Introduction

Bridging Africana Studies and Environmental Studies

Contextualizing the Study

Budding intellectuals who are attracted to Africana studies and environmental studies are, of course, curious about the subject matter of these half-century-old academic fields, but they also want to know that their studies prepare them to become effective change agents, empowered to bring about and administer more equitable and sustainable societies. This book responds to the inquiries and needs of such individuals. First, however, we must recognize the two fields of study as complementary in their respective missions. For this reason, the primary aim of this book is to explore and rectify the disconnect between Africana studies and environmental studies within the academy—a disconnect that exists despite their similarities on multiple levels and the numerous ways the two can support one another's scholarly and activist interests.

In addition to examining some of the key similarities of Africana and environmental studies, this book discusses why and how the two should be integrated. To this end, it provides comprehensive knowledge of the two fields, focusing on the mission and major paradigms that identify their respective curricula, research interests, and practices. It also shows that several of the major paradigms that underlie

academic activity in both Africana and environmental studies compete for dominance in each field and that there are opportunities to collaborate across them.

On the surface, the most conspicuous similarity between Africana studies and environmental studies is the diversity of their appellations or naming conventions. For instance, on one side we have Africana studies, African American studies, Afro-American studies, Pan-African studies, black studies, and Africology. Africana studies looks at the black experience in America primarily and in the rest of the diaspora and Africa secondarily. All the aforementioned appellations to some extent cover African American studies; African studies, however, does not necessarily cover African America. African studies examines the historical and contemporary social dynamics of lived experiences on the African continent primarily and may include black America and U.S. politico-economic and cultural forces vis-à-vis Africa secondarily. In other words, Africana studies primarily covers African America, while African studies mainly covers the African continent. The study of the environment encompasses environmental studies, environmental justice, and sustainability studies. Environmental studies could be considered the broad canvas on which environmental justice and sustainability studies are painted. After all, environmental studies examines human-environment interactions in general, whereas environmental justice and sustainability studies focus on the ways humans engage with the environment and share the goals of just distribution of resources, regulations on environmental degradation, and sustainable outcomes. A related field, environmental sciences, focuses primarily on the physics, chemistry, and biology of the environment and only secondarily on its so-called softer side—policy, aesthetics, culture, and economics.

The point is that both Africana studies and environmental studies, unlike traditional disciplines, have multiple names for single intellectual endeavors. Some early critics of these fields of study suggested that they were not ready for academic prime time and that they were not deserving of scarce university resources. Some of the harshest criticisms identified them as little more than products of political largess. Traditional disciplines such as sociology, biology, history, economics, and physics, so the argument goes, settled on the parameters, bedrock

assumptions, key questions, competing paradigms, and, perhaps most elemental, consistent naming before taking the national academic stage. The inability of Africana studies and environmental studies to reach uniformity on a name for their departments and programs undermines their credibility in the eyes of critical observers. However, the frequency of these criticisms is diminishing as the innovative contributions of these fields to the academy over the past half-century have been recognized.

Referring to Africana studies, Martha Biondi notes, "Many critics, both internal and external to Black studies, criticized it on two interrelated grounds: they claimed that it lacked curricular coherence and that by not having a single methodology it failed to meet the definition of a discipline. As a result, many educators in the early Black studies movement pursued a two-pronged quest: a standardized curriculum and an original, authoritative methodology" (2012: 241). Africana studies scholars such as Abdul Alkalimat have long lamented the lack of a uniform curriculum and pedagogy that would define the field. Conversely, Rhett Jones, a cofounder of Africana studies at Brown University, has been a longtime critic of the uniformity approach. Darlene Clark Hine hints that if there is any silver lining to the absence of curriculum standardization, it is what it suggests about the ever-changing and evolving nature of Africana studies: "The rapid proliferation of knowledge in the field is a strong argument in support of institutional flexibility" (1997: 11). While Alkalimat and Biondi lament the lack of uniformity, Hine and Jones seem to argue for innovational latitude brought on by the absence of standardization. Both sides of the argument have merit, but Africana studies, which builds on the rich diversity of the African and American contexts, may need to legitimize its existence in academia like most previously established fields. It can achieve such legitimacy only through the creation of specific approaches unique to Africana studies that combine structured and unstructured components and allow for intellectual creativity.

