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## BLACK THOUGHT AND BLACK REALITY

*A Critical Essay*

By

Lou Turner

### *I. Black Revolt vs. Black Studies*

It doesn't take a Black studies course in sociology to decipher what the May explosion in Miami revealed about the nature of the crisis in America, nor, in 1980, what relationship Miami has to the resurgence of Black mass revolt in South Africa during the June 16 anniversary of the 1976 Soweto rebellion. Yet, an earlier protest this year involving American Black youth at Harvard University demonstrating against the latest reorganization of the Black Studies Department very nearly appears to be in another world, separated from the economically depressed reality Black youth of Miami and Capetown, South Africa have shown they have every intention of transforming.<sup>1</sup>

What drives the world of Black academia to face the Black reality of the ghetto is the inescapable totality of crises which demands that thought and activity not be kept in separate realms. Whether the crisis is spelled out as Carter's drive to war, the racist balance-the-budget-on-the-backs-of-the-poor hysteria, the imposition of an unprecedented draft registration in peace time or the struggle over the direction of Black studies, the crisis is so deep that Black thought cannot be separated in an ivory tower from Black reality.

The truth is that theory has been running a losing race with the reality that the mass of Black Americans live and with the deep undercurrent of revolt that runs very near the surface of American society. Thus, the current debates over the interpretation of Black history and culture in Black studies would seem far afield from the race and class struggles of Miami and South Africa were it not for the fact that social upheavals compel consciousness to break with its old categories of thought and create new ones, more intrinsically rooted in reality.

For instance, it is not accidental that Black intellectuals gained a new impulse for studying the thought of Frantz Fanon just as the Soweto revolt revealed the Black Consciousness Movement had brought his thought to life in their struggle against the apartheid regime of South Africa. That intellectuals have relegated Fanon to academia or reduced his thought to psychology or existentialism, as if it developed outside of the social forces

of his day, exposes, in one sense, the dilemma of Black studies.<sup>2</sup> By separating what the South African youth had joined together--the dialectics of thought with the dialectics of liberation--Black academia and the New Left show that while they extol Fanon, they, nevertheless, don't follow him. The Black youth activists in America, however, have shown that they have never separated the multi-dimensionality of Fanon from all his liberating struggles that they have followed.

The fragmentation Fanon suffered, only in part, discloses what happens when theory gets separated from reality. It is true, Frantz Fanon's Black Skins, White Masks and Wretched of the Earth, which were never divorced from his actual participation in the African Revolution, show him to be far ahead of everyone else in grasping and making a category out of that revolutionary upsurge. No doubt that is what attracts today's revolutionaries and intellectuals to him. But, what happened to Fanon's ideas when he died? In other words, what happens to theory when there is no collectivity, no organization, to concretize it at each new stage of historic development? What made Soweto and the Black Consciousness Movement new was their beginning to grasp the twofold relationship of spontaneity to organization, and organization to theory.

In 1980, it is both crises and revolution which demand a new reorganization of Black thought; one which roots us more deeply in the freedom struggles of the day, and, therefore, compels another look at that hidden history of the two-way road to revolution stretching between the U.S. and Africa. What allows us to see the impact of the Black past on the course of world history and thought is its continuity with the burning questions of our day; questions which cannot be answered outside of the most serious and concrete working out of a totally new relationship of theory to practice, as Black perspectives for the 1980s. It is not alone for the reason that the late, Black historian, Carter G. Woodson, described as the "awful fate of becoming a negligible factor in the thought of the world,"<sup>3</sup> that a reexamination of Black history is imperative for today's freedom struggles. It is, also, because critical strands in the history of Black thought relate in such a way to the present objective situation that we can begin to break down the dialectic by which thought illuminated reality, and through which theory is united to practice.

Thus, three strands of consciousness converged in the first four decades of the twentieth century to form the Black dimension of American thought. Whereas, national, international and class consciousness in the form of Pan-Africanism and Garveyism, Black anti-imperialism, and the industrial trade unionism of the I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World) and the C.I.O. seemed to have developed along divergent lines, nevertheless,



the economic remains of slavery in the cotton culture and tenancy farming of the South conditioned and developed special economic relations which pursued the Negro everywhere, in the city and in the country, on the plantation and in industry, South and North.<sup>4</sup>

In the forty years since World War II the convergence of four very different, powerful historic forces--the Civil Rights Movement in America, the emergence of the Third World, the East European revolutions and the Cold War--have determined the development of world history. It was in this period that Black intellectuals tried both to respond to the new forces and realities of the objective situation and to search for a unifying philosophy for the various conceptions and tendencies surrounding the Black question.

