REFLECTIONS ON THE WESTERN TRADITION FROM THE BLACK ATLANTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Just as the West has never been one, the (subaltern) critique of the West has never been univocal

    -- critiques that presume other intellectual traditions (Islam, Confucianism, etc.)
    -- critiques that reflect Paul Gilroy’s “frog eyed” perspective.
    -- critiques premised on the existence of alternative consciousnesses (LGBT, indigeneity, etc.)
A subaltern critique that is consistently ignored as distinct is the one that comes from inside the Western tradition itself, from those who have been raised in the Western tradition but denied a Western identity by Europeans.

The Black Atlantic critique is one great example of this critique.
BLACK ATLANTIC PERSPECTIVE

What the Black Atlantic critique is not
--shaped by the experience of slavery
--shaped by a rejection/repudiation of Christian Western bourgeois liberal humanism

What the Black Atlantic critique is
--Affirmation of Christian Western bourgeois liberal humanism
--Condemnation of European efforts to reserve the Western tradition to themselves
Some history of the Black Atlantic critique

--Grows out of the eighteenth-century effort by (Protestant) free people of color to claim space for themselves within the Western tradition

--Came to formulate and articulate an intellectual stance that rejected all European arguments that the African race was a slave race with no history

--Sought to demonstrate their ownership of Western civilization claiming Africa as a field where they could

  a) be settlers on the Anglo-American model
  b) embrace the ultimate act of Christian civilizing – the evangelization of Africa
“Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God” (Psalms 68:31)

Ethiopianism as the essence of the Black Atlantic critique

Ethiopianism as a lived affirmation of the Western tradition

The Marcus Garvey movement and Ethiopianism
BLACK ATLANTIC PERSPECTIVE

Projecting it forward: Ethiopianism and the Present-Day Critique of the Western Tradition

What is the West
Defending the Western Tradition
The Post Colonial Critique
Is the West closer to being one now than at any time in the past?
Reclaiming and Reconstructing the Western Tradition