

TEXT 1

## Hollywood should bury<sup>1</sup> Tarzan and the legend of racism

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Why in the era of “Oscars so White” would Hollywood still make a film about a White man, Tarzan, as “King” of the African jungle?



Tarzan will always epitomize<sup>2</sup> the history of euro-centric racist demonization<sup>3</sup> of Africa. This time around, in “[The Legend of Tarzan](#)”, a bad White man, King Leopold of the Belgians, and his evil agents have been enslaving Africans, committing massacres and stealing ivory. Evil Leopold!

So let’s send in another White man, now settled in England, but born in Africa to shipwrecked British aristocrats and raised by gorillas; let him rescue the African “natives” who have lived there from the beginning of time, yet somehow<sup>4</sup> understand less well their environment.

Tarzan was a bad idea and remains a bad idea on many levels. When Edgar Rice Burroughs created Tarzan in 1912, all of Africa, except Ethiopia and Liberia, was under European control. While many people saw Tarzan movies as “entertainment” the representations of Africa also had treacherous<sup>5</sup> intended consequences, justifying colonial rule<sup>6</sup>.

Media demonization of Africans is a topic I’ve [written extensively about](#) — it was the subject [my book](#) “[The Hearts of Darkness](#), How White Writers Created the Racist Image of Africa.”

Malcolm X, understood the power of [media misrepresentations](#). He once told an audience that when Europeans controlled Africa they “projected the image of Africa negatively. And in hating Africa and the African, we ended up hating ourselves without even realizing it.”

So why should Black people —and other viewers— have to pay money to go see an imaginary White hero rescuing Africans in Africa; isn’t this repetition of the ridiculous pervasive<sup>7</sup> stereotype that Black people can’t do anything for themselves?

### Vocabulary

1 to bury = to put under the earth (eg: when a person dies) 25

2 to epitomize = to represent well

3 demonization = describing something as evil (*diabolisation*)

4 somehow = *curieusement/on ne sait pas comment*

5 treacherous = disloyal (*traître*) 30

6 rule = government

7 pervasive = *répandu*

Tarzan deserves to die or to remain buried. This is the era for new heroes. Tell Hollywood to [stop making Tarzan](#) movies.

**Milton Allimadi publishes The Black Star News. The Second Edition of his book “The Hearts of Darkness, How White Writers Created the Racist Image of Africa” will be published on August 15, 2016.**

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/hollywood-should-bury-tar\\_b\\_10799098](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/hollywood-should-bury-tar_b_10799098)

## TEXT 2

From birth, black people are told a set of lies about themselves. We are told that we are lazy—yet<sup>1</sup> I drive through the Delta area of Mississippi and watch black people picking cotton in the hot sun for fourteen hours. We are told, "If you work hard, you'll succeed"—but if that were true, black people would own this country. We are oppressed because we are black—not because we are lazy, not because we're stupid (and got good rhythm), but because we're black.

I remember that when I was a boy, I used to go to see Tarzan movies on Saturday. White Tarzan used to beat up the black natives. I would sit there yelling, "Kill the beasts, kill the savages, kill 'em!" I was saying: Kill *me*. It was as if a Jewish boy watched Nazis taking Jews off to concentration camps and cheered them on<sup>2</sup>. Today, I want the chief to beat hell out of<sup>3</sup> Tarzan and send him back to Europe. But it takes time to become free of the lies and of their shaming<sup>4</sup> effect on black minds. It takes time to reject the most important lie: that black people inherently<sup>5</sup> can't do the same things white people can do, unless<sup>6</sup> white people help them.

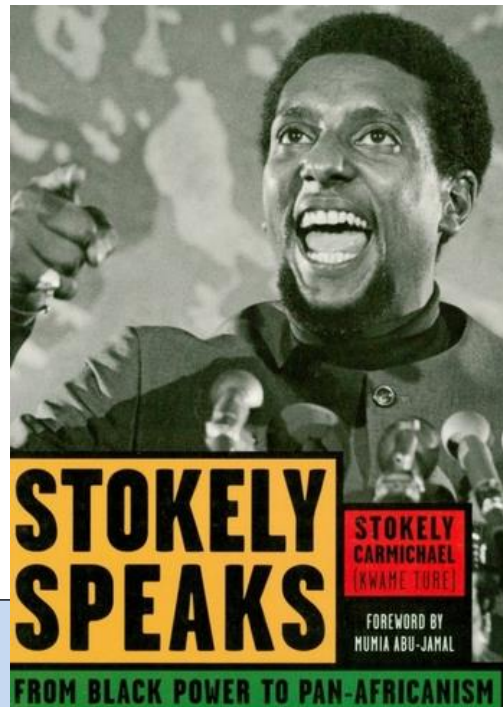
The need for psychological equality is the reason why SNCC<sup>7</sup> today believes that blacks must organize in the black community. Only black people can convey the revolutionary idea that black people are able to do things themselves. [...] This is one reason Africa has such importance: The reality of black men ruling their own nations gives blacks elsewhere a sense of possibility, of power, which they do not now have.

This does not mean we don't welcome help, or friends. But we want the right to decide whether anyone is, in fact, our friend. [...]

### **Power and Racism or 'What we want' in Stokely Speaks: From Black Power to Pan-Africanism, By Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture) 1965**

#### Vocabulary:

- 1 yet = *pourtant*
- 2 To cheer sm. on = to encourage someone
- 3 beat hell out of sm. = *rouer de coups*
- 4 shaming = humiliation
- 5 inherently = naturally
- 6 unless = *à moins que*
- 7 SNCC = The Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, founded in 1960 a major channel of student participation in the civil rights movement



#### Understanding the texts:

- 1) Compare what you know about the author of each text and when each text was written.
- 2) "Tarzan was a bad idea and remains a bad idea on many levels" (line 11 -text 1) Explain why, using ideas from both texts.
- 3) What is the surprising similarity between "beat[ing] up the black natives" (text 2) and "rescu[ing] the black natives" from King Leopold (text 1), justify using both texts.