

IFÁ (Yorùbá for 'Wisdom'):

Intro for All

A free short course on Black Studies

**You are invited
to five
FREE lectures
on five
fundamentals**



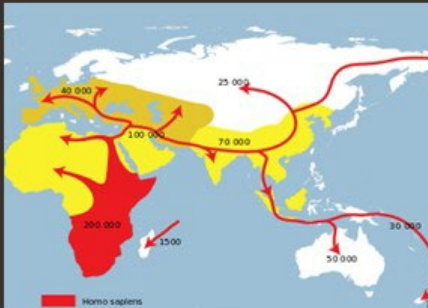
**Aug 26:
Color**

**Sep 2:
Class**

**Sep 9:
Culture**

**Sep 16:
Gender**

**Sep 23:
Consciousness**



**Saturdays 10–11:30 am US Central time (UTC–5)
Register at <https://go.illinois.edu/ifa>**

**Abdul Alkalimat,
Instructor**

Welcome!

**We'll start a few
Minutes after 10am
US Central Time**

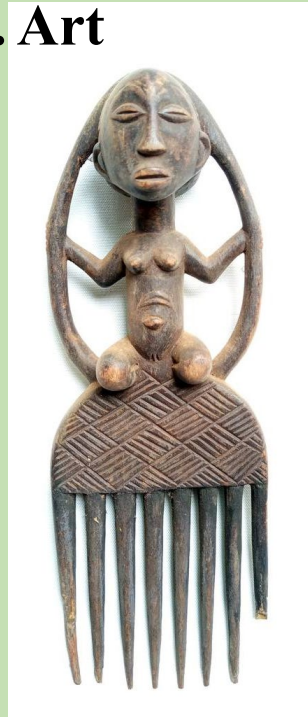
Culture

Abdul Alkalimat
IFA: Intro for all
Community Lecture #3
September 9, 2023



Outline

1. A definition
2. Origin
3. Everyday Life
4. History
5. Art



Definition of Culture

Culture is the ideas, customs and social behaviour of a particular group of people. It includes the attitudes of this group as well as their actions. Language is an example “element” of a culture.



Two perspectives on culture

Styles and values of everyday life, including dialects, food production and preparation, clothing, dancing, morality, and aesthetics

Art forms, representational forms of expression carried out as specialized activity that require high levels of skill



Aaron Douglas, *The Warriors Dance*

Elements of Everyday Culture

Recreation

Norms

Values

Style

Customs

Rituals

Tradition

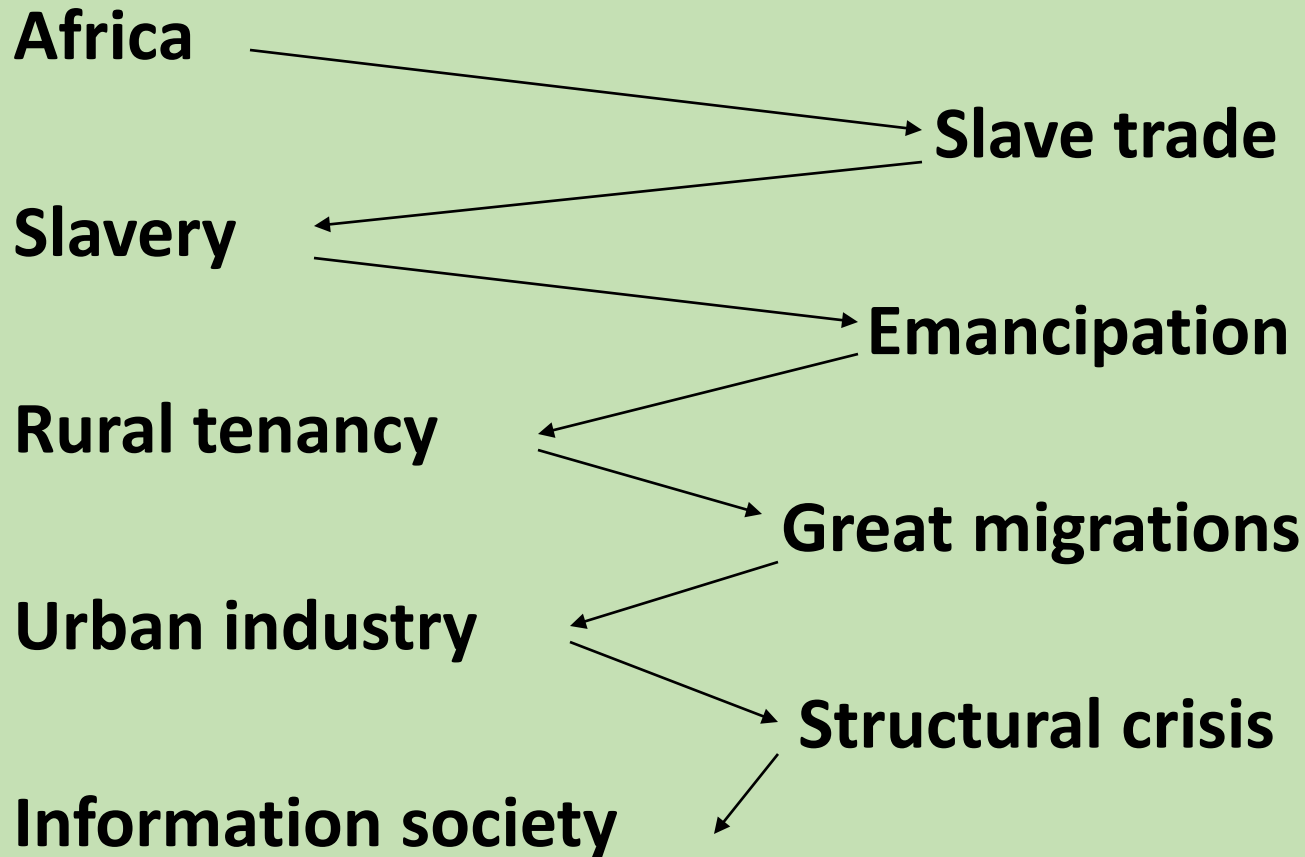


Henry Ossawa Tanner
1859 - 1937

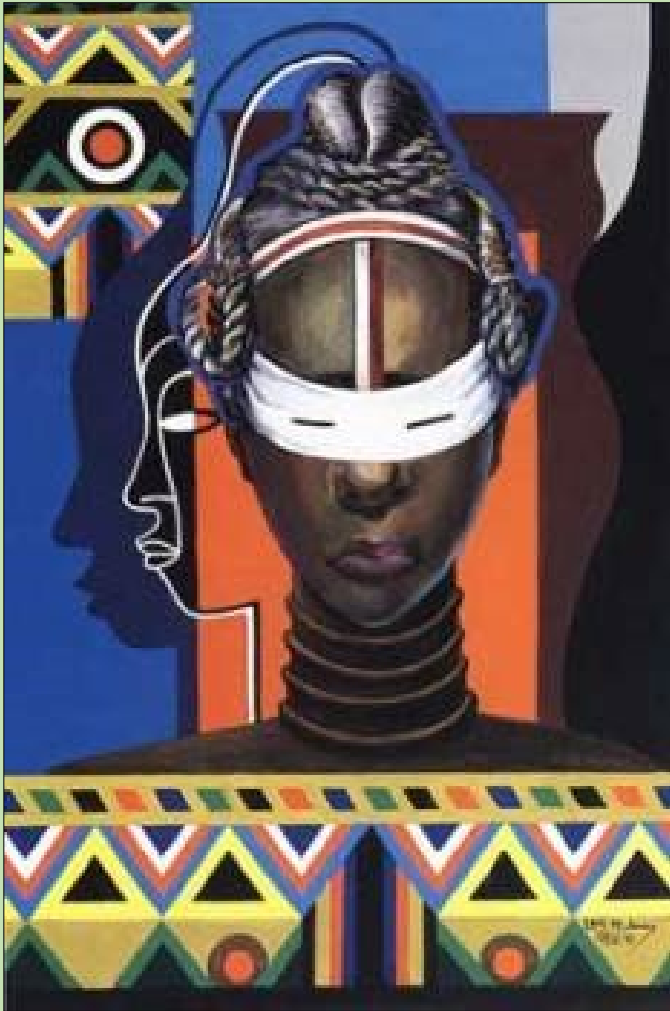


The logic of Black history:

