

Millennial Neo-Negritude and Negritude in the Twentieth and the Twenty-First Century

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Abstract— The role of social media plays a big part in racial discrimination. It also plays a big role in the way in which victims of racism voice their opinions and change cultural and historical views around the globe. Through a literature microscope, the art in the twenty-first century has been tackling the barriers put on indigenous black art and black voices. This type of art entails movies, songs and social media platforms to upbringing those discriminated against. Millennials have been using art across social media and medial platforms to take a stand and to come collectively in order to reconstruct their own voices on historical and current racial issues and to also create new ones.

Keywords—*Historical art, Literature, Millennial Art, Negritude, Racism.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the twenty-first century, millennials may view African art and movements as expressions of struggle; tension that differences in skin color and the inherent history behind it have caused. In this time of movements such as Black Lives Matter and the Black Panther movie, African subjectivity may not only be about rewriting the history of black people but uplifting them and changing the future of the international narrative of the African community: physically, emotionally and mentally. In its simplest form, negritude flips the colonial narrative, and suggests it is 'bad' and everything associated with the African narrative is 'good'. Within the negritude movement, however, African writers and the path of discourse is essentially a counter-movement that affects the literature from historical Eurocentric work about African people and their homeland. Thus, the negritude of the past not only helps give Africans a voice but is a form of agency to rewrite their own history and love for their continent and its people. As negritude artists rewrite historical accounts and paint a different picture of the African world, they also chronicle the effects of colonial power that has severely impacted Africa for centuries. I argue that in the twenty-first century negritude has evolved into a sub-category known as neo-negritude, in which black art is seen as carrying and conveying themes from the negritude movement to express international change for black Africans. While negritude may reverse the Eurocentric narrative for Africa and its people, Neo-negritude's concerns not only is to change

Eurocentric views but repainting the black global identity everywhere.

The History of Negritude

The negritude movement started in Paris with African writers who, well aware of their voiceless past, began to write about how they have been oppressed throughout history due to the color of their skin and colonialism. Negritude was founded by African writers and students, and "emerges in Paris during the early 1930's" (Ahluwalia 230). These African artists made themselves heard in France, a country known for the harsh cruelty it inflicted on the 'black human' during the era of colonisation and its aftermath. However, the importance of voicing their struggles regarding the color of their skin was not only a concern for their ancestors; it continued into the mid-twentieth century. For example, Pal Ahluwalia states that, "African and West Indian students [who arrive] in Paris" during the 1930's are not considered French by the locals (230). Thus, they not only faced issues about identifying with the place they migrated to but were also stripped of the acknowledgment of belonging somewhere. With the self-awareness of being so oppressed that they were not acknowledged to be anything but black, African artists "undertake a journey to rediscover their past, their black roots and African heritage" (Ahluwalia 230). The journey makes a compelling case for Africans who speak to Eurocentric narratives on the African self and deconstruct

them, as this causes reaction to new identities and perspectives for both the African and the colonizer.

Though negritude as a movement is compelling enough to make a difference in international views of the African self, negritude artists also reconstruct how one views the European colonizer. The celebrated Jean Paul Sartre was fascinated by the types of persecution European oppressors would impose on the African. In *Black Orpheus* Sartre asks the oppressor, “when you removed the gag that was keeping these black mouths shut, what were you hoping for?” (13). Interestingly enough, with this very question Sartre highlights European oppressor entitlement. He begins with the question and makes a point to repeat a historical account on the kind of treatment the oppressed black African was subject to, and also suggests that European oppressors expect black Africans to remain oppressed even after the gag has been removed. Sartre disagreed with those who caused the African people centuries of brutality, so he changes the narrative by illustrating the European oppressor as the uncivilized party. Therefore, Sartre and those alike challenge their oppressors. Moreover, he asks the oppressor a question on behalf of the black African, “Did you think that when they raised themselves up again, you would read adoration in the eyes of these heads that our fathers had forced to bend down to the very ground?” (Sartre 13). This question is a shift in tone and curiosity from the previous one, as it seems to be more of a threat than a question. He reminds European oppressors of the cruelty that has been inflicted on his people, then mocks the Europeans by implying their stupidity and mostly their entitlement in believing that the African will begin to admire them after colonialism.

