

978-81-957522-5-6

FIRST ED.
2023



Prof. Saddik Gohar

Professor Gohar is a distinguished scholar and well-established translator and conference interpreter of world reputation who obtained his MA and PhD degrees in English Literature and Criticism from Indiana University (USA). He also obtained two higher diplomas in translation and Interpreting in addition to two BA degrees in English Language and Literature. He translated 53 books from English and Arabic. Gohar was in charge of the interpreting activities of more than 200 conferences in different fields of knowledge. He has published 45 books on comparative literature and cultural studies in English and Arabic languages. He chaired the Department of English Literature and the Department of languages and translation studies in flagship universities in the Arabian Gulf region. He served as a referee/reviewer for prominent translation awards in the Middle East. He published extensively in first-tier western journals indexed in Scopus portal. He participated in several high-caliber international conferences as keynote speaker. He is also a critic and published poet as well as a member of the UAE Writers Union. He is the winner of several awards of academic distinction.



CRDEEP PUBLICATIONS

315/10, INDRA VIHAR, DEHRADUN

WWW.CRDEEPJOURNAL.ORG; EDITOR@CRDEEPJOURNAL.ORG

+91-6395985863

IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

By: Prof. Saddik Gohar

2023

FIRST ED.
2023

978-81-957522-5-6

IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

THE PROTEST POETRY OF IMAMU AMIRI BARAKA

AUTHOR

Prof. SADDIK GOHAR



CRDEEP PUBLICATIONS

978-81-957522-5-6

In the Eye of the Storm

The Protest Poetry of Imamu Amiri Baraka

Author:
Prof. Dr Saddik Gohar

CRDEEP Publications

In the Eye of the Storm: *The Protest Poetry of Imamu Amiri Baraka*

No part of this book can be republished, reproduced or reprinted without prior permission of author or publisher

Copyright@CRDEEP Journals
First Ed. 2023

978-81-957522-5-6

Typesetting and Printing at: CRDEEP Publications, Dehradun

Table of Contents

Title	Page(s)
<i>Abstract</i>	1
<i>Chapter One: Introduction</i>	4
<i>Chapter Two: The Black Aesthetic Theory and The White/Black Critical Controversy</i>	44
<i>Chapter Three: <u>Black Magic</u> :The Poetry of the Ghetto .</i>	56
<i>Chapter Four : <u>Black Magic</u> : The Poetry of Black Hate .</i>	78
<i>Chapter Five : Violence , Anger and Protest in <u>Black Magic Poetry</u> .</i>	106
<i>Chapter Six : The Nationalist Poetry of the Early Seventies .</i>	139
Works Cited	172

Abstract

The critical argument of this book aims to examine Lo Roi Jones / Baraka's revolutionary poetry (1965-1985) – in terms of content and form – within the socio-political context of the period and in the light of a complex pattern of critical theories in order to explore the distinguished characteristics of each phase of Baraka's poetic development and underline the poet's innovations and contributions . Baraka's poetry is analyzed from different critical approaches in order to refute critical assumptions that Baraka's revolutionary poetry is artistically inferior to his white-oriented avant-garde poetry – *Preface To A Twenty Volume Suicide Note* (1961) and *The Dead Lecturer* (1964). Moreover, in this critical book, it is argued that Baraka's revolutionary poetry , though ideologically different from the poet's avant-garde poetics is an extension to the poetic strategies and techniques of the white avant-garde poetic traditions in the 1950s and early 1960s . Manifesting themselves throughout all the stages of Baraka's development as a revolutionary poet, the avant-garde poetic traditions create a kind of formal coherence and a sense of continuity which characterize Baraka's poetic development and integrate his poetry within the traditions of post-modern American poetry.

Within the analytical framework of this book , Baraka's revolutionary poetry is divided into four categories : The first category includes the ethno-political poetry of *Black Magic* (1965-1969) . Written at a time of great tension-in America- on the political and ethnic levels , the *Black Magic* poetry reflects the painful experience of the 1960s . Thematically , *Black Magic* poetry personifies the spirit of the 1960s – therefore , its poems explore themes such as violence , anger , protest , loss of identity , ethnic awakening , existential despair, economic exploitation , dehumanization , alienation and racial hatred. In terms of form *Black Magic* poetry reveals Baraka's manipulation of sophisticated non-Western forms derived from black music, folklore , mythology and oral traditions as well as the poet's transformation of white-oriented avant-garde poetic techniques to serve his own revolutionary poetic purposes. Ideologically the *Black Magic* poetry – which is divided into three volumes , "*Sabotage*", "*Target Study*" and "*Black Art*" –reflects the Black Aesthetic theory in the 1960s which calls for an authentic and functional black-American poetry ,addressed to the black masses in the ghetto and aims to participate in the battle against racism and oppression .

The second category includes Baraka's poetry in the early seventies- when the poet advocates Black Nationalism, Pan- Africanism and the Afro-American Kawaïda doctrine of the black activist, Ron Karenga. The poetry of this category is collected in five volumes –*In Our Terribleness* (1970),*It's Nation Time*(1970),*Spirit Reach*(1972),*Tenzi Ya Imamu* (1973)and *African Revolution*(1973)which reveal Baraka's ideological aims to connect blacks with their cultural roots in Africa and establish a community identity independent of white America in order to achieve the long deferred dreams of Afro-Americans .In the volumes of the category , Baraka increasingly uses oral poetry which is originally written for public performance and dramatic presentation .The poetry of this category was orally and ritualistically presented by the poet to the black masses in accompaniment of jazz music and African drums . Thematically the first three volumes of this category - *In Our Terribleness* (1970) , *It's Nation Time* (1970) and *Spirit Reach* (1972) can be considered as a continuation of the themes of *Black Magic* poetry in the mid and late sixties whereas the last two volumes -*Tenzi Ya Imamu* (1973) and *African Revolution* (1973) can be considered as a preparation for Baraka's Marxist poetry or what critics call Neo-Marxist poetry in the mid and late seventies.

The third category of Baraka's revolutionary poetry includes the Marxist poems of *Hard Facts* (1975) and *Poetry for the Advanced* (1979) as well as the uncollected long poems of the early 1980s such as *"Class Struggle In Music"* and *"In The Tradition"*. Baraka's Marxist poetry emphasizes that the poet's ideological transformation from Black Nationalism to Socialist-Marxist does not undermine his role as an active rebellious poet but it rather enhances the vitality of his revolutionary role. Baraka changes his poetic strategies and ideological tendencies—from white avant-garde to Black Aesthetic then to Black Nationalism and finally to Socialist-Marxist— in order to be able to face the dangers of white racism, oppression, violence and economic exploitation, not only of Afro-American but also of non-Western nations in the third world and Africa. In this connection, it is argued that throughout the twists and turns of his poetic development with all its aesthetic and ideological transformations, Baraka has remained hostile to the West in general and the American mainstream culture with its socio-political fabric in particular. It is also noteworthy to argue that Baraka's Marxist revolutionary Nationalism extends and negates his Black cultural Nationalism at the same time. In his Marxist poetry, Baraka is still committed revolutionary revolt but at this stage it is defined in Marxist terms; the enemy is no longer the white man but the Capitalist state. And the issue of struggle is no longer approached in terms of the white/black conflict but it is tackled in terms of class struggle—the struggle of the oppressed masses to bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat.

What interestingly distinguishes Baraka's revolutionary black poetry from the poetry written by any other Marxist poets is that Marxist has not separated Baraka from his black cause. In other words, Marxist, in spite of the poet's claims, has not destroyed Baraka's belief in the autonomous black state and the uniqueness of black culture. Marxism has only given Baraka a framework for looking at the black struggle for independence in economic and materialistic terms. In this context, Baraka can be identified not simply as a Marxist poet in the Western sense but as a black and third world Marxist poet because race and economics are major elements in his revolutionary ideology as seen in his Marxist poetry.

The fourth category of Baraka's revolutionary poetry—as far as this book is concerned— includes his latest poetic contribution, the first part of his Afro-American epic *"Wise /Why's"* (1985) which incorporates poetic techniques taken from Baraka's predecessors, the white avant-garde poets in addition to other elements derived from black music, folklore rituals and mythology. As a poetic chronic of the Afro-American experience, *"Wise/Why's"* traces the painful history of blacks since the slaveship era until the modern time. Using black music forms and avant-garde poetic techniques and dealing with the black experience in white America, *"Wise / Why's"* can be considered as an extension of Baraka's avant-garde poetry in the 1950s and early 1960s. By blending elements of both white and black cultures, the poem, which is the pinnacle of Baraka's poetic achievements creates a kind of harmony and coherence which characterize Baraka's poetic development as a whole. In the light of the former argument, the researcher comes to the conclusion that the major controversy over Baraka's revolutionary poetry, to a great extent, is more concerned with racial and political contents rather than with his artistic and poetic techniques which are extensions of the white avant-garde poetry conventions.

In spite of its shortcomings, Baraka's revolutionary poetry in all its phases, draws attention to issues not merely of racial or political concerns but of complex and profound human significance—issues such as loss of identity, alienation, displacement, oppression, injustice and despair. Baraka's revolutionary poetry, as a whole, not only explores themes

with political ,ethnic and propaganda implications because of its being predicated on the black American political dynamic but also it underlines symbolic , ritualistic and mythical themes with universal implications , traceable to complex motifs draws from black folklore and culture . Due to its mass popularity. Baraka's revolutionary poetry reveals the poet's impact on modern American culture because Amiri Baraka/Le Roi Jones enters the American consciousness not only as a poet but also as an event , a symbol suggesting a blending of Euro-American radicalism and black rebellious energies .

Chapter one

Introduction

In the introduction to *Imamu Amiri Baraka (Le Roi Jones): A Collection of Critical Essays*, Kimberly Benston hails Baraka as one of the most significant and revolutionary writers in contemporary American literature:

Baraka entered the American consciousness not merely as a writer but as an event, a symbolic figure somehow combining the craft and insights of Euro-American radicalism with the rebellions energies of young Afro-America. The themes of initiation, renunciation, and reformation with which he is associated are reflected as much by Baraka's literal biography as by the spiritual autobiography that concerns us most. Indeed, the glamour and nobility of his own life of action have had a great share in creating his hold on our imagination. The ordinary contemporary artist of alienation rarely actually abandons his familiar environment for another more strange and uncharted, if also more promising ; nor does the ordinary artist of revolution usually become physically embroiled in the violent outbursts his poetry celebrates (1).

Baraka who is both black and American creates his poetry in the context of a complex of factors which subtly affect the nature of his work and its reception. First, because he is a member of a minority group which is not allowed to define is instead defined by the majority to the latter's own advantage, the thrust of his creativity goes counter to the majority definition. That is, his work, if faithful to life, must challenge the assumption of white superiority. Secondly, if truthful to its origins, the work will also reflect the fact that he comes from a cultural background fundamentally different in many respects from that of white Western culture. It will reveal the historical, social, political ,cultural fact that Blacks are an African people living in the West .Third , in challenging given definitions , in choosing to define himself , Baraka , the Black African poet, reclaims the historical right to self-determination, and thus , his work is perceived on some level as revolutionary or even propagandist in its relationship to American society . In large part this is what informs the development of Le Roi Jones into an Amiri Baraka.

Before he changed his muses from avant-garde to black nationalism in **1965**, Baraka identified himself with the American mainstream culture. In his essay, "Cuba Libre", collected in *Home: Social Essays*, Baraka, though impressed by what he saw in Cuba, still thought of himself as an American because he said:

The rebels among us have become merely people Like myself who grew beards and will not participate in politics But name an alternative here. Something not inextricably bound up in a lieThere is none. It's much too late. We are an old people already But the Cubans, and the other new people (in Asia, Africa, South America) don't need us, and we had better stay out of their way (61-62).

Moreover, before embracing Black Nationalism or Pan-Africanism, Baraka in ***Blues People***, commented upon the complex link between an African heritage and the Afro-American experience, he stressed the dual nature of that history for Black Americans:

The traditions of Africa must be utilized within the culture of the American Negro where they actually exist ,and not because of a defensive rationalization about the worth of one's ancestors or an attempt to capitalize on the recent eminence of the "new" African nations . Africanisms do exist in Negro culture, but they have been so translated and transmuted by the American experience that they have become integral parts of that experience. The American Negro has a definable and legitimate historical tradition, no matter how painful, in America. but it is the only place such a tradition exists, simply because America is the only place where the American Negro exists (111).

Baraka rejected at that time the notion of Africa's having primary, cultural significance for black Americans, an idea which later he and many others in the euphoric heyday of Black Nationalism either forgot or conveniently ignored. In ***Blues People***, he argues:

It is only the American experience that can be a persistent cultural catalyst for the Negro. In a sense, history for the Negro, before America , must remain an emotional abstraction. The cultural memory of Africa informs the Negro's life in America, but it is impossible to separate from its American transformation (111).

The 1963 essays in ***Blues People*** tend to manifest a further step away from the mainstream ,for Baraka argued for a committed art ,

The quality of an idea (or life) makes it singular : what it is about . An idea must be specific and useful , and must function in the world ; . . . (118).

And for the necessary and inseparable welding of ethnic identity with craft ,

If Whitman and W.C. Williams were not talking about "their people", what in Christ's name were they talking about .It is the how that is ,and will remain, important (124-125).

Baraka also rejected the concept of non-violence ,pointing out that Blacks had always been non-violent or powerless to stop their oppression ,and that the argument between white conservatives and white liberals about the appropriateness of the tactic was simply a struggle to determine which group would have the privilege of defining Black people .

The 1964 essays in ***Home*** are particularly important points in Baraka's evolution, for they deal with the energy force of the artistic process and with the position of the Black writer in American society .For example ,in "*Hunting Is Not Those Heads On The Wall*" ,Baraka advances ,in effect ,a concept closely aligned to that of African art ,for he advocates the primacy of the creative process over the artifact .

The academic Western mind is the best example of the substitution of artifact worship for the lighting awareness of the art process. Even the artist is more valuable than his artifact ,because the art process goes on in his mind .But the process itself is the most important quality because it can transform and create, and its only form is possibility .The artifact, because it assumes one form ,is only that particular quality or idea .It is, in this sense, after the fact ,and is only important because it remarks on its source (174) .

Stressing what he calls the verb process (which corresponds to the African concept of force /energy), Baraka manipulates English to reflect this energy, "Art-ing is what makes art, and is thereby more valuable" (175), and

Art is not a be-ing ,but a Being , the simple noun .It is not the verb but its product. Worship the verb, if you need something. Then even God is after the fact , since He is the leavings of God-ing .The verb-God is where it is, the container of all possibility (175).

In "*Le Roi Jones Talking*", Baraka acknowledges the power of American society to either manipulate everything to its own advantage or destroy that which it cannot co-opt .One of the essential fears of Blacks Americans, expressed in the nightmarish, controlling image of Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man* , as "keep this nigger boy runnin" , manifests itself for Baraka in the form of an apprehension of the (almost) inevitable creative death awaiting him :

I write now ,full of trepidation because I know the death this society intends for me .I see Jimmy Baldwin almost unable to write about himself anymore .I've seen DuBois ,Wright, Chester Himes driven away – Ellison silenced and fidgeting in some college. I think I almost feel the same force massing against me, almost before I've begun (179).

With the essay "*Last Days of The American Empire (Including Some3 for Black People)*" the focus shifts to a concern to communication more directly to Black people ,the prose comes closer to the more vigorous ,exhortatory ,starkly and uncompromisingly imaged style characteristic of Baraka's revolutionary and nationalism poetry. He writes :

NEW PICTURE

INFORMATION

Death throes of the empire . UGLY CRACKERS!

Negro policeman with sad twisted eyes.

Strong face (big Mammas with their arms

Folded, lonely children whose future lives

You wonder about) ,black faces set into

America. There is no America without those

Whites of eyes against black skin

ALL KINDS OF VICTIMS. People being burned.

What does America mean to you? (Home 189).

The customary ,discursive essay style alternative with direct appeals to Black consciousness ,expressed in capital letters, "YOU BLACK PEOPLE ARE STRONG, remember that --. . ." (192). Baraka attempts to impress upon Black people the absolute gulf separating them from whites and the impossibility (let alone ,undesirability) of ever becoming an American .He says :

All the white people in American who have grounds for dissent, and will dissent. . .The price the immigrants paid to get into America was that they had to become Americans. The black man cannot become an American (unless we get a different set of rules because he is black (195-196) .

Rejecting class analysis of the Black experience as a deceptive white ploy , Baraka calls repeatedly for Black unity.

Thus, having gradually equipped himself with a strong emotional understanding of the function of the writer in society, Baraka went uptown to Harlem ,to the historic capital of blacks in America in order to become the singer of the black ghetto. He attempts to begin the reclamation of Black people's historic place as the progenitors of human civilization(according to black mythology).This change is initiated not to provide an escape into a comfortable anesthesia of past glories but to stimulate a renewed struggle to place humanism and a reverence for the spirit at the center of the world's concerns. However , with Baraka's move to Harlem in **1965**, the umbilical cord was cut .The white folks downtown, in Greenwich Village, were shocked and hurt .

In "*Le Roi Jones or Poetics and Policeman or trying Heart, Stephen, Bleeding Heart*", Stephen Schneck illustrates this point:

He wasn't ,and he was serious. He demonstrates this fact by an act that not even the cynical New York art world pass off as a publicity bit or another tasteless tantrum . Jones, on the very brink of the American dream of fame and fortune, withdrew from the magic circle and went uptown .All the way uptown – to Harlem – leaving the high art scene to his white colleagues .The intellectual establishment could and did take the insults ,obscenities ,bad manners and name calling. But what was unforgivable, the one thing they couldn't take ,was to be deserted, stood up . Le Roi Jones left them (194).

Baraka's ideological and aesthetic transformation seems similar to what Frantz Fanon calls the three stages of development of the native writer. In *The Wretched of The Earth*, Frantz Fanon discusses the three stages of development of the native writer. Fanon argues that the first stage is where the native writer assimilates all the foreign influences of the colonizes , the second stage is where the alienated native wants to return to his own culture (which is very similar to Baraka's cultural Nationalist period) and the third stage is where the native wants to awaken his people (which is also analogous to both Baraka's Nationalist and Marxist periods) . Thus , Baraka who passed through a period of assimilation – Fanon's

first stage – was able to abandon his avant-garde , liberal credentials to participate in what Caribbean nationalist Frantz Fanon calls the fighting phase of the revolution in which the writer tries to "shake the people" (222) into active warfare . Baraka's new role and spiritual orientation was accompanied by a change in name, religion and political doctrine. In his introduction to *Four Black Revolutionary Plays* , Baraka , who uses Ancient Egyptian mythology as a take-off point says :

*The change is the Egyptian phenomenon
The change from black to white reversed
Is the change
From white to black (7) .*

In Harlem Baraka wrote his *Black Magic Poetry* (1965-1969) which reflects the spirit of the **1960s** with its violence and pain. In his discussion of American poetry in the **1960s**, K.A Paniker points out:

When the sixties began, poetry came to be looked upon more as a process than as a product .This brought the poets close to the philosophical school of existentialism. The language of the absurd theater too found an echo in the poems of the period. Since there was no sanctity about traditions and conventions , the use of free verse or ,for that matter, free prose became more common .The persona as a learned device was replaced by the person of the poet .He was no longer a verse to talking about himself ,no longer content to be a mere catalyst .The impersonality advocated by the classicists seemed to be losing its hold on the younger writers (26) .

In spite of the fact that Paniker's argument is not concerned with Baraka's poetry in particular, but with American poetry as a whole, there is still a possibility of underlining Baraka's contributions to modern American poetry. Baraka can be considered as a main link between the poetry of the **1950s** and the political poetry of the **1960s**. From the avant-garde poets of the **1950s** , Baraka caught the spirit of iconoclasm and social criticism .He learned the possibilities of writing a music-oriented poetry and the potential of the poet as public performer as well as the poem as a public gesture . In other words , many of the social ramifications of the avant-garde /beat movement have been carried over by Baraka into the political poetry of the **1960s** and extend to the Neo-Marxist poetry of the **1970s** and **1980s**.The poetic techniques of the avant-garde which characterized Baraka's complex and obscure poetry of the **1950s** and early **1960s** were transformed after a period of transmission, to suit his militant poetry in the mid and late sixties . Baraka's political and revolutionary poetry in the **1960s** and **1970s** became aggressively militant in tone and message and directed , in the manner of Langston Hughes , to the black masses .

Baraka's political and revolutionary poetry in the **1960s** and **1970s** is a reflection of the racial turmoil of that period . It is completely different – in terms of content and form – from the poetry written by white poets or even black poets from previous generations .Donald Gibson in his introduction to *Modern Black Poets* , illustrates this issue

The great social stress of the sixties has brought about the creation for the first time of a significantly definable black poetry. It is a poetry clearly distinguishable from that written by poets of the majority culture –specially and essentially urban in character – and different, too, from poetry written by previous generations of black writers. It is a poetry which has its own history and its own character. Its language, form, and style, its intentions and its meaning have been called into conjunction as the result of the impingement on certain minds and sensibilities of forces peculiar to the modern (especially the industrialized) urban environment. Its high priest is Amiri Baraka – previously known as Le Roi Jones (9).

Gibson distinguishes between Baraka's **Black Magic Poetry** 1965-1969 which reflects the poet's militant phase of cultural Nationalism and the poetry of other black poets such as Langston Hughes, Jean Toomer and McKay. Gibson argues that Baraka's **Black Magic Poetry** in the 1960s has developed out of the thrust of the 1960s toward economic and social freedom. Baraka's poetry which reflects "black nationalism, a concomitant militancy and a pride in blackness"(14) is unlike the poetry of the Harlem renaissance of the 1920s.

In other words, the socio-political context of the 1960s distinguishes Baraka's **Black Magic Poetry** from the poetry of other black poets, written within a more general Western or American tradition. Baraka's poetry is directly related to the Black Nationalist movement in terms of the poet's formal commitment to political alliances such as the Black Power and the Black Arts Movement. Baraka, unlike contemporary Black poets such as Margaret Walker, Gwendolyn Brooks and, unlike the poets of the Harlem Renaissance –Hughes, McKay, Toomer, etc. –is committed to a particular view of the ethno-political function of his poetry. Furthermore, he draws upon the facts of black urban life to nourish a feeling of community in blackness and it is this perspective which also distinguishes Baraka from other black poets.

Baraka's **Black Magic** reflects the poet's experience in Harlem where he pleaded for "intelligent compassionate men of whatever race or nation" to band together in "some kind of organized militancy" against white racism. Moreover Baraka's political viewpoint as a black activist and the high priest of the Black Arts Movement is also reflected in **Black Magic**. Larry Neal in "**Black Arts Movement**" argues that the movement is totally opposed to any concept which isolates the black writer from his community. In this context, black poetry should speak directly to the needs and aspirations of black people. In order to perform this task, Neal assumes "the Black Art Movement proposes a radical reordering of the Western culture aesthetic. It proposes a separate symbolism, mythology, critique and iconology (187). In fact Baraka in **Black Magic** uses black mythology, symbols, deities and many other elements of black/ African culture. He also manipulates other sources such as the black folk tale, the dozens and the ghetto language. He adopts black music, particularly jazz and black speech to his poetry in his efforts to undermine and recorder "the Western cultural aesthetic" but he does not completely succeed in his task because he could not avoid the influence of his avant-garde period. Baraka's Western experience as an avant-garde poet in the 1950s and early 1960s keeps its impact on the poet not only during his nationalistic phase but in his Marxist stage in the 1970s and 1980s.

Baraka's Pre-Revolutionary Background

In the fifties and early sixties, Amiri Baraka / Le Roi Jones was a part of the avant-garde literary movement in New York. Renato Poggioli, in *The Theory of The Avant-Garde*, argues that "the conventions of avant-garde art, in a conscious or unconscious way, are directly and rigidly determined by an inverse relation to traditional conventions" (56). One reason Baraka was basically drawn to the white avant-garde was that their artistic inversions seemed similar to those in which blacks were often engaged. But in creating his own revolutionary and political poetry (1965-1985), Baraka has transformed the avant-garde poem, an achievement that should be recognized as an extension of avant-garde literary traditions.

These poetic transformations which appear in the poems in terms of content and form begin in Baraka's *Black Magic Poetry* (1965-1969), then continue through his cultural Nationalist poems (1970-1974) and the Marxist poetry of the 1970s and 1980s as well as Baraka's Afro-American epic "*Wise / Why's*" which he started to write in the mid eighties. Adapting the techniques and ideas of jazz music to poetic forms and transformation avant-garde techniques and ideologies to suit black poetic forms and historical circumstances, Baraka has created a new kind of American poem. Nevertheless, in the late 1950s, Baraka was drawn to the white avant-garde in part because its celebration of the imagination reflected his own valorization of fantasy. As he became more and more involved in the world of black politics and the economic and social reality, however, he had to reconsider the importance of the creative imagination. Baraka's 1960 trip to Cuba provided him with an alternative both to the avant-garde and the liberal politics. This trip was one of the most transforming experiences of his life.

Clearly, the Cuban revolution provided him with an alternative he could not find in America; when he returned from Cuba he had shifted from being a Beatnik with a little political curiosity—enough, certainly, to make him take the trip—to being a nascent third-world revolutionary. While in Cuba he was attacked for his "bourgeois individualist" stance and defended himself by saying, "Look, why jump on me? I'm in complete agreement with you. I'm a poet . . . what can I do? I write, that's all, I'm not even interested in politics" (*Home* 42). Jaime Shelley, a Marxist poet, responded to him: "You want to cultivate your soul? In that ugliness you live in, you want to cultivate your soul? Well, we've got millions of starving people to feed, and that moves me enough to make poems out of" (*Home* 42-43). Struck by this third world attack on his American poetics, Baraka began to reevaluate his poetic values. Although it took the political upheaval and struggles of the 1960s in America to make him a full-scale political poet, this period gave birth to the idea of incorporating politics—radical politics—into his poetry; it also gave birth to his disillusionment with postmodernist politics and poetics. The Cuban revolution in its early stages was also inspiring to Baraka because it was an ideal for his emerging revolutionary ideas.

Unlike their counterparts in America, who disdainfully stood apart from the American political and social process, Baraka found that the young and energetic intellectuals in Cuba were actually engaged in government and were involved in the process of transforming their country into a more humane place. Soon after his trip he asserted in *Black Magic*: "Bankrupt utopia sez tell me / no utopias. I will not listen" (38). Thus, when the white American avant-garde said that there are no utopias, the black poet, Baraka refused to

listen because he had seen utopia –a working radical humanist state . Baraka's trip to Cuba did not provide model for his new political poetry ; however , it did provide the new consciousness that led him to become not only a revolutionary black artist but also a third-world poet .

Thus ,in his ethnic / militant phase (1965-1969) Baraka totally denounces his earlier influences and associates in the avant-garde / beat movement .In **Raise Race Rays Raze** , Baraka states :

White poetry is like white music (for the most part , and even taking into account those "imitations" I said, which are all as valid as W.C. Williams writing about Bunk Johnson's band. Hear the axles turn, the trust churned and repositioned .The death more subtly or more openly longed for .Greeley's black box, Olson's revivification of the dead, Ginsberg's screams at his own shadowy races or the creepier elements completely covered up with silver rubied garbage artifacts and painting and manners and ideas , my god , they got a buncha ideas , and really horrible crap between them and anything meaningful. They probably belch without feeling (23).

Baraka's attack against Allen Ginsberg goes back to 1963-1965 when Baraka was writing the poems which constitute the first part to **Black Magic** .For Baraka ,Ginsberg epitomizes the failure of the white avant-garde philosophy to recognize its social and political responsibilities toward the white/black racial issues .At this point ,Baraka found the socio–political conditions of black Americans too serious to entrust to mystics .In **Black Magic** ,Baraka attacks Ginsberg's spiritual politics / poetics as a representative of the avant-garde ideology . Baraka says :

Poems are made

By fools like Allen Ginsberg , who loves God , and went to India only to see God , finding him walking barefoot in the street , blood sickness and hysteria , yet only God touched this poet , who has no use for the world (81).

Ginsberg ,unlike Baraka ,does not believe in the necessity of violent struggle against white oppression and racism Ginsberg's political poetics ,then is the opposite of Baraka's black poetics and Baraka's attack on Ginsberg was part of his own transformation into political poet in **Black Magic** .In other words ,Baraka saw Ginsberg's spiritual poetics as an evasive device to protect him from the bloody political battlefield where Baraka hungered to be ,and Baraka's attack on Ginsberg's signaled his own decision to become as active political poet. Within the larger historical context ,that is ,within the debate among blacks in the 1960s over strategies to achieve their goals, Baraka sides with those who oppose nonviolence .In **Home : Social Essays** , Baraka states that "non-violence as a theory of social and political demeanor concerning American Negroes means simply a continuation of the status quo" (144) . Thus , in **Black Magic Poetry** , the issue of violence is the focus of many poems.

The Revolutionary Poetry

Baraka's revolutionary poetry can be classified into four categories : the ethnic poetry of ***Black Magic*** (1965-1969) ,the poetry of Black Nationalism (1970-1984) , the Marxist poetry (1974 -1984) and the post – Marxist Afro-American epic poems which the poet started in the mid eighties . The first category includes the poems of ***Black Magic*** and is characterized by a growing sense of bitterness , an enlarged socio-political awareness and a marked shift in the poet's sensibility .Written when Baraka was recognized as the high priest of the Black Arts Movement ,The ***Black Magic Poetry*** was the outcome of the overt destruction and frustrated aspirations which highlighted the mid and late 1960s.***Black Magic*** is divided into three sections : "*Sabotage*", "*Target Study*" and "*Black Art*". As a whole, ***Black Magic*** comes in response to a series of national and international events such as Baraka's visit to Cuba in the early sixties ,the murder of the black African revolutionary Patrice Lumumba ,the Birmingham bombing by the white police (the white police attacked a black church with bombs killing many people including children),the failure of the passive resistance policy adopted by Luther King ,the Harlem racial riots and the assassination of the black activist , Malcolm X.

Thus ,***Black Magic Poetry*** is characterized by a rejection of the white-oriented avant-garde attitude toward the race struggle and the issue of violence in the 1960s .Baraka points out in ***Home : Social Essays*** that white people see the violence inflicted upon blacks as "more than a favored recreation of a few neurotic whites –it had become an American institution used to uphold a monolithic syndrome of predictable social values based on the economic power and hegemony of the American white/ Western man" (135) .To Baraka , American violence in the 1960s against blacks was a means of making blacks change in order to fit the system , instead of changing the system . Within this context the poetry of ***Black Magic*** focuses on the themes of violence , protest , anger and other related issues . For example , the poems explore issues such as the black identity crises , black pride and ethnic awakening . ***The Black Magic Poetry*** reveals as well Baraka's attacks against the oppressors –the white people who have dehumanized his black folks – and the conspirators –the black middle class and the American Jews –who have participated in the victimization of blacks through economic exploitation of the black masses in the ghetto .

Black Magic Poetry (1965-1969)

In the poems of ***Black Magic*** , Baraka was passing through a cultural purgatory , an exorcism of his white past . The vague , indefinable despair of the avant-garde poetry finds , in ***Black Magic*** , a source , a sufficient cause in the enormities of white injustice . Like other writers of an activist temperament –Yeats and Pound on the right ;Brecht and Malraux on the left –Baraka, in ***Black Magic*** , succumbs to the glamour of ideology and embarks on an authoritarian adventure by turning to politics championing a black revolution . To Baraka , revolutionary nationalism was invigorating , even life-giving , through it he found distinction from ,and quasi therapy for his inner turmoil at a period of extreme exorcism . All his poetry in ***Black Magic*** is directed against the white enemy; hence his energies of mind and passion, unlike the avant-garde poetry ,are turned away from examining the inner self.

In ***Black Magic***, violence and militant action are ways of affirming black existence, a means by which the black anguish of racism, their sense of futility and despair, can be

transcended. Violence, to Baraka, is not only a psychic aid to survival in a racial society but also it is a cure to the painful divergence of feeling present in states of high self-awareness. To Baraka individuality is to be achieved through self-possession in involvement and militant action in a collective historical situation. By committing himself personally in militant action –Baraka participated in the Newark racial riots and he was arrested –Baraka seeks to escape the alienation of the avant-garde years and join his fellow black men in the assuming the suffering and responsibility of radical destiny .

Thus, Baraka's commitment to militant negritude in the mid sixties served personal and public purposes. He is, in a substantial way, constituted and defined in racial terms through his championing of revolutionary nationalism, Baraka is absorbed in that collectivity of actions toward the objectives of Black Power movements which disassociates him from his avant-garde works and the sterile ideology from which it sprang. In his unpaginated introduction to **Black Magic Poetry** Baraka denounces his avant-garde poetry:

***You notice the preoccupation with death, suicide in the early works.
Always my own, caught up in the deathurge of his twisted society .The
work ,a cloud of abstraction and disjointedness, that was just whiteness.
European influence etc. just as the concept of hopelessness and despair,
from the dead minds and dying morality of Europe.***

In spite of dismissing the escapist, non-political quest of the avant-garde poetry as a reflection of the "dying morality of Europe", Baraka fails to abandon the avant-garde poetic techniques. In his revolutionary and political poetry(1965-1985), Baraka adopts the poetic techniques and forms of the avant-garde to suit his black / revolutionary purposes.

Nevertheless, Baraka's **Black Magic** is partly an attempt to purge himself from the "whiteness" of the avant-garde phase. In **Black Magic**, Baraka divorces himself from the futility of the old mythology. His avant-garde imagery of sexual perversity and cowardice is transferred only to the white man. The poet leaves the dominant culture's assorted corruption and deaths –of his avant-garde poetry – beyond him in order to attain spiritual fulfillment and recover himself as a black man :

***When I die, the consciousness I carry I will to black people. May they
pick me apart and take the useful parts, the sweet meat of my feelings .
And leave the bitter bullshit rotten white parts alone.***

Having undertaken systematic ruin of the "white" structures, Baraka has acquired – a spiritual destruction symbolized the inevitable violence by which blacks will gain their freedom—he calls for his folks to move in new directions to break their chains and revolt against their oppressor.

In this context , **Black Magic** is a poetry of severity written on the very edge of crisis. Unable to support the full consequences of his perceptions, in flight from the engulfing nightmare of the 1960s, Baraka oversimplifies life in America into an arena of polar opposites: blackness becomes the source of all goodness, heroism, vitality, humane virtue, and spiritually; whiteness is a source of all horror and stupidity. As well as a militant man of action, Baraka becomes a soothsayer, a priest, a black magician, an imamu /Imam. Moving beyond the diabolical inversion of white values, he seeks to discover for black people the

secret mysteries of blackness. In ***Black Magic***, Baraka is a conscious observer expressing ideas on political, social and cultural affairs as well as a visionary poet seeking to define blackness as a transcendental, spiritual state. The deepening mysticism (his poems, he says, become self-consciously spiritual and stronger) is animated by the same hip avant-garde sensibility of the early poetry, though here the imagination is continually pressed into overstatement, expression into the fierce, rhetorical lyricism of "a long-breath singer" (in contrast to the tentative telegraphese of the avant-garde stage), as he strains toward the fever of eloquence:

*We are unfair
And unfair
We are black magicians
Black arts we make
In black labs of the heart
The fair are fair
And deathly white
The day will not save them
And we own the night.*

The second category of Baraka's revolutionary and political poetry is represented by the poems written in the early seventies and collected in the following anthologies: ***In Our Terribleness*** (1970), ***It's Nation Time*** (1970), ***Spirit Reach*** (1972), ***Tenzi Ya Imamu*** (1973) and ***African Revolution*** (1973). The cultural nationalist poetry of these volumes characterizes Baraka's move from the militancy of ***Black Magic*** toward Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism. This shift was also due to a series of events on the national and international levels. For example the racial turmoil of the mid 1960s which inspired the poetry of ***Black Magic*** was coming to an end as the white mainstream started to reveal new attitudes toward the problems of black Americans. The militant black organizations such as the Congress of African People and the Black Arts Movement started to decline. People in America were preoccupied with other significant issues such as the consequences of the Vietnam War, the energy problem during the Arab-Israeli war in 1973 and the Watergate scandal. Houston Baker in ***"These Are the Songs If You Have the Music"*** illustrates the situation in America at the late 1960s and early 1970s. Baker argues:

The last two years of the decade and the beginning of the 1970s found Black men and woman throughout America with their arms raised in the closed-fist salute of Black Power –Black Revolution. Many had more than fists to clench ;they had sophisticated weapons . But their picking up the gun did little good. The Black Panthers, and virtually every other American radical group, were effectively eliminated by a government - sanctioned wave of repression that might be equated with the violence directed at organized labor earlier in this century .When the Vietnamese war drew to an agonizing conclusion, talk of the imminent overthrow of white American had waned. Those symbols of the proposed Black Nation– the Afro hair style, the dashiki, the tri-colored flag – had begun to disappear. Soon, the country at large had to contend with the despair of Watergate (2).

Baraka's shift to Black Nationalism is considered as a step forward on his poetic development which paves the way for his Marxist poetry . In fact Black Nationalism encompasses a wide

body of social thought, attitudes and actions ranging from the simplest expression of ethnocentrism and radical solidarity to the comprehensive and sophisticated ideologies of Pan-Africanism. In this stage Baraka's poetry has a double function: on the national level, the poet pays attention to the building of the black nation spiritually, physically, economically and politically. On the international level, Baraka attempts to link the struggle of black Americans with the third world countries' struggle, particularly in Africa, against white exploitation and imperialism.

In this stage the persona of the poet-warrior or in white critical terms "the mafia-poet" which appears in *Black Magic* is replaced with the persona of the poet-priest, the poet a prophet, as a black imam /Imam. In the poetry of the early 1970s, Baraka, who takes the role of the prophet, uses techniques of oral poetry, Arab and Swahili vocabulary in his address to the black humanity all over the world. According to Benston's *The Renegade and the Mask*, Baraka maintains "a firm belief in the divine sanction of poetic activity"(144). Like Shelley, in "*Ode to the West Wind*", Baraka becomes a medium through which God sends his message and his poetry is heavenly inspiration:

*Listen to the creator
speak in me now. Listen, these words
are part of God's thing. I am a vessel,
a black priest interpreting
the present & future for my people
Olorun – Allah speak in and
thru me now . . . He begs me to
pray for you – as I am doing –He
bids me have you submit to
the energy . . . (Selected Poetry 212) .*

The Nationalist Poetry (1970-1973)

In the early 1970s, Baraka became an advocate of Black Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and the Kawaida doctrine, thus, he deplored the ethnic / political effects of his *Black Magic* Poetry (1965-1969). He felt that the rhetoric of violence appealed to the lumpenproletariat but did not lead the way to meaningful change for most black people. The poems of *Black Magic* according to Baraka, as an advocate of Kawaida doctrine of Maulana Ron Karenga, were primarily destructive and nihilistic, not yet part of the nation-building process. These poems were involved in "razing" not in "raising". Baraka's views about black cultural nationalism and Pan-Africanism which gave an impetus to his Nationalist poetry in the early 1970s are recorded in his essay books, *Raise Race Rays Raze* (1969) and *Kawaida Studies: The New Nationalism* (1970).

Written by the end of Baraka's ethnic/militant phase in the late 1960s, these books were attempts to define black cultural nationalism which was central to Baraka's perception of America as a whole. Baraka's philosophy of blackness claims spirit worship "religious-science and scientific-religious" as the "special revolutionary province" of black culture. This philosophy which has made the black culture one of "peaceful humanists" and since peaceful humanism has as its goal the "spiritual resolution" of the world, then it follows that a true black power movement must entail a cultural rebirth or the reordering of the world (*Raise* 47). Moreover, the spiritual humanism of black culture explains the alleged predisposition of

blacks toward feeling. And since feeling is the key to human evolution, the future, according to Baraka rests with blacks rather than with whites whose culture lacks feeling (*Raise* 81). Unfortunately, Baraka's philosophy of Black Nationalism is presented with the dogmatic preaching that characterizes the essays of this period and robs his arguments of the spirit of persuasiveness.

In his essays on Black Nationalism, Baraka attacks the limited notion of progress in white American culture. At the same time he emphasizes the cultural evolution as integral to black culture. The evolutionary ideal of Baraka's philosophy which is echoed in his poetry through the ideals of moral regeneration can be taken as an extension to the ideal of progress which Baraka despises in the everyday reality of the mainstream culture. It is relevant to argue that both the ideal of cultural and moral evolution which Baraka sees as the special province of black culture and the superficial notion of progress which Baraka attacks as a symptom of mainstream culture are motivated by certain assumptions of human perfection. Regardless of the exclusive blackness by which Baraka defines his ideal of humanistic progress, Baraka's Black Nationalist criterion, through hostile to white culture, seems to stand in the most optimistic traditions of America idealism. Thus, Baraka's black nationalism reflects affinities with the very American or Western values that he attempts to reject.

Furthermore, the emotional values that are inherent in Baraka's philosophy of blackness need more elaboration than he offers in his essays. For example in attacking the limits of white nationalistic culture in *Raise*, Baraka leaves the mistaken impression that anti-rationalism is some uniquely black value system. Baraka's attitude toward the subjects of reason and non-reason in white culture is similar to the views of his teacher Malcolm X, the black activist and politician. Malcolm, in fact does not attack reason but the abuse of reason in Western culture where scientific rationalism seems to be prized at the expense of emotional values. Malcolm X is therefore able to show admiration of the achievements of the technological intelligence in Western cultural while lamenting the inability of "the white man's working intelligence" to deal with human beings. Malcolm X and Baraka questioned the inability of Western rationalism to solve problems created by human irrationality such as racism. Baraka is skeptical about the kind of scientific rationalism that has become "a sacred cow in Western culture". And in a certain sense this is quite similar to a long tradition in Western culture itself. For example, the rejection of single-minded rationalism is represented by works such as Dryden's *Religio Laici* and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. These works attest to the well-known fact that the emergence of modern science has always proceeded side by side with a philosophical skepticism that questions the notion of self-sufficient reason.

In this context, the real issue at stake in Baraka's espousal of spiritual values is not a simplistic dichotomy (black feeling versus white rationalism). Instead, Baraka, in his nationalist phase (1970-1973) questioned the priorities of a white culture in which the canons of scientific "truth" are often assumed to be incompatible with (therefore superior to) the "spiritual". And in the process, Baraka contrasts this dichotomy with the synthesis that he attributes to black culture, the synthesis of feeling and reason "religious-science and scientific-religion". This ideal synthesis becomes the aim of that evolutionary movement which Baraka's Black Nationalism envisions. It represents an ethos of wholeness, one that is offered as substitute for a rationalistic tradition in which insensitive systems—racial, socio-economic and philosophical—have fragmented communities and individuals alike. Thus, the

desired fulfillment of Baraka's ethos of wholeness is expressed in the poetry of the period. Baraka's ethos of wholeness is also the basic theme of his novel *The System of Dante's Hell*, where the young black protagonist develops from a self-destructive acceptance of white rationalism and Puritanism to a more integrated self-consciousness based on the synthesis of intellect and feeling. Conversely many of Baraka's poems of *The Dead Lecture* (1964), his pre-black volume, are based on a recurring theme –the destructiveness of a narrowly technological culture that has too little room for passion and humanism.

Furthermore, most of Baraka's essays in *Raise* and *Kawaida Studies*, like his Nationalist poetry (1970-1973) can be considered as a rhapsody celebration blacks as begins of spirit whose religious heritage—especially by way of the African past—is integrated with their total experience instead of existing apart (*Raise* 55). And by virtue of this heritage black culture comes closer to that ideal of wholeness which Baraka celebrates in his Nationalist poetry .

In *Raise* , the philosophical ideal of wholeness /oneness has an immediate and practical application in the political strategy of "operational unity"- that is ethnic unity among blacks, the unification of political movement within the black community and a general emphasis on effective political organization. In fact the very idea of organization is both a practical political necessity and the microcosm of a large evolutionary movement in which "progress" , as defined by Baraka's "Black" humanism, connotes a movement toward perfection. And the movement should culminate in ethnic, global, and cosmic experience of wholeness: "We are after the perfection of our species and the evolution of men and their motives to the furthest reaches of life All life joined in symbiotic understanding" (*Raise*, 166).

The concept of operational unity, like so many of his other criteria, is borrowed from elsewhere. It is derived from the Kawaida doctrine of Ron Maulana Karenga, the leader of US (as opposed to "THEM")- a militant Black Nationalist group. The idea of operational unity appeals to Baraka not simply because it is the political version of a philosophical ideal, but also because by invoking that ideal in the political arena he is integrating political activism with idealistic vision. And in this process, of course, he is literally attempting to demonstrate the fundamental ideal itself. This is the kind of demonstration that he undertakes in those essays which are really guidelines or manuals on political strategy and which affect his Nationalist poetry.

The most extended demonstration of operational unity is the major publication of the later years of Baraka's Black Nationalism, *Kawaida Studies : The New Nationalism* (1972). The book is really a frank attempt to popularize Karenga's brand of nationalism, the "new" Nationalism that differs from the old (middle 1960s) because the former is more concerned with the ideals of Black Nationalism as a cultural tradition and with the mundane details of political organization . Consequently the major principles of Karenga's group as they are expounded by Baraka quite adequately summarize the basic elements of operational unity in political and philosophical terms: umoja (unity), kujichaagalia (self-determination), ujima (collectivism), ujimaa (cooperative economics), kuumba (creativity), and imani (faith) (9-10).

On the whole Baraka brings together his criteria for unity and wholeness rather well. His success is partly due to the manner in which the concept of unity is shown to be a natural reaction to those fragmenting forces which he attributes to Western culture. It is also due to

the thoroughness with which these essays in 1970s on Black Nationalism apply his basic ideal of wholeness to a variety of subjects (religion, political organization, economics, or personal growth and social change in general). In so doing these essays represent a fully integrated argument, and actually become, in the process, a rhetorical demonstration of the kind of philosophical and moral synthesis that they describe, an issue which is extended in Baraka's poetry of that time.