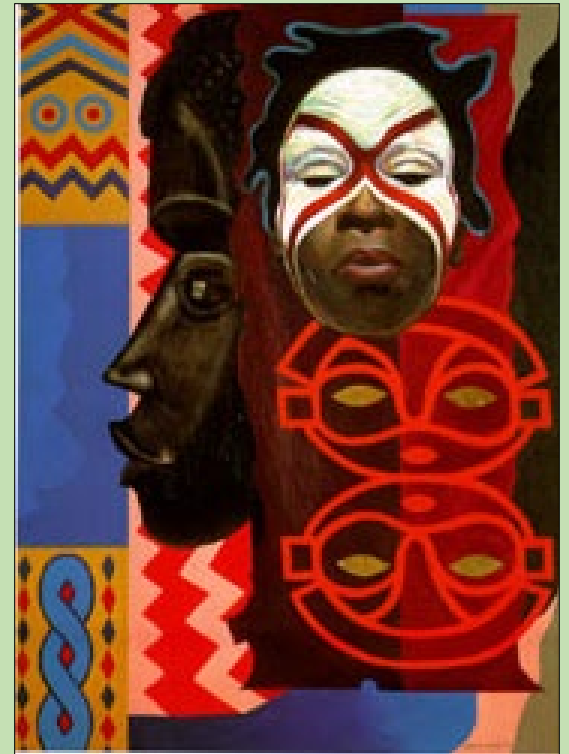
modes of social cohesion, modes of social disruption



African retention is a vital aspect of African American culture



Lois Mailou Jones
1905-1998



This includes aesthetics, religion, language, food, music and dancing, hair care and styling, and much more





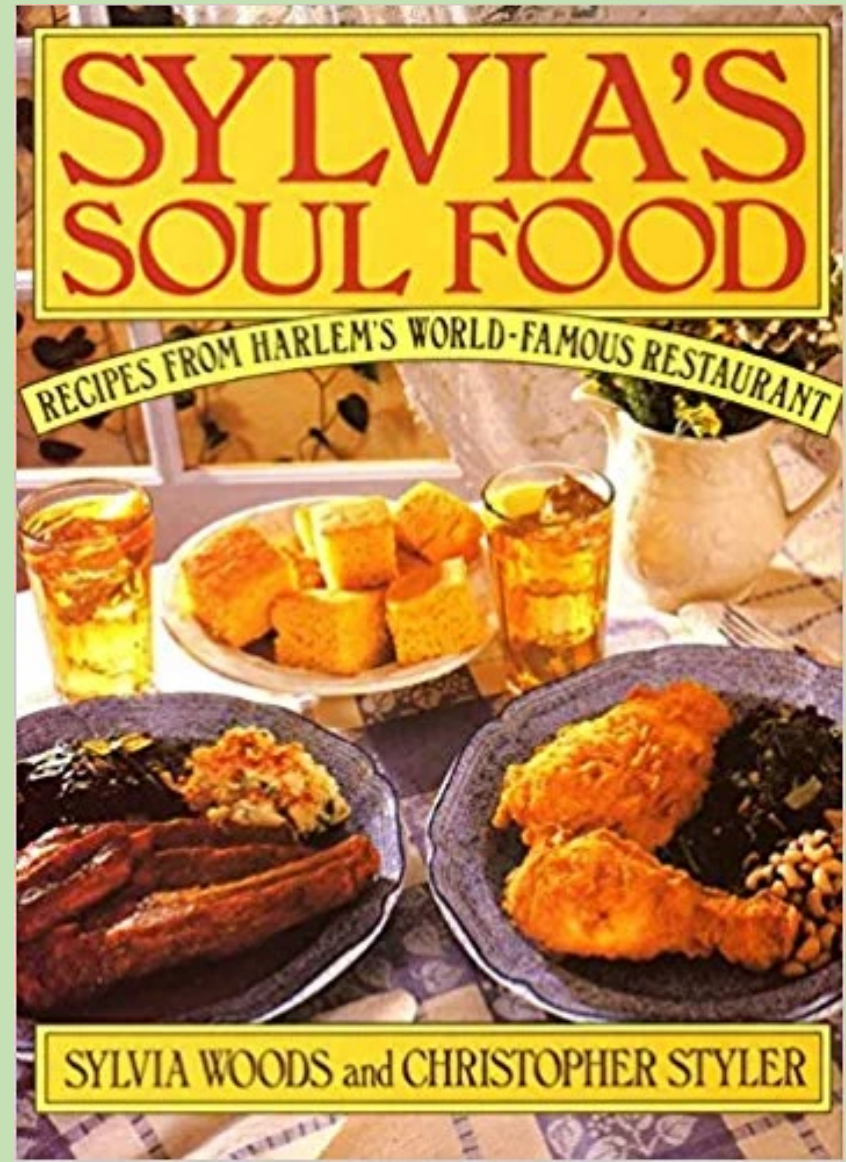
Moving our bodies in **dance is cultural performance**



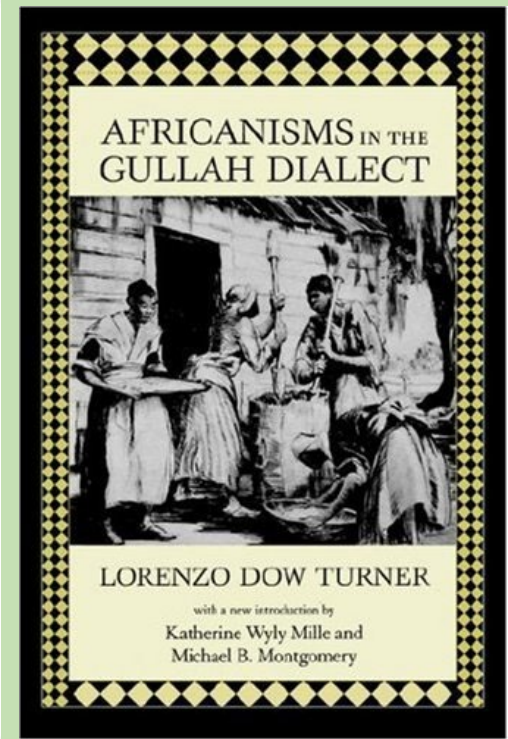
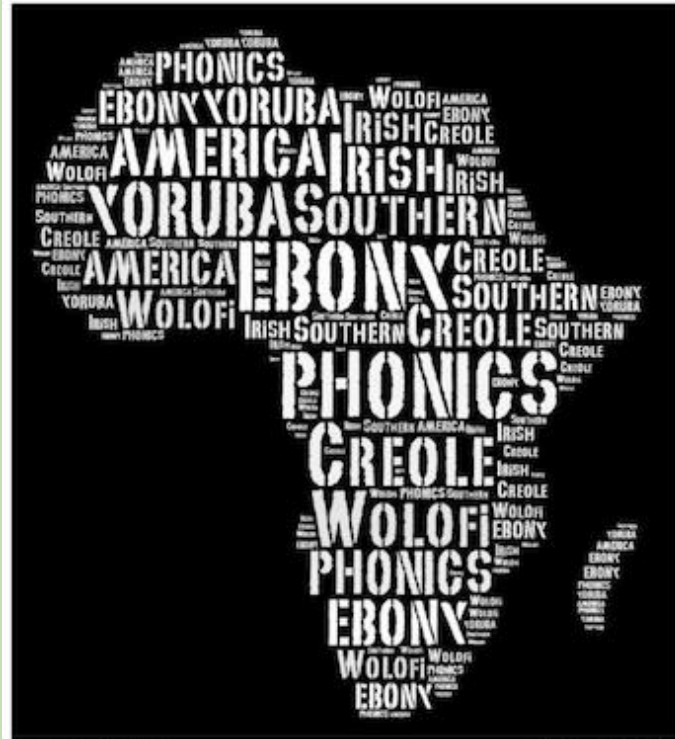
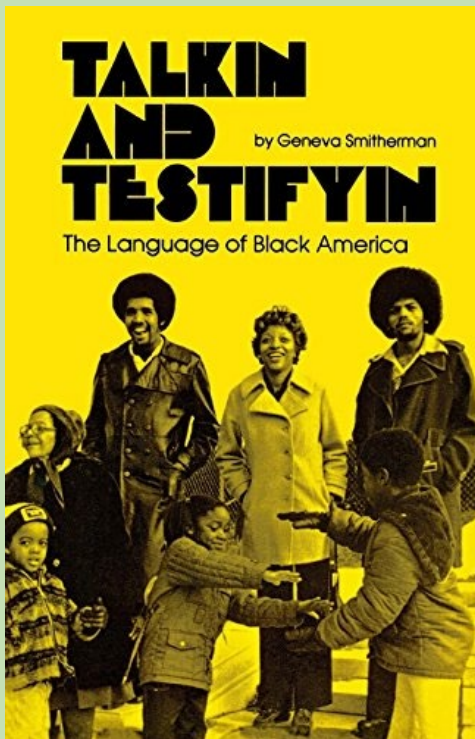