## II. *Negritude and the New Humanism of Frantz Fanon*

One such search began with Black French intellectuals and students residing in Paris in the 1930s and '40s and centered around the conception of *negritude*. Recognized as the intellectual creation of the Martiniquan poet, Aime Cesaire, and the Senegalese writer, Leopold Senghor, the evolution of *negritude* over its forty-year existence stood for a number of things: "A critique of imperialism; a revolutionary African development distinguished from the proletarian revolt; the birth of a new black civilization; a philosophy of life; an ideology for African unity; a methodology for development; a justification for rule by indigenous elites; a defense of the dignity of cultured blacks."<sup>5</sup>

It was out of their dual alienation from both French and African society that the Black French intellectuals created the conception of *negritude*. It was their bridge back to the roots of African culture. However, why didn't *negritude* become their link to the African masses? Why after creating a modern Black ideology, whose universalism transcended the more narrow entity of nation to encompass the scope of race, did the African intellectual, nevertheless, remain alienated from African reality?

Indeed, the next stage in the evolution of *negritude*, following World War II, saw Senghor make an amalgam of Marx's humanism and *negritude*, as this time African socialism was propounded as the new bridge to unite the Black intellectual with the mass movement. Senghor's first formal statement on African socialism wasn't made public until 1958, after independence seemed assured and some ten years after his break with the French Socialist party, because he recognized the French socialists as looking upon post-war Africa as nothing more than a voting bloc for their parliamentary ambitions, meanwhile, leaving Africa to remain an appendage of France.<sup>6</sup>

Senghor's own words express well enough, however, the dualities of his African socialism. On the one hand, there is nowhere a more cogent passage summarizing the three component parts of Marx's philosophy than where he says in his report to the Party of African Federation (1959): "Let us recapitulate Marx's positive contributions. They are: the philosophy of humanism, economic theory, dialectical method." By contrast, on the other hand, there is the following passage from Senghor's speech, Theory and Practice of Senegalese Socialism (1962): "...the party must do more: it must guide the masses. The consciousness of the mass, who lack education and culture, still remains confused, lost in the fog of animal needs. (Consciousness) can reach the mass only from the outside, the intellectuals."

Despite the African intellectual's desire to find his way to the masses via Marxism, he found himself more separated from the masses than ever, by conceptions which were no expression of Marx's. Surely technological underdevelopment and the global political climate charged with the super-power rivalry of the U.S. and Russia were inescapable realities. Nevertheless, that alone doesn't explain the middle-class nature of African leaders and intellectuals which led to the "administrative mentality"<sup>7</sup> that now characterizes African socialism. Indeed, African socialism as propounded today has become an ideological barrier to the development of the African revolution. It is for that reason that Raya Dunayevskaya's analysis of the relationship of the Third World intellectual to the Afro-Asian revolutions remains even more true today than when she originally wrote it in 1959: "The inescapable fact is that in this epoch of state capitalism the middle class intellectual, as a world phenomenon, has translated 'individualism' into 'collectivism', by which he means nationalized property, state administration, State Plan."<sup>8</sup>

From its beginnings, the two contributions that *negritude* brought to Black thought were 1) the theme of cultural alienation which runs throughout the literature of the tendency, and 2) the search for a collective philosophy. It was the latter contribution which became critical when the African revolutions did emerge in the 1950s and '60s. Rather than the transition to Marx's philosophy of revolution becoming a true turning point for *negritude*, however, the reduction of Marxism to the conception of the "vanguard party to lead" became the new obstacle in the path of uniting philosophy and African revolution.

Frantz Fanon not only reorganized the contradictory legacy of *negritude* in response to the new realities of the post-war world, but worked out a totally new view of humanism: "Independence is not a word which can be used as an exorcism, but an indispensable condition for the existence of men and women who are truly liberated, in other words, who are truly masters of all



the material means which make possible the radical transformation of society."<sup>9</sup> When the Communist party of Martinique, led by Cesaire, advocated the island's amalgamation into the French republic, one begins to date Fanon's distaste for Stalinism and the beginning of his critical view of *negritude*.