Nevertheless, Baraka's essays on Black Nationalism in *Raise* and *Kawaida Studies*, like his Nationalist poetry of the early seventies, are based on some idealistic, over-ambitious concepts, such as the poet's utopian image of Africa, which make it difficult to turn the ideals of Black Nationalism into reality. For example, in *Kawaida Studies*, Baraka, like Huxley, envisages the brave new world of blackness in strictly urban terms. Newark, New Jersey, where Baraka himself was an active political organizer of the late 1960s, is repeatedly offered as the model of the new Black nation – culturally separate, socio-economically self-sufficient, and politically independent of white America. It is never clear how rural Black America – which does exist – will fit into this Black urban millennium, and Baraka, a Northern Black with no direct personal tie to the rural South, never bothers to ask or answer the question.

Moreover, in view of the urban bias of his cultural and political perception, the "African" criteria of his ideology are rather suspect. For in offering the philosophical arguments of Karenga as African-derived modes, it never seems to occur to Baraka (any more than it apparently did to his mentor Karenga) that urban culture, as he envisages it on behalf of the Black nation, is closer to the high-density, compacted life-style of Western urban than it is to the African models (especially Julius Nyerere's Tanzania) from which he culls the culture criteria of *Kawaida Studies*. In the final analysis the readers are left with Black Nationalist criteria which are closer to Western culture than their advocates seem willing or able to admit.

On the whole, contradictions of this sort leave the impression that the "African" criteria of Black American Nationalism are at best a well-intentioned but essentially sentimental incongruity. At worst even the good intentions lend themselves to a certain kind of manipulateness, as they do in the notorious case of the "Kwanzaa" festival which Karenga invented for Black Americans while claiming that it was a genuine African tradition. The nature of such ideas, together with the contradictions inherent in others, limits the usefulness of the black philosophical idealism that Baraka espouses, notwithstanding the impressively integrated design of his rhetorical methods. In short, his black nationalist rhetoric enjoys a coherence of sorts but it lacks depth. There is no adequate body of data to support the philosophical claims and the political objectives. For example, there is no demonstration that black Americans have really managed to preserve some African-derived communality in the aggressively individualistic context of American society.

Baraka is also unconvincing when he does offer specific plans for the realization of the black nationalism millennium. For example, his essays, *"The Practice of The New Nationalism"* (1970) envisages the black takeover of American cities, complete with total political control and nationalization of economic institutions within the cities. But Baraka does not indicate how this could ever be effected in the face of the enormous power which already controls the cities. And at this juncture Baraka's Black Nationalism seems to be little more than a strident wish-fulfillment (*Raise* 159). It amounts to a rhetorical device that is

often more useful in enumerating and lambasting the evils of white racism than in defining black American culture as a distinctive entity.

Given the intellectual shortcomings of Baraka's Black Nationalism it is not surprising that his concept of "blackness" suffers from the kind of ideological thinness about which Harold Cruse complains when he surveys *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (1967) the attempts of black Americans to formulate social ideologies of any kind ,integrationist or nationalist. In lieu of intellectual substance , Baraka's philosophy of blackness –Black Nationalism – is sometimes little more than racial invective ,aimed at whites as in *Raise* .Baraka ,however , explains that this invective is not racist but is a response to the hatefulness of white racism ,a "legitimate empirical reaction" (*Raise* 106).

In spite of the shortcomings of Baraka's philosophy of blackness as reflected in his essays and poetry , his nationalist volumes , *In Our Terribleness* (1970), *It's Nation Time* (1970) and *Spirit Reach* (1972) reveal innovations in poetic techniques and experiments with new formal prototypes .Baraka's new forms do not only come from black literature but also from black speech and music. His nationalist poetry aims to approximate ,emulate and incorporate black street English folk forms such as the "dozens" and signifying" ,the oratory traditions of the black sermon – religious and secular –and many other black rhetorical devices .The title poem "*It's Nation Time*", for example ,appears on the printed page as an unpretentious sermon to black readers / audience to get together and unify / "nationfy":

*Time to get
together
time to be one strong fast black energy space
one pulsating positive magnetism , rising
time to get up and
be
come
be
come , time to
be come
time to
get up come
black genius rise in spirit muscle
sun man get up rise heart of universes to be
future of the world
the black man is the future of the world
be come
rise up
future of the black genius spirit reality
move
from crushed roach back
from dead snake head
from wig funeral in slow motion
from dancing teeth and coward tip
from jibber jabber patme boss patme smmich
when the brothers strike niggers come out
come out niggers
when the brothers take over the school*

*help niggers
come out niggers
all niggers negroes must change up
come together in unity unify
for nation time
it's nation time...*

*Boom
Boom
BOOM*

*Boom
Dadadadadadadadad
Boom
Boom
Boom
Boom
Dadadadadadadadad*

*Hey aheee (soft)
He ahhee (loud)
Boom
Boom
Boom*

*Sing a get up time to nationfy
singaa miracle fire light
sing a airplane invisibility for the jesus niggers
come from the grave
for the jesus niggers dead in the cave, rose up ,
past jewjuice
on shadow world
raise up christ nigger
Christ was black
krishna was black shango was black
black jesus nigger come out and strike
come out and strike boom boom
Heyaheeee come out
strike close ford
close prudential burn the policies
tear glasses off dead statue puppets even those
they imitate life
Shango budda black
hermes rasis black
moses Krishna
black
when the brothers wanna stop animals
come out niggers come out
come out niggers niggers niggers come out
help us stop the devil
help us build a new world
niggers come out , brothers are we
with you and your sons your daughters are ours
and we are the same, all the blackness from one*

***black allah
when the world is clear you'll be with us
come out niggers come out (Selected Poetry 198-199).***

In spite of a few cryptic references, the preaching rhetoric holds the poem together as an appeal to culture nationalism, to move from "Raze" to "race". The poem is highly affective as rhythmic speech art and becomes a perfect illustration of the immediate auditory appeal of Baraka's poetry in the 1970s and 1980s. In the early 1970s when Baraka and his friends in the black ghetto, greet each other they say "what time is it?" They always reply "It's Nation Time". The poem, in this context, illustrates the process of "raising" in the concrete sense of getting up and in the sense of black nation-building.

Moreover, Baraka's Pan-African volumes *Tenzi Ya Imamu* (1973) and *African Revolution* (1973), in their emphasis on the struggle of African countries against imperialism pave the way for his subsequent shift to Marxist-Leninism. In Baraka's poem "*African Revolution*" which appeared one year before his conversion to Marxism is an evidence of the coming change:

***Afrikan People all over the world
Suffering from white domination
Afrikan People all over the world
Trying to liberate their Afrikan nation (s)
Afrikan People all over the world
Under the yoke, the gun, the hammer, the lash
Afrikan People all over the world
being killed& stifled melted down for Imperialists
cash
Afrikan People all over the world
conscious, un conscious, struggling, sleeping
resisting, tomming, killing the enemy killing each
other
Being hurt, surviving, understanding, held in
ignorance
Bursting out of chains, lying for Nixon, drowning
colonialists
Being shot down in the street
Afrikan People everywhere
Afrikan People all over the world
Evolving because of & in spite of ourselves
Afrikan People all over the world, trying to make
Revolution
The world must be changed, spit open & changed
All poverty sickness ignorance racism must be
eradicated
Who ever pushes these plagues, they also must be
eradicated
All capitalists, racists, liars, Imperialists. All who
cannot change
they also must be eradicated, their life style, philosophies
habits, flunkies, pleasures, wiped out –eliminated***

*the world must be changed , spilt open & changed
 Transformed , turned upside down.
 No more Poverty !
 No more dirty ragged black people, cept from hard
 work
 to beautify + energize a world we help create
 Death to Backward Powers
 Death to Bad Dancers
 No more trash piled up in the streets
 No more wind in the bedroom
 No more Capitalists in penthouses & colored people
 in tents
 with no houses
 Death to disease & carriers of disease
 All disease must be cured ! (Selected Poetry 203).*

The Marxist and Post-Marxist Phase (1975-1985)

The Black Magic Poetry of Baraka's ethnic/militant phase was partly revelation of what was called the Black Aesthetic , a theory which was developed in the mid sixties by militant Black writers and critics such as Baraka, Larry Neal, Etheridge Knight, Don Lee and others which totally rejects the white Aesthetic theory of art-for-art's-sake. The Black Aesthetic theory seeks to connect art with society , poetry with politics or ethics with aesthetic .This theory calls for a kind of poetry which is used as a weapon in the battle of liberation against white racism and oppression. In ***Black Magic*** , Baraka wants "poems that kill –assassin poems –poems that shoot guns. .etc". In fact the affinities between the Black Aesthetic theory and Marxist critical theory are obvious. Both theories require literature to be revolutionary, didactic and doctrinaire. The Black Aesthetic theory diverges from Marxist theory in one important respect by placing centrality on the race issue, not on economic class. This one single difference has made it impossible for the one group to make a common cause with the other in their otherwise common plight for freedom and equality. This may explain the differences between Baraka and Marxist in the 1960s.

At that time, Baraka attacks Capitalism and Marxist as products of European cultural values. In 1974, however, and after a series of meetings with African Marxist leaders, Baraka denounced Black Nationalism and was converted to Marxist –Leninism. The third category of his revolutionary and political poetry is represented by his Marxist anthologies ***Hard Facts*** (1975), ***Poetry for the Advanced*** (1979) and ***Reggae or Not*** (1981) as well as his uncollected prolonged poems "*I Investigate the Sun*" , "*In the Tradition*" and "*Class Struggle in Music*" which were written in the early 1980s making Baraka a third world poet . Baraka's poetry in this phase of his poetic development does not deal with the struggle issue in terms of the white/black racial conflict but it terms of class struggle to bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat .Baraka's Marxist or what some critics call Neo-Marxist poetry calls for an art which should be a weapon of revolutionary struggle .In spite of the propagandist overtones of Baraka's Marxist poetry , the poems of this phase reveal a complex pattern of innovations in poetic forms as the poet came under the influence of the Chinese writer Lu Hsun and many other writers from Latin America as well as his adaptation of jazz and avant-garde techniques to serve poetic purposes.

Moreover, Baraka's fourth category of poetry is represented by a poem sequence , *"Wise / Why's"* which Baraka calls an Afro-American epic which reveals the poet's manipulation of black music and avant-garde poetic techniques to narrate his vision of Afro-American history . The first part to the epic poem , *"Wise / Why's"* which appeared in 1985 , is a poetic chronicle of Afro-American history since the slave ship era passing through the period of America slavery , The Civil War and Reconstruction era up to the 1960's . Constituting the pinnacle of Baraka's poetic achievement , *"Wise / Why's"* is considered , so far , as the latest stage of the poet's artistic and political odyssey .

In 1973 the Congress of African People ,the last nationalist black organization , declined . The cultural black movement in America lost its impact as an explosive, potentially revolutionary force . America , specially the white majority , was increasingly preoccupied with other crises such as the consequences of the war in Southeast Asia , the economy and the energy crisis during the Arab-Israeli last war in 1973 . The white majority has increasingly been convinced that the racial relationships have improved , that things have changed for blacks for the better . The conservatism or apathy of the white majority regarding ethnic issues began to make itself felt at a time when several leaders of black militant groups such as the Black Panthers and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating committee were arrested or fled into exile abroad. And ironically , the more the white mainstream opened up opportunities to blacks , under pressure from militant black movements , the greater the loss of momentum for militant black movements . Such development was irksome to Amiri Baraka who was against any form of integration . He believes that the impact of militant black movements had the effect of enriching the pockets and the political positions of the black middle class . This is the viewpoint which Baraka has articulated on frequent occasions in explaining his eventual shift from Black Nationalism to Marxist-socialism (1974) .

In Baraka's Marxist phase America's racial and social ills had to be manipulated poetically , not from an ethnic political perspective, but within the context of class divisions. The issue was no longer to be ethnic rebellion such as in *Black Magic* or cultural revolution defined in ethnic terms such as in the nationalist poetry of the early 1970s. Instead, it would be a class struggle to bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat:

*The dictatorship
Of the proletariat*

*you need to say that
need to hear that
not be scared of that
Cause that's gonna save your*

*life
gonna make your life life change from suffering
you hear that, the dictatorship
of the proletariat. And be scared
think somebody gonna hold you back
hold you down, downer than you been held
which aint even in it, is it. Not downer than we been
held cause
we been held down, like down and dirty we been
held, way down.
It shows you how powerful, how strong and cruel*

*powerful
These capitalist are. These superbillionaire blood
suckers
Cause they put words in schools, radios,
newspapers, televisions
Word coming out of the heroic hero's mouth
heroically. The happy cop,
The strong sensitive cop, the tall cop, the cop whose
father wanted him to be a lawyer
And he's gonna make it one day type, the cop with
the hip mustache, the laughing cop,
The hippy cop, batman and robin cops, nigger cops,
negro cops, Puerto rican patrolmen
All comin at you led by our loving goodguys from
swat, just the thing for the superfly
All these herolover cops, are these the same which
shoot yr little nephew in the back of the
Head while he hanging up some crepe paper for a
surprise birthday party down in the
basement
Where they got you living. Are these the same gentle
goodguy heroes who killed the little
14 year old in bed stuy, the 12 year old in queens,
the 18 year old in staten island, the
16 year old in long branch. The ones that
slaughtered the 31 dudes in attica, and is that
the same attica where bald head mel stewart be
sneaking cake to the inmate & they all
buddies grinning together and frankly happy they
don't have to be out in the world
getting in rich peoples way?*

*Yet when you hear the dictatorship of the
proletariat. You dont know. You aint sure
You heard about hitler, and franco. The daily star
ledger news courier times bulletin tells
You dic
Tatorship is bad. All but the dictatorship bein run
now, the dictatorship of the minority
Which is currently bein run, at this moment
crushing yr whole self down, the one
Mashin on you right now, is frankly, well listen to
buckley, Sammy davis, Steinem (selected poetry 263).*

In the introduction to *Hard Facts* (1975), Baraka denounces his cultural phase of Black Nationalism as reactionary. He argues:

*Our nationalism was reactionary when it focused on White people as
the cause of our oppression rather tha the system of monopoly*

capitalism. Perhaps the lack of struggle orientation that we observed among the White petty bourgeois arty types fueled our belief in racial analysis. But the reality is that we were reacting to petty bourgeois vacillation & uncommittedness to anything but individual hedonistic ease and the hip service of the bourgeoisie which we still oppose and aim to denounce (238).

Nevertheless, Baraka speaks about his Marxist poetry as an extension of his Nationalistic phase. Due to differences in ideological perspectives, Baraka's Marxist poetry is not only addressed to black but it is also addressed to the masses all over the world Baraka's Marxist poetry aims to awaken the consciousness of the oppressed masses through revolutionary struggle in order to change the external reality :

Earlier, our poems from an enraptured patriotism that screamed against whites as the eternal enemies of Black people as the sole cause of out disorder & oppression. The same subjective mystifications led to mysticism, metaphysics, spookism ,etc., rather than dealing with reality, as well as an ultimately reactionary nationalism that served no interests but our newly emerging Black boureaucratic elite and petty bourgeois, so that they would have control over their Black market. This is not to say revolutionary Black nationalism is not necessary. It was and is to the extent that we are still patriots, involved in the Black Liberation Movement, but we must also be revolutionaries who understand that our quest for our people's freedom can only be realized as the result of Socialist Revolution!(238).

In his introduction to *Hard Facts*, Baraka also argues that revolution is the major function of his Marxist or Neo-Marxist poetry .To him, poetry should be committed to the masses and it should lead to cultural revolution which is anti-capitalism, anti-racism and anti-imperialism. In other words Baraka identifies the function of his poetic art at stage within the context of his Marxist perspective :

The poetry, art or writing reveals the class stand, and attitude of the writer, reveals the audience to whom the writer and artist address themselves, it also reveals what work they have been active in and what studies they are involved in. There is no art that is above the views or needs or ideologies of one particular class or another, tho the rules pretend that art is classless and beyond political definition. That is why we aim at an art that serves the great majority of people. The working masses of people. That is why we make an art that praise what helps the people and puts down mercilessly what oppresses or exploits them. That is why we should try to make a poetry, an art that speaks to, after 1st learning from, those same dynamic working masses (236).

Poetry should promote "the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialism and communism" (237).To Baraka, poetry should be used as a "weapon of revolutionary struggle"(237). Like his ethnic poetry in the mid sixties, Baraka's Marxist poetry should only include "odes of strength, attack pieces, bomb, machine guns and rocket poems" (238). Moreover, the ultimate

aim of poetry is the destruction of the capitalist system. Baraka's Marxist poetry is written for the oppressed masses:

We need a poetry that directly describes the situation of the people and tells us how we change it. That shows us our lives and gives us the responsibility for mobilizing them around life and revolution rather than drifting impotently in support of death and bourgeois rule (238).

Baraka's Marxist poetry is clearly an embodiment of the ideological principles of his political doctrine :

We learn from the omnied ,multinational mass, the scattered, raw, unsystematized, and even refined, and reorganize, re-intensify, dynamize, make gigantic and give back what we have learned. We deal with reality, "to get truth from facts", as Mao says, and with the class stand, attitude and strength of the inspired worker give it back to inspire, educate, mobilize, persuade, involve, the people. We want to raise the level of the people, but to do that we must start where they are which is on a much higher level than the majority of intellectuals and artists. We also want to popularize, to make popular, to make a popular mass art. To take the popular and combine it with the advanced. Not to compromise, but to synthesize. To raise and to popularize (236-237).

In spite of the ideological even propaganda overtones of Baraka's Marxist poetry ,it is a continuation of the poet's poetic development which started in the avant-garde period(1954-1964) passing through the ethnic and Nationalist phases which extended from 1965 to 1973 .In the Marxist phase, Baraka seeks a post-modern or a post-Western form suitable for his new commitments. In an interview with Kimberly Benston in 1978, Baraka implies that his Marxist poetry cannot be separated from his poetic development. He also argues that he has been preoccupied with his search for a post-Western poetic form for a long time:

I was consciously striving for a post-bourgeois/Western form, even before the cultural nationalism period. Now, Creeley, Olson et al. were themselves post-bourgeois/academic poets, and that was valuable for me. But they were also, in some way, an extension of Western art, and so I tried to get away from them is System."Modernism" and "post-modernism" are essentially the same thing. The three schools I've mentioned (Black Mountain, Ginsberg , New York) were opposed to the existent bourgeois/academic poetry, but their work contained elements that eventually established yet another bourgeois/academic school. They were more modern, to be sure-they led to a crumbling of the old forms. But to a great extent they perpetuated the same kind of processes-Black Mountain, for example, can be as obscure as, say, Pounds; so can Olson, for that matter .I learned from these three schools; but, at the same time, I felt the need to develop from them because their concerns weren't those of the masses . They weren't asking for revolution (308).

Seeking a post-Western poetic form, Baraka resorts to the works of Marxist writers from China such as Lu Hs n. In an interview with Werner Sollors ,Baraka associates himself with Lu Hs n:

I read a Chinese short story writer, Lu, who has been, perhaps, the most inspiring discovery that I made in the last year. His short stories I find brilliant done; and, of course, as far as my own political development is concerned , I find it verified. I have been studying books, political books and actually, doing a lot of reading in Marxism-Leninism rather than in fiction and poetry (247).

Baraka admits his indebtedness to the Marxist works of Langston Hughes and Richard Wright as well as the works of Lu Hs n. In an interview with Sollors on 1978 , Baraka declares:

I should have added that early Langston and Lu Lu have really been the main inspiration in the last year or so. Langston's work in Good Morning Revolution is an event, it is fantastic, absolutely contemporary, as strong as any work I have seen by an American poet and very carefully hidden by American literary marshals. His poem, like the one to China, to Lenin, they are really starting , because when you see those poems and you know that Langston was so clear, at that point, then you trace his whole development and disillusionment with the Communist Party USA, just like Richard Wright's disillusionment, just like so many other writers' disillusionment.

As a Marxist poet , Baraka points out that he does not want to turn his poetic art into a propaganda, rather he seeks to turn his propaganda into art. He illustrates this point in his interview with Sollors:

The danger is that you become just a propagandist without the art .And Lu and Mao Tse Tung say that all art is propaganda but not all propaganda is art. We want to make sure that our propaganda is art, that you have a unity of form and content, of artistic form and political content (252).

When Baraka was asked in 1985 about his intentions as a Marxist poet, he replied that his intentions have not changed as he remains the same. In the beginning his revolution against oppression and racism took the shape of an avant-garde criteria. then it took the form of ethnic revolt and Nationalist perspective and finally it took a Marxist approach. Baraka explains this point in an interview with William Harris:

I think fundamentally my intentions are similar to those I had when I was a Nationalist .That might seem contradictory but they were similar in the sense I see art as a weapon, and a weapon of revolution. It's just now that I define revolution in Marxist terms. I once defined revolution in Nationalist terms But I came to my Marxist view as a result of having struggled as a Nationalist and found certain dead ends

theoretically and ideologically, as far as Nationalism was concerned and had to reach out for a communist ideology (149).

With the publication of Baraka's Afro-American long poems such as *"In the Tradition"* and *"Class Struggle in Music"* in the early 1980s as well as the appearance of the first part of his Afro-American epic *"Wise / Why's"* in 1985, Baraka seemed to enter a new phase, a post-Marxist phase of poetic development. In the 1980's poems Baraka avoids the Marxist propaganda of his poetry in the 1970s. Instead he seeks new poetic techniques which link avant-garde forms with Afro-American folklore and jazz music. Baraka attempts this synthesis in the poem of the 1980s particularly in *"Wise/Why's"* where the poet narrates the Afro-American history since slavery until the modern times. Nevertheless, it is relevant to argue that the various changes in Baraka's political positions have tended to encourage a certain skepticism, even cynicism, about the poet, especially about the depth of his ideological commitments. The actual ideological shifts have, of course, been obvious enough—the early apolitical rebellion of the beat generation, then the militant civil rights activism, followed in turn by black separatism and Marxist Leninist socialism . . . etc. The thinness or untidiness that has marked his adoption of these varying positions has also been obvious. But there is really no basis on which his sincerity or commitment to the ultimate issue can really be doubted. And that ultimate issue has remained consistent throughout all the twists and turns of his ideological choices: he remains steadfastly and deeply antipathetic to American mainstream culture – its social structure, its racial caste system, and its socio-economic values. And the consistency with which he has remained a rebel against the mainstream has actually been highlighted, rather than diminished, by the very enthusiasm with which he continually seeks new approaches to change. Given his past record there is little reason to doubt that more ideological changes are possible in 1998 even likely. But it is also possible that he will continue to be motivated by the same deep-seated rebelliousness that has engaged him for much of his adult life—as activist as writer and human being.

The Black Aesthetic

In an interview with Elaine Duval, Baraka is asked about his view toward the critical attack on the Black Aesthetic—which he advocated in the 1960s—a theory which hostile critics believe gives priority to ethnic themes lacking the universality necessary for an enduring art. Baraka replies as follows :

No ,that's not true .hat we have always talked about is democracy—the fact that our lives have to be in tune with the world, that's all . And that we as a people have an aesthetic based on our experience ,and no one should try to define or limit our aesthetics based on what they consider, given their views on the matter . And they are always trying to turn that around to say that I am trying to limit it. I am saying they are the ones trying to limit our experience and our art, because they are not in time with us (13-14).

Larry Neal ,one of the advocates of the Black Aesthetic, argues that black writers should revise "Western Aesthetics" ,the traditional role of the writer and the social function of art in order to develop their own Black Aesthetic .Neal ,in *"Black Arts Movement"* ,point out:

It is the opinion of many Black writers, I among them, that the Western aesthetic has run its course: it is impossible to construct anything meaningful within its decaying structure. We advocate a cultural evolution in art and ideas. The cultured values inherent in Western history must either be radicalized or destroyed, and we will probably find that even radicalization is impossible. In fact, what is needed is a whole new system of ideas (138).

The Black Aesthetic issue is extremely important not only because it shapes the themes of protest, violence, anger, revolution, identity and other related issues in ***Black Magic*** but also because it frequently raises controversy among white and black critics. Thus, it is relevant to trace the history of the black aesthetic which reaches its culmination as an ethno-political apparatus in the late 1960s.

Early in the literary history of black writers, it was hard to establish a black aesthetic because the accepted body of writings by black Americans was too small and limited to serve as a basis for theory. The validity of a black aesthetic can be determined by an examination of the main canon of black writers which comprises four distinctive stages. The first is the embryonic stage, the period of slavery and reconstruction when writers such as Frederick Douglass, Francis Harper and Philip Wheatley wrote out of the depths of their souls. The second stage is the Harlem Renaissance (1919-1930), a turning point in black literary history where famous writers such as Langston Hughes, Jean Toomer, DuBois and Zora Neale Hurston wrote revolutionary books which presented the black awakening of that time. The third stage came in the 1960s and 1970s with writers hostile to a society that had denied black rights. Black writers such as Baraka, Don Lee, Nikki Giovanni and Sonia Sanchez wrote from a poignant perspective expressing their anger through language.

In the 1960s, a Black Aesthetic came to challenge the traditional language of American literature. Black writers rejected the belief in the slave/master's interpretation of the Bible and the Euro-centric mythologies which constitute the basis for a white American Aesthetic in which beauty was always pure, divine and white while ugly was associated with black, sin and unrighteousness. Covertly such Western terms and values were used to convey society's mores. In "*Some Observations on a Black Aesthetic*", Adam David Miller argues:

The slaves had not only a different language from that of their masters, but also an entirely different view of the world. Thus, having no tools to measure their intellect, most masters found it both convenient and profitable to suppose they had none. Having made this supposition, they proceeded to set up the enforce systems of denial and restriction that had the effect of suppressing the slaves' intellect and directing it so that it was hidden from the masters (539).

In fact, there was no need for the slave masters to understand or respect the culture or worldview of the slaves. They were a nonentity. Thus, it was with deliberate purpose that angry black writers of the sixties attacked the language turning it into a gun that shoots bullets at the white man. In ***Black Magic***, Baraka says: "we want poems like fists . . . or dagger poems . . . poems that kill, assassin poems, poems that shoot guns . . . poems that wrestle

cops . . . airplane poems . . . poem scream poison gas on beasts" (116-117). Equally, Richard Thomas, in his poem "**Revolution**" says :

*We will not die for nothing
Not anymore
...We ain't radical or high ;
We's thought it all over , and
It's marked on your calendar
Burning on our foreheads (196).*

The pain that reached the pages of poem after poem by Richard Thomas, Baraka and other revolutionary poets was often laced with the added rebellion of obscenity. But languages was the *modus operandi* for a divergent pattern, turning speech from its traditional semantics and making the word "become flesh", black fingers pulling the scales from the eyes of the oppressor. This was not like the time of slavery when language was used to pull the wool over the eyes of the slave master. Time, necessity and white racism have brought about a change, this was the language of the black streets, the ghetto language which Baraka manipulates in his **Black Magic** poems.

Due to the socio-political conditions in the 1960s, Etheridge Knight discusses the necessity of developing a Black Aesthetic. In the **Black Aesthetic**, Knight states:

Unless the Black artist establishes a "Black" aesthetic he will have no future at all. To accept the white aesthetic is to accept and validate a society that will not allow him to live. The Black artist must create new forms and new values, sing new songs (or purify old ones) :and along with other Black authorities, he must create a new history, new symbols, myths and legends (and purify old ones by fire). And the Black artist, in creating his own aesthetic, must be accountable for it only to the Black people. Further, he must hasten his own dissolution as an individual (in the Western sense)- painful though the process may be, having been breast-fed the poison of "individual experience" (189).

Larry Neal also in the **Black Aesthetic** provides the following argument :

When we speak of a "Black aesthetic" several things are meant. First, we assume that there is already in existence the basis for such an aesthetic. Essentially, it consists of an African - American cultural tradition. It encompasses most of the useable elements of third world culture. The motive behind the Black aesthetic is the destruction of the white thing, the destruction of white ideas, and white ways of looking at the world. The new aesthetic is mostly predicated on an ethics which asks the question : whose vision of the world is finally more meaningful, ours or the white oppressors'? (189).

Here Larry Neal calls for a black aesthetic with international dimensions, one which extends to share the third world countries in Africa and elsewhere in the world their struggle against white imperialism :

What is truth? Or more precisely whose truth shall we express ,that of the oppressed or of the oppressors? These are basic questions. Black intellectual of previous decades failed to ask them National and international affairs demand that we appraise the world in terms of our own interests.

In the 1960s the Black Aesthetic theory calls for a black literature which unifies ethics and aesthetics .This notion is expressed in Baraka's ***Black Magic*** particularly his famous poem "***Black Art***". Baraka believes that the contradiction between ethics and aesthetics in Western literature is symptomatic of dying culture and a declining civilization .To Baraka, black aesthetics seeks, through black magic and black arts ,to dominate the world and challenge white racism .In ***Home*** he says:

***We are unfair
And unfair
We are black magicians
Black arts we make
In black labs of the heart***

***The fair are fair
And deathly white***

***The day will not save them
And we own the night(252) .***

The black aesthetic of the 1960s ,is also reflected in Baraka's poem "***Black Art***" in which he calls for poetry that is used as a weapon in the battle against racism for the sake of black liberation .Addressing the black masses in the streets , Baraka uses the language of the ghetto:

***Poems are bullshit unless they are
teeth or trees or lemons piled
on a step . Or black ladies dying
of men leaving nicked hearts
beating them down . Fuck poems
and they are useful , would they shoot
come at you , love what you are,
breathe like wrestles, or shudder***

***strangely after peeing . We want live
words of the hip world , live flesh &
coursing blood .Hearts and Brains
Souls splintering fire, We want poems
Like fists beating niggers out of Jocks
Or dagger poems in the slimy bellies
Of the owner - jews . .(116).***

Baraka's poetry here has a political function—poems are physical entities : fists , daggers , airplane poems , poems that shoot guns . . . etc. Then poems are transformed from physical objects into personal forces :

***. . . Put on him poem . Strip him naked
at the world. Another bad poem cracking
steel knuckles in a jewlady's mouth
Poem scream poison gas on breasts in green berets..***

Afterwards ,the poem underlines the integral relationship between ethics and aesthetics ,between art and society , between black poetry and black people :

***. . .Let Black people understand
that they are the lovers and the sons
of lovers and warriors and sons
of warriors Are poems & poet &
all the loveliness here in the world***

Finally , the poem ends with the following sections which is a central affirmation in both the Black Arts Movement and the philosophy of Black power .The poet concludes his poem saying:

***We want a black poem . And a
Black world .
Let the world be a Black Poem
And let All Black People Speak This Poem
Silently
Or LOUD***

In the early **1970s** ,the Black Aesthetic as a revolutionary/militant theory in black literature declined with the decline of the Black Arts Movement and the other revolutionary black organization in America .In the **1980s** and the early **1990s** came the fourth stage of the black aesthetic . This time the Black Aesthetic appears in a new shape with new concepts .

Thus , we have what is called the New Black Aesthetic –NBA. The advocates of the New Black Aesthetic are young black writers in their twenties and thirties whose attitudes toward the race issue ,the function of art and the role of the artist, though an extension of the Black Aesthetic and the Black Arts Movements in the **1960s** and **1970s** ,are not identical with the views of the generation of black writers and critics in the **1960s** and **1970s** . The advocates of the New Black aesthetic are new writers who follow in the steps of black artist such as August Wilson , Richard Pryor ,Toni Morrison and George Clinton –who became famous in the seventies and eighties . According to Roland Judy ,the New Black Aesthetic "is way of thinking about artistic expression that while recognizing its indebtedness to the agitprop of the Black Arts Movement and confidently employing the forms and themes of previous black arts, ironically parodies all claims of genealogical purity or continuity"

(249) .The advocates of The New Black Aesthetics are "cultural mulattos" who according to Trey Ellis attempts to synthesize the Harlem Renaissance –of the twenties and thirties –and the Black Arts Movements –of the 1960s and 1970s –in order to be separate but better than the dominate white culture.

In "*The New Black Aesthetic*", an essay which has become a manifesto of a new arts movement ,novelist Trey Ellis attempts to give a coherent expression to a way of thinking about authenticity emerging among an increasing number of young black American artist . The expression he found was New Black Aesthetic ,an apt naming that performance a chief function of the way of thinking it refer to –parody .Ellis argues that black artist who are categorized as New Black Aesthetic artists are neither shocked by the persistence of racism as were those of the Harlem Renaissance nor preoccupied with it as were those of the Black Art Movement . For them , "racism is a hard and little –changing constant that neither surprises nor enrages them" (240) Ellis argues that these artist are "cultural mulattos" who absorb both white black culture and have the ability to assimilate so painlessly . Ellis illustrates :

Just as a genetic mulatto is a black person of mixed parents who can often get along fine with his white grandparents, a cultural mulatto ,educated by a multi-racial mix of cultures, can also navigate easily in the white world. And it is by and large this rapidly growing group of cultural mulattos that fuels the NBA. We no longer need to deny or suppress any part of our complicated and sometimes contradictory cultural baggage to please either white people or black (235).

The New Black Aesthetic in the 1980s and the early 1990s is an attempt to synthesize the last two black art revivals , the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement .In the 1920s, blacks wanted to be considered as good as dominant culture. In the 1960s blacks want no part of dominant culture at all . The New Black Aesthetic wants to dominate the mainstream culture .

" *The New Black Aesthetic*" essay was attacked by many black critics and writers .For example ,Imani Fryer who looks at Ellis's essay from a feminist perspective , criticizes Ellis who excludes female writers from the advocates of the New Black Aesthetic . Fryer says : "the idea of a Black Aesthetic emanating from its original African properties is feasible and correct"(444). Fryar adds that a Black Aesthetic is individual as well as collective . To Fryar "an aesthetic , as a cultural measurement of beauty has to be different things to different groups , depending upon their sense of beauty " (445) . Other critics accuse Ellis of ignoring the needs of the black masses because the advocates of the NBA come from upper classes .

In "*Response to NBA critiques*" ,Ellis argues that the advocates of the NBA grow up in white neighborhoods and are influenced by white culture .These "cultural mulattos" are no longer ashamed of their blackness because their parents and perhaps grandparents were not slaves but were college graduates This does not mean that "they cavalierly ignore the economic problems of the majority of blacks" .Nevertheless ,Ellis ,unlike Baraka ,is convinced that "we realize that a poem ,no matter how fiery ,is not going to feed a homeless black child"(250). Ellis adds :

It is important to remember that the New Black Aesthetic I try to define is reallyan anti – aesthetic that defies definition. The NBA is an attitude

of liberalism rather than a restrictive code .I was not trying to induce from my observations a few precepts that would grip future artists into yet another aesthetic lock step . Instead ,I was trying to argue that today we can be more honest and critical of ourselves than ever before , and this open-minded far-sightedness may very well produce some of the greatest works of art the world has ever know, because, like Newton, we stand on the shoulders of giants (251).

Ellis believes that the black artist in the 1980s and 1990s "stand on the shoulders of giants" because the NBA attempts a kind of synthesis of the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement, a synthesis of avant-garde modernism and leftist vanguard agitprop which can be the basis for a popular black post-structuralism . Ellis believes that black culture signifies a multicultural tradition of "expressive practices" that is why the NBA accepts black culture which claims art produced by non-blacks as a part of its inheritance . In this connection the NBA makes a radical departure from the Black Aesthetic of the 1960s and 1970s advocated by Baraka.

Nevertheless , through appearing in 1988, the New Black Aesthetic is no longer fashionable in 1988 among the black academic circles .The Theory currently gaining ground in black studies is called Re-constructionist Poetics which tends to work in association with white American aesthetics in order to integrate black literature with mainstream American literature. It aims to develop a concept of criticism with open frontiers which makes it possible for the critic to move unobstructed into any area of literary studies . It also aims to create literature with no ethnic or political frontiers.

Baraka and Critics

In 1965 ,Le Roi Jones left his avant-garde friends in Greenwich Village and went to Harlem where he became Imamu Amiri Baraka ,the revolutionary and political black poet. In his comment on Baraka's change of his muses from white avant-garde to black nationalism John Frank Joy argues :

There were and will be those who believe Baraka / Jones has destroyed his artistic contribution by directing his writing towards Black Power purposes. But the sixties were especially a time when black artist found it difficult to separate the two. From the center of his world outward ,Baraka's involvement with and contribution to the causes of Black Power would seem to have been necessary and important (56-57).

In fact Joy's argument underlines the critical controversy over Baraka's career as a writer .There are critics who attack Baraka because of his abandonment of the white-oriented beat movement and his subsequent move to Harlem where he becomes a black activist poet writing "masturbatory art" .Others praise Baraka's black art as a necessary weapon in the face of white tyranny.

Baraka's attitudes toward the Western culture in general and white American society in particular are criticized by white critics . Baraka's views which were reflected in his poetry

and raised critical controversy will be examined in the context of this book. For example Baraka's views on white religion, the race issue, the struggle issue, racial violence, black identity and integration, as well as his antagonism toward the American Jews and the middle class Negroes will be discussed within the context of white/black critical reaction and in relation to Baraka's poetic development.

Baraka's art has raised extensive critical controversy which is reflected throughout the controversial attitudes toward his poetry. For example, whereas a critic such as Paul Breman considers him as one of the most interesting figures "on the black arts scene" (105) during the 1960s, Truman Capote, a Southern writer and critic accuses him of being a deceptive person. In an interview Capote says:

Baraka . . . is a total fraud, both artistically and politically. I was particularly amused to note that he was recently awarded a Guggenheim fellowship; well, a Guggenheim is something an artist applies for - - begs for, actually - - and if Le Roi Jones so violently hates the white race and all its works, why is he down on his knees pleading for several thousand of Guggenheim's filthy white capitalist dollars? You can't raise at the front door and then run around to the back door with an alms cup. He's just another hypocrite (168).

Pete Hamill sums up the revolutionary post-white Baraka/ Jones. He says:

One comes to a meeting with Le Roi Jones prepared to dislike him; there is a glibness to his messages, and an opportunism to his history which puts one off. He has been a Zen Buddhist, a Beat poet, an aggrandizer of Fidel Castro, and finally, in a time made conscious of Negro outrage by James Baldwin, an evangelist of Negro anger. And yet, sitting with him, listening to him talk ..., one realized that this is probably Le Roi Jones final bag. He talks like a man who has discovered that the one inescapable fact of his life is his color (44).

On the other hand, Cecil M. Brown reveals an interest in Baraka's metamorphosis – his journey from the white avant-garde to black nationalism. He argues:

Jones' journey from where he was to where he is, is more important to me than any other journey in literature. It is the authentic modern-day descent from purgatory into hell; it is essentially a poetic manifesto, as is witnessed by the swelling number of young Black literary followers. It says, as all poetic manifestos say, e.g., preface to the Lyrical Ballads, "Let's get back to the original source, baby". Only indirectly is it literary criticism, in the sense that a new poem is critical of old poems (29).

Moreover, while William Fischer praises Baraka's "culturally modified Marxist orientation of third world revolutionary politics" (280) in his poetry in the 1970's, Lynn Munro criticizes the Black Magic Poetry – "one notices a certain unevenness" Munro adds:

Although much of the writing seems to be a successful attempt to write for the masses of the black community and to discard conventional usage and style ,much of it is still bound by traditional forms and images and conveys a message which could only be appreciated by other academicians .Only insofar as he has shifted the primary concern of his work from introspection to social criticism and utopian vision does he seem to have been able fully to overcome his early literary training (57).

Like Frank Joy ,Dudley Randall in his introduction to *Black Poets* indicates that the socio-political situation of the 1960's was sufficient to push Baraka or any other black artist to take sides with the black masses against the racism of white America. Randall describes the black poetry of the 1960's and 1970's saying :

The poets of the sixties and seventies have gone further than the poets of the post- Renaissance .The best of them have absorbed the techniques of the masters , have rejected them , and have gone in new directions ... when the poets saw the contorted faces of the mobs , saw officers of the law committed murder, and "respectable" people scheme to break the law, there was no cry for law and order then, perhaps they asked themselves, why should we seek to be integrated with such a society ?Perhaps they resolved to work toward a more civilized ,a more humane society...This alienation from white society initiated a turning away from its values and its poetry , Poets turned to poetry of the folk ,of the streets ,to jazz musicians ,to the language of black people for their models ... This emancipation from white literary models ,and critics freed them to create a new black poetry of their own. Such freedom was necessary if they were to create a truly original poetry .This is not to say that they remained ignorant of the currents of contemporary poetry ,but that their attitude toward it was different. What they could use ,they took , but they wrote as black men ,not as black writers trying to be white . They tried to change language ,to turn it around ,to give new meanings and connotations to words .One example of this is the word "black" which no longer connotes evil or dirt , but pride and beauty (25-26) .

In spite of all the reasons mentioned by Randall which were sufficient to push black poets toward the poetry of the folks , Baraka was accused of racism and his black poetry was condemned as hate and racial propaganda .Ironically ,Baraka , despite the stylistic changes in his revolutionary poems and despite his attempt to merge his craftsmanship with his political perceptions , does not completely succeed in liberating himself from his avant-garde training .Donald Gibson clarifies this issue:

Baraka /Jones does not write for the masses of the people (as his politics would dictate) .Even when he tries to do that ,to leave his academic training and sensibility behind him ,he can do so only with great difficulty and not nearly so easily as many black poets who do not have his background (27).

Nevertheless , every stage of Baraka's ideological development, according to Sandra Richards, "is accompanied by a simultaneous change in style and form " (188) . In this context it should be apparent that each of Baraka's major ideological shifts has been accompanied by a corresponding stylistic change .The focus on the contours of an individual psyche ,thinly disguised as the author's alter-ego ,along with abundant literary allusions, classical frameworks and impressive ,intricate verbal poetry are the liberty equivalents of a deep devotion to Western tradition . In rejecting white culture and declaring himself as an advocate of the black culture adopted by the masses ,Baraka has had to find a suitable form which would be more immediately and thoroughly accessible to those black masses .Thus ,the use of black archetypes ,rituals and symbols to operate on a more instinctive ,precognitive level ;the lean simplicity of form which nevertheless captures a complexity of through ; and the reliance on black music in particular to add other layers of meaning become for Baraka indices of a changed ,African-based perspective.

In his shift from Greenwich Village to Harlem ,Baraka has undergone an almost total radicalization of his personal, political and literary sensibility .In spite of critical controversy on this issue ,it is safe to say that Baraka's shift through inevitable, was expected because of the poet's anti-white activities in the early 1960's. Stephen Schneck in "*Le Roi Jones or Poetics and Policemen or , Trying Heart , Bleeding Heart*", argues:

At first, the blasé New York culture scene was titillated by his maledictions. He was invited to all the enchanted-circle beautiful-people parties, literary events , show business orgies, and hip gatherings .The more he attacked white society ,the more white society patronized him .Who'd have suspected that there was no much money to be made from flagellation ?Whitey seemed insatiable ; the masochistic vein was a source of hitherto untapped appeal ,big box office stuff ,and Le Roi Jones was one of the very first to exploit it . Naturally the smart money crowd ,the commercial – intellectual establishment ,decided he was running a game ,a successful device .After all ,Le Roi Jones had been around the Village for years ,had run with the white beatniks in the early 50's ,had married a white Jewish girl .So how could he really mean what he was saying ? Actually mean it . . . ? (194).

It seems that in the 1960's Baraka had fallen a victim to the psychology which Harold Cruse contends has constantly characterized the black American thinker .To Cruse ,the Black American artist was caught in a web of interracial ,intellectual paternalism which prevents him from recognizing a basic fact of political power in America , namely "every other ethnic group in America ,a nation of nations ,has accepted the face of its separateness and used it to its own social advantage " (364). However ,nothing in Baraka's background prepared Cruise for the poet's anti-white/anti-Jewish stand of 1965 .Cruse argues :

Baraka / Jones come so far and so fast since 1961 , and in the meantime so contradictory , that it is difficult to place him. In 1961, after my own personal ideological tussle with the Jones-Ship Hicks contingent in Harlem, no one could have made me believe that in 1965 Le Roi Jones would start a Black Arts Repertory Theater and School in Harlem ... Any of my personal early misgivings about Jones grew out of my critical responses to his different poses and postures ,As

it turns out these Jonesian posturing have not been all upstage antics, but rather the ambivalence of the supreme actor brazenly in search of just the right "role" that would best suit the purposes in life of the real man inside Jones (365).

While Cruse in *The Crises of the Negro Intellectual* does not expect Baraka's shift to militancy /Houston Baker in *"These Are Songs If You Have the Music : An Essay on Imamu Baraka"*. indicates that the socio – political in the 1960's in America was sufficient to push any black artist to racial extremes . Baraka explains his points:

During the decade , Black moved decisively away from the Christian humility and Gandhian forbearance that marked the strategy of Martin Luther King .And as either voices became more strident , their actions more daringly aggressive ,the police forces of America were converted from domestic law enforcement agencies into what seemed heavily-armed military regiments. It was not Blacks alone for whom these forces were upgraded .Young whites also become vociferous and aggressive as America's involvement in Vietnam increased. By the fall of 1963 , it was clear to many that the optimistic mood of the fifties had been replaced by one of violence and despair . In that year, Medgar Eves ,John F. Kennedy ,and four young , Black ,Birmingham, Alabama, Sunday-school worshipers were murdered .The violence of their deaths was not singular ; it was simply the most publicly lamented .Combining with it –in the North and South alike –was an outgoing hostility that threatened to destroy the nation (1).