African
Foods





African American Food



**Language/Speaking is a cultural act
Every culture makes sense to itself**

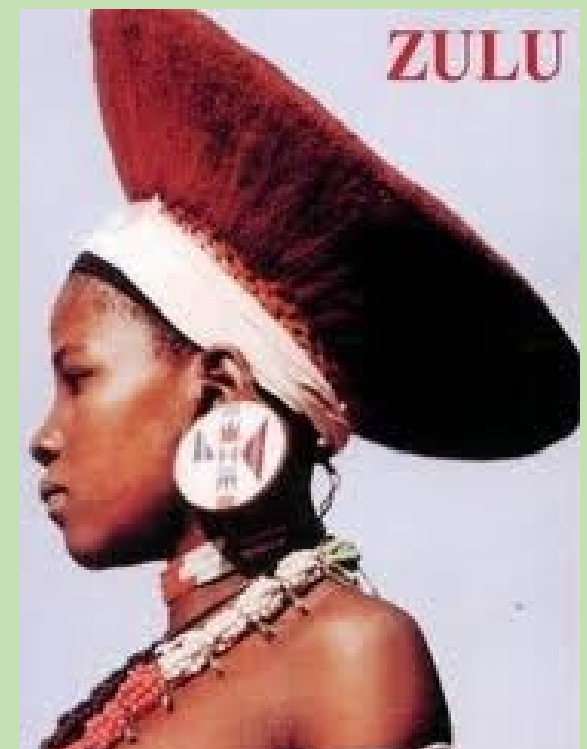
Nommo: Words can create harmony



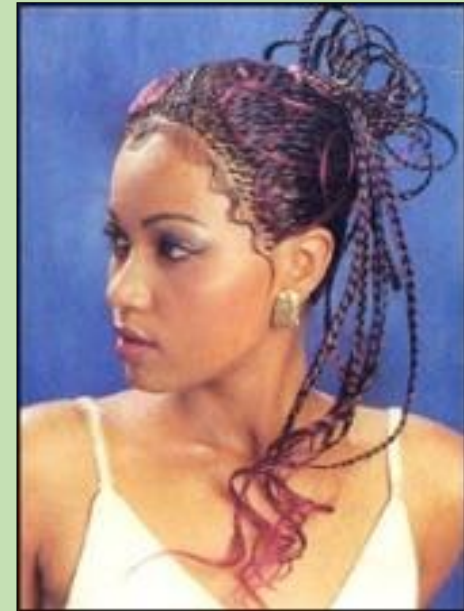
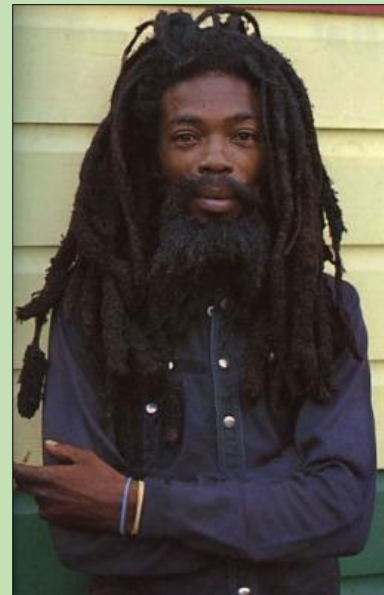
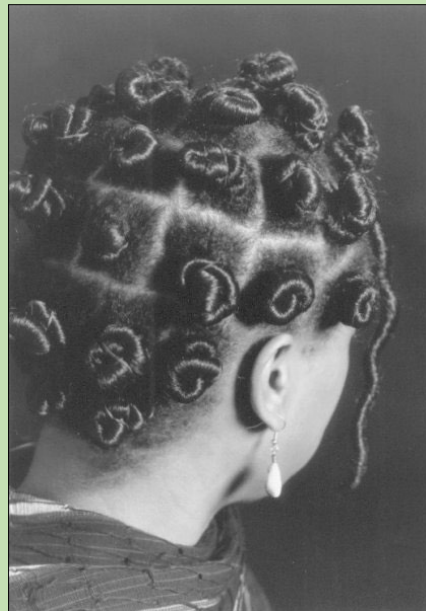
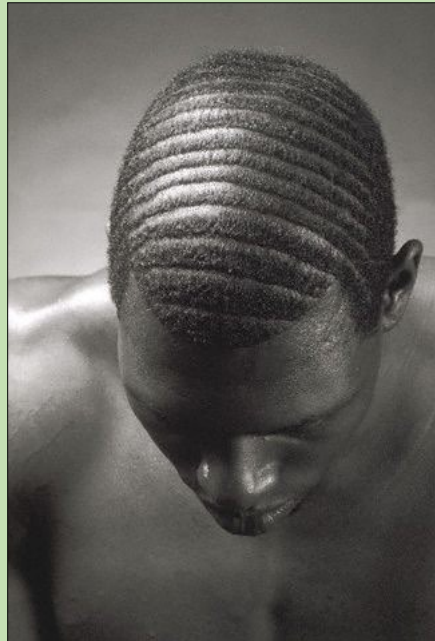
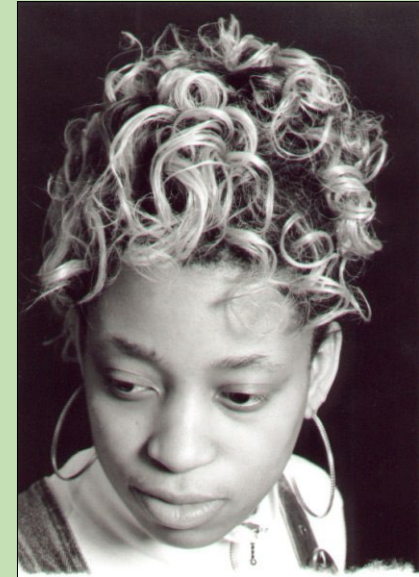
**Telling stories is the performance of culture
through generational transmission**



OUR HAIR HISTORY

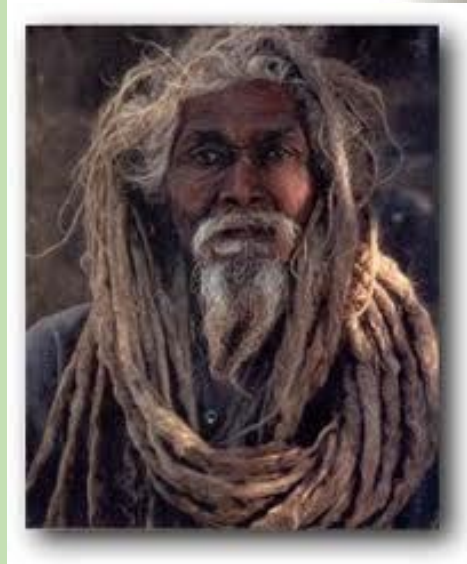


Culture always involves hair





1.



