger and in some cases disillusioned at their adult educators, whom they felt had a duty to expose them to accurate and correct information, and clearly, they were been introduced to this for the first time.

I witnessed firsthand, the liberating power of the truth of the information I imparted, which did not place one over the other, nor at the expense of the other: but rather served to round out and elucidate the existing information, placing it in its proper historical perspective, place, and time, and thus enhancing it. This showed our collective humanity. Building upon the truth left behind and contributed to by succeeding Afrakan generations and peoples, as opposed to what we see today (Abu-Jamal, 2003). I submit that only the true force of proper and correct education can genuinely liberate, dispel myths, right wrongs, and possess the detergent power to transform once, lifelong enemies into lasting friends.

These undergraduate students, to whom I introduced the truth, in turn, introduced to me a truth that there is hope for our singular humanity. That, we can work to collectively move each other forward. That our planet must be shared, not from the coercion and domination of each other racially and ethnically: but from rather knowing the only truth: *In the beginning was the Aboriginal Afrakan. The Aboriginal Afrakan populated the earth and became other races: from the specific climatic and environmental conditions, they encountered. All other races must return too and in acknowledgement of themselves as children of the Afrakan parent-stock.*

These undergraduate students, to whom I introduced the truth, in turn, introduced to me a truth that there is hope for our singular humanity. That, we can work to collectively move each other forward.

The Students

The University of Pittsburgh teaching survey for ADMJ 1449- *Special Topics in Courts: The United States of America v. The United States of America*, was completed in the later part of the Spring 2016 academic term. The survey had a 100% student response rate. In regards to the survey results, two specific areas are highlighted for their importance: *Overall Teaching Effectiveness*, which is a quantitative statistical score, and *Student Comments*, which is a qualitative assessment. In regard to the quantitative results, Professors Thompson and Stevens received an *excellent* overall teaching effectiveness, with a score of 4.43.³⁸

The qualitative results were lengthy, purposeful, and represented the emotional energy of the moment. The critical representations of these students not only spoke volumes regarding their own unique truths about

³⁸ An *excellent* is the highest statistical grade that can be awarded. The scoring ranges from 1 (ineffective) to 5 (excellent). The standard deviance for this score was .53.

the incarnated instructors and the course itself, but more importantly, how these experiences will shape their perceptions on the role higher education has played in the social construction of lives.

Although Dr. Tony Gaskew was the instructor through the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, the instructors that were teaching the course were Professor Thompson and Professor Stevens through the Federal Bureau of Prisons at FCI McKean. Both instructors were two of the most intelligent men I have had the pleasure of conversing with during my four years in college. They maintained a high level of professionalism while teaching the course and had vast amounts of knowledge of many different subjects that were unfamiliar to me. I would recommend, and urge that this course be offered again. It has been the best opportunity that I been given throughout my higher education journey. The professors made us all think critically about major social issues that most of us had little knowledge about. They pressured us to be open minded and take things further than face value. They reflected on personal experiences often which helped the learning process and brought it closer to home for all of us. I can personally say that I am upset to see the class come to an end and I hope that this opportunity is given to others in the future.³⁹

The students specifically commented on the various strengths of the pedagogical formula adopted by the instructors, which enabled them to introduce a very organic learning platform in order to blend their extensive subject-matter expertise in counter-culture sociopolitical movements, with the readings, class exercises, and discussion questions.

Taking a class with incarcerated instructors was itself an incredible learning experience.

Taking a class with incarcerated instructors was itself an incredible learning experience. Professors Thompson and Stevens have invaluable life experiences to share, and I am thankful they were able to share with me. I was impressed with the level of organization in the coursework, and it shows they spent a good deal of time formulating our curriculum. Both instructors were passionate to a fault and often showed us the emotional side of incarceration and participating in radical social movements.⁴⁰

These two instructors were without a doubt two of the most intelligent men I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. Considering the setting of the course, and the type of class, both Professor Thompson and Professor Stevens provided me with more knowledge, and critical thinking skills than I ever could have imagined.⁴¹

Both Professor Thompson and Professor Stevens have given me so much as a student, and as a person. I am forever grateful for the both instructors, Dr. Gaskew, and the University of Pittsburgh and FCI McKean for allowing such a great learning environment to take place. Writing down all of their strength's is utterly impossible. They have opened my eyes to so many things, and that is something that words just cannot convey.⁴²

Throughout the semester, the two incarcerated instructors provided their manifestos based on their experiences with the criminal justice system and social movements. I have learned