Moreover Kimberly Benston in the introduction to *Imamu Amiri Baraka (Le Roi Jones): A Collection of Critical Essays*. states that Baraka's shift from the alienated avant-garde American left to the angry vanguard of the Black Arts Movement is due to the "violence against civil rights activists in the South and North alike ;the assassination of Medgar Evers, the rise of liberated African countries ; a prolonged series of impassioned debates on racial politics between Baraka and both Harlem based black separatists and the white liberals in Greenwich Village –All these were major elements in Baraka's conversion to Black Nationalism . But two episodes stand out especially framing that era of the early sixties ; Baraka's trip to Cuba in 1960 and the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965" (3) . In *"The Last Days of the American Empire"* Baraka reveals reasons for his extremism when he states that conventional procedures will not "change the basic structure of the society" (Home 206). Baraka claims that there must be a revolution by the young blacks in America .They will erupt "like Mt. Vesuvius to crush in hot lava these willfull maniacs who call themselves white Americans"(209).In this essay, the apocalyptic dada revolutionary in Baraka according to William Harris (1985) was asking for "a transvaluation of values .Baraka's revolution sought not only to destroy the powers that be –a common avant-garde goal –but also to commit itself to black people" (100) .Being committed to the black cause , Baraka , during his Nationalist phase developed a succession of organization such as the Black Arts Theater and School – Bart/s (1965) ,Spirit House (1966) ,The Black Community development and Defense Organization (1968) and The Congress of African people (1970). As much as each of his identifiable artistic phases of poetic development ,these organizations emanate from a matrix of political and philosophical speculations which have frequently been targets of critical attack .

Baraka was not only attacked because of ideological differences with the white mainstream but also he was criticized because of the revolutionary nature of his poetry which was alien to white standards of criticism . For example ,Baraka adapts avant-garde techniques to serve his black purposes, this inversion was not accepted by white critics .Moreover , Baraka's poetry was attacked because of his manipulation of black sources such as the ghetto language and his adaptation of jazz music techniques to suit black poetic forms as exemplified in the following lines :

*Say day lay day may fay come some bum'll
 Take break jake make fake lay day some bum'll
 Say day came break snow mo whores red said they'd
 Lay day in my in fay bed to make bread far jake
 Limpin in the hall with quiverin stick
 He's hiney raised , in a car by the curb,
 Licking his yellow lips , yellow snow yellow bubs,
 Yellow eyes lookin at the dark , hears his whisper
 Say , "come" down goily I give you a stick . . . da da
 da
 come down goily I give you a pinch . . .da da
 da
 come down goily I sit in my car . . . da da da
 come down goily to where we grey guys are...
 da da da . .
 da da da . . .
 da da da . . .
 *da da da . . .**

Baraka's poetry is also criticized for its attacks on the American Jews who according to Baraka , exploit and blackmail the poor blacks in the ghetto .Baraka declares that he is tired of the often-made analogy between blacks and the six million Jews of Nazi Germany .Critics such as Werner Sollors , Henry Lacy and L. Brown attack Baraka's anti-semiticism considering it as a form of racism .Baraka's poetry is criticized as well for its use of ritual violence as a way of facing white racism and economic exploitation . Baraka was arrested and jailed because he wrote and distributed the following poem during the racial riots in the 1960s :

*You know how to get it , you can get it ,no money down, no money
 never, money don't grow on trees no way , only whitey's got it, makes it
 with a machine ,to control you you cant steal nothing from a white
 man, he's already stole it he owes you anything you want, even his life
 .All the stores will open if you will say the magic words . The magic
 words are :Up against the wall mother fucker this is a stick up ! Or :
 Smash the windows at night (these are magic actions) smash the
 window daytime , anytime , together ,let's smash the window drag the
 shit from in there .No money down . No time to pay. Just take what
 you want . The magic dance in the street .Run up and down Broad
 Street niggers ,take the shit you want .Take their lives if need be ,but
 get what you want what you need. Dance up and down the streets ,
 turn all the music up, run through the streets with music , beautiful*

*radios on Market Street ,they are brought here especially for you.
Our brothers are moving all over ,smashing at jelly white faces .We
must make our own world, man our own world ,and we can not do
this unless the white man is dead .Let's get together and killim my man
,let's get to gather the fruit of the sun ,let's make a word we want
black children to grow and learn in do not let your children when
they grow look in your face and curse you by pitying your tomish
ways.*

Furthermore ,Baraka's poetry is dismissed because of its obscene language and graffiti-like lines which Baraka calls "artistic obscenity" used for artistic purposes as in the following lines:

*The guant thing
With no organs
Creeps along the streets
Of Europe , she will
commute , in her feathered bat stomach-gown
with no organs
with sores on her insides
even her head
a vast puschamber
of pus(sy) memories
with no organs
nothing to makes babies
she will be the great witch of euro- American legend
who sucked the life
from some unknown nigger
whose name will be known
but whose substance will not ever
not even by him
who is dead in a pile of dopeskin*

In fact ,Baraka's obscene forms are partly derived from black folklore tradition such as the "dozens" and transformed to suit his poetic objectives .

Baraka's poetry is also criticized for its oral characteristics which cannot be appreciated by critics who deal with poetry as a written text . It is a poetry written for public performance as in the following lines :

*O Allah
all deity , jinn , spirit creation
on the earth , where we live , cut off from
righteousness
by devil
in corporate come see about
we
us
black people your first creationsssss
all deity*

*hey god
spirit ,
interior animation of existence
we here
cut off
in a devil land
we need something to be strong god
all spirit flesh us with strength to allah give us will
to
get up
and split
cut out a here
uhhuh
uhhuh
uhhuh
please great black creator
let us get our hat , from the ugly thing got us
let us , oh , allah , please , move from where
we at*

*into ourselves into ourselves , where
into ourselves , into ourselves
digit
Pleasure boat of sweet black memory
& where
anywhere the whole being is
anywhere the total vibration.
uhuh
uhuh
aaaaaaaaahuuhh
doodoo doo
doodoo doo*

*on into light with pharaoh junior
on into our self my man and sweet lady
cool world around you
dig yourself*

*uhhuh
uhhuh into ourselves 'swhere
to involve
then
evolve,*

yeh,gone

Like his ritual plays, Baraka's poetry is written for dramatic performance :

*come out niggers come out
It's nation time eye ime*

*It's nation ti eye ime
chant with bells and drum
it's nation time*

*it's nation time ,get up santa claus (repeat)
it's nation time , build it
get up muffed dragger
get up rastus for real to be rasta farari
ras jua
get up got here bow*

*It's Nation
Time !*

It is noteworthy to mention that Baraka usually presents his poems to the audience , accompanied by jazz musicians, African drums ; lightening and sound effects :

*BANZA !! BANZA!! BANZA !! BANZA !!
Came running out of the drugstore with
An electric alarm clock , aqnd then dropped the motherfucker
And broke it .Go get something else. Take
everything
In there.
Look in the cashregister. TAKE THE MONEY.
TAKE THE MONEY .
YEH.
TAKE IT ALL .YOU DON'T HAVE TO CLOSE
THE DRAWER COME ON
MAN . I SAW
A TAPE RECORDER BACK THERE.*

As an oral poetry ,written for public performance ,Baraka's revolutionary poetry is dismissed be academic critics as racial or Marxist propaganda .Baraka's oral forms are equally criticized as in the following lines :

*blackness
blackness
blackness
blackness
blackness
blackness
yeaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa's god*

Baraka's poetry is also criticized as a revelation of political doctrine and ideological propaganda:

*Poetry must sing , laugh & fight
Poetry must reveal , probe and light
Poetry must take class struggle*

*as the key link
must remold its world view
to take up the struggle
for the mighty
working
class
Poetry must see as its central task
building
a Marxist – Leninist
Communist Party
in the USA*

*So that even in our verse
we wage ideological struggle over political
line*

All critical reactions to Baraka's revolutionary poetry as well as all critical misconceptions will be discussed in details in subsequent chapters in order to refute hostile critical assumptions and underline Baraka's poetic innovations . Now let us start with a critical examination of the Black Aesthetic Theory which was advocated by Baraka and which led to controversy among white critics .

Chapter Two

The Black Aesthetic Theory and the White / Black Critical Controversy

In his article "*The Black Aesthetic In The Thirties , Forties and Fifties*" , Dudley Randall argues that Black Aesthetic was nonexistent in the thirties and during the forties "black poets only absorbed the innovations of white poets" .In the fifties, Randall adds that poets such as Don Lee and Amiri Baraka were not only absorbing white literature but they attempted to write their own poetry. Looking forward to the future ,Randall expects that Baraka and Lee will "use their heritage of folk poetry and black music ,will build something new upon white literature" . Randall continues :

There was no consciously formulated Black poets considered themselves as part of American literature, although most of them were excluded from textbooks, anthologies, and , to a great extent, from magazines. It remains to be seen whether, in our time, the Black Aesthetic will stimulate superior poetry . The proof will have to be in the poems produced (42).

Randall also expects that black poets such as Baraka and Don Lee ,

Will not depend upon white publishers, white audiences, or white critics, as there are black publishers, black critics, and an increasing black audience .Robert Hayden and Gwendolyn Brooks are mature and at the height of their powers, and are capable of change and growth. There are many younger poets not yet even published in book form. All that I can foresee in a poetry of increasing power and richness, which will make a glorious contribution to the world. (42).

Randall's prophecy of "a poetry of increasing power and richness" was fulfilled when black writers advocated a Black Aesthetic the sixties establishing credence for a Black Aesthetic hypothetically was to serve a three-fold purpose: it was to provide black writers with another alternative to secure positive identities as black writers ; it was to create political and social alternatives for the black community; and it was to answer, in a provocative context, what Frederick Sterns has called "Questions concerning the relationship between literature and society , between the life experience of social human beings and the art that they produce (637).

Nevertheless, the historical background of Black Aesthetic Theory is fairly well-known and can be quickly reviewed. As laws enacted during the 1950s and 1960s by the United States government in order to end segregation and discrimination of black Americans and to secure freedom and equality largely failed because of white intransigence, many black civil rights leaders realized that freedom is not given, but rather won. These leaders felt that peaceful marches, disciplined sit-ins, and non-violent demonstrations were simply exercises

in futility because the limited reforms, tokens, and substitutes gained thereby would bring about no drastic change in the situation of the blacks. They organized that love, conscience and moral suasion did not help them achieve their aspirations of freedom and human dignity. Radical methods and a total revolution seemed to them the only ways by which they could win their rights. With contempt for the legislative process, Black Power entered the Civil Rights Movement in the mid-60s and urged black people to acquire political and economic strength, and resort to violence and riots, if necessary, to realize their long deferred dreams.

While Black Power propagated political nationalism, the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 1970s celebrated cultural nationalism. As Huston Baker observes in his introduction to *Reading Black Essays in The Criticism of African, Caribbean and Black American Literature*, the poetics accompanying the new ideological orientation underwent a "generational Shift"(4) during this period of political and cultural turbulence—the mid-sixties. (Baraka defines "a generational shift" as "an ideologically motivated movement overseen by young newly-emergent intellectuals who are dedicated to refuting the work of their intellectual predecessors and to establishing a new framework of intellectual inquiry"(4). Baraka describes two general gaps in his essay—the first one occurred in the mid sixties and the second one took place in the late seventies and early eighties. Black critics in the 1960s and 1970s abandoned traditional integrationist poetics which was aimed at bringing black literature and criticism in line with the American mainstream and set up Black Aesthetic Theory, a poetics wholly indigenous to black culture and politically committed to a separate black identity.

In other words, the political and social forces that coalesced during the 1950s and 1960s intensified the sense of "unity in struggle" among most black American and had dramatic effects upon the evolution of a Black Aesthetic during the 1960s and early 1970s. The "zeitgeist" of Civil Rights, Black Power, Black Nationalism, Black Cultural Nationalism and more liberal attitudes among whites increased the desires of some black writers to establish a community identity independent of the white America. Inspired by those ideologies emerging among the black communities, black writers equally had been encouraged by the "cultural mystique" of Negritude and by Richard Wright—the leading black American writer—to espouse a literary nationalism. Wright in *"Blueprint for Negro Writing"* argues:

*They (Negro Writers) must accept the concept of nationalism . . .
 .carrying the highest pitch of social consciousness . It means a
 nationalism that knows its origins, its limitations ...
 For purposes of creative expression it means that the Negro writer must
 realize within the area of his own personal experience those impulses
 which ,when prefigured in terms of broad social movements, constitute
 the stuff of nationalism (320).*

Advocating a Black Aesthetic and creating artifacts to illustrate a Black Aesthetic reflected the ideological position some black writers including Baraka held during the 1960s and early 1970s.

Central to the Black aesthetic Theory is the view that black literature is a literature of blacks, by blacks and for blacks. Black writers, such as Baraka and others, believe that if they fail to write for blacks, they—in effect—fail to write at all. Stephen Henderson in,

"Survival Motion :A Study of The Black Writer and The Black Revolution in America", comments on black poetry in the 1960s saying: "There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that these poems were not intended for white audiences ,that their purpose was direct address to the black community to get us together"(65). In black criticism seldom does a book written by a white author on black life or literature find approval whether a critical book such as Robert Bone's **The Negro Novel In America** or a novel like William Styron's **The Confessions of Nat Turner** In spite of the sympathetic portrayal of Nat Turner, the black hero black critics feel otherwise and are outraged by the novel .

On the other hand, white American critics reject the ethnocentricity of Black Aesthetic theory finding it unbearable in the field of art/literature .They argue that since art/literature is universal a good artist/writer should transcend the limits of his birth, race, language, upbringing, culture and deal with universal human issues. White critics add that since black literature is read by with Americans and is a part of American culture, it is supposed to be judged by the same critical standards applied to mainstream American literature. White critics reject any separate black aesthetic theories because of their contradictions with the universal issues admitted in good literature. They go beyond that to accuse black writers such as Amiri Baraka and Don Lee who are committed to the Black Aesthetic Theory of racism, cultural chauvinism and of practicing apartheid.

The pioneers of Black Aesthetic .Theory respond to such points by arguing that the concept of universality ,as understood in white aesthetic, strongly smacks of parochialism and racism. The concept is ,according to them, based on Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman tradition, and fall seriously short of its claim to present all humanity. Black critics feel that so- called universal outlook can give no real help in the interpretation of literature rooted in tradition other than white European traditions Besides, black writers and critics believe that universal aesthetics is an impossibility. They look upon aesthetic as group-specific. For example, Houston Baker, in an interview with Jerry Ward, refers to the "anthropology of art" to imply that appreciation of art/literature involves the study of art / literature in relation to its social and cultural context. He states: "When I say what constitutes art in a society ,what I have in mind is an attempt to discover what the natives of a culture call art"(51) .Etheridge Knight bases aesthetics firmly in history ,politics and culture of individual groups. In a conversation with Sanford Pansker ,he points out :

Black Aesthetic, to me, is what aesthetic is to any historical groups .Aesthetic is a personal ,subjective thing. To me, what prompts art, what prompts the creative impulse , comes out of a particular group at a particular time in history and the being of the artist and the artist's primary audience. A Navajo Indian poet addressing the French Canadians is crazy . In the first place ,the language won't reach. An aesthetic grows out of a people, along with the people's economics, their politics and everything else. So, to try to delute the authenticity of a group's aesthetic as divorced from the group's politics ,that group's place in the general scheme of things, is foolish. It's impossible. There ain't no universal economical system or universal political system. Therefore, any aesthetics, to me, has to be subjective, personal , within a group (11).

The creation of Black Aesthetic Theory marks a tremendous change in black literary studies. From the 1920s until the 1950s, integration with the American mainstream had been the black writer's ideal but in the 1960s, and due to socio-political factors, the reverse becomes true. "The problem of the de-Americanization of black people", according to Addison Gayle, "lies at the heart of the Black Aesthetic" which Gayle conceives as "corrective—a means of helping black people out of the polluted stream of Americanism". In his introduction to *Black Aesthetic*, Gayle illustrates:

The question for the black critic today is not how beautiful is a melody, a play, or novel made the life of a single black man? How far has the work gone in transforming an American Negro into an African-American or black man? The Black Aesthetic, then, as conceived by this writer, is a corrective - a means of helping black people out of the polluted mainstream of Americanism, and offering logical, reasoned arguments as to why he should not desire to join the ranks of a Norman Mailer or a William Styron. To be an American writer is to be an American, and, for black people, there should no longer be honor attached to either position (22).

Gayle adds, "speaking honestly is a fundamental principle of today's black artist. He has given up futile practice of speaking to whites and has begun to speak to his brothers" (21), a notion which is fulfilled by Amiri Baraka, particularly in *Black Magic Poetry*. The function of the black artist/writer according to Gayle is "to point out to black people the true extent of the control exercised upon them by the American society, in the hope that a process of de-Americanization will occur in every black community in the nation". Gayle continues his argument affirming that the black writer must "wage unlimited, continual warfare against American society—against its values, its morals, its ethics" as issue which is underlined in Baraka's ethnic poetry particularly in the mid and late sixties.

According to Gayle "a new note discernible even to the most biased observer, was sounded in the art of black people during the nineteen fifties and sixties" (15). Due to his historical position in America at that time, the black writer adhering to a Black Aesthetic was engaged (like Baraka) in a war in rebellion against the aesthetic of "whiteness" and what it was meant historically to whites and blacks. Such a writer who strove toward a Black Aesthetic was responsible for creating new aesthetic criteria. As such, he was following the ideology of race first, then art. The black writer in the sixties also followed the artistic maxim of Richard Wright as expressed by John A. Williams' character, Harry Ames, who in *"The Man Who Cried I Am"* says:

*I'm the way I am, the kind of writer I am, and you may be too,
because I'm a black man; therefore we're in rebellion; we've got to be.
We have no other function as valid as that one (45).*

As a rebel, the black writer was responsible for depicting "old values" inherent in black American history and culture; and he was responsible for introducing or establishing new values within the black community. In its narrowest context, a Black Aesthetic according to Henderson (1973) has been conceived by some black writers as one that supports, regardless of literary ability, any black artist who speaks honestly to and about black people. It was also

a rejection of the traditional assumptions of art for an espousal of the rhetoric of Black Nationalism.

Although a Black Aesthetic has not been precisely defined it meant as Larry Neal ,a leading spokesman for the new movement in black artistic expression in the 1960s ,has provocatively stated in *"The Black Arts Movement"* "a radical recording of the Western cultural aesthetic"(257). Neal also says that blacks must determine what is good literature and what is bad . Blacks cannot abdicate their culture to those who exist outside of us . According to Neal , blacks should "guard and protect "their culture "viciously" and work "critical ju-ju on those who screw up". Moreover ,Hoyt Fuller in *"Towards A Black Aesthetic"* emphatically reiterated, traditional Western ideals are not merely irrelevant to the black community , they must be assiduously opposed by the black artist (8) . They were to be opposed to indoctrinate themselves as well as the black community with new concepts of dignity and "black" pride , or, as James Stewart stated ,

The black artist must construct models (historical , social ,and humane) which correspond to his own reality . The models must be non-white . Our models must be consistent with a black style ,our natural aesthetic styles, and our moral and spiritual styles (3).

In theory ,to adhere to a Black Aesthetic was to establish a new and relevant relationship among the technical components of art, the black American community ,and the black creative artist. That radical recording of the Western aesthetic ,as Ishmaei Reed stated ,allowed the black artist to :

*DO YR ART D WAY U WANT
ANYWAY U WANT
ANY WANGOL U WANT
ITS UP TO U WHAT WILL WORK
FOR U (334).*

For black artist of comparable persuasion –such as Neal , James Stewart , Joseph Bush , and Don L. Lee (Haki R. Madhubuti) –a Black Aesthetic explicitly required the black American artist to reject traditional western values –aesthetic of whiteness –associated with "American standards of morality ,justice , education, social behavior ,beauty ...(**Ford** 303) as well as those critical approaches to literature –formalist ,psychological, sociological , art for art's sake , Marxist , Aristotelian , etc. –that are indifferent to the realities of the black experience . Specifically , as Don L. Lee suggested ,a Black Aesthetic in its purest form is directly opposed to a white aesthetic. In *Don't Cry .Scream* , he says :

Black poetry is written for / to / about & around the lives / spiritations / humanism & total existence of black people. Black poetry in form / sound / word & usage / intonation / rhythm / repetition / direction / definition & beauty is opposed to that which is now (&yesterday) considered poetry, i.e. ,whi-te poetry. Black poetry in its purest form is diametrically opposed to white poetry (15-16).

Although there are no set definitions or nor universally agreed upon criteria for a white aesthetic ,traditional aesthetics , or a white aesthetic sensibility ,black artist ,in rejecting a

vaguely defined white aesthetic ,intended to replace them with their own symbolism, mythology, and iconology .As Joseph Bush implies in "Nittygritty":

***...We all gonna come from behind
those
Wigs and start to stop using those
Standards of beauty which can never
Be a frame for our reference ; wash
That excess grease out of our hair,
Come out of that bleach bag and get
Into something meaning to us as
Nonwhite people –Black people(8).***

Central to that Aesthetic was a use of symbolism and iconology which were to be specifically "tailored to fit the exclusive feelings and needs of the Black America subculture , (Ford 303) and thus would be of benefit to black people in America and the Third World.

The conception of the nature and function of literature put forward by Black Aesthetic Theory grows directly out of an ethnocentric nationalistic outlook . Amiri Baraka the most vocal spokesman of Black Aesthetic Theory defines black art as follows in terms of his racial group :

I would like to . . . say that my conception of art, Black art, is that it has to be collective ,it has to be functional, it has to be committed and actually if it isn't stemming from conscious nationalism, then at this time, it's invalid . When I say collective , that it comes from the collective experience of Black people, when I say committed, it has to be committed to change, revolutionary change .When I say functional ,it has to have a function to the lives of Black people (Freydberg 27) .

Maulana Ron Karenga talks about black art in almost the same language .In "**Black Cultural Nationalism**" he says :

. . . all art must reflect and support the Black Revolution . . .all Black art, irregardless of any technical requirements, must have three basic characteristics which make it revolutionary .In brief , it must be functional ,collective and committing . . . we cannot accept the false doctrine of "art for art's sake" (32).

Briefly ,the central tenets of Black Aesthetic Theory are thus collective ,functional ,and committed .The "collective" view prompts literature that gives primacy to society over the individual and withholds approval of literature that puts the individual before society .Because of the strong element of individualism in his works, even a distinguished writer like Ralph Ellison has few enthusiastic admirers among critics who subscribe to Black Aesthetic Theory.

Moreover, in Black Aesthetic Theory a writer does not need to fight shy of didacticism or propaganda .In fact he is called upon to teach his people .In "**Afro-American Literature**

and Class Struggle" ,Baraka comments on the functional aspect of revolutionary literature saying : "The function of art was to teach and educate and move and unify and organize people , not to mystify them or offer dazzling support of the status-quo !" (8). About those who complain that this literature is not art but didactic politics ,his simple reply is "we just argue that they have a bourgeois view of art" (Hull 149) .

Moreover ,the artist in Black Aesthetic Theory is cast in the role of a committed revolutionary fighting for radical social change . Literature works become weapons in his hands . In his "Introduction" to **The New Black Poetry** Clarence Major declares that "our weapons are cultural ,our poems" , and goes on to say that "Black poets here are practically and magically involved in collective efforts to trigger real social change"(12) . Amiri Baraka says that poems are "bullshit" unless they are used as weapons to fight the white establishment and to destroy the black integrationists. He calls for "dagger" poems to slay the Jewish exploiters and for poems to disarm and destroy the cops". Haki Madhubuti (Don L. Lee) writes that black poetry is "like daggers, broken brew bottles , bullets , swift razors from black hands cutting through slum landlords and Negro dope pushers" (**Henderson** 1969 , 32).

Furthermore ,it may be pertinent to ask if .by making an artist a political propagandist and a revolutionary ,art is not sacrificed for politics or made subservient to it .In Black Aesthetic Theory the artistic function is not viewed as something separate from the political function , one canceling or contradicting the other .The two functions do happily mix and blend at least in certain major black writers ,work together in harmony ,support and strengthen each other.

Despite its strong political bias ,Black Aesthetic Theory recognizes the importance of the formal aspect of art .The forms and techniques it commends are ,however ,different from the Western forms and techniques .They are drawn from Afro-American and African traditions—spirituals ,blues ,jazz ,gospel, rhythm ,voodoo ,mumbo jumbo, occultism ,signs ,symbols, rituals and myths which are taken from these traditions provide models and techniques for black writers .Baraka reflects there forms in his poetry on the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Although many black aestheticians such as Don Lee , and Amiri Baraka were serious about creating black artifacts to demonstrate the "excellence of black aesthetic theories", some black artists have merely written prose and poetry by using the complex and controversial passwords of the Black Aesthetic movement : "Black Nationalism" ' "Black Militancy" , "Black Liberation" , "Black is Beautiful" .Others have written ,as numerous critics have pointed out, a "masturbatory art"that used incendiary polemics ,militant slogans and four-letter expletives and epithets , fused words, slashed words ,phonetic spellings , obscenities to scream death to honkie (hunkie) ,mock the "Negro" , and grant superiority to the black man . Sonia Sanchez says :

***My poems be talkin bout blk / people and the kind of
trickology the devil (white man) done devised fo us
(New Black Poetry 22).***

And others create "art" only in the medium believed to be a symbol of pride , source of collective identity and an expression of the unique culture of the black ghetto –Black English

. "To start sentences with capitals , to end sentences with periods / to use commas etc. etc. etc. reeks of ... the colonizer language , correctness learnedness and a subtler more destructive order" (Rodgers10). Those gimmicks became major forms of expression to define a Black Aesthetic during the late 1960s as well as to emphasize the unique qualities of the black man's style ,his traditions ,his "fine vines" (clothes) ,or his "innate" creativity .

To white critics ,the works of black artists of the late sixties and early seventies who relied upon the "uniqueness of blackness" and the total rejection of everything and anything white or Western have justified the suspicion that a Black Aesthetic was simply a form of racism-in-reverse .Nevertheless, it is fair to argue that Black artists such as Gerald W. Barax , Nikki Giovanni ,Carolyn Rodgers ,Sonia Sanchez ,Welton Smith , and Askia Muhammad Toure have not taken artistic expression or the formation of aesthetic criteria seriously . Rather, for them , artistic expression was merely a incomprehensibility ,vulgar and abusive language , a philosophy of hate , anger and violence against mankind , especially one's own kind (the very "folks"[oreos and dictys]Black Aesthetic art is to enlighten) .In addition ,such aesthetic invalidates the historical aspirations , psychology and ideology of most blacks . In brief , that kind of aesthetic is mindless , contrived bourgeois rhetoric , which merely consists of outrageous inanities. Further, a theory based on inanities is inconsistent with traditional black culture ; it is more consistent with the numerous propagandistic tracts which reflect immoral and irrational biases of mankind Ironically , such an aesthetic perpetuates the very irrationality to which some Black Aesthetic advocates object .

Although brashness and intellectual incomprehensibility were a part of the Black Aesthetic movement , like what has just been discussed , they merely represented the absurdities which a misplaced cultural generosity ,to all things created in the name of "blackness" ,allowed to be considered art / literature .The majority of the new generation of black aestheticians in the 1960s. took a Black Aesthetic or Black Art's movement much more seriously .They saw it as a step toward a meaningful social liberation . The serious black aestheticians ,such as Don L. Lee , Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal , intended to recorder a social and racial consciousness within the black community via art .To them , as Larry Neal stated , "All art is propaganda" , and as "the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept" ,it should be used to speak directly to the needs and aspirations of Black America .In the spirit of Malcolm X, the black activist, they viewed black culture as an indispensable weapon in the freedom struggle . Malcolm says: "We must take hold of it and forge the future with the past (563) . Advocates who used art for political purposes comprise a second group of advocates of a Black Aesthetic: Karega believes that politics is the most inclusive means of creating a new world order in this world .

Because many advocates of a Black Aesthetic viewed artistic creativity as the business of making revolution ,the politically motivated like Neal ,Baraka ,Ron Karenga ,and Robert Williams saw social relevance as the primary criterion for judging black art / literature To them ,traditional aesthetic considerations were inconsequential to judging the validity of black art .Their belief ,similar to Addison Gyale's or Nick Aaron Ford's view expounded in "**Black Literature and the Problem of Evaluation**" , or as Léopold Sédar Senghor , writing about Negro African Art suggests , is that art-for-art's-sake does not exist . All art is social (115) . Consequently , they had been exposed to the use of white Western criteria to evaluate black art such as in the case of Baraka's ethnic and revolutionary poetry .

Advocates like Karenga ,Etheridge Knight ,Baraka or Neal believed that artistic expression must be "functional , collective and committed" to the black social revolution in the United States . As an American extension of the ideology of Negritude , art should contribute to the physical and psychic liberation of black Americans as well as to the liberation of all Third World people .Similar to advocated of Negritude –such as Aimé Césaire or Louis –Thomas Achille –they clearly rejected Western-white society and culture as enviable and they believed that the black arts movement must expose the white enemy , praise black people ,and fully support the reordering of the black man's relationship to traditional white models . Baraka says : "We want a black poem . And a Black Word".

As polemicists and artist , advocates of Black Aesthetic like Baraka and Don Lee ,especially rejected the historical literary images and metaphors of whiteness which connote and denote white as pure ,good , universal and beautiful and connote and denote back as impure ,evil ,parochial and ugly .Because black art should be committed to black people , the rejection of white symbols in favor of black symbols was to be functional because it present a positive self-image to all black people. Black art ,for them , then, served a utilitarian purpose ,as Ron Karenga pointed out, but also questioned the very nature of art in relationship to black people and black artists .Karenga points out :

***Art will revive us (black people) , inspire us , give us
enough courage to face another disappointing day
... For all our art must contribute to revolutionary
change and if it does not , it is invalid (36).***

To build a positive racial identity ,they relied upon a rhetoric of heightened racial sensitivity , as in Don Lee's poetry , patterning after the language used in the black ghetto .As Baraka suggested , Black people do have a language of their own .The words may be English but the way a black man puts them together and the meaning he gives them creates a new language . As such ,black language patterns were , in part attempts to shape words into "sophisticated bullets" to indoctrinate the minds of black people and to produce a collective black conscience through art as in Baraka's poetry.

For black arts advocates like Baraka ,Karenga ,or Clyde Halisi ,the true function of black art was to make radical revolution ,with little regard for technical or aesthetic qualities that an individual artist may deem necessary .After all, Karenga says : "Individualism is ,in effect ,nonexistent" (34) .In their opinion, only black people can decide the values of any black artistic expression and the values of black art must come from the people ,as it has historically been viewed in Africa and in the idea of "negritude" .Validation will be determined by the "force and function" it contributes to self-pride and to developing a positive black radical identity .

Baraka and other black artist who call for ethno-political literature totally reject the attitude of black writers such as Gwendolyn Brooks ,Ishmael Reed and others who do not advocate art as a political weapon .In fact artist such as Gwendolyn Brooks ,Clarence Major ,Ron Milner ,and Ishmael Reed did not view the Black Aesthetic movement as political or propagandistic or racism-in-reverse .They ,like Julian Mayfield, Toni Morrison ,William Harris ,William Melvin Kelley ,Ron Welburn or Albert Yong ,realized that political persuasion (propaganda) ,rhetorical inanities ,or a strict adherence to a political dogma would be insufficient to promote the aesthetic qualities of art .They realized that "simple protest and

anger are not enough and rhetoric will not be useful in making the inadequacies of literary craftsmanship (Hill 15).

Those black artists functioned within and around a nationalistic concept of a Black Aesthetic ; they have been as dedicated to raising the level of black consciousness as the Black Cultural Nationalists .Rather than create artifacts from a political or racial perspective ,they sought to establish a positive black identity and to reorder racial consciousness through exploration and rediscovery of the black community's unique cultural heritage :its own particular beauty ,its rich and varied oral tradition ,its private joys and agonies ,as well as its communal "trials and tribulation" .Because there is an aesthetic difference which stems from their particular racial and historical context in Africa and America that kind of advocate of a Black Aesthetic exhorted others to share in his exaltations of the beauty of blackness ."Whether or not we believe blacks are born separate , or should achieve separateness, there is no question that separateness has been thrust upon them(Wilent 88). By creating around and out of their separate existence ,heretofore these advocates of a new Black consciousness created an art that is not particularly black ; rather ,it is more particularly related to an existence in a multi-colored world an issue which is rejected by Baraka .To them "the black arts movement has reached a new level of commitment and sophistication ;its focus is no longer protest against white America ,but (should be) an embracement and celebration of the black experience (Welburn 20) .

This group of writers believe that the black artist who was concerned with trying to encourage and develop valid black artistic experience was faithfully portraying the innermost thoughts and feeling of black people – their excitement , romance , suffering , and frustration . That kind of artist created art , not as art per se , but an art that is meaningful to black people . Following the tradition of black American writing while adding new refinements , writers like Morrison , Brooks , and Reed added integrity to a Black Arts movement . Moreover , they , in this context , challenged the basic premise of aesthetic criteria .Unlike Baraka ,they raised questions about the relationship between "art and politics" rather than "politics and art" . Their emphasis was on art rather than on polemics or racial rhetoric .Their writings depicted the experience of black Americans in the medium of black language which according to James Emmanuel is :

... direct ,creative ,intelligent communication between black people based on a shared reality , awareness , understanding which generates interaction; it . . . places premium on imagistic renderings and concretizations of abstractions ,poetic usages . . . , idiosyncracies – those individualized stylistic nuances . . . – which , nevertheless hit "home" and evoke truth ; it is an idiom of integrated insight ,a knowledge emanating from a juxtaposition of feeling and fact . . . (200).

To create for black people by drawing upon their historical, sociological and psychological experiences as black in white America and in a manner that was honest and truthful to human experiences was the goal of serious black artist who aesthetically recreated the black American experience. However, capturing black experiences in a medium that communicates only to blacks , according to these writers , did not establish a Black Aesthetic ; rather , such artistic expression promised to establish an aesthetic that is meaningful to black people and thus meaningful to other humans .

The previous approach adopted by Brooks , Reed and others with its integration overtones is totally rejected by Amiri Baraka. As an ethnic poet and a black activist , he definitely dismisses as well the following view of Arthur Davis and Sterling Brown who ,in their "introduction" to **The Negro Caravan** identify the assumption underlying integrationist poetics :

The editors. . . do not believe that the expression "Negro Literature" is an accurate one , and in spite of its convenient brevity ,they have avoided using it . "Negro Literature" has no application if it means structural peculiarity ,or a Negro school of writing . The Negro writers in the forms evolved in English and American literature ...The editors consider Negro writers to be American writers and literature by American Negroes to be a segment of American literature ... The chief cause for objection to the term is that "Negro literature" is too easily placed by certain critics , white and Negro , in an alcove apart. The next step is a double standard of judgement ,which is dangerous for the future of the Negro writers (1) .

Baraka also rejects the views of other black critics and writers such as Sanders Redding ,Darwin Turner ,Arthur Davis and others on the concept of a Black Aesthetic .As advocated by numerous black writers and critics ,in the 1960s and 1970s ,a black Aesthetic has not been defined in a single precise way .In fact, some black scholars believe ,as J. Saunders Redding does that a Black Aesthetic does not exist because a White Aesthetic does not exist .There is only an aesthetic . Others .such as Hoyt W. Fuller ,in his essay "**Towards a Black Aesthetic**" stated , albeit cautiously ,that black artists are on the road toward the establishment of specific criteria for a black Aesthetic while implying that a definitive Black Aesthetic ,in practice as well as in theory , may not exist (3) .Still other black scholars , such as Darwin Turner ,questioned the establishment of a Black Aesthetic that call upon black writers "to create the works of art that are needed to demonstrate the excellence of the theories (73).

Some black writers critics , like Julian Mayfield rather found it easier to define a Black Aesthetic in the negative rather than in the positive. "I know quite definitely what a Black Aesthetic is not", (23) or as suggested by Chester Fontenot "A Black Aesthetic negates an 'aesthetic' which is universal and colorless". Other critics such as Arthur P. Davis(1970) suggested that the New Black Poetry is based on and motivated by hatred for white Americans and for everything associated with them , including middle-class Negroes (382) .In addition to the negation ,skepticism ,and caution involved in advocating of defining a Black Aesthetic ,many black artists ,particularly Amiri Baraka consciously resisted defining , "totally", a Black Aesthetic .They did so because they believed that each black artist was trying to define what is of value to him as an artist and to his people as members of an oppressed racial group. To conclusively define a Black Aesthetic automatically limits it and no one has been able to define a White Aesthetic ,even within the context of Western literature .Simply ,the aesthetics of "whiteness" were frequently viewed as anything associated with white-western culture.

However ,the Black Aesthetic started its decline in the seventies ,lost most of its appeal ,popularity and influence in the 1980s and 1990s . The decline may be partly

explained by the continuous improving of economic conditions among blacks in America as well as the simultaneous decline of other black Nationalistic organization such as the Black Arts Movement and the Congress of African People .On one level ,nationalistic aesthetic movements start when a formerly colonized people begin to achieve political equality with their former oppressors but before they achieve economic independence .The fate of such a movement ,then becomes a function of economic history. When economic equality follows political equality ,the nationalistic / revolutionary aesthetic will lose its force and impact on the people .Thus ,Black writers in 1998 call for a study of "Afro-American literature as literature". They call for a " reconstructionist poetics" chiefly responsible for ushering in a generational shift .The new approach seeks a poetics and criticism with open frontiers which tends to function in association with white American aesthetic in order to integrate black literature with mainstream American literature . The new approach ,nevertheless ,which negates "the frontiers of criticism" will make it possible for "the critic to move unobstructed into the neighboring territory of politics in times of struggle for human rights and preservation of group or national integrity" and it will make the critic able to respond "to the demands of a transforming society" (**Aithal** 39) .

In spite of all these developments, and despite the decline of the Black Aesthetic theory which started in the mid1970s and came to an end in the 1990s , it should be admitted that such a theory played an important role in history .For nearly two decades the sixties and the seventies –it held black literature under its sway .It made blacks conscious and proud of their own artistic tradition and encouraged the development of that tradition in contemporary American literature .By stressing the uniqueness of black literature it helped readers and critics from all over the world to develop proper understanding and appreciation of it . Moreover , in giving a political orientation to its work ,Black Aesthetic Theory is only following a fairly well-established line of criticism . if it has no substantial contribution to make to literary theory ,it provides a powerful practical demonstration to what can be achieved by wedding criticism to politics . Critics and some readers know that such a conjugation takes place when a nation or people are engaged in a revolution to overthrow political , economic and socio-cultural oppression and achieve their self-identity .This was the case when Amiri Baraka wrote his ethno-political masterpiece **Black Magic Poetry** which crystallizes –in terms of content and form –the major aspects of the Black Aesthetic –and which will be critically examined in the following chapters .

Chapter Three

Black Magic : The Ppoetry of the Ghetto Introduction

In Euro-American culture , " black magic" has usually been associated with evil and destructiveness but Baraka alters it into an innovative and creative process as reflected in the content of his ***Black Magic Poetry*** .According to Lloyd Brown ,black magic in Baraka's poetry has a special significance . Brown states :

It is both an ethnic and aesthetic power ,attacking rationalistic systems in the culture as tools of economic and racial exploitation, and rejecting overly formalistic approaches to art .The idea of magic in both ethnic and aesthetic terms is therefore intrinsically bound up with the experience of transformation : self-hatred is replaced by ethnic pride and art-for-art's sake gives way to art as responsive and committed design .Magic, the very essence of "irrationality" and disorder ,in rationalistic terms ,is now the symbol of a new , rebellious anti-rationalism .It is a rebellion in which exclusive reliance on objective logic is discarded in favor of the synthesis of reason and feeling , from and substance , in both society and art (119).

In his introduction to ***Black Magic*** , Baraka dismisses his white-oriented avant-garde poetry as symptoms of sickness and signs of the "whiteness" which he had inherited from Western "abstraction and disjointedness" .Kimberly Benston in ***The Renegade and the Mask***, argues that ***Black Magic Poetry*** documents "the difficult and often painful period of exorcism , revaluation and consolidation that was a necessary prelude to the assurance and celebration that mark Baraka's later works" (121).***Black Magic poetry*** is divided into three sections, "*Sabotage*" , "*Target Study*" and "*Black Art*" .In "*Sabotage*", the poet exposes the social and moral ills of the American society .For example ,he attacks the middle class Negroes and the American Jews who economically exploit the poor classes particularly the ghetto blacks :

*The Jew who torments Hitler in Paradise ,wiping
thick fingers
on a hospital cloth .His fingerprints on the dough, marking it
before baking .Drifting to sleep in Pelham , fucking
a female spy.
This man was used against me,
in a dream .*

*Broken teeth
Dirty apron
Hires a bowery desperado ,
to pull out the garbage
and imagine the whiteness
of his wife's withered
stomach .*

Ding

The proportion of Magic

*has seeped so low .
 For the 1st person plural
 America, then ,
 Atlantis ,
 in blind overdose (21).*

Whereas , "**Sabotage**" is a divulgence of America's socio-political diseases "**Target Study**" is a preparation of tactics and an analysis of methods required to obliterate these diseases. Here Baraka's energy is directed toward the total rejection of white Western values ,myths Gods ,culture and religion .Thus, the Jewish God of Western society is totally dismissed: The fag's death/they give us/to worship/a dead jew/and not ourselves" and "the empty jew / betrays us as he does / handing stupidly /from a cross, in a oven ,the pantomime / of our torture". In "**Black Art**". the expulsion of the white "demons" is satisfactorily completed and Baraka turns the full force of this poetic vision toward the development and use of a new mythic apparatus and its relation to black people only .The "**Black Art**" M section which is the culmination of **Black Magic** is a statement of a new ethnic attitude which aims to keep blacks apart from the white American mainstream and relate them to their racial roots in Africa .

However , in the first two sections of **Black Magic** , the poet became conscious of his blackness as he was passing through a cultural purgatory after which he managed to touch the metaphysical basis of his return to his black roots after leaving his avant-garde ,who oriented friends in Greenwich Village .Thus ,the whole of "**Sabotage**" and "**Target Study**" read like a phantasmagoria of past sins ,badly remembered and fragmentary truths and half-created hopes .It is obvious ,in these two sections ,that Baraka is in a spiritual limbo and a culture deadlock from which he cannot release himself until the foolish occupations of the past are fully denounced and the white odds and ends are entirely abolished and the roots of the poet's black life are recognized : "we want a black poem . And a black world / let the world be a black poem / And let all black people speak this poem / silently or loud".

In the "**Black Art**" section of **Black Magic** Baraka comes to the crucial decision to embrace blackness, the final connection According to Baraka's brief introduction to the book "Black Art was a beginning ,a re-beginning ,a coming in contact with the most beautiful part of myself ,with ourselves. The whole race connected in its darkness , in its sweetness" . Baraka adds that his work after 1966 is "self-consciously spiritual , and stronger" but he ends his collection at **1969** because he "did not want to give the devils all of it". The poetry of the "**Black Art**" section is primarily addressed to black men and is about black life .Thus ,the search for a sense of place ,for security in Baraka's newfound ethos is the solid underpinning of all the militant poses and harsh condemnations struck in poems like "**After the Ball**" and "**Black Art**". And thus, there is a preoccupation in these poems with recovering something lost or forgotten .Moreover ,poems such as "Black Art" creatively dealt with the nature and function of poetry as a form of ethno-political statement .The desire of the poet for an ethnic poetry which is a liberal physical tool is best expressed in "**Black Art**" a poem which becomes in itself an example of the power , anger and violence generated by Baraka's black aesthetic at that time :

*Poems are bullshit unless they are
 teeth or lemons piled*

*on a step .Or black ladies dying
of men leaving nicked hearts
beating them down .
We want live
words of the hip world live flesh &
coursing blood .
We want "poems that kill" .
Assassin poems , Poems that shoot
guns .*

However ,a new vocabulary and a new clarity of belief must be developed before ,this new style can effectively fill the void left by the purge of the earlier white methodology ,the content carried by the old language also must be driven out of **Black Magic Poetry** .Thus, fixation upon death which in Baraka's avant-garde poetry had been essentially self-focused, becomes , here ,completely centered on the external white world with its racism ,corruption ,oppression and the subsequent black counter violence .

For example ,Baraka's poetic reaction to the murder of Malcolm X ,his experience as a political activist and his involvement in the Newark riots in **1967** were recorded in a group of poems about Malcolm X and the racial violence in America at that time .These poems which deal with the theme of anger ,violence and black revolution appear in "**Black Art**" , the final section of **Black Magic** .These poems and others characterize Baraka's divorce from this "step-mother America" and his adoption of a new black perspective The poems in **Black Magic** also reflected the major events of the 1960s which stimulated Baraka's militancy and provided the impetus for his radical activism and political poetics .

Crystallizing the ethno-political function of poetry as Baraka argues in his critical essays ,the poems of **Black Magic** explores themes of black pride and ethnic awakening , racial violence and protest ,black identity and black double-consciousness . . etc. In this connection ,it is relevant to argue that **Black Magic** was influenced by the publication of "**The Black Aesthetic Manifesto**" in 1966 which combines literature and ethics .This provides the stimulus for the ethno-political poems which appear in **Black Magic** .The black aesthetic requires a revolutionary dynamic , thus Baraka's poems in **Black Magic** seek new themes , new forms and techniques appropriate for the oral nature of his poetry and compatible with the aspirations of the black masses in the ghetto **Black Magic** is not addressed to the black literature but is an attempt to establish a dialogue between the black poet and his heroes in the streets of Harlem whom he wants to shape into a unifying nation . Thus , Baraka's poetry in **Black Magic** becomes increasingly non-verbal, impulsive , aural , ritualistic and dramatic.

The poems of **Black Magic** reveal the moral deterioration and religious bankruptcy of white America .Dismissing the white civilization as immoral , Baraka seeks to establish strong ties with the black people in America and all the world over using other languages , in addition to English , such as Swahili and Arabic . Being the high priest of the Black Arts Movement , Baraka emphasizes the holy quest of black struggle making his people see their cause as a sacred question .For him ,racial riots are not acts of violence, as white America conceives them, but they are religious commitments that must be done properly . Baraka also attacks America's ambivalent attitude toward violence. To him, America is a nation which speaks against the use of violence while supporting the most terrorist and brutal governments

in the Third World particularly Israel .Baraka also states that American Blacks have always been objects of violence rather than perpetrators .He rejects non-violence as a theory of social and political demeanor which means a continuation of the status quo .

