

DEDICATED TO **N.M.** AND **H.R**

# The N-Word Manifesto

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Interpreting Mark Twain via an Inspiration 'Made in Germany'

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*No, I wouldn't consent to my daughter's marrying a nigger,  
 but that doesn't prevent my treating a black man fairly.*  
 James Weldon Johnson

*Whut do Ah want wid some trashy nigger out de streets?*  
 Zora Neale Hurston

The human capacity to injure other people has always been  
 much greater than its ability to imagine other people.  
The Difficulty of Imagining Other Persons  
 Elaine Scarry

How often during one's lifetime might they find themselves laughing at just having heard the “Other” calling them, nigger? Nonetheless, in the fall of 2007, seven years ago to be exact, a most profound encounter inspired me as none other had. I was called by an old contact at the Together Temp service in Charlottenburg and offered a chance to work as a Teacher Assistant at the Helmuth James von Moltke Schule in Berlin.

After a couple of interviews and the clearance of a police background check, I reported to Frau Miller that first week in October of 2006, optimistic that I was the right guy for the job. Frau Miller was certified by the state to teach art classes, yet due to the shortage of Germans who qualified as English teachers, she'd dared to take on the challenge of teaching English to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders at the middle school.

There sprung out of nowhere, this urgency to fill some six hundred vacancies in the Brandenburg district, alone. News spread like wildfire among those foreign residents living in Germany: if you were from a country where English was your “official language” you were

being pursued to teach English fulltime, even if you hadn't a bachelor's degree in English. All one needed was a university degree. That is to imply: engineers, architects, lawyers, dishwashers, bus-boys, bellhops; they were all lining up at the *Arbeitsamt*:<sup>1</sup> Aussies, Swedes, Danes, British, Americans, Canadians, South Africans, and even Argentinians: get the picture? Fulltime. What had led to this sudden influx of employment? Of course, it was the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

Unfortunately, I had no degree(s). But I had that one contact, that one connection to Frau Rumsauer and her belief in my teaching skills. No, I wasn't at all uncomfortable with the opportunity before me. I'd been trained to teach ESL at The Berlitz Language School and had worked there for six months back in 1987. Furthermore, I had been employed for several years as an acting instructor in West Berlin: I had taught young adults: in theaters, in acting conservatories, and in private schools. Then too, I had been allowed to work as a volunteer parent; that was, to teach ESL (on and off over a period of five years), at the prestigious John F. Kennedy International School.

As Frau Miller and I walked toward the classroom, I was told that there were three Russians, four Poles, three Turks, one Lebanese, two Jordanians, and eight Germans amid the lot of 4<sup>th</sup> graders I'd be assisting Frau Miller with. "The children have been so excited about your arrival the entire week," Frau Miller said upon opening the door. Then, this eerie echo erupted from the right side of the room. I couldn't absorb the class in its entirety. I had to look at the area where the voice had just mesmerized my senses into a moment of gleam that would have insulted many others. Laughter imploded in the classroom. Then, there stood before me this superb, wheat-complexion replica of the Pillsbury Doughboy, the prototype of a Kebab-stuffed Arab kid, ten-years old and already his belly bouncing towards obesity, with his Dallas Cowboy's t-shirt swaggering out from his baggy trousers.

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<sup>1</sup> Unemployment Office

Had he really said what I thought he had said? His hands raised up in the air caught somewhere between a pumped-fist, signifying an athletics' Black Power protests in Mexico and an outreached arm that was about to salute a fellow Hitler Youth, he yelled yet again: "*Yo, my nigga, waz up!*"

Instantly, Frau Miller rushed toward him, grabbing his arm, and yanking it in total disbelief. He smirked a bit, embarrassed, while the two Turkish boys bellowed repeatedly, *Yeah, my nigga, my nigga! My nigga waz up!!!*

*Verdammt mal! Genuf, genuf! Es ist total Quatsch...!*<sup>2</sup> Screamed Frau Miller, her face blushed as red as roses.

"What's his name," I intervened.

"Daniel! He knows better. They all do!"

"Hey, look Daniel. How's your English? Can you understand me?" He nodded that he could. So, I feel I have the dubious honor of addressing Daniel in a manner befitting his M-TV connectedness to American culture, and, proceed with: "Look, I *feel* you. I think I know where you're coming from. But dig this. If you ever happen to find yourself walking up Broadway sometime in the next couple of years and, in particular, if you're with your father...please do me a favor right this minute and promise me that you won't go running up and down the streets of Harlem...yelling out...*yo my nigger...my nigger...my nig...!* to every other black guy you see in New York. You know why?" He looked a bit puzzled that I was laughing in tears. "I'll tell you why: your father won't be flying back with you to Berlin because you are going to have a dead father if you go screaming this sort of brotherhood to strangers like this in America. I'm one of the liberal Americans. I can handle it. But most Americans, especially Black Americans will not be able to handle it. Understand me?" That he did understand me eased my contempt