³⁹ Verbatim from the teaching survey of ADMJ 1449, p. 2.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

more in this class alone than I have in an entire semester of classes. The information was consistent throughout the semester, and the instructors constantly made the students think critically, which allowed us to absorb the large amount of information presented to us.⁴³

Students also shared their representations on which specific aspects of the course was most beneficial to them:

First hand instruction about the repression of social groups from people who were repressed while participating in social groups - it can't get any better. Every assignment was personally challenging and I grew emotionally and intellectually as a result of this course.⁴⁴

In the beginning, I was discouraged by how much reading we had to do for this course. However, I now realize that a lot of reading is crucial to a class like this, and the books I read are now the "evidence" I use when I try to "awaken" others.⁴⁵

The books and information presented is extremely complex, and I will be absorbing it all for a long time. The entire course made me reconsider my future career path, but has shown me what type of person I should be when I do enter the field.⁴⁶

The entire class is most beneficial to me. I value every bit of information that I gathered through this course. Mainly I was pleased to learn about the history of this country that I was unaware of, and pleased to learn about an agency that I hope to work for some day.⁴⁷

Several students added a much more reflective and mindful representation of their journeys:

Professor Stevens - You were always very prepared for class, and the lectures that you were giving. What I enjoyed the most was your ability to bring real world experiences into whatever it is you were teaching. Your honesty was completely refreshing. Every time that myself or a fellow classmate had a question, you were able to not just answer it - but give us examples and your experiences along with it. You have opened my eyes into a world that I thought I knew, and gave it more meaning. You have taught me that critical thinking is a must, and that it shouldn't be taken for granted or underestimated. You have inspired me to go out into my career and strive to be, not just the best that I can be, but what the world needs me to be - even if that means it won't be the easy thing, but the right thing. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to be in a class taught by you. This course has given me experiences to look back on, and that will help me with my life, career and all. You were fair, and straightforward, and always made me think more critically, the lectures that you were able to bring to us will never be forgotten, your wisdom will never be forgotten. Thank you...⁴⁸

You have opened my eyes into a world that I thought I knew, and gave it more meaning. You have taught me that critical thinking is a must, and that it shouldn't be taken for granted or underestimated.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Verbatim from the teaching survey of ADMJ 1449, p. 3.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Professor Thompson - Your willingness to always demand that we look at things from a different perspective was without a doubt the most important thing that you have taught me. I have learned so much from your lectures. Class was always a mystery and that kept us on our toes. Your experiences throughout your life was also something that made this class so beneficial to me. It is so overwhelmingly obvious that you have dedicated your life to becoming a scholar, and a scholar you are. I often left your lectures speechless, and craving to learn more to read more and to not just listen to what you were saying, but to really absorb it and relate it to my own experiences. You always showed and told us that you see potential in us and that we will make a difference as long as we don't forget the truths in our histories. You were able to show me that I need to always engage in difficult conversations - especially with those who it will be hard. That those conversations need to take place, and that we cannot hide from what is right, and what is true. You were fair in our discussions, but always honest. Your kindness and immense wisdom will never be forgotten. Thank you...⁴⁹

It cannot be said enough. I am forever grateful to have been able to be your students, even for a short time. As I enter into my adult life, I am certain that I will be able to look back at my time in this class and know that the both of you made a huge difference in my life. Thank you both so very much. Beneficial is an understatement.⁵⁰

Finally, students briefly added a critical lens into some of the challenges of completing a college course behind the walls of a federal prison, and suggestions for improving the course delivery:

Annoyances and difficulties associated with taking a college course inside a federal correctional institution pale in comparison to the knowledge our instructors imparted on us and the experience of speaking to and learning from these two brilliant individuals.⁵¹

Given the constraints that were put on the class for being at FCI McKean, I think that overall it went smoothly. There were times that class was cancelled, but that is just something beyond anyone's control. I would take this course 1,000 times over again if given the opportunity.⁵²

I have been told that a course like this will not be offered in the future.⁵³

The only suggestion that I have to give is that this course be held again! It is very unique and beneficial for those pursuing a degree in criminal justice and hoping to work in the field.⁵⁴

Again, these anonymous representations only serve as an initial critical lens, the first in fact, of how incarcerated educators will be deconstructed through the cultural senses of their students. Clearly, there are limitations and more questions than answers. But as participant observers in a dysfunctional higher educational sphere, one that we all share, our often-reluctant partners in this community, the students, are

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Verbatim from the teaching survey of ADMJ 1449, p. 4.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

more than capable of lending a radical voice that will inspire a paradigm shift from *what is, to what could be*.

