Black Man Emerging

Facing the Past and

Seizing a Future

in America

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Chapter 6

Masculine Alternatives:
The African–American Perspective

Because of the toxic psychological and social effects associated with the traditional Euro-American masculine ideal, African-American psychologists have recommended that Black males avoid strict adherence to White norms and seek alternative definitions of maleness.[1] Indeed, the Euro-American masculine ideal has many admirable qualities—an emphasis on logical thinking, organizational skills, and planning ahead to achieve future goals—but there is a definite downside. Excessive emphasis on power, dominance, competitiveness, individualism, and control has resulted in the oppression of ethnic minorities and in sexism. In what appears to be a distortion of human potential, the Euro-American masculine ideal leaves out a wide range of human experiences and feelings. Little or no value is placed on empathy, nurturance, compassion, harmonious relationships, and being in touch with one's feelings

The social psychologists James Doyle and Michele Paludi, summarizing key aspects of Euro-American masculinity, list five factors:[2]

1. *The self-reliant factor.* Real men are in control. They are calm and decisive under pressure.

2. *The success factor.* To demonstrate their masculinity, men should compete and win against other men at work and in sports. Making lots of money, having a high-status job, and driving an expensive car are important.

3. *The aggressive factor.* Men are expected to go after what they want and fight for what they believe is right. Real men defend themselves aggressively against threats and are capable of using physical and verbal violence.

4. *The antifeminine factor.* Real men do not act like soft, gentle, tender females.

5. *The sexual factor.* Men should be the initiators of sexual behavior and control heterosexual interaction. Women are valued as objects of physical beauty and displayed as symbols of conquest.

Since the ideal male is supposed to be in control at all times, public displays of emotion are taboo. In 1972, when Senator Edmund Muskie wept during his campaign for the Democratic party's presidential nomination, he was roundly criticized. Real men don't cry. The Euro-American masculine paradox, therefore, is that while White males generally have more freedom than women and children and Black males to compete, pursue adventure, seek power, and take risks, they are less free to express their own feelings.

For several reasons it is not psychologically healthy for Black males to follow heedlessly the overly controlled, dominating Euro-American masculine style. First, aggressive individualism and rigid emotional control are likely to be rejected in the African-American community, which values connectedness, interdependence, and emotional expressiveness. Second, an extreme emphasis on material success can be a cause of frustration. Black males have difficulty overcoming barriers caused by racism and poverty and becoming part of the good-old-boy corporate and social networks where inside information is passed along and which provide mentoring that enhances the

chances for success. Third, acting out frustrated masculine strivings by overcompensating with go-for-bad machismo behaviors, sexual conquests, and violence will inevitably create negative consequences for self and others. The safety net in the inner cities is very thin; slight missteps can lead to poor academic skills and unemployment, unplanned parenthood, prison, or death. Such outcomes unwittingly reinforce negative stereotypes about Black males. Finally, emulating the Euro-American masculine ideal means identifying with a lifestyle that resulted in the enslavement and oppression of African-Americans and created the persistent negative stereotypes of Black males.

As an externally imposed ideal, the norms, values, and dictates of Euro-American masculinity warp the Black males' conception of manhood and prevent new possibilities from emerging. It is difficult, if not impossible, to free oneself psychologically from oppression by identifying with the oppressor and emulating his lifestyle. To free the African-American male from the destructive effects of slavery, segregation, and institutional racism, and to unlock suppressed human potential, a fundamental refocusing of masculine ideology is needed.

