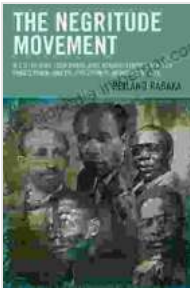


The Evolution of Negritude: Du Bois, Damas, Césaire, Senghor, and Fanon



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

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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BOOK REVIEW

The Negritude Movement: W.E.B Du Bois, Leon Damas, Aime Cesaire, Leopold Senghor, Frantz Fanon, and the evolution of an insurgent idea, by Reiland Rabaka. New York, Lexington Books, 2016, vii + 534pp., hardback, ISBN: 978-1498511377.

Reiland Rabaka's *The Negritude Movement* (2015) addressing, in five main sections, the social reality that gave birth to the negritude movement. While focusing on the negritude as a social movement, Rabaka explores the various aspects of the movement by bringing on board scholars like Leon Damas, Aime Cesaire, Leopold Senghor, and Frantz Fanon. Rabaka seeks to present the negritude in a more integrated way as opposed to the isolated nature at which their ideas have been presented in the past. Rabaka insists that 'Negritude is just as much a form of radical politics as it is a form of radical poetics' (Rabaka xi). By this, he means that the negritude movement engenders several genres that speak to the oppressive realities of black people. Rabaka argues that the intellectual discourses of negritude played a significant role and informs the discursive continuity in the works of W.E.D Du Bois and Frantz Fanon. Ultimately, Rabaka maintains that if Du Bois and Fanon are still important in the twenty-first century, key elements of negritude must not be ignored in the twenty-first century (Rabaka xii). While critical of the negritude movement, Rabaka casts a new light on how to understand the negritude scholars, taken together, in their responses to the realities of oppression that besieged their time and continue in some African countries today.

Du Bois, in his *The Souls of Black Folk*, addresses a major concern which is expressed in the question, 'How does it feel to be a problem?' (Du Bois in Rabaka 42). The existence of black people, in a supposed white world, casts a 'shadow' on a world that does not see blackness as a valuable state of existence. The various elements of negritude were to challenge this debased disposition towards blackness – it was a struggle for the self-affirmation and public legitimisation of black existence. The core element of negritude was informed by the Harlem Renaissance era. According to Rabaka, there is a strong connection between the 1920s and 1930s New Negro Movement and Harlem renaissance and the negritude movement of late 1930s and 1940s (Rabaka 43).

Rabaka observes from the very beginning, that the negritude movement cannot be isolated from a social vision and political praxes that were at the core of social change that was sought at the time (Rabaka xi). This social change had different outlooks: they were manifested through poetry and political postulations. The negritude movement, in the quest for the legitimacy of black existence, represents both a compliment and challenge to the negritude studies that privilege negritude poetics over negritude politics, negritude aesthetics over negritude's incessant emphasis on decolonisation, re-Africanisation, radical humanism (Rabaka xi).

Rabaka argues that the negritude movement has its origin in the Harlem Renaissance which is commonly used to denote the New Negro Movement (Rabaka 1). It is the work of the young Harlem renaissance that provided a primary link between the New Negro Movement and the Negritude Movement (Rabaka 45). The renaissance radicals were self-critical of the negative events going on in the Black American communities; the domestic violence, prostitution,

The Negritude movement was a literary and political movement that emerged in the 20th century as a response to the racism and colonialism that Africans and people of African descent faced. The movement's main goal was to celebrate and promote African culture and identity.

Five of the most influential figures in the Negritude movement were W.E.B. Du Bois, Léon Damas, Aimé Césaire, Léopold Sédar Senghor, and Frantz

Fanon. These men came from different backgrounds and had different approaches to Negritude, but they all shared a deep commitment to fighting for the rights of Africans and people of African descent.

W.E.B. Du Bois

W.E.B. Du Bois was born in 1868 in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. He was the first African American to earn a doctorate from Harvard University, and he went on to become a leading sociologist, historian, and civil rights activist.

Du Bois was a strong advocate for Pan-Africanism, the idea that all Africans and people of African descent should unite to fight against racism and colonialism. He founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909, and he served as its first president.

Du Bois's writings on race and identity were highly influential in the Negritude movement. He argued that Africans and people of African descent should be proud of their heritage and that they should resist the racism and discrimination that they faced.

Léon Damas

Léon Damas was born in 1882 in Cayenne, French Guiana. He was a poet, novelist, and playwright who wrote in both French and Creole.

Damas's work was often characterized by its use of irony and satire to critique the racism and colonialism that he experienced. He was also a strong advocate for the use of Creole languages in literature.

Damas's work was highly influential in the Negritude movement. He helped to give voice to the experiences of Africans and people of African descent who were living under colonialism.

Aimé Césaire

Aimé Césaire was born in 1913 in Basse-Pointe, Martinique. He was a poet, playwright, and politician who wrote in both French and Creole.

Césaire was one of the founders of the Negritude movement. He argued that Africans and people of African descent should embrace their African identity and that they should fight against the racism and colonialism that they faced.

Césaire's work was highly influential in the Negritude movement. He helped to raise awareness of the plight of Africans and people of African descent, and he inspired many others to join the fight for racial justice.

Léopold Sédar Senghor

Léopold Sédar Senghor was born in 1906 in Joal, Senegal. He was a poet, philosopher, and politician who wrote in both French and Wolof.

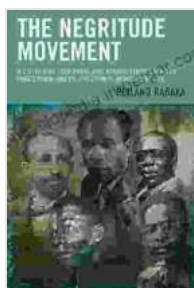
Senghor was one of the founders of the Negritude movement. He argued that Africans and people of African descent should celebrate their African culture and identity. He also believed that Africans should work together to build a better future for themselves.

Senghor's work was highly influential in the Negritude movement. He helped to promote a positive image of Africa and its people, and he inspired many others to join the fight for African liberation.

Frantz Fanon

Frantz Fanon was born in 1925 in Fort-de-France, Martinique. He was a psychiatrist, philosopher, and revolutionary who wrote in both French and English.

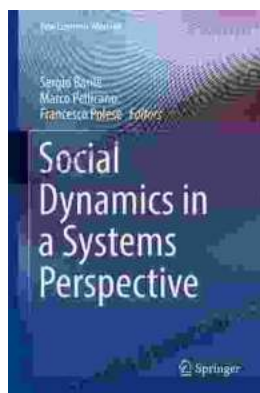
Fanon was a leading figure in the



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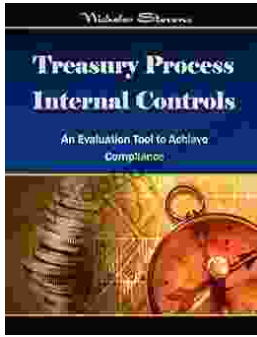
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