Thus , in ***Black Magic*** ,Baraka creates poetry which is a liberal physical weapon – " poem should be first , daggers... etc" . Equally , in ***Black Magic*** , Baraka rejects the " Christian sanctioned hell" which is modern American society and he affirms the importance of Pan-Africanism and cultural nationalism as the only viable alternatives . In ***Black Magic*** Baraka's allusions are breaking away with Western culture and are increasingly manipulating Eastern mysticism and African Gods to replace –

***The law of some dingaling god, cold as ice cucumbers, for the shouters
and the wiggles ,and what was the world to the words of slick nigger
fathers too depressed to explain why they could not appear to be men
(55).***

This inversion or metamorphoses is a revolutionary act which requires violence .Thus , Baraka , in ***Black Magic*** , posits an increasingly strong mandate for violence and destruction in order to achieve the self-determination and wholeness so long denied the black community . Therefore he calls for "poems that kill , assassin poems / poems that shoot guns /poems that wrestle cops into alleys" . Thus , the subjective and relatively reasonable poetic statement of Baraka's avant-garde poetry gives way to the aggressive assertion and the carefully turns phase gives way to the impulsive exclamation of the ***Black Magic poetry*** .

The Function of Ethnic Poetry

In his book , ***Understanding The New Black Poetry*** , Stephen Henderson argues that "black poetry in the United States has been widely misunderstood ,misinterpreted and underevaluated for a variety of reasons –aesthetic ,cultural and political – especially by white critics" (3) .Like other black poetry Baraka's ethnic and Marxist poetry has been misunderstood by white audience and critics on one level because the poet's concept of art is different from the Western concept .For Example ,the Western concept of "art for art's sake" is invalid for the ethnic poet because it assumes that a work of art can be created for no purpose other than the joy of creation, that it has no impact upon society .During a period of ethnic and political upheaval ,this Western concept of art can not be accepted by a revolutionary poet such as Baraka. Moreover , in black American culture , the world is itself a life-force ; the act of utterance or naming calls reality into being , and thus every word is committed and committing ,Baraka ,in "***Nationalism, Pan-Africanism ,Socialism :Toward Ideological Clarity*** " , argues :

***What we cannot conceive of is unreal ; it does not exist. But every
human thought ,once expressed , becomes reality. For the word holds
the course of things in train and changes and transforms them (26).***

In this context ,the poet's task is a sacred thrust particularly if the poet is black because in black American culture there is a belief in the power of the word whether in literary forms like prose ,poetry or the sermon ,in the telling of folk tales or playing the dozens ,or even in

scat singing ,the pattering of the word is of prime importance because it creates a rhythm whose energy adds other dimension to the reality contained in the sense of the words . In order to be functional ,the word must be pleasing both to the mind and to the ear .That is why ,for instance ,poetry to blacks has always been a performing art whereas in the Western tradition, is aural potential was underestimated and ,up until relatively recent time, poetry became the exclusive province of the educated people .

Since the word calls reality into being as Baraka indicates the challenge for the black American poet is to use what was originally an alien tongue to create his own reality .Baraka has done this in his poetry in several ways .For example he transforms the language into its opposite of accepted meaning –talking "in code" Baraka calls it –("bad is good) and in this sense words such as "black" ,"terrible" ,"vicious" , and "bad" are used in their opposite meaning . Baraka also refers to entities alien to the mainstream culture and the white majority (black sense of time is different from white folks') .Moreover , the poet exposes a reality which white Americans like to pretend does not exist("the flag is crooked"(5),states Baraka is **Raise**). Finally ,the poet rejects the religion , the political doctrine and the language of the white majority entirely such as the change from Christianity to Islam ,the change from Capitalism to Marxism and the change from Le Roi Jones to Imamu Amiri Baraka as well as the use of Arabic and Swahili vocabulary instead of standard English in some of his poems .

Furthermore , in **Home** ,Baraka states that "the black artist is desperately needed to change the images his people identify with ,by asserting black feeling ,black mind ,black judgement" (248) .Within this context **Black Magic Poetry** was written to counter the white magic of the mass media and image-makers. Baraka believes that the function of poetry is to change the negative cultural imagery which is associated with black people in American culture .

In **Black Magic Poetry** , Baraka rejects the racial images of blacks as subhuman which are fashioned by the white mass media . Instead he expresses a sense of reverse racism and refers to whites as animals and commands his black reads to "leave the beast / in its snowy den" (167) .In another poem he speaks about the importance of "Humanism for animals ./We should turn them into humans ./ The Fire will" (203). Furthermore , in **Black Magic Poetry** which was written during the cultural Nationalist period when reversal of the black/white relationships was a major goal ,Baraka repeatedly reconstructed images of Africans projected in Tarzan movies Baraka raises blacks to heroic standards :

*Remembering dances for Tarzan
Until the jungle pots
Boil darkness and the hot
Sun fashions it into
Black heroes (127) .*

Taking the common white stereotypes of blacks wielding razors, Baraka forges a new image of these blacks as heroes defending their people against the white oppressors: "thin heroic bladders / the razor . Our flail against them " (selected poetry 41) .One of Baraka's famous inversions lies in the poem that concludes "State/ Meant" , a part of the last essay in **Home** .In this poem Baraka's penchant for punning and his quest for new black images come together in a complex word play which is frequently quoted :

*We are unfair and unfair
 We are black magicians , black arts
 We make in black labs of the heart .
 The fair are
 fair, and deathly white .
 The day will not save them
 and we own
 the night (252) .*

In this poem , there are puns on the meaning of "fair" (both "light-skinned" and "even-handed") . Besides, the suggestion of supernatural black powers is pitted against white impotence, and most significantly , the metamorphosis of Langston Hughes's imagery of day and night – in his poem *"Dream Variations"* ("To fling my arms wide / In some place of the sun / To whirl and to dance / Till the white day is done . / Then rest at cool evening / Beneath a tall tree / While night comes on gently/ Dark like me") (14) – from the light-hearted to the ominous , reveal Baraka's militant inversion of black/white relationships in his creation of images that will at once give blacks new confidence and inspire them to become revolutionaries .

The notion that Baraka's functional concept of black art and its implicit revolutionary thrust are related to fundamentally different philosophical assumptions must be emphasized , for otherwise, it leads to misinterpretations on the part of white critics who define good art as that which must necessarily have a universal quality , particularly in terms of their own cultural imperatives . White critics in their discomfort with what they sometimes perceive as the "strident" tone of black poetry , have dismissed Baraka's ethnic and Marxist poetry as mere propaganda . As Addison Gayle Jr .in his introduction to *The Black Aesthetic* argues and will become obviously crucial to an understanding of Baraka's poetry ,

A critical methodology has no relevance to the black community unless it aids men in becoming better than they are .Such an element has been sorely lacking in the critical canons handed down from the academies by the Aristotelian critics, the practical critics, the Formalistic critics .Each has this in common :it aims to evaluate the work of art in terms of its beauty and not in terms of the transformation from ugliness to beauty that the work of art demands from its audience (23).

In his comments in the criteria for black art , Gayle adds:

The question for the black critic today is not how beautiful is a melody ,a play , a poem , or a novel , but how much more beautiful has the poem ,melody , play, or novel made the life of a single black man ? How far has the work gone in transforming an American Negro into an African-American or Black man? (23)

What Gayle probably implies here is that the work of art achieves universality if it transforms not simply a black man but any other person into a more humane human being .Black art/ poetry should also seek to affirm the black identity of Afro-Americans as a nation of independent cultural inheritance. Black poetry , in a period of ethnic awakening should

also criticize the hostile white society in America which has attempted to dehumanize blacks by stripping them of their cultural and mythological background and turning them into insignificant beings and shadows – white imitations . One of the major concerns of Baraka's poetry in **Black Magic** is the issue of identity which will be explored in the following section.

Black Diaspora And The Issue of Identity

In "***Race And The Wider Identity***", Erik E. Erikson, in his comment on the identity problem that characterizes the works of ethnic minority writers in America , argues :

The widespread preoccupation with identity , therefore, may be seen not only as a symptom of "alienation" but also as a corrective trend in historical evolution . It may be for this reason that revolutionary writers and writers from national and ethnic minority groups (like the Irish expatriates or our Negro and Jewish writers) have become the artistic spokesmen and prophets of identity confusion.(Their) artistic creation goes beyond complaint and exposure ,and it includes the moral decision that a certain painful identity - consciousness may have to be tolerated in order to provide the conscience of man with a critique of conditions , with the insight and the conceptions necessary to heal himself of what most deeply divides and threatens him , namely his division into what we have called "pseudo-species" (297).

The dilemma of the black American –his loss of identity –stems from the fact that he is a Negro living in the Diaspora –the white American society . This identity crisis has become painfully obvious because blacks suffer at time from a cultural schizophrenia which W.E.B. DuBois, the pre-eminent black American writer and political activist , refers to as "double consciousness" . DuBois believes that the black American wants at times to be a part of a society which denies his existence . In **The Souls of Black Folk** , he states :

It is a peculiar sensation ,this double- consciousness , this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others , of measuring one's soul by the tape of the world that looks on in amused contempt and pity .

In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost .He would not Africanize-America ,for America has too much to teach the world and Africa . He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism ,for he knows that Negro blood his a message for the world . He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American ,without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows , without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face (16-17) .

In opposition to the integrationist stance implicit in "the double consciousness" concept comes the nationalist perceptive enunciated first by black people such as Martin R. Delaney and Bishop Henry Turner from the late nineteenth century on and by Marcus Garvey in the early decades of the twentieth century and given new impetus in the **1960s** by a variety of events on the national and international levels .The violence of the racial turmoil in America in the **1960s** and the heroic struggle of the newly independent African countries and of Cuba

convinced many black writers ,including Baraka ,of the inevitability of violent confrontation as a means of achieving black aspirations and affirming black identity Two towering leaders ,with two different ideologies ,Martin Luther King ,Jr. Malcolm X were preoccupied with the issue of black identity .

Martin Luther King ,Jr. the son of a middle-class Baptist minister ,believes that the assimilation of blacks into the mainstream American culture does not necessarily mean the loss of black identity .Thus ,king preached the white inherited Christian doctrine of love for one's enemies and practiced the non-violent precepts of Gandhi .In many respects ,King typified a continuation of the dominant thinking of the past , for he appealed of the moral conscience of white America to give blacks an opportunity to achieve their identity and allow them into full American citizenship ,an attitude which as totally rejected by Baraka . In contrast to King's integrationist solution to the black identity crises , Malcolm X ,the son of a murdered black activist and himself a reformed criminal ,preached the separatist doctrine of the Nation of Islam and stressed the need for blacks to adopt violence as a self- defence policy in the force of white racism .Dr. King's achievements for the race issue in America were remarkable at a time in which merciless beatings , jailings and murders of blacks reached their culmination .But his failure to achieve any significant economic gains for blacks as well as his own assassination revealed the utter bankruptcy of America's moral conscience .Malcolm X's revolutionary and violent stance acknowledged the frustrated rage of blacks and caught the imagination of millions so that despite the fact that both Malcolm X and Luther King were assassinated , Malcolm's militant vision came to symbolize the spirit of the 1960s , "Malcolm is our manhood" ,Baraka eulogized , and in no area was that fact more apparent than in the literature area where a second Harlem Renaissance of black pride occurred. Here , Baraka became the Malcolm X of ethnic poetry who insists on achieving an autonomous identity for black Americans separated from white America .In "***The People Burning***" he talks about alternatives given to him by the society and his friends who want him to be other than black : "Now they ask me to be a Jew or Italian"(11) .In "***A Letter to Elijah Muhammad***", he is prepared to make the choice and choose his blackness even if it is a choice which will wear him down : "I am tired already / of being so hopelessly right" (12) . In his search for a black identity , Baraka aims to connect blacks in America with their roots in Africa . In "***Ka Ba***" he says :

*We have been captured ,
brothers . And we labor
to make our getaway , into
the ancient image , into a new
correspondence will ourselves
and our black family . We need magic
now we need the spells , to raise up
return , destroy , and create . What will be
the sacred words?" (146)*

In "***Sad Cowboy***" he speaks about himself as a black man living in a white world "full of hatred" .He speaks, self-consciously , as a black him , but it is his recent role in the white world that aggravates him , and it is the vision of assuming a warm niche in that social order that he despises most :

The place , is the final determination .

***What is your place in the order of your feelings ?
As the runner for your nation , focused on their
needs ,
what can you say or dream or float wild copper love
in***

***Place of ,
what you had , which was white and soft, and the
vision of***

***the farm
boy ,standing in his shit .Replacing the man , and
defining***

***his demise .
But that crap is finished .I move with the rest , as
strong as***

***they,
knowing my own mind to be the unneeded rationale ,
the***

kindly explanation (66).

There is no reservation of intellectual orientation here as in the earlier poetry ,where feelings might be withheld behind a screen of tantalizing images . Baraka is obviously unsure of his "place in the order to [his] feelings "and states clearly that this is the most crucial dilemma he faces .Yet , given the admission of unanswered questions and he general undertone of insecurity , the assertions that close the poem –"But that crap is finished . I move with the rest as strong as they"

In **Home** , Baraka observes that his life has become "a struggle in myself to understand where and who I am and to move with that understanding" (9) .Throughout his career he recalls a continuous movement toward affirmation of his own black identity : "My tendency , body and mind , is to make it ,to get there from anywhere always .By the time this book appears, I will never blacker" (**Home** 10) . Baraka , according to Dudley Randall , affirms his black identity by rejecting his middle class upbringing , his marriage to a white woman , his association with whit poets of the Black Mountain and Greenwich Village schools and "his patronizing of white institutions" (112) . In place of this orientation ,Baraka in **Black Magic** came to embrace Pan-Africanism and turned his attention almost entirely to the concerns of the black community.

Commenting on the identity issue, Baraka says "I cannot be anything I'm not" and in "**Philisdnism And The Negro Writer**", Baraka points out :

The Negro middle class that in a society where black is a liability, the coolest thing is not to be that ,so the first thing the Negro writer has to say is , "Well, I am a Negro", which is great, dramatic thing .To say that is realize that it means not only some racial delineation , but a responsibility to a specific and particular culture, one that can be talked about meaningfully ,simply because it is a human experience– your human experience (54).

He echoes these lines in "**Numbers and Letters**" , a poem from **Black Magic** :

*I'm Everett Le Roi Jones ,30 yrs old .
A black nigger in the universe. A long breath
singer ,
Would be dancer , strong from years of fantasy
And study .All this time then ,for what's happening Now. All that
spilling of white ether ,clocks in ghostheads
Lips drying and rewet, eyes opening and shut,
mouths churning (47) .*

In this poem Baraka insists on his blackness and on "all the things that make me ,have formed me ,colored me" .In this poem which comes from "*Target Study*" ,the second part of ***Black Magic Poetry*** ,Baraka is concerned with the most central problem of all – his identity problem, who he is. After exorcising his avant-garde / white past in "Sabotage" , the first part of ***Black Magic*** ,Baraka ,in a parody of the identity crises in James Joyce's ***A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man*** (when Stephen sees himself in terms of "Europe / the world / the universe") , Baraka says :

*I am real , and I can't stay who
I am . Ask me if I know , I 'll say
Yes , I might say no . Still , ask .
I'm Everett Le Roi Jones , 30 yrs old .
A black nigger in the universe (47) .*

In ***Black Magic*** ,Baraka ,like all black American writers , confronts the dilemma of the double-consciousness .Thus ,the volume is characterized by violent images "pinnacled on anguished obscenities" reflecting the conflict in the poet's mind between the two opposing cultures –black and white .In "Le Roy" , Baraka insists on his black identity and rejects all white influence .He wills his own inheritance ,his "sweet" black legacy to his people . He says :

*When I die , the consciousness I carry I will to black
people . May the pick me apart and take the useful
parts , the sweet meat of my feelings . And leave the
bitter bullshit rotten white parts alone (217) .*

In another poem , Baraka reveals the pain of the divided mind or double consciousness in an outstanding manner . Baraka says :

*Read this line young colored or white and know I felt the twist of
dividing memory .Blood spoiled in the air, caked and anonymous
(28).*

Even the title of the poem in ***Black Magic*** reveal Baraka's preoccupation with the options of their choosing sides or being torn asunder : "*The Rainy Night I went Away*" and "*Return of the Native*" . . . etc . In this context ***Black Magic*** is a volume of poetry about which Baraka says , in the words of Claude McKay "there is no white man who could writer my book" (50) .

It is true , then , that ***Black Magic*** , unlike ***Preface*** and ***The Dead Lecturer*** , is a black man's book , characterized by the poet's search for and affirmation of his black identity and punctuated by extensive borrowings from other black writers . The allusions in ***Black Magic*** are drawn largely from the works of black authors . The shift from a white to black frame of reference is clearly presented in terms of the poet's relationship to Richard Wright and James Baldwin ,the famous black novelists . In the following poem "***That Mighty Flight***" Baraka makes an allusion to Bigger Thomas ,the black hero, of Wright's great novel ***Native Son*** , who , like the poet , suffers from an identity crisis :

*My brother , Bigger Thomas , son of
Poor Richard, father , of poor
lost jimmy , locked together all
of us , wringing our hands in the dark .
Lost to our selves and our people , that we find ,
just few moments of life and light let it come
down ,lord , that we love life more than all life
and want it, want our selves , and our black soul nation
to love us as great strong prophets and heroes, but weak
lord ,we weak as flesh , fall sometimes , Bigger laughed
when the old jew left him , " a wry bitter smile," dug we were flying
and his father ,and brother ,and
the son's
son ,all rising ,lord to become the thing you told us.*

Frantz Fanon ,in ***The Wretched of the Earth*** ,in this discussion of the native writer's identity crisis demonstrates :

*In order to insure his salvation and to escape from
the supremacy of the white man's culture the native [intellectual] feels
the need to turn backwards towards his unknown roots Because
he feels he is becoming estranged . . . [he] decide to take all for granted
and confirms everything even though he
may lose body and soul (37).*

In his search for his search for his identity , Baraka , like the native intellectual in Latin America , "turns backwards towards his unknown roots" in Africa . The poet also identifies himself with Egypt . In this context Egypt is associated with the poet's African roots , it is associated with magic and with miracles . The poet considers the Egyptian pharaohs as his ancestors .The African Egyptian spirit is contrasted with the white American spirit .The Egyptian spirit has a cleansing effect "salvation" on blacks .In his poem "***Race***" ,Egypt is "the city of God" ,a holy city ,a kind of Byzantium .Baraka says:

*Title it a smell . In the twilight of our lives , as
things. There is an Egyptian feeling come back
to cleanse us . We sail , this is holier than any
form , that it is , all forms . If we speaks of
"Economics" , a white man sits on his arm ,
listening ,
dirt falling off his 19th century body . The year*

*of their Lord , who is now , famously
dead .
Magi Cities
begin to reform . Our strength is in the drums ,
the sinuous horns , blow forever beautiful princes, touch
the spellflash of everything ,all life ,and the swift
go on
go off and speed . Blow forever , like the animals
plants and
sun . Forever in our universe there is beauty and
light , we come
back to it now .Throwing off the tons of dumb metal the beast
has strapped us in .Those things. These
refrigerators , stoves ,
automobiles ,airships ,let us return to the reality of spirit ,
to how our black ancestors predicted life should be , from the
mind and the heart ,our souls like gigantic kites
sweep across
the heavens ,let us follow them ,with our trembling love for
the world .Let us look up at each other's spirits zooming , and
enter the cities of Gods (223).*

Baraka urges the black people to look forward to Africa /Egypt for their moral and spiritual salvation . However , Baraka's idealistic concept of African reveal that Africa is a Utopia which exists only in the poet's imagination .In "*Return of the Native*" Harlem is depicted as "vicious modernism" whereas black salvation lies in the return to Africa/EGYPT :

*The place , and place
meant of
black people . Their heavy Egypt .
Their minds , mine ,
the black hope mine . In Time .
We slide along in pain or too
happy . So much love
for us . All over , so much of
what we need . Can you sing
yourself , your life , your place
on the warm planet earth .
And look at the stones (108) .*

By presenting Egypt as a utopia and a refuge for blacks , Baraka inverts the white/Western concept of Egypt as the land of tyranny from which Moses and his Jewish followers were dismissed by the Egyptian pharaoh ,according to the Old Testament's story . Moreover , Baraka's poem illustrates that the poet in *Black Magic* has been involved in a search for a united identity , an identity which , according to Larry Neal , in "*The Development of Le Roi Jones*" emphasizes the revolutionary and "spiritual demands of black people and The Third World" (23) .and attempts to "bring aesthetic in line with ethics" (24) . In his search for a united identity for blacks , Baraka attacks the middle class Negroes who deny their

black roots and identity in their attempt to be assimilated into a hostile culture . This motif will be critically examined in the next section .

The Black Middle Class and The Issue of Integration

Baraka attacks the Negro middle class or what he calls in ***Black Magic Poetry*** , "the black bourgeoisie" ,for their attempt to be assimilated into the mainstream America culture . Baraka demonstrates that entrance into the mainstream of American life destroys the Negro as a possible agent of dissent . He argues that Negroes are fooled by tokenism which he defines in ***Home*** as "the setting up of social statements or the extension of meager privilege to some few selected Negroes in order that a semblance of compromise or progress or a lessening in racial repression might seem to be achieved white actually helping to maintain the status quo just as rigidly . . ." (73) . In ***Blues People*** Baraka states :

The black middle class , from its inception (possibly ten seconds after the first Africans were herded off the boat) has formed almost exclusively around the preposition that it is better not to be black in a country where being black is a liability. All the main roads into America have always been fashioned by the members of the black middle class (not as products of a separate culture, but as vague, featureless Americans) The black middle class wanted no sub-culture , nothing that could connect them with the poor black man or the slave (123-24) .

Therefore ,the black middle class member is depicted in ***Black Magic Poetry*** in poems such as "*Black Bourgeoisie*" as someone who

*has a gold tooth , sits long hours
on a stool thinking about money .
sees white skin in a secret room
rummages his sense for sense
dreams about Lincoln (s)
conks his daughter's hair
sends his coon to school
works very hard
grins politely in restaurants
has a good world do say
never says it
does not hate ofays
hates , instead , him off
him black self (111).*

The middle-class persona in the poem hates his black self instead of hating whites (ofays) who oppress him .He believes in the money culture of the West : "sits long hours on a stool thinking about money" .Baraka also attacks the self-hatred of the black middle class which is reflected in their attitude toward white culture .The black persona in the poem imitates whites in everything –in their materialistic interests and even he wants his daughter to change the style of her Negro hair .In this connection , Werner Sollors points out that Baraka criticizes the black middle class for "their adherence to the American economic sensibility" (13).

Besides, Sollors adds that Baraka, during the sixties, rejects the restrictive "Philistine" aesthetic of the black bourgeoisie writers which defines art as an artifact, an "object" and a credit to the race (14).

In *Home*, Baraka makes a distinction between middle class Negroes and blacks. To him the first group, what he calls "Knee-Grows" are those who prefer to be "Uncle Toms" or "imitation white boys" rather than black men. In the early sixties Baraka was still calling himself a Negro and he used the term "Negro" to mean any person of African descent. In 1962, he started using the term Afro-American "an historically and ethnically correct term" (*Home* 66). Later, Baraka was to prefer the term "Black", with a capital "B", or Afro-American and he was to use the term "Negro" as a derogatory term. Many black civil rights leaders and race spokesmen fall within Baraka's connotations for the term "Negro". The same treatment is accorded other prominent Afro-Americans such as actors who, according to Baraka, would rather play Hamlet than engage in black guerilla theater. It extends to opportunists who assume a posture of blackness when it is personally profitable to do so, writers who aspire to create "universal" literature, elected politicians who allow themselves to be manipulated by whites. In *"Poems For Half White College Students"* Baraka attacks the black middle class students who are interested in mainstream culture and seek assimilation:

*Who are you, listening to me, who are you
listening to yourself? Are you white or
black, or does that have anything to do
with it? Can you pop your fingers to know
music, except those wild monkeys go on
in your head, can you jerk, to know melody,
except finger poppers get it together
when you turn from starchecking to checking
yourself. How do you sound, your words, are they
yours? The ghost you see in the mirror, is it really
you, can you swear you are not an imitation
greyboy,
can you look right next to you in that chair, and
swear,
that the sister you have your hand on is not really
so full of Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton is
coming out of her ears (120).*

In this connection *"Poem for Half White College Students"* is more than a harangue at native young blacks and their (white) cultural models (Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, and Steve McQueen). As harangue the poem is a political act, and as such it exemplifies the political basis of Baraka's aesthetic and views at this time. But, simultaneously, the harangue is not simply a matter of ideological content. It also represents a rather calculated and crucial sense of artistic design. As a traditionally oral form the harangue accommodates Baraka's typical attempts to create poetic and other literary forms by integrating literary techniques with oral modes. The poem is sound, sound as political act (the harangue) and as deliberately conceived, specially executed design. And as sound it competes with other artistic and political forms for the attention of Baraka's college audience: "Who are you, listening to me

. . . ?" (p. 120) . Moreover ,the poem challenge that audience to participate in the black cultural traditions of oral art , specially rhythm and blues . And in so doing Baraka integrates the political "sounds" of the poem with the "sounds" of black America's traditional music .This is precisely the kind of integration that makes the poem both a political act and a deliberately contrived work of art .

In "*Television*" ,Baraka examines his adolescent years . At the programmed son of a black middle class ,Baraka ,who was Le Roi at the time , describes himself in the following lines which attack black bourgeoisie :

*. . .winded-up-Leroy heading down belmont avenue thinking he was
grey . James Edward's nose was too ugly hunched
open
like that .And the other dude , the doctor , calling
him dirty names
invisible kike the mind .*

*. . . I limped along with
the rest of the niggers ,and was beautiful then to
invisible greys .
They found me ,found each at the end of the long
slaughter . house.
Who will save the jesuSnigger ?Who will come back
smiling and lick*

Ing

Him

*silent knowledge ?
Who will be the final coming attraction and
beautiful character actor
Of my bonafide creation? The me's of it .The
strong I's .Yell .They*

CRAAAAAAAYYYY

*YYYYYYYYYYE . to good faith blessing . Ahhh .The
Nature . The smell . I*

am whole

I am whole (208) .

The poet here uses popular culture imagery in a pervasive way . He recalls the movie "*Home of the Brave*" in which black actor James Edwards starred . "The winded-up-Leroy" find with cultural shame found the too-negroid features of James Edwards repulsive .The doctor in the line "the doctor ,calling him dirty names" is clearly the psychiatrist in the movie ,who attempts to heal Edwards of his paralysis by provoking him with racial insults . In other poems such as "*The People Burning*" , Baraka rejects the idea of assimilation by insisting on his own identity as a black man :

*Now ask me to be a jew or Italian , and turn from
The moment of disappearing into the shaking clock
of reasonable safety, like reruns of films, with sacred coon stars .To
retreat and replay ; throw my mind out , sit down and broad about the*

***anachronistic God, they will tell you is real . Sit down and forget it .
Lean on your silence ,breathing the dark. Forget your whole life ,pop
your fingers in a closed room , hopped-up witch doctor for the cowads
of a recent generation (10).***

Baraka , sometimes draws the attention of the middle class to the fact that their blackness is a potential power which must be mobilized ,by force ,if a necessary .In "20th – century Fox", he says :

***Dynamite black girl
Swinging in the halls
The world cant beat you
And my slaps are love (84).***

In "Sos" , Baraka cries for help asking all blacks regardless of their social or class distinctions to be united :

***Calling black people
Calling all black people , man woman child
Wherever you are , calling you , urgent , come in
Black People ,come in ,wherever you are, urgent, calling
You , calling all black people
Calling all black people , come in ,black people ,
Come
On in (115).***

In "Goodbye" Baraka attempts to convince the middle class blacks , through gentle persuasion and warming , to change their attitude toward the white society . He says :

***I want you to understand the world
As I have come to understand it
I'll wait here a fewseconds , please come (110).***

When Baraka threatens Negroes , he is asking them to abandon certain of the ideas , values , plans and aims that they have traditionally nurtured . "The Negro's real problem", he claims in Home , "remains in finding some actual goal to work toward a complete equality of means is impossible in the present state of American society . And even if it were possible , the society is horrible enough without Negroes swelling its ranks . The only genuine way , it seems to me , for the Negro to achieve a personal autonomy ,this equality of means ,would be as a truly active moralizing force within or against American society as it now stands" (150) .In order to know himself ,the Negro , according to Baraka ,must separate himself culturally from the white man .Baraka feels contact with white tends to bury deeper and to enervate the Negro's latent blackness . Contact with Jews is also forbidden in Baraka's ethnic canon because the American Jews , like the black middle class have betrayed the black cause by being assimilated into the mainstream culture.

Black Magic and the American Jews

*A jew on the corner was thinking
of bargains .A dog ,out back
did not start yet , howling ,puny words,
barking in sorrow ,a boat, for the spy's family to
ride in
while they watched a sinking image of the world,
and the spy's death
in snow they could really dig as beautiful or cool or
somewhere else ,
or just grimy lace curtains would make them hang
against te boat's window
dreaming of God. The disappointment would come
after they opened their mouths ,or version last
would come ,and coparmies would salute the jewish
dog
barking the rhythms of embezzled deserts .
We are all spies for god .
We can get betrayed . We ask for it ,we ask
so much .And except the fire the sun set the horizon
to slide through human speech dancing our future
dimensions .
We expect some real shit .We expect to love all the
things
somebody runs down to us .We want things, and
are locked here ,to the earth ,
by pussy chains ,or money chains ,or personal
indulgence chains ,lies ,weak
phone calls ,attempts to fly when we know good and
fucking well can't and even
the nerve to get mad ,and walk around pretending
we are huge magnets for the
most beautiful force in the universe. And we are ,
but not in the image of wind
spreading the grass , or brown grass dying from a
sudden snow , near the unemploy
ment office where the spy stands trying to remember
just why he wanted to
be the kinda spy he was (185).*

In ***Black Magic Poetry*** ,Baraka not only attacks the black middle class but also he attacks the American Jews .He considers the Negro middle class as traitors and he hates the Jews because they remain images of assimilated Negroes. Baraka's anti-Semeticism ,on one level, is an intensely personal exorcism of his own personal past and his anti-Semitic references include his first Jewish wife Hettie Cohen and his avant-garde friends .Hettie ,in "***Here He Comes Again***" is depicted as "a hooknosed lady panting at my fly" (54) . Diane Di

Prima ,the avant-garde intellectual and Baraka's ex-friend is criticized in "*Corregidor*" as follows :

*so desperate is the nature of this white woman
that she will confuse
what she is for what she wants, and confuse me
with
Barney Google or Santa
Clause or John Apple nodding in his clothes (76).*

Kimberly Benston in *Baraka " The Renegade and the Mask* argues that Baraka's attacks against the Jews are associated with the poet's attempt to exorcise "the ruins of specific culture" (122) .In fact ,Baraka in *Black Magic* does not speak as an avant-garde American intellectual but he speaks as a black man. In "*The People Burning*" ,he insists on his black identity :

*Now they ask me to be a jew or Italian , and turn
from the moment
disappearing into the shaking clock of treasonable safety ,like returns
of films ,with sacred coon stars .To return ,and
replay ; throw my mind out ,
sit down and brood about the anachronistic God ,they will tell you
is real. Sit down and forget it .Lean on your
silence, breathing
the dark. Forget your whole life, pop your fingers
in a closed room ,
hopped-up which doctor for the cowards of a recent
generation . It is
choice, now, like a philosophy problem. It is
choice, now, and
the weight is specific and personal. It is not an
emotional decision .
There are facts ,and who was it said ,that this is a
Scientific century (11) .*

In "*Citizen Cain*" , Baraka refuses to "be herded off like a common jew" in the sense that he prefers to go to prison than to be assimilated ,like a jew ,into the mainstream of a hostile culture . Baraka explains :

*Where's it all leave' me? A romantic liar , a coward,
not even the courage to kill myself , or drink myself
to death . Just be herded off like a common jew ,
and roasted in my teary denunciation . I'll go to jail
and become a fag, write a huge treatise an religion , and never speak
another English word (8) .*

In *"Four Tom Postell, Dead Black Poet"*, Baraka explains that his friends, Postell, warns him of having relationships with the Jews but as an amateur poet, Baraka does not accept his friend's advice: "you screamed and slobbered on me to hear you. And I didn't". Instead, Baraka "shacked up with a fat Jew girl". The fat girl is Baraka's first wife, Hettie Cohen who is depicted as one of "the cows and intelligent snakes of the age" and one of "the beasts and meateaters". Then, he apologizes for his dead friend who was killed by the Jews: "They killed you- they ran you down third avenue". Baraka also recalls his memories with the Jews in New York: "I strode with them, played with them, thought myself one with them, and Jews were talking through my mouth". After few years and in the mid and late sixties, Baraka regretted his association with Jews and came to realize what Postell meant. Baraka writes the following lines which come at the end of his poem for Tom Postell, the lines include some images which are considered repulsive by white critics:

*Now I know what the desert thing was why they fled from us
into their caves . Why they hate me now . . .
having seen them as things , and the resistance to
light , and the
heart of goodness sucked off , vampires ,flying in
our midst , at the
corner, selling us our few horrible minutes of
discomfort and frus-
tration .
Smile , jew .Dance ,jew. Tell me you love me ,
Jews . I got
something for you now though. I got something
foryou ,
like you dig ,
I got .I got this thing, goes pulsating through black
everything
universal meaning. I got the extermination blues ,
jewboys.
So some for the rent , jewboys ,or come ask me for a
book , or
sit in the courts handing down yr judgements ,still I
got something
for you ,gonna give it to my brothers , so they'll
know
what your whole
story is, then one day, jewboys, we all ,even my
wig
wearing mother
gonna put it on you all at once (153-154).*

In *"The Test"* Baraka denounces the Jewish God and sees black men as Gods, in the Miltonic not the Dantesque sense: Gods dispossessed and in hell. "Like Gods we are in hell, fallen, pulling now, against the gravity of the evil one himself. Black streak from sun power. We are Gods, Gods, flying in black space". Baraka adds:

*And now are in Hell .
 You see the fire and death . (The jew enters ,
 with desert pouch and four italian mobster
 cops . Their God is a simple one . He bangs over the
 earth
 with his dripping piles killing the trees .He enters,
 to force us into crazyhouse and caskets . The
 bastard
 enters , he enters , with four dragons , fatsos full of
 television
 spaghetti ,which is Chinese anyway , he enters , with
 his publish
 eyes , and disgusting habits . He enters , With them .
 he enters .The
 bastard enters) .You see
 dead niggers wallowing in the street .You see
 the celebration of ignorance and ugliness . This
 is the white man's image .This is what hell is (188) .*

The whole poem is important because it establishes the end of the poet's belief in the Jewish God –seen here with fur Italian "mother cops" and with the "four dragons" of Revelation .Jews and whites are seen as driving blacks against their nature ,and here is no alternative but "the upward gaze" pulling now/ against the gravity of the evil one himself" .The black Gods ,at this stage of Baraka's poetic development ,must replace the Jewish and white Gods .In another poem from *Black Magic* , Baraka says : "This year 1966 , in their measure ,almost two thousand years since they hung this old jew ,and made Sidney Poitier carry his cross . . . some sleep holding their breath in the urine air" (146) .

In "*The Black Man Is Making New Gods*" , Baraka reviles the Jewish God ,the old hanged man ,as one who ,by mimicking the black man's suffering ,may well have distracted him from his purpose . The entire poem is as follows :

*Atheist jews double crossers stole our secrets crossed
 the white desert white to spill them and
 turn into wops and bulgarians .
 The Fag's Death
 they give us on a cross .To Worship .Our dead
 selves
 in disguise .The give us
 to worship
 a dead jew
 and not ourselves
 chained to the bounties
 of inhuman
 mad chains of
 dead jews
 and their wishes
 and their escape
 with our power
 with our secrets and knowledge*

*they turn into loud sings
advertising empty factories
the empty jew
betrays us , as he does
hanging stupidly
from a cross , in an oven , the pantomime
of our torture ,
so clearly , cinemascope the jews do it
big , hail the whiteness of their
waking up unhip
no
ties
with the black holy ghost
who created them
from the dirt on a burn hunch
the shit
would be useful (205).*

What Baraka calls for is an inversion –black Gods must replace white and Jewish Gods .White morality , symbolized for Baraka by the Italian mobster and the Jewish merchant ,must be abolished in order to established his black utopia .

Baraka's anti-Semitic attitude is also recorded in "*Attention Attention*" .Here ,the recurrence of anti-Semitic images is very effective since they are accompanied by a new tone of militaristic dogmatism in a holy warfare of racial revenge :

*All greys must be terminated immediately
Project cutoff date moved up Fifty Years
End of species must be assured (135).*

In "*Black Art*" ,Baraka considers the "Jew Lady" and the "owner Jews" as his enemies .The "owner Jews" represent the Jewish landlords and merchants whom Baraka charges with the exploitation of black people in the ghetto .According to Henry Lacey , "The roots of Baraka's attitude regarding Jews stems ,at least in part ,from the negative effects of earlier relationships" (102) .Nevertheless ,Baraka's professional relationships with Jews have never been good particularly in the 1960's .He used to have problems with Jewish publishers .He believes that Jewish businessmen have a stranglehold on the publishing and recording industries in America using black artists to swell their own coffers .In an interview with Marvin X ,Baraka declares that he would have booked the Spirit House Movers and Players on the rhythm-and-blues circuit except for the fact that "you have to go through Jews to do that " (17) .Moreover , Baraka's judge during his riot trial was a Jew who accused Baraka of carrying fire weapons during the Newark riots in the 1960s.

In reaction to Baraka's anti-Semitism ,Allen Ginsberg commented in a 1968poem called "*Genocide*" , collected in *War Poems* , a book edited by Diane Di Prima ,saying : "I thought / he spoke against my Jews / flashed throw my mind to/ tell him this fault" (37) .But , in 1970 ,Ginsberg changed his views about Baraka's anti-Semitism claiming that Baraka was

following archetypal intuitions which were not "right" or wrong –they are true dreams of a true dreamer .In spite of Ginsberg's comment Baraka's hatred of the Jews is not a kind of dream or an illusion but it is due to the poet's political and ideological views . In the mid and late sixties and during his ethnic phase , Baraka reveals his hatred of the Jews basically for their pro-white mainstream position during the racial conflict in America. In the seventies and the eighties and during his Marxist phase ,Baraka attacks the Jews who constitute a part and parcel of the American capitalist system which crushes the working classes particularly the poor blacks in the ghetto .The hostile attitude of Baraka toward the white American society in general and the Jews in particular results in his militant poetry of the mid and late sixties which is termed by some white critics as "the poetry of black hate".

Chapter Four

Black Magic: The poetry of Black Hate

*I hate them , oh!
I hate them well ,
I hate them, Christ !
As I hate hell !
If I were God ,
I'd sound their knell
This day" (Black Aesthetic 20).*

In "*The New Poetry of Black Hate*", Arthur P. Davis argues :

Since the 1950s ,a new type of Negro American poetry has come into being ,a poetry whose subject matter is unlike that of any other poetry heretofore produced by Negroes .It is a poetry based on and motivated by "poetic" hatred for white Americans and for everything associated with them including middle class Negroes (147).

In response to Arthur Davis's argument ,black critic Addison Gayle points out that the committed black artist is constantly in conflict with the white society. The black artist also attacks the social and moral codes of white society which dehumanize blacks .In the past ,the black artist ,according to Gayle ,wanted to be integrated into the mainstream American culture. He was anxious to become equal to the white man because blacks at that time "believed in the American dream" and in the false myths of America innocence . Nevertheless ,the black artist of the 1960s, like Baraka ,does not want to be assimilated into the white American society but he seeks separation .Gayle states :

The serious black artist of today is at war with the American society as few have been throughout American history. Too often ,as Richard Wright noted , the black(artist)"...entered the court of American public opinion dressed in the knee pants of servility , curtsying to show that the Negro was not inferior, that he was human ,and that he had a life comparable to other people". They waged war not against the society but against the societal laws and mores that bared them from equal membership .They were in the main , anxious to become Americans , to share in the fruits of the country's economic system and to surrender their history and culture to a universal melting pot .They were men of another era who believed in the American dream more fervently than their white contemporaries. They saw the nation as a land of innocence , young enough to hold out promises of maturing into a nation of freedom, justice, and quality. The day's of innocence have passed .The child has become the adult ,and instead of improving with age, she has grown increasingly worse (17).

Larry Neal , in *"The Development of Le Roi Jones"* regrets the notion that "Jones (Baraka) since Malcolm's death , has been projected by the news media as a venom-filled monster oozing with hate of the white man" (24) .In fact, it is easy to find poems attacking American society, as a whole, throughout ***Black Magic*** , particularly in the first section ,*"Sabotage "*. For example ,in "three Modes of History and culture" ,Baraka attacks the moral "emptiness" of the American civilization. Even American cathedrals are "chalk mark sex of the nation" .In a waste land manner , Baraka echoes Eliot in " catching hellfire in windows , passing through the first ignoble cities of Missouri, to Illinois and the panting Chicago". Baraka's cities represent the moral bankruptcy of the American wasteland : "And then all ways ,we go where flesh is cheap" .In the American cities ,the rich capitalists suck the blood of the poor "where factories sit open burning" its workers .

Baraka ,the black poet, who walks "through fog and history" criticizes the dead cities of American civilization .In a wasteland fashion ,Baraka echoes Eliot in the following lines where he attacks famous American figures such as John Dewey and Abraham Lincoln :

*Chalk mark sex of the nation , on walls we drummers
know
as cathedrals . Cathedra , in a churning meat milk . Woman glide
through looking for telephone .Maps
weep
and are mothers and their daughters listening to
music teachers. From heavy beginnings . Plantations,
learning
America ,as speech, and a common emptiness .
songs knocking
inside old women's faces .Knocking through cardboard trunks.
trains
learning north, catching hellfire in windows, passing through
the first ignoble cities of missouri ,to illinois ,and the panting
Chicago .
And then all ways ,we go where flesh is cheap . Where factories
sit open, burning the chiefs. Make your way! Up through fog and
history
Make your way ,and swing the general ,tha it come flash open
and spill the innards of that sweet thing we heard , and gave they theory
to .
Breech, bridge, and reach, to where all talk is energy . And there's
enough ,for anything singular . All our lean prophets and rhythms .
Entire
we arrive and set up shacks, hole cards ,Western hearts at the edge
of saying. Thriving to balance the meanness of particular skies
Race
of madmen and giants (3).*

Baraka dreams of a time in which he will be able to leave the American city, for the sake of his own salvation . if he can do this his "songs will be softer" and he will not probably write his militant poetry :

Brick songs. Shoe songs. Chants of open weariness.
Knife wiggle early evenings of the wet mouth .
Tongue
Dance midnight, any season shakes our house .
Don't
Tear my clothes! To doubt the balance of misery (3).

In "*A Poem Some People Will Have To Understand*", Baraka asks "will the machine-guns please step forward?" (6). This call for violence stems from Baraka's impatience with the white American society where "justice" is "a fantasy". The poet has been living in such a society waiting for a kind of change which may end the suffering of blacks -but the white *Godot* will never come –"but none has come". Baraka cries: "we have waited for the natural phenomena, but none has come". In "*The New World*", Baraka, the avant-garde intellectuals: "Beatniks, like Bohemians, go calmly out of style"(22). And in "*Square Business*", he attacks the lack of feeling among Americans. In the last section of the poem, the poet manipulates rhythmic language which characterizes his oral poetry: "Time time is . / The pop of the clock, your head /on the block ./or your wife , another / life , to fly us black to historical hate" (30).

In "*After The Ball*" ,Baraka attacks America and its "avenues of failure" and its "ghost towns" :

*So much for America, let it sweep in grand style
up the avenues of its failure. Let it promenade
smartly
beneath the marquees of its despair .*

*Bells swing lazily in New Mexico
ghost towns . Where the wind celebraes
afternoon , and leftover haunts stir a little
out of vague instinct ,*

*hanging their messy sheets
in slow motion against the intrepid dust
or the silence*

which they cannot scare (17).