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<sup>2</sup> Darn it! Enough! Enough! That's total nonsense...

even more. But immediately the tiniest child in the room, a Russian girl by the name of Vera, came to my tailcoat, pulled it, and giggled out “nigger.” I rolled my eyes at her and she laughed yet again. She repeated the word. Frau Miller insisted, they’d be punished if they said the word again. She explained that this was not displaying proper manners and that she was not going to be as forgiving as I had been. Then, without missing a beat, she told me that in September the children had heard an audio version of Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

I can admit this little episode did not annoy me as much as many would probably have wanted it to. This was obviously one of the very few English words the children knew off the top of their heads. And many of them probably didn’t even know that that word existed before that day. There were a few belligerent stares from a couple of the girls who felt Daniel and Vera were tactless in behaving as they had. But, for Daniel and Vera, it was their one way of signifying that they’d made at least one association to an English word which they felt was relevant to the moment at hand. They were standing in front of a nigger, Negro, black, a man of color, an American they could identify as the “nigga”; even, perhaps, their signifying that they were relating to the previous weeks of learning a little something about Nigger Jim.

This incident, alone, helped me understand just how readily it was for whites, especially centuries ago, to refer to anyone of African descent as *niggers*. In both the prose of Whites and Blacks the word nigger was commonplace. Our noblest of colonial Americans: Franklin, Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Fuller—even Stowe, Melville, Whitman, and Edgar Allen Poe—seemed discreet regarding any carelessness of N-word references to their Negro characters (and Black cats). On the contrary, other authors, writing in and out of the slavery narratives, found it commonplace to use nigger as often as they used the word “negro.”

Over a hundred years ago, Mark Twain wrote, “I write from the grave, that I know I will be long dead and gone, when my words are finally read and understood.” Today, or should I say in our era, the editing out of the N-word throughout Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn* has led to a censorship of art that is surely one of the most unjustly acts proposed on literature since the omission of the female tales associated within the Apocrypha scrolls. It is an insult to the intellect and humility of Samuel Clemens that “Twain’s writing” has been revised as it has. The robot references to the *other* are irrelevant to the crux of abuse and injustice weighed upon the Black males Twain was able to respectfully mention in his literature at the time. He could have chosen not to mention the “negro” at all, but Twain felt it his duty as an author, humanitarian, and social critic to not exclude such characters from his art and commentary; and, also, as Faulkner and Conrad, and at intervals Hemingway, did. “The brilliance of *Huckleberry Finn* is that it is the argument it raises” (Introduction, 2), Morrison writes in *The Oxford Mark Twain* edition of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Having myself been wrongly ousted from presenting plays at the Amerika Culture Haus Berlin in 1995, and, thus, becoming starkly misinterpreted as a writer—that is, when I actually *rebuked* one of my Black female characters for being anti-Semitic in the realm of addressing anti-Semitism in urban America in a play I wrote called “Women Of Interest”—, I myself was viewed as anti-Semitic and was, thereupon, prohibited from producing any further workshops at that particular cultural venue. It took some five years before some Jewish leaders in Berlin would sit down with me and take the time to pardon me for their misinterpretation of the work. Once they’d taken time to read that aforementioned play in its entirety, they accepted my intentions had been nobler. (I have since looked deeper into the private letters, notebooks, and journals of

authors to determine their humanity and humility before accessing any sort of “ethnic” judgment on them as individuals.)

For example, one finds in Henry Miller’s letter to June Smith and Anis Nin a display of humanity Miller intentionally refuses to show in his prose. Equally, though one might argue that Clemens was of an ambiguous mind-set of the post-colonial, post-white-supremacist heteronormative of his times, I find it hard to accept that Clemens was a racist. In a letter addressed to W. D. Howells and his wife on August 25, 1877, Clemens wrote a rather oblong letter on behalf of a courageous fleet one of the neighboring “negroes,” John T. Lewis had accomplished:

Lewis has worked mighty hard and remained mighty poor. At the end of each whole year’s toil he can’t show a gain of fifty dollars. He had borrowed money of the Cranes till he owed them \$700—and he being conscientious and honest, imagine what it was to him to have to carry this stubborn, helpless load year in and year out.

Well, sunset came, and Ida the young and comely (Charles Langdon’s wife) and her little Julia and the nurse Nora drove out at the gate behind the new gray horse and started down the long hill, the high carriage receiving its load under the porte cochère. Ida was seen to turn her face toward us across the fence and intervening lawn. Theodore waved good-bye to her, for he did not know that her sign was a speechless appeal for help.

The next moment Livy said, “Ida’s driving too fast [downhill]!” She followed it with a sort of scream, “Her horse is running away!”

We could see two hundred yards down that descent. The buggy seemed to fly. It would strike obstructions and apparently spring the height of a man from the ground.

Theodore and I left the shrieking crown behind and ran down the hill bare-headed and shouting. A neighbor appeared at his gate—a tenth of a second too late!—the buggy vanished past him like a thought.