2.



3.



4.

1. Traditional African comb
2. Industrial “hot” comb
3. PanAfrican comb
4. Global comb

AFRICAN-AMERICAN BIOGRAPHIES

MADAM C. J. WALKER

Self-Made Businesswoman



Della A. Yarns

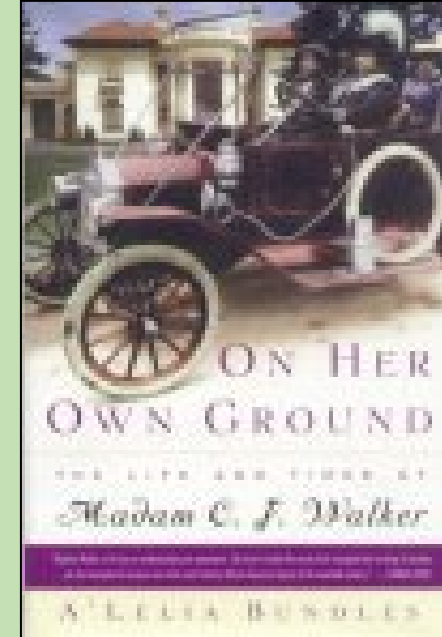
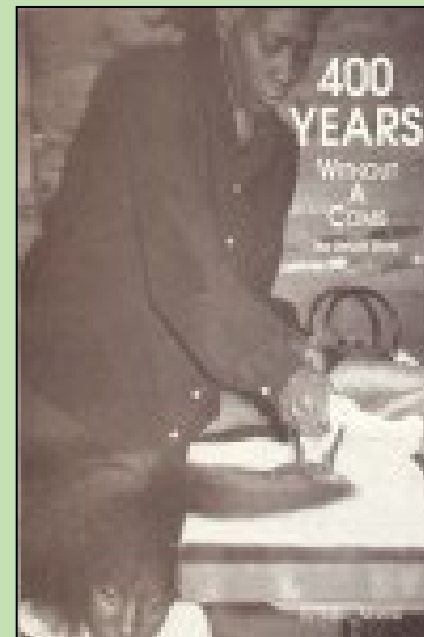
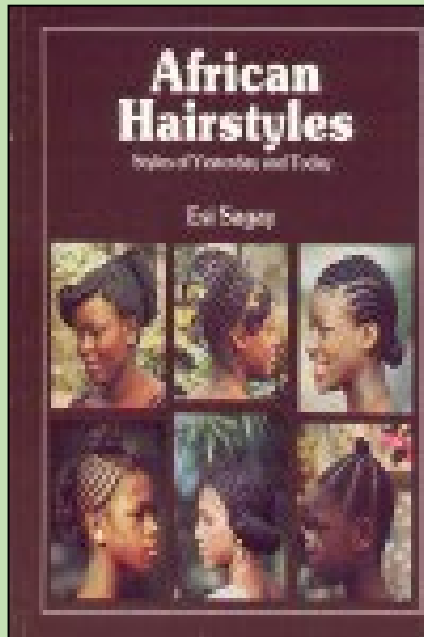
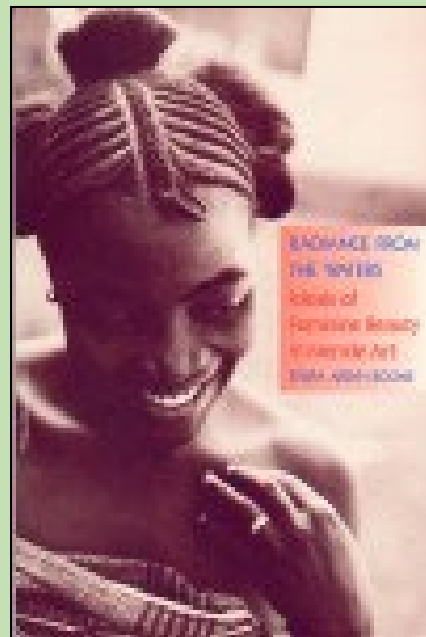
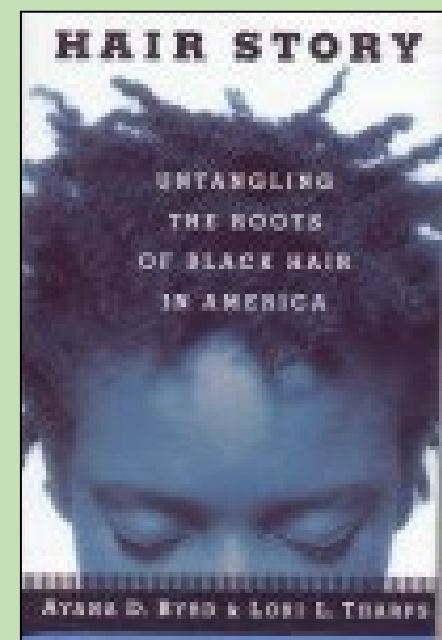
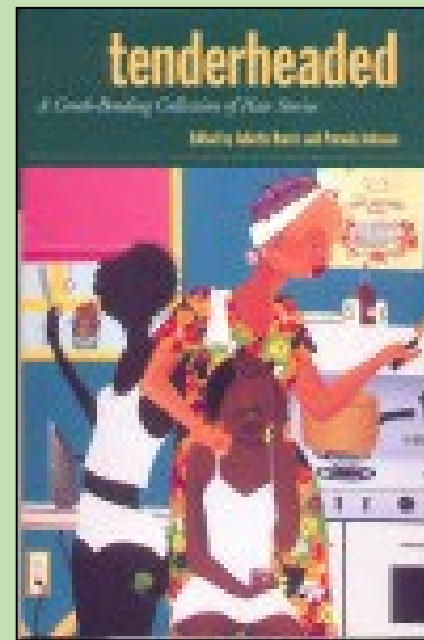
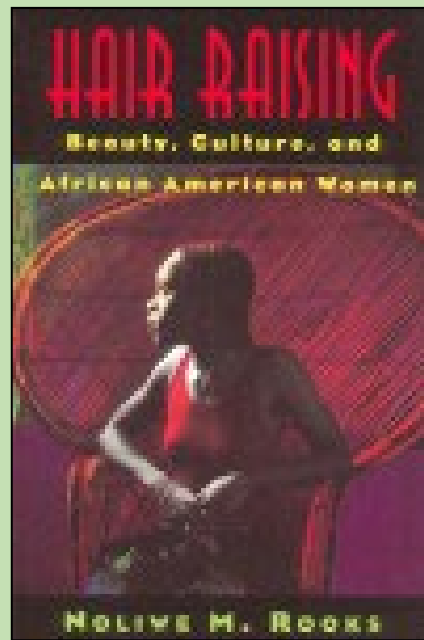
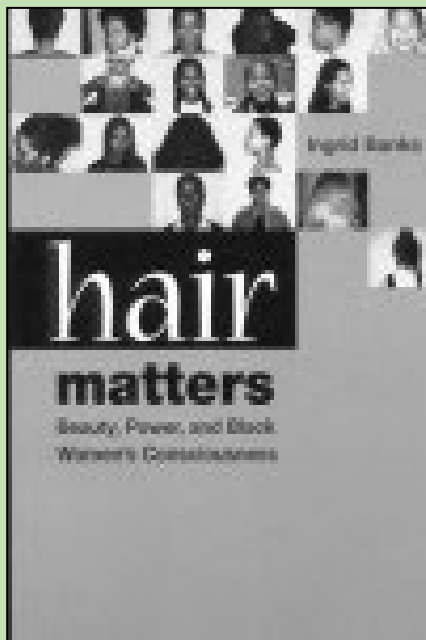


A LEDIA BUNDLES WALKER FAMILY COLLECTION



Telephone Morningside 7881







Our clothing expresses our culture



**Style is a cultural act.
We take clothes and
make them our own.**

Cultural innovation during slavery



Cotton production and brutality conditioned Black people to harness their emotions and focus on describing their suffering, while praising God.

