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Examination Of The Transformational Life Experiences Of Malcolm X And Their Impact On His Leadership, Beliefs, And Leadership Practices

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An Examination of the Transformational Life Experiences of Malcolm X and
Their Impact on His Leadership, Beliefs, and Leadership Practices

Brenda Dobbins Barber
North Carolina A&T State University

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department: Leadership Studies

Major: Leadership Studies

Major Professor: Dr. Forrest D. Toms

Greensboro, North Carolina

2011

School of Graduate Studies
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Greensboro, North Carolina
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my maternal grandmother and grandfather, Mr. and Mrs. William Lester Wilfong Sr., who were entrepreneurs in the Black community who provided a place for students to eat their lunch on a regular basis while they attended the only Black high school in the community and county from 1945-1952. They were insistent on sharing the value of education and the need to have an education.

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Mr. Augustus G. Dobbins and Mrs. Frances Bowick, my husband, M. Calvin Barber, and my daughters, Mrs. Amanda G. Redmon, (Seth) and Ms. Sasha D. Martin, for their love, support and understanding and believing in me. This dissertation is also dedicated to my extended family for believing in me since childhood and encouraging me throughout this tedious journey to strive for an education. I am forever grateful to all of my family and extended family for every prayer, every word of encouragement and advice in building my confidence and attention toward furthering my education.

Biographical Sketch

Brenda Dobbins Barber was born on January 3, 1958 in North Wilkesboro, North Carolina. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Human Services from Gardner-Webb University, in 2001, and a double Masters of Arts degree in Teaching Parent Specialty and Community Counseling, with a minor in Addictions, from Appalachian State University in 2005. She received her Doctorate in Leadership Studies from North Carolina Agricultural and State University in 2011.

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine the life experiences of Malcolm X that led to his beliefs, practices, and transformation as a leader. This study utilized qualitative historical social science research methods that included document analysis, article review, and analysis of materials obtained from web sites. Archival data analyzed included electronic documents, web sites, books, letters, as well as first hand quotes from Malcolm's own writings, lectures, speeches, and first hand reports from wife Betty Shabazz, his children, Alex Haley, and other sources related to Malcolm's life history.

The study's objective was to identify and examine life changing experiences and their impact on Malcolm as a transformational leader. After careful review of the literature, the researcher conceptualized and framed four periods (ages 4-15, ages 16-23, ages 24-30 and 31-39) that were utilized to highlight critical and life changing experiences. In each period of his life, seminal incidents were identified in terms of their importance to understanding Malcolm X as a transformative leader.

This study holds the potential to inform leaders of our own time regarding the struggle against racial inequality, social oppression, as well as class exploitation. It is my hope that this study will encourage further research on the uniqueness of African-American transformative leadership.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Since the arrival of Black folk to America, Black leaders have relentlessly attempted to remove the shackles from the Black folk's feet and from the pure hatred, the racism and poverty suffered in America. Malcolm X's life from beginning to end, and even after his death, continues to resonate with the fight for human rights and against racism. My research explores the experiences of Malcolm X and how they shaped his contributions to African American transformational leadership.

"I for one," Malcolm X once said, "believe that if you give people a thorough understanding of what confronts them and the basic causes that produce it, they'll create their own program, and when the people create a program, you get action!" In so many respects, Malcolm X was a man who, in retrospect, was far ahead of his time. In the tradition of the Afro-Caribbean socialist historian and activist C. L. R. James (1936, 1937, 1938), Malcolm was a Gramscian organic intellectual who articulated the feelings, experiences and aspirations of Black working class people. With the recent publication of Manning Marable's (2011) biography on Malcolm X, once again his ideas have resurfaced and are being seriously reconsidered as a major force in the liberation of Black people in the United States. When Civil Rights leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr., and Whitney Young argued that racism was the only blemish on American democracy, Malcolm brilliantly exposed the "American democracy" as a nightmare for Blacks. Malcolm X's life—as a laborer, prisoner, Muslim and international political figure—shows how his individual resistance to the U.S. Empire inspired many and become transformed into a form of collective resistance. During his life, he was admired and hated for his being a man of uncompromising integrity and action, the dialectical negation of the politics of

compromise embodied in the nonviolent, middle-class oriented leadership of the Civil Rights movement. As Manning Marable (2011) notes, Malcolm “presented himself as an uncompromising man wholly dedicated to the empowerment of Black people, without regard to his own personal safety. Even those who rejected his politics recognized his sincerity” (p. 11) Benjamin Goodman (1971), who became one of Malcolm’s followers, describes his impact on him:

Here was a man who could walk boldly into the jaws of the lion, walk proud and tall into the territory of the enemy . . . and force him to capitulate. Here was a man who could help restore the heritage, the pride of race and pride of self, that had been carefully stripped from us over the four hundred years of our enslavement here in white America.
(p. 4)

Throughout his life, Malcolm always assumed an approachable and intimate outward style which contrasted with the traditional image of the Black leader. The complex layers of his life provided him with the ability to relate to nitty-gritty material realities of the Black working class. As a master of public rhetoric and debate, he could artfully recount tales about his life in order to expose the wretched conditions of the oppressed and exploited. No matter the context, Malcolm exuded charisma and wit. With his healthy sense of humor, he could place any ideological opponent off guard and advance a convincing argument.

This study holds the potential to inform leaders of our own time regarding the struggle against racial inequality, social oppression, as well as class exploitation. It is my hope that this study will encourage others to recognize the connections between racial discrimination and class inequality, and work to remedy these

Chapter 1 provides a brief synopsis of Malcolm's traumatic, yet inspirational, life from his birth in 1925 until his death in 1965. Chapter 2 defines transformational leadership theory which I use as a conceptual framework to analyze the revolutionary leadership of Malcolm X. The third chapter brings to light Malcolm's early life experiences with racism and their long standing impact on Malcolm's development as a leader. In the fourth chapter I explore Malcolm's life as both a laborer and criminal as he moves from rural Lansing Michigan to the urban cities, particularly Boston, Massachusetts and Harlem, New York. During this period, Malcolm's intellectual mind is opened to Black political culture and Black urban working class life. I also examine the role of Al-Islam, particularly the eschatology of the Nation of Islam, on Malcolm's political development. Chapter 5 follows Malcolm as he proselytizes on behalf of the Nation of Islam, teaching the political theology of Elijah Muhammad and working tirelessly to build its organizational structure. Chapter 6 explores Malcolm's burgeoning leadership role in the Nation of Islam and his eventual political split with the Nation of Islam. In the final chapter, I summarize the results of my case study and attempt to connect Malcolm's transformational leadership with elements of his political ideology.

The Evolution of a Revolutionary: Malcolm X as a Transformational Leader

Malcolm X was one of the most influential twentieth century political figures in African American political culture and history. Born in Omaha, Nebraska, on May 19, 1925, Malcolm X was assassinated on February 21, 1965.

Malcolm was the fourth child born to Earl and Helen Louise Little. Malcolm's father was an outspoken Baptist minister, and devoted follower of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). According to Malcolm, his mother Louise looked like a white woman, as her father was white. Malcolm recounted that early in his life he thought it was a

status symbol to be light-skinned, but later realized his skin color was a direct result of white rapist blood (Haley, 1965). Malcolm was the lightest child in his family, born with red hair. He stated that he was favored by his Dad. And, yet, he also stated that he was treated harshly by his mother for the very same reason. Malcolm recounted that his mother had been threatened by the Ku Klux Klansmen while she was pregnant with him in December 1924. Malcolm's mother recalled the Klansmen warning the family to leave Omaha because Earl Little's activities with the UNIA were "stirring up trouble" (Haley, 1965).

In 1931, Earl Little was found dead with his head bashed in. Authorities ruled his death as a suicide, and only one of the two insurance policies paid death benefits, which was the smaller policy (Haley, 1965). Not long after Earl Little's death, Malcolm's mother, Louise Little, had a nervous breakdown and was declared legally insane in December 1938. Malcolm and his siblings were split up and sent to different foster homes. Louise Little was formally committed to the state mental hospital at Kalamazoo, Michigan. Malcolm and his siblings secured her release 26 years later (Haley, 1965)

Malcolm Little graduated from junior high school at the top of his class but dropped out of middle school soon after a teacher told him that his aspirations of being a lawyer were "no realistic goal for a nigger" (Epps, 1968, p. 20). After withstanding several foster homes, Malcolm was sent to a detention center. From the detention center, Malcolm moved to Boston to live with his older half-sister, Ella Little Collins. Malcolm held a variety of working-class jobs including Pullman porter on the New Haven Railroad. However, at the age of 17, Malcolm became involved with Boston's underworld culture (Collins & Bailey, 1998).

In January of 1946, Malcolm Little was arrested and convicted of burglary and weapons possession charges, and received a seven year prison sentence. Malcolm placated himself by

furthering his education. It was also during this time that Malcolm's sibling, Reginald, introduced him to the Nation of Islam, a movement in the tradition of millennial Black Nationalism, led by Elijah Muhammad. Muhammad taught that the white "Devils" actively worked to keep African Americans from empowering themselves and achieving political, economic, and social success. The Nation of Islam fought for a state of their own, separate from one inhabited by white people. Malcolm Little experienced a spiritual and intellectual awakening while in prison. Emerging from prison in August 1952, Malcolm was a devoted follower with the new surname "X," as he considered "Little" a slave name and chose the "X" to signify the Lost Tribe of Shabazz (Myers, 1993).

In 1954, the talented, intelligent, and articulate - Malcolm X was appointed national spokesman for the Nation of Islam and minister of Detroit Temple #1. Later he was named minister of Harlem's Temple #7, which he led for almost a decade. Malcolm X utilized newspaper columns, radio, and television, and traveled constantly across the country to communicate the message of the Nation of Islam. His charisma, drive, conviction and determination attracted an overwhelmingly number of new members (Leader, 1993). Malcolm is credited with increasing the membership in the Nation of Islam from five hundred to thirty thousand by 1963 and was personally responsible for establishing more than one hundred Muslim temples or mosques throughout the U.S. By the early 1960's, Malcolm X was a widely celebrated public speaker and debater at universities and in the national media (Leader, 1993). The Federal Bureau of Investigation's efforts to discredit the Nation of Islam and its leaders led the agency to infiltrate the organization, to participate in unlawful wiretappings, and harassment, as well as to monitor by camera various group meetings (Leader, 1993).

In 1960, Malcolm X established the newspaper *Muhammad Speaks*. The paper had national circulation of 600,000. It was the most widely read Black owned newspaper in the country over the span of a decade (Haley, 1965). During this time period, Malcolm X's faith was dealt a devastating blow as he learned that Elijah Muhammad had fathered a number of children out of wedlock. Malcolm strictly adhered to the teachings of Muhammad including remaining celibate until his marriage to Betty Shabazz in 1958. In addition to disagreeing with Elijah Muhammad's infidelities, Malcolm was also in disagreement with the Nation of Islam's policy of non-involvement in political issues, particularly its non-involvement in the Civil Rights movement.

In 1964, Muhammad silenced Malcolm X for 90 days. In reference to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Malcolm had argued that Kennedy's assassination was an instance of "the chickens coming home to roost" (Leader, 1993). In March of 1964, Malcolm X decided to formally terminate his relationship with the Nation of Islam. He subsequently founded two new organizations, the Muslim Mosque, Inc., designed for former Nation of Islam members as a spiritually based group, and a secular political organization, which he named the Organization of Afro-American Unity (Leader, 1993).

Upon conversion to Sunni Islam, Malcolm X completed his spiritual pilgrimage to Mecca in April 1964. During extended journeys through Africa and the Middle East, Malcolm X gained new insights into the problem of racism and its relationship to world capitalism. In the *Autobiography*, Malcolm argues: "I was no less angry that I had been, but at the same time the true brotherhood I had seen had influenced me to recognize that anger can blind human vision" (as cited in Haley, 1965, p. 381). This spiritual journey was life altering for Malcolm as he met fellow Muslims practicing brotherhood. Malcolm's message could now preach not only to

African Americans, but also to all races of people (Haley, 1965). Through these experiences, Malcolm did not become blind to the existence of racism, national oppression and class exploitation. Rather, he came to see the need to transform the civil rights struggle into a human rights struggle.

According to Leader (1993), Malcolm X's new political strategy called for building Black community empowerment through voter registration and education, economic self-sufficiency, and the development of independent political parties. Malcolm X called on African Americans and African American leaders to transform the civil rights movement into a struggle for international human rights (Leader, 1993).

In the last months of Malcolm X's life, he emphasized the similarities between the African American struggle for equality and the Asian, Latino, and African campaigns against European imperialism. However, Malcolm X gained attention for criticizing the growing U.S. military involvement in Vietnam (Marable, 1992).

On his return to the United States in November 1964, Malcolm received a multitude of death threats against him and his family. On February 14, 1965, his home in East Elmhurst, Queens, New York was firebombed. Malcolm, his wife Betty, and their four daughters escaped physical harm. On February 21, 1965, at a speaking engagement in the Manhattan's Audubon Ballroom, Malcolm X/El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz was assassinated before a crowd of hundreds, including his pregnant wife, Betty Shabazz and four of his six children. Three gunmen rushed Malcolm onstage and shot him fifteen times at close range. Approximately 1,500 people attended Malcolm X's funeral in Harlem at the Faith Temple Church of God in Christ on February 27, 1965. After the services, friends took shovels from the gravediggers and buried Malcolm themselves. Betty Shabazz gave birth to their twin daughters later that year.

Research Methodology

Qualitative research as a method of inquiry seeks to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. Mandelbaum (1973) argues that the quantity of data collected in a life history should be organized in order to analyze the data with progressive results as the researcher can focus on (a) critical dimensions or aspects of the person's life, (b) principal turning points and the life conditions between them, and (c) the person's characteristic means of adaptation (as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

By focusing on Malcolm X's life history, this research attempts to build an understanding of the particular socio-historical context within which Malcolm acted, and the influence this context had on his development into a transformational leader. This study employs of qualitative research methods of historical social science such as document analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), article review, and analysis of information available from websites. Archival data examined consist of written materials to include electronic documents, websites, books, and letters firsthand quotes from Malcolm's own writings, lectures, speeches; as well as firsthand reports from Betty Shabazz, his children; and other sources related to Malcolm's life history. After a careful reading of Malcolm's life-changing experiences and their impact on him, I have mapped out four periods (ages 4-15, ages 16-23, ages 24-30, and ages 31-39) that will serve to highlight critical dimensions (see Table 1).

In each period of his life, I identify seminal incidents that are important to understanding Malcolm X as a transformative leader. In particular, I am interested in the influence of family background, relative wealth or poverty, education, and contact with whites on his development as a leader and his economic and political philosophies. It should be pointed out that I take Malcolm's own assessment of the factors leading to his development at face value (cf. Rosaldo,

1989, on informant accounts as analyses in their own right). I have made an effort to check Malcolm's own assessment against the growing body of secondary literature. Emphasis was on the question of the extent to which racism has been influential on his development into a transformational leader. I argue that racism forms the determinate difference between African-American and Euro-American transformational leaders.

Table 1

Malcolm X's Stages of Life and Life-changing Experiences

Stage	Life-changing Experiences
Stage 1 4-15 years old Early Life Experiences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Little's Family's Early Encounter with Racist Groups 2. Death of Malcolm's father 3. Malcolm's family is on Welfare 4. Placement in Foster Homes and Detention Center
Stage 2 16-23 years old In the Wilderness of America	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Malcolm moves to Boston to and is exposed to Middle Class Blacks and Working Class Blacks 2. Malcolm is exposed to Black Working Class Culture 3. Loss of Freedom: Prison Experience 4. Malcolm introduced to the Nation of Islam
Stage 3 24-30 years old Transformation of a Leader	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Malcolm's release from prison and his stay with his brother Wilfred 2. Malcolm moves to Chicago to live with Elijah Muhammad while studying for the Ministry, and changes his name 3. Malcolm sets up mosque in Detroit, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and serves as assistant minister and official minister.
Stage 4 31-39 years old National Representative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Political and Personal Conflict with Elijah Muhammad 2. Assassination of John F. Kennedy, Split with the Nation of Islam 3. Trip to Mecca and Africa 4. Speeches of Malcolm X at Harvard 5. The Death of Malcolm X

Data Collection Procedures

Data collected included Malcolm's own writings, speeches, and lectures along with biographies written about Malcolm that include descriptions of experiences that influenced him. Archival data was collected from electronic documents, websites, books, letters, and speeches given by Malcolm X, with focus placed on the life-changing experiences and their impact on

Malcolm in the four stages of his life identified earlier. My research draws primarily on the following materials: *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965); Pathfinder's (1990) *Malcolm X on Afro—American History*; Roger Epps's (1968) *The Speeches of Malcolm X at Harvard*; James L. Conyers, Jr. and Andrew P. Smallwood's (2008) *Malcolm X: A Historical Reader*; Karl Evanzz's (1992) *The Judas Factor: The Plot To Kill Malcolm X*; and the recent biography by Manning Marable titled *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (2011).

Data Analysis

The framework of analysis is founded by reading several primary sources. Due to this information being obtained from published documents such as newspapers, magazines, TV news shows, and reviewing websites, there existed no confidentiality issues. The data were analyzed for common themes, trends and issues, regarding the life changing experiences of Malcolm X during the four stages of his life.

The analytical procedures used in identifying and selecting the stages and categories employed in this research were completed in the following phases: (a) collection of primary sources; (b) read and reviewed the data for common themes, trends, and issues regarding life changing events in Malcolm X's life; (c) initially identified and developed a list of ten life-changing events at various ages appearing in the data; (d) reviewed, analyzed, and identified the four most significant life changing events appearing in the data; (e) developed a chart identifying four Stages of Life by age; (f) identified and developed a chart identifying Life Changing Experiences of Malcolm X including the four most significant life changing events occurring in each of Malcolm X's Life periods ; and (g) documented findings in qualitative research of common themes, trends, and issues.

Once the data was analyzed and reviewed for common themes and issues, a conclusion was drawn on the experiences that enabled Malcolm X to be a transformational leader. I also discuss the ideological impact of his transformational leadership.

Significance of the Study

In 1940, African American political scientist Ralph Bunche was asked to submit an analysis of African-American political ideology, and African American leaders and organizations to Gunnar Myradal, in preparation of the infamous *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*. Part of what Bunche submitted was an ethnographic approach to Black leadership titled, “A Brief and Tentative Analysis of Negro Leadership.” Bunche attempted to develop a “scientific analysis of Negro leadership” (Bunche, 2005, p. 31). Few have matched Bunche’s efforts to undertake a comprehensive analysis of Negro leadership. Because the political influence of the Nation of Islam does not reach its height until the 1960s, Bunche had nothing to say about the iconic Malcolm X. Serious attention would have to be devoted to Malcolm’s charismatic leadership and organizational skills if Bunche’s analysis were to be updated. While I cannot hope to match the brilliance of Bunche’s analysis, my study of Malcolm makes an important contribution to transformation leadership theory, which has historically focused on Euro-American leadership.

Definition

For the purpose of this study, a transformational leader is defined as one with a restless compulsion to challenge the status quo. Transformational leaders often articulate their vision using metaphors and stories in ways that allow everyone to understand the vision.

Transformational and charismatic people have a remarkable ability to distill complex ideas into

simple messages “by any means necessary.” Transformational leaders are great optimists and their followers see the leader as one that possesses the ability to visualize the future with clarity.

Transformational leaders encourage invocation and creativity by developing new ways of looking at current challenges (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Preparation, practice and a commitment to learn new strategies and techniques enhance opportunities to communicate effectively with other people. Persuasive communication then stimulates and motivates individuals to achieve desired goals and objectives. The task of bringing about change is complex and requires a steady and persistent plan. The major focus has to be on acquiring results.