The notion of knowledge for knowledge's sake has never taken root in either Africana or environmental studies. Both have an academic mission and an unapologetic social mission. The phrase "academic excellence and social responsibility," coined by Abdul Alkalimat when Africana studies was undergoing its initial growth spurt, is actually

applicable to environmental studies also. Both fields were founded in political struggle, in efforts to better understand and address the ills of racism, social inequality, and environmental degradation and to empower blacks and other subalterns as well as to advance environmental sustainability. Fighting against social ills and fighting for empowerment and sustainability are political tasks for which Africana and environmental studies are totally unapologetic and well suited, as they are for the task of advancing innovative and rigorous scholarship.

Africana studies documents and challenges racism while promoting the agency of people of African descent in responding to and reshaping their social settings. Its well-known mission is to improve the life experiences of black people as well as to improve sources of knowledge about those experiences. Students of Africana studies identify a specific time period (e.g., 2010s) and a given issue (e.g., redeveloping brownfield sites in black neighborhoods with renewable energy production or urban agriculture) and then examine the use of one or some combination of the field's paradigms. In other words, for this issue in this time frame—as is the case for any black experience issue in a given time frame—the student will ask: "What are the specific institutional ways in which racism and other structural factors have limited the options of brownfield remediation in black neighborhoods?" "Why are the brownfields so disproportionate in black neighborhoods in the first place?" "How have African Americans responded productively and unproductively to the racial imbalances that militate against the success of brownfield redevelopment?" Responses to these questions lead to discussions about African Americans who have taken proactive measures against such racist practices, not simply responding and adjusting to them but trying to reshape social institutions in a way that would lead to more brownfield redevelopment and more renewable energy. In essence, Africana studies, is the scientific study of and humanistic reflection on holistic aspects of contemporary and historical black thought and practice.

Similarly, environmental studies documents and challenges environmental degradation while documenting and promoting the agency of environmentally conscious and politically engaged individuals and institutions in reshaping human-environment interactions. Students

in the field engage primarily environmental issues that concern us today, but they also engage such issues historically and archaeologically.

Africana studies is oriented toward better understanding and significant improvement of the black experience, and environmental studies is oriented toward a better understanding of negative human impacts on the environment and ways to reduce them. The two fields are progressive in that, if they are to initiate means for improving the black experience and for promoting more sustainable human-environment interactions, they must question and critique the existence, activities, and culture of institutions and individuals in society as each impacts blacks and the environment.

By definition and objective, Africana and environmental studies have oppositional stances and identities when compared to economics and business, with their inherent focus on finance and marketing—the principal disciplinary pillars of the establishment. Like Africana and environmental studies, economics is a liberal arts discipline, but it is not nearly as progressive in the sense that, at least in the United States, it is essentially restricted from questioning the fundamental tenets of capitalism. It is limited to identifying ways of making capitalist economies work more efficiently and to reducing the duration and severity of the recessions that are fixtures in capitalist economies. Likewise, business, by nature, does not question or debate the fundamental merits and demerits of capitalist enterprises. Africana and environmental studies, however, routinely examine propositions concerning the inevitability of labor exploitation, social inequality, and environmental degradation in all, including capitalist, economies.

Perry Hall argues that Africana studies disrupts Western narratives of development "by decentering the hegemonic Eurocentric approaches to knowledge production" (2010: 31). Additionally, Africana studies disrupts the "Eurocentric tendency to marginalize and pathologize blackness" while centralizing and celebrating whiteness (22). Analysis of people of African descent as "the other" facilitates a narrative of the social pathologies of poverty, failures in education, and crime-ridden neighborhoods as a direct result of "the other's" inherent deficiencies—culturally or genetically induced. Conversely, Africana studies makes black people the central agents rather than reducing them to "the other." Beyond merely documenting and

describing social ills in the black community, as was long the case with traditional disciplines, Africana studies examines and reflects on black people's cultural, economic, and political responses to institutions that maintain racial inequality. In addition, it centralizes black agency in positive experiences for black people and in reshaping visions of the black presence in our society, culturally with its music, style, and attitude and politico-economically with its overwhelming preference for politicians and policies that seek to end economic and racial inequality.