Negritude Artists

Some movements are meant to represent a whole nation, and others to represent a message. The negritude movement is meant to represent the black skin color, and the brutality faced because of it. The message and implications imposed by negritude artists speaks to the suffering and disgust accorded black skinned human beings. Thus, artists voiced their desire to return to a humanity black people were denied for centuries (Ahluwalia 231), and to expose the affront to decency that has been an ongoing African issue for centuries. However, negritude writers not only revealed the damages and denials of important human rights, but also illustrate how the western world depicts the African as uncivilized, barbaric, animalistic and other pseudo-identities that deny them their basic rights. This malice is imposed by western writers,

historians and politicians to defend their actions toward Africans during colonial rule. Though this propaganda illustrates Africans as objects not worthy of humanism, negritude artists vehemently change this western narrative by rewriting their own African history, as well as that of other regions. By doing this, negritude artists adhere to negritude literary conditions that must be followed to convey a negritude message.

In his article *Negritude-Literature and Ideology*, Abiola Irele outlines many important themes found in negritude artists’ work. One is the feeling of alienation that provokes the belief of being unwanted in the European world, and the memories of historical colonial impositions that led Africans there. Irele argues that the, “overwhelming sentiment... is the black man’s sense of separation from his own world and of being thrown into a social system with whose cultural values he can strike no personal relation” (500). After colonialism, tensions between Africans and their oppressors are the aftermath of the brutality and forced uprooting from their lands, and how they can deal with these transgressions. In the second theme of negritude, the artists exhibit signs of revolt as they rewrite accounts about Africans and their history. However, their work is not only to present different accounts of what happened to their people, but to illustrate the ‘black human being’s’ refusal to accept, “western values [and viewing them] as oppressive constraints” (Irele 507). In essence, by refusing western values negritude artists accept African values pertaining to their cultural, religious, traditional beliefs and, most importantly, black being associated with the color of their skin. Therefore, by disregarding western values, negritude artists celebrate both themselves and their association with Africa.

The negritude movement of the past shows and highlights the importance of the African black world. Negritude artists write about the wonderful aspects of the black color, the black person and their African continent. And although many would consider the negritude movement one of anger and an imitation of their oppressing colonizers, one can also argue it is a movement that has been created to change the historical narrative imposed by Eurocentric voices on black Africans. As a result, negritude artists embody a sense of pride and glorification for black Africans and their continent, as well as being a reminder to the world that their freedom remains to be caged by their western counterparts as seen in the works of Sartre and artists alike. Hence, their revolting art speaks to their wishes in which conduct a change of narrative, a reminder of an

Africa through the eyes of the African that only suggests descriptions unfiltered by Eurocentric voices and values.

Negritude not only questions European oppressors, it is also a movement that uplifts the black person from the color associated with their skin, their memories of Africa and everything related to their continent. For example, in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's book *Something Torn and New*, one recognizes the author's argument about the African identity after colonialism and will conclude that Thiong'o is a negritude artist. In the text, he touches on the idea of Africa being a fragmented continent due to the colonial power imposed on it. He argues that the English language attacks African indigenous languages, resulting in obliteration of African culture, religion and traditional beliefs, as well as societal and educational norms. Thiong'o asks how colonial impositions affect the memory of Africa, and where the African is supposed to draw the line between themselves and the colonialist. For one thing, Thiong'o believes Africans should disregard the English language, as it is one of many reasons for the 'loss of memory' and the collapse of African self-identity (21). Thiong'o's negritude also suggests that the English language in its colonial guise implies brutality, oppression and domination of the African people; thus, by using African indigenous languages one not only remembers 'Africa' and everything it embodies but recognizes the 'bad' imposed by western colonial rule. Thus, if the English language is considered to be the 'bad' in the equation, the return to African indigenous languages, as Thiong'o suggests, means that they are the 'good'.

To Thiong'o, language is not only a means of communication but serves to establish one's identity as the African continent holds many indigenous African languages. A specific language, dialect and accent provides a wealth of information on the cultural and ancestral roots of the African individual. In many cultures and communities, language also gives a good indication of peoples' social standing and class as well as their level of education. In Africa, the English language not only serves to distinguish between peoples' social class and levels of education but has become an example of the powerful impact that colonization has had throughout the continent's history. Evidently, in Thiong'o's negritude voice he proposes a kind of movement where in which using African indigenous languages as not only a reminder and means for Africans to reconnect with their African identity, but also to distance them even further from their past colonial rulers.