In "*The Black Man Is Making New Gods*", Baraka criticizes Western civilization accusing the West of cultural impotence and robbery—the west stole the scientific discoveries of the Arabs :

*These robots drag a robot
in the image of themselves , to be
ourselves , serving their dirty
image . Selling fried potatoes
and people , the little arty bastards
taking arithmetic they sucked from the arab's
head .
Suck you pricks . The best is yet to come . On how*

*we beat you
and killed you
and tied you up .
And marked this specimen
"Dangerous Germ
Culture" . And put you back
in a cold box (206).*

In "*I Don't Love You*" ,Baraka reveals his hatred of the white American civilization and culture :

*Whatever you've give me ,whiteface glass
to look through, to find another day there , another what motherfucker?
Another bread tree made at its sacredness , and the law of some
dinagaling god ,
cold
as ice cucumbers, for the shouters and the wigglers, and what was the
world to the words of slick nigger fathers,
too dipressed to explain why they could not appear
to be men.
The bread fool. The don'ts of thias white hell. The crashed eyes.
of dead friends, stanind at the bar, eyes focussed
on actual ugliness.
I don't love you. who is to say what that will mean . I
don't
love you, expressed the train, moves, and uptown days later
we look up and breath much easier
I don't love you (55).*

In "*A School of Prayer*", Baraka says that blacks are "all beautiful" and "white people are full of and made of shit". The angry poet advices his people to turn their backs on the white American society and its decadent culture :

*Don not obey their laws
which are against God
believe brother , do not
ever think any of that
cold shit they say is
true .They are against
the law .Their "laws"
are filthy evil , against
all might God. They are
sick to be against God ,
against the animals and son ,
against thought and feeling
against the world as it most commonly
is. That is they are against
beauty .Do not let them show you*

***a beer can ,except believe their profundity
is as easily read .Do not believe or shelter them .
do not let them eat your children .Do not believe
or shelter them ,or shelter their slickbullshit
for one second in your heart (121).***

In "*Babylon Revisted*", Baraka severely attacks the white woman ,a product of the decadent culture ,for being a sterile prostitute who victimizes blacks .The white woman in the poem is stereotyped as a barren whore who has no productive sexual organs "nothing to make babies". Baraka says :

***The gaunt thing
with no organs
creeps along the streets
of Europe ,she will
commute ,in her feathered bat stomach-gown
with no organs
with sores on her inside
even her head
a vast puschamber
of pus (sy) memories
with no organs
nothing to make babies
she will be the great witch of euro- american legend
who sucked the life
from some unknown nigger
whose name will be known
but whose substance will not ever
not even by him
who is dead in a pile of dopeskin (159).***

Then he speaks about the destructive interracial relationship between the white woman and the black man in a racial society. The white woman ,like Lula in Baraka's play *Dutchman* , destroys her black victim turning him into "a faggot" – Baraka's term for the black male who lost his manhood in his attempts to imitate whites .Baraka adds :

***This bitch killed a friend of mine named Bob Thompson
a black painter , a giant , once , she reduced
to a pitiful imitation fagot
full of American holes and a monkey on his back
slapped airplanes
from the empire state building (159) .***

Bob Thompson ,a black artist ,like Charlie Parker and Clay- the protagonist of *Dutchman* is victimized by the white society .In reality ,Thompson ,who lives in a hostile environment ,falls prey to white women and drugs .Baraka ends his poem with the following warning :

May this bitch and her sisters ,all of them,

*receive my words
in all their orifices like lye mixed with
cocola and alaga syrup
feel this shit, bitches, feel it, now laugh your hysterectic laughs
while your flesh burns
and your eyes peel to red mud (159) .*

Richard Barksdale, in *"Humanistic Protest in Recent Black Poetry"*, emphasizes that "the tradition of protest against his social ,political and moral conditions runs deep in the black man's literature in America"(157) .In *"Western Front"* , Baraka protests against his old artistic orientation by attacking Allen Ginsberg , the poet he once described as the "only white man in New York I reality trust" .Here Baraka indicates his former associate for his mid - sixties emergence as the irresponsible , euphoric guru of the drug cult . Baraka says :

Poems are

*made
by fools like Allen Ginsberg, who loves God, and
went to India
only to see God, finding him walking berafoot in
the street ,
blood sickness and hysteria, yet only God touched
this poet ,
who has no use for the world. Bur only God , who is sole dope
manufacturer of the universe ,and is responsible for ease and
logic .Only God ,the baldhead faggot ,is clearly responsible ,
not ,for definite ,no cats we know (81).*

Here ,Baraka criticizes his avant-garde friend who escapes from the American Wasteland in Buddhism and Hinduism. According to Baraka ,Ginsberg went to India to "see God" even if God is "sole dope manufacturer of the universe" and a "baldhead faggot" –Buddha. The poem, however, has a poignancy that leads the readers to think that Baraka probably sympathizes with Ginsberg's faith –though he criticizes it and cannot by any means share it. In the poem, there is no India for Baraka to travel to : "God is not a nigger with a beard. Nor is he not" (90) and no amount of search, at this period of turbulence ,during his career as a black activist, seems likely to bring Baraka to the kind of peace he imagines for "fools" like Allen Ginsberg.

In *"Alone and Centered"* ,Baraka attacks white people : "whirling devils, painting Jews, cunt teasers". Because white Americans are nurtured on white culture ,they are killers ,thus he warns blacks of the evil nature of these people :

*They will kill you
if you cross them. If you
dare to speak of breathing
world, they will menace you if
you are stronger than you are ,
they will try to bring you down (86).*

In "*Babylon Revisited*" Baraka attacks white women because of their sterility and unchastity whereas, in another poem, he praises black women in spite of their Negro features :

*The black woman in Newark are fine .Even with all that grease
In their heads .I mean even the ones where the wigs slide around , and
they coming at you 75 degrees off course.
I could talk to them. Being them around . to something
Some kind of quick course, on the sidewalk ,like
Hey baby
Why don't you take that thing off yo'haid .You look
like
Miss Muffett in a runaway ugly machine . I mean. Like that (137).*

This ethnic pride and racial belief in black superiority make the poet reach the following conclusion :

*When I die ,the consciousness I carry I will to
black people .May they pick me apart and take the useful parts, the
sweet meat of my feeling . And
leave
the bitter bullshit rotten white parts
alone (217).*

In "*A Poem For Religious Fanatics*" Baraka demonstrates that some blacks are deceived by white civilization "because they do not know enough to hate white man" (90) .In "*The Test*" , the poet attempts to justify his hatred of the white man:

*They drive us
Against
the wall white
people
do ,against
our natures
free and easy atoms
of peaceful loving
ness .Beautiful things .Our sign permits
of the upward gaze Toward heaven ,or haven ,in
the spirit reach of black strength ,up soaring ,
like Gods we are in hell, fallen ,pulling now
against the gravity of the evil one himself .
Black streak from sun power .We are Gods ,Gods , flying in black space
.And now we are in Hell (188).*

Moreover, the white people in America are depicted in "*Hands*" as "Junkies move on a long string .Slobber blood from their noses ,crumbling in front of Carnegie"(78).The white people are "mice and fucked ladies" (129) . The poet prefers the black woman who

*... is better than
white drifting fairies , muses , singing
to us, in calm tones, about how it is better to die etcetera, than go off
from them ,how it is better to
lie in the cruel sun with your eyes turning to dunes
than leave them alone in that white heat (63).*

In "*I said It*" Baraka reveals his reverse racism when he speaks about whites as animals "the white man's hairy ancestors" living in caves . He states :

*The white man's isolation, like the sun slicking thousands of miles of
snow into ice where such philosophies were dreamed
up. In those barren caves, on those inhuman cold scenes the white
man's kairy ancestors made their first baby gesture to fuck up
dogjawed cracker of the west .Who is so cold would wipe his behind
on the souls of men (168).*

In "*Jitterbugs*" Baraka attributes all the corruption of the world of the white man :

*The imperfection of the world
Is a burden , if you know it , think
About it , at all .Lick up in the sky
Wishing you were free ,placed so terribly
in time ,mind out among new stars ,working
Propositions , and not this planet where you
cant go anywhere without an awareness of the hurt
the white man has put on the people .Any people .
you
cant escape, there's no where to go .They have made
this star unsafe ,and this age ,primitive ,though yr mind
is somewhere else , your ass aint (92).*

In "*Ready or Not*", Baraka attacks the immorality of the West . He is not interested in living in a country full of homosexuals . He criticize the American government "the White House" as well as the American president in the 1960s and the American police "dogs" as well as the American Jews who "own radio stations" . The poet says :

*We are moving through the streets five oclock dead tired dreaming of
dying white men . We
flex out trigger fingers on 14th street dreaming of dying
white men .We look up at the flag cold wednesday ,
at center,
in October, my birth feeling, turns the season, new now can something
ram through your veins, nodding under god, and
still dreamed
of dying white men .It rained, it stopped , he fucked and came .
He walked near supermen whose grandmother lived*

*in Dublin . He
 Puts small bits of herb in the end of a cigarette ,
 thinking of
 amazing language, but move and stop were dream
 and core of who
 he moved and said he loved tho he this tall nothing
 rain god
 had larger flights, these dreams psychiatrist
 sucking around
 rich pussy would be God's function in newtown ,
 utopia , euphoria,
 under closed lids of the comers ,now cold dead in
 the whitehouse (79).*

Then Baraka speaks about the historical brutalities and atrocities committed by the white man .He refers to the immigration of white Americans who come basically from "the cold caves Europe" with their horses "to kill the beautiful Moors" .The moors are the Red Indians ,the native inhabitants of America, who were annihilated by the white man .There repulsive image of the American cowboy ,the man on the horse –" snorting cold air and cocaine"—undermines the American myth of innocence and affirms the brutality of the white man :

*These dreams , go back to the cold caves f Europe,
 the horses snorting
 Cold air and cocaine snow , they rise and ride to kill
 The beautiful Moors .
 Slung on a horse (a dime a day ,no show ,blow the whole load) fast
 motherfucker , still dreaming . . .
 RISE GOD FROM SLUM FACTORY
 SUCKER
 OF RHYTHM
 LORD*

The following allusion to the white man's brutality during the Second World War "Hiroshima" emphasizes the inhumanity of the white man throughout human history and predicts the subsequent genocide of black Americans if they remain passive and non-violent in the face of white racism :

*(in sneakers he moves so quiet
 with a big razor e will beatify
 What bright hand struck at Hiroshima ?
 To be in love so long , and stare at
 the water , without yourself , or a
 single beautiful white woman . . Now
 he will move , still faster . . . love . . .
 love ,where are you , I want you ,
 BLACK MAN DREAMING OF MIURDER
 GET THE SHIT AND MEET ME
 SOMEPLACE ,*

*dreams
the world in happy-talk (that's
german psych-floogie for hard
on ,
the projected singings
name stars fly past them
to where we still rule.
The assembled laughed , in
white hat and red suspenders .
"You dumb farmer ," I began
all of the worldless music ,
all of the eyeless meanings
all of us who are left
alone too much
This poem now has said
what it means , left off
life gone seconds ago (80).*

Because of the white man's bloody history against the Red Indians and his racial history of oppression of blacks , black people do not like to live in the white man's world –"the land of the dead" and "the country of the blind" . Baraka explains :

*There is a sickness to the black man
living in white town .Either he is white
or he hates white , but even in hating , he
reflects , the dead image of his surrounding .
his moon is saw dust marble . His walk is long
and fast , because he doesn't want the reality
of his importance to sing , instead he will sting
you , before you ask him to look deeply into any reflector
and see himself eating gravel and dust , and old
wood hearts .
There is a sickness to the black man in white town, because
he begins to believe he can beat everybody's ass,
and he can,
down there, where each man is an island , and the heaviest bomber,
throwing down tnt can establish some conditional manhood in the land
of the dead, in the country of the blind . A one-eyed man , with rotting
palms , king of the tribes of the lost and the dead (89).*

Baraka refers to the escape from the white man's world ,the world of cannibals using new poetic shapes as indicated in the form of the poem :

*But we have gone away
from you , one-eyed man, cannibal ,
o slickest weapon of the romes
we have left you , to come black
to ourselves , We have gone away from*

*the dead forests of your allergic kingdom
away from your evil fear women , from away
your heavy screaming of anti-fact , and left you
with your brothers ,who are no kin to you at all (89).*

The poet ,at this stage of his ethnic awakening totally rejects all aspects of Western culture and art .In "*Television*" ,he refuses..

*To be a man ,
Or a white thing crawling through nuns dreams . I
the beginning of my heart we walked and rode
motorcycles into each other , killing each other ,
fucked japs , in the beginning , and were Sammy
davis
for allen ginsberges frank sinatra . the beginning ,
of the alien .of the path back to my self . the cold
illnios skeletons of dostoevski . in the track crossing ,
in the movie feelings (that's Saturday evening culture for the blind) . I
hurt myself . I struck and stabbed
and wounded my own gentle flesh. I began. This
sliding
talking pictures of old relatives sudden heroes who were
dead spitos of the winded-up-leroy heading down blemont avenue (207).*

In "*Dada Zodzi*" Baraka attacks slavery which started by whites who came from Europe and America .These Western people build "steal ships to kill their brothers" –blacks .He refers to the African shores as "coasts of gold" .In a sad tone , the poet depicts a vivid image of the slave ship's era where blacks –black gold–were brutally taken by white slave traders to an alien continent , to the West "

*Ships crowd west , in long lines
Floating culture in . New ports and
Stalls , designed by disease and money .
The honeyed genius hoists a flag . Storm
Warning , of nationalism and misguided
Archaeology . Manning steel ships to kill
Their brothers . Along both coasts of gold
Twist is a bird
Whose wings are wet
From eating on the fly . (Ship lanes
In straight lines . For harmony and
The stacked deck of power's measures.
"Millions killed themselves,"
in the dark . Jumping
off building and boats
complex geography of motives . Red dot
to red dot , from waters marked on light blue
along the coast. But their histories are blurred. Misread for effect.
Booms that shattered the ears*

Of schoolboys too young to see in the dark (61).

When blacks came to America ,they were dehumanized and the free human beings of Africa were turned into slaves in America. Now , they want a magic formula to bring them back to their homeland in Africa .Nevertheless ,they cannot go back because the white man turns them into slaves changing their African religious and forcing them to worship the white God who is depicted as "a white man with a dueling scar" :

***Now poleaxed to the vacant cement
they want an herb to bring them back .
Restore their flesh and noise (for the fathers)
who vanished into elevators loosening
their ties .Vowing not to drink or swear
until the man would let them see God .(A white man with
a dueling scar (61).***

In the final section of the poem ,Baraka reveals his rejection of the white culture by dismissing the white/ Western God of the Bible :

***I want
to see God . If you Know
him .Biblically , have
fucked him . And left him wanting ,
in a continuous history of defeat. Screaming ,then ,
in a fog of meanings setting on the rotting crop .
When I was coolest
they said I limped . Was lame ,
and had no future past memory .
Restore me ,was a song
I made . let me drink
of the high getter. Let me
seriously lose my mind .***

***Limping
across an ocean . With no tongue
to give my children their names .
Claiming the useless parts of vegetables, and a
music
too close to hysteria .
A coloring device .universe of tones.
Claim now , an old fly , little letter God
who has gone to bed with no one
for the last 300 years (62) .***

The white American God of the previous poem becomes the "Jewish God" in "*The Test*" who is severely attacked by Baraka:

*(The jew enters ,
With desert pouch and four italian mobster
cops .Their God is a simple one .He hangs over the
earth
with his dripping piles killing the trees .He enters,
to force us into crazyhouses and caskets. The
bastard
enters, he enters ,with four dragons ,fatsos full of television
spaghetti ,which is chinese anyway ,he enters ,with his puplish
eyes ,and disgusting habits .He enters .with them .
He enters .The
bastard enters.) You see
dead niggers wallowing in the street .You see
the celebration of ignorance and ugliness . This
is the white man's image .This is what hell is (188).*

In "*The Black Man Is Making New Gods*" ,Baraka also reveals his hatred and rejection of the white American society by denouncing the white God as an extension of that culture .The white God in this poem is also Jewish :

*Atheist jews double crossers stole or secrets crossed
the white desert white to spill them and
turn into wops and bulgarians .
The Fag's Death
they give us on a cross. To Worship. Our dead
selves
in disguise .They give us
to worship
a dead jew
and not ourselves
chained to the bounties
of inhuman
mad chains of
dead jews
and their wishes
and their escape
with our power
with our secrets and knowledge
they turn into loud singns
advertising empty factories
the empty jew
betrays us, as he does
hanging stupidly
from a cross ,in an oven ,the pantomime
of our torture ,
so clearly ,cinemascope the jews do it
big , hail the whiteness of their
waking up unhip
no*

*ties
with the black holy ghost
who created them
from the dirt on a bum hunch
the shit
would be useful (205).*

The white God in "*I Don't Love You*" is a "dingaling God" , in "*Dada Zodzi*" is "a white man with a dueling scar" and in "*Madness*" the white cross is "a double dirty cross, to hang your civilization" (162). Moreover , in "*Madness*" Baraka attacks the white American figure who appears in the poem as "a mean bastard –being" . Baraka says :

*The white man
at best
is
corny
but who is to say it how is the
who how is the black man ? To say
what when he sits biting his ass
in the sun ,or laid cross a puddle
for snailtitty to cross over , how
and with what logic who
is fed by the meanest of streams
will we move , or will we be merely
proud ,
as the best ,yet with will
to be ego ,or self same mean bastards
corrupting our inch of despair .To try ,
what , for what , who will appreciate , who
will benefit to desert is no different or better ,
they all have deserted and sit in the sun under a sign
spirits waving through summer and fall spirits in the
cold
place of our crucifixion ,break the man-head off
the sign
it is a cross, a double dirty cross, to hang your
civilization (162).*

Baraka attacks the white man and blacks who accept the moral codes of his civilization :

*We poets drummers horn players , nationalists
running our corny shit on people standin in the sun rotting rotting for
centuries destined to die with the
white man destined to die with the white man destined
to die with the white man ,the white man we say we hate
the white man we want to kill the whiteman who
kills us
the white man, WHO AT BEST IS VERY VERY*

CORNY DUDE

*To we die you will at the best to very die destined
falling
ground-face hands burned in the windows fall corny
die
the legend will be
the suffering and sacrifice will be
gone
lost
done
never
no one will remember
except the lost servants died with their masters
when the rest of the spiritual world got fullup
with corniness and death
the eternal life
we know we are
lostdie
heart fall (163-164).*

The Baraka expects the decline of the Western civilization .The "kyrie elision" –in the poem –is said for the entire civilization including all those blacks who wish to remain abroad as servants:

*up," i'm hurt , help me , no stay with me nigger ,
die with me nigger
look jump off the building
with me ,nigger , jump jump
look now me fall through space ,nigger ,
sign you up to play at newport
you can run the jazzmobile
you want to go to lincoln center
look I'll give you the goddam academy award
letme slap your face Dianne ,let me die with you ,
off the
building , falling , hurt , gone
lost
done
never
no one will remember
Hi Yo Silver . . . Away !! " we die with the white man
the building stick us in the heart
we die
with
oh no
please
not
not that
not with
oh please*

*can we
oh
not
lost
yest -
a ha ,
a ha , ha , ha
a ha, ha, ha, ha, ha ,ha,ha,
hahahahahahahahahahaha
Kyrie kryie kryie elision (164-165) .*

The white God "the naked man" also appears in "*Biography*" in an image of cruelty which is very impressive even in its economy and in the poem's unique form :

*Hangs.
Whipped
Blood
Striped
Meat pulled
Clothes ripped
Slobber
Feet dangled
Pointing
Noised
Noise
Churns
Face
Black sky
and moon
leather night
red
bleeds
drips
ground
sucks
blood
bangs
life wetting
sticky
mud
laughs
bonnets
wolfmoon
crazyteeth
hangs
hangs
granddaddy
granddaddy , they tore
his*

neck (124-125).

In ***Black Magic***, Baraka criticize white culture and white religion. God is anachronistic, if he is the Jewish or Italian God of his avant-garde friends. ***Black Magic***, on the contrary, reveals a firm moral position for the black man and unites the poet –who rejects white corruption – with his black brothers. The logic of this position begins in the avant-garde poetry and develops through the poet's struggles with Eliot's conception of God and through his ultimate creation of an alternative to Eliot's moral order and white God. Baraka wants to liberate himself from both the Jewish and the Eliotite Gods who partly represent the Western culture. He says: "We are all spies for god" (162) by which Baraka seems to mean spies for the Jewish God, since the poet talks about betrayal "comparmies" and "the jewish dog". In ***"Are There Blues Singers In Russia"***, Baraka also attacks the Western moral system including Eliot's God. Here, the black poet complains of the dehumanizing influences of white culture and civilization: "We want things and are locked here, to the earth, / by pussy, or money chains or personal indulgence chains" (185).

In ***Black Magic***, the attacks on American society are coupled with the familiar echoes of ethnic reaction. These echoes dominate ***"Target Study"*** which differs from Baraka's avant-garde poetry in ***Preface*** and ***The Dead Lecture*** in that the ethnic reaction is now decidedly separatist. For example ***"Friday"*** is a sustained series of invectives against America that concludes with a passionate cry for black separation: "You are strong. Leave them, leave them" (53). In ***"I don't Love You,"*** Baraka depicts the white society in a series of negative image especially the mirror image "whiteface glass" that has encouraged blacks to reject their racial identity in favor of beloved white standards. But the negative "don't" of "the white hell" is eventually succeeded by the concluding declaration "I don't love you" (55).

*The don'ts of this white hell. The crashed eyes
of dead friends, stand at the bar, eyes focused on
actual ugliness.
I don't love you. Who is to say what that will mean.
I don't
love you, expressed the train, moves, and uptown
days later
we look up and breathe much easier
I don't love you (55).*

Despite its negative emphasis the declaration is actually the positive affirmation of that ethnic self-love which enforces a sense of ethnic separateness. The sense of separation which appears in the previous poems is affirmed by the rejection of Eliot's white God. Eliot himself, a symbol of white /Western culture who has a tremendous impact upon Baraka's early poetry, is repudiated openly in the final page of ***"Sapotage"***, the first section of ***Black Magic***, which is characterized by a sense of exorcism of the poet's white past:

*Soft night comes back
with its clangs and dreams. Back
in through the base
of the hairy skull The heavy pictures, unavailable*

*solaces, emptying their churchy magic
out .Golden girls ,and thin black ones
patrol the dreamer's meat. Things
shovel themselves, from where they always are .
Spinning , a
moment's indecision ,past the vision of stealth and
silence
Byron through the night could be . Death blow Eliot silence , dwindling
Away ,in the 20th century . Poet clocks crouched in their Americans (44)*

After exorcising his white past , Baraka seeks to affirm his black consciousness and ethnic pride ,an issue which will be discussed in the following section .

Ethnic Awakening And Black Consciousness

In ***Anger And Beyond*** , Herbert Hill argues that the Negro writer in America is in a peculiar position "since if he is writing about his own life and his own experience , his writing must be separate ,not only because of the intellectual gulf that causes any serious man to be estranged from the mainstream of American life but because of the social and cultural estrangement from that mainstream that has characterized Negro life in America . I have always thought of writing a moral art , that is , basically , I think of the artist as a moralist , as demanding a moral construct of the world" (53) . Baraka also thinks that writing poetry is a moral task and that the poet should develop the black consciousness as black spiritual frame of reference which is based on the humanism of the non-white world .The coming into being of such spirit ,in ***Black Magic*** ,implies a revolutionary dynamic where Baraka ,as the high priest of the Black Arts Movement , advocates a black aesthetic which seeks to reshape the black world in America during a period of ethnic awakening .Here , Baraka focuses on the necessity of Black Nationalism ,black unity and black power .

The black poet ,in a period of ethnic awakening , must maintain black identity ,purpose and direction so that the poetry can be freed from the images of the oppressor / the white man and effect a collective functional and committing response . In ***Raise*** ,Baraka emphasizes :

***Black Art must be collective, is the spirit of the
whole Nation .It must be functional, it must have a function in the
world to Black people. It must also commit Black people to the struggle
for National Liberation (120) .***

At a time of ethnic rebirth ,the role of the black poet ,is to educate and illuminate ,to affirm black consciousness ,integrate individual egos and identity and ultimately reconstruct a new reality in accordance with black values .In this context ,the black poet should draw upon African traditions ,philosophy, mythology and other non-white sources in order to legalize his schema revealing his belief in God and a fundamental morality which according to Baraka "must be thought in order to validate temporal existence" .In ***Raise*** , Baraka advises blacks to

go to your religion .Go to black religion .Kawaida .

Think about Islam. Go to Yoruba founts . Think about the supreme ego .The One .Out of whom in whom out of in which we are rest and moved (96).

It is only with this spiritual base that blacks can divorce themselves from the death-in-life existence and degeneracy of Western white system . Only in this manner that a new epoch in which black society "in tune with the morality of perfection" can be shaped at a time of ethnic awakening .

In Baraka's revolutionary play , ***Slave Ship : A Historical Pageant*** , the black characters –mainly slaves –at the climax of the play ,which characterizes a historical moment of black awakening ,chant the following lines :

***Rise Rise Rise
Cut these ties Blacks Man Rise
We gon'be the thing we are
when we gonna rise brother
when we gonna rise above the sun
when we gonna take our place brother
like the world has just begun (13).***

In ***Black Magic*** , the poems which concentrate on a sense of few ethnic spirit/awakening are more imaginatively executed . There is a freshness in language and an innovative approach to form which distinguish them from most protest poems in the volume . Moving from the themes of white racism to the subject of a black awakening gives fresh impetus to Baraka's imaginative energies. In "***Legacy –for Blues People***", he speaks about blacks in the South :

***In the south , sleeping against
the drugstore , growing under
the tracks and stoves , stumbling
through and over the cluttered eyes
of early mysterious night . Frowning
drunk waving moving a hand or lash
Dancing kneeling reaching out , letting
a hand rest in shadows. Squatting
to drink or pee . Stretching to climb
pulling themselves onto horses near
where there was sea (the old songs
lead you to believe). Riding out
from this town , to another , where
it is also black . Down a road
where people are sleep . Towards
the moon or the shadows of houses .
Towards the song's pretended sea (19).***

In "***Black People :This Is Our Destiny***" ,Baraka expects blacks to "civilize the word through 'revolutions' " :

*Who God is ,and the many revolutions we must spin through in our
Seven adventures in the endlessness of all existing feelings ,all
Existing forms of life, the gases, the plants ,the
ghost minerals
The spirits the souls the light in the stillness where
the storm
The glow the nothing in God is complete except
there is nothing
To be in complete the pulse and change of rhythm , blown flight
To be anything at all . . . vibration holy nuance
beating against itself , a rhythm a playing re-understood now by one of
the 1st race
The primitives the first men who evolve again to
civilize the world (199).*

In "*The Calling Together*" the poet asks blacks to work hard in order to build the black nation . He advises blacks to work as they were "the tribe of the tribes". Through the spirit of the black tribe ,blacks can achieve miracles :

*If we call ourselves
together
to be the strength
of one
character
the black fist
will work
out
into
an
angel
You want to know how much stuff
You could do ? How much you could build
or create ? How far you could stretch
the party in your brain
the health in your soul
to be funk' n ' up an down
all the streets
in the
universe
like the shaking air
Be somebody Beautiful
Be Black and Open
Reach for God (173).*

The black awakening here is supported by a feeling of love which unifies the black people together .The language of violence disappears here :

*If we call
to ourselves
if we want to feel
who we are if
we want to love
what we can
be
come
into
a wide space
of heart
and hearts
meaning
we love (love love
(these are soft cries of feeling
can you help me , who are here w/ me can
you walk into my deep senses (110).*

The new ethnic rebirth in the sixties still needs some efforts and pain to achieve its aims :

*There is so much pain for you blackness
so much beauty there , if we think to what
our beautiful selves would make
of the world , streaming burning blackouts
over cold georgia , the spirits hover
waiting for the world to arrive at ecstasy (91).*

At a time of black awakening , the black woman is essential for black progress and development . He asks black women to take a positive role in the black liberation and in the battle against "our tormentor" . He says :

*Ladies .Woman .We need you .We you still
trapped and weak , but we build and grow heavy
with our knowledge women .
Come to us . Help us get black what was always ours . Help us .women
.Where
Are you ,women. where, and who, and where ,
and who , and will you help
Us ,will you open your bodysouls , will you lift me up mother .will you
Let me help you ,daughter , wife / lover ,will you (148).*

In "*Sterling Street September*" , the poet also confidently to his second wife Sylvia Robinson ,who became Amina Baraka in the late sixties .As a black woman she participated in the revolutionary activities of that time .Baraka and his revolutionary wife are depicted as "black beings passing through a tortured passage " of flesh" .The poem refers to the sixties as "the peak of violence" and the poet becomes a worshiper of the black sun in Harlem after abandoning the "loveless white-Anglo sun" in Greenwich Village :

I CAN BE THE BEAUTIFUL BLACK MAN
because I am
the beautiful black man, and you, girl, child
nightlove ,
you are beautiful
too .
We are something ,the tow of us
the people love us for being
though they may call us out our
name ,they live our strength
in the midst of ,quiet , at the peak of ,
violence , for the sake of ,at the lust of
Pure life ,WE WORSHIP THE SUN ,
We are strange in a way because we know
who we are .Black beings passing through
a tortured passage of flesh (177).

The theme of ethnic awakening appears also in poems such as *"I Don't Love you"* .Here the use of the positive statement is more than a bit of syntactic cleverness .Baraka rejects the white man's culture entirely and he refuses to be an imitation of whiteness .This issue is affirmed through the mirror image in the first line of the poem - "whiteface glass" :

Whatever you've given me ,whiteface glass
to look through ,to find another there ,another
ehat motherfucker ? another bread tree made at its
sacredness ,and the law of some dingaling god ,
cold
as ice cucumbers, for the shouters and the wiggles,
and what was the world to the words of slick nigger
fathers ,
too depressed to explain why they could not appear
to be men .
The bread fool. The don't of this white hell .The
crashed eyes
of dead friends, stanind at the bar ,eyes focused on
actual ugliness .
I don't love you .Who is to say what will mean.
I don't
Love you, expressed the train, moves , and uptown
days later
We look up and breathe much easier
I don't love you (55).

The rhetorical shift ,in the poem ,from the over negative to an implied positive is analogues to a comparable shift within the ethnic consciousness that the poem describes –a shift from an obvious ,long-standing self-hatred to an implied ,tentative racial pride. The poem's rhetorical structure has therefore been integrated with the poet's theme of ethnic growth.

In "*Return of The Native*", there is "a comparable integration"(Brown 120).The progression from a bleak despairing image of Harlem to the affirmation of love –even in suffering –is effective because it is linked with the tradition of the blues :

*Harlem is vicious
modernism .Bang Clash
Vicious the way is made .
Can you stand such beauty?
So violent and transforming
The trees blink naked , being
so few ,The women stare
and are in love with them
selves .The sky sits awake
over us .Screaming
at us .No rain .
Sun ,hot cleaning sun
Drivers us under it .
The place ,and place
mean of
black people .Their heavy Egypt .
(Weird word!) Their minds , mine ,
the black hope mine .In Time .
We slide along in pain or too
happy .So much love
for us .All over ,so much of
what we need .Can you sing
yourself , your life ,your place
on the warm planet earth .
And look at the stones
the hearts ,the gentle hum
of meaning .Each thing ,life
we have ,or love ,is meant
for us in a world like this .
Where we may see ourselves
all the time .And suffer
in joy ,that our lives
are so familiar (108).*

It is obvious here that Baraka draws ,as he does so frequently in his ethnic poetry ,on the blues tradition of deriving a sense of triumph from the very act of confronting pain -in immersing himself in the suffering of Harlem, then the black poet discovers, the special love for ethnic and cultural roots .

The blues tradition is more explicit in "*I am Speaking of Future Goodness and Social Philosophy*" but the effect is quite similar :

*When musicians say Cookin
it is food for the soul*

*that is being prepared , food
for the mad rain markers ,black witches
good nature , whether rain everyday ,or the
brightest of suns ,every day , in our meat and
tubes, the newness and deadness of the central character .
Man is essential
to my philosophy ,
man (99) .*

The poet describes the white man as "the beast of the age" :

*The weather is spain could ride
in a train .Of generals and bishops
their assholes reamed with malice ,the mountains mountains more
beautiful than they ,
though they be men .As the white man
is a man , no less his disqualification ,
and subsequent reappearance as the beast
of the age .Men , no less .Though we must
finally kill them ,rid the earth of them ,
because they are a disease species ,but
recognized as God Fearing .*

the assertion of an untrammelled black pride is analogous to the kind of spiritual affirmation that is the hallmark of the blues tradition :

*So we must become Gods.
Gigantic black ones .
And scare them back into the dirt .
With the heat of our words ,and burning
stares .With the heat of our holy passion .*

What makes this poem one of the most impressive works in the "*Target Study*" section of *Black Magic* ,is the felicity with which Baraka blends the blues idiom ,as a series of declarative statements, with rhythms that recall the chants of the black magician .The last section of the poem reads –

*And then ,with steel
with bricks
with garbage
dogs ,purposes ,
madness ,tranquility ,
weakness ,strength ,deadness
(these aint clams
you eatin
an of nigger
say, overhearing*

*this poem in my bowels .
 ain't clams
 dad.)
 In short everything that is magical ,will respond , in
 men,
 if few
 have the code
 to their hearts (99-100).*

The "magic" of ethnic and moral change ,in effect ,is integrated with the "magical" triumph of self over suffering in the blues tradition .

In "*School of Prayer*" ,the sounds of ethnic consciousness are integral of the poet's a self-conscious sense of poetic form as political sound : "black blood screaming – we are so beautiful we walk at the same time" (121) .In "*Ka Ba*" that self-consciousness is more pronounced .The sounds of positive ethnic awareness stimulate the need for the related sounds of political action, for the "sacred words" of a magical transforming political movement .The poem emphasizes the African / non-American roots of blacks:"we are beautiful people / with African imaginations". The poet also takes pride in his African traditions: we are "full of masks and dances and swelling chants" .Writing a poem of racial pride ,and noses and arms".

Then Baraka reminds his people of their history of slavery "we were captured brothers" and "we sprawl in grey chains". Blacks are enslaved in America ,a country which is described as "a place full of winters" .During the slave era ,and even in the sixties ,black Americans dream of their homeland ,of Africa which ,unlike America ,is a place of sun: "what we want is sun".

The poem "*Ka Ba*" , which briefly traces the history of blacks since their pre-slavery era in Africa until the decade of the sixties , ends with the triumphant words : "raise up , return , destroy and create". These are the "sacred words" which are appropriate with Baraka's growing consciousness as an ethnic poet .Within the socio-political context of the poem ,blacks have to go back to their .African roots and traditions in order to be a unified nation. The creation and establishment of a black nation in America ,according to Baraka's views at that time demands the destruction of the white man and the white system. The issue of violence and destruction which pervades *Black Magic Poetry* often undermines Baraka's vision of a black utopia and a better future for the entire humanity. Nevertheless ,the image of magic- "we need magic / now we need the spells" –is a unifying one because it emphasizes the possibilities of change at the same time that it represents that concept of the word as action which is central to Baraka's poetry at that stage of ethnic awakening :

*A closed window looks down
 on a dirty courtyard , and black people
 call across or scream across or walk across
 defying physics in the stream of their will
 Our world is full of sound
 Our world is more lovely than anyone's
 tho we suffer , and kill each other
 and sometimes fail to walk the air*

*We are beautiful people
with african imaginations
full of masks and dances and swelling chants
with African eyes , and noses , and arms ,
though we sprawl in grey chains in a place
full of winters , when what we want is sun .
We have been captured ,
brothers . And we labor
to make our getaway ,into
the ancient image , into a new
correspondence with ourselves
and our black family .We need magic
now we need the spells , to raise up
return ,destroy ,and create .What will be
the sacred words? (146) .*

In "*I Am Speaking of Future Goodness and Social philosophy* ", the magical word of transformation is , of course the chant, the kind of chant that defines the nature of poetic form and political awareness in the poem. Consequently in "*The Spell*" ,the entire poem itself is conceived as a spell ,as a chant in which sound itself is intended to galvanize the listener into a special "magical" kind of ethic change .The poem as a whole characterizes Baraka's shift to oral poetry :

*The Spell the SPELL THE SPELLLLLLLLLLL!
Away and sailing in warm space .The eyes of God-
our on us
in us. The Spell .We are wisdom, reaching for
itself .We are
total, watch us, warch through yourself, and
become the whole
universe at once so beautiful you will become ,
without having
moved, or gone through a "change" , Except to be
moving with the world ,
at that incredible speed, with all the genius of a tree (147).*

The theme of black awakening and ethnic pride ,is developed in the "*Target Study*" section with such an emphasis that it overshadows Baraka's themes of protest ,violence and black anger which pervades the "*Black Art*" section .

The theme of ethnic pride is often juxtaposed in "*Target Study*" with the familiar issue of black self-hatred .The "Deadly eyes" poem is an example of just juxtaposition :

*the deadly eyes
are stars !
fools
say ,i've sd it
and come to regret the white filth*

*jamming thru my veins ,come to hate
the quiet well disposed "beauties" of the
word ,without substance ,even opposed
to it ,as black hearts pumping through eyes
cannot see stars ,cannot see skies ,cannot see
anything ,except the truth, the fat bulging lunatic
eyes ,of the white man, which are not stars, and
his
face, not sky, and him self, no God ,Just another
lame
in love with him self, at everybody elses expense .
Why don't
somebody kill to the mother fucker? Why don't somebody jam his head
in his own shit? Why are you chumps standing
around
doing nothing? Letting this creep tapdance on your
dreams (142) .*

Self-love as such is really dramatized by emphasizing its opposite. Here, the destructiveness of racial self-hatred is underscored by the jolting image of a junkie pinging drugs into the veins :when accepted and internalized by self-hating blacks , the racial attitude of whites are skin to "white filth / jamming thru my veins" .As with the repeated attacks on white racism, Baraka's themes of self-hatred sometimes suffer from excessive repetition throughout **Black Magic** as a Whole. For example "**Race**" almost adds nothing to Baraka's theme :

*The madness
Of Cane ,strided
The dumb world , again
Strided it
Drove it
Bangbanged it ,with misery (222) .*

In spite of its intrinsic merits "**Human To Spirit : Humanism For Animals**" does not add anything to poems such as "**I Am Speaking of Future Goodness And Social Philosophy**" .The thematic interweaving of the blues ,magic and black "soul" culture ,in both poems ,is identical .And in both poems the techniques of magical chant are very similar .Both poems focus on the humanity of blacks and the inhumanity of the white race in the West :

*the humanity
Humanism
For animals '
Spiritism
for Humans
Reach
Brother
Reach (204) .*

Regardless of the repetitive tone which marks some of the poems which deal with theme of ethnic awakening, the poems as a whole are well-done in terms of content and form . Baraka, in some of these poems tends to use the simple language of oral poetry because these poems of black pride are addressed to the black masses in the ghetto .

Chapter Five

Violence , Anger and Protest In Black Magic Poetry

In *The Journey Back :Issue in Black Literature and Criticism* , Houston A . Baker argues that America is a country "built on oppression and destruction" (106) .Living in that country during a period of racial turmoil ,a militant poet like Baraka cannot advocate non-violence or passive a resistance as a means of peaceful struggle against an aggressive oppressor . According to Theodore Hudson ,Baraka does not believe in non-violence or passive resistance as a means of facing white racism because Baraka "sees such as only tactics and ploys to maintain the social and political status quo" (21) .In Home ,Baraka discusses the issue of non-violence in detail :

*In the white West nonviolence means simply doing
nothing to change this pitiful society ,just do as you have been doing,
e.g., suffer, and by some
beautiful future-type miracle the minds of the
masses of white men will be changed ,and they will
finally come around to understand that the majority
of peoples in the world deserve to live in that world,
no longer plagued by the white man's disgusting
habits. But why. WHY, must anyone wait until
these certain. . .change . . .ha ha . . .their famous
mindsWhy indeed (202).*

Baraka also discusses the same issue in connection with the middle class Negroes' attitude toward it He says :

*Nonviolence can be your "goat" if you are already
sitting in a comfortable house being brought the
news of your oppression over television, it can be
the normal conduct of rational men if they believe in
the literalness and effectiveness of what they are
trying to accomplish by such conduct .But walk, on
any night, from one end of 125th Street (in New
York's Harlem)to the other, and count the hundred
policemen and figure out the climate of rational
conduct that is being cultivated by such an
environment (152).*

Baraka's violence toward white people in the poetry of the mid and late sixties , however ,is a sign of his need to break with a social group –the white avant-garde –that at once attracted him aesthetically and repulsed him politically. Moreover ,the assassination of the black activist ,Malcolm X by the white police in 1965was for Baraka a sign of the absolute evil of white society and one of the reasons of his militancy .After Malcolm's death, Baraka left his personal white world in Greenwich Village and moved uptown to Harlem where he publicly became a cultural nationalist committed to black people

as "a race, a culture ,a nation" (*Home* 248) .Central to his break with white liberal ideology was their passive reaction of the racial violence of the period as well as his claims that blackness / race was the most significant factor in a black poet's life .

Although interestingly , Baraka insistence that are was the best instrument for creating black culture out of the elements of black life ,his poetry grew out of the avant-garde aesthetics he had absorbed from the white ideology .In the mid sixties ,a new goal was to incite the black community to national purpose through a positive sense of black self-consciousness .Thus ,in 1966 ,Baraka became caught up in the political turmoil and violence of Harlem's power structure. In 1967 ,he was injured and arrested on charges of unlawfully carrying fire weapons and resisting arrest.

Reaction to the racial turmoil ,violence and the brutalities committed against blacks in America during the sixties ,Baraka in *Home* ,predicts that if black protest against racism continues to go unheard "the masses of Negroes will finally strike back , perhaps even kill ,in a vertiginous gesture of fear and despair" (152) because

*The penalty is death , for death
to walk up cold paths with fake light
splintering water , patchy things rubbed together
under the spoils of (they think) the universe .All
except spirit , up the concrete under glass , they come
in
and look at other beings like them, parading ,
sleeping ,deathly
colorless tin cans, asks in peach juice, lipstick
cigars jammed
in their egg. Brecht speaks and they cannot hear .
Their own species
accuses, and the blue veins bulge in their ankles ,
the jewelry cold cancer
identify these diseased creatures, slobbering over
humanity (149) .*

The angry Negro masses ,in a moment of despair ,may use machine guns to defend themselves against the white people- the Nazi vampires .Baraka illustrates some aspects of the issue of violence in the following lines :

*Red Spick talking to you from a foxhole very close
to the
Vampire Nazis ' lines. I can see a few Vampire
Nazis movingvery quickly
Black and forth under the heavy smoke .I hear ,and
Perhaps you do, in the back ground ,the steady
Deadly cough of mortars, and the light shatter of
machine guns .
BANZA !!! BANZA !!! BANZA !!! BANZA !!!
BANZA!!!
Came running out of the drugstore window with*

***An electric alarm clock, and then dropped the
mother fucker
And broke it. Go get somethin' else. Take
everything in there .
Look in the cashregister. TAKE THE MONEY.
TAKE THE MONEY .YEH .
TAKE IT ALL .YOU DON'T HAVE TO CLOSE
THE DRAWER . COME ON MAN , I SAW
A TAPE RECORDER BACK THERE.***

***These are the words of lovers .
Of dancers , of dynamite singers
These are songs if you have the music
(104) .***

As Baraka's poetry in the mid sixties indicates ,America was on the verge of a race war at that time .Violence and destruction were the keynotes of the day, yet, blacks were still being asked to remain non-violent .In the mid and late sixties, Baraka advocated a conscious effort to change the socio-political structure seeing blacks as the only revolutionary force in America—the only group who could force change. Such a radical approach was reflected in his ***Black Magic Poetry***. At this stage of his development, Baraka no longer felt completed to advocate poetry which fulfilled acceptable literary criteria.

The black experience since to him, can not be a typical American experience since blackness is socially defined as non-conformity .The responsibility of the poet ,by is very nature , includes politics because the poet is a word user who helps "establish the world's realities" As a part of his task the poet learns to speak the language of that group with which he intends to communicate —that group which he can and must move . Within this context and within the socio-political context of the sixties ,Baraka ,in ***Home*** defined the black writer's function as follows :

***The black artist's role in America is to aid the destruction of American
as he knows it .His role is to report and reflect so precisely the nature of
the society, and of himself in that society, that other
men will be moved by the exactness of his rendering and, if they are
black men, grow strong through
this moving ,having seen their own strength ,and weakness ; and if
they are white men, tremble ,
curse, and go mad, because they will be drenched with the filth of their
evil (251) .***

In ***'Sacred Chant For The Return of Black Spirit and Power'*** ,
Baraka urges blacks to commit acts of violence and anarchy against the white people .In spite of justifying his violence as self- defence ,Baraka's vision here contradicts with the utopian black world which he intends to build :

Ohhh break love white things .

*Ohhh ,Ohhh break break break let it roll down .
Let it kill ,let it kill, let the thing you are destroy
let it murder, and dance, and kill .Ohhh OhhhOhhh
break
the white thing .Let it dangle dead .Let it rot like
nature needs .
MMMMMMMMMMMM
MMMMMMMMMMMM . . . OOOOOOOOOO . . .
Death Fiddle*

*Claw life from space
Time
Cries inside bleeds the*

*word
The sacred Word
Evilout .Evilin .Evil Evil
White evil ,god good ,break love .Evil Scream .
Work smoke-blood steams out thick bushes .
We lay high and meditating on white evil .
We are destroying it .They die in the streets .
Look they clutch their throats .Aggggg .Stab him . Aggggggg
MMMMMMMM
OOOOOOOO
Death music reach us .
Bring us back our strength .
To turn their evil backwards
Is to
Live (192).*

In "*A poem Some People Will Have To Understand*" . Baraka's call for violence-"will the machinegunners please step forward?"- aims to take revenge against the white man."the master who corrupts the silence of our beautiful consciousness" (96) .In "New shit" Baraka reveals the brutalities of the white police during the 1960s :

*They killed him he's dying stretched our cars
trampling his papers .An old dead man ,wanted
life ,killed in the street ,screams ,for light.
LIGHT LIGHT LIGHT LIGHT LIGHT LIGHT
LIGHT LIGHT
he screams as if the world were a cellar , and
nothing
in it reflected his needs .
I am a mad nigger in love with everything
You make it impossible to be myself in this
place .Where can I go? Where is my self to
live in this shaky universe (96).*

When the white police kill an old black man . in a cold-blooded manner ,blacks should retaliate . In *"In one Battle"* ,Baraka tells his readers a brief story about one of the violent confrontations between whites and blacks during the 1960s :

*Three greys tracked us to an old house .
We saw them coming winding collection the weather
in their slow movement .Grey also their day
which is their faces ,and their understanding
of where we are .
Our murderous intentions
Are what they hear ,and think them thin whore
hawks
brushing through the trees .
The other guys are already aiming
as greys snake towards the house .
I take a few seconds ,to finish
these notes ,now my fingers eagerly
toward the machine (106).*

In *"Citizen Cain"* ,Baraka describes his own desire to get personally involved in that violence :*"Roi , finish this poem , someone's about to need you Roi ,ask for the destruction of New York Get up and hit someone , like you useta"* The poem , as a whole ,reveals Baraka's belief in violence as the only means of facing white racism and protecting blacks lives in an aggressive society :

*Roi, finish this poem ,someone's about to need you
Roi
Dial the mystic number, ask for holy beads,
directions,
Plans for the destruction of New York .Work out
your problems
Like your friends in some nice guy's couch .Get up
and hit
Someone ,like you useta. Don't sit here trembling
under the
Hammer. Fate like a reason of abstract reference.
Like an
Abstract execution where only ideas are shot full of
holes .
Don't sit there drowned in your own bad writing .
Get up and
Throw that ball. Move your hips, cut, like the
white boys ,
For ten more yards. Tackle and punch , then sit
down grinning
And waiting for some Barrymore to lick you clean.
get up
And get high, so you wont understand what those
gentlemen want ,*

*Spying for months from the dope factory. Ask the
White man
For your passport and quit it, little Jesus. Your time
is up
In this particular feeling ,In this particular throb of
meaning .
Roi ,baby ,you blew the whole thing (8).*

In "*Death IS Not As Natural As You Fags Seem To Think*" the black masses "the poor" kill their ex-master, the white man : "the dead king laughs, looking out the hole in his tomb. Seeing the poor seeing his evil songs" (18). In "*Three Movements And A Coda*", Baraka declares the death of the American myth of innocence and heroism which is false . He uses figures from the American popular culture: "The Lone Ranger Is Dead ".Baraka also declares the death of the American president "Lyndon Johnson" whom leads a racial government. The racial situation in America in the sixties with its horrible consequences is depicted here :

**THE QUALLITY OF NIGHT THAT YOU HATE
MOST IS ITS BLACK
AND ITS STARTEETH EYES , AND STICKS ITS
STICKY FINGERS
IN YOUR EARS .RED NIGGER EYES LOOKING
UP FROM A BLACK HOLE .
RED NIGGER LIPS TURNING KILLEWR
GEOMETRY, LIKE HIS EYES ROLL UP
LIKE HE THOUGHT RELIGION WAS BEBOP.
LIKE HE TOUGHT RELOGION WAS
BEBOP . . . SIXTEEN KILLERS ON A
LIVE MAN'S CHEST . .
THE LONE RANGER
IS DEAD
THE SHADOW
IS DEAD
ALL YOUR HEROES ARE DYING . J .EDGAR
HOOVER WILL
SOON BE DEAD.YOUR MOTHER WILL DIE .
LYNDON JOHSON,**

*these are natural
things , No one is
threatening anybody
that's just the way life
is,
boss (103).*

In an interview with William Harris ,in 1985, Baraka argues that violence is very important as a major motif in his ethnic and Marxist poetry .Baraka believes that violence is an integral part of his literary works because it is associated with the revolutionary nature of his work .Baraka explains :

I think there are two elements: one, the elements of action or acting, doing, that always in my mind, has been contradicted by the traditional intellectual posture of theory, the statement or literature as a passive kind of enterprise rather than trying to see one's ideas implemented in the real world .So on one level, it's simply a focus on action, but on another level it's always seemed to me that the violent action was what was really necessary to achieve things that you know needed to be achieved .At first it was simply a spontaneous understanding that I had, an intuitive understanding, that the violent act was what really was a creative approach to a reactionary and static reality, but later on, when I actually began to get involved with revolutionary struggle, a revolutionary theory , it became very clear that revolution was a violent act , but it was an act which had to be rationally considered .I think that most of my focus on violence per se has been a focus, even intuitively , on revolution (139).