For example, in one of Malcolm’s speeches, he speaks on the house Negro and the field Negro. Malcolm informs his audience of the two kinds of Negroes. The house Negro always looked out for his master. Consequently, the house Negro is rewarded. He or she ate better, dressed better, and lived in a better house, either the attic or the basement of the master’s house, than most Black slaves. The house Negro ate the same food as the master, wore the same clothes as the master, and even talked like the master, using proper English. Despite being a slave, Malcolm argues, the house Negro loves the slave master and does not see anything fundamentally wrong with slavery. Malcolm observes:

If the master got sick, he’d say: “What’s the matter, boss, we sick?” If the master’s house caught afire, he’d try to put out the fire because he didn’t want anything to happen to the master or the master’s property. Malcolm says the house Negro was more defensive of master’s property than master. (Pathfinder, 1990, p. 76)

On the other hand, Malcolm identifies what he terms the field Negroes who lives in the slave quarters, wearing the worst clothes and eating the worst food. Malcolm argues the field Negroes caught hell, as they felt the sting of the lash. The field Negroes hated working for the slave

master and wished for the master to get sick and die. In fact, if the master's house were to catch fire, the field Negro would pray for a strong wind.

Here Malcolm makes his point quite clear. With great subtlety, he identifies with the objective political interest of the toiling Black masses who continue to be exploited by the American empire. As a field Negro, if he can't live as a human being, then he is praying for a strong wind to come along. He argues,

If the master won't treat me right and he is sick, then I'll call the doctor to go the opposite way. However if all of us are going to live as human beings, then I'm for a society of human beings that can practice brotherhood. (Pathfinder, 1990, p. 76)

Research Questions

Life histories and narrative inquiry (Creswell 2009) are methods that collect, analyze, and interpret the stories people tell about their lives. Life histories and narrative inquiry methods are helpful in providing the reader with an insider's view of a culture or era in history (Edgerton & Langness, 1974, as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 2006). For the purposes of this study, I have identified the following relevant research questions:

1. What influenced Malcolm to become a leader?
2. What life changing experiences did Malcolm have that impacted his development as a leader?
3. What impact did racism have on Malcolm X's development into a transformational leader?
4. What role did class have on Malcolm X's leadership?
5. What contributions did Malcolm make to the national democratic struggles of African Americans?

6. What political and personal factors made Malcolm successful as a leader?

CHAPTER 2

Transformational Leadership

“Leadership over human beings,” James MacGregor Burns (1978) observes, “is exercised when person with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage, and satisfy the motives of followers” (p. 18). At various points in his life, Malcolm was a laborer, a criminal, a minister, a leader, and, in death, a political icon (Marable, 2011). Yet, by any standard, Malcolm was one of the most significant African-American leaders of the twentieth century. More than this, however, Malcolm was a transformative leader. Through his transformational leadership style, he was able to create valuable and positive change in followers, focusing on “transforming” others into leaders. In this chapter, I outline transformational leadership theory, which is used as a conceptual framework to analyze the revolutionary leadership of Malcolm X.

James MacGregor Burns first introduced the concept of transforming leadership in his descriptive research on political leaders. Since then, his concept has been used in a variety of disciplines, most prominently organizational psychology. From Burns’ standpoint, it is easy to confuse management with leadership. Subsequently, he suggested that management should be seen as a form of transactional leadership, as opposed to authentic leadership, which is transformational. According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership is a process in which “leaders and followers make each other advance to a higher level of morale and motivation” (p. 4). Also characteristic of transformational leadership is that the transformational style creates significant change as it redesigns perceptions and values, as well as changes expectations and aspirations of its followers.

Transformational leadership stands in stark contrast to what Burns calls transactional leadership. Transactional leadership is a brokerage model of leadership. Under this model, a leader is one who brings about political action and/or change through a form of high-level negotiation. The result is a notion of leadership that substitutes for popular mobilization. This model raises many questions regarding democratic representation—such as how to achieve accountability of spokespersons; how to stimulate and safeguard open debate; how to define plausible constituencies. A telling example of transactional leadership in African-American intellectual history is none other than the Tuskegee Wizard himself: Booker T. Washington. More than Frederick Douglass, Washington's importance rested on being the singular, trusted informant to communicate to whites what African-American people thought, felt, wanted and needed. It is the case that Washington skillfully became the race spokesman; his status, in effect, depended on designation by white elites rather than any Black electorate or social movement. His leadership was not based on genuinely popular, deliberative processes and concrete, interest-based organizing that connects with people's daily lives. Washington's leadership style was not geared towards building a political movement and fueling political education for popular mobilization. The transactional model of leadership does not lend itself to democratic representation, much less popular or mass political mobilization. Rather, we are left with leadership that is prone to opportunism and political movements with an anti-democratic foundation.

As Burns observes, transformational leadership is “a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents” (p. 4). Researcher Bernard M. Bass (1985) suggests that a transformational leader's leadership is measured by his or her influence on the followers. The followers of transformational leaders feel

trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect. Transformational leaders' help followers grow and develop into leaders, themselves, by responding to individual followers' needs. They are able to empower other leaders, and align the objectives and goals of individual followers with those of the leader, group and the larger organization. Transformational leaders are often charismatic, but not narcissistic. These leaders actually transform and motivate followers using their charisma, intellectual arousal and individual consideration (Bass, 1985). The transformational leader seeks new working ways and attempts to identify new opportunities while maintaining passion and energy through motivation.

Explanation of Statement

Transformational leadership theory is the process in which an individual engages with others and develops a connection between themselves as leader, and the other as follower, influencing motivation, morals, and performance. James MacGregor Burns first introduced transformational leadership theory in 1978. Drawing on Max Weber's (1968) influential study of charismatic leadership, Burns discusses leadership as transforming. He contends that the leader and those being led were transformed, resulting in a change in their performance and their outlook. Bass (1985), in addition to Howell and Avolio (1992), have offered further insights into the morality of transformational leadership.

Burns suggests that the leader must be morally uplifting to be transformational. Yet he observes that leaders can be virtuous or villainous depending on their morals and values. Burns says that for leaders to have the greatest impact, they must motivate followers to action by appealing to common values while at the same time satisfying the higher order needs of followers to include their aspirations and expectations. Howell and Avolio (1992) argue that only socialized leaders interested in the common good could undoubtedly be transformational leaders,

while understandably personalized leaders—concerned only with their own self-interest—could not. In essence, a leader’s ability to influence others—while striving for congruence of values—will lead followers to achieve goals and objectives. Burks’s (1978) conceptual framework offers important insights into the reasons why a variety of leaders have had a significant impact on society—some positive and some negative.

Major Components

The major components of transformational leadership theory are “idealized influence,” “inspirational motivation,” “intellectual stimulation,” and “individualized consideration.” These factors suggest that the leader must possess charisma: there must be a link with morality, and personal identification between the leader and the follower, as well as social identification between the leader and the follower.

Idealized influence and inspirational motivation refer to “charisma” (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999; Bass, 1985). These two components are similar to the behaviors noted in theories of charismatic leadership (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Idealized influence states that in addition to possessing charisma, the leader must (a) have the skill to impart a sense of working together in a joint effort toward the same hopes and dreams of others; (b) have the ability to confront and address the crisis with urgency and head on, while simultaneously soothing the tensions of critical events; and (c) be willing to sacrifice self for the benefit of the followers, leading by example and modeling exemplary ethical standards. Inspirational motivation factors include presenting an optimistic and attractive view of the future; stirring up emotions with the use of symbols and emotional arguments, and providing meaning of actions; and modeling optimism and enthusiasm for others. The intellectual stimulation factor encourages increased awareness of problems and issues, suggesting followers take a step back and revisit their assumptions on

problems and issues in an effort to create a different or new view in the hopes of creating a new or different way of thinking and perspective. The fourth factor of transformational leadership is individualized consideration, including offering support, encouragement, and coaching to followers. Included in this factor are recognizing individual strengths and weaknesses as well as displaying consideration for the well-being of others; assigning task and duties based on individual ability; promoting self-development; and encouraging a two-way exchange of views. As previous research has revealed, transformational behaviors are related to a leader's ability to be effective and provide success (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996).

Something to be considered as well is the relationship between personal identification and dependence. Howell (1988) was among the first to suggest that personal identification with the leader is likely to lead to dependence, submissive loyalty, conformity, and "blind" obedience of the followers. Conger and Kanungo (1988) suggest, however, that dependence is reliance on the leader as well as identification with the leader. Howell and Avolio (1992) further suggest that authentic transformational leaders should promote organizational ethical policies, procedures, and processes within their organization and most importantly, should commit to a clearly stated, continually enforced code of ethical conduct with clearly established acceptable standards.

Major Contributors

Transformational leadership is described by Burns (1978) as the ideal situation between leaders and followers. Burns suggests that in order for leaders to have the greatest influence on followers into action, they must motivate them by appealing to the followers' shared values; the leader must also meet the needs and expectations of the followers. As a result, transformational and transactional leadership address morality and in turn raise the level of human conduct and ethical aspirations of the leader as well as the follower, effectively transforming both the leader

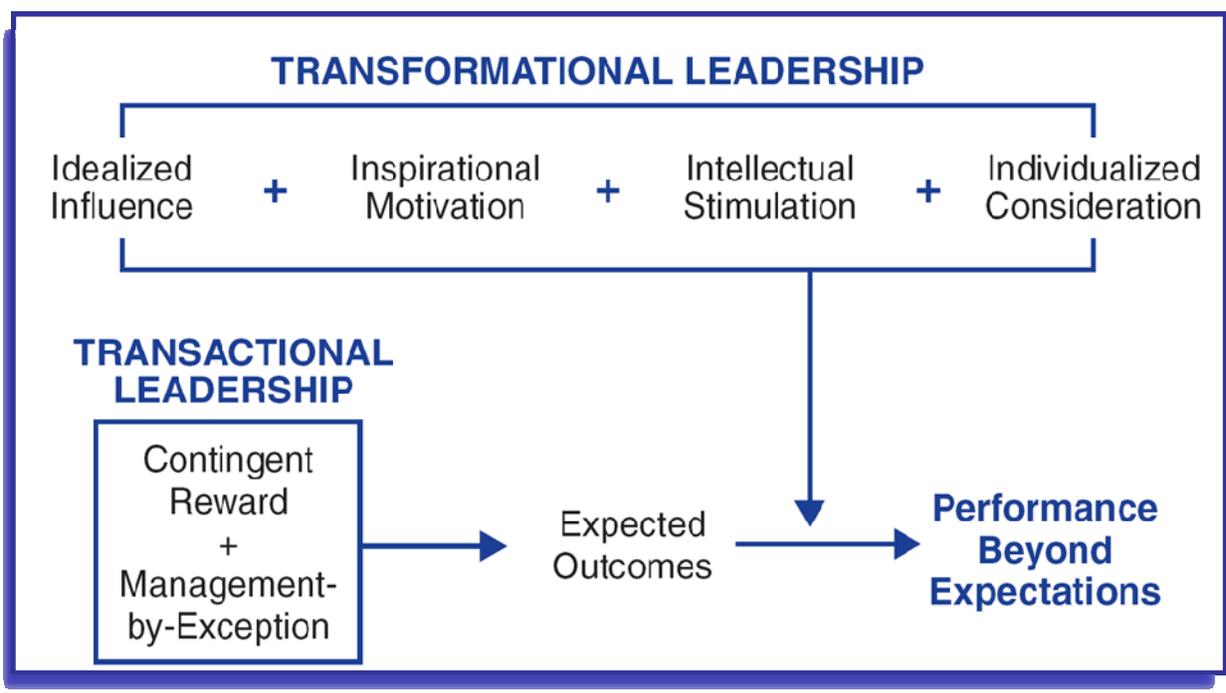
and the follower. Burns (1978) recognizes the brokerage leadership approach and suggests that there is an indirect influence of leaders on others, through their followers as well. Heavily influencing the development of transformational leadership is the work of Bernard Bass (1985), who directs attention to the relationship between transactional and transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is frequently compared to transactional leadership. Transactional leadership is described as contingent reinforcement; leader-follower relationships are based on a series of exchanges or bargains between the leader and the follower. Transformational leaders rise above the bartering relationships, common in transactional leadership, by developing intellectually stimulating and inspiring followers who rise above their own self interest for a greater good collective purpose, mission, or vision (Howell & Avolio, 1992).

An example of transactional leadership could be the promise of jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions. See the illustration of transformational leadership vs. transactional leadership in Figure 1.

Reflection

Transformational leadership has undoubtedly influenced leadership theory and our conceptions of leaders and followers. Transformational leaders have brought about change on political, economic, religious, and social fronts, which have allowed our nation and its people to grow and prosper. This leadership style has been linked to morality and ethical practices in leadership. The ethical values and vision of leaders, and their ability to articulate the vision and inspire followers to accept various program goals and objectives are examined in much research. For example, according to Burns (1978) and Bass (1988), authentic transformational leadership must rest on a foundation of legitimate values. As history confirms, many transformational leaders have influenced our society negatively, to include Adolph Hitler, Jim Jones, and Saddam

Hussein, as well as positively, to include Nelson Mandela, Malcolm X, Gloria Richardson, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Transformational leaders are action oriented, skilled relationship builders who guide followers to desired outcomes. Transformational leadership holds promise to transform society for the greater good.



Adapted from Bass and Avolio (1990)

Figure 1. Transformational Leadership vs. Transactional Leadership.

CHAPTER 3

“Up, You Mighty Race!” Malcolm’s Early Years, 1925-1940

Chapter 3 examines the early life experiences of Malcolm Little and his family through the four stages introduced in Chapter 1. In each of these stages, I identify several life-changing experiences, and the projected impact these experiences had on his view of the world. In addition, I demonstrate how these experiences were transformative in terms of his perceptions, beliefs, philosophy and leadership as regards the status of African Americans in America, and racism..

This chapter addresses the following life changing experiences that occurred during Malcolm X’s early life: (a) the Little family’s early encounters with white racists, (b) the death of Malcolm’s father and the nervous breakdown of his mother, (c) the destruction of the Little’s family by the welfare system, and (d) Malcolm’s placement in foster homes and detention centers. An investigation of these events reveals how he was shaped as an individual with a national-racial identity, and as a member of a charismatically led movement. In addition, because he eventually achieved a position of racial leadership, this examination provides an analysis of a political movement from the perspective of the leader, as well as of the follower.

The Little Family’s Early Encounter with White Supremacy

Malcolm Little was born to Earl and Louise Little on May 19, 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska. Malcolm’s father, Earl Little, was an outspoken Baptist minister and supporter of Marcus Garvey, as well as a local leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Marcus Garvey, the founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, worked his entire adult life attempting to give a sense of racial pride and to empower the Black people of the world. In his autobiography, Malcolm observes, “When my mother was pregnant with me, she

told me later, a party of hooded Klu Klux Klan galloped up to our house Brandishing their shotguns and rifles, they shouted for my father to come out” (Haley, 1965, p. 1).

Malcolm never forgot the lessons taught by his father, a strong Garveyite, particularly the necessity of having Black pride (Epps, 1968). As a follower of Garvey, Earl fervently believed that freedom, independence, and self-respect would come only when African-Americans returned to their homeland of Africa (Vincent, 2006). Malcolm’s family history demonstrated that racial violence on the part of whites was a means of ensuring that the Color Line stayed intact. Malcolm reports in his autobiography that four of his uncles died at the hands of white men, and one of them lynched (Haley, 1965). Research indicates that Malcolm learned very early in life that the white man’s treatment of Blacks showed no evidence of regard for the life or well being of the Black man (Haley, 1965). Based on his life experiences and study of world history, Malcolm came to the conclusion that Blacks had been stripped of their humanity and their heritage, resulting in a race of people left with no knowledge of their birthright, birth language, birth name, or even their birth history (Pathfinder, 1990).

Perhaps the most well known Black internationalist, Marcus Garvey, led a Back-to-Africa movement that attracted thousands (Vincent, 2006). Garvey’s efforts included promoting racial pride, aid to the needy, and self-esteem (Vincent, 2006). It seemed quite natural that Malcolm would follow in his father’s footsteps, glorifying and uplifting the Black man, speaking of morals, values, and pride.

Earl Little, a six foot tall dark-skinned Negro with one eye who had been born in Reynolds, Georgia, brought to his marriage with Malcolm’s mother three children from a previous wife: Ella, Mary, and Earl Jr. (Haley, 1965). Earl and Louise had seven children together and their children’s names were Wilfred, Hilda, Philbert, Malcolm, Reginald, Yvonne,

and Wesley (Haley, 1965). With another partner years after the death of her husband, Louise Little gave birth to a final son, Robert Little (Epps, 1968). Although the relationship did not work out with this partner, Malcolm was appreciative of the man for attempting a relationship with his mother, who already had seven children.

Malcolm's mother, Louise Norton Little, was a mulatto from Grenada in the British West Indies. Louise's father was Scottish, which gave Louise the appearance of a white woman. Malcolm inherited his light-skinned complexion from her, and was the lightest-skinned child in the Little family (Haley, 1965). Malcolm was shown favoritism by his father as a result of his complexion, yet received harsh treatment from his mother for the same reason. Malcolm surmised that this harsh treatment resulted because his lighter color constantly reminded Louise that a white man had raped her own mother.

According to Sterling Brown's essay entitled *The Tragic Mulatto*, the mulatto was the undeniable symbolic representation of the sexual abuse of the Black woman at the hands of the white man. On the other hand, Brown's essay further suggested that the mulatto's white blood made him worth more than the pure Black. Nella Larsen, author of *Passing*, describes two African American childhood friends who were very light in color and could pass for white. However, only one of the women decided to do so, while the second woman lived her life as an African American and ultimately married an African American man. The first woman passing as white married a racist, who later discovered his wife's true heritage. In turn, the woman either committed suicide or was pushed out a window.

Initially Malcolm thought it was a status symbol to be fair skinned. However, he later came to the conclusion that his light-skinned complexion was the result of a brutal assault on his heritage. Along with the light-skinned complexion, Malcolm's hair color at birth was ash-blond,

and by age four was reddish-blond, gradually getting darker as he aged. Malcolm's hair color gave cause for the nickname "Detroit Red," among other monikers by which he was known (Haley, 1965).

In December 1924, while pregnant with Malcolm, Louise Little, an active member and supporter of the UNIA along with her husband, was threatened by Ku Klux Klansmen. The Ku Klux Klan was a secret society of white men founded in the southern United States after the Civil War, to reestablish and maintain white supremacy using terrorist methods. As a result of Earl's various activities with the Universal Negro Improvement Association, the Little family was told to leave the city of Omaha (Haley, 1965).

Two years later, after the birth of Malcolm, the family moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for a brief time, and later to Lansing, Michigan. According to Haley (1965), Earl Little purchased a home for his family with the plan of growing the family's own food and building a business, as he continued to preach his vision of a Black self-determination, based on Marcus Garvey's teachings (Vincent, 2006).

Earl Little preached Christianity in the local Baptist churches on Sunday and spread the teaching of Marcus Garvey through the week, informing all who would listen of the importance of becoming independent of the white man (Haley, 1965). In the meantime, as Earl encouraged the Negroes to work for self-reliance, the Black Legion, a local hate group, began harassing the Little family. Earl was accused of being "uppity" and stirring trouble for wanting to own his own store, and living outside the Lansing Negro district (Haley, 1965). In his autobiography, Malcolm reminisces about his father's favorite sermon, "That little black train is a a-coming' . . . an' you better get all your business right!" The sermon, Malcolm observes, symbolically refers

to Garvey's "back to Africa" movement and how the Black train (perhaps the Black star line steamship) will take Blacks homeward bound to Africa (Haley, 1965).

Earl Little's teachings of Black pride placed him in a precarious position, requiring him to relocate his family numerous times. The family was forced to move from Omaha, Nebraska, to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to Lansing, Michigan. Earl bought a home in Lansing, Michigan, for his family and continued to preach Garvey's brand of Black Nationalism in the Black communities. Earl Little was determined to promote freedom and equal treatment for his people at the risk of his land his family's life, and his son, Malcolm Little, undoubtedly internalized this behavior and committed himself to the same (Epps, 1968).