Environmental studies can also disrupt and decenter the hegemonic Eurocentric approach to economic production and human-environment interactions. For it to produce the knowledge and activities that will move society to a sustainable economy, the transformation of our energy sources from fossil fuels to renewables is absolutely paramount. Such an objective is most challenging and most disruptive, as we live in an era in which our food, our clothing, and virtually everything else depend on fossil fuels, and as a consequence we have made the very people we need to defeat politically to achieve sustainability more powerful by enriching them with wealth from meeting our ever-growing energy needs. And that enrichment is used in part to purchase political support from elected and appointed officials and to confuse the public with disinformation such as the denial of climate change. Among the world's five hundred largest companies in 2011, four of the top ten were Western oil companies, two were Chinese oil companies, and another was a Chinese power company. The eighth top-ten company, Toyota, depends completely on oil. What this suggests is that fossil fuel industries can purchase political power as a means to dominate much of the law and policy making in Washington.

Alas, one area in which environmental studies has not disrupted and decentered Eurocentric hegemonic thinking is race. The field engages in color-blind discourse, thereby supposedly obviating the need for, if not delegitimizing, critics of racialization. Bringing racialization to the table could prove to be one of the greatest contributions of Africana studies to environmental studies.

Africana and environmental studies have contributed to the decentering of Eurocentric knowledge building and economic production. Because of Africana studies, traditional academic disciplines

have begun to cover transformative black experiences as a centralized rather than as a pathologized narrative of "the other's" social ills. Africana courses at elite, predominately white universities—Oberlin College and the University of Texas among others—are easily among the most popular on campus. Students who have been steeped in Africana studies have not only carried on with such myth debunking but have also gone on to create new knowledge and engage civically based in part on this exposure. Furthermore, half of all Africana studies programs are at major research universities, and another 14 percent are at elite liberal arts colleges (Rojas 2007). As Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis (2006) notes, discourses do not just reflect reality; they help re-create it. So, as Africana studies has played a role in changing discourses, it has thereby also played a role in changing realty.

Similarly, as a result of environmental studies on campuses and in the broader environmental movement, industrial polluters now feel compelled to show their green bona fides, which are often contrived, in order to maintain and grow market share. It is not insignificant that this field has been among the fastest growing in the academy in the twenty-first century. Indeed, according to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (2009), over a hundred new degree programs focusing on energy and sustainability were created in 2009 alone. Forty years ago, Africana studies experienced similar stunning growth.

Both Africana and environmental studies gained academic status principally because of social movements beyond campus. For Africana studies, it was the civil rights and black power movements, whereas for environmental studies it was heightened green consciousness among the public as well as the growing environmental movement in all of its permutations in the wake of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1964). As Paul Hawken (2007) notes, the environmental movement is the largest social movement ever to have existed. Moreover, unlike with the civil rights and black power movements, there is no leader for hegemonic forces to try to eliminate and thereby upend the movement—it is too lateral and diffuse to be stopped.

Since Africana and environmental studies are not establishment disciplines in the mold of economics and business, they will continue to rely in part on social movement support for their existence.

Environmental studies, unlike Africana studies, will continue on a faster growth path because of the continued energetic growth of the environmental movement as well as many new opportunities in the nonprofit and private sectors. Africana studies is currently without such systematic extra-academic forces in the community or in the broader society, which will likely limit its further growth outside of the elite research and liberal arts institutions where significant investment in the field continues.

Africana and Environmental Studies: They Need Each Other to Fulfill Their Missions

The notable successes in Africana and environmental studies should be kept in perspective, considering how much more work needs to be done in the areas of racial inequality and environmental degradation and its attendant climate chaos. This work is at the heart of why it is imperative that the two fields work collaboratively. A clearly recognized fact, however, is that the academic and social mission of neither can be successfully realized unless the political power of fossil fuel is greatly diminished and ultimately eclipsed by renewable energy and other sustainable industries. That is perhaps patently obvious with environmental studies and less so with Africana studies. The former's mission of creating a sustainable economy and environment cannot be achieved as long as fossil fuel industries wield substantial influence in Washington.