The “Negro spiritual” was the greatest cultural genius during slavery

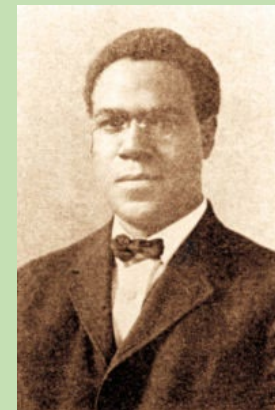
The low moans and melodies of Black Christians revealed the soul of a new people, out of Africa and being reshaped by the pain of white racism and creative Black genius. The Fisk Jubilee singers popularized these songs all over the world.



M. PORTER. E. W. WATKINS. H. D. ALEXANDER. F. J. LOUDIN. T. RUTLIN.
JENNIE JACKSON. MABEL LEWIS. ELLA SHEPPARD. MAGGIE CARNES. AMERICA W. ROBINSON.

Original Fisk University Jubilee Singers

John Work II and III →

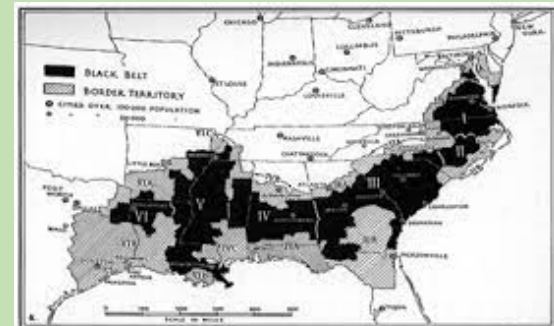


Culture of the Black Belt Nation

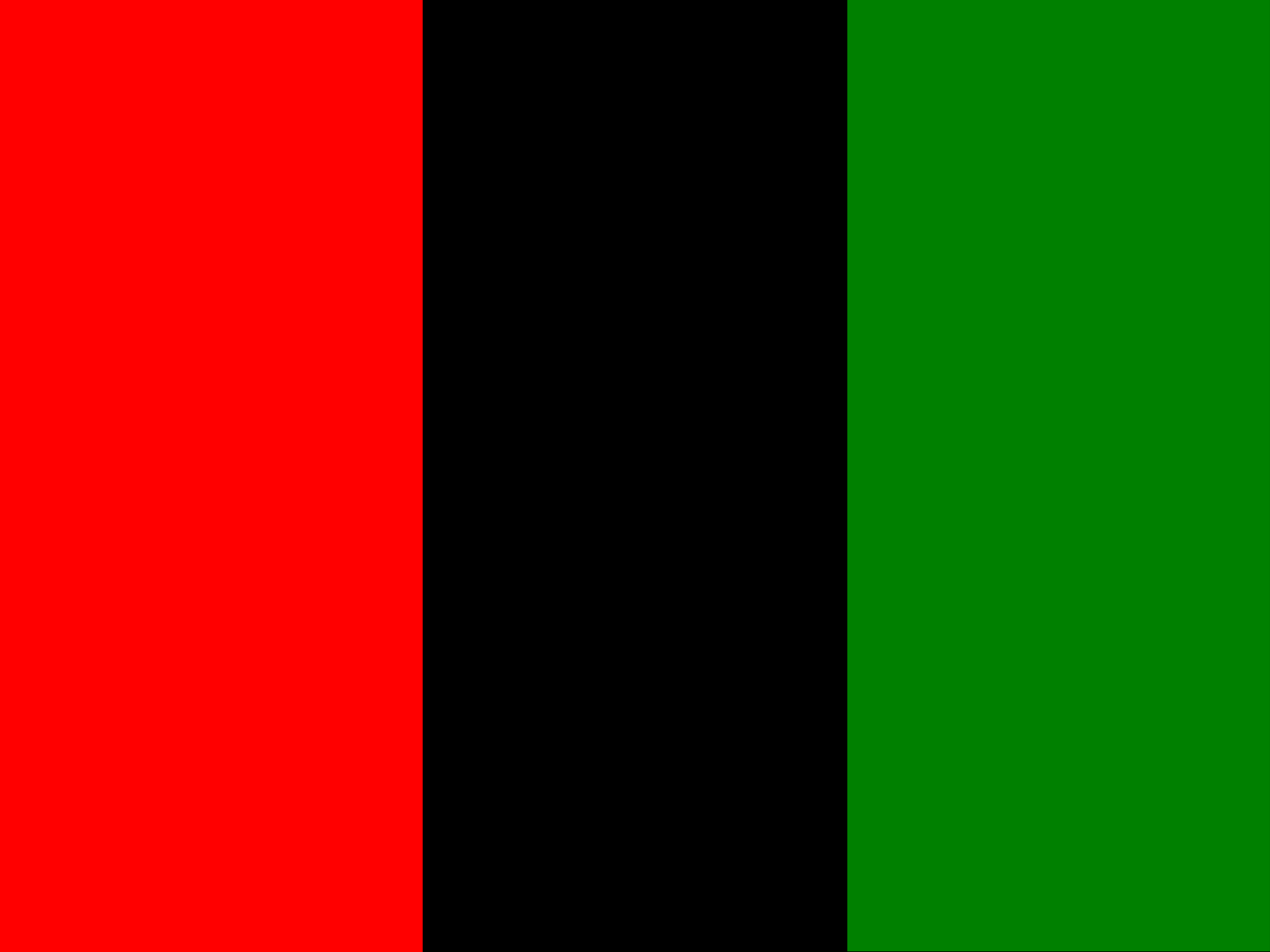


R.L. Burnside
Holly Springs, Mississippi 1990

BLUES – the musical foundation of African American culture and all of American popular music. This music is important as musical composition, as poetry and as philosophy. The harder the life, the better the blues.