Clemens explains that he knew Ida would be dead once he did arrive to the site he envisioned her being overthrown.

But when I got amongst that bunch, there sat Ida in her buggy and nobody hurt, not even the horse or the vehicle. Ida was pale but serene. As I came tearing down, she smiled back over her shoulders at me and said, “Well, we’re alive yet, aren’t we?” A miracle had been performed—nothing else.

You see, Lewis, the prodigious, humped upon his front seat, had been toiling up on his load of manure. He saw the frantic horse plunging down the hill toward him on a full gallop, throwing his heels as high as a man’s head at every jump. So Lewis turned his team diagonally across the road just at the “turn,” thus making a V with the fence. The running horse could not escape that, but must enter it. Then Lewis sprang to the ground and stood in this V. He gathered his vast strength, and with a perfect Creedmoor aim he seized the gray horse’s bit as he plunged by and fetched him up standing!

I have only written here but half of that which Clemens writes exhaustingly of the incident. He is full of infallible excitement and support about what all Lewis’s bravery symbolizes to him. Furthermore, Clemens clarifies, in detail, how the debt of \$700 was canceled by the Cranes because of Lewis’s heroics. And, Clemens explains, with much praise for Lewis’s character, just how noteworthy a being Lewis was to have had this honor bestowed upon him. It is written by a man appreciative (and loving) of every aspect of life and God’s gifts to that existence of the human being. This is but only a small sample toward Twain’s humanity. Sure, the young Clemens “loved the minstrel show.” He loved the dramatics of the *show* as an art, not an ethnical, framework, and even if he did confess there was nothing like a “real nigger show,” who is to judge that this was but his way of mockery and cynicism toward those who attempted to duplicate the authenticity of this art form, this musicality, the Negro slaves had mastered. Was

this not, juxtaposed to Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weil’s creation of “Die Dreigroschen Opera,”<sup>3</sup> an evolution of the American musical itself? Rightfully, Ron Powers, from the onset of his biography *Mark Twain A Life*, argues “No one who knew him [Twain], including Frederick Douglass, ever accused him of animosity or condescension to the Negro race. Far from embracing the Bible defense of slavery, he disdained biblical interpretation in general, gravitating as a young man toward egalitarian Enlightenment-derived ideas, such as those of Tom Paine” (Power, pp. 11-14). Noting that it’s senseless for us to get all caught up on the political correctness of previous authors, Toni Morrison declares: “If you take that word out, the book collapses. It’s very important for Huck to be in the company of a slave who is also a male and an adult. Jim has to be someone that an orphan, a kid from the streets, can feel superior to. That’s a nigger” (*The Times*).

In recent years leaders of the NAACP<sup>4</sup> have not sought to defend Mark Twain the way previous national members and black intellectuals—which included a distinguish list of supporters: W.E.B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, William Dean Howells, Sterling Brown, Jesse Fauset and Ralph Ellison—had defended him. It appears that the “new separatist doctrines,” in wake of the aftermath of influences mused by a post-Baldwin mistrust of white American authors and the post-Black Arts Movement consciousness, has emerged this targeting of Twain, Faulkner, and even Hemingway as “racists.” Yet, Neal’s agenda was that “The Black Arts Movement eschews protest literature.” On the contrary, much protest of mainstream literature has evolved since Neal’s words were corroborated in the ‘60s. Unfortunately, Francis E. Rivers and Donald Bogle (Marshburne, 4), did not have Mark Twain’s *Autobiography* at their disposal as we do.

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<sup>3</sup> Three Penny Opera

<sup>4</sup> National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Maybe James Weldon Johnson and other NAACP members critiquing Twain at the time did not even take the time to read, decipher, and interpret Twain's "King Leopold Soliloquy" correctly. Perhaps they were too judgmental and suspicious of all that Twain wrote on race. It is in this stark satire that Twain reveals the disturbing psyche of this king and attacks him without inhibition. In this soliloquy, alone, Twain puts his life and reputation at risk. But only after reading Twain's *Autobiography* does one learn that on several occasions he was adamant about attacking and exposing King Leopold's corruption in the Congo Republic. Every time any sort of forum arrived which enabled Twain to inform Americans of Leopold's wrong-doings, he was warned that such rebukes of the Belgium king were unacceptable. At least twice, Theodore Roosevelt intervened, challenging Clemens to understand that his actions would not be serving America's best interests, abroad or at home. I find it to be an inexplicably bold and courageous position for any white man to place themselves in; in particular, inasmuch as being a white man living in an era as racially delicate as that era was. Now we as readers can connect the dots to Twain's outrage toward Leopold's atrocities. We can readily comprehend Twain's rebukes against the Belgian king and his reproaching of America's government for not taking a stand to defend England's position against Belgium's treatment of the Congo's indigenous people at the time.