The larger fossil fuel industry constitutes an interest group, whose products power over three-quarters of human activity, that uses political parties as one instrument to meet its objectives, one of which is to retain for as long as possible its status as the subsidized energy source of choice and to prevent renewable energy sources from reaching grid parity or becoming competitive. The industry finds it politically expedient to dominate the Republican Party so that these outcomes can be achieved. As an example, consider the fact that there were thirty-seven Senate seats open in the 2010 electoral season; among the forty-eight Republican candidates for those seats, only one agreed that human-made, or anthropogenic, global warming was real and that fossil fuels were a major factor in its development. Former representative

Mike Castle of Delaware, the lone exception, would have won easily against a Democratic opponent, but the fossil fuel–backed Tea Party and Americans for Prosperity saw to it that he was defeated in the primary. One reading of this situation is that the fossil fuel industry was willing to lose one senate seat as a way to warn Republican candidates that they must deny climate change and support fossil fuels while only rhetorically—at best—supporting renewables.

In other words, it is nearly impossible for Republican candidates to win primaries for statewide, congressional, or presidential elections if there is any suggestion that they advocate any of the following: significantly taxing the pollution-emitting carbon that contributes to climate change, removing fossil fuel subsidies, significantly subsidizing renewable energy to gain grid parity with coal and natural gas, and further restricting toxic chemicals.

Mitt Romney is a telling example of the fossil fuels industries' agenda. As governor of liberal Massachusetts, he pushed to close old cold-fired power plants and supported wind and solar energy. Nevertheless, as a Republican presidential candidate, "he [was] a proclaimed skeptic on global warming, a champion of oil and other fossil fuels, a critic of federal efforts to develop cleaner energy sources and a sworn enemy of the Environmental Protection Agency" ("Energy Etch a Sketch" 2012). Political parties are well known as instruments of power for coordinated and influential interest groups. The Republican Party is one instrument of choice for the fossil fuel industry. This sounds partisan, but even a cursory look at fossil fuel interests' political contributions reveals that they are heavily skewed toward Republicans and other deregulatory politicians.

No one should be surprised that discussions of environmental studies are inseparable from discussions of politics. The same conclusion applies to Africana studies, which presupposes politics given that it was founded in political struggles. Additionally, it is no secret that Republicans have won most of the white vote and have dominated southern electoral votes since Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For all presidential contests between 1992 and 2008, between 59 and 72 percent of the Republican nominee's electoral votes came from the South. The South is crucial to the fossil fuel industry's agenda, but it remains the industry's primary province because of the

stoking and exploitation of latent racial animus (Patterson 2013b). This issue is, of course, of special concern in Africana and environmental studies programs.

In the United States, as a rule, racial fears and anxieties tend to be higher in areas where blacks constitute a large percentage of the population. In the Pacific Northwest and the northern New England states, for instance, where black populations are extremely small, discordant race relations are few. Conversely, in the Deep Peripheral South, where black populations range from 12 to 37 percent of states' populations, racial discord is consequential. Whites who reside in communities that include or are adjacent to large black populations are more racially conservative than are those who reside in areas with smaller black populations in the same states (Glaser 1994; Valentino and Sears 2005).

As Oliver Cox (1948) and other scholars have long noted, elites manipulate a heightened sense of economic threat among white workers based on race, not class, that springs from intense zero-sum thinking played out as racial strife. And when such thinking overlies the belief that a large black population threatens white workers—added to the fact that the South was home to the most brutal forms of chattel slavery and the cruelest and longest forms of Jim Crow, as well as the fact that the region has long been the poorest and worst educated in the country—it is understandable why the fossil fuel industry focuses on the South, where racial fissures can be stoked more easily and fruitfully for their global private gain.

Given that Africana studies programs (those focusing on U.S. issues) primarily study the black experience per se and in the context of politico-economic dynamics, and given that environmental studies programs study, among other issues, the politico-economic factors affecting environmental quality and sustainability, it is crucial that the two work together. In short, I posit that the manipulation of racial suspicions and antagonisms is one of the most significant factors standing in the way of achieving a sustainable environment in the United States.