Thiong'o illustrates his negritude in his book *Something Torn and New*, where he not only embodies

themes of alienation and revolt, but also provides an example of Irele's third negritude theme, rediscovery. In his text, Thiong'o challenges western oppression by portraying the brutal reality afflicted on the African people. He describes the brutality through the devastating and crippling impacts of war metaphorically in his first chapter and as the reader could gather, literally, and the resultant chaos that follows in its wake. In the discussion of language however, he argues that the English language used in Africa is another example of colonial power that needs to be erased. Violet B Lunga argues, "English cannot be freed from its racial and colonial assumptions of superiority and authority" (40). Hence, one of Thiong'o's issues with the English language is that it is a reminder of western oppressors' assumed superiority, a view that still exists in Africa centuries after the end of colonial power. Moreover, English language superiority is dysfunctional to Africans because it is another source that effects the African identity, through what he calls linguicide. Thus, by killing off the English language and reestablishing the use of African indigenous languages the people of Africa are free to rediscover themselves.

Thiong'o opposes the English language because he believes African indigenous languages are being oppressed and eradicated by it as Europeans assault the African body. English colonizers deconstruct the value of the African languages at both local and international levels. Frantz Fanon argues that language bears, "the weight of civilization" (2). Thus, the colonial English language carries the weight of brutality, oppression and domination of the African people. Conversely, indigenous African languages support the culture and traditions of African civilizations prior to western colonization. Just as Western colonialists inflict physical damage on African lives, the imposition of the English language oppresses African languages, resulting in disruption and decay of indigenous communities and power structures. In addition, Africans who use English must also carry its oppressive weight, and thereby they replace their African traditions, culture and beliefs with English cultural counterparts. For example, traditional stories that are passed down by the elders of an African community are done so verbally in an indigenous African language. Hence, if younger generations adopt the colonial language, the ability to express these traditional stories is undoubtedly hampered. However, in the wake of racial struggles, in the twenty first century black communities are fighting the same negritude fight.

Neo-negritude in the twenty first century

Though negritude as a movement might have died with those who founded it, neo-negritude is beginning to appear due to the serious struggles millennials face in the twenty-first century. Today, movements such as neo-negritude resemble negritude because they also work and struggle for, “liberation when it [is] crucial to break down the representations of the colonizers, [and] when it [is] essential to reconstitute subjectivity” (Ahluwalia 232). Today, Africans around the world are changing the ‘black’ humannarrative and replacing it with something that is not considered crude by western counterparts. The language and discourse of the African diaspora changed when negritude became the mode of the academic world. Neo-negritude, though perhaps not as academic as its forbearer, offers resources that are critical for today’s generations to be aware of and understand, and thus it is well-established on social media, and in music and movies.

Neo-negritude of the twenty-first century is different than the negritude of the twentieth century in many ways. Today, millennials react to racial differences less academically—though just as artistically—as those who created the negritude movement. The first all-black superhero movie *Black Panther* was released in January 29th 2018, and it portrays a story very similar to colonial rule in Africa. It has been very successful at the box office because it is innovative and different in that it depicts men and women of color as heroes who save the world. More importantly, *Black Panther* represents negritude themes of alienation, revolt and rediscovery. In a world where some people believe racial differences are changing, others feel the opposite. Movies like *Black Panther* highlight issues that are still occurring and change the narrative of Africa for both Africans and other people of color world-wide.

With regard to the themes in *Black Panther*, the three most important are alienation, revolt and discovery. As Irele argues, these three are necessary in negritude art, and *Black Panther* shows traces of the same artistic pleasures. However, in the twenty-first century when negritude is no longer a movement, millennials have become part of neo-negritude, a new form of negritude that not only changes the views and historical accounts by westerners but is a means of reframing Africa as a whole. In the midst of many controversial issues between Africans whether in their continent or globally neo-negritude has been formed into a movement because of struggles that resemble those of the past. For example, viewers are first introduced to one of the black heroes in *Black Panther* by ‘N’jobu’, one of their own who is a traitor and is willing to

help the western counter-part ‘Klaw’ steal Africa’s most important resource. After being exposed as a traitor N’jobu is left for dead, leaving behind a son, ‘Erik Killmonger’, who was born and raised in America and who teams up with Klaw only to get revenge on black panther. Perhaps the most important theme of the movie is how closely the plot resembles history. Viewers are told of five tribes fighting over a resource, ‘vibranium’, just as many tribes in African history fought over resources, including land, power and wealth. Although violence is inescapable in these encounters, it seems that Klaw was not a part of N’jobu’s and Erik’s lives, and uninvolved in the issues they faced that would have dishonored their own people with violence and betrayal. What is most important, however, is that the writers and director who reinvented Africa for today’s world to see are Afro-Americans who are not from Africa, and thus alienated from their origins.

