

Afrocentrism and the Peopling of the Americas

Gabriel Haslip-Viera
City College of the City University of New York

This essay focuses on a theory of human development that has been promoted aggressively by a group of Afrocentrists in recent years - that the Western Hemisphere was first populated by "Africoids" or "Black" people who came to the Americas by way of Asia and the Bering Straits with little or no change in their physical or racial characteristics. As discussed in this article, the theory has no support in the evidence collected by scientists in various fields. The essay focuses on the basic claims and methods used by the Afrocentrists to support their theory, including their misuse or misinterpretation of mostly outdated scholarship produced in Europe and the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A brief concluding section makes reference to the potential repercussions of this theory on relations between African Americans, Native Americans and Latinos of Native American and part Native American background.

Afrocentrism or the Afrocentric view has emerged in recent years as one of the most controversial issues in the rancorous debate over multicultural education in this country. Afrocentrism is frequently used by critics of ethnic studies and multi-culturalism to discredit such movements for their alleged promotion of social and political divisiveness in U.S. society. Critics point to the anti-Semitism, the denigration of European culture, and to the smug sense of racial superiority that they see in much of the Afrocentric literature. But it should also be made clear that Afrocentrism does not constitute a monolithic point of view.

There are different types or different gradations of Afrocentrism. For example, Manning Marable has made a distinction between "scholarly" Afrocentrism and "vulgar" or popular Afrocentrism in his writings.¹ To some degree, this view is accurate, but there is also considerable overlap, and as a result, it is often quite difficult to differentiate between the two.²

Afrocentrism or the Afrocentric view has its origins in the nineteenth century black nationalist and pan-Africanist ideas of Edward W. Blyden, Alexander Crummell, Africanus Horton and Martin Robinson Delaney. These were among the first African descended diasporans to positively connect such people to an idealized African continent conceived as ethnically unified. Accordingly, African diasporans were seen as "a family" or "a race" that should identify with or "return to the land of their fathers and be at peace."³ These ideas and others that focused on the African origins of human culture and civilizations were adopted and developed further in the decades that followed by W. E. B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Aimé Césaire, Léon Damas, Léopold Senghor, Carter G. Woodson, Cheikh Anta Diop, Théophile Obenga, Maulana Karenga and others before they were synthesized and re-conceptualized as Afrocentrism in the mid 1980s by Temple University Professor Molefi Kete Asante. According to Asante, Afrocentrism is a "philosophy," a "worldview," a guide for "personal and social transformation," and a "theoretical instrument for the examination of phenomena" which places African peoples at the "center" of inquiry as "subjects" rather than as "objects" on the margins of the European experience.⁴ As we shall see below, Afrocentrism also frequently includes a cultural hegemonism and a racist view of humanity that tends to privilege "black people" at the expense of other peoples, including Native Americans.⁵

This paper will focus on the racist views promoted by a number of Afrocentrists and their application to the origins and physical evolution of Native Americans. The view towards Native Americans and other peoples, aside from Europeans and Africans, has not received much scrutiny from the critics of Afrocentrism. The debate up until now has focused primarily on "black" versus "white" issues or on Afrocentrism versus Eurocentrism.⁶ In this paper, I will argue that a racist Afrocentrism which focuses on Native Americans in a hegemonic manner is fundamentally Eurocentric in its orientation. It also should be made clear that the advocates of these views are connected to both the so-called "scholarly" Afrocentrists and the so-called "vulgar" or popular Afrocentrists.⁷

The Afrocentric view towards Native Americans and the peopling of the Americas has been articulated by Légrand H. Clegg II, Runoko Rashidi, Ivan Van Sertima, and Keith Jordan, among others. Their basic premise is rooted in the Afrocentric view that humanity began in Africa and was racially "black" or "Africoid." In the Afrocentric scenario, the early "Blacks" migrated from Africa and populated the entire globe,

including the Americas, before the emergence of "Caucasoids," "Mongoloids" and Native Americans. In an early articulation of this theme, Legrand H. Clegg II developed the scenario further by suggesting that the "Mongoloid" ancestors of Native Americans might have participated in a global conspiracy, led by "their white counterparts," to uproot, defile, annihilate and appropriate the cultural achievements of the "Blacks" who allegedly preceded them.⁸