Environmental studies is to be applauded for its goal of generating knowledge for a sustainable economy and an overall sustainable human-environment interaction, a goal that would be impossible to

meet with today's level of fossil fuel burning, which, according to recent reports, releases six billion tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year. The human, social, and environmental ills from this include undermined human health from air pollution, climate refugees, political instability resulting from global competition for finite oil deposits and other commodity sources, environmental degradation caused by global warming (e.g., more powerful storms, droughts, desertification, melting glaciers, and weaker ecosystems), acid rain, and water pollution.

A disturbing fact is that "through lawyers, lobbyists, elected officials, government regulators, conservative think tanks, industry front groups, and full-force media saturation, the [fossil fuel] . . . industry uses its wealth to change the public debate and, more often than not, achieve its desired policy outcomes" (Juhasz 2008: 11). More specifically, "three out of every four lobbyists [who] represent oil and gas companies were previously members of Congress who served on the committees that oversee and regulate the industry, or worked for various federal agencies responsible for regulating the energy industry. . . . [This is a major reason that,] from 2002 to 2008, federal energy subsidies to the fossil fuel industry totaled more than $72 billion. Renewable energy subsidies during that same period were less than $29 billion" (Rifkin 2011: 158). Nevertheless, it is not inevitable that a fossil fuel regime will dominate America. If the industry is unable to get 270 electoral votes, at least 60 reliable Senate votes, or a president who backs fossil fuels, it will be politically constrained as it has not been since President Theodore Roosevelt broke up Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company in 1911.

Chief among the many recent and current fossil fuel–backed think tanks and front groups are the Global Climate Coalition, the Heartland Institute, the American Enterprise Institute, the Manhattan Institute, Americans for Prosperity, the Alliance for Energy and Economic Growth, and the American Coalition for Clean Coal. These groups provide a platform for technical and political climate change deniers to confuse the public about the scientific consensus that climate change is real and anthropogenically induced. Deniers work to convince public officials and the general public that climate change is unproven.

Africana studies needs to be engaged in this epic struggle in the way its forerunner traditions of thought were engaged in struggles when science was used as a tool for dominating political reasoning, particularly when race with respect to slavery and Jim Crow was involved. For example, pseudo-science was employed to argue that blacks' cranial capacity was smaller, making them inherently intellectually inferior. The same brilliance, cleverness, and tenacity with which Africana studies scholars fought against this pseudo-scientific reasoning can also be employed by environmental studies scholars as they engage intellectually and politically to defeat climate change deniers and their supporters.

It should be natural for Africana and environmental studies to work together as the hip-hop generation gives way to the climate change generation. Bakari Kitwana, author of *Hip Hop Generation* (2002) and *Why White Kids Love Hip Hop* (2005), identifies as the hip-hop generation blacks born between 1965 and 1984. Hip-hop was once considered the expression of a counterculture and its resistance to prevailing social ills. As it went mainstream globally, it began to be repackaged as a cultural platform for marketing products to young adults. This distortion is recognized most graphically by hip-hop's overindulgence in "gangsta-ism" and "video vixen-ism." It would be naïve to think that, in its original artistic forms and political objectives, hip-hop would have been "allowed" to flourish as a medium for communicating and mobilizing around the ills of society as they are painfully manifested in young people's lives. To prevent it from meeting its political objectives, hip-hop came under excruciating and relentless attack, which sadly has led to more pronounced stereotypical images of the black experience.

Kitwana notes that early hip-hop art forms (e.g., DJ-ing, graffiting, rapping) gave voice to young people suffering from "reckless abandonment" by adults in their lives and in society. Their frustration with incarceration, illicit and pharmaceutical drugs, poor education, social inequality, and often grinding poverty was expressed with a distinct attitude and explicit body language.

As the birth period of the hip-hop generation was coming to an end in 1984, at least according to Kitwana's formulation, the "climate

change generation" was starting to be born, according to Mark Hertsgaard, author of *Hot: Living through the Next Fifty Years on Earth* (2011). Hertsgaard tags its beginning year as 1988, which was the year in which NASA's James Hansen, one of the world's eminent climate change scientists, testified before a Senate committee that "global warming had begun." The following year, Bill McKibben wrote the first popular book on global warming, *The End of Nature*. He refers to our new planet as *Eaarth*, suggesting that it is similar but different and will become increasingly so throughout the life of the climate change generation. In his words, "We have changed the atmosphere and thus we are changing the weather. By changing the weather, we make every spot on earth man-made or artificial" (1989: 58). As a result, it is believed that we are losing over one hundred species every day. Nature's response is not man-made; rather, it is based on artificial stimuli according to a built-in logic formulated over billions of years. We have little idea of what that logic is, which is why the response to what we have done to the planet appears increasingly chaotic. Rather than responding to this transformative change as if it were linear, we should think of it and so respond to it as nonlinear climate chaos.