FINAL THOUGHTS: WHAT IS, TO WHAT COULD BE

Kwame Ture (1965) spent a considerable amount of his time in the realm of Afrakan Diaspora and the decolonization of Blackness, filtering through the question, “who is qualified to make it?” (pp. 9-16) in America. He suggested that America has limited this “qualification” in only three ways: by having money; by knowing the right people; and by education (p.10). Ture (1965) quickly dismissed the first two as symbolic American-made pipe dreams; however, he felt so strongly about the concept of education, specifically the creation of radical pedagogical platforms that fought against the traditional American colonized educational mantra, that he insisted classrooms become sites for raising consciousness rather than simply assessing work and applying standards. He understood that classrooms contained the secrets to truth, revolution, and liberation.

As well, Ture (1965) argued that traditional college settings participate in the same systems of colonial oppression that maintains white supremacy, and the poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance.⁵⁵ He added that those individuals who had the ability to transcend knowledge, educators, held the key to awakening the consciousness of a people who have been asleep for nearly 400 years.⁵⁶

As a student of Kwame Ture (1965), I often wonder what he would think about *The United States of America vs. The United States of America*. I think he would encourage the continued evolution of the revolutionary pedagogy used in this course. A pedagogy that focused on developing a *resistance consciousness* in students. A pedagogy that fostered the establishment of an organic classroom. A pedagogy that unapologetically promoted course curriculum that reflected the historical truths of the African experience in America and challenged the psychosis of white superiority and Black inferiority. A pedagogy that created very uncomfortable spaces for our partners, allies, and supporters of prison higher education programming. And finally, a pedagogy that trusted and invested in the empowerment of human potential.

REFERENCES

- Aaronson, T. (2013). *The Terror Factory: Inside the FBI's Manufactured War on Terrorism*. Brooklyn, NY: Ig Publishing.
- Abu-Jamal, M. (2003). *Faith of Our Fathers: An Examination of the Spiritual Life of Africa*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press.
- Al-Amin, J. A. (1969). *Die Nigger Die: A Political Autobiography*. Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill Books.
- Ani, M. (1995). *Yurugu: An African-centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior*. Trenton, NJ: African World Press.
- Bell, D. (1988). White Superiority in America: Its Legal Legacy, Its Economic Costs. *Vill. L. Rev.* 33, 767.
- Bell, D. (1990). Racial Reflections: Dialogues in the Direction of Liberation, *UCLA L. Rev.* 37, 1037.
- Churchill, W., & Wall, J. V. (1990). *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars Against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

⁵⁵ The three poisons, greed, anger, and ignorance, from the book *Being Black: Zen and the Art of Living with Fearlessness and Grace*.

⁵⁶ From the essays, *The Policing of the Black American Male: Transforming Humiliation into Humility in Pursuit of Truth and Reconciliation; Unfriending the Policing Culture: The Reawakened Black Consciousness; Transforming the Systemic Humiliation of Crime and Justice: Reawakening Black Consciousness; Mindfulness, the Reawakening of Black Consciousness, and Mastering the Art of Policing*.