Underlying this scenario and those of other Afrocentrists is the notion that bands of "blacks" or "Africoids" migrated to Asia, moved north to Siberia, crossed the Bering Strait into Alaska, and populated the Americas without undergoing any kind of perceived biological or evolutionary change. In support of this concept, the Afrocentrists rely very heavily on legends, oral traditions, an earlier generation of African and African American writers, and the cranial or skeletal studies published by racist scholars from Europe and the United States in the period from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. Accordingly, the Afrocentrists believe that there were three and possibly four migratory movements from Northeast Asia into the Americas in the period between 40,000 B.C. and 2,000 B.C. The earliest was "possibly" a migration of "Pygmoids" or "Diminutive Blacks" who are described as being of "unusually short stature," with "yellowish" to "dark brown" skin complexions, "tightly curled hair," and in frequent cases, "steatopygia" (unusually large buttocks, especially in women). They are also described as being related to the modern-day "Pygmies," "Negritos," "Negrillos," "Khoi-Khoi," "San," and "Hottentots" (etc.) of Africa, South Asia and the Pacific region.⁹

Although the Afrocentrists are not certain about the migration of "Pygmoids" or "Diminutive Blacks," because "the supporting evidence is extremely sparse and inconclusive," they nevertheless assert that there was a subsequent migration of "Australoids" into the Americas in the period after 40,000 B.C. The "Australoids" are described as being longheaded ("dolichocephalic"), "dark-skinned (invariably black)," with "broad, flat" noses, "fleshy lips," "beetling" brow ridges, "receding" foreheads, "hair that ranges from wavy to straight," and with "alveolar prognathism" or the forward projection of the area above the lips due to large teeth and a robust dental arch. They are also said to be related to the "Mundas" and the "Veddas" of India and Sri Lanka and to the "Kooria" or "aboriginal" population of modern Australia.¹⁰

In the second or third stage of the Afrocentric scenario, the "Australoids" are followed by "Prehistoric Negroids" or "Clovis-Folsom Point Blacks." These individuals are defined as being a "sub-type of the Africoid race," but the description of this group is somewhat vague. According to Clegg "the 'Negroid' race" is "long-headed, and dark-skinned" with "crinkled or wavy hair, a nose that ranges from broad to keen and lips that are often fleshy," but Rashidi asserts that the "Clovis-

Folsom Point Blacks" are related to the "Melanesians" or the so-called "Asiatic Negroids" of the South Pacific region and may be ancestral to these groups.¹¹ Scholars have asserted that the "Melanesians" and other so-called "Asiatic Negroids" are a special group,¹² but to the Afrocentrists it is clear that this population is a "sub type" of "the Black or Africoid race" based on their promotion of racial stereotypes and alleged similarities in physical characteristics and appearances.

In the final stage of the Afrocentric scenario, "invading Mongoloids" begin to displace the earlier "Negroid," "Black," or "Africoid" populations in many parts of the Americas (circa 2000 B.C.!). The "resistant Africoids" are said to be "uprooted," "exterminated," and "almost totally absorbed" by the "invading Mongoloids." Quoting Eurocentric scholars, the "Mongoloids" are described as being "longheaded," with "broad faces" and "slant eyes."¹³ As the Afrocentrists see it, the "fusion" of the "invading mongoloids" and the earlier "Africoid" populations results in the emergence of the "American Indian" as a physical type by the time of the arrival of the Europeans in the sixteenth century, but they fail to define this stereotype with any degree of precision.¹⁴ It should also be noted that the physical types articulated above are the same ones that were used by the old racist scholars of Europe, the United States and the other regions of the world that were significantly influenced by this scholarship. As a result, the Afrocentrists rely very heavily on the cranial and skeletal studies that were done by the physical anthropologists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