King Leopold II of Belgium—probably the most intensely Christian monarch, except Alexander VI, that has escaped hell thus far—has stolen an entire kingdom in Africa, and in fourteen years of Christian endeavor there has reduced the population of thirty million to fifteen, by murder, mutilation, overwork, robbery, rapine—confiscating the helpless native's very labor, and giving him nothing in return but salvation and a home in heaven, furnished at the last moment by the Christian priest. (Vol. 2, 134)

Twain wrote, within these two volumes of his *Autobiography*, a forthright disapproval against Leopold's reign in the Congo. Even if his position does not come across convincingly in his soliloquy, in his autobiography Twain posits an honesty and courage which questions the atrocities among both the Jews in Russia<sup>5</sup> and the indigenous populace in Congo, which merits this recognition of moral greatness. Inside this epic artifact, Mark Twain left civilization his ineffable humanity. Although we had to wait a hundred years to hear from him, these are thoughts not only rendered by one of America's greatest authors, I would dare admit that such words help unveil America's greatest humanitarian.

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Meanwhile, one might recall, Eugene O'Neill and *The Provincetown Players* were harshly criticized by many among the Harlem Renaissance, and the public, at large, for "The Emperor Jones" in 1920; that is, until W. E. B. Du Bois acknowledged that at least O'Neill was repeatedly willing to see that Blacks did *exist* on the American stage. This was something no other White playwrights and producers of his era were willing to do. And, as Ridgely Torrence and Emily Hapgood had done, three years earlier, with their three one-act plays, "The Rider of Dreams," "Simon the Cyrenean," and "Granny Maumee" receiving accolades for the dignity in their characters, O'Neill dared to put *real* Blacks on the stage. Sometimes his characters didn't prove to be the most dignified of Blacks, yet Du Bois felt Blacks should be grateful for the fact that O'Neill was recognizing that they existed after all.

Ironically, besides Hemingway and Faulkner, two other essential American writers have been viewed as racists because of their authentic use of the N-word. Thomas Wolfe and Henry Miller are the two writers I am making reference to. It took the German newspapers *Berliner*

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<sup>5</sup> "The anti-Jewish riots in Kishinev, Bessarabia, are worse than the Censor will permit to publish.... The dead number 120, and the injured about 500" (e.g., see, *Autobiography*: Vol. 1, 185).

*Tage[s]-blatt*,<sup>6</sup> to point out Wolfe as being a man of “gigantic youth...free of prejudice and not selfish or conceited...” (Kennedy). And in so being a man “free of prejudice,” with regard to his boldness of a critique on racism in Asheville, North Carolina, via his play *Niggertown*,<sup>7</sup> I confirm here and now that Wolfe was wrongly accused as being a racist. Moreover, I have felt this to be a harsh judgment on his genius since reading his brilliant novella, “I Have a Thing to Tell You” some fifteen years ago. A racist could never write such a tale. It was an untimely misfortune that Wolfe died a year after the novella’s publication in the *New Republic*. Not only was Wolfe prohibited from entering Germany again, he was dead [Apparently by way of having contacted tuberculosis. Still, to this day, I ask myself, “How medically (or scientifically) stark might the Nazis’ *intelligence* network throughout North America have been?”], and thereupon, not able to continue his rebuke of Hitler’s perpetration of Jews in Germany. Now historians might comprehend how important his eyewitness account was.

Subsequently, to paraphrase one of the most rewarding passages in American literature, a passage Congress censored and prohibited from publication for over thirty years—but hardly a passage ever brought to light by way of any socio-political-analysis, if but due to the fear of critics being accused of political incorrectness—is this frame in Henry Miller’s novel *Tropic of Capricorn*, when Miller approaches a “darky” in the South. As Miller advances, he states that there exists a poisonous hatred among the niggers in the South; *and this nigger’s poison is destroying the South*. My guess is this must be the mid-to-late 1920s when such thoughts are coming together for his inevitable 1939 publications in France and Germany:

*I felt truly ashamed of myself, of my country, my race, my epoch....*

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<sup>6</sup> Published on August 5, 1936 (see: p. 64) *Thomas Wolfe Interviewed, 1929—1938*, ed. Magi and Walser

<sup>7</sup> It has always been my opinion that he made a big mistake when he felt pressured to change the title to *Welcome to Our City...*

*A few days back I passed the imaginary line which divides the North from the South. I wasn't aware of it until a darky came along driving a team; when he gets alongside of me he stands up in his seat and doffs his hat most respectfully. He had snow-white hair and a face of great dignity. That made me fell horrible: it made me realize that there are still slaves. This man had to tip his hat to me—because I was of the white race. Whereas I should have tipped my hat to him! I should have saluted him as a survivor of all the vile tortures the white men have inflicted on the black. I should have tipped my hat first, to let him know that I am not a part of this system, that I am begging forgiveness for all my white brethren who are too ignorant and cruel to make an honest overt gesture. Today I feel their eyes on me all the time; they watch from behind doors, from behind trees. All very quiet, very peaceful, seemingly. Nigger never say nuthin'. Nigger he hum all time. White man think nigger learn his place. Nigger learn nuthin.'* (308-309)

After reading the aforementioned lines, I rushed to the library at the Free University's John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies and embarked on Miller's journals and letters to Anaïs Nin, finding myself reading glorious passages like this one:

I can't say enough about the country itself—it's beautiful. So different from the impression you get in the train. But life is nil.