BLACK BELT AND BORDER TERRITORY



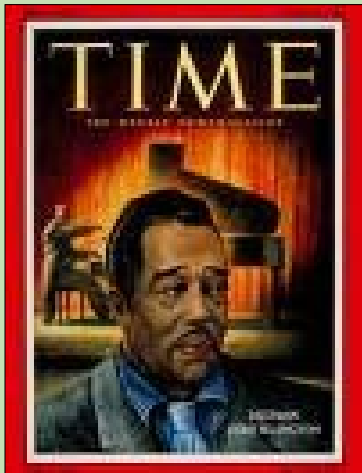


Mahalia Jackson, Thomas Dorsey, the Staple Singers

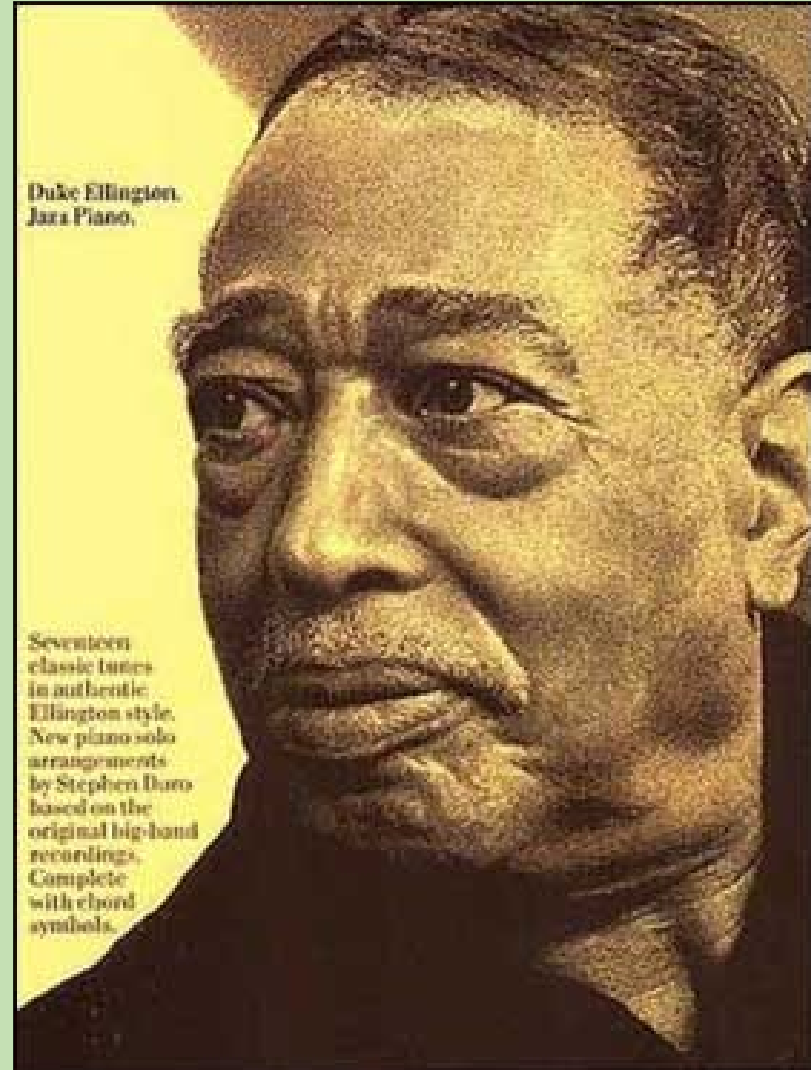
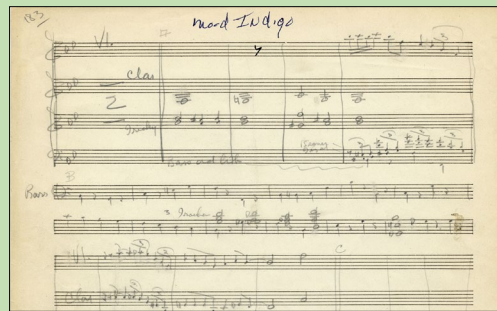


**Gospel music
Anchors
The church
As a total
cultural
institution**

JAZZ (Black classical music): The culture of the Black metropolis



Edward "Duke" Ellington
1899-1974



Duke Ellington,
Jazz Piano.

Seventeen classic tunes in authentic Ellington style. New piano solo arrangements by Stephen Davis based on the original big-band recordings. Complete with chord symbols.

The Harlem Renaissance, 1920's



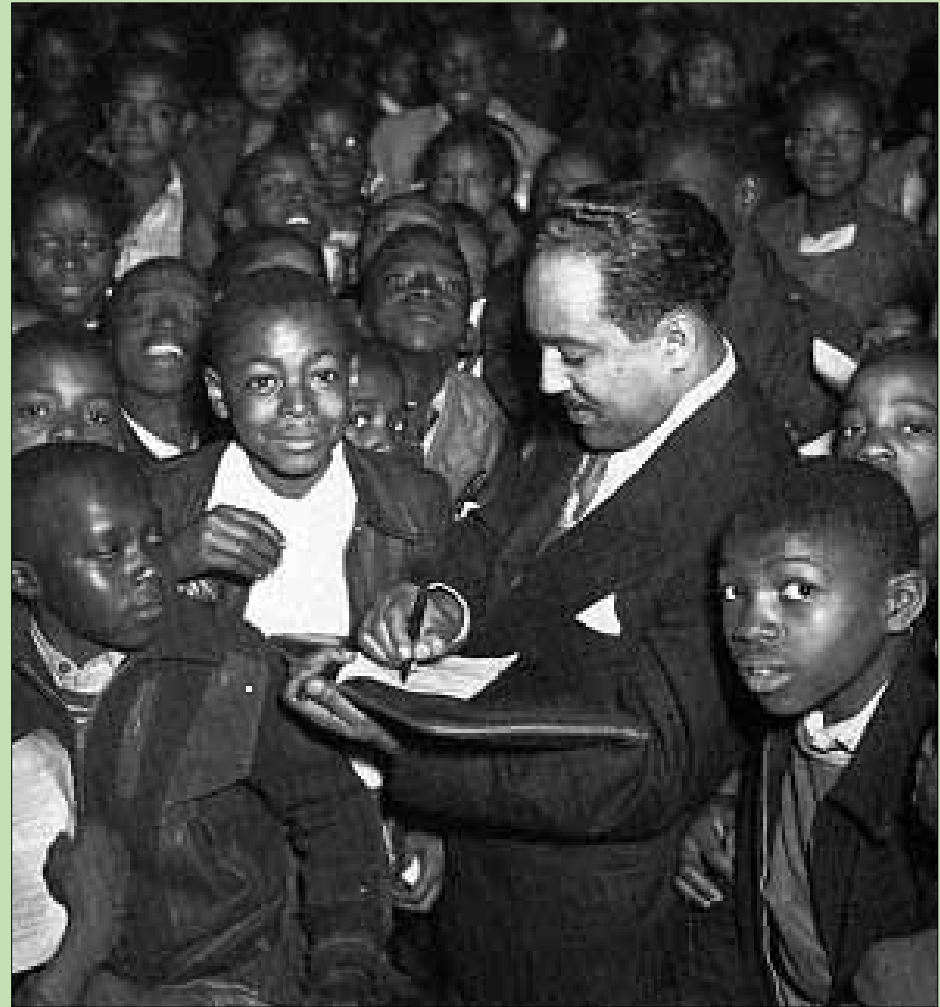
This is the Black counterpart to the “Roaring 20’s” as Black people were expressing a breakout cultural impulse. These were bold and exciting times. The activists were called “New Negroes,” with a militant attitude and freedom on their mind. Harlem was the capital of Blacks in the US during this period.



The Negro Speaks of Rivers

By [Langston Hughes](#)

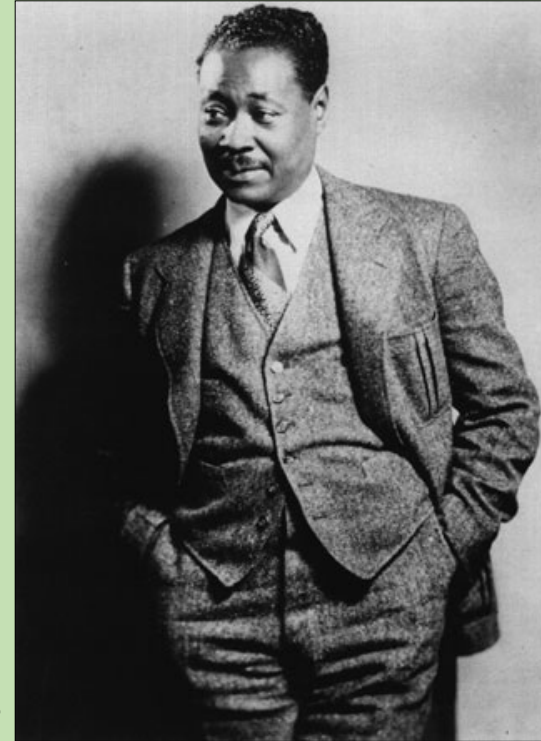
I
I've known rivers ancient as the world and
older than the flow of human blood in
human veins.
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.
I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns
were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled
me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the
pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when
Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans,
and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all
golden in the sunset.
I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.