For example, the Afrocentrists make reference to the works of Harold S. Gladwin, Roland Dixon, H.C. Haddon, Earnest Hooton, Arthur Keith, Paul Rivet and other racist scholars and craniometrists of this period. They also try to utilize their works to support the Afrocentric assertion that the first Americans were "Africoids" or "Blacks." Very often, however, this old and hopelessly out of date scholarship is not used in a very careful or thorough manner. For instance, the Afrocentrists continuously make reference to the "Australoid" and "Negroid" characteristics that were seen in the excavated skulls of Native Americans by the early craniometrists. They fail, however, to report that these same scholars were generally mystified by the overall conclusions of their research. In fact, there was an intense debate within the scholarly community with regard to the origins of Native Americans and their alleged racial characteristics in the earlier part of this century. As a result, Dixon, Haddon, Hooton, Keith and many of the other scholars who studied the subject were generally much more careful in their use of the prevailing racial concepts and terminology than the Afrocentrists would have us believe. For example, Hooton used the terms "PseudoAustraloid" and "Pseudo-Negroid" when he discussed the skulls of Native Americans.¹⁵ At the same time, Dixon, upon whom the Afrocentrists rely very heavily, used the terms "Proto-Australoid" and "ProtoNegroid," when referring to

the same crania.¹⁶ It is also clear that Dixon was not referring to modern Australians or African "Blacks" when he used these concepts or terminology. As he clearly states in his "Racial History of Man" the use of the term "proto Negroid...does not mean that actual Negroes...are supposed to have migrated to the New World."¹⁷ He also states that

The terms Proto Negroid, Mediterranean, etc. are merely convenient (although perhaps misleading) names for a series of purely arbitrary types which might just as well be denominated by numbers or the letters of the alphabet....¹⁸

The Proto Negroid type designates a form of skull which is dolichocephalic, hypsicephalic, and platyrrhine, and carries with it no necessary implication whatever that any other features which we may be accustomed to think of as occurring in Negro crania are also present....¹⁹

The name Proto-Negroid...carries with it no implication in regard to skin color, hair form, or any other superficial or structural features which may be found in the modern Negro.²⁰

...the statement that among a given people the Proto-Negroid Type is strongly represented does not imply that they have or had a black skin or woolly hair.²¹

Of course, the racist scholars of yesteryear were not able to resolve their differences with regard to the origins of Native Americans and their alleged racial characteristics. This disagreement was one of many factors that eventually led to the collapse of most race theories based on biology, genetics, and morphology by the late 1960s.²² The effort to subdivide the human species into "Caucasians," "Negroids," "Mongoloids" and other "races" based on skeletal or cranial measurements is no longer taken seriously by the scientific community as a whole,²³ but the Afrocentrists who write on Native Americans and other groups would have us believe that they continue to be both valid and very useful. In the case of Native Americans, what results is the promotion of the old Eurocentric racist ideal. According to Clegg, the "Indian or red man" is of "Mongoloid stock with a broad head, straight, black hair, broad and prominent cheekbones, and a broad concave nose."²⁴ In other writings, Ivan Van Sertima, Keith Jordan and others establish additional limitations on their version of the Native American physical type. Accordingly, preColumbian Native Americans could not have been relatively tall in stature, with darker skin color, "alveolar prognathism," "African" noses, "Semitic" noses, "thick lips," or "fully fleshed lips." They also would not have been capable of growing "goatees" or "flowing beards."²⁵

It should be noted that the Afrocentrists also rely on historical documents and oral traditions in their efforts to find support for their assertion that "Africoids" or "Blacks" were the first Americans. For example, the Afrocentrists make reference to the presumed sightings of "Blacks" in the Americas by European explorers in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, but these references are problematic because they fail to take into consideration the wishful thinking of the Europeans, especially the Spaniards and the Portuguese. Based on their knowledge of geography and their familiarity with the ethnic and environmental concepts of the time, the European explorers were expecting to find "Blacks" in the equatorial regions of the Americas. Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci appear to have been rather perplexed by the fact that they could not find "Blacks" in the same latitudes in which they were presumably found on the African continent. As a result, there were a number of reported but unconfirmed sightings of "Blacks" in various parts of the circum-Caribbean region along with reported sightings of monsters, mermaids, Amazons and other types of strange phenomenon that the explorers were also expecting to see.²⁶