So concrete was Fanon's reinterpretation of Black universalism, because he grounded his thought in the Black mass movement from below, he was able to span the colonial barriers that still divide French-from English-speaking Africa.<sup>10</sup> In his 1959 speech to the Second Congress of Negro Writers and Artists held in Rome which he redrafted for Wretched of the Earth, Fanon showed the source of Black culture to spring from the dialectic of liberation of the colonial masses against imperialist domination, and thus, concluded that, "this new humanity cannot do otherwise than define a new humanism both for itself and for others." (p. 246)

Ezekiel Mphahlele caught precisely this view of Black, rather than *negritude* concept, when he pointed out that for the Blacks in South Africa the "very bloody struggle helps to determine the shape of their culture." And in the 1970 Introduction to his Down Second Avenue, we see how his relationship as writer to the reality of Black South Africa helped Mphahlele anticipate the international dimension of the Black Consciousness Movement which burst onto the world-historic stage on June 16, 1976 in Soweto. It was with such prescience that Mphahlele wrote: "...for the second revolution that is now due in Africa, she needs black Americans more than she could ever have dreamed. To be cut loose altogether from the spiritual shackles of colonialism, white tutelage, Africans need to draw strength from the black American's drive, thrust, and sophistication. On the other hand I insist that the American Negro must go to Africa to get to know her at firsthand; to observe the social realities of the continent; to see where the power really lies, which is not in the free black man's hands...They need to see for themselves the general resistance of countries against black aliens from other parts of Africa. After this, the American Negro will know what it is he really expects Africa to do for and with him, beyond the dream of an African innocence he has carried with him all along." (p. xv)

The dialectics of liberation, as culture, brought the famous Nigerian writer, Wole Soyinka, into conflict with the Nigerian government and he was imprisoned in 1969 for his participation in the Biafran Rebellion. "That war also caught up in its wake, but in different ways, Chinua Achebe, Christopher Okigbo, Cyprian Ekwensi, Elechi Amadi, to name a few...Christopher did not survive. The war has since been a dominant thematic influence in the postwar work of these and other Nigerian writers."<sup>11</sup> The point is that no category remains the same,

whether in culture or in philosophy, once it is developed in another context.

### III. *American Black Thought and Capitalism's Intrusion*

So total was the form of national and international, as well as class, consciousness drawn out of American Black thought, by such writers as Langston Hughes, Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison,<sup>12</sup> that Black literature has become as integral to working out the relationship of Black thought to reality as the serious theoretical works on the Black dimension in America, which have continued to appear--from the turn of the century, when DuBois edited the still ignored nor studied political and sociological papers delivered annually at Atlanta University, to the highly touted Gunnar Myrdal study, An American Dilemma. Whereas the Myrdal study, to this day, is considered the definitive work on the Negro in America and whereas the work's analysis engaged a great number of Black intellectuals, the conclusions drawn represent only one--the pseudo-liberal views of Mr. Myrdal. To find out what conclusions the Black intellectuals were drawing as they worked on this massive study of the Negro problem you would have to search out the thirteen reels of microfilm carrying the original manuscripts, which were never fully incorporated into the final version, but rather deposited in the Schomburg Library in Harlem.

The most comprehensive analysis of thinking on the Negro Question by a Black intellectual, which, nevertheless, didn't enter American Dilemma, was Ralph Bunche's study, Conceptions and Ideologies of the Negro Problem, written in 1940. That this monograph has never seen the light of day reveals just how divergent were the "value premises" of Mr. Myrdal from the ideas held by Black intellectuals like Bunche, whose radicalism Myrdal did not hesitate to attack as not being "very active in trying either to induce or prevent an economic revolution..." The question that arises is, what made it permissible for Bunche to shelve his more radical views in the Schomburg collection, and defer to the pseudo-liberal conclusions of Myrdal?

Whereas the dilemma of *negritude* meant discovering the roots of Black culture as "remembrance of things past"--the divorce of African thought from African reality, for a radical academic like Ralph Bunche, the dualities revealed through compiling the Myrdal study meant relegating the revolutionary dimension of Black thought that had been discovered to the archives. Subordinating his own conclusions beneath Myrdal's not only points to the Black intellectual's alienation from Black thought when that is spelled out as masses in motion transforming reality, it reveals how alienated he is from his own thought once it shows itself to bear an affinity to revolutionary philosophy.<sup>13</sup>



It was from practice that a new stage of American Black cognition did arise in the mid-1950s with the American Civil Rights Movement. The "new passions and new forces" revealed both the opening of a new page in world history, and a new dimension in thought, further deepened with the articulation of Marxist humanism.