Exception—first—was in walking thru Negro district here in Wash. First sign of life! Tried to enter a café and they wouldn't let us in. I like that too. That's what they ought to do in Harlem. Washington is Nigger Heaven, they say. (Miller letters, 205)

In the summer of 1984, some seven months upon my arrival to Berlin, a group of Germans whom I befriended introduced me to Miller's *The Rosy Crucifixion* and *Tropic of Capricorn* and gave me one of my greatest literary possessions. I had viewed Miller's watercolors on every other street corner of the eastside during my two years in Manhattan, but never had I correlated this painter to any prominent literary figure; yet, it was indeed embarking upon my

“Berlin Years” a few months afterwards—and not too far removed from the scent of the Trump chocolate factory near a *Wohngemeinschaft* in the Neukölln district—that I discovered Henry Miller and became inspired to newer heights as a reader. One may find few better critics of the French as artists and authors than that which Miller is in *Tropic of Cancer*.

Decades before the publication of Erica Jong’s brilliant biography on Miller, *The Devil at Large*, I’d accepted many blacks and feminists alike were wrong about Henry Miller. (Truth is, if, Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer* and *Tropic of Capricorn* had been published in America in the late 1930s—as they had been so published in Europe—I am convinced his work would have thrust the civil rights movement a decade or two in advance of itself.) I praise the fact that Erica Jong came along those last few years of Miller’s life and honored him so boldly as she did; however, my point is this; it is unfortunate that we have become so political correct in this society, insofar as to display this sort of insolence toward Mark Twain, who is arguably one of the world’s greatest writers, and it is our culture that suffers most from such isolated impudence. If we allow our literary talents (whether dead or alive) to be so artlessly misrepresented by such reckless and incongruous censorship, then might we as well take out the *niggers* in Harriet Jacobs, Kate Choplin, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Richard Wright, James Baldwin, William Faulkner, Joseph Conrad, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jean Genet, Jean Toomer, Wallace Thurman, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Nella Larsen, Zora Neale Hurston (with her hilariously humorous “lap-legged nigger[s]”), and the rest of the Harlem Renaissance crew laying enthusiastically in their graves attuned to ZZ Parker’s *niggers* with their bad-ass, eye-balling belligerence spouting far beyond the ivy of Yale’s Commons Hall! Oh, and, as we hear incessantly in our national debates, what about all the glorification of the N-word that our culture has vaulted into the marketing of Gangsta Rap?

In the novel *Banjo*, following a black foreigner's encounter with police brutality in southern France—of all places, right—here is Claude McKay at his best, in 1927:

But a black man, even though educated, was in closer biological kinship to the swell of primitive earth life. And maybe his apparent failing under the organization of the modern world was the real strength that preserved him from becoming the thing that was the common white creature of it.

Ray had found that to be educated, black and his instinctive self was something of a big job to put over. In the large cities of Europe he had often met with educated Negroes out for a good time with heavy literature under their arms. They toted these books to protect themselves from being hailed everywhere as minstrel niggers, croons, funny monkeys for the European audience—because the general European idea of the black man is that he is a public performer. Some of them wore hideous parliamentary clothes as close as ever to the pattern of the most correctly gray respectability. He had remarked wiry students and Negroes doing clerical work wearing glasses that made them sissy-eyed. He learned, on inquiry, that wearing glasses was a mark of scholarship and respectability differentiating them from the common types.... (Perhaps the police would respect the glasses) [323].

I challenge readers acquaint themselves with one of the starkest novels I have ever read. I challenge readers to find a copy of James Michener's *The Drifters*. I would go as far as to say Cato Jackson, "a literate, well-mannered young man of extreme vitality and charm" (Michener, 163), is the most compelling black characters in post-World War II literature. One will find oneself reading the most auspicious post-Twain epic ever written. Unfortunately, that positive image alone makes Cato, as a Black male, considerably unmarketable in American society. And, there, between the sociopolitical heartlessness of Boston and Marrakech, Michener's six out-

casts cultivate a truth that frightens Hollywood—and, possibly, the Middle East—till this day. Ultimately, as Freud exclaims concerning the racial hostilities of men:

Anyone who calls to mind the atrocities committed during the racial migrations or the invasions of the Huns, or by the people known as Mongols under Jenghiz Khan and Tamerlane, or at the capture of Jerusalem by the pious Crusaders, or even, indeed, the horrors of the recent World War<sup>8</sup>—anyone who calls these things to mind will have to bow humbly before the truth of this view.