The Afrocentrists also make reference to a number of Native American or Inuit ("Eskimo") oral traditions, but the quoted stories are very few in number and raise a number of questions that Afrocentrists have perhaps failed to consider. These traditions supposedly make reference to the "Africoid" precursors of "Mongoloid (Indians)" in early America, but there is no certainty that these stories are in fact rooted in the distant past or have not been modified considerably over a period of time.²⁷ The Afrocentrists also assume that Native Americans have always understood the Eurocentric concepts of race and the racist use of the term "black" when reference is made to people or the skin color of humans. It is also absolutely clear that the Afrocentrists have chosen to ignore the thousands of legends or stories which place the origins of native peoples on the American continent--in its soil, its rivers, and its environment--not in some distant continent.²⁸ At this point we should be reminded of the consensus that exists among archeologists and other social scientists with regard to the origins of Native Americans. Based on the evidence that has been collected thus far, it is believed that the ancestors of modern Native Americans began to migrate from Siberia into Alaska and Northwestern Canada sometime between 11,000 and 35,000 years ago. It is also believed that modern Native Americans and Siberians are in part descended from the same ancestral populations of Northeastern Asia.²⁹

Based on the "evidence" that they present, it would seem that there is no basis for the Afrocentric assertion that the first Americans were "Africoids" or "Blacks," but they are inclined to articulate their assertions in an often aggressive and preachy manner. This preachiness is in part rooted in the alleged conflict between Eurocentrism and

Afrocentrism and is seen in the numerous and often disparaging remarks which are made about the western scholarly tradition in their writings. It is absolutely clear, however, that when it comes to Native Americans (and other non European and African peoples as well) it is this same western scholarly tradition that forms the basis for the Afrocentric assertions. Essentially what is seen is a debate between contemporary Afrocentrists and the Eurocentric scholars of yesteryear over how to define Native Americans and the peopling of the Americas. Any Native American perspective is obviously missing in such a debate. This problem is clearly evident not only in the Afrocentric view of the peopling of the Americas, but also in the Afrocentric view toward Native American culture and its evolution.

Without providing any concrete evidence, Ivan Van Sertima and other Afrocentrists have published books and articles which claim that the ancient "Egypto-Nubians" inspired or created the first Native American "civilizations." They also claim that Africans, particularly West Africans, came to the Americas at various times between 1200 B.C. and 1492 A.D. and entered into peaceful relationships with the "Mongoloid-Indians." However it is also clear that most of these assertions are inspired by Eurocentric rather than Afrocentric ideas.³⁰ Thus Van Sertima and his colleagues would resurrect the old racial concepts and stereotypes which characterized Eurocentric scholarship prior to the 1960s. They would reintroduce the old outdated skeletal and cranial studies to identify Native Americans as "racial types." They would also revive the old racialist art criticism of figurative art. They would resurrect the old comparative linguistics with its "word list games." And, they would reinstate the old Eurocentric concepts of cultural superiority and what it means to be "civilized."³¹

Despite the protestations of Van Sertima and his colleagues, there is also ultimately what C. Tsehloane Keto calls a "hegemonism" in much of the Afrocentric literature on Native Americans.³² Clegg and Rashidi may write about the up- rooting, extermination and absorption of earlier "Africoids" by invading "Mongoloids," but an Ivan Van Sertima will maintain that Native Americans emerged as a rather dull-witted and unimaginative people who required the input of the superior Egypto-Nubians in order to develop complex societies and cultures. Thus, not only are the first Americans said to be "Black," but the first American "civilizations" are also said to be "Black."³³