Langston Hughes 1902-1967

Militant Black Poetry Became Iconic

**If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die, O let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!
O kinsmen we must meet the common foe!
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!**



Claude McKay
1890-1948

The Chicago Renaissance, 1940's

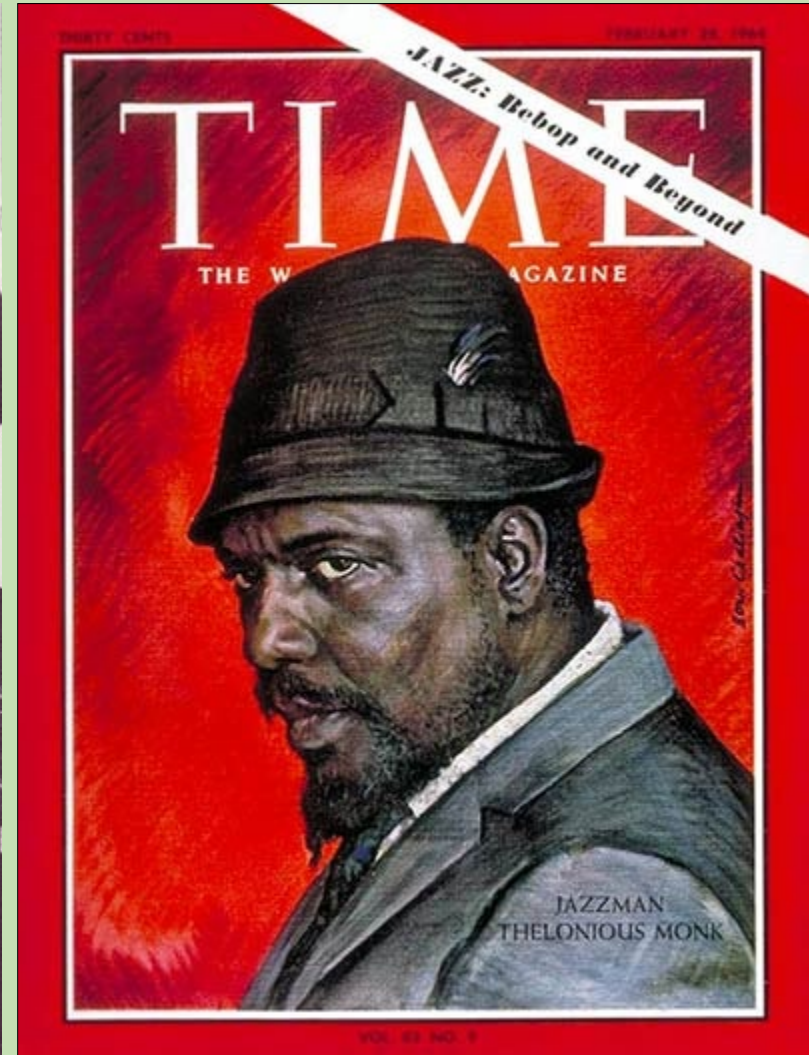


Richard Wright 1908-1960

The Harlem Renaissance was a celebration of the middle class, while the Chicago Renaissance of the 1940's was a celebration of the working class.

Wright wrote: "...the Negro writer must create in his readers' minds a relationship between a Negro woman hoeing cotton in the South and the men who toil in swivel chairs in Wall Street and take the fruits of her toil."

Bebop was new music in the 1940's



Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie (above), Thelonious Monk (right)



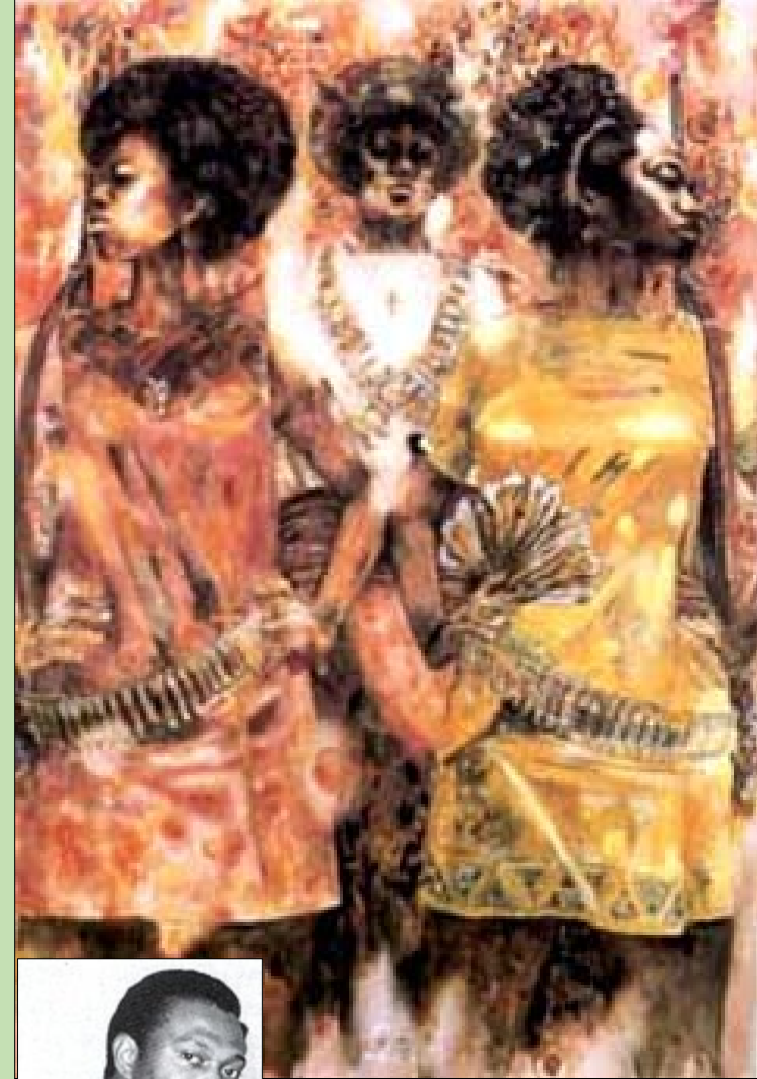
Billy Holiday (1915 – 1959)



Charlie Parker (1920 - 1955)