The existence of this inclination to aggression, which we can detect in ourselves and justly assume to be present in others, is the factor which disturbs our relations with our neighbors and which forces civilization into such a high expenditure [of energy]. In consequence of this primary mutual hostility of human beings, civilized society is perpetually threatened with disintegration. (69)

Like Plautus' *Asinaria*, St. Augustine, Bardach, Voltaire, Pasternak and Freud observed: One subject we can historicize is, indeed, this one: *Homo homini lupus*.<sup>9</sup> As long as men exist there will exist aggression. As long as men exist there will exist wars, as well as the economics and “technology of war” (Foucault, 137). As long as men exist violence amongst those who make up the agencies of “otherness” will prevail overtly and subversively, and in every corner of the globe, that is, within a logistical framework of violence which will stimulate the existence and usage of the N-word. “It is as managers of life and survival, of bodies and the race, that so many regimes have been able to wage so many wars, causing so many men to be killed” (Foucault, 137). I believe that not until we can decrease such agents of violence and instill the notion of respect for every human being's life, both locally and globally, might societies dissolve any ongoing usage of this word. Sadly so, violence is so innately instilled into our norm. And,

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<sup>8</sup> Remember, this is in hindsight and reflection to the First World War...

<sup>9</sup> “Man is a wolf to man.”

sadly so, media continues to cultivate this derogative social-marketing of the word *nigger*. This normative outpouring of aggression and violence becomes so prevalent within the various entities of influence of the media's hype, and success thereof. Nowadays, I myself refer to this successful global movement of marketing violence as simply, [the] Hollywood Hype. And as we all know, especially in this country, for good or for worse, and unlike any other country on this globe, the great American socio-political and -cultural-media sage itself is race. *Black poverty sells*. Miller's "poisonous nigger" has become universally marketable, and if you doubt this as the case, download the venomous "gangstas" rapping in Russia, Serbia, China, Mexico, France, Turkey, Germany, and England who are conquering You Tube. And, what I am underscoring here is nothing new to the world. Yet, I am addressing and challenging blacks, globally, first and foremost, with a renewed cultural- and racial-marketing strategy:

## The Nigger Manifesto

1. The N-word itself should be challenged by blacks within the context of their own linguistic and social order—as to not see them use this word as a derogative ingredient within "The Black Aesthetic."
2. No niggers roaming within the conundrum of Mark Twain's superb conscientiousness and humanity should be further provoked or disposed of. (On the contrary, when not in character references of his fiction, when in the context of journals and letters, Samuel Clemens never uses the N-word: compassionately, he uses only coloreds and "negro.")
3. Nor must we abandon the Negroes and Niggers who dwell inside the confounds of Stowe, Jacobs, Douglass, Northup,<sup>10</sup> Conrad,<sup>11</sup> Lee, Faulkner, Miller, Wright, Hughes, Hurston, McKay, Baldwin, Michener, Sartre, Genet, Parker and others...that *be* left to the waste-side to rot in censorship.
4. Those living authors, worldwide, recorded and published, and representative of the *Zeitgeist* in a work of fiction, poetry or music, should not be censored for using the N-word. (When we begin to censor one author's nigger's words all others will also get

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<sup>10</sup> The compassionate and humanitarian manner that Brad Pitt addresses "niggers" in *12 Years a Slave* is indicative of how common it was to refer to the men and women of Africa as nigger or nigga (which is / was the German cogent of the word during colonial and present times.)

<sup>11</sup> Once "unclassified documents" in England, now published, have brought to light how plausible Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is as a testament and underpins the fact that there were corrupt missions in the Congo, and further implying Conrad was plausibly exposing and critiquing this corruption. Also, see, Angus Mitchell.

censored!) Sorry, but is this constitutionally respectful to any of our Forefathers or their Slaves?

5. Any forthcoming niggers being addressed in yet still unpublished works should be disallowed—unless the use of the N-word in an historical novel / reference is being created, whereby, beyond “unknown forces” made imaginable, it has made sense to speak of the Negro, Coloured, African American and Afro-American in such a socio-cultural and -political frame.
6. And if one but looks into the egalitarian genre of gangsta, hip hop, and rap music, alone, this might well include caution in the way the N-word would warrant its aesthetical and political merit in both poetry and music. It was one thing to have been of the generation that grew up listening to the ambivalent belligerence of Public Enemy, De La Soul, Sugar Hill Gang (I can’t to this day believe that I turned down weekly offers from Joseph Robinson, for nearly six months—as he carried his huge black briefcase up and down Harlem back in 1982, with the Sugar Hill logo printed on both its sides—while pleading with me to stay in NYC and help write lyrics for him. If only he’d played the “Sugarhill Gang” track for me...), Grandmaster Flash,<sup>12</sup> Ice-T, Dr. Dre, Snoop Doggy Dogg, Biggie Smalls, Tupac, Puff Daddy, Eminem, 50 Cent, to the now even more explosively hate rappers who cannot seemingly even afford video and film production teams yet via the brilliance of names like Young Jeezy, Drake, Fetty Wap, Young Thug, and Rich Homie Quan. And oh, how could I forget the superb stupidity of stanzas O.T. Genasis shouts out to his homies, “*Bakin’ soda, I got bakin’ soda! Bakin Soda I got bakin’ soda! Whip it through the glass nigga! I’m blowing money fast nigga! I’m in love with...!*” Now, you see, the vagaries in the *beat* itself goes on and eventually disguises and suppresses the worthlessness of lyrics in Gangsta Rap and Hip Hop; and I don’t see “niggers” *on a mission* leaving this corporate-imprisoned, gangster-funded society of ours anytime soon. Thus, you quasi-intellectuals of censorship, please, simply savior any notion of perpetually using Mark Twain as the literary scapegoat that he has become, insofar as discrediting the creditability of niggers as no longer being a plausible maxim for any sort of social or cultural critique on the *Über*-usage of the N-word.