Although Afrocentrists in general have argued for an "accurate representation of information" and the need to create a new Afrocentric history which will raise the "self-esteem," "self-worth" and "self-respect" of African Americans, we seem to have in this case a rather transparent attempt to use the old racialist Eurocentrism to distort the record at the expense of Native Americans and Latinos of Native American or part Native American background. In particular, Clegg, Rashidi, Jordan, Van

Sertima and their supporters appear to be quite willing to trample on the self esteem of Native Americans by minimizing their role as actors in their own history, by denigrating their cultures, and by usurping their contributions to human development in the name of some distorted Afrocentric version of "accurate representation" and "self-esteem" for African Americans.³⁴

NOTES

¹ Manning Marable, "Beyond Racial Identity Politics: Towards a Liberation Theory for Multicultural Democracy," *Race & Class* 35, 1 (July-September 1993): 120-122 and passim. Maulana Karenga has also made a distinction between "Afro-centrism" as an ideology and "Afrocentricity" as a "systematic intellectual" approach to research and study. However, there is no evidence of any agreement on this distinction among self proclaimed Afrocentrists or other interested observers. See Maulana Karenga, *Introduction to Black Studies*, Second edition (Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press, 1993), 35.

² Afrocentrism or Afrocentricity has been defined in various ways by artists, educators, scholars, political activists and other interested persons. See, for example, Ed Wiley III, "Afrocentrism: Many Things to Many People," *Black Issues in Higher Education* 8:17 (October 24, 1991): 1, 20-21.

³ As quoted in Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 17, 21; Also, see Molefi Kete Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990), 112-14.

⁴ See Molefi Kete Asante, *Afrocentricity* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1988), vii, 2 and passim; Molefi Kete Asante, "African American Studies: The Future of the Discipline," *The Black Scholar* 22, 3 (Summer 1992): 20 and passim; Molefi Kete Asante and Diane Ravitch, "Multiculturalism: An Exchange," *American Scholar* 60, 2 (Spring 1991): 270; Also, see other writings by Asante on this subject.

⁵ For examples of this type of literature as they apply to Europe and Asia, see Ivan Van Sertima, ed. *African Presence in Early Europe* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1985); Ivan Van Sertima, ed. *Golden Age of the Moor* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1992a); Ivan Van Sertima and Runoko Rashidi, eds. *African Presence in Early Asia* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995), among other works.

⁶ Although Native American scholars are generally familiar with claims that trans-oceanic contacts took place between the Americas and other

continents in the pre-Columbian period, they have published very little on the subject with no apparent reference to Afrocentric claims that the first Americans were "black." In his book, *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples*, 2nd ed. (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), Jack D. Forbes speculates on possible contacts between the Western Hemisphere and other continents prior to 1492. However, he emphasizes possible journeys by Native Americans to Europe and is very skeptical of claims that Africans came to the Americas in the pre-Columbian period. In contrast to Forbes, Vine Deloria, Jr. has expressed discomfort "with the idea that NO contacts were made" and calls for "a good look at all possible theories of Precolumbian contacts and even the transmission of every cultural trait that is found elsewhere." He also rejects the Bering Strait theory, "Indians, Archaeologists, and the Future," *American Antiquity* 57, 4 (October 1992): 597, calling it a "fictional doctrine that places American Indians outside the realm of planetary human experiences." These statements suggest, however, that Deloria would reject the Afrocentric claim that the first Americans were "black," because in their scenario the "black" migrants supposedly came to the Americas by way of the Bering Straits. See Forbes, 1993, 7-11, 265-66; Vine Deloria, Jr., 1992: 592-98. Also see Vine Deloria, Jr., (*Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 45, 48-49, 61-62, 69-70, 73-77, 81-110, 179, 216-217, 231 and passim.