In *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Malcolm recalls that shortly after the birth of his sister, Yvonne, he and his siblings were startled out of their sleep with their house ablaze. Earl Little shot at the white men who started the fire as they ran away. Malcolm's family barely escaped before their home caved in to the ground. As Malcolm's family stood outside in the dark, yelling and crying, in only their undergarments, the white police and firemen stood and watched the Little's home burn to the ground (Haley, 1965). This event, Malcolm reports, was his "earliest vivid memory." In fact, it caused Malcolm great fear and confusion. This early "vivid memory" would mark the beginning in a chain of continued negative experiences that would influence his attitude toward, and ultimately his dislike of, whites. As Eugene Wolfenstein (1981) observes,

How, then, did Malcolm experience the nightmare night? In the first place, he did not experience it as we have hitherto reconstructed it, or as he himself later understood it: a four-year-old boy does not live his life as a self-conscious participant in and observer of a

complex socio historical process. He lives, less self-consciously, within the microcosm of the family. (p. 88)

The Little family moved into another home in East Lansing until Earl Little finished building a four room house approximately two miles outside of town. After the fire and moving into the county, Malcolm recalls the dissension between his parents. Malcolm implies that his father physically abused his mother. Earl would also aggressively discipline his children when they were disobedient, with the exception of Malcolm. Earl Little, though a proud Black man, subconsciously prided himself in his own ability to have produced a fair-skinned child, which was favored by whites as opposed to the darker-skinned Negro (Haley, 1965).

Though Malcolm's father was a Baptist minister, Earl Little was always a visiting preacher, with no church to really call his own (Haley, 1965). According to his autobiography, Malcolm enjoyed his father's sermons that were geared toward the back to Africa movement; but otherwise church confused Malcolm. He had no concern or respect for people who held religious beliefs (Haley, 1965). Malcolm was the only one of Earl's children he took with him to the UNIA meetings. These meetings were very exciting to Malcolm (Haley, 1965). During those times, Malcolm's father and the participants in the meetings appeared to be more intelligent and down-to-earth than when they were in regular church service. Malcolm, at an early age, abhorred the emotionalism of the Black church. As Malcolm notes, it both "confused and amazed me" (Haley, 1965, p. 6). Yet he vividly remembered his father preaching about Marcus Garvey's Back-to-Africa movement. Malcolm recalls,

I can remember hearing of "Adam driven out of the garden into the caves of Europe," "Africa for the Africans," "Ethiopians, Awake!" And my father would talk about how it would not be much longer before Africa would be completely run by Negroes—"by

black men [sic],” was the phrase he always used. “No one knows when the hour of Africa’s redemption cometh. It is in the wind. It is coming. One day, like a storm, it will be here.” (Haley, 1965, pp. 6-7)

Earl Little spoke of “Africa for Africans” and preached that Africa would one day be completely run by Black men (Vincent, 2006). Malcolm’s most memorable reflection on his father was of his radical campaigning of the Marcus Garvey movement (Haley, 1965). During his meetings, Earl would pass out large, sparkly pictures of Marcus Garvey riding in a fancy vehicle and dressed in a shiny uniform, wearing a hat with long feathers, telling the group that Garvey had followers all over the world, not just in the United States (Haley, 1965). However, it should be noted that Garvey’s attire in these pictures consisted of a shiny uniform and a hat with long feathers which was European in style, and which contradicted—in many respects—his Afro centric message.

As a result of Malcolm’s parents’ teachings during his childhood, Malcolm wrote from Africa in 1959:

Africa is the land of the future . . . definitely the land of tomorrow, and the African is the man of tomorrow . . . Africa is the New World, a world with a future . . . in which the so-called American Negroes are destined to play a key role. (as cited in Lincoln, 1961, pp. 225–226)

Malcolm contends that all Blacks are African peoples and must work together and become as one to increase Black power. According to Conyers and Smallwood (2008), Malcolm states: “Can you imagine what can happen, what would certainly happen, if all these African-heritage people ever realize their blood bonds, if they ever realize they all have a common goal, if they ever unite?” (p. 363).

In Malcolm's early years, he suggested that Blacks should return to Africa physically, just as his father had. Yet, after leaving the Nation of Islam, he argued that African-Americans could return to Africa culturally and spiritually (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008).

Death of Earl Little

At five and half years of age, Malcolm Little is enrolled in kindergarten at Pleasant Grove Elementary School. In September of the same year, Malcolm's father, Earl Little, is run over by a streetcar and dies (Haley, 1965). Lansing authorities ruled Earl Little's death an accident, as the police reported Earl was conscious when they arrived, and told them that he had accidentally fallen under the streetcar wheels. However, many Blacks cast doubt on the "official" cause of death. It was common knowledge that the Little family was consistently harassed by the Black Legion, a white supremacist group that Earl claimed had set fire to the Little's family home the previous year (Haley, 1965). The death of his father laid the groundwork for Malcolm to view whites as a powerful and evil force that Black people had every reason to fear and hate (Haley, 1965). Although subsequent events would give greater confirmation of the evil nature of whites, the mysterious death of Malcolm's father was the beginning of what he would later deem the nightmarish American dream.

Despite the fact that Earl Little secured two life insurance policies, Malcolm and his family received death benefits from only the smaller of the two (Haley, 1965). The larger policy refused to pay benefits claiming that Earl Little had committed suicide (Haley, 1965).

With the murder of Earl Little, Malcolm's mother, Louise, at 34 years of age, was left alone to raise their seven children. According to Haley (1965) Louise was unable to make ends meet for her family and traveled to the city of Lansing looking for and finding work. Louise was able to secure work in white people's homes as long as she was passing for white (Haley, 1965).

However, the moment Louise's white employers learned that she was not white, she was fired immediately (Haley, 1965).

Facing poverty, grieving her husband's violent death, and receiving constant harassment from social services, Malcolm's mother had a nervous breakdown, and was declared legally insane in December of 1938 (Collins & Bailey, 1998). When Louise Little was formally committed to the state mental hospital at Kalamazoo, Michigan, Malcolm and his siblings were split up and sent to different foster homes. Malcolm and his siblings would secure their mother's release 26 years later (Collins & Bailey, 1998).

Early life experiences such as these impacted Malcolm's later development into a transformational leader. In *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Malcolm recalls, "Early in life, I learned that if you want something, you had better make some noise" (Haley, 1965, p. 8). At a very young age Malcolm listened and watched his father, Earl Little, a big Black man, spread the Garvey gospel of Black self-determination: being independent of the white man. Malcolm would follow his father's example as he preached and spread the word in which he believed. By the time, he was four years old, Malcolm and his family had suffered harassment from white hate groups who eventually set the family home afire while he and his family was there asleep (Haley, 1965). The awakening of Malcolm's national consciousness is rooted in his family's conflicts with white supremacist groups. As a result of these experiences, he developed a serious distrust of white people. These negative experiences played a seminal role in his acceptance of the political theology of the Nation of Islam. In one speech, Malcolm explained that the white man--having taken, through slavery, all humanity from the Black man including his native language--had the audacity to name the Black man after himself with such names as Jones, Johnson, and Smith, and pretended to have saved the Black man from savagery and the jungle

(Pathfinder, 1990). Malcolm remarks: “Human rights are something you were born with. Human rights are your God given rights; Human rights are the rights that are recognized by all nations of this earth” (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008, p. 35). Malcolm recalls that the most infuriating question he was often asked when being interviewed was, “Why do you teach Black supremacy, and hate?” (Karim, 1971, pp. 81–82). Malcolm responds: “For the white man to ask the black [sic] man if he the white man is in no moral position to accuse anyone else of hate!” (pp. 91–92). Authors Conyers and Smallwood (2008) argue that Malcolm recognized the fact that he was a human being, he was somebody, and demanded to be treated as such.

The Destruction of the Little Family

Given Malcolm’s childhood experiences, he has more than a strong dislike for the social services agency and the court system as they attempted to destroy his family. In Malcolm’s autobiography, he recalls that he managed to maintain contact with his siblings, despite the impact of social welfare system on his family.

According to Trattner (1989), many of the charitable organization societies established by the mid-1800s were concerned with the circumstances of individuals and families, offering services to assist in the alleviation of some of their difficulties. After the death of Malcolm’s father, his family experienced minimal relief. Malcolm detested social workers coming to his home checking on his family and asking prying questions (Haley, 1965). According to Zastrow (1996), the work done by the charity, organization society was regarded as the precursor of casework and the family counseling approach. Mallon and Hess (2005) and McGowan and Meezan (1983) bring to attention the enormous social changes in the United States during the nineteenth century that influenced the nature and provision for dependent children. A noticeable increase occurred in the number of orphanages founded to care for children whose parents were

unable to care for them, and for actual orphans whose parents were deceased or who had been neglected by their parents (Mallon & Hess, 2005; McGowan & Meezan, 1983).

During the early years before the Civil War, African American children were not considered for most private orphanages. Therefore, children who were not sold as slaves lived in almshouses, resulting in the founding of separate facilities for these children. The first facility was founded in Philadelphia in 1822. It was appropriately called the Association for the Care of Colored Orphans, also known as “The Shelter.” It was founded by Quaker women, and established by the Society of Friends (Billingsley & Giovannoni, 1972; Mallon & Hess, 2005).

In 1865 the Freedmen’s Bureau was created by Congress to provide federal assistance and resources to freed men and women after the Civil War (Trattner, 1989). The Bureau’s purpose was to aid the freedmen and women in transitioning from slavery to freedom, and it was considered a major source of public welfare for African Americans in the South after the Civil War (Trattner, 1989). According to Billingsley and Giovannoni (1972), the Freedmen’s Bureau took efforts to prevent and eliminate poverty, and represented a vastly different approach to children as the Bureau provided land, work, and direct relief by serving poor Black children within their families, with the anticipated benefit of strengthening and keeping those families together. This federal assistance was authorized for six years and when the assistance ended, African Americans were once again left to fend for themselves (Trattner, 1989). However, extended family, benevolent societies, and other Christian sponsored organizations did what they could and assisted African American families, according to Trattner (1989). A family doing what they could was particularly accurate for Malcolm in that his half sister, Ella, came to his aid. According to Malcolm’s autobiography, while he was living in the detention center, he remained in contact with his older siblings by visiting them on weekends and writing letters. Malcolm’s

sister, Hilda, urged him to write to their half-sister, Ella. Eventually, Malcolm asked his half-sister Ella if he could live with her. Ella made appropriate and necessary contacts that led to her being named his guardian.

From 1870 to 1920, a religious social-reform movement gained notoriety among liberal Protestant groups. The social-reform gospel movement, while not organized with central leadership, was dedicated to the use of the Biblical principles of charity and justice (Carson, 2003). Instead, it was a diverse group of religious leaders who shared similar ideals about a just society and the role religion should have in the development of society (Overacker, 1998). The social gospel movement arose during a time when the religious community saw poverty, inequality, liquor, crime, racial tensions, slums, child labor, weak labor unions, and poor schools as major signs of moral decay (Overacker, 1998).

When she was widowed at the age of 34, with eight children to care for, Louise Little and her children clearly faced an unpredictable future. Louise Little took any work that she was able to find in order to take care of her family. She suffered one job loss after another as a result of being a Negro and being the widow of Earl Little. Times grew extremely tough for Louise and her family, forcing her to accept welfare. Malcolm's oldest brother, Wilfred, dropped out of school to work and help take care of the family. In late 1934, as times grew progressively worse for the Little family, Malcolm and his siblings were being treated poorly at school because the family was on welfare. The Little family would be so hungry at times that they were dizzy. Though Malcolm and his siblings may have been hungry, and the family was struggling, they were still together as a family (Haley, 1965).

Although the family unit remained intact, Malcolm recognized that his family was struggling, even with the assistance of welfare. The state welfare people continued to come into

the Little home (Haley, 1965), making monthly visits and treating the family with little human dignity. Malcolm says the neighborhood children teased him and his siblings, accusing them of eating “fried grass.” During this period in Malcolm’s life, the Great Depression wreaked havoc on most families in the United States. Malcolm and his family were suffering mentally and physically, having lost their father, and the provider in their home. As a result the family lost their pride and eventually the family unit was split up by the welfare system (Haley, 1965).

Malcolm’s Placement in Foster Homes and Detention Center

The Little family continued to receive visits to their home from social workers. In his autobiography, Malcolm reports that social workers came into the Little home, separating the children and asking leading questions in an attempt to get them to implicate each other. After constant and continuous harassment, Malcolm and all of his siblings, except for the two oldest, were removed from the home and placed in a foster home (Haley, 1965). Malcolm remarked that they were “state children.” Later in life, he argued that a white man in charge of a Black man’s children is legalized slavery (Haley, 1965, p. 21).

Malcolm is outraged that the state welfare system was allowed to take control of his family and divide them up like they were pieces of property to be disbursed; this state welfare system now had the right to say where each of his family members lived, and with or without siblings. Malcolm felt his family was ripped apart by the state welfare system. As far as Malcolm was concerned, the state welfare system literally destroyed his family, causing more harm than good (Haley, 1965). Looking back on those hard times, Malcolm concludes that had it not been for the vulture-like interference of the state welfare people, the family would not have disintegrated. He observes: “We could have made it, we could have stayed together” (Haley, 1965, p. 18).

One of the most devastating experiences for Malcolm is coping in the world without a father. Approximately eight years after his father's death, Malcolm graduated from the seventh grade and prepared to enter the eighth grade (Collins & Bailey, 1998). In the spring of 1939, Malcolm tells his favorite eighth-grade teacher that he wants to be an attorney and is quickly informed that this is "no realistic goal for a nigger" (Collins & Bailey, 1998, pp. 36–37).

Malcolm recalls:

I happened to be alone in the classroom with Mr. Ostrowski, my English teacher (in the 8th grade) . . . I had gotten some of my best marks under him, and he always made me feel that he liked me. . . . He told me, "Malcolm, you ought to be thinking about a career. Have you been giving it thought?" The truth is, I hadn't. I never have figured out why I told him, "Well, yes, sir, I've been thinking I'd like to be a lawyer." He kind of half-smiled and said, "Malcolm one of life's first needs is for us to be realistic. Don't misunderstand me, now. We all here like you, you know that. But you've got to be realistic about being a nigger. A lawyer, that's no realistic goal for a nigger. You're good with your hands, making things. Everybody admires your carpentry shop work. Why don't you plan on carpentry? People like you as a person; you'd get all kinds of work. The more I thought afterwards about what he said, the more uneasy it made me. It was then that I begun to change inside. (Collins & Bailey, 1998, pp. 36–37)

If Malcolm's father had been alive, there was no way that Mr. Ostrowski would have said such a thing to Malcolm. With Earl Little dead, Malcolm was without his love and disciplining power. As a result as Malcolm's family was separated by social services, Malcolm became rebellious and unruly. Malcolm was placed in foster care. With continued rebellious behavior, he was then placed in a detention center with a white couple, which was the beginning of his education in the

ways of white folks (Goldman, 1982). Malcolm describes his stay with this white couple in a televised debate with Black journalist Louis Lomax in 1964:

Lomax: Are all white men immoral, Minister Malcolm? Is there not one good one?

Malcolm: I haven't met all of them. Those whom I have met are the type I would say are insincere. Now if there are some sincere whites somewhere, it's those that I haven't met yet.

Lomax: How about the woman . . . that took you in when you were a little boy and put you on the road to learning something?

Malcolm: . . . My presence in that home was like a cat or a parrot or any type of pet that they had. You know how you'll be around whites and they'll discuss things just like you are not there. I think [Ralph] Ellison calls it the *Invisible Man* and [James] Baldwin calls it *Nobody Knows My Name*. My presence in that home was not the presence of a human being.

Lomax: But she did feed you.

Malcolm: You feed your cat.

Lomax: She clothed you.

Malcolm: You clothe any kind of pet that you might have.

Lomax: And you impute to her no humanitarian motivation?

Malcolm: No. Not today. (Goldman, 1982, p. 307)

After he had been through several foster homes, a social worker recommended to the court that Malcolm be placed in a juvenile home. Judge John McClellan agreed with the social worker and the court ordered that Malcolm be sent to the Michigan State Detention Home

(Haley, 1965). Thus in the end the welfare state, through its bureaucratic and juridical intermediaries, took legal possession of both Malcolm's mother and her children.

Malcolm's attitude and behavior were negatively impacted while he was in the detention center, which was run by a white couple (Haley, 1965). During these crucial years of his life, Malcolm grows up with a growing sense of alienation. He is literally robbed of a family life, love, and affection. Malcolm was placed in what felt like jail or prison and was treated as a caged animal (Haley, 1965). No thought was given to Malcolm's specific emotional needs and feelings regarding his circumstances in life. During Malcolm's stay at the detention center, he simply did what he was told to do and was thought of as a "good nigger" (Haley, 1965, p. 27).

At a very young age, Malcolm absorbed many things. Racist groups burned his family's home to the ground; his father died at the hands of the racist hate groups and the family was cheated out of his insurance money; Malcolm's family was torn apart by the welfare system and he and his siblings were placed in foster care. What stood out for Malcolm was the physical and mental abuse he suffered at the hands of the white people. As a result, Malcolm's leadership was impacted in a way that instilled in him the urgent need to raise the self-esteem of Black people. Malcolm later urged Black people to learn about their past in order to understand the present, analyze it, and then proceed to doing something about it. Malcolm once stated: "The greatest mistake of the movement has been trying to organize a sleeping people around specific goals. You have to wake the people up first, then you'll get action." In other words, Black people need to be educated on their humanity, to be informed of their own value, worth, and heritage (Pathfinder, 1990). According to Ilyasah Shabazz, the daughter of Malcolm X, his leadership was committed to changing the way people of African descent viewed themselves, one another, and their place in history (Shabazz, 2002). In sum, through their father's death and mother's

humiliation, the Little family came to be ashamed of themselves. Racist violence had transformed Malcolm and his siblings into neglected children, wards of the state. The welfare system had destroyed the family through a policy of divide-and-rule. As a transformative leader, Malcolm was determined that Black people would never feel the way he had as a child. In the years to come, Malcolm would gradually take conscious possession of his Garveyite heritage by fighting against white Christianity and promoting Black racial uplift and pride.

CHAPTER 4

Malcolm X in the Wilderness of America, 1941-1948

As Malcolm came of age in the 1940s, one would hope that the worst was behind him. In a short period of time, Malcolm had lost his father to death, his mother had been institutionalized, and he and his siblings had been torn apart by the state welfare system. Yet, Malcolm's sister, Ella, had rescued him from the utter despair of the state welfare system, and now free from the shackles of rural Michigan, Malcolm's intellectual mind would be opened to Black political culture and Black urban working class life. Once in Boston, Malcolm entered the ranks of the U. S. working class. While he initially held several jobs in the service sector, he eventually found work as a Pullman porter, and thereby joined the largest and most autonomous organization of Black workers at the time. In this chapter, I explore Malcolm's life as both a laborer and criminal as he moves from rural Lansing Michigan to the urban cities, particularly Boston, Massachusetts and Harlem, New York. I also examine the role of Al-Islam, particularly the eschatology of the Nation of Islam, on Malcolm's political development.

Malcolm, the Black Bourgeoisie, and the Black Urban Working Class

Upon release from the detention center, 15-year-old Malcolm moved to Boston, Massachusetts, to live with his paternal half-sister Ella Little Collins. There he held a number of jobs include shoe shining, dishwashing, soda jerking, and working sporadically for the New Haven Railroad as a Pullman porter (Collins & Bailey, 1998).

During the summer of 1940, Malcolm traveled from Lansing, Michigan, to Boston, Massachusetts to visit his half-sister Ella. She believed "We Little's have to stick together" (Epps, 1968, p. 22). While visiting, Malcolm recognized that Ella belonged to numerous clubs and was deeply involved in the Black community. Malcolm was amazed at all the Black people

to whom he was introduced, and keenly observed their city language and lifestyle. Malcolm noticed that Blacks in Roxbury were allowed to be outside and downtown at night, and even periodically observed interracial couples on the streets of Boston. Malcolm remarked, “I didn’t know the world contained as many Negroes as I saw strolling downtown Roxbury at night” (Haley, 1965, p. 35). For the very first time in Malcolm’s young life, he had the opportunity to see how Blacks lived in an urban metropolitan city. Not only did Roxbury appear to be less restrictive, with much more freedom, there were many Black folk in one city (Haley, 1965). As he notes of his first days in Roxbury: “The world of grocery stores, walk-up flats, cheap restaurants, poolrooms, bars, storefront churches, and pawnshops seemed to hold a natural lure for me” (Haley, 1965, p. 42). Although the Black folks’ churches were well-built and good looking in appearance, they worshipped just the same in Boston as they had in Mason Michigan, shouting, and jumping up and down (Haley, 1965). In Malcolm’s view, Black folk may have had more money and the ability to build fancy churches, but in terms of religion, they remained true to Black folk tradition (Haley, 1965).