Masculinity: The African-American View

Several Black psychologists, including Wade Nobles, Na'im Akbar, Linda Jones Myers, and Asa Hilliard, have convincingly argued that an African-centered ideology represents the greatest potential for transforming the African-American vision of manhood into a psychologically actualizing ideal that will allow Black men to raise themselves above oppression and function as liberated rather than controlled human beings.[3]

Afrocentrism, an African-centered philosophical orientation, value system, and frame of reference, views African values and ideals as the starting place for analyzing such issues as the meaning of masculinity for people of African descent. The Afrocentric worldview incorporates the Black Nationalist tradition of Marcus Garvey, as well as the values represented in African-American expressive forms like dance, literature, art, and drama. Afrocentrism represents an attempt to return to traditional African culture and update it to deal with spiritual, cultural, and psychological change. Rather than anchoring the search for masculine identity and values in a Euro-American perspective, the Afrocentric approach looks within and articulates a point of view that

is congruent with the history and culture of African and African-American people.[4]

The Afrocentric View

The Afrocentric view of masculinity places emphasis on spiritual beliefs, the importance of human relationships, and the synthesis of opposites as a way of resolving conflict. Optimal psychological functioning involves incorporating into one's daily life the practice and principles of spirituality, connectedness and interdependent living, harmony with others, and balance.

Spirituality, the first of these basic Afrocentric concepts, is symbolized by a vibrant belief that a spiritual force acts as a connecting link to all life and all beings. Spirituality gives direction, purpose, and energy to all human endeavors. Attunement to and cultivation of spirituality as the core of existence enhances individual and group well-being, healing, and actualization of human potential. Spiritual power enables one to maintain psychological equilibrium during the ups and downs of life. Soul is the essence of human beings; and soul force is fundamental to understanding the African and African-American experience. From soul force come the power, intensity, and will to survive oppression. Soul force is expressed in African and African-American art forms, sports, religion, and relationships. Soul force can provide African-American males with a sense of their own adequacy, power, resilience, and resourcefulness.

People do not exist apart from nature or each other. In Afrocentric reality, there is no separation between spiritual and material, sacred and secular, man and nature. The universe is conceived of as a spiritual totality in which all elements of the system are interconnected: the person, the family, the community, animals, plants, and inanimate objects. With spirituality as the unifying power, the goal is to achieve harmonious relations among interdependent components of the larger system. Rather than dominance and control, the emphasis is on blending in harmoniously with the flow of human and natural events.

Harmony is a central feature of African life and finds expression in all aspects of African culture. The Afrocentric worldview fosters a humanistic conception of life and relationships. The rules of living are geared toward mutual aid, collective survival, and interdependent relationships. The basic human unit is the group or tribe, not the individual person. Individual identity is part of collective identity; the

individual does not exist apart from the group. People exist to benefit one another mutually in an altruistic fashion. Because the survival of the group takes precedence over individual survival, cooperative relationships, as opposed to individualism, are encouraged. In Afrocentric philosophy, a high premium is placed on maintaining and enhancing harmonious relationships. Authentic, genuine relationships with people are valued over power, control, or acquiring material possessions. Being true to oneself and others in intimate relationships earns respect and admiration. As part of the Afrocentric masculine ideal, courting harmonious relationships can enhance mutually enriching bonds between men and women, build unity in the Black community, establish a sense of connectedness between Black males, and reduce Black-on-Black crime and violence. In the philosophy of interdependence, we are our brothers' keepers.

Whereas the Euro-American masculine ideal encourages polarities and rigid dichotomies—male/female, Black/White, conservative/liberal, proabortion/antiabortion—Afrocentric values encourage a synthesis of opposites through mediation, conciliation, and dialogue. Thinking and problem solving are based on commonalities of views. Reality involves contradictory forces, which, at the same time, are part of the whole. When Nelson Mandela and his followers took over the government in South Africa, they included their former oppressors in the new government and initiated a movement toward reconciliation. The process of moving beyond either-or thinking in order to achieve unity and completeness is not purely intellectual; harmony, spirituality, and intuition are critical components of problem solving aimed at achieving synthesis of opposites. Sometimes the truth or a workable solution to a complex problem can be sensed or felt before it can be articulated in a rational, logical fashion.