⁷The articulation of racialist and hegemonic views towards pre-Columbian Native Americans can be found specifically in Ivan Van Sertima, *They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America* (New York: Random House, 1976); Ivan Van Sertima, ed. *African Presence in Early America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1992b); Ivan Van Sertima, "African Presence in Early America," in *Race, Discourse, and the Origins of the Americas: A New World View*, ed. Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995): 66-101 and Clyde Ahmad Winters, "Mexico's Black Heritage," *The Black Collegian* (December-January 1982): 76-84, among other works. For a critique of these views, see Bernard Ortiz de Montellano, Gabriel Haslip-Viera and Warren Barbour, "They were NOT here before Columbus: Afrocentric Hyperdiffusionism in the 1990s," *Ethnohistory* 44, 2 (Spring 1997): 202-203, 215-220 and passim; Gabriel Haslip-Viera, Bernard Ortiz de Montellano and Warren Barbour, "Robbing Native American Cultures: Van Sertima's Afrocentricity and the Olmecs," *Current Anthropology* 38, 1 (June 1997): 420-425, 431 and passim. Reference should also be made here to Manning Marable's view that Ivan Van Sertima belongs to the "scholarly" as opposed to the "vulgar" or popular group of Afrocentrists. See Manning Marable, "Goodbye Columbus: Challenging the Myths of Discovery, Civilization and Racism During the

Columbus Quincentennial," *Black Issues in Higher Education* 8:5 (September 26, 1991), 22, for an endorsement of Van Sertima's work.

⁸ Legrand H. Clegg II, "Who Were The First Americans?" *The Black Scholar* 7, 1 (September 1975): 34-35, 39.

⁹ Legrand H. Clegg II, "The First Americans," in Van Sertima, 1992b, 232, 233-34; Ivan Van Sertima, "Introduction," in Van Sertima, ed., 1992b: 24; Runoko Rashidi, "Men Out Of Asia: A Review and Update of the Gladwin Thesis," in Van Sertima, ed., 1992b: 216-19. Rashidi's essay has also been published with a different title in Runoko Rashidi, *Introduction to the Study of African Classical Civilizations* (Chicago and London: Karnak House, 1992): 99-113.

¹⁰Clegg, 1992, 232, 234-36; Rashidi, 219-22; Van Sertima, 1992b, 24.

¹¹Clegg, 1992, 232, 236; Rashidi, 223-25; Van Sertima, 1992b, 24.

¹²For example, recent research has demonstrated that Africans are "genetically" closer to Europeans than they are to "Melanesians" and Australian aborigines. See for example, Luigi Cavalli-Sforza, "Genes, Peoples and Languages," *Scientific American* 265:5 (November 1991): 104-10. Also, see Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza, Paolo Menozzi, and Alberto Piazza, *The History and Geography of Human Genes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 302-342 and passim. It should also be noted that the skin color of pre-Columbian Native Americans cannot be determined with any kind of accuracy using current research methods and probably varied to a significant degree. In any case, the Afrocentrists are also quite vague when defining 'blackness' and very often rely on the old 'one drop rule,' ie: that a "Black" person is anyone who has at least "one drop of black blood." See for example, the vague, confused or contradictory definitions for "blackness" that are found in Van Sertima, 1976, xvii.

¹³Clegg, 1992, 237; Rashidi, 226. It should be noted here that the obsolete or bizarre dates used by Rashidi and Clegg (40,000 B.C., 2,000 B.C., etc.) are mostly those of Harold S. Gladwin. See his *Men Out of Asia* (New York: Whittlesey House, 1947).

¹⁴Clegg, 1992, 237; Rashidi, 226-27; Van Sertima, 1992b, 24.

¹⁵Earnest Hooton, *The Indians of Pecos Pueblo: A Study of Their Skeletal Remains* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931).

¹⁶Roland Dixon, *The Racial History of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923).

¹⁷Dixon, 400.

¹⁸Dixon, 401.

¹⁹Dixon, 22.

²⁰Dixon, 401.

²¹Dixon, 22-23.

²²For a recent discussion of this subject, see Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America: Origins and Evolution of a Worldview* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), 273-310 and passim.

²³See, for example, the discussion in Steven Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981).

²⁴Clegg, 1992, 231.