In Roxbury Malcolm had the opportunity to spend time and socialize with people just like him, and felt a sense of belonging (Haley, 1965). Also, for the first time in his life, he got a taste of middle-class African-Americans. He felt uncomfortable when he was among the more prosperous Blacks living on the “hill” that overlooked the Roxbury “town” section. He observes, “Not only was [the town] part of Roxbury much more exciting, but I felt more relaxed among Negroes who were being their natural selves and not putting on airs” (Haley, 1965, p. 43). Malcolm took this time to familiarize himself with the neighborhood, and learned quickly how “Roxbury Negroes” acted and lived differently from any Black people that he had ever been Roxbury (Kelley, 1998). Malcolm came to the conclusion that these “uppity Roxbury Negroes”

were imitating white people. Oftentimes, these “uppity Roxbury Negroes” described their jobs as being in banking or in securities. In reality, they were merely working as the bank janitor or a bond house manager (Kelley, 1998).

Ella Little Collins owned a house in the predominantly Black Boston neighborhood of Roxbury, where she was surrounded by other Blacks who considered themselves middle class, and looked down on the Black working class (Kelley, 1998). Malcolm immediately felt uncomfortable in this new setting, where he was made fun of by the middle class Blacks as a result of his poor quality, poorly fitting clothing (Kelley, 1998). Ella unknowingly adds insult to injury when she gets Malcolm a job at the local drugstore as a fountain clerk, where Malcolm must serve these same folk (Kelley, 1998). Based on evidence from Kelley (1998), Malcolm, in recognizing that his own background was poor, must have felt the same pain and discomfort from the bourgeoisie Blacks as he felt from the whites.

But why did Malcolm feel at home only among Black working class folk? Based on his own words, he self-identified as a “field Negro” by heritage and life experience: the Little’s had been agricultural workers in the south; and, after his father’s death, his family had become part of the welfare system’s “rabble of paupers.” To be sure, there had been years of Garveyite prosperity; but Earl Little’s death and its consequences nearly destroyed Malcolm’s Garveyite self-image. All that remained was stubborn pride, a certain toughness of character, and a burgeoning feeling of manhood.

However, Malcolm could not comprehend how and why one Negro could think they were any better than another, after all they were all still African-American at the end of the day (Kelley, 1998). Venturing out in the community as suggested by his sister, Malcolm toured Boston’s historic downtown, and discovered a statue of a Negro named Crispus Attucks, who

had been the first man to die in the Boston Massacre (Haley, 1965), something he had never learned in school. Gaining such knowledge confirmed Malcolm's belief that the whites discarded and placed no value on Negroes as human beings (Kelley, 1998). Malcolm continued exploring the city of Boston where he found Boston University, Harvard University, and Cambridge, using the city's subway and railroad stations (Haley, 1965). Malcolm wrote letters to his siblings in Lansing describing to them the cobblestone streets, the close-built homes, movie theaters, the Roseland State Ballroom, and the big stores downtown in the big city, along with the white people's restaurants and hotels (Haley, 1965). Malcolm's family ties remained strong as he reported to his siblings, describing his ventures and allowing them to live vicariously through him in the big city of Boston (Haley, 1965).

Ella encouraged Malcolm to associate himself with the Black bourgeoisie in their community. Malcolm felt that mingling with the Black bourgeoisie was not what he wanted to do, as he felt himself no better than any other Negro (Haley, 1965). According to Kelley (1998), Malcolm consistently identified with ordinary Black working-class people, living in poverty, and never forgetting his humble roots.

Kelley (1998) suggests that Malcolm, having no interest in Black middle class cultural life, makes the decision to hang out in the less fortunate part of town where he was more comfortable. There Malcolm was introduced to Black culture, the exciting world of the zoot suit, the conk (straightened) hairstyle, and the lindy hoppers (Kelley, 1998). This new world of Malcolm's not only allowed him to feel like he belonged somewhere, but the language and culture allowed him to reject white racism and patriotism, as well as his rural folkways and the Black bourgeoisie (Kelley, 1998). Malcolm was finally at home with his people and ready to live

life in surroundings comfortable to him, with a feeling that he was equal to everyone else, no less and no more (Kelley, 1998).

Detroit Red: The Descent into Criminality

Coming from the country poorly dressed and knowing nothing about city life, Malcolm had entered a world he had never seen or knew of until now. Epps (1968) says a whole new career of hustling and peddling drugs opened up for Malcolm. Malcolm had never drank alcohol or smoked cigarettes, yet he was witnessing young Black children in the ghetto playing cards, shooting craps, fighting, swearing, and using street language he had never heard before (Haley, 1965). In this ghetto world, Malcolm saw Black men with straight shiny hair like white men. And he saw Black men and white women together as a couple in public, and not trying to hide, unlike where he came from in Lansing, Michigan (Haley, 1965). Malcolm was filled with excitement and a desire to become a part of this new life, as he witnessed and gained firsthand knowledge of hustling, ingesting cigarettes and alcohol, petty crime, and a way to make his “conk” hair (Kelley, 1998).

Kelley (1998) describes Malcolm and his friends as draft dodgers who refused to lose their lives over a “white man’s war,” and avoided employment as well. As a result, Malcolm moved to Harlem where he made a living of petty hustling, drug dealing, pimping, gambling, and exploiting women (Kelley, 1998). Malcolm continued to display anti-white behaviors, rejecting anything white, and was drawn to ghetto life as it allowed for him to remain Black and in control of his own life (Kelley, 1998). Commenting on his risk of being drafted in 1943, Malcolm remarked in his *Autobiography*: “In those days only three things in the world scared me: jail, a job and the Army” (Haley, 1965, p. 104).

After watching from the sidelines, ghetto life had appealed to Malcolm, and he walked into the local poolroom looking for work. There he immediately found and made a friend with Malcolm “Shorty” Jarvis, someone from his very own hometown of Lansing, Michigan (Haley, 1965). Not only had he secured a job of his own choosing, he had found commonality with a friend from the same city and neighborhood as he, which turned out to be even more beneficial for Malcolm (Haley, 1965).

Though Ella was not happy about it, Malcolm lands his next job shining shoes at the Roseland State Ballroom and expresses excitement about getting this job where he would have the opportunity to see some of the greatest bands in the world (Epps, 1968). In addition to shining shoes, Malcolm was taught how to hustle his customers by offering them a towel when they came out of the bathroom, in exchange for a tip (Haley, 1965). Malcolm also learned how to hustle condoms, alcohol, and drugs for his customers to earn extra money (Haley, 1965). While working and hustling at the Roseland Ballroom, Malcolm learned many hustles, but he also got to meet star performers such as Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Lionel Hampton, and others (Haley, 1965). According to Epps (1968), Malcolm describes himself during this period as a true hustler, uneducated, unskilled at anything honorable, yet skilled at living by his wits at the expense of anyone getting in his way.

Malcolm began hanging out with his good friend, Shorty, and as a result was introduced to conk, buying on credit and zoot suits. Malcolm had learned how to hustle, dress, conk his hair, and drink alcohol, and smoke cigarettes and marijuana (Haley, 1965). Once while at a party, a young woman pulled him on the dance floor and immediately all of his inhibitions about dancing were dissolved (Haley, 1965). Malcolm was so excited with his newfound skill and love of dancing that he quit his job at the Roseland State Ballroom, which pleased his sister Ella greatly,

as she felt there was no prestige in the job anyway (Haley, 1965). Obviously, Malcolm was more interested in having a good time than obtaining a real job, since being told that a career in law was no realistic goal for him (Epps, 1968).

Ella immediately began searching for a job for Malcolm and found him one just a few blocks from her home in the middle class section of town at Townsend Drug Store as a soda fountain clerk. There Malcolm was reduced to wearing a white serving jacket and serving soda and sundaes to the middle class Blacks he abhorred (Haley, 1965). In the article “House Negroes on the Loose: Malcolm X and the Black Bourgeoisie,” cultural theorist Robin D. G. Kelley (1998) reports Malcolm saying “I couldn’t wait until eight o’ clock to get home to eat out of those soul-food pots of Ella’s, then get dressed in my zoot suit to get with friends to lindy-hop and get high, anything for relief from those uppity Hill clowns” (p. 422). Ella was trying to instill middle class values on Malcolm, yet he was only interested in hanging around Black working class people (Kelley, 1998).

Malcolm briefly dated a young Black woman from the middle class Black section of Roxbury. However, he quickly moved on in favor of a white woman, who had her own car and gave him money (Haley, 1965). The white woman gave Malcolm status in the ghetto with the hustlers, club managers, and numbers runners (Haley, 1965). However, once Ella learned of Malcolm dating a white woman, she began treating him very differently, and shortly thereafter, he moved in with his friend Shorty, a move financed by his white woman (Haley, 1965). Malcolm appeared to be pleased with himself dating a white woman, even if it meant causing division between him and his sister Ella (Kelley, 1998). Malcolm felt like he was somebody or someone important with this white woman on his arm (Haley, 1965).

Still a very young man, during this time 16-year-old Malcolm traveled several cities and held numerous jobs. In 1942, he moved from Boston to Michigan and worked as a porter-messenger for Shaw's Jewelry Store. Then Ella came through for Malcolm again, getting him a job with the railroad company, hoping to get him to leave town and to get him away from the white woman (Haley, 1965). Malcolm was excited about seeing New York City: he had heard about Broadway and the big city lights, the Savoy Ballroom, the Apollo Theater and the famous big bands and Black stars. Malcolm received an opportunity to expand his horizon by traveling for free while working on the train. During his travels on the job between Boston and New York City he visited Washington DC, just beyond the Capitol, and with his own eyes saw Negroes living worse than he had ever seen in his life (Haley, 1965). Malcolm struggled with the extreme poverty faced by African Americans throughout the United States living in conditions that were far worse than he had ever even imagined (Haley, 1965).

Among Malcolm's travels in New York City, he saw famous musical artists such as Dizzy Gillespie, Billy Eckstine, Billy Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald and Dinah Washington (Haley, 1965). Malcolm was awe struck by Harlem, where he lived at the YMCA, and later moved to a boarding house where all of his co-workers stayed. Malcolm had witnessed everything Harlem had to offer—from where the rich and famous lived, to slums (Haley, 1965).

Fascinated with the fast life, Malcolm began hustling in New York. When not on the job, he was showing off with his white woman, dressed in his zoot suit. However when he returned to work high on alcohol and marijuana, he was eventually relieved of his duties (Haley, 1965).

While unemployed, Malcolm took advantage of his free travel benefits from the railroad, traveling to Lansing to visit his siblings and to the state hospital in Kalamazoo to visit his mother. On one occasion while back in Lansing, Malcolm visited with Mrs. Swerlin at the

detention home where he used to reside, and even attended a dance at the Lincoln School gymnasium (Haley, 1965). The locals were so impressed with Malcolm's dancing, they asked for his autograph, to which he obliged signing his name "Harlem Red" (Haley, 1965, p. 81). Malcolm felt accomplished, as if he was doing something, as only celebrities were asked for their autographs (Haley, 1965).

Jobless and penniless, Malcolm applied for a position with another railroad company, and two days later, was hired. However, in just a short period, Malcolm had disagreements with the assistant conductor and was advised to find another job (Haley, 1965). The very same day Malcolm had an offer he could not refuse, and at the tender age of 17, and having never been in trouble with the police, Malcolm was hired as a waiter at the Black-owned bar, Small's Paradise (Haley, 1965). Malcolm faced stiff rules there: he was required to be on time, no laziness, no stealing, and no hustling of any customers in any way (Haley, 1965). Malcolm gained quite a bit of informal education while working at Small's Paradise, as well as further education in the art of hustling.

Malcolm listened intently as one of his many patrons explained to him that Harlem had not always been a Black community (Haley, 1965). Harlem has been the home of the Dutch and the Germans, Irish, Italians, and Jews. The old-timer went on to inform Malcolm that Negroes had been in New York City since 1863, where they were pushed from one area to another before ending up in Harlem (Haley, 1965). Sometime around 1910 a Negro realtor moved more Negro families into Harlem, and the Jewish families left, making Harlem practically an all-Black community (Haley, 1965). During these times, patrons such as this one shared knowledge with Malcolm in the same manner an older uncle, cousin, or relative would share. The patrons

Malcolm served at the bar became like family to Malcolm, sharing Black history and their knowledge of Harlem (Haley, 1965).

The early 1920's had brought the music and entertainment industry to Harlem, with overwhelming support from whites. Harlem was suddenly overrun with white people from all over the world; all the clubs including the Cotton Club, the Savoy, and Small's Paradise catered to white people and their money. However other customers educated Malcolm on hustling, pimping, con games, peddling dope, and armed robbery (Haley, 1965). Eventually Malcolm broke one of Small's Paradise's golden rules by attempting to hustle a military man, and immediately lost his job there (Haley, 1965). While Malcolm was not happy about the loss of his job, he learned an important lesson in that if you break the rules, you will pay the consequences (Haley, 1965).

Barred from Small's Paradise, Malcolm's new job was peddling marijuana, rolling and selling reefers by the sticks (Haley, 1965). In an attempt to avoid the law, Malcolm decided on traveling the East coast on the railroad selling Reefers (Haley, 1965). In a matter of years, Malcolm Little had become known as "Detroit Red," a small-time hustler in New York City. Malcolm says of himself:

I was a true hustler, uneducated, unskilled at anything honorable, and I considered myself nervy and cunning enough to live by my wits, exploiting any prey. A hustler knows that if he ever relaxes, if he ever slows down, the other hungry, restless foxes, ferrets, wolves, and vultures out there with him won't hesitate to make him their prey. (p. 24)

Malcolm is determined to live in the world by any means necessary, as he has witnessed on a daily basis in the Black ghetto (Epps, 1968).

In 1943, Ella received a letter addressed to Malcolm from the Boston draft board. When the Boston draft board received no response, the New York draft board sent another letter to Malcolm. In response he went downtown to register for the draft of the United States Army, where they found Malcolm mentally incompetent to serve in the Army and classified him as 4F (Haley, 1965). Kelley (1998) contends Malcolm purposefully dodged the draft as he had no plans to die over a “white man’s war.”

Malcolm continued to work sporadically on the railroad, working the street as Big Red, pushing dope, playing the numbers, bootlegging whiskey, hustling, and working in the night club as a bar entertainer using the name “Rhythm Red” (Haley, 1965).

Malcolm was determined to defy the white man in anything and anyway that he could, as he was not going to work for the white man, and he certainly was not going to war for the white man. These decisions left Malcolm to continue to live his hustling lifestyle (Epps, 1968).

After moving back to Boston, Malcolm had gotten to the point where drugs were a part of his everyday life; he was using reefer, cocaine, or both daily in an attempt to hide his stress and worries. There Malcolm came up with the idea of forming a gang to commit armed robbery with his friends, Shorty and Rudy, and Malcolm’s and Shorty’s white women (Haley, 1965). The plan was for the two white women to case the wealthy neighborhoods by actually going into the homes pretending to be saleswomen, or college girls taking a survey, to see if there were valuables there worth stealing (Haley, 1965). Malcolm continued on this downward spiral of destruction, and by January 1946, had been arrested and charged with grand larceny and breaking and entering (Haley, 1965). At this point in Malcolm’s life, with no guidance or direction, he had become a walking zombie, getting high, using white women, and in the business of robbery (Haley, 1965). Malcolm recalls how the white girls got low bail and

sentences, as their only “crime” was viewed as being involved with Negroes. However, Malcolm and his friend received excessively high bails. Malcolm said to his attorney: “We seem to be getting sentenced because of those girls” (Haley, 1965, p. 151). Malcolm’s court appointed attorney reminded him that is what happens when you are with white women. Malcolm and his friend received an unheard of amount of time, not for their crime of burglary, but for being involved with white women (Haley, 1965). The result for Malcolm, who had not yet reached his twenty-first birthday, was to begin serving his sentence of ten years in the Charleston State Prison. On the records, the sentence handed down for Malcolm and his friend was officially for the charge of burglary, but in reality, they received such a heavy sentence because they had been involved with white women (Haley, 1965).

During this low period in his life, Malcolm is mesmerized by the Harlem underworld, and he views himself as a heroic outlaw. As Malcolm observes in his autobiography:

It was about this time (mid-1943) that I discovered the movies. Sometimes I made as many as five in one day, both downtown and in Harlem. I love the tough guys, the action, Humphrey Bogart in “Casablanca,” and I loved all of that dancing and carrying on in such films as “Stormy Weather” and “Cabin in the Sky.” (Haley, 1965, p. 99)

The Hollywood fantasy allowed Malcolm to escape from the harsh realities of the life of a hustler. As he later observes in his autobiography:

[During the winter of 1944/45] I began to be sick. I had colds all the time. It got to be a steady irritation, always sniffing and wiping my nose, all day, all night. I stayed so high I was in a dream world. Now, sometimes, I smoked opium with some white friends, actors who lived downtown. I didn’t smoke the usual wooden-match-sized sticks of marijuana. I was so far gone by now that I smoked it almost by the ounce. (Haley, 1965, p. 123)

For Malcolm, in order to escape the maximum penalty of death by drug addiction, he accepted the lesser one of imprisonment. Being sent to prison represented a nodal point in his development into a transformational leader. The isolation of prison gave him the necessary time to come to terms with the tragedies of his early life: the death of his father, the mental breakdown of his mother, and the fragmentation of his family. The solitude of prison offered him an opportunity to return to his Garveyite roots, and to identify with the struggles of Black working class people.

Paradise Lost: Malcolm's Prison Experience

Just before the age of 21, young Malcolm, who had not yet begun to shave, found himself standing before a judge in Middlesex County being charged and convicted of grand larceny. Malcolm and his friend Shorty received a sentence of 10 years, while the white women received a much lighter sentence of one to five years (Haley, 1965). The sentencing merely reminds Malcolm that he is Black and he will not receive fair or equal treatment.

In The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Malcolm reports:

Any person who claims to have deep feeling for other human beings should think a long, long time before he votes to have other men kept behind bars—caged. I am not saying there shouldn't be prisons, but there shouldn't be bars. Behind bars, a man never reforms. He will never forget. He never will get completely over the memory behind bars. (Haley, 1965, p. 153)

Feeling the lowest of low, Malcolm was locked up, assigned a prison number, and suffered mightily from drug addiction withdrawal symptoms that went untreated. Malcolm's prison cell was tiny and filthy, had no running water, and had a pail for a toilet (Haley, 1965).

Malcolm, still a very young man, had his freedom taken from him and was forced to live in conditions that were inhumane, comparable to a zoo for animals where one is locked up, unable to move around freely, and subjected to eating and sleeping while inhaling the scent of one's own and other's bodily waste (Haley, 1965).

During this time Malcolm received letters with spiritual words of encouragement from various family members, but filled with bitterness, he replied back cursing. Malcolm cursed the Bible and God for his fate. He claimed to have become an atheist while in prison (Haley, 1965). It is reasonable to assume that while in prison Malcolm felt he had absolutely nothing to live for; he was a very angry young man looking for something that he was unable to find on his own, and which continuously eluded him—guidance and direction (Epps, 1968).

Malcolm eventually met a man by the name of John Elton Bembry, for whom he had great respect (Haley, 1965). This man had the ability to speak in such a manner that even the white prisoners and the guards would occasionally listen to what Bembry had to say, as he possessed the ability to speak on practically any subject. Bembry encouraged Malcolm to take advantage of the prison library, as well as to use his brain, because he had one (Haley, 1965). Malcolm was also strongly encouraged by his sister, Hilda, to take coursework in English and writing (Haley, 1965). Encouraged by others, Malcolm used his prison time as an opportunity to study philosophy, history, religion among others areas.