The Afrocentric frame of reference is incorporated in the seven principles of living and guides for conduct outlined in the *Nguzo Saba* value system developed by Maulana Karenga (see Chapter 5). In his *Coming of Age: The African American Male Rites-of-Passage* (1992), Paul Hill recommends that young African-American men go through modern-day rites of passage. In an extended mentorship program conducted in schools, churches, and homes and supervised by teachers, parents, and community elders, young men are taught basic Afrocentric principles, the *Nguzo Saba* value system, and the importance of community service, respect for their elders, leadership and coping skills, health care, and proper conduct in male/female

relationships. The rationale for such programs is that boys need hands-on guidance from their elders during the turbulent transition from boyhood to manhood.

For a more extensive discussion of historical interpretations and political connotations associated with the Afrocentric view, the reader should consult Molefi Asante's *The Afrocentric Idea* and Martin Bernal's *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*.

TRIOS: Time, Rhythm, Improvisation, Oral Expression, and Spirituality

A related concept of the African-American heritage of masculinity can be found in the research of the Black social psychologist James Jones.[5] Jones has taken into account five dimensions of human experience: time, rhythm, improvisation, oral expression, and spirituality—TRIOS—which represent basic ways in which individuals and cultures make decisions, organize life, establish beliefs, and derive meaning. The concept of TRIOS emerged from analysis of racial differences in sports performances, personality research in ethnic cultures, psychotherapy research on Black clients, and studies of African religions and philosophies. Jones's findings indicate that African-American males, as compared to Euro-American males, are more spiritual, emotionally expressive, gregarious, flexible, and present-oriented. His findings from TRIOS are supported by the research of other African-American psychologists, including Richard Majors, Robert Staples, and Alfred Pasteur and Ivory Toldson.

Nigrescence: The Process of Becoming Black

Since the late 1960s, African-American psychologists have been examining the development of ethnic awareness as a culturally based empowerment process that reaffirms self-worth and enhances personal efficacy in African-American men. In an African-American context, the essence of ethnic consciousness is captured by the term "Nigrescence." Nigrescence means "to become Black." It is a conversion experience or shift in Black consciousness characterized by movement through a series of psychological stages in which the person becomes more aligned with the African-American way of being. Nigrescence is a new awakening of Black consciousness, a resocialization experience that comes

about through a process of discovery and self-examination. It is a process through which a nonaligned Negro becomes a Black.[6]

As a social movement, Black consciousness has been observed in three historical periods in the United States. The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, with its concept of the "New Negro," emphasized racial consciousness and pride in literature, art, drama, dance, politics, and psychology. In the 1960s, the cry for Black power, manhood, and self-determination represented the transformation from Negro to Black. In the 1990s, we have the search for Afrocentrism.

Psychologists have discovered five stages of ethnic consciousness, representing an evolution of consciousness of the world shaped by an internalization of ethnic values, lifestyles, and cultural customs. In the first stage, the pre-encounter stage, being Black is not important in a person's life. Stage two, the encounter stage, isolates a powerful event that starts the process of transformation. In stage three, the immersion/emersion stage, a person tries to cast off his old identity and earnestly searches for authentic Blackness. Finally, he internalization and commitment stages represent a period during which the person settles into a new Afrocentric identity and makes long-term commitments in terms of who he is, what he believes, and where he is going with his life.[7]

Let's look at these five stages in more detail, using the life of Malcolm X as a guide.

The Pre-Encounter Stage

The pre-encounter stage is characterized by very little awareness of what it means to be a Black man in America. The lifestyle and the way of experiencing the world of a person at this stage reflect no preference for African-American values. The person could be a fully assimilated Black who believes that upward mobility in the corporate structure depends solely on a combination of hard work, organizational skills, intelligence, careful planning, and people skills. He just happens to be Black, but believes he will ultimately be judged on his own merit. The pre-encounter Black man could be a gang member or a drug-using street hustler who is too busy exploiting other Blacks to think about the destructive effects on himself and others. He could be a suburban Black teenager with streaks of red and green in his mohawk haircut who hangs out with punk rockers. In an extreme case, a pre-encounter Black male could harbor anti-Black attitudes; he accepts

the White racist view that Blacks are inferior and the conservative view that all major Black social problems would be resolved if Blacks adopted the White American work ethic and puritanical attitudes toward sex.