The movie uses familiar historical accounts, but does it represent Africans revolting against western ‘superiority’? That remains to be seen, as western influence is arguably still an oppressor in the twenty-first century. *Black Panther* is a revolution movie because the actors who are cast as superheroes are black, as are those behind the scenes such as the director Ryan Coogler. Artistically, *Black Panther* takes a stand against the concept that only ‘superior’ Europeans can be depicted as super heroes, as if there is something supernatural that dictates humans of color cannot play noble and majestic characters. Creatively, the movie challenges negative assumptions the western language inflicts on Africans, and thereby helps change the narrative. As a result, the Black Panther becomes a form of neo-negritude art as it is meant to highlight the ‘good’ in what the Eurocentric view suggested as ‘bad’ for many centuries.

Black Panther also reaffirms Africans and others of Africa’s importance, in terms of wealth and battling the diasporic black identity. But more importantly, it emphasizes and attempts to remind Africans that they can be proud of their heritage; the Black Panther character who represents his people is noble and worthy of his status as leader, as he proves it by fighting for his people in one-on-one combat. Therefore, *Black Panther* is an artistic revelation that speaks to Irele’s argument which suggests, “the reversal of color associations in the western language” (507). *Black Panther* deviates from the narratives about black slavery, barbarism, animalistic depiction and such, and recreates a story on Africans’ behalf by changing the narrative that the European white is the only kind of superhero that exists in culture. The movie links the,

“association between the black race and Africa... [in which evolves into] a source of pride”, rather than one of shame (Irele 508). The messages and implications of the tension between the white and black races in *Black Panther* is another artistic form of rediscovering African love, pride, identity and, to some, the ‘African’ in them. As Irele states, the literature of negritude and the *Blank Panther* artistic presentation both involve the, “glorification of the African past and a nostalgia from the imaginary beauty and harmony of the traditional African society” (509). While the movie uses African names such as N’Jobu, Nakia, W’Kabi and Tchalla, it also emphasizes African music with African drums, and the characters wear traditional African clothing. And since many scenes take place in Africa, the movie presents the continent and its peoples positively. As stated previously, *Black Panther* paints a different picture than those created by western counterparts, through the use of traditional African literature tropes rather than American.

In African tradition, movies that depict a protagonist saving the world individually without help is a foreign concept. While the hero is meant to stand out in many Marvel movies, the *Black Panther* message of collectiveness, community and unity is prominent alongside the superheroes in the movie. In many American superhero movies, the concept of hero is the, “belief in the individual who is different from his fellowmen” (Larson 79), a concept that is not part of the theme of *Black Panther*. Charles Larson argues that in African fiction there is an importance of, “group-felt experience that is all important: what happens to the village, the clan, the tribe” and the western depictions of heroes is quite “alien to African life” (79). While the character Black Panther certainly stands out for his persistence and dedication to save Africa and its people, other characters who help him in the process are also evident, including Nakia, Okoye, Ramonda, Shuri and M’Baku. Interestingly, Ramonda and Shuri demonstrate respectable and healthy African domestic culture in their mother daughter relationships with Black Panther. And M’Baku demonstrates the connection between African tribes. Though he fights against Black Panther for power and control during a ceremonial ritual of leadership, he also fights by his side to help save his people from invaders. Thus, *Black Panther* paints a rather novel narrative of Africa and its people, as it illustrates positive depictions in domestic, cultural, traditional and political areas. Unlike the movie’s positive depiction of Africa and its people, the American scenes involving N’Jobu in Oakland, California showcase the issues found in Black ghetto communities

throughout America. Thus, the resonance of the American connection is relatively negative, as it is especially highlighted in N’Jobu’s son Erik a black African born and raised in America.