Malcolm's Introduction to the Nation of Islam

In 1948, Malcolm was relocated to Concord prison and there was introduced to the Nation of Islam by way of a letter from his brother, Philbert. Shortly after, Malcolm received a second letter from his brother, Reginald. However, Reginald put a twist in his letter, suggesting that Malcolm stop eating pork and smoking cigarettes, in order to get out of prison (Haley,

1965). By this time all of Malcolm's siblings were members of the Nation of Islam. They would play a key role in his decision to join Elijah Muhammad's Black Nationalist millennial organization (Epps, 1968).

Through relentless work and her personal connections, Malcolm's sister, Ella, aided him in his next transition to the Norfolk, Massachusetts Prison Colony (Haley, 1965). This experimental rehabilitation prison had a much more relaxed atmosphere and the amenity of running water. This prison allowed Malcolm more freedom, and provided educational rehabilitation programs from Harvard and Boston universities, as well as from other local educational colleges and universities (Haley, 1965).

In this new facility, Malcolm now had the ability to go to the library and select books of his choice from which to read and study (Haley, 1965). By this point in time Malcolm was no longer eating pork or smoking cigarettes, as was part of the Nation of Islam's political theology (Epps, 1968). Malcolm listens to his brother, Reginald, as he speaks of Elijah Muhammad's teachings and reference to "the white man" as "the devil" (Haley, 1965, p. 160). Also, according to Epps (1968), Elijah Muhammad reminded Black folk that they should stop thinking and acting like slaves and stop being fearful of the white man. As Malcolm recalled, from the time he was a young child until this particular point in his life, all white people had acted like devils. In Haley (1965), Malcolm is quoted as saying:

From the start of my life the state white people [were] always in our house after the other whites I didn't know had killed my father . . . The white people who kept calling my mother crazy to her face and before me and my brothers and sisters, until she finally was taken off by white people to Kalamazoo asylum . . . the white judge and others who had split up the children. The Swerlins, the other whites around Mason . . . white youngsters I

was in school there with and the teachers--the one who told me in the eighth grade to “be a carpenter” because thinking of being a lawyer was foolish for a Negro . . . (pp. 160-161).

Malcolm recalled the whites in his adult life in Boston where he had shined their shoes at the whites-only dances, waited on them and washed their dirty dishes in the restaurant, as well as the whites on the railroad, including the ones with whom he had worked and the ones on whom he had waited. Malcolm reflected on the whites that he met in New York City who included the police, the criminals, whites who enjoyed the Black clubs, and the white women that wanted Black men. Malcolm thought about the white judge that gave him ten years in prison, when for first offenders, the maximum was two years. Malcolm thought about the white jeweler who helped to trap him, the white prison guards, and the white officials (Haley, 1965).

In his mind, Malcolm could not let go of his suffering and ill treatment by the white man, as he was reminded daily in prison by the presence of the white prison guards. To a Black Muslim, the white man was a “dog” (Epps, 1968, p. 29). From the Nation of Islam and Muhammad’s teachings, Malcolm surmised that he had no idea who he was, because the white devil had stripped him of his heritage of kings and queens, of riches and gold. The white devil had stripped him of his own family name, his language, and people of his kind; the evil white devil murdered, raped, and stole his native land from its people (Haley, 1965).

After Malcolm gained this knowledge about how he, as a Black man living in the United States, had been brainwashed, his brothers and sisters pressured him by sending at least two letters a day strongly encouraging him to convert to the Nation of Islam faith. Malcolm’s family was now all Muslim, and recognized as their leader “The Honorable Elijah Muhammad” or “The Messenger of Allah” (Haley, 1965, p. 162). Malcolm learned that Muslims did not eat pork

because it was against the Islamic religion; however the injunction against cigarettes, drugs, and alcohol was a rule of the followers of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, specifically (Haley, 1965). According to Epps (1968), cleanliness of the mind and body was a requirement if success was to be obtained by Black people.

In *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Malcolm received literature explaining “the true knowledge of the black [sic] man” from the supporters of Elijah Muhammad (Haley, 1965). History had been “whitened” in the white man’s history books, and the Black man had been brainwashed (Haley, 1965, p. 163). More accurate information available in the Black man’s literature described inhuman treatment: trafficking of the Black man when the white devil traveled to Africa, killing and kidnapping the Black man in chains on slave ships, to bring him to the United States of America where he was then worked and beaten like an animal, and tortured (Haley, 1965). In addition to this cruel and unusual punishment, these Black men and women were denied their language, religion, and culture (Pathfinder, 1990). As a result, the Black slave was given his slave owner’s family name such as Jones, Smith, and Johnson (Pathfinder, 1990).

The negative representation of Africa taught by the white man to the Black man pictured animals and savages swinging in the jungle (Pathfinder, 1990). Blacks were taught the religion of white Christians who’s God was white with blue eyes and blond hair. This white Christian religion said that Black was a curse, that everything Black was to be hated, and that everything white was good, and to be praised (Haley, 1965). Additionally, the white Christian religion taught Negroes that they must be humble, sing, pray, and turn the other cheek (Haley, 1965).

Malcolm finally decided to write Elijah Muhammad, in which he informed Mr. Muhammad that during his prison sentence, his sisters and brothers have talked of him and his faith. Malcolm received a letter back explaining that the Black prisoner symbolizes white

society's transgressions of maintaining Black oppression, depravation, and ignorance; that white society structures the inability of Blacks to get decent jobs; and as a result, that Blacks are left struggling and turn to a life of crime (Haley, 1965). According to the Nation of Islam's eschatology, the white man was an immoral beast and should be treated accordingly.

Feeling encouraged and confident, Malcolm continued his education in the prison library. While in prison he was also exposed to a number of classes that were taught by instructors from the local universities of Harvard and Boston (Haley, 1965). In addition, Malcolm purposefully searched out the Black man's history, reading books including *Souls of Black Folk* by W. E. B. Du Bois, *Outline of History* by H. G. Wells, *Story of Civilization* by Will Durant, and *Negro History* by Carter G. Woodson (Haley, 1965).

By this time Malcolm had taken on the role of activist: he led the struggle of Muslim prisoners to get their religious and dietary needs respected by prison officials, and wrote for the prison newspaper and made it a forum for the rights of prisoners. It was in prison that Malcolm began to use some of the skills that later are so powerfully evident in his founding and editing of *Muhammad Speaks*, the official newspaper of the Nation of Islam. Prison becomes the fertile soil for the transformation of Detroit Red into Malcolm X.

Malcolm was alarmed at what he read in the history books, and would never forget all he was learning; it would be forever ingrained in his mind (Pathfinder, 1990). Malcolm read of the inhumane suffering brought on Blacks through slavery: of people beaten with whips, chains and clubs, and chased by dogs like animals (Haley, 1965). Through Malcolm's reading, he learned that not only had the slave's freedom been taken, but his family name had been taken as well, leaving him with no opportunity to learn from what tribe he descended (Pathfinder, 1990). *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Alex Haley (1965) lists potential slave tribal names:

Mandingos, Wolof, Serer, Fula, Fanti, Ashanti; men and women from these tribes were treated as if their cultures had never existed. Their unique heritages were certainly never discussed among the white man (Haley, 1965). Malcolm's reading taught him that the white man had exploited and brutalized every non-white people in existence, and further confirmed the teachings of Mr. Muhammad that the white man was the devil (Haley, 1965).

According to Malcolm:

I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life as the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive. My homemade education gave me, with every additional book that I read, a little bit more sensitivity to the deafness, dumbness, and blindness that was afflicting the black [sic] race in America. (Haley, 1965, p. 180)

By now Malcolm has acquired a genuine interest in educating himself through reading and learning about Black history (Haley, 1965). As he later recounted, "my reading had my mind like steam under pressure. Some way, I had to start telling the white man about himself to his face" (Haley, 1965, p. 184). His participation in the prison debate team allowed him to release the some of the pressure of his newly acquired knowledge.

Prison provided Malcolm with the means to spiritual and intellectual freedom. From Malcolm's standpoint, he had been unjustly labeled a criminal and condemned to imprisonment by the white man. In prison, Malcolm came to believe that true justice could only come about if he in turn judged and condemn the white man for being a "devil." Ironically, Malcolm observes of his years in Norfolk: "I never had been so truly free in my life" (Haley, 1965, p. 173).

It was in jail that Malcolm was able to clean himself up, and gain self-respect, discipline, and a sense of mission. These qualities would become essential in influencing his followers later

in his life. Malcolm learned how to help others and organized them to stand up for their rights. He learned the importance of historical and social knowledge. He developed a respect for the written word and the power of books, but he also knew that all knowledge did not come from books. Written facts had to be validated against the lessons of his own experience and that of the people he led and influenced. This was especially necessary because African Americans' experience and perspectives differed markedly from the experiences of those who wrote most of the books about history. It is important to note that people followed Malcolm not merely out of an emotional attachment to his charisma. The basis of his leadership was that he gave back to followers, in a more highly refined and clarified form, ideas and insights that were rooted in their experiences. Unlike politicians of today, Malcolm did not depend on extensive public opinion polls to tell him of the desires of his constituency. Because of his experiences in Lansing, Boston, and Harlem, he was familiar with Black people from every walk of life. He was, therefore, able to articulate the suppressed agony and pain that many working class African-Americans lived with everyday. In sum, his imprisonment gave him the opportunity to learn how to be of service to the "wretched of the earth."

CHAPTER 5

“The Hate That Hate Produced”: Becoming a Transformative Leader, 1949-1955

Strong and unashamed, Malcolm had educated himself, become a Muslim, and spent his last year of prison time perfecting his speaking skills, while spreading the political theology of Elijah Muhammad. Malcolm was bold in speaking his thoughts and opinions on religion. On the one hand, he denounced Christianity as the white man’s religion and, on the other, promoted Islam as the Black man’s religion.

This chapter focuses on the development of Malcolm as he proselytizes on behalf of the Nation of Islam, teaching the political theology of Elijah Muhammad and working tirelessly to build the organizational structure of the Nation of Islam. In this chapter I identify and examine the effects of three life-changing events: (a) Malcolm gets out of prison and goes to live with his brother, Wilfred Little, and attends various Nation of Islam meetings, (b) Malcolm moves to Chicago and lives with Elijah Muhammad while studying for the ministry and changes his name, and (c) Malcolm sets up a Mosque in Detroit, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, and serves as assistant and official minister for the Nation of Islam.

From Malcolm Little to Malcolm X

Released from prison in August 1952, Malcolm traveled to Detroit where he was invited to live with his brother, Wilfred, and his family (Haley, 1965). Although Malcolm had been told about Muslim ritual and routine he had never witnessed or participated in it. In Wilfred’s home, Malcolm listened and learned, as his brother explained each act of the ritual and its significance. and invited Malcolm to participate, to which Malcolm obliged. According to Malcolm (Haley, 1965), this family ritual acknowledges and requires the father to rise first to prepare the way for his family, performing the morning absolutions, followed by his wife, and then the children.

Ritual continued throughout the day with all practicing Muslims throughout the world, including cleansing the hands, face, and mouth, and meditation at noon (Haley, 1965). Malcolm observed Muslim men appropriately dressed, and the women with ankle-length gowns, heads covered with scarves, and no makeup. The Muslim children were appropriately dressed, respectful, and mannerly. Malcolm says:

I had never dreamed of anything like that atmosphere among black [sic] people who had learned to be proud they were black [sic], who learned to love other black [sic] people instead of being jealous and suspicious. I thrilled to how we Muslim men used both hands to grasp a black [sic] brother's both hands, voicing and smiling our happiness to meet him again. The Muslim sisters, both married and single were given an honor and respect that I'd never seen black [sic] men give to their women, and it felt wonderful to me. The salutations which we exchanged were warm, filled with mutual respect and dignity: "Brother" . . . "Sister" . . . "Ma'am" . . . "Sir." Even children speaking to other children used these terms. Beautiful (Haley, 1965, pp. 196–197).

Gaining this new and firsthand visual knowledge, Malcolm worked relentlessly at cleaning himself up and behaving in an honorable and respectable manner as he submitted to the discipline and guidance of the Nation of Islam, and Elijah Muhammad (Kelley, 1998). This new faith gave Malcolm a sense of pride, and an opportunity to work in and give back to the community in which he lived (Epps, 1968).

Malcolm continued to grow in the Muslim faith, consistently attending meetings and taking in the Muslim message, which was the teaching of Elijah Muhammad. Malcolm was becoming a zealot about Elijah Muhammad's message, which he viewed as the true knowledge of the Black man. At one point, he remarked on not being able to understand why the temples

were not full of Black people (Haley, 1965). From Malcolm's view, the local temple's surrounding community was filled with brainwashed Black brothers and sisters who were drinking, cursing, fighting, dancing, carousing, and using dope, which were the very things that Mr. Muhammad taught were causing the Black man to stay under the heel of the white man in America (Haley, 1965). Malcolm had seen the light, opened his eyes to the disparities of the Black man and his plight, and was unable to comprehend the lack of will and desire by fellow Blacks to follow the teachings of the Islamic faith, and the Nation of Islam leader's, Elijah Muhammad.

Pressing on and determined to follow the lead of Elijah Muhammad, after receiving his blessings, Malcolm began working to increasing the membership of the Nation of Islam (Epps, 1968). It was also during this time that Malcolm received his "X" from Chicago, officially repudiating his last name (Kelley, 1998). The "X" symbolizes the true African family name that he could never know (Haley, 1965). Malcolm explained that the "X" replaces the white slave owner's name, which in his case is "Little" (Haley, 1965, p. 201). Malcolm found himself recruiting in Detroit ghetto bars, poolrooms, and street corners every evening and straight from work (Haley, 1965). According to Epps (1968), Malcolm singlehandedly increased the membership in the Nation of Islam from 400 to 40,000 in less than ten years.

Malcolm was eventually rewarded for his hard work. By the summer of 1953, he was officially named Detroit Temple Number One's Assistant Minister; in his first speech Malcolm informed his listeners: "We didn't land on Plymouth Rock, my brothers and sisters, Plymouth Rock landed on us!" (Haley, 1965, p. 203).

Malcolm's career as a Muslim minister gave him a platform that he didn't hesitate to use, informing all those who would listen to throw aside their slave behavior, and to take up arms if

need be, as the American Black would be delivered someday (Epps, 1968). Malcolm was relentless in seeking out new recruits, and fiercely preached the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, reminding some while informing others of the abuse and torment the Black man had suffered at the hands of the white devil. Frequently Malcolm made visits to the home of Elijah Muhammad where he was treated as a family member, visiting with Mr. Muhammad's wife and mother, having meals with them, and occasionally traveling with Mr. Muhammad to Muslim-owned grocery stores. On occasion, while visiting one of the grocery stores, Mr. Muhammad would sweep the floor, or perform some task, modeling working to his followers, as opposed to being idle and lazy (Haley, 1965). It was during these times that Malcolm's relationship with Elijah Muhammad developed beyond that of follower and leader of the Nation of Islam, toward that of son and father, as Mr. Muhammad modeled his expectations for Malcolm, as well as for other followers in the Nation of Islam (Haley, 1965).

After much training and eager to spread the word, Malcolm quit his job and with the permission of Mr. Muhammad, began traveling to various cities to set up temples (Haley, 1965). In a period of three months, Malcolm had gathered enough support in the city of Boston to open a temple. Malcolm, following the teachings of Mr. Muhammad, would raise his hand and say: Do nothing unto anyone that you would not like to have done unto yourself. Seek peace, and never be the aggressor, but if anyone attacks you, we do not teach you to turn the other cheek, May Allah bless you to be successful and victorious in all that you do (Haley, 1965, p. 216).

Malcolm X as National Organizer and Minister

By the fall of 1953, Malcolm had successfully organized Temple Eleven in Boston and was appointed its first minister; by March 1954, Malcolm had moved on to Philadelphia to successfully organize Temple Twelve, and was there also appointed acting minister; by June

1954, Malcolm was appointed minister of Temple Seven in New York City by Muhammad (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008). Malcolm, overwhelmed with excitement with this new appointment, began his tedious journey of trying to build up Temple Seven in his old stomping ground (Haley, 1965). Malcolm's passionate message from the temple to the street was beginning to make an impact on the developing civil rights movement (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008). By 1956, the Nation of Islam felt tremendous growth, particularly in the major cities of Detroit, Chicago, and New York, and included Black people with various backgrounds such as civil servants, nurses, clerical workers, and department store salesmen (Haley, 1965). Malcolm was pleased with the diversity and pleasant mix of Black people, from the ghetto to the middle class, joining the Nation of Islam. After all, regardless of the tint or color of the skin, whether it is light, medium, or dark; whether you lived in the ghetto, low income housing, or a middle class neighborhood; or the position you held as garbage collector, the butler or the maid/servant, or nurse; you were still Black and a victim of white supremacy (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008).

Malcolm was personally responsible for establishing more than 100 Muslim temples or mosques throughout the U.S. (see Table 2). By the early 1960's, Malcolm X was a widely celebrated and feared public speaker and debater at universities and in the national media (Leader, 1993).

Dedicated to building the Nation of Islam in the Muslim faith, Malcolm is assigned a car by Mr. Muhammad, and continues his efforts. By this time, Malcolm has made many speaking engagements and traveled extensively among the established temples to hold and attend meetings, as well as to serve as the tour leader for Temple Seven during a Nation of Islam Convention in Chicago (Haley, 1965). In addition to his responsibilities and duties, Malcolm is awarded the title of national spokesperson for the Nation of Islam, an act which broadens his

travels and opportunities to express his concerns, thoughts, and views on a variety of topics including civil rights, as well as to participate in formal discussions on Black equality and Black leadership (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008).

Table 2

Malcolm X's Organization of Temples in the Nation of Islam

West Coast

San Francisco, CA
 Los Angeles, CA (Temple No. 27)
 San Diego, CA

Midwest

Milwaukee, WI
 Chicago, IL
 St. Louis, IL
 Dayton, OH
 Detroit, MI (Temple No. 1)
 Cleveland, OH
 Youngstown, OH
 Cincinnati, OH

Lower South

Houston, TX
 New Orleans, LA
 Atlanta, GA

Upper South

Baltimore, MD
 Washington, DC

New England

Boston, MA (Temple No. 11)
 Boston/Roxbury, MA
 Springfield, MA
 Hartford, CN (started by Rosalee in her home in 1955)

Mid-Atlantic Region

New York, NY (Temple No. 7)
 Philadelphia, PA (Temple No. 12)
 Pittsburg, PA
 Camden, NJ
 Atlantic City, NJ
 Buffalo, NY
 Albany, NY

Source: New York City Public Library, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

On one particular evening in Harlem in 1957, a scuffle broke out among some Negroes; two white policemen broke up the scuffle and demanded that onlookers disperse. Two of the onlookers were Muslim brothers belonging to Temple Seven, and they didn't move (Haley, 1965). The two policemen beat Nation of Islam member James Hinton to near death, transported

him to the 123rd precinct, and placed him in jail; within thirty minutes of the incident being reported to Muslims, fifty of Temple Seven's men stood in rank-formation outside the 123rd precinct, where they were joined by other Negroes (Haley, 1965). Malcolm went into the 123rd precinct and demanded to see Hinton. The police initially lied to Malcolm saying that Hinton was not there, but then admitted he was there but could not be seen (Haley, 1965). Malcolm informed the police that the Muslims would remain there until Hinton was seen and had received proper medical attention (Haley, 1965). Hinton was sickening to the sight, drenched in blood with his head busted open, and Malcolm demanded that he be taken to the hospital (Haley, 1965). Malcolm reports that the Muslim brothers followed the ambulance to the hospital on foot in loose formation. In the meantime, the crowd grew larger and followed the Muslims to Harlem Hospital (Haley, 1965). A top police official insisted that Malcolm make this crowd of people leave. According to Haley (1965), Malcolm says: "Our brothers were standing peacefully, disciplined perfectly, and harming no one" (p. 237). Once Hinton was stabilized and receiving proper care, Malcolm gave the order to disburse, and the Muslims departed (Haley, 1965). This incident made headline news and for the time in Harlem, Blacks of all ages were talking about "those Muslims" (Haley, 1965, p. 237).

The harassment and arrest of Brother Johnson Hinton, and the killing of numerous other Nation of Islam members, motivated Malcolm X to organize and mobilize the membership to protest in an organized fashion similar to the civil rights marches (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008).