The most important poem which embodies the theme of violence and the political function of poetry in **Black Magic** is Baraka's "**Black Art**" :

*Poems are bullshit unless they are
teeth or trees or lemons piled
On a step .Or black ladies dying
of men leaving nicked hearts
beating them down .Fuck poems
and they are useful, wd they shoot
come at you , love what you are,
breathe like wrestles, or shudder
strangely after pissing. We want live
words of the hip world live flesh &
coursing blood .Hearts Brains
Souls splintering fire. We want poems
like fists beating niggers out of Jacks
or dagger poems in the slimy bellies
of the owner-jews .Black poems to
smear on girdlemamma mulatto bitches
whose brains are red jelly struck
between 'lizabeth taylor's toes .Stinking
Whores !We want "poems that kill" .
Assassin poems , poems that shoot
guns. Poems that wrestle cops into alleys
and take their weapons leaving them dead
with tongues pulled out and sent to Ireland .
Knockoff*

*poems for dope selling wope or slick halfwhite politicians Airplaen
poems ,rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr rrrrrrrrrrrrrrr . .tuh tuh tuh thu tuh tuh tuh
tuh
tuh .
. . . rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr . . Setting fire and death to
whities ass .Lock at the Liberal
Spokesman for the jews clutch his throat
& puke himself into eternity . . . rrrrrrrrr
There's negroleader pinned to
a bad stool in Sardi's eyeballs melting
in hot flame Another negeroleader
on the steps of the white house one
kneeling between the sheriff's things
negotiating coolly for his people .
Aggggh . . . stumbles across the room . . .
Put it on him , poem . Strip him naked
to the world ! Another bad poem cracking
steel knuckles in a jewlady's mouth
Poem scream poison gas on beasts in green berets Clean out the world
for virtue and love ,
Let there be no love poems written
until love can exist freely and
cleanly . Let Black People understand
that they are the lovers and the sons
of lovers and warriors and sons
of warriors Are poems & poets &
all the loveliness here in the world
We want a black poem . And a
Black World .
Let the world be a Black Poem
And Let All Black People Speak This Poem
Silently
or LOUD (116-117).*

"Black Art" is an expression of Baraka's concept of the political and ethnic function of poetry as a weapon in the face of racism and of his own black aesthetic. The poem's obvious violence leads critics to categorize Baraka as racist, revolutionist, terrorist, and the like. In the poem Baraka asks the black masses to destroy the Jews, the middle-class Negroes "mulatto bitches" and all blacks who seek integration and take "Elizabeth Taylor", a representative of white popular culture as their model. Baraka asks blacks to kill the white police and send their dead bodies to "Ireland"—most of the extremely racial white officers in the 1960's come from Irish origin. The poet asks his people in the ghetto to kill all the hypocritical politicians who are "kneeling between the sheriff's things—negotiating coolly for [their] people". Baraka also asks the black masses to assassinate "the liberal spokesman for the Jews" and use "poison gas" against the white beasts.

This poem is striking because of its venomous language and rhetorical violence .The abstract and arbitrary sounds of the machine guns , "rrrrrrr tuh tuh tuh tuh" are the volley-shot sounds of "poems tha kill" white enemies .The poem itself is employed to commit the

violence that Baraka considers the prerequisite for the establishment of a black world. By becoming an "assassin poem" Baraka's **"Black Art"** becomes political and Baraka's poetry merges with life. In this context, the poem must abandon poetry in order to perform its political function. On one level, **"Black Art"** implies that poetry must die so that the poem can kill.

"Black Art" is an innovative and interesting poem dealing in a creatively self-conscious way with the nature and function of black poetry itself and which, in the process, addresses itself to the identity of the artistic imagination in general. Baraka's black aesthetic which is concerned with the political function of poetry emerges, in the poem, to embody the poet's ethnic viewpoint. According to Baraka's aesthetic, "Poems are bullshit" unless they incorporate living styles or, in other words, unless one regards the living styles of black culture as poetry. This would be the highest ideal of functional art. According to Baraka, any black man or woman –the way he/she talks, hums, screams, shouts, walks dances or kills –is the style and the poem is the embodiment of "arting":

***.Let Black People understand
that they are the lovers and the sons
of lovers and warriors and sons
of warriors Are poems & poets &
all the loveliness here in the world***

Black styles themselves, when compared to the literary styles of the West, are not revolutionary simply because the black experience they reflect have radical political implication but also because –and in James T. Stewart's words –"they emphasizes motion and change and manifest a revolving dynamic through their improvised communal processes" (7). Baraka underwent considerable distress as he worked toward an awareness of the way these qualities function in his culture, his personal experience and finally in this poetry during his militant phase of poetic development.

When Baraka says " we went a black poem / And a Black world/Let the world be a Black poem / And let All Black people speak this poem /Silently or Loud", he speaks with his exclusive audience, the black people, and this poem is addressed to them as the strongest link of the unending chain, no longer the blond of the slave. In this context, the black poem has to be an active agent not a vehicle of escape to "another world". Baraka declares "poems are bullshit unless they are /teeth or trees or lemons piled / on a step'. Here, Baraka employs techniques and poetics of the imagist-objectivist tradition. Like the imagists/objectivists, Baraka wanted to place real objects in his poem. His aim, however, is radically different from that of his predecessors. Thus, while W.C Williams and Ezra Pound for example, tend to place real objects in their poems because their anti-symbolist stance mandates recreation of things themselves, Baraka wants to place real objects in his poems to create a black world that would reflect the lives of blacks:

***We want a black poem .And a
Black World .
Let the world be a Black Poem
And Let All Black People Speak This Poem***

***Silently
or Loud***

Moreover ,Baraka wanted concrete images in his poems so that his black readers would recognize themselves and be inspired to revolt against their circumstances and racial oppression. Throughout the period when he changed from a Beat to a political poet , Baraka used objectivist techniques to signal the need to destroy the white world: "We want poems that kill / Assassin poems , poems that shoot guns" .In spite of the shift in Baraka's aesthetic and political attitudes at that stage of his career ,an examination of his ethnic poetry reveals that his poetry remains ingrained in the Western tradition .

"**Black Art**" ,on one level ,implies confidence in the political efficacy of poetry .poetry itself becomes a social act and a literal physical tool .The poem reflects Baraka's interest in a socially and politically committed poetry. Baraka's poetic manifesto in **Black Magic** , is expressed in the following lines :

***Poems are bullshit unless they are
teeth or trees or lemons piled
on a step .Or black ladies dying
of men leaving nickel hearts beating
them down***

In his new role as a black activist, Baraka believes that poems must be put to human use :

***Fuck poems
and they are useful ,wd they shoot
come at you ,love what you are ,
breathe like wrestles ,or shudder
strangely after pissing.***

The obvious metaphors of bodily function affirm the poet's uncompromisingly humanistic demands .Baraka also demands that the black revolutionary poem spare no one in its apocalyptic thrust .The black middle class ,the Jew ,the Italian and the Irish –each in his turn –are all reduced to the lowest stereotypes because of their ideological views which contradict with the poet's black aesthetic :

***we want poems
like fists beating niggers out of Jocks
or dagger poems in the slimy bellies
of the owner-jews . Black poems to
smear on girdlemamma mulatto bitches
Whose brains are red jelly stuck
between 'lizabeth taylor's toes . Stinking
Whores ! We want "poems that kill".
Assassin poems , Poems that shoot
Guns . Poems that wrestle cops into dead
With tongues pulled out and sent to Ireland
Knockoff***

*Poems for dope selling wops or slick halfwhite
Politicians Airplane poems , rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr
Rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr... tuh tuh tuh tuh tuh tuh tuh tuh
tuh
. . . rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr. . . Setting fire and death to
whities ass.*

However ,it is obvious that every Jew in America is not a Capitalistic exploiter, that every Italian is not a member of the mafia, that every Irishman is not an oppressive policeman , and that very black middle class politician is not insensitive to the needs of his people .Baraka , here, simply attempts, through his overwrought and particularizing indictment, to show that no element in America society can hide from the righteous wrath of the enraged black writer. As suggested by the onomatopoeic sortie of the last quoted lines ,this poem ,is an incendiary barrage aimed at all hostile influences on the black American's spiritual growth .In this poem ,the author employs the oracular manner of the fire-and-brimstone preacher. Like the fundamentalist preacher ,the poet builds his invocation through a passionate reliance on repetition and a perfect sense of timing.

The crucial matter at hand, i.e. „poetry ,is thrust upon the hearer's consciousness through repeated imploration .The word "Poem" very nearly appears in every statement of the poem itself. Baraka's poem (or mini-sermon)shows to great advantage the folk preacher's sense of timing. The emotional buildup (climaxing in the onomatopoeic barrage)and release (concluding in the clam coda) are indeed reminiscent of the most exemplary folk sermons .

"Black Art" is a poem which conveys through imagery and language Baraka's concept of the function of poetry during his militant phase of poetic development as an ethnic poet . According to Baraka ,poems should function to advance the consciousness and cause of black people .The poem denies the right to existence of non-social poetry until there is no need for social poetry : " Let there be no love poems written / until love can exist freely and / cleanly " **.Black Art** "in this sense ,is a poetic statement of the ideas expressed by Baraka on the necessity of asserting a black aesthetic separate from the Euro-American one .In this poem ,Baraka uses free verse ,non-traditional sentence structure and obscene language , capitalization and approximations of sounds for plants and machine guns .The poem is made up of a series of images which indicate not only what a poem should be but also what it should do .**"Black Art"** indicates that a black poem should be definite , human ,concrete and violent :

*Poems are bullshit unless they are
teeth or trees or trees lemons piled
on a step .Or black ladies dying
of men leaving nickel hearts
beating them down .*

Baraka's sentence pattern in the previous lines is very clear. He opens with a statement about poetry using the equational "to be" and qualifying the statement to indicate that it is a prescriptive rather than descriptive one. The poet says: "poems are bullshit unless they are ..." Here, he equates his poems with the nouns, "the things" themselves. The first equation of "teeth" carries with it the animal or human potential to bite or articulate. The reason for the choice of "trees" is less clear. Their being solidly rooted to the ground is possibly reason

enough within the poem .The poet adds that black poem should be "back ladies dying" ,a statement which moves the poem further in the direction of the concrete ,and equates poetry with what is neither wordless ,motionless in time , nor non-human .The next image pushes the palpability of black poems to the further extreme imaginable: "Fuck poems / and they are useful" .The poet means that poems have value only in that they can be used for a purpose , explicitly and physically .If Baraka's obscene language here has a certain shock value ,it is not used for the purpose of evoking sensationalism as some critics claim .The idea itself here is a deliberately shocking removal of the Western poetic muses from her pedestal .Baraka wants to shock his readers through such obscenities .

As a revolutionary black poem ,"**Black Art**" is direct statement for sound and words .Baraka says: " we want live / words of the hip world" .He says what are wanted are "airplane poems" and approximates the sounds of the planes and their machine guns for two lines: "rrrrr. . .tuhtuhtuh". The poem is told to " scream poison gas on beasts in green berets", Baraka calls not only for the verbalness of the poem itself, but for black people to verbalize the black poem of the world "silently / or LOUD" .The black poem is not to be mute ;it is to speak and be spoken . Moreover, the single overriding impression of Baraka's imagery is of its violence. Most of the images are either sexual ones , descriptive of the violence of the black situation , or war images , descriptive of the violent response seen as necessary to bring change. Black poetry is to be part of the change-bringing ; therefore ,it is this second set of violent images which is of concern here .The violent acts of poetry in behalf of blacks are to be directed not only against the white oppressor (both over and liberal varieties) ,but also against the black sell-outs . i.e. , "halfwhites" ,"negroleaders" and such types. Baraka calls for : "poems /like fists beating niggers out of jocks /or dagger poems. in the slimy bellies of the owner-jews"; "poems that kill; "assassin poems , poems that shoot / guns" ; "poems that wrestle cops . . .leaving them dead / with tongues pulled out and sent to Ireland" ; "knockoff / poems for dope selling wops or slick halfwhite politicians" ;"airplane poems . . . setting fire and death / to whities ass" .These airplane poems go on to shoot down the "Liberal Spokesman for the jews" and three "negroleaders" portrayed as compromising themselves and their people socially, politically , and sexually . The poem is commanded , " Put it on him , poem . Strip him naked / to the world !" "Another bad poem" is then described , "cracking / steel knuckles in a jewlady's mouth " . The final battle orders for the poem are to "scream poison gas on bases in green berets / Clean out the world for virtue and love" . This finale command , to "clean out the world for virtue and love" ,is the reason for the other commands and for the poem's taking up arms in the first place . In "**Black Art**" , this is the necessary activity of poetry , and a poem not so engaged cannot justify its right to "be" .

As has already suggested ,poetry's right to exist in "**Black Art**" is contingent upon not only its own activity , but its association with human activity .In other words, there is no art-for-art's sake , but only art-for-freedom's sake . This is supported by the fact that the actions ascribed to poems are human actions and ,with the exception of the "trees" and "lemons piled on a step" , the equations for poetry are human ones .Many of these human images have already been cited in other contexts .For example , all the battle images turn poems into assassin / soldier/ revolutionaries .Poems were equated with dying black ladies , were capable of being fucked ,and were addressed directly . Baraka is even more direct in his equation of poetry and humankind ,however .He says poems can love ,can "breathe like wrestles , or shudder / strangely after pissing" .He says that what is wanted for poetry is " live flesh& / coursing blood .Hearts Brains / Sols splintering fire" .Toward the end of the poem Baraka pleads for a raising of black consciousness and ethnic pride :

*Let Black People understand
that they are the lovers and the sons
of lovers and warriors and sons
of warriors . Are poems & poets &
all the loveliness here in the world*

To say black people are poems serves to comment both on the nature of black people and on the nature of black poems , as one side of an equation defines and qualifies the other . In ***Black Art*** Baraka is of course, paying the poet's supreme compliment to black people , and he is also bringing his discussion on poetry to its climax . Poems are not simply to be used by the people , poems are the people ,and poems that are not are "bullshit". This equation of poetry and people becomes Baraka's final equation for poetry .The same idea is expresses by the Magicians in Baraka's militant play ***Black Mass***. Jacob ,who eventually destroys the peace of the world by creating the white beast, says, "I speak of movement .Of creation ,Of making. Of thought" . Nasafi tries in vain to instruct him,"Then you speak of humanity. Of the human mind".

In ***"Black Art"*** Baraka does not indicate that if the American cultural tradition cannot be radically changed, it should be destroyed .Instead ,he does not explicitly concern himself with the American culture at all ,but makes his statement implicitly by turning his back on that culture and concentrating on black art as separate entity .However ,Baraka , in ***"Black Art"*** does not establish permanent restrictions on the nature of black poetry .Just as black poems are to be functional, Baraka's definition of black poetry is functional and has a specific job to do .Love poetry is not condemned categorically , but until such time as it will be appropriate :*"Let there be no love poems written/until love can exist freely and/cleanly"* .At that undermined point in the future when the airplane poems have finished their work ,a new ,peacetime ***"Black Art"*** may be written by Baraka .

In the context of ***"Black Art"*** ,the relationship between black and white are can be said to be extension of Baraka's ideas on the relationship of black power to white power .In ***Raise*** , Baraka indicates that black power can never exist within white power although it is theoretically possible for the two to coexist. In ***"Black Art"*** Baraka affirms the necessity for black art to exist apart from white art but does not deny the theoretical possibility of co-existence . Black art , according to Baraka, is a call for the black race to be "connected in its sweetness .We must study each other .And for the aliens we say I aint studying you" .***"Black Art"*** ,then ,is concerned with the formation of a separate black poetry to bring cultural awareness as an impetus for socio-political and ethnic action .

According to W.D.E. Andrews ,Baraka's poetic work after 1964 was "devoted to exorcism of the evil white spirits that had. processed him and continued to be bedevil his people"(215). The process of exorcism which starts with the rejection of the Jewish God in ***The Dead Lecturer*** poetry is intensified to sneering contempt in ***Black Magic Poetry*** where Eliot's hanged man is reviled as a ridiculous imitation of black suffering .Of Eliot's Jewish God ,Baraka says "jewish Christ" ,that's hunkie bread , turned green" (74) ,the hanged man becomes not God but a black lynched "granddaddy"(124)and "The Shadow is dead"(103) .In ***Black Magic*** ,all false heroes of American culture are dead and all white values are inverted .Baraka say: "we are in love with the virtue of evil" (72) .In ***Black Magic*** , Baraka's loss of

faith in the Jewish God ,in the comic strip heroes of popular culture and in the Western moral values lead the poet to call for the destruction of the old order .The poet , instead wants to erect his black Gods and call his black heroes from Harlem's streets . In ***Black Magic*** ,Baraka wants to destroy the corrupted white city which is full of "murderers humming under the window and

*Among things with souls , find me .
Picking thru the alphabet
or leaning out the window. (Lives
and magic) . Old witch city, the
lights and roads (floating) up near the tops
of building. Electric names ,which are not
love's. A rolling Eastern distress. Water cutting
the coast , lulling the mysterious classes.
Murderers humming under the window.
A strutting long headed Negro . Beneath the red silk
Of unique social fantasy. Shore invisible under
tenements (21).*

The theme of violence in ***Black Magic*** reaches a climax in "***Ration***" .Here Baraka asks the oppressed black masses in the ghetto to rob the white banks and get all the money . The poet here takes the role of the mafiaman :

*Banks must be robbed
The guards bound and gagged
The money must be taken
And used to buy weapons
Communications systems
Must be seized or subverted
The machines must be turned
off .
Smoke plenty of bush
before and after work
or during the holdup
when the guards are iced (68) .*

In "***The Calling Together***" ,Baraka also asks his folks who "bathe in blackness" to burn the white man's world :

*Energies exploding
Black World Renewed
Speaks ! Starts ! Eyes !
Huge Holocausts of Heaven
Burning down the white man's world
Holy Ashes!!!
Let the rains melt them into rivers .
And the new people naked bathe themselves*

***And look upon the life to come as the heaven
We seek (174).***

In "*After The Ball*" ,the poet tells black people that white American civilization is going to collapse and black will dominate the white man's world .In the poem ,Baraka appears above the scene looking at the ruins of that "grey hideous place" of Western civilization –America :

***The magic dance
of the second ave ladies ,
in the artificial glare
of the world, silver-green curls sparkle
and the ladies' arms jingle
with new Fall pesos , sewn on grim bracelets
the poet's mother-in-law thinks are swell .
So much for America, let it sweep in grand
style
up the avenues of its failure. Let it promenade
smartly
beneath the marquees of its despair (17) .***

The poet records this grim dance of death and anticipates the abandonment of the Western ghost-town by non-white survivors and the worn out myths of American innocence must to longer be worshipped by the oppressed .Baraka here brings bad news to the white man . He expects the death of white myth figures of popular culture :

***IS DEAD
THE SHADOW
IS DEAD
ALL YOUR HEROES ARE DYING. I . EDGER
HOOVER WILL
SOON BE DEAD . YOUR MOTHER WILL DIE .
LYNDON JHONSON ,
these are natural
things. No one is
threatening
anybody
that's just the way life
is,
boss (103).***

Baraka in the ethnic poetry of *Black Magic* focuses on the theme of violence and neglects the lyricism of the early poetry . He believes that in a time of organization against oppression, of strengthening against the last struggle of a monstrous West in its death-throes the lyrical impulse is a kind of weakness and it must be suspended :

***In a time of organization against oppression of strengthening against
the last struggle of a***

*monstrous West in its death-throes, Baraka, like the theorists of the French and Russian revolutions , finds this lyrical impulse to be a weakness and must, sadly, suspend it :
I think about a time when I will be relaxed.
When flames and non-specific passion wear themselves
Away . And my eyes and hands and mind can turn
And soften ,and my songs will be softer
And lightly weight the air (4) .*

Baraka's violence in *Black Magic* is directed against the man whose racism and brutalities violated the universal moral codes . The natural order of the universe – which "everything is everything" and man is in harmonious relation to nature and God, his imaginative powers equal to his needs ,has been interrupted disastrously by the intrusion of a counter human homunculus , "the white man" –who maintains its parasitical existence feeding on the blood of living non-whites, basically black people and their cultures .The white man who is a target for Baraka's violence is depicted by Baraka as a vampire "vampires ,flying in our midst ,at the /corner selling us our few horrible minutes of discomfort and frustration" .Baraka also attacks the white man using ethnic violence against him because the white man – the homunculus –as well as white civilization is the equivalent of the appearance of sickness, disease, maladjustment , and death into the universe ,largely by virtue of its diabolical insinuation and materialism .The white man is attacked by Baraka because of his enslavement of living cultures, particularly the black and the Third World cultures , under the name of modern civilization. Looking back to his avant-garde experience ,Baraka admits "I was under the spell of the white-man" .*Black Magic* reveals the violent and painstaking exorcism of the white/sick spirits that had possessed him . The fragments of a disjointed psyche crystallize concrete images : "we want poems that kill / Assassin poems , poems that shoot guns" :This violence continues in "*From The Egyptian*" where Baraka threatens to take revenge against the white enemies of his black race :

*I will slaughter
the enemies
of my father
I will slay those
who have blinded
him .
I will slaughter
the
enemies
of ym
father
I will slay those
who have
blinded
him
To blind int race the slar tore slaw tearing
The eyes ,ice cold broatish maggots babble-tering battering the ice
kaltenborn machine gunned
avie's ave Livingston presumed*

*trapped sapped, capped by the living
nigger ,traits for the traitorous nigger doctors
whose asses and stomachs cost more than
telephones
cripple pipple
mine but cripple babbar
ooni
mc-rout and death cruel murder
rip their uniforms off and stomp feet in their throat smash them , rip
their bellies, bash the heads with stones
niggers sailing across the world ,broome street squadron
parked near West Kinney ,when the light changes
they leap
at the cars, the troats , yelling, tho, burd dies eyes
tap
squish under mad tree crus crunch-oo good, my
eyes, my baby
the face, george ,oh god, please i didn't i didn't the
nigger
cop bop stamp, his gun, fuck you, shit ,
AAAAERRRRR, Twist
blues hill rope yall mixd uuuh, ummuuua. The.
Ouaff. We. Ow
God, that woman i we were i the egyptian bar, looked
at her,
the huge art object of destruction (103).*

The violence motif which pervades most of the poems in ***Black Magic*** extends to the last part of the poem :

*Great thing
Great great thing
great thing
GREAAAAT
Gre-e(a)t thing great thing
great great thing
Dirty fucking shit HEYALEEE great scraping
fuckin head yes diggair
Dutair moto'freaking scrashteemash
car bashed into house fat legs
upside down ,and smashed bloody JESUS
what'll we do ,lets geh0ub ohh ra-ze-ra-ze
I will slaughter the enemies of my father
I will slay those who have blinded him (131).*

The call to action in Baraka's ethnic poetry is a call to violence. For example ,the "machine gunners" are called forward in "*Poem Some Will Have To Understand*" ,and Baraka in ***Home*** says : "the faire are faire / and deadly white / the day will not save them / and we own the night" .According to Clyde Taylor the violence which starts a "black madness" in Baraka's earlier poetry becomes holy black madness in ***Black Magic*** (131).

Baraka believes that violence becomes a holy quest and a necessary Jihad particularly if it is adopted as a way of retaliation for the murder of a national symbol . In *"A poem For Black Hearts"* ,Baraka affirms the importance of using violence against those who killed the black activist , Malcolm X The poet threatens to retaliate for Malcolm death : "Let nothing in us rest / until we avenge ourselves for his death" . The poet insists on using violence against whites who killed Malcolm , "Stupid animals that killed him". Baraka adds : "Let us never breathe a pure breath if / we fail, and white men call us faggots till the end of the earth" . The poet will take revenge against the white man for the sake of the following : "Malcolm's eyes" , "Malcolm's hands raised to bless us" , "Malcolm's words ,fire darts" ,Malcolm's heart raising us above our filthy cities" ,and "for Malcolm's pleas for your dignity black me" . In the poem Baraka demands revenge on the white world for the assassination of Malcolm's X :

*For Malcolm's eyes , when they broke
the face of some dumb white man , For
Malcolm's hands raised to bless us
all black and strong in his image
of ourselves ,For Malcolm's words
fire darts , the victor's tireless
thrusts, words hung above the world
change as it may , he said it , and
for this he was killed , for saying ,
and feeling , and being change , all
collected hot in his heart ,For Malcolm's
heart , raising us above our filthy cities ,
for his stride, and his beat , and his address
to the grey monsters of the world , For ,Malcolm's pleas for your dignity
,black men , for your life ,
black man , for the filing of your minds
with righteousness , For all of him dead and
gone and vanished from us, and all of him which
clings to our speech black god of our time .
For all of him , and all of yourself , look up
black man ,quiet stuttering and shuffling ,look up ,
black man , quit whining and stooping , for all of
him ,
For Great Malcolm a prince of the earth , let
nothing in us rest
until we avenge ourselves for his death , stupid
animals
that killed him ,let us never breathe a pure breath if
we fail , and white men call us faggots till the end of
the earth (112) .*

Baraka tells the black masses that Malcolm was killed because he dedicated himself to the cause of blacks—he was killed because he challenged the oppressor: "For this he was killed". Malcolm was assassinated by the white police –FBI –because he attacked "the grey monsters of the world" .In Baraka's poem, Malcolm is raised to mythic and scared proportions—he becomes the "black god of our time" and "a prince of the earth" .

The influence of Malcolm X on ghetto blacks was considerable and it has been of mythic proportions among black writers such as Baraka .In ***Black Magic*** and other anthologies . Baraka wrote many poems which elegize Malcolm's leadership , reflect his intense commitments ,repeat his philosophy and interpret his legendary contributions .For Baraka , Malcolm X is not merely a man and a heroic martyr .More exactly ,he is the symbolic representative of the nationalistic themes and approach to life's chaos which Baraka avowed .Baraka refers to Malcolm so often in his poetry because his name evokes and invokes the principles of the black nation Baraka seeks to build .The use of Malcolm's name and memory are aesthetically articulated in Baraka's poetry for revolutionary and ethnic purposes .Malcolm is used as a black community hero . His death has a great impact on Baraka ,an impact which is translated in "***Poem For Black Hearts***" ,an impassioned piece of poetry which implores blacks to realize the dream of Malcolm , their dead prophet :

*For all of him ,and all of yourself , look up ,
black man ,quit stuttering and shuffling , look up , black man ,quit
whiting and stooping , for all of
him ,
For Great Malcolm a prince of the earth , let nothing
in us rest
Until we avenge ourselves for his death .*

In this poem and in most of the ***Black Magic*** poems , Baraka addresses an audience that is not a reading public but ghetto audience which has little time for such things as poetry in the conventional sense .Most of these poems have a rough-and-ready quality which results from the poet's assumption that they will not be studied or analyzed .They are essentially oral poems written for dramatic performance .In ***Black Magic*** ,Baraka explores the possibility of uniting poetry with music and drama. He also sees the black revolutionary poet as a public performer and the black poem as a public gesture .

Moreover, "***A Poem For Black Hearts***" ,written in memory of Malcolm X, is a striking illusion of the political function of poetry. The poem receives much of its force from the poet's employment of imagery suggesting the manly and unswerving dedication of Malcolm, the martyred leader, to the complete liberation of the black nation :

*For
Malcolm's hands raised to bless us
all black and strong in his image
of ourselves ,For Malcolm's words
fire darts , the victor's tireless
thrusts ,words hung above the world
change as it may ,he said it , and
for this he was killed ,for saying ,
and feeling , and being / change , all
collected hot in his heart .*

Baraka uses Malcolm's manhood , in the poem ,as a challenge to all black people .It is the standard to which the black "victims" must aspire .Baraka implores blacks to discard the old images , the old masks as slaves and rise up in the face of white oppression :

*For all of him ,and all of yourself ,look up ,
 black man ,quit stuttering and shuffling , look up,
 black man ,quit whiting and stooping , for all of
 him,
 For Great Malcolm a prince of the earth ,let
 nothing in us
 rest until we avenge ourselves for his death , stupid
 animals
 that killed him , let us never breathe a pure breath of
 we
 fail ,and white men call us faggots till the end of the
 earth .*

Being addressed to black ghetto audience ,much of Baraka's poetry of the mid and late sixties is characterized by the hortatory tone of the preceding lines and much of it was obviously written for oral presentation .The poems of **Black Magic** as a whole do not always evince the artistry of the early volumes of poetry .

Frantz Fanon , in **The Wretched Of The Earth** , discusses the issue of violence or the cleansing anger , a discussion which springs from the political climate of the 1960s and which is still pertinent for black minority poets such as Baraka .Fanon argues:

*At the level of individuals , violence is a cleansing
 force .it frees the native from his inferiority
 complex and from his despair and inaction , it
 makes him fearless and restores his self-respect
 (73).*

Jean Paul Sartre ;commenting on Fanon , emphasizes Fanon's conception of the therapeutic violence .Sartre in his introduction to **The Wretched Of The Earth** , states :

*They [white Europeans] would do well to read
 Fanon ; for he shows clearly that this irrepressible violence is neither
 sound and fury , nor the resurrection of savage instincts , nor event the
 effect
 of resentment : it is man re-creating himself .I think
 we understood this truth at one time, but we have forgotten it – that no
 gentleness can effect the marks
 of violence; only violence itself can destroy them .
 The native cures himself of colonial neurosis by thrusting out the
 settler through force of arms .
 When his rage boils over, he rediscovers his lost innocence and he
 comes to know himself in that he himself creates his self (18) .*

The black minority poet ,like the native ,is engaged in a violent struggle ; his ,however ,is with words / poetry and his creation is a new ethnic culture .Obviously ,a similar aesthetic

evolves in any situation in which the poet / writer feels himself to be in an inferior position to the dominant culture .The specific formula for an individual writer's struggle ,however ,grows out of the particulars of his given social ,ethnic ,political and cultural situation and these are the particulars that make his creation unique .As Baraka observes in *Home* , "for every culture there is a definite set of aesthetic ,moral. .etc ,judgements based quite literary on specifically indigenous emotional and psychological response" (131).Within this context ,Baraka's most radical move from being an apolitical avant-garde poet to being a politically engaged cultural nationalist militant activist provides an important example of how such a radical move toward a black aesthetic embodies forms of social and artistic change . Baraka's cultural nationalist poetry in *Black Magic* not only describes change but also calls for it ; in "***Black Art***" , he says "we went poems that kill" . He wants to kill his avant-garde past in order to become a black poet. Here Baraka advocates the concept of violent change because only after a violent revolution of values will his black voice be heard . For Baraka effecting such a violent change is a dangerous political act , one to which Malcolm X was a martyr . In "***A Poem For Black Hearts***" Baraka explains :

*For Malcolm's words
fire darts , the victor's tireless
thrusts , words hung above the world
change as it may , he said it ,and
for this he was killed , for saying ,
and feeling ,and being / change*

"***A Poem For Black Hearts***" is not the only poem that is written about the death of Malcolm X but "***Letter To Elijah Muhammad***" is another poem which discusses the same theme:

*When your talking is murdered ,and only very old
women will think to give you flowers .When history
is the homework that presses you ,silently ,at your
dying ,in your blood some briefer hatred digs long shank claws, what
will it be like to be more than
that ?What will it be to adore the nature of your
killer's affliction? (12)*

In "***Poem***" ,Baraka describes his sense of confusion and despair after the murder of Malcolm X .He says :

*For their clean bodies , and malcolm's eyes
I walk the streets confused and half sick
with despair at what I must do , yet the doing
as it's finally possible ,drags me on .The way out
feeling inside where I reach, the stones and lights
of new town ,new black ,new strength ,of new wealth
all come down ,and back, and the length, of my
health*

*My world .
 There's not a feeling or fissure sailing
 to the stars. Not a strong lady dancing
 on the heads of fat white guys , who lick
 their bony lips or suck their grey fat teeth.
 You see the who die of cancer and heart
 trouble .
 You see their niggers , fat men with freckles whose minds
 Are like endless garbage cans, full of blue rats and
 lies
 and the stale vomit of dead Greeks .What is the soul
 to do
 but expand . In the circle of being , the cycle of spirit , the closeness
 of love when it's us who are loved , and made huge
 by some lady
 we feel in our speech , or the image of home , in the valley of the blind
 we give them eyes , who we lost , where they drive the suitcases of
 glassmenagerie windows .*

Baraka believes that Malcolm X is a great black leader and a hero who is killed because he attempts to build an autonomous black nation in America where black people exist .Malcolm is killed, according to Baraka, because he emphasizes the importance of having land for blacks –"to have a nation you must have land" Baraka says that before Malcolm the black man never understands that before Malcolm the black man never understands that he has land right here in America–Malcolm was assassinated on February 21 ,1965 by the white police for making unilateral contacts with foreign powers according to the American government claims . Because Malcolm was killed by the white police, Baraka delineates the American police in a repulsive way in most of the poems in ***Black Magic*** .They are "white beasts" or inhuman criminals who must be killed and sent back home to Ireland. .etc. In his poem "*Cops*" ,Baraka, like the balladeer , realizes the powerful appeal of the narrative mode on the imagination of the illiterate ghetto audience , the poet wants to address . Thus he employs dramatic and narrative modes as well as speech of the black urban hipster such as in the word "Flyolfloyd" which in actuality is there words –fly old Floyd –connected for effect . Floyd , former musician and friend was once "smooth as anything blowin . ." .Now he becomes a brutal policeman who in Baraka's view , is a part of the repressive apparatus used by a racial government to punish blacks in the ghetto , Baraka says :

*Flyolfloyd , i kno from barringer ,
 he used to be the daredevil sax playing
 lover of the old sod ,near the hip park
 where they threw you in ,he ,with some others ,
 notably Allen Polite ,was a lover, and smooth as
 anything blowin
 in them parts ,in that town ,in that time
 he weight 400 now
 and threatens junkies
 on Howard Street ,Calling them by first or nick
 names , really scaring the piss out of them , being
 "a nice guy" and all his killing being accidental
 (186).*

Much of the force of *"Cops"*, a poem that attacks policemen because of their violence against blacks, stems from Baraka's dramatic recollection of his childhood memories. He remembers former friends, who become policemen later such as "Bowleg Otis" who is a "prick" who once arrested a "dude" he knew all his life. "Leon" is remembered for being "bad" which means "good" in Baraka's black idiom. He is said to have been "strong as a bitch". Another friend who was a strange fellow, is described as a "funnytime cat". Instead of saying that the boys often had sexual relations with this friend's sister, Baraka says "cats used to pop his sister"

*Bowleg Otis played football but was always a prick
he made detective by arresting a dude he knew all
his life,
he waited in the cold counting white folk's smiles .
Lenny
drives a panel truck, Leon parked in front of the
city hospital
bullshitting ,but he'd split yr head .He was a bad
catcher w
Baxter Terrace ,you slide home head first you get
messed up
Strong as a bitch .Herbert Friday ,beat up Barry
One night,
Herbie was a funnytime cat never played anything .
Cats used to pop his sister .*

All these memories are shattered with the harsh realization of the inhumanity of his friends as policeman serving a racial government. The poet ends the poem asking himself :

*You wanna stand in front of a bar , with a gun
pointed at you? You wanna try to remember why
you liked somebody
while the bullet comes .Shit*

In his discussion of Baraka's revolutionary works, Michael Jackman argues that "revolutionary literature should force change ,should inspire action"(104). Baraka's poem *"Black People"* fulfills the demands of revolutionary literature as defined by Jackman since it urges the black masses to take violent action in their protest against white racism. However, the poem visualizes an image of counter racial violence which undermines the vision of the black dream that the readers expect:

*What about that bad short you saw last week
On Frelinghuysen ,or those stoves and refrigerators , record players,
shotguns ,
in Sears , Bambergers, Kelien's, Hahnes' , Chase, and the smaller josh
enterprises? What about that bad jewelry ,on Washington Street , and
those couple of shops on Springfield ?You know
how to get it , you*

*can
get it, no money down, no money never, money
don't grow on trees
no
way ,only whitey's got it ,makes it with a machine , to
control you
you cant steal nothing from a white man, he's
already stole it he owes
you anything you want , even his life. All the stores
will open if you
will say the magic words .The magic words are : Up
against the wall
mother
fucker this is a stick up ! Or : Smash the window at
night (these are
magic
actions) smash the windows daytime ,anytime ,
together . let's smash
the
window drag the shit from in there . No money down.
No time to
Pay . Just
take what you want .The magic dance in the street.
Run up and
down Broad
Street niggers, take the shit you want. Take their
lives if need be,
but
get what you want what you need. Dance up and
down the streets
turn all
the music up, run through the streets with music ,
beautiful radios on
Market Street, they are brought here especially for
you. Our
Brothers
are moving all over, smashing at jellywhite faces .
we must make our
own
World man ,our own world, and we can not do this
unless the white
man
is dead. Let's get together and killhim my man ,let's
get to gather the
fruit
of the sun, let's make a world we want black
children to grow and
learn in
do not let your children when they grow look in your face and curse
you by*

pitying your tomish ways (225) .

"**Black People**" is one of the poems in ***Black Magic*** which reflected the angry mood of the black inner-city dwellers of the mid and late sixties .Characteristic speakers in many of Baraka's ethnic poems are rioters or guerilla fighters .The poem which is a vivid example of Baraka's riot poetry is characterized by the guerilla fighter's voice. Although The poem perhaps lacks poetic metaphor ,it is animated by the charged language of violence and searing defiance that characterized the fiery riots and racial confrontation on the streets of American cities during the 1960. On one level the poem can be conceived as a counter statement to the well-known "rip-off" advertisement of the radio stations directed to the black communities across America , advertisements infamous for duping the poor into purchases of shoddy goods and interminable payments . This poem is also a parody an inverted "sales The pitch" spoken in the idiom of the black ghetto dweller .For example, the "bad shorts" of the first line is a beautiful and attractive car .

In the poem, Baraka urges blacks to destroy the shops owned by whites and take "stoves and refrigerators", record players , shotguns . . etc" .The poet tells his people that "money don't grow on trees" but the white man has money which he makes as a result of exploiting black people . Thus , it is time for blacks to get black by force ,what has been taken from them through economic exploitation : "you can't steal nothin from a white man ,he's already stole it, he owes you anything you want, even has life" .Baraka also asks blacks to "smash the window at night . . smash the windows daytime . . take the shit you want" .If white people attempt to defend their properties, blacks are asked to "take their lives if need be" and smash "the jellywhite faces" .According to Baraka ,the only way of establishing his new black world required the destruction of the white man in America: "We must make our world and we cannot do this unless the white man is dead"

Baraka, here, employs the strikingly theatrical method seen so often in the works of ***Black Magic*** ,He visualizes a situation and literary creates a mini-drama , complete with stage directions .The same directive is seen in poems such as "***Three Movements And A Coda***" where the speaker describes his own riotous violence and exhorts his readers / audience in much the same way as the speaker in "***Black People***" .

*Came running out of the drugstore window with
an electric alarm clock , and then dropped the motherfucker
and broke it .Go get something' else .Take everything
in there .*

Look in the cashregister. TAKE THE MONEY

TAKE THE

MONEY . YEH .

TAKE IT ALL. YOU DON'T HAVE TO CLOSE

THE DRAWER .

COME ON MAN, I SAW

A TAPE RECORDER BACK THERE

*These are the words of lovers
Of dancers, of dynamic singer*

***These are songs if you have the
music .***

Here Baraka suggests that these acts of pillage are acts of self-creation, of righteous rage. However, there is also evidence in the poems of ***Black Magic*** that the poet is rapidly coming to the conclusion that such materialistically oriented recreation is not enough. He would administer to the spirits of black people. In this connection, it is easy to compare the Lyrical "***Distant Hearts ,Come Closer ,in the Smash of Night***" to "***Black People***" and "***Three Movement And a Coda***". The exhortation is markedly different in this metaphorical and more conventionally poetic work where Baraka says :

***our strength is in the drums ,
the sinuous horns, blow forever beautiful princes ,
touch
the spellflash of everything, all life ,and the swift go
on
go off and speed .Blow, forever, like the animals ,
plants and
sun. Forever in our universe there is beauty and
light ,we come
back to it now . Throwing off the tons of dumb metal the beast
has strapped up in. Those Things. These
refrigerators, stoves,
automobiles, airships, let us return to the reality of spirit ,
to how our black ancestors predicated life should be , from the
mind and the heart, our souls like gigantic kites
sweep across
the heavens, let us follow them our trembling
love for
the world. Let us look up at each other's spirits zooming, and
enter the cities of Gods (223).***

Within the sociopolitical context of the 1960s "***Black People***" can be explored as an extreme example of Baraka's pragmatic and functional poetry of the period. The poem which looks like a sermon, juxtaposes the sacred and the profane, Biblical and street language in order to launch its attack on the city of Newark and to prophesy a black utopia after a holy war, Jihad, against whites and particularly Jewish capitalists who exploit the blacks in the ghetto. The poem reflects Baraka's vision of an apocalypse and of a black future life, achieved through violence. In 1967, when Baraka became personally involved in the Newark ghetto rebellion and racial violence, the poem, "***Black People***" was used by Kapp, the Jewish judge, as evidence of his evil intentions.

In "***Black People***" Baraka speaks about robbery, taking what is needed, dancing in the streets turning things upside down :

***Dance up and down the streets, turn all
The music up ,run through the streets with music ,***

beautiful
radios on
Market street, they are bought here especially for
you .Our
brothers
are moving all over, smashing at jellywhite faces.
We must
make our own
World, man, our own world, and we can not do this
unless
the white man
is dead Let's get together and kill him my man , let's
get to
gather the fruit
of the sun, let's make a world we want black
children to
grow and learn in

In "**Black People**" Baraka demands violence and "magic", the "black magic" of his titles: "The magic words are up against the wall mother / fucker this is a stick up" – according to W.D.E. Andrews "this obscenity is an integral part of Baraka's strategy of inversion" (216). Taken as a whole the poem is a call to action, a call to violence in which there are no ambiguities, no hesitations. Here, Baraka has moved from what Andrews terms as "the heroism of consciousness" –available only in black weakness and defeat–to the heroic act (even though it is vicious, bloody and revengeful).

During Baraka's trial for illegal possession of arms during the Newark riots of 1967, Judge Kapp offered some observations on the poem which are quoted in an article by the white critic, Stephan Schneck. Kapp considers "**Black People**" as "a diabolical prescription to commit murder and to steal and plunder – causing one to suspect that you [Baraka] were a participant in formulating a plot to ignite the spark –to burn the city of Newark! –It is my considered opinion that you are sick and require medical attention" In spite of the fact that Kapp's comments on the poem were identical to those done by any hostile critic, it is easy –if one reads the poem's text - to see why the Jewish judge was threatened and outraged by the poem. However, the question is how such poems as "**Black People**" could ostensibly serve the cause of black nation building and effect the expansion and raising of black consciousness which Baraka calls for.

"**Black People**" can hardly be called a poem about black liberation, about what Baraka refers to in another poem as "Future Goodness". It is a violent vision of the Newark riots, and Baraka himself was under no illusion that what was looted was likely to be what was needed. His contempt for what can be stolen from white stores is registered in another poem: "Those Things. These refrigerators, stoves / automobiles, airships, let us return to the reality of the spirit / to how our black ancestors predicated life should be, from the /mind and the heart, our souls like gigantic kites sweep across /the heavens, let us follow them, with our trembling love for the world". Moreover, the vision of "**Black People**" has nothing to do with the ultimate promise of black revolution, with ideals of militant negritude. But it does express what Baraka considers to be a necessary part of the painstaking and violent exorcism of whiteness. "Evil" has a positive function: "We are / in love with the virtue of evil".