As the American Black struggle emerged on an entirely new level, outside the direct influence of the "established" organizations and leadership, with the birth of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, the White intellectuals and old radicals like Daniel Bell were bemoaning "the end of ideology." In Africa, however, there was no way to escape the dynamism of ideas and the rise of a whole new Third World, beginning with the transformation of the Gold Coast into the first African republic--Ghana. In the U.S., the Montgomery Bus Boycott initiated the Black youth revolt of the 1960s, which sparked also the White youth revolt, from the Free Speech Movement to the Anti-Vietnam War Movement. Indeed, the Black slogan so popular then, "Hell no, we won't go!", is now being revived by the youth of the 1980s in their resistance to draft registration.

Black youth had, also, from such Black intellectuals as Richard Wright, much to learn and use as new ground for their own original contributions. The fact that the White literary establishment has first now (1977) published American Hunger, which was originally written in the early '40s, only shows that it isn't alone in being Black that you become their "invisible man," but also through the genuine ideological struggles against communist statism and for genuine Marxism and liberating struggles. Thus, it was in his study of Marx, free of communist perversions, that Wright proclaimed in American Hunger that, "it seemed to me that here at last in the realm of revolutionary expression was where Negro experience could find a home, a functioning value and role."

That it has taken till 1980 for Claude McKay's manuscript, The Negroes in America, also to see the light of day isn't because either the American communists or Black intellectuals did not know of its existence. On the contrary, following out Lenin's directive that material be gathered and published on the Negro question, McKay wrote in DuBois' Crisis about being commissioned by the state publishing department in Moscow to write a book on the American Negro. As a result of his address to the 1922 Comintern Congress, McKay was commissioned to write a book on the Negro question and invited to gather material for a book on the Russian Revolution for American readers--an assignment he never completed. And whereas McKay's position on the relationship of the Black struggle to the class struggle continued to elicit critical responses from American communists even as he was drafting the book, the new point of departure in Negroes in America



which connects with our day is McKay's statement that "the Negro question is inseparably connected with the question of woman's liberation."

Thus, whether in poetry or as outright revolution, whether in Africa or America, whether as past or present, women initiated serious work and thought; as early as 1927 Black women were responsible for organizing the Pan-African conference that year. And there is still hidden from Black history the 1929 Aba Women's War against British imperialism in Nigeria.<sup>14</sup>

In the early 1970s when Black students shook up academia with their demands for a Black curriculum, another Black poet, Audre Lorde, captured the alienation of the Black intellectual from the Black youth revolts in her poem, "Blackstudies":

*The chill wind is beating down from the high places.  
My students wait outside my door  
searching condemning listening  
for what I am sworn to tell them  
for what they least want to hear  
clogging the only exit from the 17th floor  
begging in their garbled language  
beyond judgement or understanding  
"oh speak to us now mother for soon  
we will not need you  
only your memory  
teaching us questions."*

Even more than literature, however, it is philosophy which provides the profoundest illumination of the inseparability of Black thought and reality. In fact, the reason Marx's economic-philosophic categories come to life in our period of insoluble crises and revolutionary upsurge is because the transformation of reality is central to their very construction. Thus, it is not only the question of the relationship of leaders to masses, rather, we have reached an entirely new transition point for the entire development of Black thought and Black reality.

Of course, it is true that the Black "talented tenth" were likewise separating from the mass struggles. But never was it so total as it is today. Thus, the right-wing movement in the U.S. that came out of the crisis of the 1970s is so total in 1980 that even the established organizations have to give vent to American Black anger; witness Vernon Jordan's comment that the depression conditions that Black people face makes them "boat people without boats" which prompted some racist to shoot him.

The point is that even DuBois' nineteenth century conception of the talented tenth doesn't so much revolve around the

question of political leadership today, as it centers on the more fundamental question of what is theory and where does it begin. Thus, by the time 1963 rolled around to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation either intellectuals like DuBois were dismissing the achievements of the Black movement, pointing instead to Russia as the Negro's alternative, or the labor bureaucracy was reversing labor and Black history by stating that the Negro could not have made such achievements without the CIO. The truth is the exact opposite-- industrial unionism would never have succeeded had it not been for the decisive role the Black worker played among the unskilled who were the backbone of the labor movement.