In 1959, as the Nation's popularity grows, Malcolm is approached by journalist Louis Lomax, and asked to participate in a television documentary "The Hate That Hate Produced," to discuss the political theology of the Nation. At Elijah Muhammad's approval, Malcolm, Mr.

Muhammad, and other ministers were filmed teaching about the Black man's true religion and the "white devil" (Haley, 1965).

Following the television documentary on the Nation of Islam, Boston University scholar C. Eric Lincoln writes his thesis on the Nation of Islam, which is later turned into a book.

Lincoln had learned of the Nation of Islam while reading a term paper written by one of his students. Lincoln uses the student's term paper as the introduction in his book. Malcolm quotes from C. Eric Lincoln's book:

The Christian religion is incompatible with the Negro's aspirations for dignity and equality in America. It has hindered where it might have helped; it has been evasive when it was normally bound to be forthright; it has separated believers on the basis of color, although it has declared its mission to be a universal brotherhood under Jesus Christ. Christian love is the white man's love for himself and for his race. For the man who is not white, Islam is the hope for justice and equality in the world we build tomorrow. (Haley, 1965, pp. 238-239)

According to the Nation of Islam, Christianity supported slavery, violence, and war (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008). Malcolm talked of how the white man seized power among the nonwhite people in the name of Christianity, labeling all other nonwhite cultures heathen and pagan; yet the white man has yet to display the true spirit of Christ's teachings of being meek, humble, and Christ-like (Pathfinder, 1990, p. 67).

Malcolm, in direct opposition of Martin Luther King's Christianity—being meek and humble, turning the other cheek, and preaching nonviolence—suggests that anytime the preacher or the shepherd teaches you not to fight for your rights or your life as a human being, that preacher is deceiving you and is doing a disservice to his people (Epps, 1968). Malcolm's theory

was not to lie down and give up, but to stand up and to fight back (Epps, 1968). Malcolm continued to use the Nation of Islam and teachings of Mr. Muhammad as a platform on his journey of teaching and preaching to the nonwhite peoples of their rich history, of their value, of their pride and respect (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008).

In an effort to maintain communication regarding the Nation of Islam and the teachings of Mr. Muhammad, Malcolm initiated contact with James Hicks, the editor of the *Amsterdam News*, a newspaper published in Harlem (Haley, 1965). Malcolm began writing a column for this newspaper, and eventually transferred his column to the *Los Angeles Herald Dispatch*, also a Black newspaper (Haley, 1965). While working in Los Angeles setting up a Temple, Malcolm spent time learning how to construct a newspaper, bought himself a used camera and printer, and thus developed and founded the Muslim newspaper he named *Muhammad Speaks* (Haley, 1965).

Representing the Nation of Islam as instructed by Mr. Muhammad, Malcolm traveled to various countries including Africa, Egypt, Arabia, Sudan, Nigeria, and Ghana, where the Muslims are applauded for attempting to lift up the American Black people (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008).

In July 1959, as Malcolm's notoriety grew in and out of the United States, the television documentary entitled "The Hate that Hate Produced" was aired (Haley, 1965, p. 240). The title and content of the documentary had been severely altered and as a result, created massive hysteria, particularly among the Caucasian race (Haley, 1965). However, African American writers' and scholars' reviews were very different. According to Conyers and Smallwood (2008), John Clarke stated: "He was saying something over and above that of any other leader of that day. While others leaders were begging for entry into the house of the oppressor, he was telling you to build your own house." Poet Sonya Sanchez suggests: "Malcolm removed fear for

African Americans. Malcolm said out loud in a strong and manly fashion what you've been thinking for years" (p. 223). The show depicted Malcolm, Mr. Muhammad, and other ministers as aggressively teaching hate of and separatism from the white race (Haley, 1965). Malcolm recognized that almost immediately the white newspapers and national weekly magazines began writing that the Nation of Islam consisted of individuals who were "Hate-teachers, black [sic] racists, anti Christian and possibly Communist-inspired," (Haley, 1965). Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam were being accused of teaching white racism. Adding to turmoil and conflict, other Negro leaders attacked the Muslims and emphatically denied any mass representation of the Negroes (Haley, 1965). Conyers and Smallwood (2008) confirm that the actual contradiction between Malcolm's own views, as opposed to views that were presented in the television program, were a direct result of the presenter of the documentary, Mike Wallace, and his own bias. In fact, Wallace went on record calling his documentary a study of the rise of Black racism, and labeled the Nation of Islam as a cult of Black supremacy (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008).

Infuriated, Malcolm reminded the public that attempts at integration by their enslaved parents and decedents would have brought certain death, yet when Mr. Muhammad and others spoke of separation, this was called hate teaching (Haley, 1965). Conyers and Smallwood (2008) suggest that Malcolm displayed courage by speaking publicly on what everyone else thought, but was afraid to say publicly.

Malcolm, angered by the accusations, retaliated with more words, with each interview or phone call received. Malcolm says:

. . . when those devils would ask, "why is your Fruit of Islam being trained in judo and karate?" Any image of black [sic] men learning anything suggesting self-defense seemed to terrify the white man. I'd turn their question around: Why does judo or karate suddenly

get so ominous because black [sic] men study it? Across America, the Boy Scouts, the YMCA, the YWCA, all teach judo! It's alright until black [sic] men teach it! Little grammar school classes, and little girls are taught to defend themselves (Haley, 1965, p. 243).

Unwavering, Malcolm fought the media with undeniable history and words; however the news reporters and interviewers twisted his words to give him the persona of a Black racist stirring up trouble and teaching hate (Haley, 1965). Writer James Baldwin said: "When Malcolm talks . . . he articulates for all Negro people who listen to him . . . their suffering, the suffering that this county has long denied and he confirms their reality" (Bagwell, 1994, as cited in Conyers & Smallwood, 2008).

Initially, Malcolm was not allowed to retaliate against the Black leaders who continued to bash the Nation of Islam, in an effort to avoid dividing the race and having Blacks publicly fight among each other. However as tension progressed, Malcolm began responding to Wallace as a twentieth century Uncle Tom and professional Negro who was submissive to the white man (Haley, 1965).

As debate continued, there was coverage in the Black and white newspapers and magazines, including an article in the *Reader's Digest*, with its worldwide circulation and in thirteen languages (Haley, 1965). Next Malcolm was receiving requests from various radio and television personnel to participate in further panel discussions and debates, to which he obliged (Haley, 1965).

At every opportunity, in debate Malcolm reminded listeners of the difference between segregation, which is forced upon inferiors by superiors, and separation, which is done

voluntarily by two equals for the good of both (Haley, 1965). Malcolm, always giving Mr. Muhammad credit, says:

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that as long as our people here in America are dependent upon the white man, we will always be begging him for jobs, food, clothing, and housing . . . and he will always control our lives, regulate our lives, and have power to segregate us (Haley, 1965, p. 249).

By 1961, the Nation of Islam had a newspaper, *Muhammad Speaks*, founded by Malcolm, several small Muslim-owned businesses, and two Universities of Islam teaching school-age Muslim children (Haley, 1965). When Mr. Muhammad's physical health began to decline, responsibility for some organizational matters, public speaking, and radio and television requests, along with the notoriety that came with these public events, fell to Malcolm, and he was warned that he would be envied and hated (Haley, 1965). See Table 3 for a list of lectures by Malcolm X that took place in 1963.

In summary, during this time period in Malcolm's young adult life, he has just completed nearly seven years of his life in prison. With the guidance and assistance of his family and his own personal will and determination, Malcolm had cleaned up and humbly submitted himself to the discipline and guidance of Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. Malcolm began working to provide his Black brothers and sisters with the same knowledge that he had gained, which was pride and respect for the man; and to remove things such as cursing, fighting, and using dope (Haley, 1965). In following the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm dropped his last name, Little, referring to it as a slave name given to the Black man by the white slave master, and had begun using the symbol "X" which represented his lost African tribal name (Epps, 1968).

Table 3*Lectures by Malcolm X in 1963*

Location	Date	Lecture
Mosque #7, New York, NY	January 1, 1963	A Night with the NOI
East Lansing, MI	January 23, 1963	Malcolm X speaks on the Race Problem in America at the invitation of the African Students Association and the campus chapter of the NAACP, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.
Hi-Fi Country Club Charlotte, NC	January 30, 1963	Lecture at the Hi-Fi Country Club
New York, NY	February 1, 1963	Muslim Demonstration in Times Square.
New York, NY	June 29, 1963	Muslim rally in Harlem, 115 th Street and Lenox Avenue
HARLEM Unity Rally	August 10, 1963	Malcolm X speaks on the Black Revolution at the invitation of Adam Clayton Powell, Abyssinian Baptist
Philadelphia, PA	September 1963	The Old Negro and the New Negro
Wayne State University, Detroit, MI	October 22, 1963	Malcolm X delivers lecture to students at Wayne State University
Northern Grass Roots Leadership Conference, Detroit, MI	November 10, 1963	Malcolm X delivers "Message to the Grass Roots."
OAAU Rally, Audubon Ballroom, New York, NY	December 13, 1963	Malcolm X speaks on the Afro-American problem as a world problem, with Dick Gregory and Babu.
Harvard Law School Forum	December 16, 1963	Malcolm X speaks on the African Revolution and Its Impact on the American Negro.

Source: Malcolm X Research Web Site, <http://www.brothermalcolm.net/mxtimeline.html>

Malcolm, eager to share his newfound knowledge and religion, and with the approval of Elijah Muhammad, furthers his work, setting up mosques, preaching the teachings of Muhammad, and encouraging his audiences by instilling in them a sense of pride, hope, and the demand to be treated like human beings. Malcolm's skill as a talented orator and his desire to help his fellow man allowed him to rise quickly to the top within the Nation of Islam (Haley,

1965). Malcolm was able to grow the capacity of the Nation of Islam to serve by setting up mosques in various cities, and increasing membership, going into the ghettos, pool halls, and jails, where others would not go (Epps, 1968). As Malcolm grew in popularity within the Nation of Islam, among the masses in the Black ghetto and in the public eye in the United States and internationally, Muhammad advised him to be aware of those who would envy and become jealous of him (Haley, 1965).

CHAPTER 6

Malcolm's Emergence as a National Leader, 1956-1965

From his base in New York, Malcolm built the structure, increased the membership, and heavily influenced the Nation of Islam. He introduced the Nation of Islam to the world, and as he continued to represent the Nation of Islam in the media, colleges, and universities, he increasingly became the target of envy and jealousy within the Nation of Islam brothers, due to his success and being in the forefront.

Malcolm kept preaching and speaking, saying:

Human rights! Respect as human beings! That's what America's black [sic] masses want and that's the problem. The black [sic] masses do not want to be treated like animals, nor do they want to live like animals in the slums and ghettos. The blacks [sic] want to live in an open and free society with their heads up like men and women (Haley, 1965, p. 275)

This chapter addresses (a) the intense envy and jealousy among the Nation of Islam brothers toward Malcolm X, and his disappointment in mentor Elijah Muhammad, (b) Malcolm's remark on the assassination of John F. Kennedy, and his eventual split with the Nation of Islam, (c) his trip to Mecca, and speeches at Harvard, and (d) his death.

In a talk Malcolm delivered in Rochester, he reminded his audience that as a Black man, whether he was a Methodist or a Baptist, atheist or agnostic, he caught the same hell (Pathfinder, 1989). As Malcolm traveled the country delivering his electrifying speeches, he consistently gave Elijah Muhammad recognition, as noted in his address at Michigan State University on January 23, 1963. Malcolm informed his audience that Elijah Muhammad was a religious leader, teacher, and the only one in America spreading the religion of Islam (Pathfinder, 1989).

Malcolm's speech at the University of California on October 11, 1963, advised that Elijah Muhammad was the only Black man who would tell you how the Black man really feels.

In addition to the numerous events in which Malcolm participated, approximately one month prior to the March on Washington, the *New York Times* reported that he was the second most sought after speaker at colleges and universities. This description was an indirect result of a book entitled *The Black Muslim in America*, authored by Dr. Lincoln, which was required reading in many college courses (Haley, 1965). About that same time, *Playboy* magazine, also heavily circulated on college campuses, printed an interviewed Malcolm in which he was depicted as the fiery Muslim (Haley, 1965). By this time Malcolm had spoken at a minimum of 50 colleges and universities, including Brown, Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Rutgers, Atlanta University, Clark College, and Howard University, and had invitations to speak at Cornell and Princeton. When speaking at colleges and universities, Malcolm began with fearless and upfront honesty stating: "Gentlemen, I finished the eighth grade in Mason, Michigan . . . My high school was in the black [sic] ghetto of Roxbury, Massachusetts . . . My college was in the streets of Harlem, and my masters was taken in prison" (Haley, 1965, p. 286).

Malcolm prided himself in helping to bring about progress to the Nation of Islam as he had aided Mr. Muhammad and the Nation in revolutionizing the American Black man's thinking, opening his eyes so that he would never look in the same fearful way at the white man again (Haley, 1965). Malcolm, always careful to give Elijah Muhammad praise, as noted in the Harvard Law School Forum on March 24, 1961, consistently reminded the audience of Mr. Muhammad's teachings concerning the treatment of Black Americans, with the solution being complete separation (Epps, 1968). Readings from Haley's autobiography credited Malcolm with establishing the Nation of Islam's most powerful and aggressive mosques in New York City,

Harlem, Queens, and Brooklyn, and aiding in establishing most or all of the remaining mosques in all 52 states (Haley, 1965). As a reward for his hard work and aid in organizing these mosques, Malcolm received the appointment of mosque #7 in New York, which was considered the most important Eastern temple (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008).

As Mr. Muhammad's health further deteriorated and Malcolm's duties increased, he began to hear negative remarks and comments such as "Minister Malcolm is trying to take over the Nation," that Malcolm was "taking credit" for Mr. Muhammad's teachings, trying to "build and empire" for himself, and enjoying playing "coast to coast Mr. Big Shot" (Haley, 1965, p. 294). Malcolm took note that the newspaper *Muhammad Speaks*, which he founded, had begun providing little to no coverage of his news and news events. After in depth further investigation, Malcolm learned that the limited coverage was a direct result of the new publisher of the paper: Mr. Muhammad's son, as the new editor, had decided to limit his coverage in the paper (Haley, 1965). Continued orders were issued to provide no coverage to Malcolm, yet he consistently provided rallies concerning Mr. Muhammad's teachings (Haley, 1965). In fact, Malcolm held rallies with over 8,000 students at the University of California, and with 7,000 people in Harlem, but the Chicago headquarters wouldn't and didn't acknowledge these events in the newspaper, or otherwise (Haley, 1965).

Tension, envy, and jealousy mounted as Malcolm tried to do just what the he had always done, which was to spread the teachings of Mr. Muhammad. Sometime in 1963, Malcolm began refusing coverage by magazines, and guest appearances on television programs, as a result of the negative attitude he sensed from Chicago headquarters (Haley, 1965). Historian John Henrik Clarke (1992) suggested that due to the aspirations of others regarding the Nation of Islam should Elijah Muhammad pass away, the idea of getting rid of Malcolm developed.

While Malcolm practiced suspension of all media activities for 90 days at the order of Elijah Muhammad due to the envy and jealousy from Muslims in Chicago headquarters, he also observed the hate that the American white man was generating and feeding (Haley, 1965). The murder of NAACP field secretary, Medgar Evers in Mississippi, and the bombing of a Negro church in Alabama killing four little Black girls, hit Malcolm hard, yet he felt muzzled and unable to speak out truthfully on these matters resulting from the jealousy and envy of fellow Nation of Islam brothers in Chicago (Haley, 1965).

The Autobiography of Malcolm X recognizes that Malcolm X used his own personal transformation as an example, teaching among the entire Nation of Islam, of Mr. Muhammad's power to reform Black men's lives, demonstrating belief without doubt or hesitation that Mr. Muhammad was the symbol of morality (Haley, 1965).

Malcolm recalls and confirms the influence that Mr. Muhammad had on his life from the time he was in prison, and after his release, and says:

. . . the religion of Islam had reached down into the mud to lift me up, to save me from being what I inevitably would have been: a dead criminal in a grave, or if still alive, a flint-hard, bitter, thirty-seven-year-old convict in some penitentiary, or insane asylum. Or at best, I would have been an old, fading Detroit Red, hustling, stealing enough for food and narcotics, and myself being stalked as prey by cruel ambitious younger hustlers such as Detroit Red had been. (Breitman, 1967, p. 8)

Undoubtedly Elijah Muhammad had helped him turn his life around, and saved him from sure self-destruction; however, Malcolm's faith was dealt a severe let down as reports of Mr.

Muhammad's immoral behavior rose up in newspaper, radio and television accounts across the United States (Haley, 1965).

Malcolm had been so blinded by his faith in Mr. Muhammad; it was as if he had no brain of his own. Malcolm recalled turning on his own flesh and blood brother, Reginald, resulting from the teachings of Mr. Muhammad. Tormented and torn, Malcolm had nowhere to turn but to Mr. Muhammad for answers (Haley, 1965). This man had rescued Malcolm from nothing, he trained him, gave him credibility and the opportunity to go places and do things he would otherwise never thought of doing, and made it possible for him to use his talents helping other people (Breitman, 1967). Malcolm traveled to the home of Mr. Muhammad to confront him regarding the accusations of infidelities, but Mr. Muhammad replied that the accusations were all prophecy, and that he must fulfill that prophecy (Haley, 1965).

Caught up in the religious dilemma, Malcolm returned from this visit to inform the East Coast Muslim officials of Mr. Muhammad's choice of the "fulfillment of prophecy." There he learn that not only did the East Coast Muslims already know of the infidelities, but the Chicago Muslim officials had already formulated a plan to make it appear that Malcolm was spreading this news as a vicious rumor, which in turn would cause Muslims to hate Malcolm (p. 304).

"Chickens Come Home to Roost": Malcolm X and the Assassination of John F. Kennedy

On November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Within hours of the assassination, Elijah Muhammad sent a directive to each Muslim minister, ordering them to make no remarks regarding the assassination, and if pressed, simply to say "no comment" (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008).

In the meantime, at Elijah Muhammad's request, Malcolm had been scheduled to speak in his place at the Manhattan Center in New York City. During the question-answer session that

followed his talk, Malcolm was asked his opinion regarding the assassination of President Kennedy. Without any hesitation, Malcolm responded that he saw the event as a case of “the chickens coming home to roost” (Haley, 1965, p. 305). He went on to explain that the white man’s hate had not only killed defenseless Black people, but the hate that was allowed to spread, was the culprit for taking down the president (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008).

Immediately, mass media displayed various headlines accusing Malcolm and the Black Muslims of speaking harshly against the dead president. Malcolm was taken aback, but obeyed Mr. Muhammad’s required silencing for approximately 90 days (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008). Upon Malcolm’s return to New York City, before he could tell his own assistants in Mosque Seven of his silencing, he learned that they were already aware of his suspension (Haley, 1965). To bring even more distress, Chicago officials had, by way of telegram, informed all the New York City newspapers, radio stations, and television stations of Malcolm X’s silencing. Malcolm received an overflow of phone calls from all over the country questioning the recent change of events regarding his silence, to which he responded accordingly that he had disobeyed Mr. Muhammad (Haley, 1965).

Suddenly, Malcolm became acutely aware of several unusual turns of events. He was immediately forbidden to teach in his own Mosque Seven. The rumor mill said that Malcolm could be reinstated if he submitted; yet he had already spoken with Mr. Muhammad and submitted completely to him. Malcolm realized he was being set up, and he didn’t like it (Haley, 1965).

As difficult as this decision was, Malcolm acknowledged within himself that the end for his relationship with the Nation of Islam had arrived. Malcolm knew his reinstatement after the 90-day suspension would never occur, just as every practicing Muslim knew that the ruckus

regarding his comments about President Kennedy's demise was an excuse, the beginning of the end for him. It became uncomfortably clear to Malcolm that the Chicago headquarters intended extinction for him (Marable, 2011). Also, now acutely aware, Malcolm observed that everywhere he went, whether it was on the streets and sidewalks, in a place of business, or an elevator, he was being watched by his Muslim brothers, who were waiting for a chance to kill him (Marable, 2011).