Erik, Black Panther’s cousin and antagonist, embodies the third negritude theme: rediscovery. He has spent his life in the West, and encountered war, killing, poverty and many other negative issues. He is proud of his many killings, and every scar on his body represents a life he has taken. However, his father N’Jobu tells him of a place called Home—Wakanda in Africa—that has the best sunsets he has ever seen. Moreover, while he is in Africa Erik is introduced to his father’s religious beliefs, his tribe, many rituals and ceremonies and much more. As Irele puts it, negritude retraces a, “spiritual adventure, involving the quest for self, with a quest of a lost identity” (511). Erik’s lost identity is due to his connection to the West, and the loss of his father who was the only one who could speak about his Wakanda home. N’Jobu’s death also meant the end of African traditions, such as his oral story telling about Wakanda. However, Erik’s arrival in Wakanda means he rediscovers his true identity, where he comes from and what it means, and in the process reestablishes an identity that has been lost because of Western influence. Thus, *Black Panther* is a straightforward assault on the West, as it is a, “direct attack on colonialism” (Irele 512). Moreover, the movie’s release date speaks to the many tensions between the black communities and their western counterparts in America. While the movie attacks colonial narratives, rule and superiority, it also reminds African Americans about their origins: their continent full of wealth, beauty and a source of pride. In the past the negritude movement played an important role in writing and awareness, while neo-negritude is filtered through pop culture to reach millennials and younger generations.

Pop culture has a prominent influence on the views of newer generations, particularly with respect to America and its racial tensions in the twenty-first century. While *Black Panther* changes western representations and narratives by rewriting the narrative of Africa and its people, pop culture also includes musicians and other forms of art. For example, Kendrick Lamar is a rapper who speaks on the issues of African Americans in white supremacist America. His lyrical music is similar to Irele’s arguments, particularly when he proclaims that the, “quest for new values leads the black writer to self-definition in terms that are non-western” (508). Though Lamar’s song *DNA* represents many issues that African Americans face

due to racism and stereotyping, it also demonstrates negritude themes that rebel against racial differences in America. In the middle of the song there is a break to Fox News reporter Geraldo Rivera, a white man who says, “hip-hop music has done more damage to African Americans than racism in recent years”. In his lyrical way Lamar’s reaction to Rivera is, “Fuck your life/ I live for black / This is my heritage / All I’m inheriting / Tell me something / You motherfuckers can’t tell me nothing” (Lamar DNA). Evidently, Lamar’s response imposes negritude implications and themes, particularly where it pertains to the theme of revolt. Not only does Lamar attack the white western reporter, he reminds him that hip-hop music is a part of black heritage and demonstrates throughout his song his pride in that heritage. Therefore, as Irele argues that negritude artists define themselves, Lamar embodies a neo-negritude attitude in his work to represent the African American caught up in white supremacy.

The context of Lamar’s song *DNA* touches on how the white supremacy that has overwhelmed African American communities in recent years resembles much of the negative aspects in their history. While some claim that substantial positive change has occurred in America for African Americans, the truth is much of that claim is unfounded. Lamar’s music and Rivera’s comments encapsulate the tensions of the current movement, just as when African artists wrote about their pride in the negritude movement and refused to conform to European stereotypes of the African person and the values imposed on them. In the twenty-first century, many other African artists in America strike back at these views. However, Lamar’s music suggests a neo-negritude assertion of African pride in their DNA, rapping:

I got loyalty, got royalty inside my DNA
 I live a better life, fuck your life
 ...
 I’d rather die than to listen to you
 My DNA not for imitation
 Your DNA an abomination (Lamar DNA)

While the rapper’s anger is clear in his lyrics, his emphasis on changing the narrative for African Americans—and Europeans whose DNA he calls an abomination—is just as evident. His assertion that his DNA is too good to be imitated, as it is royal and loyal confronts Europeans who criticize his DNA, and he calls them out for their disgust and hatred. Yet Lamar’s song is also a call for attention that Americans and many others have chosen to ignore. His music has a, “hidden transcript... it uses cloaked speech and

disguised cultural codes to comment on and challenge aspect of current power inequalities (Rabaka 291). Though he attacks his white counterparts, Lamar also speaks about many issues’ black communities face, including drugs, murder, poverty, lack of education and political rights. These encoded messages challenge the white political and social structures and assumed superiority over the African American people. Lamar reminds African Americans who have had these hardships imposed by their white counterparts, to remain proud of who they are and where they come from.