Some scientists now think that it was during the 1980s that humans began to overshoot the capacity of the planet. They believe that we are currently overshooting by as much as 150 percent its biocapacity to sustain the global economy and absorb our waste without losing its regenerative capacity. In other words, our industrial systems are overstressing our ecological systems, destroying biodiversity, exhausting resources, and dumping pollution on the planet and into its atmosphere faster than either Earth or Eaarth can absorb it. If the global economy were to grow by, say, 3.2 percent annually until 2050, we could overshoot Earth's carrying capacity by 500 to 700 percent. That means that several additional planets would be needed to maintain our lifestyle using today's technology.

The climate change generation will have to deal with much hotter cities, more frequent and violent mega-storms, rising seas, reduced agricultural yields, changing precipitation patterns and levels, and, maybe most intimidating, water shortages. They also must deal with co-optation and corporate manipulation by faux green washing and

the urgent necessity to both mitigate the causes of climate change and adapt to the effects of environmental chaos. Undoubtedly they will butt heads with the fossil fuel industry.

That said, it is not inevitable that the fossil fuel industry will win out over the climate change generation. Some victories against the industry are already being won by the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign. Since 2007, the groups affiliated with this campaign have succeeded in blocking some 130 new coal-fired plants through cancellations and prohibitions in some areas. As a result, Wall Street has downgraded many coal company stocks, and it is now difficult for the companies to secure financing and insurance. Beyond Coal campaigners are not anti-energy; they simply want carbon-neutral, renewable energy to replace fossil fuels. And they are getting their way. In 2008 and 2009, the world invested more in renewable energy than in fossil fuels or nuclear power.

The climate change generation is learning from previous generational movements, and they know that their movement is the largest the world has ever known. One of the beauties of it, is that it is leaderless, which means that no one person or group is available for the climate destroyers to "buy off," "drug up," or "wipe out" and in this way end or even derail the movement. Africana studies, which provided stocks and streams of knowledge for the hip-hop generation and studied hip-hop in all its genres and nuances, can contribute to the climate change generation's struggle against fossil fuels and toxic chemicals.

Although race, rather than class, is a far better predictor of the location of hazardous environmental sites and economic activities, the glaring exception of Appalachia comes to mind. According to Michele Morrone and Geoffrey Buckley (2011), poor Appalachian whites have mortality rates higher than those in a growing number of developing nations. For well over a century, they were treated like colonial subjects of an oppressed periphery country or like internal colonial workers in a wealthy core country—paid low wages and laboring in hostile working conditions to extract commodities that were shipped to more privileged regions, where they contributed to higher-value-added activity that created higher wages, better working conditions, and higher standards of living for those citizens.

As Morrone and Buckley report, community-based organizations (CBOs) and social movement organizations (SMOs) such as the Keepers of the Mountain Foundation and Mountain Justice are working to improve the environmental, working, and residential living conditions in Appalachia. Africana studies and the environmental justice movement should be working with these groups. As Oliver Cox stated in his classic study, *Caste, Class, and Race*, "[Blacks] and the poor whites are exploited by the white ruling class, and this has been done most effectively by the maintenance of antagonistic attitudes between the white and the colored masses. Could anything be more feared, is any aspect of race relations more opposed by this ruling class than a *rapprochement* between the white and the colored masses?" (1948: 473).