The pre-encounter view of the world, shaped in a person's youth by events in the family, community, neighborhood, and school, is difficult to change. Malcolm X's pre-encounter view of the world, for example, was formed by the assassination of his father in Lansing, Michigan, by local Whites, by the breakup of his family after his mother was committed to a mental hospital, and by the racist advice from a White teacher that Black boys should not aspire to become lawyers.

The Encounter Stage

In the encounter stage, a person experiences an event that calls into question his existing belief system. The event usually catches him off guard and raises questions about what one's life and values are all about. An assimilated corporate executive who has tried hard to be the right kind of Negro is turned down for a well-deserved promotion to senior management. Insider friends tell him, off the record, that the company is not ready for a Black in senior management; the stockholders would be uneasy. A college biology professor who has published extensively and has an excellent teaching record is turned down for tenure and promotion to full professor. A young Black punk rocker goes to college and is ridiculed by other Black students as a "weird-acting White boy." A street hustler is busted, convicted, and sent to prison, where he is confronted by Black Nationalist inmates who criticize his lifestyle.

The encounter stage has two steps: The person must consciously experience an event and his life must be profoundly affected by the event. The event can take place in the public or private arena but is ultimately personalized. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, assassination was a public event that had a profound emotional impact on many Black men. The assault on Rodney King in 1991 was a public event that evoked deep personal feelings of anger in most Black men. Although the encounter experience is generally negative, it need not be. The Million Man March on Washington in October 1995, sponsored by Louis Farrakhan, elicited feelings of pride and affirmation for Black males who were there as well as those who watched the event on television.

The encounter experience generates a wide range of emotions, which can be energizing. The assimilated Black man may feel anger for having trusted the White man. At the same time, he may feel guilty for having abandoned the Black struggle. The street Brother may feel guilt for exploiting his people and for dishonesty in his relationships with women. A Black man who has witnessed a police assault or had a family member or friend assaulted by the police may experience a sense of outrage and righteous anger. The psychic energy provided by rage and guilt triggers the motivation to start the search for a new identity. Old ideals are reexamined and new questions are asked.

Malcolm X started through the encounter experience when he was arrested and imprisoned in his youth. He was convinced that he received a longer sentence than usual because two members of his burglary gang were White females. His early years in prison were filled with unfocused anger at his guards and fellow inmates. He fought, refused to work, and spent time in solitary confinement. Gradually, his rage settled and he began to ask questions about the role of race, power, economics, and history as they affect the life of a Black man in America. Malcolm started to examine the White racism underlying the events that shaped his life and how his reactions to these events had landed him in prison. He realized, slowly and painfully, that his lifestyle was wrong in the sense that it was self-destructive and dysfunctional. His search for answers pointed him in the direction of Nigrescence.

The Immersion/Emersion Stage

The real work of the Negro-to-Black transition takes place in the immersion/emersion stage. This third stage is an in-between state where the old belief system is cast off and the new one has not fully formed. The social psychologist William Cross, one of the leading experts on Nigrescence, describes the immersion/emersion stage as the vortex of the identity-change process.[8] In the immersion phase, a person gets caught up in a furor of emotions and activities as he desperately searches for just the right kind of Black identity. He joins Black-oriented groups, shifts his reading preferences to African-American literature, and wears African-style clothes to social events and sometimes to work. He may take on an African name and give his children African names like Zaire, Kenya, or Tambusi.