Lamar’s ‘DNA’ stresses that black people must stay proud, regardless of the damage in black communities around America, and he references this in his lyrics. He describes both African American problems as well as the stereotypes imposed on them, rapping:

DNA, DNA,
 Real nigga in my DNA
 ...
 Drippin’ gold in my DNA
 Power shows in my DNA (Lamar DNA)

These lyrics show both ways the African American is viewed in the western world. Although ‘nigga’ is offensive today, Lamar uses it to show pride in his heritage and his ancestors who were forced out of Africa, referred to as nigger and enslaved in the new world. His artistic expression is a form of resistance that, “binds the history of the Africa diaspora” as millions of African Americans share a common, “history in their opposition to a ‘West’ that has sought to denigrate them collectively” (Ahlwalia 232). Movies and music are not the only genres used to resist western implications and the forced oppression imposed on African Americans today. The American hip-hop culture stands as a movement within itself, and this is apparent in Lamar’s music when he calls for social change by revolting against the western interpretations of hip-hop. Reiland Rabaka argues that the hip-hop culture has, “enabled black ghetto youth to create their own social, political, and cultural world that encounters the daily violence, crime, poverty and alienation that hunt them in their inner cities” (292). In addition to hip-hop, there are many other movements that are imposed on African Americans in the twenty-first century to fight the issues Rabaka acknowledges, and the American epidemic that has wasted so many black lives. And while Lamar’s song *DNA*, *Black Panther* and many other artistic forms are pushing to change the narrative and improve African American lives,

the Black Lives Matter movement has been shaping and pushing much of the narrative as well.

Initially, many believed the Black Lives Matter movement would fade away soon after it started in 2013. However, today Black Lives Matter is an international movement that has spread like wildfire on social media with the hashtag '#BlackLivesMatter'. It began as a reaction to the death of Trayvon Benjamin Martin, a seventeen-year-old man shot dead by the police in America. A year later police officer Darren Wilson shot Michael Brown, another young black male in Ferguson. According to Keeanga-Yamahitta Taylor, "Brown's death was a breaking point for the African Americans of Ferguson-- but also for hundreds of thousands of Black people across the United States" (153). Just as negritude was sparked by oppressed and angry black people in Paris who wrote about the tension with their European counterparts, African Americans are caught up in similar circumstances that also spawn tension and anger. Even the term itself, 'Black Lives Matter', carries implications of negritude as African Americans rail against their aggressive western counterparts. The unfortunate events that cause such movements bring back memories of the past and puts in perspective how fifty years later there has been little progress in black freedom. Taylor argues, "the truth about racism and brutality of the police has broken through the veil of segregation that has shrouded it from public view." (154). Thus, black protestors and others supporting the movement feel obligated to end the brutality African Americans are still subjected to in the twenty-first century by presumed white superiority, as the movement will help expose the real truth behind the façade of superiority.

The Black Lives Matter movement has many of the same goals as negritude, since it is intended to prove Africans' value regardless of how western counterparts treats or denounces them. African Americans chant louder for black lives because, "it was their sense of not belonging... that became problematic" (Ahluwalia 231). Police shootings that result in the death of black men, women and children have often been deemed dutiful and honorable acts people should be grateful for. There are little to no consequences for black persons shot dead by western police officers, which contributes to America being seen as white America. Hence, the question is, where do Africans belong in a nation such as America? While some argue that they do belong, and the shootings are exceptional, others believe they belong in America only in their black communities. This view has changed little since freedom for

black people in America became a reality in the 1960's. Today, fairness for blacks in America is similar to before the '60's, when being lynched, killed, enslaved and treated inhumanely was accepted. However, the difference in the twenty-first century is the reaction of African Americans, who have expressed and intensified their discontent to America and the rest of the world.

Neo-negritude is today's solution for the type of panic Africans faced during the 1930's in Paris that resulted in the birth of negritude. The partnership between Aimé Césaire and Senghor inflamed a movement that exposed the cruelty Africans faced when they interacted with their western counterparts, and this malice is still shaping the narrative. Césaire and other black writers were conflicted with the racial epidemic they confronted by in Paris. Césaire states,

I launched the word negritude between 1933 and 1935? At a time, along with several other black students we were plunged into a panic-stricken despair. The horizon was blocked. No reform was in sight and the colonizers were justifying our political and economic dependence by the theory of the tabula rasa (Ahluwalia 23).