Malcolm realized that his relationship with Nation of Islam had been destroyed because of envy and jealousy. Chicago headquarters was busy spreading untruths about Malcolm, accusing him of attempting to take over the Nation of Islam for himself (Haley, 1965). In addition to the envy and jealousy, Malcolm felt utterly betrayed by Elijah Muhammad, a man whom Malcolm viewed as standing next to God, a man for whom he had been willing to give his life. Elijah Muhammad, on the other hand, was unwilling to admit to his own discretions, and relied on his plea of "prophecy fulfillment rather than admit to human weaknesses (Haley, 1965). Full of deceit, Mr. Muhammad allowed the Chicago headquarters within the Nation of Islam to influence him to silence Malcolm, purposefully using comments made by Malcolm as a reasonable explanation for such a decision (Marable, 2011).

After twelve years of unwavering support and dedication to Mr. Muhammad and the Nation of Islam, Malcolm realized this relationship had been permanently destroyed (Marable, 2011). However, during the twelve years of his service within the Nation of Islam, Malcolm had included domestic and international issues in his public statements and ministry regarding violence against African Americans (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008). Assessing his credentials, Malcolm was keenly aware of his ongoing commitment to the American Black man's struggles, and viewed this as his ultimate calling. By this time the name of Malcolm X held international

prestige, as well as a huge following in his city of residence, New York City, among non-Muslims. Spearheading Malcolm's non-Muslim popularity was the incident in Harlem where he had led Muslims to the police department after a Muslim brother had been beaten (Haley, 1965). Hundreds of Negroes had observed Malcolm as he maintained control of that crowd, and the 28th precinct chief inspector, himself, had said of Malcolm, "No one man should have that much power" (Haley, 1965, p. 314). Malcolm prided himself on his ability to speak on television broadcast stations such as ABC, CBS, or NBC; he had the intelligence to speak at Harvard University or Tuskegee College, as well as the ability to talk with the middle class Negro and the ghetto Blacks. Most important to Malcolm, however, was his skill at speaking and understanding the ghetto's language and his rapport with the ghetto Blacks (Haley, 1965).

Malcolm continually built upon this already existent foundation of popularity. He felt compelled to develop an organization to aid the Black man in North America to rid himself of dependence on the white man and the white man's culture (Haley, 1965). Malcolm's plan boasted of curing the Black man's handicaps in mental, spiritual, economic and political disability, which would be replaced with human rights (Haley, 1965). Malcolm attracted support for his newly planned organization from Muslims, non-Muslims, middle and upper class Black bourgeoisie, and whites (Haley, 1965). Malcolm stated:

Our cultural revolution must be the means of bringing us closer to our African brothers and sisters. It must begin in the community and be based on community participation. Afro-Americans will be free to create only when they can depend on the Afro-American community for support, and Afro-American artist must realize that they depend on the Afro-American community for inspiration (Pathfinder, 1992, p. 55).

Since Malcolm had traveled extensively throughout the world while serving as the National Representative of the Nation of Islam, he had an existing platform regarding the unity of the Africans and African Americans, their concerns, and their shared heritage (Conyers & Smallwood, 2008). With the financial assistance of his faithful sister, Ella, Malcolm planned his travels to Mecca (Haley, 1965).

Trip to Mecca

Malcolm quietly left the United States on his pilgrimage to Mecca, and immediately observed the friendliness of the Europeans. He observed Muslims from all over the world, of all complexions, hugging and embracing him as if there was no difference in their skin colors (Haley, 1965). Malcolm saw white, Black, red, and yellow people, all of them together, and all of them honoring each other and the same God, Allah. Also to Malcolm's amazement, a Black man of Egyptian descent was flying his jet, something he had never witnessed in his life (Haley, 1965).

When he experienced difficulty in his attempt to enter Mecca, Malcolm was detained in the city of Jeddah and called upon an affiliate, Dr. Omar Azzam, to aid him (Haley, 1965). In just a short period of time, Dr. Azzam, a Swiss-trained engineer hired by the Saudi Arabian government to oversee reconstruction work to be done in Jeddah, was at the airport to pick him up. Malcolm was in awe of this white man's kindness to him. Not only had Dr. Azzam picked him up from the airport, he took Malcolm to meet his father and friends, who had also treated Malcolm with the upmost respect and hospitality. Dr. Azzam's father insisted that Malcolm stay in his suite while waiting to continue on his journey to Mecca (Haley, 1965).

Instincts warned Malcolm to question anything anyone did for him, and to beware the expectation of something in return (Haley, 1965). Malcolm, appraising himself, understood there

was a stigma attached to him; he had been labeled a racist and a criminal who had used his religion for self-gain (Haley, 1965).

For the first time, Malcolm reconsidered his thoughts of the white man and determined that the term “white man” meant specific attitudes and actions regarding the Black, as well as all other non-white men (p. 339). According to Haley, in the Muslim world overseas, Malcolm observed the white man’s display of sincerity, genuine care and concern which was more than anyone else in his life had ever shown. Malcolm wrote in his notebook:

I couldn’t say in my mind that these were “white” men. Why, the men acted as if they were brothers of mine, the elder Dr. Azzam as if he were my father. His fatherly, scholarly speech. I felt like he was my father. He was, you could tell, a highly skilled diplomat, with a broad range of mind. His knowledge was so worldly. He was current on world affairs as some people are to what’s going on in their living room (Haley, 1965, p. 340).

Malcolm journeyed on to Mecca, overwhelmed at the crowd of pilgrims visiting the holy land as he joined them in praying and chanting. Concluding his pilgrimage, Malcolm, along with several other visiting Muslims, talked among themselves discussing what was most impressive about their experience, to which Malcolm responded “the brotherhood” (p. 343). Astounded at the behavior of fellow Muslims, Malcolm struggled with their humanity, as he had never experienced such kindness from the white race.

Malcolm understood that Muslims from other countries were familiar with the plight of Blacks in America, but lacked familiarity with the inhumanity practiced against them, including the psychological castration of the Black man in America which was consistently practiced on an everyday basis (Haley, 1965). However, what Malcolm learned from his experience with

overseas Muslims while in their country was their ability to see no color boundary in their religion, and no color boundary in their human society, as they treated everyone as human beings. Malcolm had come to a new realization and knowledge into the true religion of Islam (Haley, 1965).

Malcolm wrote:

Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and the overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people of all colors and races here in this Ancient Holy Land, the home of Abraham, Muhammad, and all the other prophets of the Holy Scriptures. For the past week, I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people of all colors.

I have been blessed to visit the Holy City of Mecca. I have made my seven circuits around the Ka'ba, led by a young Mutawaf named Muhammad. I drank water from the well of Zem Zem. I ran seven times back and forth between the hills of Mt. Al-Safa and Al-Marwah. I have prayed in the ancient city of Mina, and I have prayed on Mt. Arafat.

There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual, displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and the non-white.

America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered 'white' but the 'white' attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I

have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color.

You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to re-arrange much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I have been always a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds it. I have always kept an open mind, which is necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth.

During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept in the same bed (or on the same rug) while praying to the same God with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the words and in the actions and in the deeds of the 'white' Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan, and Ghana.

We were truly all the same (brothers) because their belief in one God had removed the 'white' from their minds, the 'white' from their behavior, and the 'white' from their attitude.

I could see from this, that perhaps if white Americans could accept in reality the Oneness of God, then perhaps, too, they could accept in reality the Oneness of Man and cease to measure, and hinder, and harm others in terms of their 'differences' in color.

With racism plaguing America like an incurable cancer, the so-called 'Christian' white American heart should be more receptive to a proven solution to such a destructive

problem. Perhaps it could be in time to save America from imminent disaster, the same destruction brought upon Germany by racism that eventually destroyed the Germans themselves.

Each hour here in the Holy Land enables me to have greater spiritual insights into what is happening in America between black [sic]and white. The American Negro never can be blamed for his racial animosities; he is only reacting to four hundred years of conscious racism of the American whites. But as racism leads America up the suicide path, I do believe, from the experiences that I have had with them, that the whites of the younger generation, in the colleges and universities, will see the handwriting on the wall and many of them will turn to the spiritual path of truth, the only way left to America to ward off the disaster that racism inevitably must lead to.

Never have I been so highly honored. Never have I been made to feel more humble and unworthy. Who would believe the blessings that have been heaped upon an American Negro? A few nights ago, a man who would be called in America a 'white' man, a United Nations diplomat, an ambassador, a companion of kings, gave me his hotel suite, his bed. This man, His Excellency Prince Faisal, who rules this Holy Land, was made aware of my presence here in Jeddah. The very next morning, Prince Faisal's son, in person, informed me that by the will and decree of his esteemed father, I was to be a State Guest.

The Deputy Chief of Protocol himself took me before the Hajj Court. His Holiness Sheikh Muhammad Harkon himself Okayed my visit to Mecca. His Holiness gave me two books on Islam, with his personal seal and autograph, and told me that he prayed that I would be a successful preacher of Islam in America. A car, a driver, and a guide, have

been placed at my disposal, making it possible for me to travel about this Holy Land almost at will. The government provides air-conditioned quarters and servants in each city that I visit. Never would I have even thought of dreaming that I would ever be a recipient of such honors, honors that in America would be bestowed upon a King, not a Negro.

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the Worlds. (pp. 344-347)

Sincerely,

El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz

(Malcolm X)

As Malcolm traveled internationally and throughout the Holy Land, he continuously preached of the ill treatment of the Black man and the crimes committed against the Black man. The Blacks in America had police dogs released on them, water hoses turned on them, and bombs thrown in their churches (Haley, 1965). On occasion, Malcolm was asked why the American Black man didn't fight to be a human being, to which Malcolm responded that the Black man had been brainwashed into not thinking of himself (Haley, 1965).

Malcolm received numerous accolades from the various high officials that he met and talked with, from the universities at which he spoke, as well as from business and professional people, regarding race relations and specifically the hardship of the Black man in America (Haley, 1965).

Speeches of Malcolm X at Harvard

Malcolm X took the opportunity to deliver speeches at Harvard University on three separate occasions. He gave his first Harvard speech in 1961 while an active member of the Nation of Islam. He used this opportunity to discuss *The American Negro: Problems and*

Solutions (Epps, 1968). Based on the political theology of Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm argued that the only solution to America's serious race problem was complete separation of the two races (Epps, 1968). In order to validate his point, Malcolm consistently used Biblical scripture. Malcolm told his audience that the condition of America's twenty million ex-slaves is inhumane and unlike that of any other race of people (Epps, 1968). He further argued that Elijah Muhammad had the only solution which would correct the inhumane conditions of oppressed Black people (Epps, 1968). He argued that the Caucasian race had the opportunity to redeem themselves by compensating the Black man for 400 years of slave labor by providing a separate territory for the former slave to call his own (Epps, 1968).

During Malcolm's second opportunity to speak at Harvard University, the Leverett House Forum of March 1964, he opened his speech by predicting that 1964 would be a radically and politically explosive year. Malcolm went on to point out that the country had been under political rule with the politicians making commitments and promise to the Black community, in exchange for their votes. Malcolm then asserted that the Black community had learned that promises were not kept, that the politician did nothing for them once they were in office, and that the Black community was no longer willing to listen to all the false promises. Malcolm told his audience that America was not the American dream for Black folks, but rather an American nightmare. Malcolm informed his audience there was now a new political consciousness as there was a new generation of Black people who had been born here and grown up here in this country facing the frustration and hopelessness present in the Black community today (Epps, 1968). Though Malcolm admitted he was no longer an active member of the Nation, his religion remained Islam, and Elijah Muhammad's long-term solution to the problem was still to return to the homeland to develop an independent nation and live among their own people (Epps, 1968).

Malcolm's Muslim Mosque, Incorporated, with its base in Islamic religion, sought to solve the problems of the Black community through a focus on the political, economic and social philosophy of Black Nationalism. The political philosophy required instructing Blacks on how to control the politics in their own communities, allowing for a solution to their unique problems. The economic philosophy called for educating and re-educating the Black community on the basic economics of spending money in their own Black neighborhoods, and the establishment of Black-owned businesses which would also create jobs. The social philosophy stressed and encouraged restoration of the cultural roots of the Black man, to educate the Black community on their history, African civilization, and culture, thereby building and restoring dignity and self respect (Epps, 1968).

The last speech given by Malcolm X at the Harvard Law School Forum on December 16, 1964, was titled *The African Revolution and Its Impact on the American Negro*. In this last speech Malcolm expressed his concern of internal race relations between the Afro-American and the white American. Malcolm provided an example of his concern specifically regarding being surrounded and influenced with imagery created by others. Malcolm described a pleasant conversation among three individuals-- himself, a male, and a female American--lasting approximately 40 minutes on a plane. The female looked at Malcolm's briefcase and asked "What kind of last name could you have that begins with X?" to which he replied, "Malcolm." After a short period of time passed, the female said "You are not Malcolm X?" Malcolm's point was that they were simply three people talking, until the woman thought of the image of Malcolm X shaped by the press. Power structures use imagery at the local, national, and international levels (Epps, 1968). Malcolm went on in his speech to make the point that victims of racism are developed in the images of racists, and rarely is accurate.

In the meantime, Malcolm argued, the Black man must continue to fight discrimination. The Black man must stand against the inhumane treatment of dogs being unleashed on him, of water hoses unleashed on his mother, his wife, and babies. He argued that there was a pattern in this country where the Black man continuously suffered from illegal injustice, and that it must be brought to a halt. Malcolm informed his audience of the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU), of which he was a member. Malcolm described OAAU as a peaceful organization based on brotherhood, but that is willing to retaliate when the government can't or won't protect civil rights workers. The OAAU would inform the world, including the Ku Klux Klan that death is a two-way street, and they would take whatever means necessary to bring African American suffering to a halt (Epps, 1968).

The Assassination of Malcolm X

Upon the death of Malcolm, the well-known psychologist Dr. Kenneth B. Clarke said to *Jet* magazine,

I had a deep respect for this man and I believe he was sincerely searching for his place in the fight for Civil Rights, where he would be respected and understood fully. I looked forward to his growth along those lines. It doesn't matter so much about his past; it is tragic that he was cut down at the point when he seemed on the verge of achieving the position of respectability he sought (as cited in Haley, 1965, p. 441).

James Baldwin was quoted by the *New York Times* saying that "the death of Malcolm X was a major setback for the Negro movement." Baldwin pointed at the white reporters and stated, "You did it . . . whoever did it was formed in the crucible of the Western world, of the American Republic!" European rape of Africa began racial problems and was therefore the beginning of the end of Malcolm X (Baldwin, as cited in Haley, 1965, p. 441). Organizer of the March on

Washington in 1963, Bayard Rustin, said of Malcolm's death, "Malcolm X caused many young Negroes to take a new vision of themselves" (Haley, 1965, p. 441). CORE's National Director, James Farmer stated that, "Malcolm's murder was calculated to produce more violence and murder and vengeance killings" (Haley, 1965, p. 441). Also, Dr. C. Eric Lincoln, author of *The Black Muslim in America*, stated that:

For the Negroes in America, the death of Malcolm X is the most significant event since the deportation of Marcus Garvey in the 1920's. . . . I doubt there are 'international implications' in the slaying. The answer is closer to home and is in the local struggle among contending rivals for leadership of the black [sic] masses, which are potentially the most volatile sub-group in America. (as cited in Haley, 1965, p. 442)

Roy Wilkins, the executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, responded to the death of Malcolm X by saying "Master spellbinder that he was, Malcolm X in death cast a spell more far flung and more disturbing than any he cast in life" (Haley, 1965, p. 442).

According to the *Dailey Times of Lagos*, in Nigeria, "Like all mortals, Malcolm X was not without his faults . . . but that he was a dedicated and consistent disciple of the movement for the emancipation of his brethren, no one can doubt . . . Malcolm fought and died for what he believed to be right. He will have a palace of martyrs" (Haley, 1965, p. 444). *The Ghanaian Times*, Accra, called Malcolm X "the militant and most popular of Afro-American anti-segregationist leaders" (Haley, 1965, p. 444). Also in Accra, the *Daily Graphic* announced: "The assassination of Malcolm X will go down in history as the greatest blow the American integrationist movement has suffered since the shocking assassination of Megar Evers and John F. Kennedy" (Haley, 1965, p. 444).

Preceding the funeral services for Malcolm, actor Ossie Davis and his wife, actress Ruby Dee, read and recognized condolences from every civil rights organization, and individuals figures to include Dr. Martin Luther King, and the Nigerian Ambassador from Lagos, and the President of the Republic of Ghana, Dr. Kwane Nkrumah, who stated: “The death of Malcolm X shall not have been in vain” (Haley, 1965, p. 450). Table 4 illustrates a contrast between the lasting impacts on African American life and culture by Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., as depicted by fifty African American poets.

Table 4

Differences in Politics, Principles, and Style of Leadership between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Item	Malcolm X	Martin Luther King Jr.
Background	The street (lower class)	The seminary (middle class)
Major Theme	Black people should embrace each other, not “love” their enemies.	Black people should transcend themselves, “love” their enemies.
Organizations	Nation of Islam; Organization of Afro-American Unity; Muslim Mosque, Inc.	Montgomery Improvement Association; Southern Christian Leadership Conference
Politics	Black	Multiracial
Black Struggles	“[B]y any means necessary”	Nonviolent resistance
End Results	Black self-determination	Assimilationism
Focus on the Future	The American reality	The American dream
Reputation	Whites: outlaw (created by the press) Blacks: mixed, especially middle class leadership; hero of the underclass	Whites: mixed Blacks: hero of the 1950’s, early 1960’s (loved? Greatly respected?); young Black militants after 1963 had problems with him.
Program Policies	Abstention from direct involvement with whites until the last year of his life	Direct involvement with whites
Religion	Black Muslim/Islam (Sunni Muslim) Religious leader, Islam	Christian (Baptist) Religious leader, Baptist Church

Table 4 (cont).

Item	Malcolm X	Martin Luther King Jr.
Ideology	From Black Nationalism to Pan-Africanism and Third World internationalism	Democratic humanism/Christianity (King's last year: movement toward Third World internationalism)
Major Influences	Black Nationalism; Marcus Garvey; Islam; Pan-Africanism; Third World socialism; decolonization	Mohandas Gandhi; Henry David Thoreau; Christianity; Negro history; decolonization
Major Turning Point	Malcolm's split with Elijah Muhammad	King's concern with America's war in Vietnam
Vision of America	Disenchantment?	Faith in the future?

Source: Smallwood (2005)

CHAPTER 7

Discussion, Implications, and Reflections

The intent of the foregoing historical narrative is to build an understanding of how the life experiences of Malcolm X influenced his unique style and vision as an African American transformational leader. As Bass (1985) points out, transformational leaders actually transform and motivate followers using their charisma, intellectual arousal and individual consideration. Malcolm X used the opportunities presented to him in both religious and secular settings in an attempt to build a resistant and resilient Black race consciousness of self-esteem, value, and worth, in the midst of unrelenting racial injustice and oppression.

The research methodology employed consisted of document analysis and narrative inquiry. The archival data used consisted of written materials to include electronic documents, websites, books, letters, quotes from Malcolm X's own writings, lectures, and speeches, as well as first hand reports from wife Betty Shabazz and his children, among others. Through a careful analysis of Malcolm's autobiography and speeches in conjunction with several biographies, I examined the critical life-changing experiences that produced a major impact on his development as a transformative leader.

The analytical procedures used in identifying and selecting my periodization of Malcolm's life as well as the categories used in the course of my research, were completed in the following phases: (a) collection of primary sources; (b) read and reviewed the data for common themes, trends and issues regarding life changing events; (c) initially identified and developed a list of ten life changing events at various ages appearing in the data; (d) reviewed, analyzed, and identified the top four most significant life-changing periods appearing in the data; (e) developed a chart identifying four stages in Malcolm's life; (f) identified and developed a chart

identifying four life changing periods in his life along with his most significant life changing events as a subset of the life changing periods; (h) analyzed and reviewed the data for common themes, trends, and issues; and (g) documented the findings of my qualitative research on common themes, trends and issues.