His life becomes a sea of Blackness; everything he does must be related to Blackness. He engages friends and relatives in endless debates

and confrontations about the correct Black point of view in religion, art, politics, education, economics, and family life. He constantly worries about being the right kind of Black man and projecting the appropriate Black image. His friends and relatives covertly refer to him as being "Blacker than thou." In his attempts to cast off his old Negro identity and liberate himself from any trace of Whiteness, his thinking becomes either-or: Everything Black is good; everything White is bad. As part of self-imposed purification rites, he withdraws from everything White. He has romantic visions of how quickly Blacks can achieve political and economic power through revolutionary action. This immersion into Blackness is akin to religious fervor; the person expresses an undying commitment to Blackness and love for his people.

Gradually, the person enters the emersion phase, a leveling-off period during which he can gain control over the emotional intensity and frantic pace of activity accompanying the desperate search for the most authentic interpretation of Blackness and the African-American way of being. In a calm, reflective manner, he can now sort out, integrate, and consolidate the process of identity change. The person is now ready to internalize a sense of self.

In his immersion/emersion phase, Malcolm X read widely, joined the prison inmates' debating team, and held extensive conversations with his fellow prisoners about existential, political, and racial matters. He toned down his impulsive, rebellious behavior, started working toward parole, and reestablished contact with family members. He examined seriously the Black Nationalist philosophy to which he was introduced by his brother, who was a member of the Nation of Islam, the Black Muslims. And he began correspondence with the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam.

The Internalization Stage

During the internalization stage, stage four, the dissonance between the old self and the emerging African-American consciousness is resolved. The man fully integrates a Black frame of reference into his daily life. His life is now calmer and more relaxed; a quiet inner peace and strength are achieved. The person no longer has to prove constantly he is Black enough or has to confront others about the correctness of their views on Black issues. His definition of Blackness is more open and sophisticated. Simplistic either-or definitions are now inadequate. Defensiveness fades, and there is a willingness to consider

different points of view. The person feels revitalized and changed. The new sense of Blackness is grounded in affiliations with African-American professional and community groups working constructively for social change. The person's values and cultural style are deeply rooted in the African-American heritage. He feels connected spiritually and psychologically.

Once internalization is achieved, there is no longer a need to rely on supermacho behavior, womanizing, drug use, or other forms of maladaptive coping to deal with the frustrations of institutional racism. Blackness provides a buffer against the psychological effects of racism. A psychological protective strategy emerges that involves an awareness that racism is part of American life, that no Black man is so special that he cannot be a target of racism. When confronted with institutional or individual acts of racism, the person is able to employ a flexible set of coping mechanisms. He knows when to confront, assert, negotiate, or engage in diplomatic problem solving and when to withdraw and fight another day. He is better able to decide when the system is to blame as opposed to when a setback is due to his own irresponsible behavior. If a college student receives a poor grade because he did not study, he cannot put the blame on the instructor. If the course was about urban political science and didn't contain a section on politics in the Black community, rather than flunk the course because of quiet resentment, the student, along with other Black classmates, could approach the instructor and negotiate changes to include coverage of Black politics. In the internalization stage, a spiritual orientation becomes part of coping strategies. Spirituality reduces the tendency to get caught up in bitterness, rage, and unproductive demonizing of all White people.

According to Bailey Jackson, as a person begins to feel more secure in the internalization stage, he can sort out those features of Euro-American culture and masculinity that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. Rather than condemning all aspects of Euro-American culture, he can reject sexism, racism, oppressive poverty, and imperialism, while at the same time accepting hard work, responsibility, logical thinking, and planning ahead. These values are combined with an Afrocentric emphasis on spirituality, harmonious relationships, synthesis of opposites, and interdependence. Integrating the positive aspects of Euro-American society with Afrocentric values fosters a bicultural orientation that allows the person to work constructively with Whites.[9]

The Internalization-Commitment Stage

The internalization-commitment stage is a long-term extension of the psychological transformation. The person is now secure enough in his commitment to the African-American way of being to become involved in long-term efforts to change the system and help others. Personal identity is complete, and he can pursue concrete actions individually and through organizations to create a more humanistic society. A multicultural orientation develops as the person begins to see similarities between the struggles of Blacks, women, and other groups.