On the other hand, if we bring absolute closure to this word in our commercializing of the “N-word” in our music, literature, and cinema, then might others join in to discard the word globally? But in this cultural realm I do not think it can be done: in other words, the N-word has become a valuable, post-colonial, commodious asset. The N-word has become America’s cul-

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<sup>12</sup> And yet another omen for me to have remained in NYC and not gone off to Berlin was that they were in the very same waiting room getting their passports with me in August of 1982.

tural and sociopolitical fetish; the N-word has become our poetry. It has become an iconic “poetry [that] must be a violent attack against the unknown forces, summoning them to lie down before man” (Futurist Manifesto, #7). Our dilemma: True, separating ourselves from the N-word isn’t going to demolish the usage of *nigger* in its global context either.

Sadly, I have heard NBC’s Chuck Todd state repetitively on “Meet the Press,” that America is becoming a nation of “self-separatist.” I want to disagree and I want to be one of those dubious that this is the path most white Americans (even many African Americans) want to embrace. If I question anything, it is that we do not hold our newer generation of immigrants accountable enough for their emersion into the ethics of race relations that comes as a price in lieu of attaining some stock of responsibility it requires in sustaining—at least—an ideological decree with merit toward the American Dream. We do not need the bias ills of the world transferred onto our soil. We do have a valuable lesson to share with others coming to our shores; and it must become an optimism we will -again- share with others in this world. We must demand of these *new* American(s) that he/she/they embrace our accomplishments as a nation of races willing to stand arm-in-arm as one nation. This should be the metamorphous we wish to display before the rest of the world, especially in the aftermath of our tragedies surrounding the death of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland and others. We know how visible that spade is now. We should not implode and enclave ourselves back toward a bigotry, even among blacks, that will have us all forgetting that Dream of Equality every American deserves. Therewithal, do believe me when I say that Black Americans have the respect and envy of a vast majority of others around the world that is hard to decipher within our nation’s media’s representation of us. (This was, in essence, the symbolism within the message Daniel had reinstated to me, that first day I stood amid his 4<sup>th</sup> grade classmates.) Sure many post-civil rights

immigrants tend to forget what Dr. King's dream asks of us. Even if our cultural, racial, and economical accomplishments offer a sense of hope for many, none of this wealth, or cultural leisure we have could we ever achieve if our nation in itself were placed within that continuum of conundrums of battlefields so much of this world remains to be. Our divine shores grant us our sovereign. But media and politicians mislead us in our understanding of our shores and borders and how readily and easily immigration policies are abused. For example, our fingers point toward the South to ease a false deception of illegal immigration, elsewhere. Too often in our notion of entitlement to police the globe for our own cultural and monetary gain, we simply forget, at home, as Americans, to turn away from other quests as to make certain that our own backyards are being policed nobly.

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As the school year passed, daily, children I had yet come to know called out to me as I passed by. "*Hi, Herr Fred!*" They yelled my name with an enormous degree of affection and respect. I enjoyed them all tremendously. No other derogatory words were ever expressed.

Have I mentioned that the school had children from grades one to seven? This was how this one particular district had combined its lower and middle schools. The expressions on the children passing helped me understand how well they comprehended where they were. They knew they were in a facility named after a great German humanitarian who had not just been one of the leading figures in the Nazi resistance, but also someone who had been forthright in critiquing the Third Reich for its abuses of people living in Germany's occupied territories during World War Two. Helmuth James Graf von Moltke's *German Abwehr* had become a significant historical document in undergirding hundreds of those determined to oust Hitler -legally-

as Führer. I was told the German *Abwehr* artifact was developed by lawyers, jurists, and aristocrats who would form the Kreisau Circle Resistance group.