Discussion and Implications

The deadly shotgun pellets that silenced Malcolm X did nothing to deaden his political legacy. Since his assassination in 1965, a host of individuals—too many to name—have sought to build on his legacy as a leader. In many respects, Malcolm was the ideological father of Black radicalism, which emerged in the forms of the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), the Black Panther Party, Malcolm X Liberation College, and later, the Black Radical Congress. There are several aspects to Malcolm's political ideology that I want to highlight here.

The remaining task is to summarize in more or less logical fashion the various theoretical principles and propositions that have emerged in the course of this study. The most general conclusion arising from the study is the idea that Malcolm's individual experiences provide a starting point for understanding the general nature of African-American oppression and exploitation. The Nation of Islam's self-contradictory role in the struggle for Black liberation led Malcolm to see a conflict between religious explanations and secular, political explanations of the Black situation. Malcolm began to see that the religious conservatism of the Nation of Islam necessarily led to political quietism. Consequently, Malcolm adopted a political approach which was foremost secular in nature. By giving primacy to the importance of *real politics*, Malcolm was able to challenge the notion of the centrality of the church as an agency for popular mobilization. Malcolm's critique of elite-driven agendas which focused on bourgeois constitutional reforms provided a necessary alternative to the mystique of Black churchliness and

religiosity. Malcolm's "message to the grassroots" provided the grounds for the dialectical transformation of the Black liberation struggle into a struggle for human rights. How was Malcolm's leadership style conducive to influencing people before and after his death? There are several lessons that can be drawn from his life story. First, Malcolm was able to connect his individual experiences as a Black man in America to the social foundations of oppression. Second, his positive experiences among the Black working class forced him to fight for their objective political interests, as opposed to developing a political program in the interests of the Black middle class/bourgeoisie. Lastly, the political quietism of the Nation of Islam offered valuable insight into the need for a political program which was not grounded solely on a religious outlook. Ultimately, Malcolm came to reject any political theology that led to political quietism, that is, to the acceptance of Black suffering.

Connecting Individual Experiences with Social Foundation of Oppression

Based on Malcolm's development in his formative years (particularly from 1925 until 1946) it is reasonable to conclude that his individual resistance to national oppression was necessarily transformed into a collective struggle to fight for the human rights of African-Americans and other oppressed and exploited people throughout the world.

Malcolm was born into a strong family that was destroyed by racial violence and social oppression. Malcolm's father, Earl Little, a passionate, fiery minister and Garvey follower was murdered at the hands of white racists. Malcolm's mother, also a Garvey follower, unable to withstand the pressures of raising her eight children, suffered a mental breakdown. As a result, the family unit was split up by the state welfare system and placed in various homes. Malcolm recalled his encounter with Mr. Ostrowski, his favorite eighth-grade teacher and recognized the brutal fact that no matter how smart he was, he was still thought of as a 'nigger'. It was then that

he began to change inside. As Malcolm migrated to the urban world of Boston and Harlem, he was transformed into “Detroit Red” and descended into numbers, drug peddling, “steering,” and burglary. Always fearful that he might get out hustled or caught by police, Malcolm lived by his wit, hustling, stealing and robbing, unable to slow down or relax (Haley, 1965). Yet, after months of nihilistic despair, Malcolm’s spirit rallied to begin the process of becoming a transformative leader. The process by which Malcolm reshaped his identity in prison involved a returning to a past buried under the pain of being Detroit Red. As the son of a Garveyite preacher and articulate West Indian immigrant woman who never yielded to white society, he sought a social explanation for his individual experience. As Malcolm so eloquently recounted, the political theology of the Nation of Islam provided such an explanation. As Malcolm later noted, “It was right there in prison that I made up my mind to devote the rest of my life to telling the white man about himself—or die” (Haley, 1965, pp. 184–185).

Commitment to Working Class People

One of the central dimensions to Malcolm’s leadership was a commitment to advancing the cause of the Black working-class. As Burns has observed, transformational and charismatic people have a remarkable ability to distill complex ideas into simple messages. Malcolm used his rhetorical talents to influence and galvanize Black urban working-class people to struggle against oppression and exploitation. Despite Malcolm’s many experiences, he was determined that he would not be a house Negro, but a field Negro. This fidelity to working class Blacks stands in contrast to leaders like Booker T. Washington, Barack Obama, or Condoleezza Rice.

Malcolm’s ideological commitment to the Black working-class is closely tied to his engagement with Black working-class life and culture. The first wage-earning job Malcolm held was as a dishwasher at a Mason, Michigan, restaurant when he was fourteen and living at the

Ingham County Juvenile Home. After moving to Boston in 1941, he worked as a shoeshine boy at the Roseland State Ballroom, then as a soda fountain clerk at the Townsend Drug Store in Roxbury, and afterwards as a busboy at the Parker House. Eventually, the 17-year-old Malcolm (who had lied that he was twenty) got a job as a Pullman porter. Even during his imprisonment, Malcolm could not escape the brutal exploitation of the working-class. After his imprisonment in 1946, he worked without pay in the license plate shop. While his mentor Bemby “operated the machine that stamped out the numbers,” Malcolm worked along the conveyor belt where the numbers were painted. His release from prison in August 1952 finds Malcolm entering the ranks of wage laborers again. After a short stint as a salesman for a furniture store in Detroit, he works for the automobile industry. “In early 1953,” Malcolm recalls in his autobiography, “I left the furniture store. I earned a little better weekly paycheck working in the Gar Wood factory in Detroit. Where big garbage truck bodies were made I cleaned up behind the welders each time they finished another truck body.” These daily experiences as a member of the working-class people made Malcolm feel caged “in the wilderness of America.” The feeling of alienation which Malcolm suffered gave him great insight into the objective political interests of the Black working-class people who work hard and receive little in return. It is reasonable to conclude that it was the anger of the Black working class and their alienation from bourgeois civil society that Malcolm articulated. Malcolm could relate to the fact that working-class people feel deprived of any real influence over the major decisions that affect their lives. He wanted to offer a type of leadership that allowed for their collective political interests to be at the forefront of a political movement.

When Malcolm moved to Boston to live with his half-sister, Ella, who owned her home on “the Hill,” he became intimately aware of the Black petit-bourgeoisie. The Black middle class

folks in her neighborhood looked down on working class Blacks (Kelley, 1998). Malcolm experienced this bourgeois attitude upon his arrival to Roxbury, Boston, while working as a soda fountain clerk at the local drug store, a job that Ella had secured for him. Malcolm soon quit his soda fountain clerk job and began working at Boston's Roseland State Ballroom shining shoes. Malcolm felt comfortable among the Black working class. He found that working class people did not put on airs (Kelley, 1998). Malcolm held several jobs while living with his sister, one of which was as a Pullman Porter on the railroad. Malcolm used this opportunity to see and evaluate how other Blacks lived in the cities of Washington, D.C., and New York City. Based on these experiences, Malcolm tells us:

There are two types of Negroes in this country. There's the bourgeois type who blinds himself to the condition of his people, and who is satisfied with token solutions. He's in the minority. He's a handful. He's usually the handpicked Negro who benefits from token integration. But the masses of Black people who really suffer the brunt of brutality and the conditions that exist in this country are represented by the leadership of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad (Malcolm X, 1963).

Malcolm's commitment to working-class people is crystallized in his famous house Negro/field Negro comparison. He posits a tension between the Black elite and masses as the major fault line in Black political culture. Malcolm seeks to challenge the relation between the "spoken-for-masses" and its interpreters as ultimately custodial. The field Negro, from Malcolm's standpoint, stands for the Black masses. On the other hand, the house Negro is a race traitor which Malcolm associates with the Black middle class.

Malcolm expanded his intellectual horizon through his many travels. For example, when he moved from Lansing to Boston, he became aware of the class differences within the African-

American community. Malcolm learned there was a group of Blacks that he labeled bourgeoisie. Malcolm's experience with the bourgeoisie in Boston was distasteful, as he was treated poorly and looked down upon. Malcolm found comfort however with Black working class culture on the other side of town in Boston. There Malcolm was introduced to the richness of Black urban life style and culture in Boston and Harlem (Haley, 1965). In Malcolm's travels to New York, he made a point of going to Harlem's bars and clubs at every opportunity given, where he was able to meet and make new friends including Black celebrities such as Billy Holiday. Malcolm found Harlem full of excitement and entertainment as he was introduced to urban Black working class culture.

While serving time in prison, Malcolm gained purpose in his life through introduction to the political theology of the Nation of Islam and Elijah Muhammad (Haley, 1965). Malcolm studied philosophy, world religions (particularly Christianity and Al-Islam) as well as African-American history, and developed the beginning of his public speaking and debating skills.

Malcolm served tirelessly in establishing more than 200 additional temples. During Malcolm's stewardship, the Nation of Islam grew in size and prestige. Elijah Muhammad rewarded Malcolm, naming him the National Representative for the Nation of Islam on nationwide television (Sales, Jr., 1994).

Malcolm continued his lectures of concern regarding the ill treatment of Blacks, particularly in the northern ghettos (Sales, Jr., 1994). When he was unable to secure the political support of the Nation of Islam in becoming actively involved with the Civil Rights movement, and concurrently experienced religious conflict with that group, Malcolm terminated his membership (Sales, Jr., 1994).

Malcolm desired to join the Civil Rights efforts and transform their movement into a human rights struggle (Sales, Jr., 1994). In Malcolm's travels to Africa, he passed through thirty countries, met with several heads of state, and was able to build relationships while bringing into view the concerns and issues of the oppressed Black man in the United States (Sales, Jr., 1994).

While in the Middle East Malcolm publicly indicated that his travels abroad were for religious reasons, but at the same time he took the opportunity to speak on behalf of Black people in the United States, and their continued oppression. Malcolm aroused concern and support for African Americans' human rights in the countries he visited while in Africa and the Middle East, to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Ghana:

It is past time for Afro Americans to ask for the aid of our African relatives. We have for many years been divided among ourselves through the deception of our enslavers, but do here and now express our desires to restore our knowledge and spirit through renewed relations and kinships with African peoples (Pathfinder, 1992).

Religious Quietism versus Political Engagement

The Nation of Islam in the United States is constructed in the tradition of millennial Black Nationalism. As Hayward Farrar notes, the Nation of Islam's political theology . . . claimed that blacks [sic] were the Lost-Found Nation of Islam that they were the original humans, and that whites were "devils" who had denied blacks [sic] their rightful place as rulers of the world. But not to worry, [Wallace D.] Fard preached, for on judgment day, Allah would restore blacks [sic] to their primary place in the world. This theology was attractive to those downtrodden blacks [sic] who needed a reason to believe in themselves (Farrar, 1999, p. 112).

The Nation of Islam's Black Nationalist message of self-determination was appealing to many of their early recruits who were ex-alcoholics, drug abusers and former criminals. As Farrar further observes,

The Nation of Islam's millennial message was appealing for various reasons. Their theology explained why whites were supreme but in a way that actually asserted black [sic] superiority. By insisting that whites were inferior mutants to a morally, spiritually, and intellectually superior black [sic] race, the Nation of Islam boosted the self-esteem of their members as well as playing on their suppressed hostility to whites. By asserting that white dominance was only temporary, the Nation gave its members hope for a glorious future. By insisting on its members living ascetic, puritanical lives according to Islamic law, the Nation gave organization and coherence to their lives. . . . By establishing small but profitable businesses, the Nation provided a kind of upward mobility for its citizens, one that did not depend on white power or sufferance. (Farrar, 1999, p. 114)

The Nation of Islam's political theology, contrary to popular belief, did not advocate active opposition to American civil society from its members. Good Muslims were taught by Elijah Muhammad to obey all laws except for those dealing with conscription—Black Muslims felt their religion prohibited them from serving in the military. Their social conservatism further implied that good Muslims worked hard at whatever job they were offered or held, in addition to obeying their employers and contributing their earnings to the Nation. As Farrar further observes,

Though NOI [Nation of Islam] members were to fight back if attacked by whites, they were not to seek out confrontations. Furthermore they were not to participate in politics with its possibilities of social change by voting or running for office. Essentially their

opposition to racist America was only within the confines of the mental universe their religion had established. In their social conservatism, Washingtonian emphasis on self-help and racial uplift, and racial autonomy within a white society, the Nation of Islam was actually a conservative force within black [sic] America, their radical rhetoric notwithstanding. (Farrar, 1999, p. 115)

As a minister and the national representative of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm single-handedly increased its membership. Based on the political theology of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm preached that the national oppression of African Americans was the result of a lack of morals and values. He sought to discourage African Americans from using alcohol and drugs, and having children out of wedlock (Farrar, 1999). Ultimately, he argued that a change in their moral values and character would provide the means toward their liberation.

Implicit in the Nation of Islam's political theology is the view that human suffering is evidence of God's favor. Their theology, however, ultimately leads to political quietism, that is, to the acceptance of Black suffering. Put another way, their political theology collapses into a politics of conformity. Ultimately, the Nation refuses to undertake political action against the white civil society, especially where cultural practices and institutional structures are concerned. Consequently, Malcolm met resistance within the ranks of the Nation of Islam when it came down to following up their militant rhetoric with political action. It would seem that many members of the NOI hid behind the militant rhetoric of Elijah Muhammad, rather than transform the suffering they faced in their everyday lives. It was much easier to believe that Allah would take care of them and rid them of white oppression (Farrar, 1999).

The religious conservatism of the Nation of Islam increasingly acted as an ideological constraint on Malcolm. He explained the impact that the political quietism of the Elijah Muhammad was having:

Privately, I was convinced that our nation of Islam could be an even greater force in the American black [sic] man's overall struggle—if we engaged in more *action*. It could be heard increasingly in the Negro communities: “Those Muslims *talk* tough, but they never *do* anything, unless somebody bothers Muslims.” I moved around among outsiders more than most other Muslim officials. I felt the very real potentiality that, considering the mercurial moods of the black [sic] masses, this labeling of Muslims as “talk only” could see us, powerful as we were, one day suddenly separated from the Negro's front-line struggle (Haley, 1965, pp. 293-294).

After his break from the Nation, Malcolm begins to develop a theology of liberation which frees Blacks from a theodicy of quietism and oppression. One of the hallmarks of Malcolm's theology of liberation—after his political break with Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam—is his emphasis on a secular approach to politics. This approach is vividly seen in the fact that Malcolm formed two organizations after breaking with Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam. He formed the Muslim Mosque, Inc., in order to provide a means for African American Muslims to learn more about Al-Islam. In contrast, the Organization of Afro-American Unity was formed with the penultimate objective of advancing the human rights struggle of African Americans.

The extent of Malcolm's influence cannot be measured quantitatively; that it was substantial, however, cannot be doubted. Since Malcolm X's assassination, there has been no other African American leader big enough, bad enough or courageous enough to take the United

States of America before the United Nations to hold them accountable for the enslavement and ill-treatment of African Americans.

Reflections

Of Malcolm's many life experiences, racial violence had a tremendous impact on his development into a transformational leader. At the young age of six, Malcolm's father, Earl Little was murdered by the Black Legion. Earl Little's body was placed under a street car to make his death appear to have been an accident, therefore denying the Little's family payment from a valid insurance policy. Malcolm and his family suffered greatly at their loss of the head of the household, husband and father and provider. As a direct result of the loss of Malcolm's father, the family suffers from a loss of income and harassment from the local social services, resulting in his mother having a nervous breakdown, and division of the family. The local social services organization split the family up, placing the under age children in various foster homes, including Malcolm, and eventually placing him in a detention center. By time Malcolm is fifteen years old, he has suffered the loss of his father and mother, and been taken away from his brothers and sisters and forced to live as a ward of the state.

In the wake of Malcolm's death, the *New York Times* editorialized on February 22:

He was a case history, as well as an extraordinary and twisted man, turning many true gifts to evil purpose . . . Malcolm X had the ingredients for leadership, but his ruthless and fanatical belief in violence not only set him apart from the responsible leaders of the civil rights movement and the overwhelming majority of Negroes, it also marked him for notoriety and a violent end . . . Malcolm X's life was strangely and pitifully twisted. But this was because he did not seek to fit into the society or into the life of his own people.

Yet, with great irony, on February 28th the *New York Times* printed the following:

Mourners and the curious lined the sidewalks on both sides of Amsterdam Avenue behind police barricades to watch as the procession of friends and relatives moved into the church. Hundreds more pressed against the window panes of the red brick and wooden tenements across the street, or stood shivering on their fire escapes (as cited in Wolfenstein, 1981, pp. 336–37).

As Wolfenstein (1981) observes, “Harlem’s black [sic] masses did not accept the editorial judgment of America’s newspaper of record” (p. 337). As I have demonstrated, Malcolm represented the quintessential model of a transformational leader. His leadership style offers us a striking difference from Euro-American models of transformational leadership. Malcolm was a grass roots leader garnering his support from the Black masses in places no other leader would go. Malcolm showed no fear as he traveled to the Black masses reminding them that they were somebody and of value. He dared to say out loud what his followers were afraid to say, as Malcolm undoubtedly stood for the people.

While my research has aspired to correct the mis-information from the white majority regarding the life and leadership of Malcolm X, future studies might delve deeper into examining possible trends in differences between forms of transformational leadership among African Americans and Euro Americans. Such research would yield powerful implications for both leading and uniting the diverse peoples of the United States, and set a model for the examination of transformational leadership differences based on cultures around the world.

Another area of further study would be to examine the extent to which Malcolm’s views of women impacted his leadership style. From his days as a hustler until his departure from the Nation of Islam, Malcolm advocated a sexist view of women’s role in society. His views on women were entirely consistent with the treatment of gender in African American social and

political thought in the 1950s and 1960s. In fact, he was a man of his times. In one respect, however, it is unfair to expect him to have access to the Black feminist writings of the 1970s and 1980s.

When Malcolm left the Nation of Islam, he didn't initially have much to say that was progressive about the rights or social position of women. One is left to assume that he would have accepted the traditional Islamic position on the subordinate role of women. However, by the end of Malcolm's second trip to Africa and the Middle East in 1964, between early July and late November, his views had undergone a striking change—one that paralleled the evolution of how he thought and acted on other social and political questions. At a news conference during a stopover in Paris following that trip, Malcolm said that one of the things he had noticed during his travels was that,

. . . in every country you go to, usually the degree of progress can never be separated from the woman. If you're in a country that's progressive, the woman is progressive. If you're in a country that reflects the consciousness toward the importance of education, it's because the woman is aware of the importance of education.

He continues,

But in every backward country you'll find the women are backward, and in every country where education is not stressed it's because the women don't have education. So one of the things I became thoroughly convinced of in my recent travels is the importance of giving freedom to the women, giving her education, and giving her the incentive to get out there and put the same spirit and understanding in her children. And I am frankly proud of the contributions that our women have made in the struggle for freedom and I'm

one person who's for giving them all the leeway possible because they've made a greater contribution than many of us men (Malcolm X, 1970, p. 179).

This change of heart represents a very advanced level of political understanding, particularly in the mid-1960s: that you can measure the degree of progress and development of a society by the place of women in its social, economic, and political life. In assessing the evolution of Malcolm's attitude toward women's rights—including the place he had come to recognize women would occupy in coming revolutionary struggles in the United States and worldwide—it is important to note the shattering impact on Malcolm of his discovery that Elijah Muhammad was sexually abusing young female members of the Nation of Islam. According to Malcolm, this was the single fact, more than any particular political conflict per se, that marked a turning point in his relationship with the Nation. This knowledge deeply shook Malcolm's confidence in the religious, political, and moral integrity of Elijah Muhammad and of the Nation of Islam itself.

Finally, Malcolm deepened his understanding of the importance of combating the oppression of women as he watched them help lead the fight for Black rights in this country. When Fannie Lou Hammer came to New York in December, 1964, to win support for the freedom struggle in Mississippi, Malcolm spoke alongside her at a rally in Harlem and gave her a platform that night at the meeting of the OAAU [Organization of Afro-American Unity]. He also admired and worked with Gloria Richardson, who had refused to call off demonstrations in Cambridge, Maryland, in the face of white-supremacist thugs and the National Guard—as well as public rebukes by conservative Black leaders—and who publicly stood in solidarity with Malcolm's call for the right of self-defense against racist terror. Malcolm X offers a model of leadership that is far more valuable to the African American community than any specific idea

he embraced or action he took. Malcolm X was a leader who was able to think for himself and act upon the strength of his convictions.

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