Baraka may be seen to encourage an apocalyptic vandalism because it represents a shattering of the spell of the white man . **"Black People"** is a delirious vision of black people defying the hallowed absolutes of the white man's morality and law , of black people transforming themselves from passive victims into agents of a fearful destruction .Baraka writers from a readiness to "soil his hands" in the pursuit of long-term moral and political aims .His conception of revolution puts historical and sociological realities before ethics .But ultimately , revolution is a moral and spiritual project : "The will to be in tune / the depth of god / the will of wills thunder and rain / silence throws light and decision / to be in / tune / with / God . . . to be alone with the God of creation the / holy nuance / in all beings ./ Is the melody , and rhythm / of / the dancing / shit / itself".

According to Lee A Jacobus, Baraka ,in "Black People" "is calling for inversion" (123) . In this sense , the white God must go away and white morality symbolized for Baraka , in another poem , by the Italian mobster and the Jewish merchant must be turned around by the black magic words:"up against the wall mother / fucker this is a stick up" .Such an expression , in the final poem –**"Black People "** in ***Black Magic*** effectively establishes , even in its impolite language , the purpose of Baraka's inversion as he wants to smash the white idols in order to erect his black utopia: "We must make our own world –we can not do this until the white man is dead" .In this context , **"Black People"** becomes a poem of finality ,there are no alternatives ,no ambiguities .The call is to magic ,the black magic of the title-the dance is magic dance ,the acts are magic acts and the words are magic words . Here ,there is no trace of the white God and all white values are expunged .Even the Cross ,we have been is "a double dirty cross ,to hung your civilization".

Thus ,it is not surprising that as a final poem, **"Black people"** is a call to violence ,a call to arms ,a call to turn everything upside down . The disappointing part is that it is not so much a vision of what has been promised as of what has been done – the poem is not a vision of black people freeing themselves or finding the new black God but it is a vision of the rioting in Newark , with all the streets and all the stores laid out for looting what is looted is not likely to be what is needed . **"Black People"** is ,for all its exhortatory power ,short of the new blackness , the new beauty .However ,Baraka cannot deny this ,because his interest is in the black man doing what he should not be doing: the black man cannot be a credit to his race, since the very concept is a white concept ,born of worshipping the white God ,the hero as victim . To Baraka ,evil has been turned backward ,to live ,though he hardly expects whites to understand this .

"Black People" , an ethno-political poem , was used as an evidence against Baraka when he was arrested during the Newark riots in 1967 .Baraka's notoriety ,his hatred of whites , Jews and policemen stemmed partly from his involvement in the racial violence in Newark which according to Larry Miller , "left over a thousand injured and twenty-five dead ,twenty of that number were blacks and of those twenty ,eleven innocent bystanders"(34) .During the riots ,groups and individuals roamed the streets smashing window looting ,setting fires, destroying property ,attacking white people .City and state law and military personnel and citizens struggled to contain the violence , using tear gas , firearms , physical force , and appeals. Shots were fired by the police , the military and citizens . Scores of people mainly blacks were killed and injured . Baraka in ***Raise*** ,describes the events ,which he predicts in **"Black People "** as a sort of messianic phenomenon .He argues :

*The city is burring! The Devil's city is in flame!
And because evil beings have tortured our people by worshipping dumb
objects more than human life,
our people run through the streets with these objects. Sometimes they
are murdered .But also
they run with what they need smashing and
destroying the temples of the UnGodly .Temples
where evil beings sell our people things and keep them chained to
illusions of Desire .*

*Pop pow pow Boom !! The flame The Flame. Red shadows
moving near the darkness . Devils whirling round and round ,
frightened that God is near and their deaths are imminent !*

*Our People dance in the street now! Young men and old men.
Arms full. Little girls outfitting
their hovels with what they've learned to desire on television . Dancing
In The Street !!*

*On the roofs the marksmen of Shango [Yoruba god of thunder
and fertility] and Allah look down and judge the dancers . A devil whirls
into the flames , a new eye blind in the center of his skull !
Allah Akbar ! . . .*

*Doom to the devil total death will come soon Doom Doom to the
devil .Young armies of God reformed after 400 years attacking with the
most natured holy of weapons holding against the
scourges of Satan our honor our lives our
Blackness !*

*When the devils catch a dancer they murder him at once or else
they throw the single human to
the earth and stomp and beat him with sticks and try
to break his bones and tear out his privates (in
terrible envy) and scream" Animals Animals
Animals", describing only themselves in their
frenzy (53-54).*

During the riots ,Baraka and some of his friends were arrested by the police after being beaten and injured .In the police station Baraka was treated badly by a racial police director ,Mr .Spina. Baraka describes all the events in a statement prepared for his lawyer and is mentioned in Baraka's conversation "*Islam and Black Art*":

*After midnight on July14, 1967 , I and my
companions were driving in my station wagon,
talking of listening to the radio .As we reached the corner of South
Orange Avenue , which at least two carloads of white-helmeted police
with shotguns and several detections. They advanced on our put , ask
for identifications etc. ,then let us go .
We were told to come out of the car .When I
opened the door and stepped down , one detective , whom I recognized
as having once attended [B] arringer High School while I was there
,reached to*

me, screaming that "we were the bastards" who'd been shooting at them . "Yes", he said , " a blue panel truck" .(My station wagon is an olive-green camper bus). I said that we had not been shooting at anyone. I told the officer that I thought I remembered him from high school –whereupon he hit me in the face and threw me up against the side of the truck . (The others had also been taken from the truck) . The detective then began to jab me as hard as he could with his pistol in my stomach ,asking , "where are the guns ?" I told him there were no guns .Suddenly it seemed that five or six of the officers surrounded me and began to beat me. I was hit perhaps five times on top of my head by nightsticks, and when I fell, some of the officers went about methodically trying to break my hands , elbows and shoulders .One officer tried to kick me in the groin –and there were many punches thrown . As they beat , they kept calling me , "Animal" , and asking me , " Where are the guns ?" Inside the wagon , the beating continued. They took us from the wagon and as I was pushed up the stairs at police headquarters, an officer called out, "Wait a minute", and then punched me in the pit of the stomach . I fell to the ground clutching my stomach.

Inside the station, Mr. Spina (the police Director)was standing behind the desk .I asked him had he ordered me beaten. He replied , "They got you ,didn't they?" -smiling. An officer then grabbed me, asked me to take off my belt . He ran his hand in my pocket, pulling out my wallet . . . about \$ 65. 00 and a checkbook out of the wallet . We were then to City Hospital ;I was dragged in and handcuffed in a wheel chair. The "doctors" put in eight or nine stitches and one you won't be writing any poems for a long time now" . (At no time were we allowed to make a phone call . At no time were we read our rights) .

We were then taken to police headquarters on Franklin Street, fingerprinted. The prosecutor asked for \$25. 000bail for me, which the judge allowed .I was taken to Essex Country Jail and put into solitary confinement ,where I remained until I was released. (All motions for lowering the bail were denied) (10) .

This painful experience may explain Baraka's hatred of the white police particularly those officers from Irish or Italian origin .Mr .Spina ,the white officer who descends from an Italian origin , is mentioned by Baraka in Raise as one of "the first cops whip my head during 1967 rebellion " . Baraka adds :

*And this ginnie walkin around tellin people he
gonna prosecute somebody for turning on a water
hydrant in 97 degree weather ,and his motherfukin
kids got airconditionin and pools and this fag talkin
about how he gonna prosecture . . . "the maximum". The motherfucker
aint wrapped up too tight you
askin me .Fuck him anyway*

*But I want to describe him, Spina .The chairman (really the
director, a pinball machine for his ol haveay handed paisanos
He work for the big ginnies , live out further in the suburbs .It's the
same system .The mighty out off somewhere hiding from the real shit.
They makin shit, fall on our
heads. An we wondering ,and buckin our eyes, or
scary or shouting or lying when all the time a
creepy european, a drop of blood in em or none at
all ,the coldest ,somewhere fukin up yr life (92).*

During his trial, Baraka ,according to Hudson, was accused of being associated with "a group of Pakistani Muslims, a secretive organization of extreme black nationalism" (24). This group ,according to the claims of the police ,used the Black Arts Reportory Theater and School ,established by Baraka, as a storehouse for illegal weapons ,bomb materials . . etc . Baraka denied the charge and in his interview "*Islam and Black Art*" he recalls this incident commenting "as long as these swine continue to dominate our lives ,there will continue to be violence and rebellion"(21). During his trial ,Baraka was accused of writing a poem "*Black People*" which urges blacks to commit violence against whites .Judge Kapp ,who was offended by the poem's anti-Semitic tones ,read "*Black People*" to the court ,interpreting it ,against Baraka's objections ,as legal evidence .After reading the poem aloud in court omitting what he considered "obscenities" ,judge Kapp had the following dialogue with Baraka which is quoted in Hudson's book :

*DEFERDANT JONES : Are you offering that in
evidence ?*

THE COURT : Just a minute .

DEFENDANT JONES: It should be read wholly ,if you are.

*THE COURT : "The Author : Le Roi Jones,
Evergreen Publications , December , 1967" .*

DEFENDANT JONES : Let me read it .

*THE COURT : Just a minute. This diabolical
prescription to commit murder and to steal and
Plunder and other similar evidences –*

*DEFEDANT JONES: I'm being sentenced for the
poem .Is that what you are saying ?*

*THECOURT : - causes one to suspect that you were
a participant in formulating a plot to ignite the
spark on the night of July 13 ,1967 to burn the City
of Newark and that –*

DEFENDANT Jones : *You mean ,you don 't like
The poem , in other words .*

THE COURT : *. . . Another shocking except from a
speech which you delivered on September 15, 1967
at Muhlenberg College has been brought to my attention*

THE COURT : *Which reads –*

DEFEDANT JONES : *Is that what I'm being tried
for ,Muhlenberg College ?*

THE COURT : *"Unless we black people can come
into peaceful power and being the benevolent rule of the just the next
stage of our rebellion will burn*

*Newark to the ground. This time City Hall and the
rest of the greco Romans will go down , including the last of these
greco Romans themselves".*

*It is my considered opinion that you are sick and
require medical attention .*

Defendant jones : *Not as sick as you .*

THE COURT : *It has been suggested by some of
your literary friends that you a gifted writer ,
which I am willing to concede , except that I abhor
the use of obscenities and your foul language . It is
most unfortunate that your talents have been
misdirected. You have the ability to make a
wholesome contribution to ameliorate existing
tensions and the resolution of the social and
economic problems of our community by the
introduction of constructive measures ,Instead we
find that you are in the vanguard of a group of
extreme radicals who advocate the destruction of
our democratic way of life by means of criminal
anarchy .*

DEFENDANT JONES: *The destruction of unrighteousness .*

THE COURT: *. . . if the philosopher can make his
own law, so can the fool .*

DEFENDANT Jones : *We that .*

THE COURT : *If the virtuous man can make his
own law ,so can those who spring from the gutter.*

DEFENDANT JONES : *Yes , we see that again .*

THE COURT: *There can be no substitute for
freedom but there can be no freedom where anarchy prevails .There can
be no substitute for justice but there can exist no justice where law and
order have perished .Your behavior ,both past and present, constitutes a
threat and a menace to our society .*

DEFENDANT JONES : *And you all are a thread to the world*

THE COURT : *The sentence of his Court on the
basis of your conviction of the unlawful possession
of two revolvers -*

DEFENDANT JONES : *And two poems .*

THE COURT : *-in violation of New Jersey Statute
2A: 151-41, a misdemeanor, on Indictment No .*

2220-66, is that you be confined to the New Jersey State Prison to serve a term of not less than 2 years and 6 months and not more than 3 years and that you pay a fine of \$ 1000 .
DEFENDANT JONES : Sir , black people will judge me ,brother Kapp .Don't worry about that .
THE COURT :You are excused .Take him upstairs (Hudson 30-31) .

After the trial ,Baraka was sentenced to two a half to three years in prison and a fine of a thousand dollars. However, many writers ,white and black ,rejected the sentence arguing that Baraka was a conspicuous American poet imprisoned for his poetry during a crisis of authoritarianism in America . Many writers condemned such violation of the principle of freedom of speech .Black and white intellectuals and civil rights leaders saw the sentence as an evidence that any black man who expresses the anger of an oppressed people is going to be treated as a political prisoner .Consequently the sentence was reversed and Baraka was acquitted by a higher court .

In spite of the violence ,anger and protest of "**Black People**" Baraka's "**Cold Term**" affirms the human quest of the oppressed poet even during a period of racial violence . "**Cold Term**" is a poem which seems clearly wishful and idealistic . If action is essential for black people and if action is violence ,as **The Black Magic Poetry** indicates ,then Baraka in his enthusiasm for " The machine gunners" is not blinded to what might have been and to what ought to be .In this poignant poem, Baraka says :

Why cant we love each other and be beautiful ?
Why do the beautiful corner each other and spit
poison ?Why do the beautiful not hangout together
and learn to do away with evil? Why are the
beautiful
no living together and feeling each other's trials ?
Why are the beautiful not walking with their arms around
each other laughing softly at the soft laughter of
black beauty?
Why are the beautiful dreading each other , and hiding from
each other ?Why are the beautiful sick and divided like myself ? (91).

Baraka's lament in this poem is poignant and moving .Baraka has admitted in **Black Magic** that "men are islands operating independently" (89) and he believes that black people living in a white city will become sick and divided . But in "**Cold Term**" Baraka admits that a beautiful thing has been lost , and that the black man is sick and divided , he is too .The call to violence , in **The Black Magic** poems , is by no means without its dues and the black man has historically paid his dues . The something in him that is so cruel takes its toll , though not without his being aware of it .

Chapter Six

The Nationalist Poetry Of The Early Seventies

A study Of In Our Terribleness (1970) , It's Nation Time (1970) , Spirit Reach (1972) , Tenzi Ya Imamu (1973) and African Revolution (1973)

In 1970 Baraka was converted into the Kawaidea doctrine of Ron Karenga . At that time , the American society as a whole became less interested in the racial issues of the sixties because whites started ,to some extent ,to understand the requirements of blacks , besides , other important problems such as the consequences of the war in Vietnam and the energy problem came to the surface. Black Americans themselves gradually lost interest in the white/black conflict because the white mainstream started to open up many opportunities for them .Baraka's attacks on the American society began to abate because the national atmosphere was not encouraging . Instead , Baraka devoted his poetic talent to build his black nation spiritually and physically . Baraka's new stance has been prepared for in the poetry of the 1960s and has been developed throughout the poet's struggle to find a substitute for the early seventies , Baraka found a substitute for the white moral order in Pan-Africanism, Kawaidea religion and third world political doctrines . In "*African Revolution*" (1973) collected in *Selected Poetry* (1979) , Baraka speaks about the conditions of black people in Africa who are killed during their revolutions against imperialist countries .He also refers to the poverty problems in Africa and he regrets the political differences which lead to wars between brothers :

*Afrikan People all over the world
Suffering from white domination
Afrikan People all over the world
Trying to liberate their Afrikan nation (s)
Afrikan People all over the world
Under the yoke , the gun , the hammer , the lash Afrikan People all over
the world
being killed& stifled melted down for the
Imperialists cash
Afrikan People all over the world
conscious ,unconscious , struggling ,sleeping
resisting , tomming ,killing the enemy killing each
other
Being hurt, surviving, understanding, held in
ignorance
Bursting out of chains ,lying for Nixon ,drowning
colonialists
Being shot down in the street
Afrikan People everywhere
Afrikan People all over the world
Evolving because of & in spite of ourselves
Afrikan People all over the world, trying to make
Revolution
The world must be changed, split open & changed
All poverty sickness ignorance racism must be*

*eradicated
Who ever pushes these plagues ,them also must be
eradicated
All capitalists, racists, liars , Imperialists , All who
can not change
they also must be eradicated, their life style ,
philosophies
habits ,flunkies , pleasures, wiped out – eliminated
The world must be changed, split open changed
Transformed , turned upside down .
No more Poverty!
No more dirty ragged black people ,cept from hard
work
to beautify + energize a world we help create
Death to Backward Powers
Death to Bad Dancers
No more wind in the bedroom
No more Capitalists in penthouses & colored people
in tents
with no houses
Death to disease & carries of disease
All disease must be cured (Selected Poetry 230) .*

Baraka ,here ,is no longer interested in the racial issues of the 1960s but he speaks about the necessity of resisting imperialism all over the world particularly in third world countries and Africa. The process of resistance includes violence and assassination :

*"Individuals" who love disease must be reeducated
If they resist world unity and the progress of all
races
Kill them. Don't hesitate! Kill them They are the
plague
No more filthy places for us to live and be
uneducated
No more aimless black children with nothing to do,
but die
Death to the creator of unemployment
What do they for a living ? They are thieves.
Jail them ! Nixon is a sick thief why does he
Remain alive ? Who is in charge of killing him ?
Why is it Cabral , Lumumba, Nkrumah , Moumie , Malcolm, Dr.King ,
Mondlane, Mark Essex, all can
Be killed by criminals, & the criminals are not
Hung from bridges? No more unfair societies!
We are for world progress. Be conscious of your
Life ! We need food. We need homes ; good
Housing –not shacks. Let only people who want to
Live in roach gyms live in roach gyms (231).*

Then Baraka attacks the American president Richard Nixon who is depicted as an insect :

*We do not want to live with roaches .Let
Nixon live with roaches if he wants to . He
is closer to a reach . What is the difference
between Nixon and a roach ?
Death to bad housing
Death to no work
We need work . We need education so
we can build houses and create work for
ourselves. All over the world we Afrikans
need to make progress . Why do Europeans
Why do white people why do ignorant
people of our own race obstruct us .*

After criticizing Europeans and ignorant black traitors for obstructing the progress of the emerging African and third world nations , Baraka demands violence against traitors :

***STOP OBSTRUCTING US EUROPRANS!
STOP OBSTRUCTING US IGNORANT PEOPLE
OF
OUR OWN RACE
Niggers ,Neo Colonized Amos + Andies
Everywhere in the Afrikan World .
No more traitors ! Death or traitors
Dope Pushers should be killed
Niggers who inform on Revolutionary Movements
Should be killed
Assassin masquerading as heroes .***

Baraka ends his poem celebrating the uprising of third world nations particularly the African countries :

*Afrikan Afrikans (Ndugu)
West Indian Afrikans (Hey man)
South Americans Afrikans (Hermano)
Fracophone Afrikans (Monsieur)
Anglophone Afrikans (Mister Man)
Anywhere Aafrikans
Afrikans Afrikans Afrikans
People
Afrikans Afrikans Afrikans
Watu Wazuri
Afrikans all over the world
Moving to the new way
A world of Good people is coming !*

*We gonna help make that world
 We gonna help eliminate the negative
 Accentuate the positive
 yellow folks brown folks red
 folks will too
 they hurting
 I can't speak for white folks, they'll
 speak for themselves
 But the rest of us , Everybody Everybody
 Everybody , let us first deal with us
 Afrikans
 All over the world ,Yes ,Everywhere Everywhere
 Everywhere , we are Afrikans
 & going to make change
 Change or die
 Afrikans
 Change or die
 to the Whole world too
 we are Afrikans
 Love is our passport to the perfectability of humanity
 Work & Study
 Struggle & Victory (234) .*

This poem , in its violence , its allusions to imperialism and its praise of third world struggle paves the way for Baraka's Marxist poetry in the mid seventies .However, the poem is characterized by its outright statements which are used in ***Black Magic*** .For example ,Baraka ,in ***Black Magic*** ,used outright statement such as "president Johnson is a mass murderer" (93) or "the white man at best is corny" (162).Here ,there are outright statements such as : "We need food " and "Let Nixon live with roaches" .

In Baraka's nationalist/ pre-Marxist phase (1970-1974) ; the poet produced five small volumes of poetry: ***In Our Terribleness*** (1970), ***It's Nation Time*** (1970), ***Spirit Reach*** (1972) ,***African Revolution*** (1973)and ***Tenzi Ya Imamu*** (1973). In these volumes , Baraka reflects his nationalist aesthetic and adoption of Pan-Africanism .Moreover , Baraka's aesthetic and his adoption of Pan-Africanism ,his interest in poetic art as form, albeit a politically committed form are reflected in these volumes .For example ***In Our Terribleness*** is a compelling example of this interest .Written and published at the peak of Baraka's black Nationalist committed it bears the hallmarks of that special black-world spirituality which Baraka draws from the black Nationalist Ron Karenga and which dominates the essays of ***Kawaida Studies*** .In fact, this collection of poems is dedicated to "advocates of Kawaida" ,and a significant proportion of it is actually a collection of prose homilies based on the teaching of Karenga .The collection also emphasized the standard black Nationalist phase of Baraka's writing at this period –the contrast between the old racial perversions and the new black pride ,Africa as a symbol of a universal "black" sensibility , and the philosophical ideas of social and individual wholeness . And as is true of Baraka's other black Nationalist collections ,***In Our Terribleness*** suffers from the familiar weaknesses that seem endemic to his black Nationalism—a philosophy of "blackness" that is too often little more than a shrill abusiveness of (black and white) antagonists , political claims that are sometimes mere

bombast or facile revolutionism, and the questionable tendency ,already noted in *Kawaida Studies* ,of defining black American culture in exclusively urban terms .

In our Terribleness is devoted to establish the black nation and build the black myth .The volume reveals the assurance which has finally come to the poet with the clarification of black mythic precepts and ever-growing righteousness .The volume also reflects the characteristic ,the rituals ,and ceremonies of the black nationalistic myth .The poet illuminates aspects of black folklore and glorifies popular cultural heroes such as Claude McKay ,San Ra and John Coltrane .In terms of structure, Baraka redefines many terms by changing their dictionary meanings . The words "black" and "Terribleness" ,for example ,acquire wider implications The word "back" is stripped of all its bad connotations and becomes a symbol of virtue ,love ,power and optimism."Terribleness" is no longer a negative term, but it, becomes a synonym for goodness and beauty ,for the positive qualities Baraka attributes to a new black self-awareness .

By inverting the standards white American definition of language ,Baraka emblematically enhances the volume's penetrating sense of disengagement from mainstream American culture .Such an intentional manipulation of language in *In Our Terribleness* is therefore indispensable to the poet's political attitude which is reflected in his Nationalist poetry .This reveals that Baraka tends to convey his new socio-ethnic attitudes through an innovational artistic form .Baraka, thus, combines the process of socio-political creation with the artistic innovation in a striking harmony .Both processes are integrated with each other because they are generated by the poet's ethnic pride . Such deliberate fusion also inspires new techniques to the poet in terms of style and form which take Baraka's poetry of this period beyond the boundaries of previous volumes. Thereupon , *In our Terribleness* is a purposeful breakaway from inflexible notions of poetic technique , style and structure . In this volume ,there is an absence of page numbers , a mixing of essays and poems and an emphasis on the mutual relation between the poetic terminology and the photographic image.

The major mistake of *In Our Terribleness* is that the theme of the book (which revolves round the emergence of the new black nation)is lost because the poet has overwritten his thematic motifs in terms of sheer words ,and mystical diction and imagery .White critics however ,believe that *In Our Terribleness* suffers from the familiar excesses which are endemic to Baraka's Nationalist poetry .The volume has been criticized for its high-pitched abusiveness of white people. Baraka has been attacked for his political claims which are sometimes mere facile and bombastic protests .It is relevant to argue that despite the flaws of the volume ,critics should not forget that the deliberate process of rejecting white American culture in favor of black values has had the effect of intensifying the poet's interest in language as a symptom of cultural values and social conflict .

Moreover ,*In Our Terribleness* is a cataloguing of black sacraments and ritual of piety as well as a serious of clearly stated expositions of the tenets of Baraka's Nationalistic myth. Its longest distinct section "*Prayer For Saving*" is an anatomy of black folklore and cultural heroes . In the breathless pace of a holy chant , Baraka calls for their preservation and glorification. He says :

Survive and Defend.
Survive and Defend.
Defend the space you live upon Defend your family
Your way of

*feeling
about the world . Defend The Impressions
and Muhammad Ali
Defend Ray Robinson and the Songhay Empires
[. . .] (Unpaginated) .*

In the poems of the volume , the impulse is to celebrate not to denigrate .The infinite articles of black humanity are its collective spirit and the Nationalistic tactics required for the projection of "The spirit of Black life" into future greatness are its dogma and affirmation .An essential aspect of the dogma is the Pan-Africanism which started to emerge in the late poems of Baraka's **Black Magic** : "We move to many nations as one , as Nkrumah and Garvey envision the many blacks into one of the Huge Black Nation strong as the divinity in us"

The shift a Pan-Africanism in the poetry of the early 1970s requires a rejection of white culture .The highly deliberate process of rejecting white American culture in favor of "black" values has had the effect of intensifying the poet's interest in language itself as a symptom of cultural values and social conflict .Hence the redefinition of "magic" in **Black Magic** from a limited , projective term in Western , technological culture is succeeded here by similar re-definitions .**Terribleness** is no longer a negative term .It is a synonym for goodness and beauty, for the positive qualities which Baraka is attributing to a new black self-awareness .In reversing the standard(white American) definition of the term Baraka intensifies the collection's pervasive sense of detachment from mainstream American culture .This self-conscious use of language it therefore integral to Baraka's political viewpoint in the poetry of the period .And it is ,simultaneously ,a symptom of his continuing absorption in the role of style and form –in the very idea of art as both design and political process .

Thus ,the pragmatic emphasis on the "nuts and bolts" of (black)nation-building proceeds here side by side with an intense awareness of art itself as a process of creating forms. The work of black artist as a process of creating forms . The work of black artist like John Coltrane ,Sun Ra ,and Claude McKay is analogues to the imaginative creation of a vital black community .But black art is also more than an analogy .It is intrinsic to the process of sociopolitical creation because both processes , the artistic and the political ,are inspired by ethnic pride and draw upon a sense of black cultural tradition .The poet's call for the building of new things in "**Prayer For Saving**" is addressed to political worker and artist alike : " build new/ black beautiful things .New Shapes Buildings".

In Our Terribleness reveals Baraka's new attitude toward the black collective which he sadly called "my own dead souls , my so called people" in the poetry of the 1960s .Even in the last poems of **Black Magic** ,Baraka sometimes fears his words may be useless to people "rotting for centuries destined to die with the white man" and that holy blacks may fail their true selves and become "plain dumb niggers with the only quality truly transferable among humans ,stupidity" .In the poems of celebrated nationhood of **In Our Terribleness** , the black man is no longer a political "dumb nigger" but he is a "holy" nigger :

*Ask Me What I Am –
[. . .] nigger love a magic being
the dipping interior resurrect constant continuous
the way the nigger walk*

*The red hat is a magic hat
 the razor a sword flasher
 the lines of adepts all niggers really
 the pyramid speaks of niggers actually
 the word will be given by niggers
 we are in our most holy selves niggers
 god is a nigger really
 ask who god is and he will answer if you ask
 right [. . .]
 a nigger is holy.*

In *In Our Terribleness*, Baraka's crucial reversal of the image of "the dumb nigger" into a "holy" nigger and his innovative use of language -"bad nigger" means "good nigger" -are attempts to emphasize some thematic concerns on the part of the poet. For example, the linguistic habits of blacks reflect the need for image reversal-the inverting of white words to render black meanings comments on the antagonism and mistrust blacks feel toward whites. For example, in the black oral lexicon "bad" means "good" because it means "bad" in the white lexicon. Baraka extends this linguistic habit by pushing it to its extreme. Baraka intensifies "bad" into "terrible" and creates a new black art form: "bad" is black speech; terrible is black poetry:

*Our terribleness is our survival as
 Beautiful beings, any where.
 Who can dig that?
 To be bad is one level
 But to be terrible, is to be
 Badder dan nat*

For Baraka as for other black artist, writers can only escape the white hell through a radical transformation of white images, ideas, and forms. Here, to be terrible is to be extreme, one way of radically confronting that hell. By becoming the white man's idea of terrible, the black assumes stature and becomes, in his own eyes, strong and beautiful.

Moreover, there is a comparable self-consciousness, about the creative use of language and style, in the subtitle of the collection: "*Some Elements And Meaning In Style*". "Style" refers both to culture (life-style, social values) and to the manner in which the poet's techniques or forms reflect that cultural "style". "Meaning" signifies the thematic or expressive role of the poet's style, "Elements" suggests the intrinsic values of black cultural "style" that are to be reflected in the artist's "meaning". And, finally, this deliberate blend of meanings has the crucial effect of defining poetry as a cultural expression and as form with its peculiar or inherent "elements". On the whole this kind of artistic self-consciousness lends itself readily to a certain innovation in matters of style and form, the kind of innovation that is drawing Baraka's poetry, in this collection, beyond the boundaries of the previous collections. The interweaving of poetry and essays, for example, remains on a tentative, somewhat experimental basis, in *Black Magic*, where there is one major essay ("*Gatsby's Theory of Aesthetics*"). But *In Our Terribleness* takes this process a step further until the reader is left with what is not so much a collection of poems in the conventional sense but a continuous flow of words. And the flow varies from essay format to poetic images and back again.

Moreover , this continuous movement from one form to another confirms one of the opening phrases that describe the work as "a long image study in motion".

In our Terribleness which is a collection of poems by Baraka and a collection of pictures by photographer Billy Abernathy suffers from its various mystical images and symbols. According to Clyde Taylor's humorous comment : "Some of [Baraka's] symbols look like paraphernalia left over from a Shriner's convention" .Nevertheless , the form of the work takes the shape of a design that seems calculated to challenge rigid notions of poetic style or structure .This challenge is unique to *In Our Terribleness* and has already been noted in the previous poetry . But the details of the challenge are more varied here ,ranging from the absence of page number ,the interweaving of essays and poems ,to the lack of subdivision and (in many instances) titles .Moreover Baraka's own reference to the work" as "a long images story" pinpoints the effect of another feature .The collection relies heavily on images , the kind of verbal images that Baraka has cultivated since his early poetry and prose fiction .But in addition to those familiar images ,Baraka here depends on the visual images of the camera .The work is not only a collage of verbal or literary images .The work is not only a collage of verbal or literary images .It is also a tapestry in which the verbal images of the poet are inter-woven with the visual images of the photographer.

In *In our Terribleness* camera and words combine to produce images that are literally those of sight and sound . As a result verbal images often flow from and reinforce photographic images .The picture of a black man with a toothpick in his mouth gives rise to two distinct but integrated images-"in visual terms the white toothpick becomes a shaft of light against a dark background .And in the verbal context of the poet's imagination the transfiguration of the toothpick is taken a step further : the toothpick becomes a magic wand , an emblem of the man's vital ethnic presence" (Brown 130) :

The touch of light
Transformed wood . A Wand .Transmutation
His mouth wand
The toothpick of the blood is this casual swagger
stick . . .
Catches the light
in the steel town
catches a dancer's
eye.

Finally ,the process of interpreting the social significance of the camera's images emphasizes the imaginative nature of the poet's own perception.

Brown believes this approach is sometimes unsuccessful , primarily because Baraka's own revolutionary "swagger" leads to some questionable interpretations of the camera's image .For example ,it would seem obvious enough that the photograph of a black youth holding an open switch blade is painful reminder of violence in the black community where blacks are sometimes more frequently than not the victims of other blacks .On this basis alone there seems to be nothing in the picture to justify Baraka's rather questionable taste in rhapsodizing about the young man as a symbol of revolution .Other failures are less distasteful and result from Baraka's original tendency to strain for an effect .Hence the photograph of an old man and a boy , one looking to the right and the other to the left ,is not

the convincing image of a universal life cycle that Baraka tries to offer the readers –even though this attempt involves the poet's pervasive sense of wholeness ,or "allness" .

But in spite of such limitations these dual images of the camera and the poetic imagination remain crucial to some understanding of Baraka's perception of his poetry in *In Our Terribleness* . In relying as heavily as he does here on the visual image Baraka is really to its logical conclusion his "continuing skepticism" about the sufficiency of words in ideal committed literary art .Hence the relationship between photographic image and poetic "word" here is actually a reciprocal one .The poet's imaginative vision adds new dimensions to the image captured by the photographer's imagination .Conversely ,the camera's eye adds further conviction to Baraka's belief that language is inherently limited on its own , either as a tool for political change or as a means of communicating the complex and multiple images of the imagination .And in relying as much as he does here on non-verbal images to complete his poetic forms Baraka is once again using the sense of artistic structure to reinforce a political statement .In this case he is actually reinforcing the contention which recurs throughout *In Our Terribleness* that Political creativity depends on much more than words , "that political rhetoric must be integrated with the actions of political organization" (Brown 131).

Thus ,in both the political and aesthetic senses , the camera and the poetic imagination complete each other .According to Brown ,these mutual dependency and the reciprocity of art forms (photography and poetry) attest to Baraka's continuing fascination with the distinctive province of the arts in general , and with the distinctive modes of each art form .But ,equally important ,when Baraka demonstrates the interdependence of such art forms and when he integrates their diverse images into one design as he frequently does in this collection he is also illustrating one of the recurrent themes of *In Our Terribleness* –that there should be a sense of "wholeness" in existence in general and in a reconstructed black "nation" in particular .

The poetry of *In Our Terribleness* is not only a symptom of Baraka's ideal of wholeness ,by virtue of interdependent forms , but is also the means whereby the poet achieves a sense of wholeness because its special images enhance or enlarge the reader's experience and perceptions .According to Brown "art mirrors life ,returns the resulting images to us ,and in turn our grasp of those images completes our sense and experience in a special way" (132) .The entire process duplicates the cycle of creation itself as follows :

*There are mostly portraits here . Portraits of life .Of life being lived .
Black People inspire us . Send life into us We wanted to conjure with
Black Life to recreate
it of ourselves . So that the
connection with you would be a bigger Self
The artist completing the cycle recreating .*

Thus , on this basis the poet is a godhead of sorts , one whose role as creator/re-creation makes him the voice of both god the creator and creation itself. And at this point Baraka's perception of his poetry merges with his political interest in the black American's African past ,for the perception of the poet as the god's voice is comparable with the traditional role of poetry in some traditional African cultures –the Akan culture of West African , for example . Baraka says :

***The Creator has all experiences
and we live as flying images of
endless imagination . Listen to the creator
speak in me now . Listen , these words
are part of God's thing . I am a
vessel , or black priest interpreting
the present and future for my people.***

Here ,the emphasis is a double one , Baraka's insistence on the representational ,committed role of poetry goes hand in hand with his continuing recognition of poetry "images" of an "endless imagination" . Poetry is a microcosm of the process by which humans –blacks in this instance –change and recreate their lives. And , simultaneously ,it is the special product of the imagination of the poet .

One point of weakness of ***In Our Terribleness*** is its doctrinal non-poetic sections .These sections are invariably those in which the poet takes it upon himself to "teach Kawaïda" and spread the doctrine of Ron Karenga's US organization . The following passage ,in which Baraka lists the seven principles of Karenga's Kawaïda doctrine is exemplary of the poet's recurring didacticism and religious propaganda :

***... it will be a value system
that change us. Something that preaches Unity ,
self Determination ,
Collective Responsibility ,Collective Economics , Purpose ,Creativity ,
And Faith. Faith in Blackness, Changes us to
Powerful Beings on the planet. Our style will
remain.***

Furthermore ,Baraka's propaganda for Kawaïda with its doctrinal flatness extends to a passage accompanying a picture of the protective force of black Muslims ,the fruit of Islam . Baraka says :

***... we must organize and be in organization .An organization (FOI
here
from the mosque) is the well of next level consciousness.
Bigger than individual . We move from the
single to the many
To the larger the city , the nation . And then past these we move
To many nations , as one , as Nkrumah and Garvey envision , the many
Blacks into the One Huge Black Nation ...***

It is important to argue as evidenced in these lines that , Baraka at this stage of his career ,is completely dedicated to the principles of Black Nationalism. No longer merely interested in cultural nationalism ,the poet ,like the Pan-Africanists he mentions ,desires the actual establishment of a black-owned-and-governed territory .The remarkable thing about ***In Our Terribleness*** , perhaps ,is that the poet manages to get so much poetry in between the political

and religious dogma .He does it , moreover ,with an abundance of wit and extensive use of the black idiom ,which he considers as poetry .

The black Nationalist Ron Karenga is not only glorified in *In Our Terribleness* but it *Tenzi Ya Imamu* as well . In a poem dedicated to Maulana Karenga and Pharoah Sanders ,a black artist , Baraka says :

*The body of man is evolved to a brain
and speech ,in the dark ,a drum ,thru
forests and over water ,speech ,man
with his black self ,describes the
sea and forest ,the trials of earth
and sinewy flaying things ,the pyramid
of his life ,beings to describe
what is in him ,beating image off his tongue ,
the blood ,carrying image thru the heart ,the blood himself ,on a lake,
with his ,wo-man ,the blood ,
then ,
in his black eloquence ,described , that ,wo-man (Selected 163) .*

Moreover ,the poet announces early in the text that *In Our Terribleness* is an exploration of the black idiom and manner. In language fraught with double meaning ,he tells his readers to watch not only the "itches" but the words as well ,because:

*They are de signs .
And the kidz is the whole cycle . An old man looks
one way
(dig it , the language) and old man looks one way -
his yug son
looks another*

Then ,after warning the reader that he is concerned with the magical powers of the word ,the poet goes on to explain the particularly black and inverted meaning implied in the book's title . "Our terribleness" translates roughly "our unmatched excellence" (Poet Sonya Sanchez uses the idiom in a similar manner in her title *We a Baaddd People*) . Baraka explains the meaning of "bad" by way of exemplary statements and the assertion that blacks literally do speak a different language . He says :

*Since there is a "good" we know is bullshit , corny
as Lawrence
Welk on Venus, we will not be that hominy shit .
We will be ,
definitely , bad ,bad ,as a mother – fucker.
"That's a bad vine that dude go on".
"Damn".
"It's a bad dude".*

It is clear ,here that the strength of the black nation is found on the streets ,up the alleys ,in the pool halls ,and on the stoops where black people serve their last portion of servitude before passage into the utopian future city .Judging from the confidence with which Baraka identifies himself with this nucleus of national power ,he has finally been claimed by the black streets whose life he chronicles : "That's a bad vine that dude got on . . etc" Baraka adds :

*This is our leadership
this is our kingdom to come
as it comes out of our hearts
to final strength in the common world .
We will raise it and develop it [. . .]
(on the stoops) .*

Furthermore ,it is relevant to argue that just as Baraka contrasts the spoken idiom of the black American to that of the dominant culture –"That's a bad vine that dude got on " translate :That's a beautiful suit the gentleman is wearing" –he constantly juxtaposes other black styles (e.g., musical, or athletic) to middle American styles .In the poet's mind, Lawrence Welk is the musical personification of a stilled dominant culture , whereas John Coltrane, Duke Ellington, and Sun Ra are the vibrant representatives of the black American. They are "terrible" musicians according to the poet :

*To be bad is one level
But to be terrible, is to be
Badder don nat*

In Tenzi Ya Imamu ,Baraka describes poetry as follows :

*Poetry is not the sole means of my expression
my life is such a bread thing
stretched out in all direction .
The poem now is a note of flying energies .Speeding meat hums
of the evolving organism .The music becomes straighter , a clearer
melody ; the harmonies worked out to a single multicolored tone .
A postcoltrane anthemic national image . The words of the old folks
the sound of our new selves ,a
theme revolving in meaning forever
even if our sun explodes .We deal with the reason
past the reasons .
We mean what is after all the seen and felt by the totality of what
has ever been .
On a street in a Newark slum . Central Ward , November 1969 , in the
reign
of Pig Richard the faggot hearted . I speak out of a need to
communicate
with the yet unborn nations of righteousness . Form
the most ancient
People on this planet. New slaves, many
unconscious , as a warrior-poet*

*of the age .This writing is a warning of how far creation can be stretched
to include absolute evil, and absolute delusion .
Power must have a balance
It must include the position evolution of all the forces (Selected 177) .*

On the other hand ,Baraka's poetry in *In Our Terribleness* is a poetic symphony of various associations .The lines of *In Our Terribleness* present a clear fusion of street life ,various mythological abstractions ,several issues about black life and mythology , and many other elements .They flow on and on , image evoking image ,fragments from one theme mingling with aspects of another ,until it becomes obvious that this work is a poetic symphony of verbal association with theme answering theme ,an elaborate succession of interwoven analogies and contrasts from all phrases of black culture: the elegance of Duke Ellington and the Soul drive of James Brown ;the doctrine of Elijah Muhammad and of Maulana Karenga ;the rhythm of Swahili and the pulse of jive .Like Pound's Cantos ,it is an "epic of timelessness" ,and it realize the tendency toward extended and encyclopedic forms characteristic of the mythic mode .It Is also clear that this massive effort is undertaken with a language in which the abstraction of myth and musical cadences of black speech are jointed in the full rediscovery of Baraka's natural lyricism such as the simple clarity of the following lines :

*Was this the highest of the physical
I was answering the truth of the whole
She was beautiful in your mind , Halisi , Burnt
full of light . So it is a spiritual blessing
to see eyes and nose and mouth so ,
Perfect ;*

Baraka in *In Our Terribleness* explains the functional nature of his work ,praise the genius of his friend ,the photographer Billy Abernathy and describes the essence of the artistic process as follows :

*In our terribleness ,We wanted to
conjur with Black Life to recreate it for our selves .
So that
the connection with you would be a bigger Self .
Abernathy has
many many photos each "bad" in some aspect .
Abernathy is him –
self ,
a terrible terbul dude. The way the terribleness of
us get thru
thru him to us, again. The artist completing the
cycle recreating .*

It is clear ,as these lines demonstrate ,that the poet is still very much a product of his avant-garde background .This is evidenced in the swift transition to the sophisticated language of the academician .

Besides ,in *Tenzi Ya Imamu* ,Baraka links blacks to Africa which is significant in a period of extreme negritude and Pan-Africanism .He chants :

*Africa Africa Africa
Africans Africa Africans Africa
Africa African Africa Africa
Africans Africa Africans Africa
Africa
Africa
We are a whole people
We are a whole gorgeous people
We are Africans
A Whole People A Holy people
We are Africans
A Whole People
Never forget this dancer
A whole people where ever in this
solar system , we are the soul of the
whole
system
Africans
Our land ,wherever we are,
African (Selected 175) .*

The poet focuses on the African identity of his race

*We are the Africans
You understand ? The Africans
Ah, you remember us ?The Africans. Yes. The
Children
Of The Sun . Africans
Yes , Africans .
Yes ,Africans ,
Africans ,
Africans, (176).*

Baraka is also concerned with mending the black American's shattered sense of self in *In Our Terribleness*. Here ,he attempts to bring out the spiritual beauty just in black of the so-called depraved façade of the "blood's" i.e. black people's reality. He says :

*Some ter-bul dudes. The glimpse of reality. Not
simple fact ,which
is the object trying to talk. But truth. The setting*

*beneath
appearance to what is shining like the hot beautiful holy sun ,
So the blood. Whatever we say .Always talk so bad
About the blood
"The blood aint ready . A nigger aint shit .Negroes
aint go no
value. Man, these spooks'll make you tired, with
they shit" . And
on and on. Tapping ourselves in screens of
negative description .
When we know we bad . Shit, we here. We here
and gonna survive .*

The speech here is very authentic and , the poet seems to draw very deliberately on those elements traditionally accepted as "poetic" ,just to show that he is equal to the task. The poem itself is an effective example of the extended metaphor .Aside from the striking simile of the third line and the metaphor of the seventh ,the whole is enriched by striking uses of incremental repetition ,assonance and consonance ,particularly in lines three and four .

In "*Prayer For Saving*" ,a poem from *In Our Terribleness* which is collected in Baraka's *Selected Poetry* ,the poet asks blacks to defend their heroes who are symbols of their ethnic pride :

*Survive and Defend .
Defend and Survive .
Defend the space you live upon Defend your family
your way of
Feeling
about the world .Defend The Impressions
and Muhammad Ali
Defend Ray Robinson and the Songhay Empires
Defend the Pyramids and Huey Newton in the same
breath the same
people faced with the same disasters in the physical
world , the
emergence of the naked apes on horseback from out
the icebox zone (Selected 150) .*

In this poem Baraka introduces his pervasive concern with black heritage ,the theme which has grown progressively stronger in previous works . Baraka pleads :

*let our words and music survive
let The Temptations please let their feeling survive
Please Black People Defend John Coltrane and
Sun Ra
Claude McKay must survive his long black
knowledge walks*

*in footprint sands of europe american and
westindies must stand
Defend the way you walk my man sister tell him
to do it
the coolness like we really meant by cool slow
fire protect
let it survive as the universal oasis of civilization .
Build new
blackbeautiful things .*

In the last section of the poem Baraka chants :

*Survive
and Defend all these things in us
All These Things We Are
Or Come From
Survive Survive Survive and Defend
Survive Survive Survive and Defend
Spirit of Black Life
Live in Eternity (152) .*

In this poem ,There are allusions to black artist and writers .For example ,the black poet ,Claude McKay is remembered ,of course ,for his influence on the so-called Harlem Renaissance, the race-conscious literary movement of the 1920s ,Ellington is praised for his general excellence as well as his race-conscious music .Speaking of Ellington ,Baraka ,in *Black Magic* has said : " . . .there have always been musicians who have been deeply conscious of their exact placement in the social world ,or at least there was a kind of race pride or consciousness that animated the musicians and their music (. . . here , Ellington is a giant . 'Black Beauty', 'Black Brown, and Beige', 'For My People' and so many many others) .Elsewhere he has spoken of the avant garde musicians Sun Ra and Ellington in the same context : "Ra's music changes places ,like Duke's jungle music' .Duke took people to a spiritual past ,Ra to a spiritual future (199) .