According to a recent study, we are not quite at a white-black rapprochement in Appalachia. Using the new Google Insights search tool, Seth Stephens-Davidowitz (2012), compared Americans' Google searches with their voting patterns to determine the frequency of words searched in different parts of the country. His study revealed which region had most frequently searched topics that included the word "nigger(s)." It turns out that West Virginia, which is ground zero for Appalachia, was number one. As progressive Appalachian CBOs and SMOs successfully battle racial ignorance and racial prejudices and as Africana studies successfully generates innovative knowledge and continues its efforts to undermine racism, there will be greater opportunities for more citizens from different walks of life and social environments to collaborate in reining in the power of the fossil fuel industry. Grace Lee Boggs eloquently but steelily asks, "How are we going to build a twenty-first-century America in which people of all races and ethnicities live together in harmony, and European Americans embrace their new role as one among many minorities constituting the new multiethnic majority?" (2011: 30). Africana and environmental studies are leading the scholarly, activist, and professional endeavors that are bound to push society forward in these areas.

Collaboration is the best way for Africana and environmental programs to meet the needs of multiple communities. For example, restricting coal-fired power plants lessens the need for coal and thereby reduces the environmental degradation from coal mining and preshipping production in Appalachia. And since coal-fired power plants,

which emit arsenic, chromium, manganese, beryllium, and other toxic heavy metals, are typically located in black and other communities of color, the health of residents can be improved. Finally, since there are far more jobs generated by each megawatt of power from renewables than from fossil fuels, blacks, Appalachians, and other less advantaged groups will ultimately benefit from renewable energy and other forms of green job creation. Significantly, "in the wind industry alone, over 80,000 jobs have been created over the past decade—the same number of jobs that exist in the entire US coal mining industry. And wind still makes up only 1.9 percent of the US energy mix, while coal accounts for over 44.5 percent of US energy production" (Rifkin 2011: 43).

Coal-fired electric power as a share of the nation's total continues to decline; currently it stands at 36 percent. In March 2012, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced an upgrade to its restrictions to no more than one thousand pounds of carbon emissions per megawatt hour, which further weakens coal production (Barringer 2012). Coal producers had already been weakened by numerous environmental groups working with the Beyond Coal campaign. More green communities of color and a greener society can be achieved faster and in greater abundance when Africana and environmental studies work closely together.

Layout of the Book

Chapter 1 develops and examines the proposition that Africana studies—an important field with much to celebrate in nearly fifty years in the academy—has given insufficient attention to the environment. Its laudable mission, through scholarship and community engagement, is to be a transformative force in combating the many ills of the black community and in raising the prospects for improvements in the black experience. And it has contributed to the achievement of these goals except for one glaring omission: the environment. The environment in many black communities in the United States, in Africa, and in parts of the diaspora is literally killing black people, and yet only a tiny percentage of Africana professors and programs have the environment as a centralized focus of their teaching.

Chapter 2 takes on the challenging task of initiating a conversation between Africana and environmental studies that could lead to organic relationships whereby each has an important and prominent role to play in the other's endeavors. The two fields have long, proud, and unique traditions, but their missions in the academy and in broader society can be made more successful by collaborating intimately and endlessly. The conversation starts at the paradigmatic level in each field. I provide a brief primer on major paradigms, first in environmental studies and then in Africana studies. Then I illustrate how constructs associated with each paradigm in each field can connect with others. I provide only a sketch of the fields' multidirectional paradigmatic discourse, which will undoubtedly become much more sophisticated in due course. Also, I present a green Africana studies curriculum and its rationale.

In Chapter 3, I discuss locally unwanted land uses (LULUs), which are hugely disproportionately located in black and other communities of color, even when controlling for socioeconomic status. The LULUs closely examined are brownfields and toxics release inventory (TRI) facilities. In addition to LULUs, African Americans, who primarily reside in urban areas, are disproportionately adversely affected by urban heat island (UHI) effects. UHI "is defined as the temperature differential between the contiguous rural area and its related urbanized space" (Johnson and Wilson 2009: 420). Differences in the types of land coverage and the built community make it difficult for inner-city neighborhoods to dissipate heat at night in comparison to neighborhoods in outer suburbs and contiguous rural areas. People may live in the same metropolitan area, but they can experience different temperatures. Low-income communities and communities of color tend to live in hotter neighborhoods with detrimental health effects (Huang, Zhou, and Cadenasso 2011). Extreme heat and air pollution trigger significant health problems, which are expected to be further exacerbated by climate change (Harlan and Ruddell 2011). Africana scholars who do not engage environmental concerns might better appreciate how the physical environment in a great percentage of black neighborhoods is contributing to premature deaths, high morbidity rates, stunted human potential, and economic stagnation. Environmental scholars

