



## The Negritude Movement: W.E.B. Du Bois, Leon Damas, Aime Cesaire, Leopold Senghor, Frantz Fanon, and the Evolution of an Insurgent Idea (Critical Africana Studies)

By Reiland Rabaka

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*The Negritude Movement* provides readers with not only an intellectual history of the Negritude Movement but also its prehistory (W.E.B. Du Bois, the New Negro Movement, and the Harlem Renaissance) and its posthistory (Frantz Fanon and the evolution of Fanonism). By viewing Negritude as an “insurgent idea” (to invoke this book’s intentionally incendiary subtitle), as opposed to merely a form of poetics and aesthetics, *The Negritude Movement* explores Negritude as a “traveling theory” (à la Edward Said’s concept) that consistently crisscrossed the Atlantic Ocean in the twentieth century: from Harlem to Haiti, Haiti to Paris, Paris to Martinique, Martinique to Senegal, and on and on *ad infinitum*. *The Negritude Movement* maps the movements of proto-Negritude concepts from Du Bois’s discourse in *The Souls of Black Folk* through to post-Negritude concepts in Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*. Utilizing Negritude as a conceptual framework to, on the one hand, explore the Africana intellectual tradition in the twentieth century, and, on the other hand, demonstrate discursive continuity between Du Bois and Fanon, as well as the Harlem Renaissance and Negritude Movement, *The Negritude Movement* ultimately accents what Negritude contributed to arguably its greatest intellectual heir, Frantz Fanon, and the development of his distinct critical theory, Fanonism. Rabaka argues that if Fanon and Fanonism remain relevant in the twenty-first century, then, to a certain extent, Negritude remains relevant in the twenty-first century.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

This book joins the respected tomes on critical Africana social thought that Rabaka edits for the publisher's 'Critical Africana Studies' series. His book proves, if ever proof is needed, that there are kindred links between the Africana intellectual traditions in Africa and in the African diaspora. He traces that intellectual lineage to the 'central intellectual antecedent' of 'Du Boisian Negritude' that is detected in the Pan-Africanism of Du Bois and in his influential text *The Souls of Black Folk*. Rabaka organically links Du Bois to the New Negro Movement of the Harlem Renaissance and to the tendencies Rabaka identifies as Damasian, Cesairean, Senghorian, and, contentiously, Fanonian, negritudes. Rabaka argues that negritude intellectual activists centered their social thought on Africa and must therefore be reinterpreted with the Afrocentric theories of Du Bois rather than depend on paradigms from Eurocentrism, against which most of those intellectuals rebelled. Using the ideological differences between Du Bois and Booker T. Washington as a model, Rabaka suggests that there were conservative and radical tendencies in the Harlem Renaissance and in the negritude movement as well . . . Summing Up: Recommended. All levels/libraries. (*CHOICE*)

In this thought-provoking study, Reiland Rabaka locates the roots of the Negritude movement in the diaspora by examining what he calls in chapter I the 'Prelude to Negritude' – that is, the seeds of the Negritude idea found in the New Negro Movement, the Harlem Renaissance, and the early evolution of Negritude as an 'insurgent' idea.... [T]his study presents a compelling argument that Negritude as an 'insurgent idea' was and continues to be central to our understanding of African peoples' struggle against racial capitalism and colonial domination. (*Palimpsest: A Journal on Women, Gender, and the Black International*)

Without a doubt this is a significant and profound analysis of 'Negritude' by one of the most insightful analysts in the field of Africana Studies. (Gerald Horne, University of Houston, author of 'The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance and the Origins of the United States of America')

Both impassioned and erudite, Rabaka's new book is a welcome reminder that a movement so complex as Negritude not only merits but demands further scholarly attention. (Richard Serrano, Rutgers University)

Working critically across the New Negro Movement and the Harlem Renaissance to the major thinkers of Negritude, this book brilliantly reexamines the legacies of the Negritude Movement. Its thoughtful detailed analysis clarifies the trajectories between intellectual and political traditions of Africa and its diaspora. *The Negritude Movement* is an essential contribution to the twenty-first century, one that reinvigorates our interests in reading with new light W.E.B. Du Bois, Damas, Césaire, Senghor and Fanon. (Frieda Ekotto, University of Michigan)

Rabaka offers us, at long last, a genuinely critical and Africana-centered account of Negritude as simultaneously a poetic AND political movement — as a truly "insurgent idea." As impressively researched as it is eminently readable, Rabaka's work also makes a compelling case for the ongoing relevance of Negritude thought in the current climate of neocolonialism and the politics of race. (Georges Van Den Abbeele, Dean of Humanities, University of California Irvine)

Reiland Rabaka offers cogent and insightful analyses of the discursive representations of the consequences of blacks' racial colonization and the ways in which the color-line has divided society and, as he states, 'even

more, black souls and black selves'. This volume adds to Rabaka's impressive oeuvre which traverses the works of the Negritude poets, African and Caribbean authors, and the African American thinkers who have contributed, through cross-cultural and dynamic exchanges, to understanding the 'humanhood' of our common history. (Valérie Orlando, University of Maryland)

About the Author

**Reiland Rabaka** is professor of African, African American, and Caribbean studies in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

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