#### *IV. On the Threshold of a New Humanism*

It was the reduction of American Black freedom struggles not only to the tokenism of a few in leadership roles by the established Black and labor organizations but also the lack of fundamental changes in the structure of the U.S.A. which drove DuBois to embrace communism in his ninetieth year, proclaiming Russia to be the path to a new society also for Blacks. Nevertheless, no one can deny the comprehensiveness and originality in research on thought and historical analysis of the struggles in America. Black Reconstruction, by Du Bois, the first and most encyclopedic and unmatched by White historians, remains to this day the greatest of any work on the relationship of Africa to Black Africa. Unfortunately, that cannot possibly bear comparison with the actual revolutions and the Pan-Africanism that accompanied them, as against the Pan-Africanism DuBois introduced after World War I, grounded in no movement.

It wasn't only a question that DuBois equated Russian state-capitalism, calling itself communism, with Marxism, rather it was that his thinking never broke with what Ralph Bunche, in his study for American Dilemma, called "the most solidly American trait...our pragmatism." Separated from Black labor and class struggles, race became equated not with proletarian or national revolution, but with "equality." And although another Black intellectual, Harold Cruse, felt that the new social reality of the 1960s provided the needed vantage point to confront the "crisis of the Negro intellectual," the underlying philosophy remained the same, old American pragmatism.

What has become critical in 1980 is that the objective situation has changed so totally the relationship of theory to practice that altogether new categories of thought are needed to capture the multidimensionality of the Black movement. The present Black leadership is not conceptually prepared to develop any further, and we cannot continue to survive on outmoded concepts. This very day reveals how serious are the dualities within



the Black leadership which, on the one hand, is very conscious of how far removed it is from the Black youth revolts and the masses, and, on the other hand, moves toward a unity of leadership brought about by the fear that the masses cannot be controlled. In the end, such a unified leadership would be subject to pressure from the ruling administration, rather than its own ranks. What, therefore, defines Black leadership and Black thought is not what it says about itself, but rather its relationship to the mass of Black people.<sup>15</sup>

It is the concreteness of the movement for freedom in American Black thought which makes it inseparable from Black reality; the self-determination of this idea of freedom parallels the actual struggles of Black masses in motion. The sharpest expression of this is their refusal to accept any established leadership. Just as the Miami Black youth actually booed the Black leadership of another era, that of the turbulent 1960s, so now their passion for philosophy refuses to accept the substitute offered by the NAACP meeting in Miami with its token realization that the masses feel in no way represented by that organization or any other. This separation of the Black masses from Black leaders as well as from White is a manifestation of the passion for philosophy that surges up from below. We are indeed on the threshold of a movement from practice that is itself a form of theory. The 1980s are sure to forge a new relationship of theory to practice, of Black thought to Marx's humanism which, form its birth, associated with abolitionism and made that freedom struggle the essence of the very First Working Men's International.

#### Notes

1. See March 23, 1980 *New York Times*, p. 20. Also, see Fred Hechinger's survey in the April 13, 1980 *New York Times Magazine* entitled "Black Studies Come of Age."
2. The token interest White academia has shown in Black thought was revealed all over again when the *Philosophical Forum* published a special double issue on "Philosophy and the Black Experience" (Vol. IX, Nos. 2-3, Winter-Spring). The editor's attempt to make it look as if Black speaks for itself as an independent voice discloses, instead, one more manifestation of how White academia never stops trying to make Black thought and reality invisible, unless recognized by it.
3. L.D. Reddick's 1937 address to the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History entitled "A New Interpretation For Negro History" singled out the importance of Carter G. Woodson to Black historiography when Reddick remarked that "the history of Negro historiography falls into two division, before Woodson and after Woodson." Along with proclaiming the need to view



- the Black past in terms of what Reddick called "history-as-actuality," i.e., Black masses making history, he is also pointing to a concrete example of that conception when he noted new "beginnings have been made" with "DuBois' brilliant attempt to apply the Marxian dialectic to the Reconstruction tumult...." L.D. Reddick's address is reproduced in Woodson's Journal of Negro History, 1937, p. 17.
4. See the 1944-46 series of articles on "Marxism and the Negro Problem" in the Dunayevskaya Collection at the Walter Reuther Labor Archives, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan 48202. See also Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal by Charles Denby, the Black production worker, editor of News & Letters, published by South End Press.
  5. From Leopold Sedar Senghor, by Irving L. Markovitz, 1967, p. 47. Also, an important light is shed on the origins of *negritude* by looking at the influence a little known journal, *Revue du Monde Noir*, had on Black French intellectuals. The *Revue* was edited and published in French and English by a West Indian woman intellectual, Paulette Nardal. American Black writers such as Claude McKay, Langston Hughes and Alain Locke contributed to this first journal of *negritude* expression. However, Paulette Nardal was critical of the silence maintained about the role of her and her sister, Jane Nardal, in the creation and development of the *negritude* tendency. Jane Nardal was the first "promoter of this movement of ideas, so broadly exploited later," and although Senghor and Césaire "took up the ideas tossed out by us," Paulette Nardal declared in 1963, "we were but women, real pioneers--let's say that we blazed the trail for them." It was Jane Nardal who first developed the conception of "Negro Humanism" in the early 1930s, which she saw as the essence of the works of the American Black writers. This relationship to American Black thought extended to the next stage in the development of *negritude* with the founding meetings for the African intellectual review, *Presence Africaine*, in 1947, which Richard Wright attended. For an intellectual history of *negritude*, see Jacques L. Hymans' biography of Senghor, 1971.
  6. See Chapter 7 of Raya Dunayevskaya's Philosophy and Revolution on "The African Revolutions and the World Economy" for an account of the 1947 meetings held in Paris between African revolutionaries and French socialists, communists and existentialists.
  7. "Administrative mentality" was the term used by Lenin to describe the effects of Russian state bureaucracy on the thinking of the Bolshevik leadership in general and on Leon