who have not focused on environmental problems that concentrate in neighborhoods of color may also benefit. I make a novel effort in this chapter to associate the hundreds of U.S. cities that have Africana studies programs with the brownfields and TRI facilities in them. Because the EPA arranges the United States into ten separate regions, I also aggregate the numbers of Africana studies programs and LULUs within each. There is a strong correlation between the locations of Africana programs and the major LULUs covered in this book. Among the important takeaways from this is that Africana studies programs need not leave their backyards to address environmental problems. As they more demonstrably engage local environmental problems, their students will gain additional interest in and expertise to take up such pursuits professionally.

Chapter 4 focuses on green jobs. African American and other students in Africana studies are similar to students in other academic programs in that they want their education and credentials to lead to interesting, fulfilling, and rewarding careers. In this chapter I illustrate the many opportunities for well-trained, credentialed professionals to address the industrially induced environmental problems of today—climate change, weakening ecosystems, and declining biodiversity among many others—or to contribute to the designing and building of the green economy and society of the future. Such a range of jobs will exist not only for Africana studies graduates but also for college graduates in other disciplines, of all colors, as well as those who are not college educated. I also illustrate the extent to which the green jobs of today are located in the states and EPA regions where Africana programs are located.

Chapter 5 explores environmental challenges and opportunities on the African continent. It also discusses the economic transformations that are well under way in many African countries. Africa is growing at twice the economic rate of Brazil and has a larger middle class than India. More important, childhood death rates have plummeted over the past decade. While all of this is obviously good news, there is a bit of a conundrum: many want quality of life to continue improving and for Africans to have more choices in their lives, but the gains that come from fossil fuel–based industrialization can be short-lived as they exacerbate Africa's environmental problems, which

are manifested in droughts, floods, desertification, and weakening ecosystems and in the cascading problems that they trigger. I discuss how green African transnationalism may help African nations take on pioneering roles in niched green technology fields by making strategic use of the African diaspora, particularly in core nations.

Following each chapter are one or two vignettes written by individuals whose work and associations are already at the intersection of Africana and environmental studies. These practitioners and intellectuals are doing interesting and important work, and they add a texture to the discussion that would have been difficult to achieve without them. I think readers will find the vignettes stimulating and a source of ideas from which to draw for their own work.

Finally, I should point out that discussions of LULUs (especially brownfields) and green jobs are fraught with ambiguity. Academics, of course, can handle ambiguity, as it is typically associated with their starting points, and they work toward more certainty and clarity as best they can. Reaching for precise figures, or at least formulating clear and exacting principles while dealing with ambiguity, is the hallmark of much academic work, and patience is needed if one is working with imprecision. Thus, I cannot speak precisely about numbers of brownfields and green jobs, but I do want to work with the best numbers possible in my analysis of both. In other words, I do not avoid analyzing hugely important phenomena simply because of the ambiguity they embody. In Chapter 3 I discuss why the number of brownfields cannot be precise, and in Chapter 4 I do the same with green jobs. The pointedness of the conclusions I draw does not diminish because a given EPA region or state has a little more or a little fewer brownfields than the number I use in my analysis. Moreover, I use secondary data from an authoritative source: the EPA. This point is also relevant to green jobs. Consider, for example, that a commercial airline pilot and a pedicurist fall into pretty clear-cut job categories. This is not the case with green jobs. As I do for brownfields, I simply analyze job or employment data culled from an authoritative source—in this instance the U.S. Department of Labor.

The empirical data in Chapter 1 provide precise figures on the extent to which Africana scholars, programs, and academic journals cover the intersection of the environment and the black experience,

but once again, there are limitations. I discuss these limitations and the methodology used to obtain the data. Note that the number of Africana studies programs given in Chapter 1 is different from the number cited in Chapter 3 because of differences in criteria and updates to *eBlack Studies*. Reproducing my study with the same methodology or with a totally different methodology could move the numbers a little higher or lower, but it would not alter the conclusion that Africana scholars have not covered the environmental concerns confronting the black community in the same way they have brilliantly covered other concerns—not even close. A goal of this book is to provide direction for further work that could be accomplished through the collaborative efforts of Africana and environmental studies scholars and professionals.