Although the man “increasingly recognized” as the central figure in the plot to assassinate Hitler was Claus von Stauffenberg (Mommsen, p. 123), Moltke had not supported the notion of assassinating Hitler. Insightfully so, Moltke believed killing Hitler would make him a martyr. He wanted Hitler to fail naturally as a leader and thus expose those few individuals of the opposition who could govern a democratic state after the collapse of the Third Reich. Of course this was not how fate unfolded for him and many others. Yet, what made Moltke’s historical relevance exceptional was how he was one of the few of national conservatives outspoken about how the Nazis treated Jews. I’d learned from other teachers newly published “declassified” British documents revealed that Moltke had informed friends in letters mailed secretly to Oxford about the war and the Nazi concentration camps.

I could see the children were a proud and profound lot of pupils inside the halls of the Helmuth James von Moltke Schule. They were informed of Moltke’s importance. There hardly aroused a problem of any sort from any one of them.

As often as was possible, I joined the other teachers during recess. The children had this one game I found most peculiar. Outdoors, in the brisk Berlin winter, we played one of our more passionate, cut-throat games. We played at this site where a metallic table-tennis stood. It was located to the far rear right of the school grounds, safely isolated from public intrusion. They jammed about ten to eleven children around the table. Only one other instructor was willing to play the game with them. It was a favorite game amongst 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Daniel’s older brother, Nabil, who was a 7<sup>th</sup> grader, always orchestrated who would play or not. Nabil was the biggest

kid at the school, and had it not been for the strict demands implemented by the advisors to respect the school's code-of-ethics, Nabil might have readily been designated the campus bully.

The children used a soccer ball and the object of the game was to punch the ball to the other side of the table as students rushed around the table. That was, as if one were playing musical chairs. This wasn't a game for the little ones. This game produced a high-adrenaline rush of an unimaginable sort. Even on the coldest days, they were out there rushing madly around that one metal table in sub-zero-temperature. I gave it my all in that game. I hated having to miss and stand there in the freezing cold while I waited my turn to get back into the next rounds again.

Of course it seems superfluous to add that Vera would be one of the last of the students to find me trustworthy. I ignored her as much as I could. The tension she brought into the class was clearly coming from her parents. Well, even though I had made plausible acquaintances with two Russian writers while living in Berlin, the novelist Wladimir Kaminer was a neighbor who greeted me frequently, and I could consider the playwright Alexei Shipenko a friend, I suppose I had my clichés about her Russian parents, too: I guess to me all Russians hated blacks and they were all a part of a mafia, or so I thought. All this is to underpin how I didn't force her to grow in her interactions with me as the other children had done those winter months. But spring came. And, with spring's arrival came new challenges, new games.

One day in gym, several girls rushed into my arms demanding I lift them into the air...so they could feel the rush of flight for five seconds or so. I lifted four girls into the air. Out of nowhere, Vera came dashing toward me, asking that I lift her too. I was exhausted. I hadn't warmed up properly. But Vera had taken a step towards conciliation that I'd patiently waited four to five months to witness. She was the tiniest thing in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. She could not have been over three feet tall, I thought, but she was the most energetic of the 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Also, she was a

gymnast. We'd probably both be absolutely disappointed if I said no to her wishes. So, I lifted her. With the grace of both a ballerina and a gymnast she took off into the air. It was for a split second a wonderful sight to see. Yet, instantaneously, I heard a tear in my back. Her eyes connected to the pain my face emoted into her eyes. For a split second, we both felt she was about to land to the floor chin smashing directly upon the wood. In great agony, I caught her. Safely. The other children gathered around us. I moaned in discontentment. It was an injury that had subsided for five years following the great care of physical therapists that had treated me in Berlin. I'd swim my way back into shape in recent years and saw a fitness routine that had repaired the back injury, accordingly, by way of daily outings to the pool. Now it was, again, inflamed. I hadn't let Vera down, however, or the other kids. It was clear that they all had been waiting for Vera to join them in on behalf of their faith in me.

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Frau Miller gave out one "A" that term. Even to her surprise, Daniel got it. Before my arrival, he had been her greatest disciplinary challenge. She told me he changed the moment I entered the classroom following that first day of my visit. He proved himself to be, undoubtedly, the strongest student in Frau Miler's class.

The day it was announced that I would be going back to America to attend university again a few of the students approached me in the school yard. Daniel's older brother, Nabil, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader, who'd be leaving the middle school next year anyway, came up to me—Vera, Daniel, and a couple of others stood beside him—and uttered, "Man, Fred! Why ya' gotta go? It's going to be so [*sic*]in' boring here without you bro!"

I smiled. "I'm going back to university to get a degree that every last one of you here has inspired me to get. That's why, Nabil. That's why."

Daniel looked on stunned. I'd hardly ever known him to be silent, not even while in his brother's company. But I could see in his eyes this gleam anticipating accolades for what I was trying to accomplish; I could see he knew he'd inspired me tremendously in my decision to return to America to obtain a degree; and I could imagine he was bopping to some Hip Hop tone, thinking to himself: yoo! that's my *nigga!* that's my *nigga*. Way to go, my man...

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