²⁵ Ivan Van Sertima, 1976, 1995, and ed. 1992b.

²⁶See Ferdinand Columbus, *The Life of the Admiral Christopher Columbus by His Son Ferdinand*, trans. Benjamin Keen (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1959), 234; *The Journal of Christopher Columbus*, trans. Cecil Jane (London: Hakluyt Society, 1960), xx; Francisco Lopez de Gomara, *Historia general de Las Indias* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1932), Vol. 1: 143, 162; Pedro de Martir de Angleria, *Decadas del nuevo mundo* (Mexico: Jose Porrúa e hijos, Sucs., 1964), Vol. 1: 291; Samuel Eliot Morison, ed. *The Journals of Christopher Columbus* (New York: The Heritage Press, 1963), 66, 268; John Boyd Thacher, *Christopher Columbus: His Life, His Work, His Remains* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), Vol. 1: 534; Vol. 2: 369, 380, 388. Reference should also be made to the Afrocentric assumption that all 16th century Europeans employed the same vague, imprecise definitions for terms such as "black, white," (etc.) which are used in our own society at the present time. For a discussion of race terminology and its evolution in Europe and the Americas since the late 15th century, see Forbes, 1993.

²⁷Clegg, 1992, 233; Rashidi, 227-28.

²⁸See, for example, some of the creation stories by Native Americans which appear in Ella E. Clark, ed. *Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952); Barbara C. Sproul, ed. *Primal Myths: Creating the World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979);

Miguel Leon Portilla, ed. *Native Mesoamerican Spirituality: Ancient Myths, Discourses, Stories, Doctrines, Hymns, Poems from the Aztec, Yucatec, Quiche-Maya and other Sacred Traditions* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980); Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz, eds. *American Indian Myths and Legends* (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

²⁹For a recent discussion of the Bering Strait scenario, see David J. Meltzer, *Search for the First Americans* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996); Maureen L. King and Sergei B. Slobodin, "A Fluted Point from the Uptar Site, Northeastern Siberia," *Science* 273, 5275 (August 2, 1996): 624-36; Anne Gibbons, "The Peopling of the Americas: New genetic data suggest that the earliest Americans came from Asia in one or two waves--not more--challenging an earlier synthesis of linguistic, dental, and genetic evidence." *Science* 274, 5284 (October 4, 1996): 31-33; David J. Meltzer, "Monte Verde and the Pleistocene Peopling of the Americas," *Science* 276, 5313 (May 2, 1997): 754-755.

³⁰See for example, Van Sertima, 1976, 1995, and the various essays in Van Sertima, ed. 1992b. Also, see Molefi Kete Asante and Mark T. Mattson, *The Historical and Cultural Atlas of African Americans* (New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1991), 15-19; Michael Bradley, *Dawn Voyage: The Black Discovery of America* (Brooklyn, NY: A & B Books, 1992); Anthony T. Browder, *Nile Valley Contributions to Civilization: Exploding the Myths*, Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Institute of Karmic Guidance, 1992), 209-217; and Karenga, 110-114. Also see other publications of this type.

³¹For a critique of this literature see Ortiz de Montellano, Haslip-Viera and Barbour, 1997:199-234; HaslipViera, Ortiz de Montellano and Barbour, 1997: 419-41.

³²Keto, an Afrocentric writer, has warned other Afrocentrists to reject "hegemonism," biological race concepts and other Eurocentric ideas, but these admonitions do not seem to have had much of an impact on those persons who are writing about Native Americans. See C. Tsehloane Keto, *The Africa Centered Perspective of History: An Introduction* (Laurel Springs, NJ: K. A. Publishers, 1992), 1, 27, 28-29, 46-47 and *passim*.

³³These are the prevailing themes in Van Sertima, 1976, 1995, Van Sertima, ed. 1992b, and Bradley 1992, among other works.

³⁴The references to "accurate representation of information" and "self esteem" are found in Asante and Ravitch, 270, 274, and *The Washington Post*, 14 December 1989, D1, D9.