Césaire's response to European superiority that implied Africans are incapable and unintelligent, was to launch an artistic and intellectual movement to prove that black people are not only capable but are revolting against many types of oppression. Césaire's negritude movement, or any movement that fights for freedom for black people, are now being reestablished in the twenty-first century. African Americans have launched movements such as Black Lives Matter and other more artistic modes of revolt to counteract the violent oppression and assumed western superiority throughout America, and lives have been lost in the process.

While the negritude movement started in Paris during the 1930's, and neo-negritude came later in America, other millennial movements around the world oppose and counteract western influence and oppression; in South Africa, for example, millennials are protesting their dissatisfaction with the educational system. The issues vary, but hashtags like #FeesMustFall and #RhodeMustFall are important, particularly when they are addressed to leaders, society or education systems. While Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o was visiting the University of Cape Town and lecturing about African identity and de-colonialism, he was interrupted by a student who requested he ask that, "all the white people leave the auditorium" (Mwaura). Though Thiong'o refused, the request illustrates how millennials were reacting toward their western counterparts. The

woman who interrupted him was angry, and she was supported by many other millennials who do not want to share space with Europeans. Her validation was that, “it would be wrong to sit in the same room as with the oppressors” (Mwaura). The issues many millennials are dealing with are very important as they clearly want progress, yet they are addressing the problems antagonistically. They show aggression towards their western counterparts and leaders who want to segregate black Africans from whites, as once was and still is being done to them after colonial rule.

II. CONCLUSION

Many millennials will argue colonialism is nothing of the past as it still lingers in the twenty-first century. The question is in the argument on how millennials of color wonder how similar oppression of the past is with their own experience today? While the views on freedom is a narrative solely presented in the Western world the reactions of the considered “inferior” other paints a different picture, one that acknowledges differences in the system that is evidently a tainted example of equality. Hence, millennial tensions are a representation of the many issues found within the Western ideals on equality and freedom, especially where it pertains to the obvious gaps of people’s rights between the superior white human and the ‘other’ inferior.

Some might suggest that millennial movements are just new groups of angry young people who revolt for the sake of revolting, or they are movements by entitled youth. Yet, these millennial movements are similar to many in the past that crusaded for the same or related causes, including the “Black Women’s Club movement, New Negro movement, Civil Rights movement, Black Power movement, Black Women’s Liberation movement” (Rabaka 290), the Black Panther movement and the Negritude movement. These movements resonate with millennials who are still fighting the same battles today, and though much has changed for Africans and Black people globally, many still experience the remaining oppression in different forms. However, those who revolted against their western counterparts in the past did not have the same resources as today’s millennials. Now the strongest tools are social media, music and movies that can almost involve the entire world in an instant. Artists amass millions in funding for their projects and can afford to reach millions simultaneously through the media. Moreover, social media for neo-negritude attitudes not only allows for people to

hear them, but they can easily be traced across the globe to show where it lays and how millennials deal with their issues with the white European counterpart.

The millennial neo-negritude attitudes today provide a distinct picture of how they vehemently oppose their white counterparts. Africans, African Americans and Black people everywhere are expressing their anger about their tenuous positions through aggression. As they fight for their freedom, millennials employ violent tactics that negatively affect their white counterparts in order to express *their* superiority over those who view them as inferior. The millennial movements are similar to the history in which Africans fought against being barbarically enslaved, tortured and treated as animals. To understand why these movements still exist in the twenty-first century, people must first learn the reasons for millennial racial aggression. As mentioned previously, while many argue that there has been huge progress for Africans everywhere, the millennial movements paint a different and tainted picture, one that is very similar to that imposed on the world by negritude artists. Evidently, just as negritude artists in Paris lived in a white European world, neo-negritude artists and followers are striking back against the same concept as well as a white America that imposes barbaric tactics against Black communities. In essence, the millennial neo-negritude attitude in the twenty-first century is a reminder of the lack of change in Eurocentric power and narratives on black people globally, yet it also shows the will to fight against these ideals.

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