"*Prayer For Saving*" is undoubtedly one of the writer's performance poems, as evidenced by the Whitmanesque cataloguing, which allows for relative ease of comprehension on the part of the listener . It is evident also in the poem's humor , always an advantage to the oral poet . The black ghetto audience would not fail to see the humor in the poet's reference to the urban hipster's insatiable appetite for extravagant ,flashy ,or what some would call "loud" ,clothing :

*defend the energy the hipness in you
its too valuable that people everywhere understand
why we got so many dances
why we like colors
[. . .]
Survive*

***and Defend
Survive
and Defend
suedes and maroon pants***

This same humor is seen in the poet's accompanying lines to Abernathy's picture of Willie Waller ,a switchblade- carrying street hipster , dressed in a leather and suede jacket and alligator shoes .Speaking simultaneously of Willies's dreams and his flair for the resplendent , the poet says :

***When he get a shoe factory willie waller
From howard street shoes might have lights on the
Motherfuckers.***

Lacey argues that Baraka ignores no fact of style or "badness" as manifested by the black urban hipster. In "cinematographic swiftness ,he lauds basketball players, hip walkers(limpers),scat singers. They all display" (128):

***That consciousness . Dukes that can
Hang in the air, double up, stuff !! Or hold one
arm stiff turning
The corner Aberbathy said "Bop do be do be dillia
do be da da do be
Dopp woo daaaa. If you can dig it This is our expression . This is
The change .And the Language the words will
change .***

Here, the poet intimates a calmer version of his revolutionary vision .He seems to reject ,at least momentarily ,the grim forecast seen in his play *The Slave*.

It is clear that although much of the writing of *In Our Terribleness* appears to be poorly coordinated with the pictures , there is an occasionally perfect pairing .In such cases the totality of effect is overwhelming .A particularly striking instance is seen in the treatment of the aproned ,tooth-pick-chewing laborer. In lines that emphasize the dramatic reversal of the poet's earliest thought ,Baraka speaks of this contemporary black urban worker in terms of his residual Africanness ,no matter the worker's physical placement in the world .Baraka says :

***The blood is the nation in its entirety. What's
pictured here is
our nation .
Like this blood with the tooth pick .Can you put a Kafiyah on him
where he stands. Mchawi a wizard they could all be wizards .They
could and are .The toothpick spraying it around .
The touch of light .***

***Transformed wood . A wand . Transmutation . The dumb wood now
vibrating at a higher rate. With the blood .His
mouth wand .
The toothpick of the blood is his casual swagger
stick .Sho
is hip .
Catches the light
in the steel town
catches a dancers
eye .A smile like a city
laugh
year later
of hard
sunlight***

In fact these powerful lines ,too ,are concerned with "the setting beneath to what is shining like the hot beautiful holy sun.....".Baraka has rarely employed imagery more precisely. He is again very consciously "poetic" in these lines . The movement of the poem is highly reminiscent of the characteristic Romantic poem of imaginative transcendence . Like the speaker of "*Ode To a Nightingale*" ,the speaker of this poem moves, by observable gradation ,from the manifested world to a spiritual or visionary awareness .This movement is expressed by the rhythm as well as the diction of the poem. The readers notice a movement from the long ,prosaic , earthbound lines of the introduction to the shorter and ,finally, ecstatic staccato bursts of lines six and seven .The poet's conscious manipulation of sound effects makes this movement even more striking . The persistent repetition of the word "blood" ,with all its associated meanings ,and the marked employment of consonance produce a magic suggested in the wording itself ."The height of the visionary experience –the perception of the other-worldly nature of the "blood" – is signaled in the move to more lyrical lines" (Lacey 130) .

Furthermore ,like the suggestive rhythmic progression , the transcendent state is reflected in the magical effect of such terms as the Swahili "Mchawi" (sorcerer) ,"wizard", "transformed" , "wand" and "Transmutation " .Also as in the Romantic poem , this speaker rebounds heavily to the commonplace world .The intrusion of this world is presented in the form of the question asked by an insensitive boor ,who surely represents the dominant culture at its worst .Following the music of the preceding lines , the question has shattered effect :

***(Hey whydo youse carry that in your mout' Kookie
fangblood asked)***

It is obvious that this voice is the enemy of the spirit . Not only does he deny the poet his vision , he also denies the "blood" his right to be , i.e., to live according to his own dictates , his own sense of style. The brusque intrusion does not completely invalidate the poet's vision ,however .He salvages enough of it to conclude that :

This is the core .The music under the skin .Of the blood . The way we walk is a relation to our majesty . The way we hump under shadders .The blood . Worship us because we close to god .This man got a tooth pick . Yeh .Can you dig it ??

Thus ,an expression of this passionate love for the supposed "dregs" of his society , ***In Our Terribleness*** is often exemplary of the poet's latter "tactic of overcompensation" .Although this strategy leaves him open to charges of reverse racism ,he is convinced that the "victims" , conditioned to look on themselves as evil incarnate –"trapping [themselves] in screen of negative description " –must be forced into the recognition of their own divinity . Corollary to this is the author's increasing presentation of the white man as the embodiment of evil .This idea is given ritualistic form in Baraka's play ***A Black Mass*** .Again the poet attempts to justify such extreme and simplistic myth-marking in terms of his desired end , i.e. the psychological emancipation of the black man, who, while looking on himself as evil incarnation, all too often accepted without question the omnipotence of his oppressors .As stated earlier ,however ,this extremely handsome book repeatedly escapes the limitations of such "proselytizing" ,and in so doing, it bears testament to the poet's power . At its more successful moments it synthesizes the very best elements of the preceding works and paves the way for Baraka's Marxist poetry .

In Tenzi Ya Imamu , Baraka deals with the issue of black identity celebrating Pan-Africanism and negritude . The emerging black nation in America requires land to establish its black utopia :

*Land
will charge
hand
s
Where pigs rule now / soon
The
"coon"
in a changed up groove
will
be
the man / be
his ol
black
self
Land
will change
hand
sss
Lives
will be took
will be lost
gained
but Bloods
will see*

*again
will know
again
Will be even hipper
than they are now
if you can stan'
it
Land
will change
hand
s (Selected 160) .*

The possession of land requires sacrifice and "blood" .Blacks will be able obtain their own land and build their nation only if America is "broken up" –probably by a civil war –"into pieces". Baraka says :

*America
will break up
into a hundred pieces
&Bloods will stand black whole bad swift cool
fine
in they
own
land (mind)
s
& draw them
Pan-Afro Garvey Dubois Nkrumah style
into One (161) .*

The inhabitant of the black utopia are blacks who are "midget gods" constructed of rhythm and gism'. Baraka says:

*Nigger is a definition of the wholly detached from material
consideration
a nigger don't have no gold
not even a negro got gold but a negro think like he
wd if he had gold
a nigger is holy
a nigger is killer and builder struts frantic for love nigger is a frantic
love man hippity hoppity 7 sided figure
the nigger who I am
who is my self and father mother your self
deep man
my man
my main man
my main main man*

*we niggers together
forever
raise (168) .*

If Plato had excluded immoral poets from his Republic, Baraka dismissed middle-class Negroes and white Americans (Christians) from his black utopia :

*Who will survive
the black future
will. You cant with the fat stomach between your
ears
scraping nickels out the inside of nigger daydreams. Few Americans
Very few Negroes . . . maybe no Red Negroes
at all .
The stiffbacked chalklady baptist, in blue lace
If she shrinks from blackness in front of the
church
following the wedding of the yellow robots
will not survive. She is old anyway y,
and they're
moving
her church in the wind .
Old people . No.
Christians . No (Selected 155-156).*

At that time , there will be no America because America is . .

*a suicide name America
breathes farts on our momentary conclusions
so turn again
rear up again
the thing we need , is each other
if we could find completion as sand lays cool for the
rising
wave
a natural
dependence
on what already exists
though the ride returns each night
and the earth speeds through space
they hool up just the same (162).*

In *Spirit Reach* ,Baraka deals with the black pride issue celebration Black Nationalist and Pan-Africanism using oral poetry techniques and forms .In "*Place In Place*", Baraka chants :

*TIME AFTER TIME AFTER TIME AFTER TIME
AFTER TIME*

**AFTER TIME
AFTER TIME AFTER TIME AFTER TIME A LIE
TIME ALIE
AFTER ALIE TIME
AFTER A TIME , A LIE
AFTER LYING TIMING LIETIME AFTER ALL
TIME IS A LIE
LIE AFTER TIME GO AFTER TIME LIE LIE IN
TIME LYING
THERE IS WORK TO DO DO YOU SEE IT DO
YOU KNOW HOW MUCH WORK
THERE IS TO DO
TO WORK TO WORK THERE IS AFTER TIME
WORK AFTER LIES WORK
WILL YOU WORK PAST TIME WILL YOU LIE
PAST WORK OR WORK
OR WORK REAL
WORK REAL WORK BEATS LIE TIME TIME
LIES DEAD WORK CAN
WORKING IN TIME
WORKING ALL THE TIME
WORSHIP THE SUN IN TIME
WORSHIP THE SUN OUTSIDE TIME (Selected 205).**

In another poem called "*Come See About Me*" , Baraka implores :

***O allah
all deity , jinn , spirit creation
on the earth m where we live , cut off from
righteousness
by evil
in corporation
come see about
we
us
black people your first creationsssss
all deity
hey god
spirit,
interior animation of existence
we here
cut off
in a devil land
we need something to be strong god
all spirit flesh us with strength to
allah give us will to
get up
and split
cut out a here***

uhhuh
uhhuh
uhhuh
please great black creator
let us get our hat , from the ugly thing got us
let us ,oh ,allah ,please ,move from where
we at
Into ourselves into ourselves ,where
into ourselves ,int ourselves
digit
pleasure boat of sweet black memory
s where
anywhere the whole being is
anywhere the total vibration (Selected 209).

Here ,the oppressed poet who feels that he lives "in a devil land" seeks salvation .He feels that he is cut off from his racial origins in Africa. According to Baraka Africa is the real homeland of all black people .It is not visible to the white man because it only exists in the black man's imagination .In this poem as well as in his other Nationalist poetry ,Baraka uses Arabic and Swahili vocabulary in order to affirm his belonging to Africa .He ends this poem as follows :

uhuh
uhhuh
aaaaaaaaahuuhh
doodoo doo
doodoo doo
on into light with pharaoh junior
on into our self my man and sweet lady
cool world around you
dig yourself
uhhuh
uhhuh
into ourselves 'swhere
to
involve
then
evolve
yeh ,gone (Selected 210) .

Realizing that he should build his black nation physically and spiritually ,Baraka ,the black poet ,takes the role of the prophet who shows his people the correct way .Like Shelley ,in "*Ode To The West Wind* " ,Baraka is" a vessel, a black priest interpreting the present and future for my people" . He adds :

Olorun –Allah speaks in and
thru me now . . . He begs me to
pray for you –as I am doing –He

*bids me have you submit to
the energy
He bids me pray that you submit
to the energy . . . the energy the energy the energy
The energy The energy the energy the rays
of God roared thru us all . . . uh
rays of God plunged thru us all-uh
bids me raise myself to tell you
Look!
Listen!
I am in an ecstasy a swoon in
actual touch with everything
These future rules
are black
I see & hear them
now
I am in touch
w / them . Them speak and
beckon to me
Listen they speak thru
my mouth
"Come on -
"Come on -
"Come on-
"Come on-
"Come on-
"Come on-
They are in the energy
They have created . through their consciousness
a closer connection
w / the energy
They speak thru
my mouth
"Come on-
"Come on -
"Come-on -
"Come on- (Selected 213) .*

In the same poem –"All In The Street" , Baraka addresses people in the third world countries –in East Africa and Arabia –saying :

*Hear each other miles apart (without no telephone)
"Love I hear from way across the
sea . . .in East Africa . . . Arabia . . .
Reconstructing the grace of our
long past –I hear you love
whisper at the soft air as it bathes
you –I hear and see you"
" I hear and see you too brother Jones
from the year 1968 talking to me ,*

*My long departed ancestor
The sounds and images are here where
you left them . All for us"
Time space manifest into the unity of
the creator .The Creator has all experiences
and we live as flying images of
endless imagination . Listen to the creator
speak in me now .Listen ,these words
are part God's thing . I am a
vessel, a black priest (212).*

Then he addressed people all over the world who are freed from "The serpent's dung" – probably third world countries which gained their independence after decades of colonialism :

*Come on-
on their way our rugs in silken garments
no cold can penetrate
They speak and beckon at you all
thru me now , as ancestors
We are the ancestors of
these black builders
and conquerors
They would appear right here to
say these things but do not want to
frighten you
instead
they speak thru
me
They say –All Praise Black Fathers
&Mothers We know the struggle
you go thru now .
We know how hard it is to be black
in that primitive age . But do not
naaw . . . do not ever despair (214).*

Baraka concludes this poem of celebration as follows :

*We have conquered
and we await the rich legacy
of hard won blackness
which you create to leave
here in the black fast future
here among the spiritual creations
of natural man
Do not despair ancient Fathers and
Mothers there in old America
We are here*

*awaiting your gorgeous
Legacy*

Here the contact is broken (214-215).

In "*All In The Street*" the definition of the poet as creator and as godhead's voice is very clear. The repetition is, to some extent, appropriate because it is fairly representative of the air of redundancy that pervades all Nationalist poetry. Some of the themes are repetitions without the benefit of innovative variations of the major black themes which Baraka explores in *Black Magic*. Nevertheless, *Spirit Reach* has some poems which reiterate some of Baraka's familiar themes with forcefulness. Hence, the theme of spirituality relies heavily on the chant as in "*The Spirit of Creation Is Blackness*".

*we merge with it
all things are it
we rhythm and sound and suncolor
we rise and set and sign and move
oh lord , oh lord , oh lord*

Thus, in one sense the reliance on the familiar and the repetitive suggests a certain flagging imaginative energies. And this failing is amply demonstrated by all the all but complete reliance on ideological clichés in a subsequent collection, *Hard Facts*. But the implications of this repetitiveness are not all negative. The heavy reliance on poetry as ritual chant in *Spirit Reach*, while representing a backward step from the experiments with multiple forms in *In Our Terribleness*, is also the reaffirmation of Baraka's major interest in language itself as a possible form of action –instead of being simply a prelude to or substitute for action. The chant is an actual process of inspiring and celebrating political change. As a collective activity it is a real example of Baraka's ideal of ethnic, communal, and cosmic unity.

Therefore, the chant is both word and ritual drama, combining the direct exhortations and images of the word with a sense of that collective activism which is traditionally involved in the group chant. On this basis it is not difficult to see that the reiterated preference for the chant in Baraka's poetry reflects a certain restiveness with poetry itself as a useful vehicle for a politically active writer like Baraka. And at this point the readers can sense that Baraka is less inclined to pursue the complex possibilities represented by the better poetry of *Black Magic*. He seems more inclined to concentrate on ritual drama as this preferred form of committed art. In light of this it is significant that since the early 1970s Baraka's more significant publications have been in drama. This is the genre in which he has continuously remained active. This preference is appropriate since drama is peculiarly suited to his activist perception of art as both image and political action.

In *It's Nation Time*, Baraka predicts the collapse of the Euro-American civilization and the subsequent revival of black nation. Baraka also reveals that the future belongs to the black race, thus, the volume reflects the poet's optimistic dreams and ambitions of a better future for his black nation. Baraka points out that black dogma and Pan-Africanism are essential aspects for future greatness. These utopian themes are projected through the songs and

*strike close ford
close prudential burn the policies
tear glasses off dead statue puppets even
those
they imitate life
Shango budda black
hermes rasis black
moses Krishna
black
when the brothers wanna stop animals
come out niggers come out
come out niggers niggers niggers come out
help us stop the devil
help us build a new world
niggers come out , brothers are we
with you and your sons your daughters are ours
and we are the same ,all the blackness from one
black allah
when the world is clear you'll be with us
come out niggers come out (199).*

Baraka ends the poem saying :

*come out niggers come out
It's nation time eye ime
it's nation ti eye ime
chant with bells and drum
it's nation time
It's nation time ,get up santa claus
(repeat)
it's nation time build it
get up muffed dragger
get up rastus for real to be rasta farari
ras jua
get up got here bow
It's Nation
Time ! (200).*

In *It's Nation Time* ,Baraka manipulates the musical cadences of black dialect and thus the work becomes a poetic symphony of verbal association with theme answering theme ,an elaborate succession of interwoven analogies from all phases of black culture . In "*Sermon For Our Maturity*" , Baraka says :

*We want to be all we can
we want to know all we can
we want to feel all we can
all there is
all there was*

all there will evooooooooo
be ("Here come
d'judge
Can all be the judge *all is the judge*)
all is the judge
all there is is the judge
We want you to feel it too
We want you to know its you
We in the mountains all in the air
We want to be all over everywhere
Can you feel it too
We want to communication with you
The motion of love has animated us
We still luv-you-ooooo-oo-oo-oooo-oooo (It's Nation Time 13-14).

It's Nation Time equally touches the peak of Baraka's role as a prophet . Here , Baraka ,is inspired by the black God to deliver his message to black humanity . Like his role in *Spirit Reach* , the poet in *It's Nation Time* becomes a vehicle , a medium through which God is sending his message to his chosen people.

*Yes Moses , it's allright , you raised
meateater off all fours , yr experiment
while dangerous , taught us about
matter and the feelings of the breathing
opposites
We have the experience
We came to the West
We grew in the West
We know the heart of stone
We can talk stone talk
We know about emptiness , hollowness ,
blackness, coldness , materialism (17) .*

The poetry of this volume ,like that of *Spirit Reach* is written for public performance. It is composed to be orally performed by the poet himself whose experience in theater makes him a skillful reader .The poet uses Arabic and Swahili vocabulary in the poetry of *It's Nation Time* :

*Ashadu an la Illaha Illaha
Ooshoobee doo bee
Tuna Jaribu Kuwa Weusi Tu
Ooshoobee doo bee
Kiss Venus for me while you up there man
A Huge Black Star
Spread out fireloined in empty space
I hear you laughin man its that hip to be
that hip
You a star and a life sign*

*You the knower that first perceived
the light and made the symbol
We carry yet . Man and his luniverse
at the dawn of creation .
Bring back angelic definition
for our lives here beneath
the mantle of Thing love .
(1) DIVINE
is name we give you
(2) GRACE
is name we give you
(3) messenger
we call you
(5) PROPHET
we call you
(5) NOBLE BLACK MAN (19).*

Baraka also uses bebop-swahili scatting such as :

*Ommmm Mane Padme Hummmmmmm
Ooshoobee doo bee
Ashadu an la llaha llala
Ooshoobee doo bee
Tuna Iaribu Kuwa Weusi Tu
Ooshoobee doo bee.*

In *it's Nation Time* ,Baraka thematically attempts to expand the consciousness of the black masses ,to share with them a black perspective ,and to influence them to accept a cultural and spiritual relationship among all black people .By rejection the traditional view of art as isolated artifact and non-political ,Baraka's poetry is clearly intended to be political . In *Home* , Baraka argues :

*Most white Western artist do not need to be
"political" ,since usually ,whether they know it or
not , they are in complete sympathy with the most repressive social
forces in the world today (214).*

His aesthetic objective is to make "black poetry" functional , to create a new racial consciousness by constructing poems as process rather than as an end .To do so, he impregnates his poetry with themes ,forms ,styles ,diction ,images that are to indicate to black people that they are "terrible" –(beautiful) . Thus he hopes to forge a new black world .Thus , in this volume of committed black nationalism ,the nation-building plea goes out to all "lost" brothers :

*doctor nigger , please do somethin on we
lawyer nigger ,please pass some laws about us
liberated nigger with the stringy haired mind ,*

please lib lib lib
you splive er ate
US , we you , [...]
please mister liberated nigger love chil nigger
nigger in a bellbottom bell some psychedelic wayoutness
on YO People , even while you feeling THE People ,
[. . .]
ple please [. . .]
newest negro to understand that theres no black
no white
only people [. . .]

The apocalyptic myth of black power and triumph that was being developed in the mid-to-late sixties becomes one of the poetic subjects in *It's Nation Time*. Further, this myth has been thoroughly integrated with the political ideal of Nationalism that also evolved in the seventies. The poetic-theologic text of *It's Nation Time* reflects the assurance that has finally come to Baraka with the clarification of mythic precepts and ever-growing righteousness of the black cause. Baraka, like many poets who have suffered similar metaphysical crises, possesses two muses, a profane and a sacred. In *It's Nation Time*, the holy / heavenly one dominated the poems of the collection. Moreover, the volume is primarily a song of celebration and prayer for continued evolution towards perfection. The prayers are for the transcendent presence of the black nation. In the title poem of *It's Nation Time*, Baraka says:

The black man is the future of the world
be come
rise up
future of the black genius spirit reality
move
from crushed roach back
from dead snake head
from wig funeral in slowmotion
from dancing teeth and coward it
from jibberjabber patme boss patme smmich
when the brothers strike niggers come out
come out niggers
when the brothers take over the school
help niggers
come out niggers
all niggers negroes must change
come together in unity unify
for nation time
it's nation time . . .

In a comment on the poem, Benston in *The Renegade And The Mask* argues that the transitory stages of black ascendancy – seminal godliness, the slide into slavery, the humiliation of "jibberjabber patme boss", rising black consciousness, ultimate return to godliness – are all duly noted. So, too, are the necessary and holy artifacts of the coming black civilization" (Benston 140).

Having a look at Baraka's Nationalist/pre-Marxist poetry of the early seventies ,it becomes obvious that the poet , at this phase of poetic development ,came to deplore the ethno-political effects of his revolutionary poetry of the mid and late sixties . Baraka felt that the rhetoric of violence appealed to the lumpen proletariat but did not lead the way to meaningful change for most black people .The poems were primarily destructive and nihilistic , not yet part of the nation-building process .The militant poems of the mid and late sixties were involved in "razing" not in "raising" .Thus , Baraka ,in the early seventies , when he was an advocate of Pan-Africanism and the Kawaida doctrine of Ron Karenga ,wrote poetry which focused on the building of the black nation .His Nationalist poetry established a cultural dialogue between black Americans and the emerging third world countries in Africa , Asia and Latin America.

In terms of form ,Baraka experimented with new formal prototypes in *Spirit Reach* and *It's Nation for* instance . His new forms do not come from black literature but from black speech and music . Equally , his Nationalist poetry attempts to approximate, emulate and incorporate black street English , folk forms such as "the dozens" . Baraka also manipulates the oratory tradition of the religious and secular black sermon and other black rhetorical devices . For example , the poem ,"*It's Nation Time*" appears on the printed page as unpretentious sermon addressed to black readers to get together and "nationfy". Despite a few cryptic references ,the preaching rhetoric holds the poem together as an appeal to cultural Nationalism .The poem is highly effective as rhythmic speech art and becomes a perfect illustration of the immediate auditory appeal of Baraka's poetry in the 1970s .During the early seventies when Baraka and his friends in Newark greet each other on the street they say "what time is it?"They always respond "It's Nation Time" .The poem illustrates the process of "raising" in the concrete sense of getting up and in the sense of black nation-building :

*time to get and
be
come
be
come , time to
be come
time to
get up be come
It's nation time eye time
It's nation ti eye ime
chant with beils and drum
its nation time*

In *Spirit Reach* (1972) ,poems such as "*Kutoa Umoja*" celebrates the striving for unity "all them bed bad meeeeeees" into "a big big black black weeeeeee".Here , the plain style of the printed poem is merely a "score" of the dramatic complexity of the spoken version. Turning to Black speech ,Baraka tries to transcend those limitations he encountered in his earlier poetry . In some cases ,however ,when Baraka reaches for the rich , subtle ,and frequently ironic Black folk traditions, he is hampered by his avant-gardist technique of killing poetry so that poetry may kill . Such poems are usually not successful , unless they remain merely imitative of chosen prototypes .Compared with the poetry of Langston Hughes or Sterling Brown, Baraka's nationalist poetry contains few "folk" poems .Moreover , Baraka's adaptation of black speech models is pervasive and his poetry comes to life in oral

performance .In his nationalist poetry Baraka consciously and radically altered his oral style of recitation ,emphasizing black speech patterns and rhythm , preaching intonation and evocation of audience response ,Thus , **"How You Sound"** of his avant-garde phase comes to mean how you sound distinctively black in the seventies .

Works Cited

Primary Works by Amiri Baraka/Le Roi Jones

"African Revolution ".Selected Poetry of Amiri Baraka/Le Roi Jones New York : William Morrow and Company , 1979 .

"Afro-American Literature and Class Struggle".Daggers and Javelins : Essays 1974-1979 . New York : William Morrow , 1984.

Black Magic : Collected Poetry (1961-1967) . Indianapolis : The Bobbs-Merrill Co. , 1969 .

Blues People :Negro Music in White American. New York : William Morrow , 1963 .

"Class Struggle In Music" , Reggae or Not ! Bowling Green , New York : Contact II Publications , 1981 .

Daggers and Javelins : Essay . 1974-1979 . New York : William Morrow , 1984 .

Four Black Revolutionary plays . Indianapolis : Merrill , 1969 .

Hard Facts . Newark : Revolutionary Communist League , 1976 .

"Hard Facts" . Selected Poetry of Amiri Baraka / Le Roi Jones . New York : William Morrow , 1979 .

Home : Social Essays . New York : William Morrow , 1966 .

"I Investigate The Sun" . Long Shot 17 (1983) Spring .

In Our Terribleness (Some Elements and Meaning in Black Style). New York : The Bobbs-Merrill Company , 1970 .

"In The Tradition" The Greenfield Review 8 Fall (1980) : 38-46.

"Introduction" to Four Revolutionary Plays .Indianapolis : the Bobbs-Merrill Company , 1969 .

"Introduction" to "Wise/Why's" . Southern Review 21 (1985) : 801 – 812.

It's Nation Time . Chicago : Third World press , 1970 .

Jello . Chicago : Third World press , 1970 .

Kawaida Studies :The New Nationalism .Chicago : Third World press 1972.

"Nationalism , Pan-Africanism, Socialism : Toward Ideological Clarity" .Black Word 24 (1974) : 24-33.

"Nationalism , Pan-Africanism , Ujamaa : their Future in America. Uncollected Nonfiction (1973-1974) .

"Needed : A Revolutionary Strategy" . Black Scholar 7 (1976) : 45-49

"New Era In Our Politics : The Revolutionary Answer To New- Colonialism in Newark Politics" . Uncollected Nonfiction (1977) : 18

"On Being Incorrect" .Unity & Struggle (1974) November , p.12.

***"Philistinism and The Negro Writer" . Anger And Beyond : The Negro Writer in The United States , ed. Herbert Hill . New York
Harper , 1966 .***

***"Poetry For The Advanced" . Selected Poetry of Amiri Baraka/Le Roi Jones . New York :
William Morrow 1979 .***

Preface To A Twenty Volume Suicide Note . New York : Totem press , 1961.

Raise Race Rays Raze : Essays Since 1965 . New York : Random House , 1971.

Reggae or Not! Bowling Green , New York : Contact II publications,1981 .

***"Revolutionary Culture and The Future of Pan-African Culture" .Uncollected Nonfiction
(1974) : 19-27 .***

"Revolutionary Nationalism = Scientific Socialism : Unity & Struggle April (1975) : 7-12.

***"Revolutionary Party : Revolutionary Ideology" . Uncollected Nonfiction (1974) March
31 .***

Selected Poetry of Amiri Baraka /Le Roi Jones : New York : William Morrow . 1979 .

Slaveship : A Historical Pageant : Newark ,New Jersey : Jihad Productions , 1969 .

Spirit Reach . Newark , New Jersey : Jihad Productions , 1972 .

System of Dante's Hell . New York : Grove press , 1966 .

Tales New York : Grove press ,1967 .Tenzi Ya Imamu" . Selected Poetry of Amiri Baraka/Le Roi Jones New York : William Morrow , 1979 .

The Autobiography of Le Roi Jones /Amiri Baraka : New York Freundlich Books , 1974 .

" The Congress of African People : A Position Paper " . Black Scholar 6 (1975) : 9-115 .

The Dead Lecture . New York : Grove press 1964 .

***"TheNationalist Black Assembly and The Black Liberation Movement"Black World 26
(1975) March : 22-27.***

"The Revolutionary Tradition In Afro-American Literature "Daggers and Javelins : Essays , 1974-1979. New York : William Morrow , 1984 .

"Toward Ideological Clarity" . **Black World** November 1974 : 24-33 , 84-95 .

"Wise / Why's : Appendix 2" . William J. Harris .**The Poetry and Poetics of Amiri Baraka :The Jazz Aesthetic** . Columbia , Mont: Univ. of Mission press , 1985 .

Secondary Sources

Books

Baker, Houston A. **The Journey Back : Issues In Black Literature and Criticism.** Chicago : Chicago Univ. Press , 1980 .

Benston , Kimberly W. **Baraka : The Renegade and The Mask.** New Haven :Yale Univ. press , 1976 .

----- . **Imamu Amiri Baraka (Le Roi Jones) : A Collection of Critical Essays.** Englewood Cliffs , N. J. : prentice Hall , 1978.

Bloom , Harold . **The Anxiety of Influences** . New York : Oxford Univ. Press , 1973 .

Brown, Lloyd W **Amiri Baraka.** Benston : Twayne publishers, 1980.

Brown , Rap H **Die Nigger die** .New York : Dial press 1969 .

Cruse , Harold **The Crises of The Negro Intellectual** ,New York: William Morrow , 1967 .

Di Prima , Diane. **Farthsong Poems : 1952-1959** N.Y. Simon , 1968 .

DuBois , W.E.B . **The Souls of Black Folk** . Greenwich , Conn: Fawcett , 1961 .s

Ellison , Ralph . **Invisible Man** . New York : Vintage Books , 1972 .

----- . **Shadow And Act** New York : American library , 1966 .

Fanon , Frantz . **The Wretched of The Earth** , Trans .Constance Farrington . New York : Grove press , 1967 .

Ford , Nick Aaron . **Black Insights : Significant Literature By Afro- Americans From 1760 To the Present** .Waltham , MASS .: Ginn and Co., 1971 .

Harris ,William J. **The Poetry and Poetics of Amiri Baraka : The jazz Aesthetic .** Columbia , Mont : Univ. of Missouri press , 1985 .

Henderson , Stephen . **Understanding The New Black Poetry : Black Speech and Black Music As Poetic References** . New York : William Morrow , 1973 .

Herskovitz , Merville . **The Myth of The Negro's Past** . Boston : Beacon press , 1958 .

Hudson , Theodore R. **From Le Roi Jones To Amiri Baraka : The Literary Works** . Durham , North Carolina : Duke Univ. press, 1973.

Hughes ,Langston . **Selected Poems** . N.Y. Vintage Books , 1974.

Isaacs , Harold . **The New World of Negro Americans** . New York : The Viking press , 1965.

Jordan , June . **Civil Wars** . Boston : Beacon , 1981 .

Kerouac , Jack . **Big Sur** . New York : Mc Graw –Hill . 1981.

Lacey , Henry C. **To Raise , Destroy And Create : The Poetry ,Drama and Fiction of Imamu Amiri Baraka (Le Roi Jones)** . New York : The Whitston publishing Co., 1981 .

Lee , Don L. **Don't Cry , Scream** . Detroit : Broadside press , 1969 .

Mckay , Claude **Selected Poetry of Claude Mckay** . New York : Harper , 1953 .

Olson , Charles . **Selected Poems** . New York : Vintage Books , 1974 .

----- . **The Maximus Poems** .New York : Jargon / Corinth Books , 1960.

Poggioli , Renato . **The Theory of the Avant-garde** . Cambridge : Harvard Univ. press , 1968.

Saunders , Redding J. and Arthur P. Davis. **Cavalcade : Negro American Writing From 1760 To The Present** . New York: Houghton Mifflin , 1971 .

Smitherman , Geneva . **Black Language And Culture : Sound of Soul** . New York : Harper , 1975 .

Sollors , Werner . **Amiri Baraka/Le Roi Jones : The Quest For Populist Modernism** . New York : Columbia Univ. press ,1978.

Williams , John A . **The Man Who Cried I Am** . New York : The American library , 1967 .

Yugendernath , B **Between The Real and The Surreal :Modernism and The Avant- Garde In The American Drama of The Nineteen Sixties** . Delhi : B.R. publishing corp.,1992.

Essays And Extracts From Books

Abrahams ,Roger D. Joking : *The Training of the Man of Words In Taking Brood : Rappin and Stylin Out* , ed. Thomas Kochman. Illinois : Urbana Univ. press , 1972 .

Baker , Houston A. "*Introduction*" .*Reading Black Essays In The Criticism of African . Caribbean , and Black American Literature* . New York : Cornell Univ. press , 1976.

Barksdale , Richard K. "*Humanistic Protest In Recent Black Poetry*" . *Modern Black Poets* , ed. Donald B. Gibson . Englewood Cliffs , N.J. : prentice-Hall , 1973 .

Breman ,Paul."*Poetry Into The Sixties*" . *The Black American Writer , Volume II : Poetry And Drama* , ed. C.W.E. Bigsby . Baltimore , Maryland : penguin Books Inc ., 1969 .

Brown , Cecil M. "*Black Literature And Le Roi Jones*" *Imamu Amiri Baraka (Le Roi Jones) : A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Kimberly w. Benston .Englewood Cliffs , N.J .: prentice –Hall Inc., 1978 .

Bush , Josef B. "*Nittygritty*" *The Black Aesthetic* , ed. Addison Gayle Jr. New York : Doubleday , 1972 .

Cullen , Countee . "*Incident*" . *Caroling Dusk : An Anthology of verse By Negro Poets* , ed. Countee Cullen . New York : Harper , 1927 .

Davis , Arthur P. "*The New Poetry of Black Hate*" . *Modern Black Poets : A Collection of Critical Essays* , ed. Donald B. Gibson Englewood Cliffs , N.J. : prentice –Hall , 1973 .

-----, and Sterling Brown , ed. *The Negro Caravan* , New York : Dryden press , 1941 .

Emmanuel , James . "*Blackness Can : A Quest For Aesthetic*" *The Black Aesthetic* , ed. Addison Gayle , Jr. New York : Doubleday , 1972 .

Erikson , Erik E. "*Race and The Wider Identity*" . *Identity , Youth and Crisis* . New York : W.W. Norton Co.,1968.

Fuller , Hoyt W. "*Toward A Black Aesthetic*" .*The Black Aesthetic* , ed. Addison Gayle Jr. New York : Doubleday , 1972.

Gayle , Jr. Addison . "*Introduction*" *The Black Aesthetic* . New York : Doubleday , 1972 .

Gibson , Donald B. "*Introduction*" . *Five Black Writers : Essays On Wright , Ellison , Baldwin , Hughes and Le Roi Jones* . New York : New York Univ. press , 1970 .

Ginsberg , Allen . "*Genocide*" . *War Poems* , ed. Diane Di Prima. New York : Simon , 1968 .

Henderson , Stephan E. "*Survival Motion : A Study of The Black Writer and The Black Revolution In America*" *The Militant Black Writer In Africa and The United States* , ed. John Clark , Mercer Cook and Stephan Henderson . Madison : Univ. of Wisconsin press , 1969 .

Hill , Herbert . "**Introduction**" .**Anger And Beyond : The Negro Writer In the United States** . New York : Harper and Row , 1966 .

Jacobus, Lee A . "**Imamu Amiri Baraka : The Quest For Moral Order**" . **Modern Black Poets : A Collection of Critical Essays** ed. Donald B. Gibson. Englewood Cliffs , N.J. : prentice-Hall 1973.

Karenga , Ron . "**Black Cultural Nationalism**" . **The Black Aesthetic** , ed. Addison Gayle , Jr. New York : Doubleday , 1972.

Knight , Etheridge . "**Black Revolution**" . **The Black Aesthetic** , ed. Addison Gayle , Jr. New York : Doubleday , 1972 .

Mackey , Nate . "**The Changing Same : Black Music In The Poetry of Amiri Baraka**" . **Imamu Amiri Baraka (Le Roi Jones) : A Collection of Critical Essays** , ed. Kimberly W. Benston . Englewood Cliffs , N. J. : Prentice-Hall , 1978 .

Major , Clarence . "**Introduction**" **The New Black Poetry** . New York : International publishers , 1969 .

Mayfield , Julian . "**You Touch My Black Aesthetic And I'll Touch Your**" **The Black Aesthetic** . ed. Addison Gayle Jr. New York : Doubleday , 1972 .

Miller , Adam David . "**Some Observations On A Black Aesthetic**" **New Black Voices** , ed. Abraham Chapman . New York : Doubleday , 1976 .

Neal , Larry . "**And Shine Swan On**" . **Black Fire : An Anthology of Afro-American Writing** , eds. Le Roi Jones and Larry Neal .New York William Morrow , 1968 .

----- "**The Development of Le Roi Jones**" . **Imamu Amiri Baraka (Le Roi Jones) : A Collection of Critical Essays** , ed. Kimberly W. Benston. Englewood Cliffs , N. J. : prentice-Hall , 1978 .

----- "**The Black Arts Movement**" . **The Black Aesthetic** , ed. Addison Gayle , Jr. New York : Doubleday , 1972 .

Randall , Dudley . "**Introduction**" . **The Black Poets** . New York : Bantam Books , 1971 .

----- "**Primitives**" . **New Black Voices** , ed. Abraham Chapman . New York : Doubleday , 1976 .

----- "**The Black Aesthetic In The Thirties , Forties And Fifties**" **Modern Black Poets : A Collection of Critical Essays** , ed.

Donald B. Gibson . Englewood Cliffs , N.J. : prentice-Hall , 1973.

Reed , Ishmael . "**Catechism of The Neo-American Hoodoo Church**" **New Black Voices** , ed. Abraham Chapman . New York : Doubleday , 1976.

Sanchez ,Sonia . **"Negro" The New Black Poetry** , ed. Clarence Major . New York : International publishers , 1969 .

Sartre , Jean Paul . **"Introduction" The Wretched of The Earth** . Frantz Fanon . New York : Grove press , 1967.

Schneck , Stephen : **" Le Roi Jones or Politics and Policemen or Trying Heart , Bleeding Heart" . Five Black Writers : Essays On Wright , Ellison , Baldwin , Hughes and Le Roi Jones** , ed.

Donald Gibson . New York : New York Univ. press , 1970 .

Senghor . Léopold Sédar . **" African - Negro Aesthetic " . The Ideology of Blackness** , ed. Raymond F . Betts . Lexington , Mass . : D . C. Heath and Co., 1971 .

Stewart , James T. **"The Development of The Black Revolutionary Artist" . Black Fire : An Anthology of Afro-American Writing** eds. Le Roi Jones and Larry Neal . New York : William Morrow, 1968 .

Taylor , Clyde . **"Baraka As Poet" . Modern Black Poets : A Collection of Critical Essays** , ed. Donald B. Gibson . Englewood Cliffs , N. J . : prentice-Hall , 1973 .

Thomas , Richard W. **"Revolution" . Black Fire : An Anthology of Afro –American Writing** , eds. Le Roi Jones and Larry Neal . New York : William Morrow , 1968 .

Turner , Darwin T. **"Afro-American Literary Critics : An Introduction" The Black Aesthetic** ,ed. Addison Gayle , Jr. New York : Doubleday , 1972 .

Watson , Andrew P. **"Negro Primitive Religious Services" . God Struck Me Dead** , ed. Clifton Johnson . Philadelphia : Pilgrim press , 1945 .

Welburn , Ron . **"The Black Aesthetic Imperative" . The Black Aesthetic** ,ed. Addison Gayle , Jr. New York : Doubleday , 1972 .

Wilentz , Ted . **"Introduction" Natural Process : An Anthology of New Black Poetry** . New York : Hill and Wang , 1970 .

Wright , Richard . **"Blueprint For Negro Writing" The Black Aesthetic** , ed. Addison Gayle , Jr. New York : Doubleday , 1972 .

X, Malcolm . **"Statement of Basic Aims And Objectives of The Organization Afro-American Unity " New Black Voices** , ed.

Abraham Chapman . New York : Doubleday , 1976 .

Periodicals And Book Reviews

Abraham , Roger D. **"Book Reviews" . Journal of AmericanFolklore** . July –Sept. (1966) : 493-495 .

Aithal , S.K. "***Black Aesthetic Theory : An Anti-Formalist Jihad***" *Indian Journal of American Studies* 18 (1988) : 35 -40 .

Andrews , W.D.E . "***All Is Permitted :The Poetry of Le Roi Jones / Amiri Baraka***" *Southwest Review* 67 (1982) : 197-221 .

Baker , Houston Jr. "***These Are Songs If You Have The Music : An Essay On Imamu Baraka***" *Minority Voices* 1 (1977) : 1-18 .

Brown , Cecil "***About Le Roi Jones***" . *Evergreen Review* Feb . (1970) : 65-70 .

Capote , Truman . "***Playboy Interviews Truman Capote***". *Playboy* March (1969) : 164-170 .

Crouch , Stanley . "***Black Fire : A Review***" . *Journal of Black Poetry* 1 (1968) : 90-92 .

Dodson ,Qwen . "***Playwrights In Dark Glasses***". *Negro Digest* April (1968) : 31-37

Ellis , Trey . "***Response To New Black Aesthetic Critiques***" . *Callaloo* 11 (1988) : 250-251 .

----- "***The New Black Aesthetic***" . *Callaloo* 11 (1988) : 233-246 .

Fischer , William C. "***The Pre-Revolutionary Writings of Imamu Amiri Baraka***" . *Massachusetts Review* 14 (1973) : 259-305) .

Freydberg , Elizabeth Hadley ."***The Concealed Dependence Upon White Culture In Baraka's 1969 Aesthetic***" . *Black American Literature Forum* 17 (1983) : 27-29 .

Fryar , Imani . "***Literary Aesthetics and The Black Woman Writer***" . *Journal of Black Studies* 20 (1990) : 443-466.

Gates , Henry Louis ."***Review of The Autobiography of Le Roi Jones***" . *Times Book Review* 11 (1984) : 11-12 .

Gayle , Jr. Addison . "***Blueprint For Black Criticism***". *First World I* (1977) :43-47 .

Hamil ,Pete . "***Harlem Encounter***" . *New York Post* 22 Oct. (1965) : 44.

Hull .Gloria T . "***Notes on A Marxist Interpretation of Black American Literature***" . *Black American Literature Forum* 12 (1978) : 148-153 .

Judy , Ronald A. T. "***The New Black Aesthetic and W. E. B. DuBois or Dephaestus Limping***" . *Massachusetts Review* 35 (1994) . 249-282.

Lacey , Henry C. "***Baraka's Am/ Trak' : Everybody's Coltrance Poem***". *Obsidian II* , Vol 1 (1986) : 12 : 21 .

Miller , James A. "***I Investigate The Sun : Amiri Baraka In The 1980s***" . *Callaloo* 9 (1986) : 184-192 .

Miller , Larry . "News" . **Black Theater** 2 (1969) : 34-35

Munro , C.L. "**Le Roi Jones : A Man In Transition**" . **Collage Language Association Journal** 17 (1973) : 57-78 .

Paniker , K.A. "**From The Tranquilized Fifties To The Turbulent Sixties : A Note On Changes In American Poetry From The 50s To The 60s**" .**Indian Journal of American Studies** 14 (1984) : 25-31 .

Pareles , Jon . "**Review of Baraka's Wise/Why's**" . **The New York Time** 3 Oct .(1985) : 22 .

Pansker , Sanford . "**A Conversation With Etheridge Knight**" . **Black American Literature Forum** 18 (1984) : 11-14 .

Reddy , A.R . "**The Dialects of Alienation ; A study of Amiri Baraka's Plays**" . **Indian Journal of American Studies** 29 (1996) : 77-80 .

Rodgers , Carolyn . "**The literature of Black**" . **Black World** 16 (1970): 10 .

Stanley , Crouch . "**Review of Black Art**" .**Journal of Black Poetry** 1 (1968) : 90 -92 .

Stern , Frederick C. " **Black Literature / White Criticism** " . **College English** 35 (1974) : 637-658 .

Sullivan , Joseph . F. "**Gibson Called A Puppet By Baraka In Open Spilt**". **New York Times** Aug . 18 (1973) : 3 .

Ward , Jerry W . "**A black and Crucial Enterprise : A Interview With Huston A . Baker**" . **Black American Literature Forum** 16 (1982) : 51-58 .

Welburn , Ron . "**Black Art**" . **The New York Times Book Review** Feb. 14 (1971) : 20 .

Interview With Amiri Baraka / Le Roi Jones

Benston , Kimberly W. "**Amiri Baraka ; An Interview**" . **Bounday** 26 (1978) : 303-318 .

Buffalo , Audreen , "**A Revolutionary Life Together : Amina and Amiri Baraka Talk Frankly About Their Life and Marriage**". **Essence** 2 (1981) : 214-220 .

Duval , Elaine I . "**Reassessing and Raising Our History : An Interview With Amiri Baraka / Le Roi Jones**" . "**Obsidian II** , Volume 3 (1988) : 1-19 .

Faruk and Marvin X . " **Islam and Black Art : An Interview With Le Roi Jones**" . **Negro Digest** Jan (1969) : 4-10 .

Harris , William C. "**An Interview With Amiri Baraka**" . **The Poetry and Poetics of Amiri Baraka : The Jazz Aesthetic** . Columbia, Mont . : Univ. of Missouri press , 1985 .

Melhem , D.H. "*Revolution : The Constancy of Change : An Interview With Amiri Baraka*". *Black American Literature Forum* 16 (1982) : 87-103 .

Sollors , Werner . "*An Interview With Amiri Baraka / Le Roi Jones*" . *Amiri Baraka / Le Roi Jones : The Quest For A Populist Modernism* . New York : Columbia Univ. press , 1979 .

X. Marvin . "*Everything's Cool : An Interview With Le Roi Jones*". *Black Theatre* 1 (1968) : 16-23 .

Unpublished Dissertations

Jackman , Curtis Michael . "*Toward A New Theater of Cruelty*" *ph. D. Dissertation* : University of New York at Buffalo , 1983.

Joy , Frank John , "*American Theater of The Sixties*" *ph. D. Dissertation* : Caregie - Mellon University , 1975 .

Richards , Sandra L. "*Sweat Meat From Le Roi Jones : The Dramatic World of Amiri Baraka*" . *ph. D. Dissertation* : Stanford University , 1979 .