- Clarke, J.H. (1998). *Christopher Columbus and the African Holocaust: Slavery and the Rise of European Capitalism*. Hunlock Creek, PA: Eworld Publishing.
- Diop, C.A. (1974). *The African Origin of Civilization*. Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill Publishing.
- Federal Bureau of Prisons. (2018a). FCI McKean. Retrieved from <https://www.bop.gov/locations/institutions/mck/>
- Federal Bureau of Prisons. (2018b). About Our Facilities. Retrieved from https://www.bop.gov/about/facilities/federal_prisons.jsp
- Federal Bureau of Prisons. (2018c). Inmate and Custody Management Policy. Retrieved from <https://www.bop.gov/PublicInfo/execute/policysearch?todo=query&series=5000>
- Gaskew, T. (2014a). *Rethinking Prison Reentry: Transforming Humiliation into Humility*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Gaskew, T. (2014b). *The Policing of the Black American Male: Transforming Humiliation into Humility in Pursuit of Truth and Reconciliation*. In I. Michelle Scott, *Crimes Against Humanity in the Land of the Free: Can a Truth and Reconciliation Process Heal Racial Conflict in America?* Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO Publishing.
- Gaskew, T. (2017a) *Do I want be a 30 Percenter or 70 Percenter?: Black Cultural Privilege*. In *Counter-Stories and Counter-Spaces: A Critical Race Analysis of Education's Role in Reintegrating Formerly Incarcerated Citizens*. Edited by Joni Schwartz and John Chaney. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Gaskew, T. (2017b). *Unfriending the Policing Culture: The Reawakened Black Consciousness*. In *Policing Black and Brown Bodies: Policing in the Age of Black Lives Matter*. Edited by Sandra E. Weissinger and Dwayne Mack. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Gaskew, T. (2017c). *Transforming the Systemic Humiliation of Crime and Justice: Reawakening Black Consciousness*. In Daniel Rothbart (Ed.). *New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan*.
- Jabari, K. (2002). *Message to the Black Movement: A Political Statement from the Black Underground*. San Francisco, CA: Abraham Guillen Press/Arm the Spirit.
- Jackson, G. (1970). *Soledad Brother*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Lorde, A. (1985). *Apartheid U.S.A.* Mineola, NY: Ixia Press.
- Madison, D. S. (2012). *Critical Ethnography: Methods, Ethics, and Performance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Meagher, T. (2015). *The Cost of Crime Fighting*. Retrieved from <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2015/02/12/the-cost-of-crime-fighting#.vCAicdrgJ>
- Muntaqim, J. (2010). *We Are Our Own Liberators*. Chicago, IL: Arissa Publishing.
- Newton, H. (1972). *To Die for the People*. T. Morrison (Ed.). San Francisco, CA: City Lights.
- Nkrumah, K. (1968). *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*. Bedford, UK: Panaf Books.
- Sankara, T. (1988). *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-1987*. Atlanta, GA: Pathfinder Press.
- Schoatz, R. (2013). *Maroon the Implacable*. Oakland, CA: PM Press.
- Shakur, A. (1987). *Assata: An Autobiography*. Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill Books.
- Smaligo, N. (2014). *The Occupy Movement Explained*. Chicago, Ill. Open Court Press.
- Some, M. P. (1998). *The Healing Wisdom of Africa: Finding Life Purpose Through Nature, Ritual, and Community*. Chicago, IL: Putnam Books.
- Thompson, S., Boyd, A., & Colon, C. (2016). *Just Mercy: A Transformative Criminal Justice Journey to Expose and Uproot White Supremacy* [Lecture Notes].
- Thompson, S., & Stevens, C. (2016). *The United States of America vs. The United States of America* [Lecture Notes].
- Ture, K. (1965). *Stokely Speaks: From Black Power to Pan Africanism*. Chicago, IL: Lawrence Hill Books.
- University of Pittsburgh-Teaching Survey. (2016). Spring 2016 Individual Comment Report for Tony Gaskew. ADMJ 1449- Special Topics in Courts.
- University of Pittsburgh at Bradford: Prison Education Program. (2018). Retrieved from <http://www.upb.pitt.edu/PrisonEdProgram/>
- Wagner P. & Rabuy, B. (2016). *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2016*. Retrieved from <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2016.html>
- Welsing, F. (1992). *The Isis Papers: The Keys to the Colors*. Pittsburgh, PA: CW Press.
- Williams, A. (2000). *Being Black: Zen and the Art of Living with Fearlessness and Grace*. New York, NY: Penguin Compass Press.
- Williams, A., Owens L. R., & Syedullah, J. (2016). *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation*. Berkley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Williams, C. (1971). *The Destruction of Black Civilization*. Chicago, IL: Third World Press.

Williams, R. F. (1962). *Negroes with Guns*. Martino Publishing.

Wilson, A. (1998). *Blue Print for Black Power: A Moral, Political, and Economic Imperative for The Twenty-First Century*. Brooklyn, NY: Afrikan World Infosystems.

Wilson, A. (1999). *African Centered Consciousness Versus the New World Order: Garveyism in the Age of Globalism*. Brooklyn, NY: Afrikan World InfoSystems.



Tony Gaskew, Ph.D., is Full Professor of Criminal Justice, Director, Criminal Justice Program, and Founding Director, Prison Education Program at the University of Pittsburgh, Bradford. He is a Fulbright Hays Fellow and a University of Pittsburgh Faculty Diversity Fellow, who has conducted ethnographic research in Africa.



Salathiel Thompson, is a formerly incarcerated college educator, intellectual, revolutionary activist, and subject-matter expert in global Afrikan Diaspora. He was born and raised in the Bahamas.