

# BCC Leaders: Wage Cultural War Through Afrocentricity

By Renee Alexander  
Ink Staff Writer

Black Cultural Centers on college campuses must wage a cultural war with an arsenal of self-knowledge.

This was the sentiment of speakers at The Second National Conference of the National Association of Black Cultural Centers at Ohio State University Nov. 7-9.

"We are fighting a cultural war," keynote speaker Asa Hilliard III, professor of Urban Education at Georgia State University, told an audience of over 200 African-American students and faculty representing over 12 universities and colleges.

Hilliard's speech was one of many which emphasized this year's theme: "The Role of Afrocentricity in the Development of Students of Color: The Challenge of Cultural Centers in the United States."

For students in attendance, the conference was a learning experience. Aside from leaving with an afrocentric view of self, students also left with an afrocentric view of Black Cultural Centers.

"One of the major purposes of Black Cultural Centers is to reject the cultural genocide that the Europeans have placed upon us, as black people," said Trisha Merchant, one of four UNC students in attendance.

Also attending the three-day conference were freshman Renée

Alexander, sophomore Denise Matthewson and senior Michelle Thomas. The students, members of the UNC-CH Black Cultural Center Advisory Board, were accompanied by Margo Crawford, director of the Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center.

For students, the conference was a learning experience.

Aside from learning about the purpose of Black Cultural Centers, participants also learned that the back bone of Black Cultural Centers is Afrocentricity.

According to Molefi Asante, head of Temple University's Afro-American Studies Department, Afrocentricity must be defined, internalized, critique and lived by

African-Americans.

"Afrocentricity is the belief in the centrality of Africans in post modern history which can best be understood as encompassing three basic themes: It (Afrocentricity) is a liberating of ideology; It transcends the theoretical and is grounded in the practical lives and experiences of Africans globally; and It is pluralism without hierarchy," Asante said.

While many agree with Asante, some are divided on whether to refer to the term as "Afro"centricity or "Afri"centricity.

UNC sophomore Denise Matthewson prefers the latter.

"Afrocentricity as opposed to Africentricity is a difference in

semantics," she said. "However, the 'fri' (free) of Africentricity stresses the freedom of the mind."

Despite which term one chooses to identify with, both serve the purpose of priding African-Americans with a strong sense of self and an Afrocentric view, which they are able to take and put to practical use at their respective universities. This was both the focus and the challenge of the weekend.

According to Asante, African Americans are one of the most displaced groups in history—culturally, geographically, and psychologically. The aim of Afrocentricity

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## Pawns Have No Business With Microphones

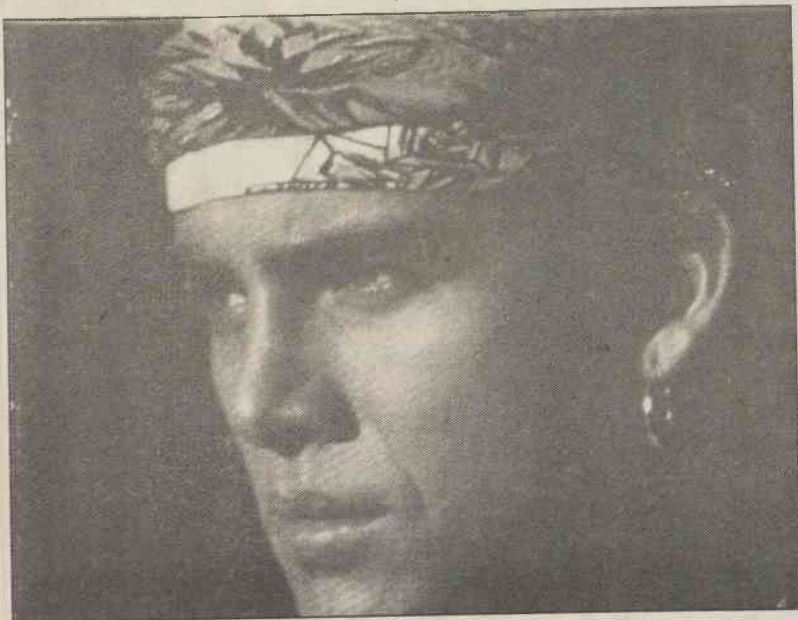
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an outsider in the hip hop community and will never get any respect because of the plastic mask of toughness he hides under. He never should have tried to fake what has to come from the heart.

Gerardo is another example of a pawn. He's been placed into the world of rap simply because there haven't been any successful Hispanics in hip hop and he was/is supposed to fill those ranks. There's no way that suckers like these have any business with a mic in their hands. We need to learn how to separate the "wanna be's" from the "real McCoys."

### CONCLUSION:

When all is said and done, mainstream sounds will still continue to be heavily influenced by the jazz, soul, and hip hop industries. After all, many of the innovations made in music are made first in the latter three categories. It is time for pop musicians and their listeners to begin acknowledging that other music forms are making contributions to the style and direction that all contemporary music is taking.



Rico yes, Suave No

## GLORIA NAYLOR

Author of Mama Day and The Women of Brewster Place  
will speak  
at Memorial Hall  
on November 13, 1991  
at 8 pm