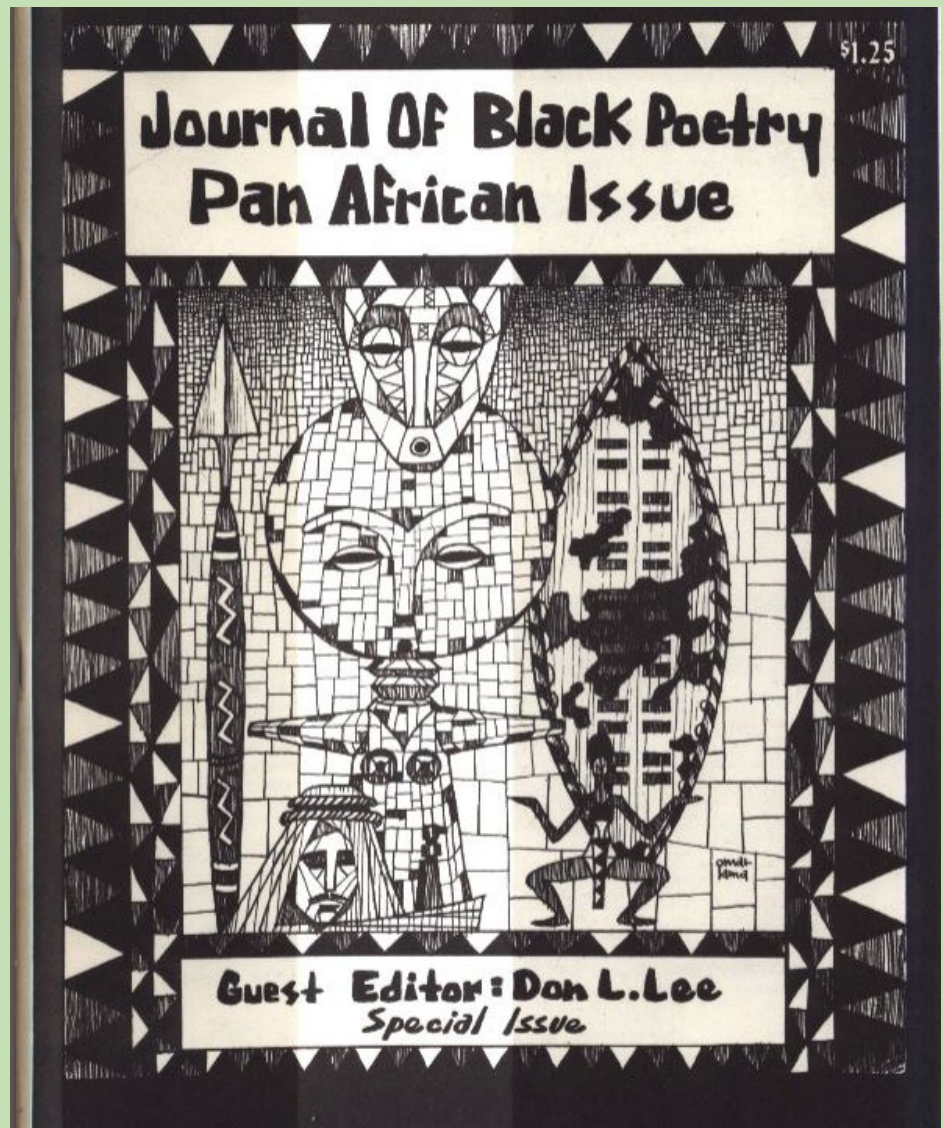
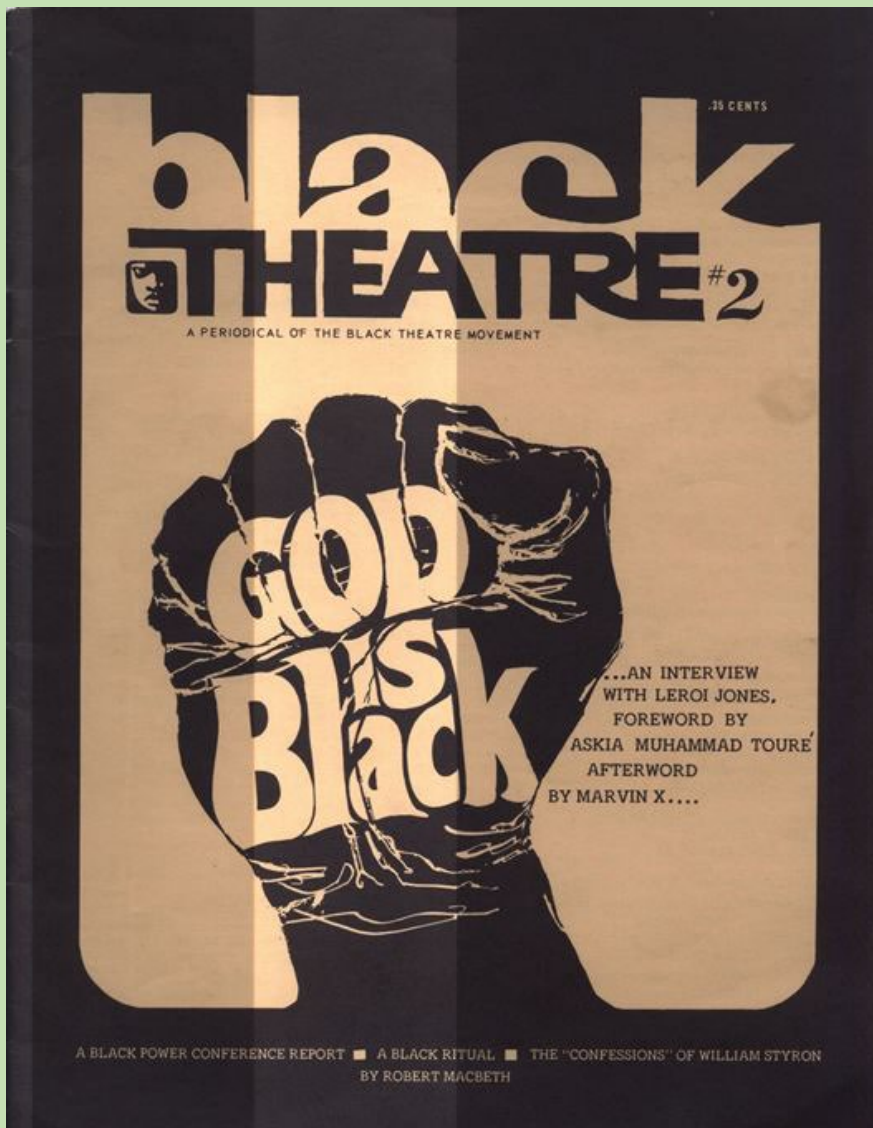
The Black Arts Movement, 1960's



The Black arts movement was the cultural arm of the Black Power movement. Jeff Donaldson said, "We wanted to try to establish an aesthetic that reflected our heritage as people of African descent in the United States, an aesthetic that also reflected social responsibility and technical excellence."



Jeff Donaldson
1932-2004



The Black Arts Movement is radically opposed to any concept of the artist that alienates him from his community. This movement is the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept. As such, it envisions an art that speaks directly to the needs and aspirations of Black America. - Larry Neal (1968)

Major Black Poets: Amiri Baraka, Amos Mos, Sonja Sanchez, Jayne Cortez



Black Power was expressed in the music of John Coltrane

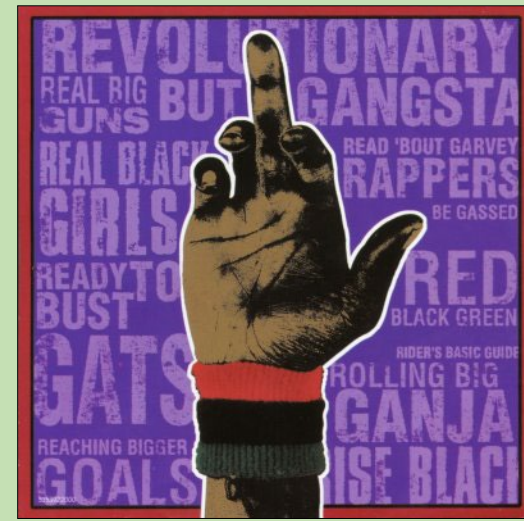


JOHN COLTRANE

GIANT STEPS



Hip Hop emerged as the next major cultural movement after the 1960's – conscious victims of the American dream.



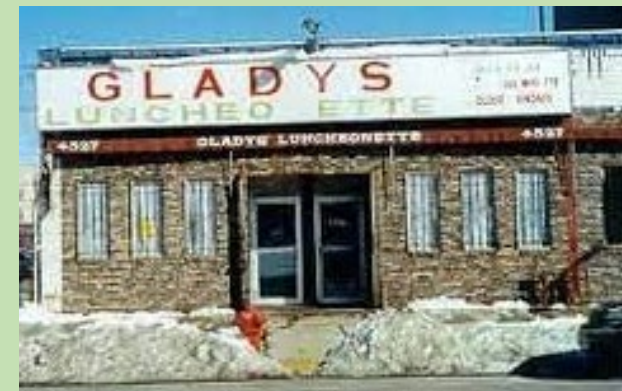
Corporate takeover of Black culture

**The carnival festival:
originally a slave ritual protest,
expression of freedom**



**Now Mardi Gras
and Carnival is
controlled by city
governments,
police, and
financial interests.
Is hip hop any
different?**





**However, we have cultural institutions:
museums, art galleries, libraries, restaurants, schools, churches
(Is Black autonomy possible in capitalist America?)**

Summary

1. Culture is what makes us human
2. The origin of Black culture is Africa
3. Fundamentals of culture are in everyday life
4. Culture goes through historical changes
5. Art is the highest form of cultural production