During his internalization stage, Malcolm X came under the tutelage of Elijah Muhammad and joined the Muslim faith. After his discharge from prison in 1952, he became a minister in charge of the Muslim mosque in Detroit. Subsequently, he was given a prized assignment as minister of New York's Harlem mosque, where he became the national spokesperson for the Nation of Islam. He was often quoted in newspapers, spoke at colleges and universities across the country, and appeared on TV news shows and debate programs. Mike Wallace's exposé on the Black Muslims, entitled *The Hate That Hate Produced*, featured Malcolm X as the organization's prime mover. After a break with Elijah Muhammad, and a trip to Mecca during the last year of his life, Malcolm X renounced Black separatism and the blind hatred of all Whites as devils and was moving in a multicultural direction.

Recycling

Thomas Parham, a brilliant young Black psychologist, has added the concept of "recycling" to Nigrescence.[10] As new challenges and crises emerge during adult life, a person who has already achieved Black consciousness may recycle through one or more of the stages of Nigrescence. New issues can trigger a reexamination and a refocusing of values, leading to a deeper involvement in one or more elements of the African-American experience. The rise, fall, and resurrection of Marion Barry is a case in point.

Case Example: The Fall and Resurrection of Marion Barry

Marion Barry was born in 1936 to a family of Black sharecroppers in Itta Beta, Mississippi. As an infant, his mother carried him in a sack as she picked cotton. His father was not in the picture during

his childhood. Barry attended a predominantly Black college in Tennessee, where he became involved in the civil rights movement. A brilliant student, he gave up an opportunity to earn a doctorate in chemistry in the 1960s at the University of Kansas. Instead, he chose to continue working with the movement as chairman and fundraiser for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In the 1970s, he worked as a community activist in low-income neighborhoods in Washington, D.C. Subsequently, he was elected to the city council and thereafter served three terms as mayor.[11] In 1990, he was driven from office in an FBI sting operation that showed videotapes of Barry in a hotel room with a woman other than his wife and lighting up a crack cocaine pipe. After a brief prison term, he surprised his critics by being reelected to his old city council seat, and in 1994, he was reelected mayor.

Somewhere along the line as an adult, Barry fell into a pattern of dysfunctional masculinity that involved alcoholism, drug use, and womanizing, behavior that was well known in both Black and White circles in Washington. When confronted about his behavior, he engaged in denial or accused newspaper reporters and TV commentators of racist bias. When he was arrested and imprisoned, he was forced to reexamine his beliefs and behaviors. During his recovery phase, he discovered a deeper level of spiritual redemption within. He remembered the voices from small Black churches in Itta Beta saying that redemptive suffering could be cleansing: "If a man falls by the side of God, he shall rise again. . . . I have never seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed beg bread. . . . Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound . . . I once was lost, but now I'm found." Whites castigated the Black community for reelecting a man of his vices. What they failed to understand was the redemptive power of the African-American ethos: Any man may fall but the test of life is whether he will seek spiritual redemption and, with the Grace of God, grow and mature through suffering.

Marion Barry's rise, fall, and redemption illustrate that life is like going up and down a spiral staircase that we traverse again and again at different elevations. We retrace many areas we have already traveled. New challenges and crises make us question who we are, questions that need to be resolved by reviewing, reorganizing, and renewing our identity.

Euro-American Masculinity: New Perspectives

In the wake of the harsh portrayal of the Euro-American masculine ideal as fostering blind ambition, destructive competition, sexism, and psychological isolation from self and others, White men are being encouraged to expand the meaning of masculinity. Three major ideas for redefining the Euro-American masculine ideal emerge in the writings and speeches of social psychologists, gender experts, and leaders of the men's movement—a loosely affiliated network of predominantly Euro-Americans.