Trotsky in particular. For an analysis of the origins of the administrative mentality out of the retrogression of the Russian Revolution, see Dunayevskaya's Marxism and Freedom, especially Chapter 12, "What Happens After," section 2, "Lenin and His New Concept: 'Party Work to be Checked by Non-Party Masses'" (p. 201), and section 3 on "Lenin's Will" (p. 205).

8. See Nationalism, Communism, Marxist Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions by Raya Dunayevskaya, 1961, p. 16.
9. Frantz Fanon, Wretched of the Earth, Grove Press, p. 310.
10. Whereas a bureaucratic attitude toward the African masses characterized those who, like Senghor, were already in power, it really wasn't true for many of the writers and activists at Presence Africaine. The tragic death of Alioune Diop in May '80 of this year leaves a deep gap between those who remained at the point of separation from actual revolution, and those who sought new beginnings in thought and culture in relation to the African Revolution. At the Africanist Congress held in Boston in 1961, Alioune Diop and Ezekiel Mphahlele carried on a very serious polemic on the question of *negritude*. For a summation of that debate and Diop's speech, "Political and Cultural Solidarity in Africa," see the Final Report of the Conference entitled, Africa and the United States: Images and Realities, 1961. Also, see Raya Dunayevskaya's In Memoriam to Alioune Diop in News & Letters, July 1980. For the West Indian connection in this triangular movement of ideas, see Five Afro-Caribbean Voices in American Culture, 1917-1929, by Wilfred D. Samuels, 1977.
11. See the editorial summation of the past ten years of African literature in African Literature Today, 1979. Even more important is the history of no less than four centuries of Nigerian resistance to British imperialism. As far back as 1956, Prof. K. Onwuka Duke, in a most historic study, Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885, proved that it was not the tsetse fly, but human revolt, that kept British imperialism from conquest of Nigeria till mid-nineteenth century.
12. New points of departure in Black thought are beginning to illuminate the intercommunication between the ages in Black literature, as well. New conceptions in Black studies which recognize in the twentieth century works of Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison, historic as well as literary responses to the elemental quest for "freedom and literacy" found in the nineteenth century slave narratives the abolitionists circulated as propaganda for the cause which brought on the Civil War. See the recent study by Robert Stepto of the Yale

University Afro-American Studies Department called From Behind the Veil: A Study of Afro-American Narrative, 1979.

It was in Langston Hughes' first anthology of African writing in 1960 which also included the voices of African women; see Phyllis Ntantala's "The Widows of the Reserve" in An African Treasury.

That the greatness of Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man is not alone in its being great fiction can be measured by the fact that "invisible" has been expounded by young Blacks as the current expression for Black alienation in White America, especially after Miami.

13. See Raya Dunayevskaya's "Negro Intellectuals in Dilemma" in Critical-Essays of Raya Dunayevskaya in the Battle of Ideas, 1979. See also her Free Speech Movement and Negro Revolution, News & Letters publication.
14. See "'Aba Riots' or Igbo 'Women's War'?--Ideology, Stratification, and the Invisibility of Women," by Judith Van Allen, in Women in Africa, ed. by Nancy J. Hafkin and Edna G. Bay, 1976. This very serious work of historic excavation first appeared in the UCLA African Activists Association journal, Ufahamu, 1975.
15. See the June 29, 1980 New York Times article called "Black Assailing Leaders as the NAACP Gathers."