First, the positive features of traditional Euro-American masculinity should be retained. Logical thinking, leadership, assertiveness, responsibility, and decision making are psychologically healthful, admirable strengths. Second, the excessive power seeking, competition, individualism, and domination of others that have led to oppression, in the form of racism, sexism, and male-dominated patriarchal hierarchies, should be eliminated. Third, the meaning of masculinity needs to be expanded to include expressive behaviors and spirituality. Men need to tune in to the inner self and learn to feel comfortable with expressive human characteristics like nurturance, affection, intimacy, empathy, compassion, and affiliation. Comfort with expressing and receiving compassion can become the basis of the long process of resolving conflicts with ethnic minorities. Finally, Euro-American men need to learn to turn to each other for emotional support, understanding, counsel, and spiritual affirmation.

The men's movement encourages men to move toward definitions of masculinity that allow access to such expressive traits. Groups associated with the movement, such as NOMAS (National Organization for Men Against Sexism), the Texas Men's Center, and the Sons of Orpheus, coordinate activities and dispense information. NOMAS encourages men to work not just to change themselves and other men but also to change social, political, and economic institutions that create unequal distributions of power across racial and gender lines.[12]

Hundreds of men's groups around the country—in 1991 there were 163 in the Northeast alone—sponsor conferences, workshops, retreats, and gatherings devoted to men's issues.[13] The men's movement issues a newsletter and two national quarterlies. The newsletter, *Man's Awareness Network,* is a regularly updated directory of publications, activities, and organizations prepared by a rotating group of men's centers. *Wingspan* (a free publication) and *Man* are the quarterlies, with

circulations of 125,000 and 3,500, respectively. Some of the popular authors associated with the men's movement and their books are listed below:

Goldberg, Herb. (1980). *The New Male: From Self-Destruction to Self-Care.* New York: New American Library.

Farrell, Warren. (1986). *Why Men Are the Way They Are: The Male/Female Dynamic.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Goldberg, Herb. (1987). *The Inner Male: Overcoming Roadblocks to Intimacy.* New York: New American Library.

Bly, Robert. (1990). *Iron John: A Book About Men.* New York: Addison-Wesley.

Keen, Sam. (1991). *Fire in the Belly: On Being a Man.* New York: Bantam.

Farrell, Warren. (1993). *The Myth of Male Power.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Hicks, Robert. (1993). *The Masculine Journey: Understanding the Six Stages of Manhood.* Colorado Springs, CO: Nav Press Books.

Connell, Robert. (1995). *Masculinities.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Levant, Ronald, and Pollack, William, eds. (1995). *A New Psychology of Men.* New York: Basic Books.

Kimmel, Michael, and Messner, Michael, eds. (1998). *Men's Lives,* 4th ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Pollack, William. (1998). *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood.* New York: Random House.

In men-only conferences, workshops, retreats, psychological growth groups, and other gatherings sponsored by organizations affiliated with the movement, White males are struggling to get in touch with their lives and reach out to other men to build relationships based on sharing, empathy, and mutual support. Using a mix of ancient rituals and modern psychological growth tools, they are trying to

overcome cultural taboos against revealing emotions and showing vul-
nerabilities. In the chanting, hollering, drumming, dancing, and pray-
ing that goes on at weekend retreats and camp outings, many men ex-
perience an emotional catharsis that frees them from the loneliness
and spiritual alienation of modern life. In face-to-face groups men
learn to replace verbal one-upmanship and verbal competition with
active listening techniques such as paraphrasing, summarizing, and
clarifying. They are encouraged to talk about feelings and relation-
ships rather than sexual conquests, athletics, cars, or occupational
achievements. The underlying assumption guiding these groups is that
men can only learn to be men and experience the awareness of what it
means to be a male by being in touch with other men. Through gen-
uine sharing, honoring, acclamation, and reassurance, one can sort
out what it means to be an emotionally healthy man in the postmod-
ern era.[14] Indeed, in trying to discover new dimensions of masculinity
and to expand their consciousness of what it means to be a whole
human being, perhaps Euro-American males should take a look at the
Afrocentric masculine ideal.