

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TERM 'BLACK' IN RICHARD WRIGHT'S THE LONG DREAM : A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA)

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**Abstract :** This paper examines the term 'Black' in Richard Wright's writings, particularly in *The Long Dream*. It aims at exploring the racial prejudice, segregation and discrimination practiced in the institutions of the USA which has reappeared suddenly in other forms. Under the African American criticism, this paper answers the question: what sense is assigned to the term 'Black' in Richard Wright's *The Long Dream*? The racial problem victimizes the black people because of their skin color. This article shows out the rude language, the pejorative use of the term 'Black' towards people of color. CDA helps to carry out the significance of the term 'Black' and the motives of its use by the oppressor in order to intimidate the African American people.

**Key words:** Significance – the Term 'Black' – CDA – Richard Wright – The Long Dream

**Résumé :** Ce travail examine le terme 'Noir' dans les écrits de Richard Wright, spécialement dans son roman "Le long rêve". L'objectif de ce travail est d'explorer le préjudice racial pratiqué dans les institutions aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique et qui a refait surface sous d'autres formes. Ce travail répond à la question : « Quel sens donné au terme 'Noir' dans le roman de Richard Wright intitulé *Le long rêve* ? Les noirs sont victimes du racisme à cause de leur peau. Cet article démontre l'usage péjoratif du terme 'Noir' envers les gens de couleur. CDA (Analyse Critique du Discours) aide à ressortir le sens du terme 'Noir' et les motifs de son usage par l'opresseur dans le but d'intimider les Africains Américains.

**Mots Clés :** Sens – le terme 'Noir' – CDA – Richard Wright – Le long rêve

## Introduction

*The Long Dream* is Richard Wright's fifth novel published in 1958 in which he explores a new topic: the description of what is called a *black American bourgeoisie*. Some sociologists studied it, but it remained unknown in great part. Most of the themes in Wright's writings are about politics and racial problems between two opposed forces, blacks and whites, in the United States.

The term 'Black' is the central theme in this novel under analysis. The readers of Wright's writings can understand the semantic of the term 'Black' and they can avoid its misuse in everyday language.

The main objective of this paper is to find out and present the significance of the term 'Black' through Wright's *The Long Dream*. The study has also a glance at the language used in the American society through three episodes in the novel that will serve to represent the racial measurement.

Using CDA, this article is based on a qualitative study of the significance of the term 'Black' via Richard Wright's *The Long Dream*. After the synopsis of the novel, this article will discuss different points comprised in the methodology, key concepts, results, discussions and conclusion in order to be faithful to scientific practice.

### 1. Commented summary of the novel

*The Long Dream* is divided into three books respectively entitled: "Daydreams and Nightdreams ..., Days and Nights ..., and Waking Dream ..." Tyree, returns from a nocturnal fishing trip and displays to his fascinated young son the evening's catch. The child associates the fish bladder with the belly, and when his father hands him one to blow up, he calls it a belly because it reminds him of a pregnant neighbour. Later the same day he takes some bladders to show his playmates, insisting that they are bellies. In this way young Rex acquires the nickname Fishbelly (Fish, for short), used throughout the novel, always with sexual associations intact. Only a few years later, the boy has encountered with his first racist whites.

Richard Wright tells us about the adventure of Fishbelly, who grows up in a small town in Mississippi. This boy is Richard Wright himself, but it could be any boy, black, white, yellow or brown who becomes what the society wants him to be. *The Long Dream* is a novel rich in characterization and plot that dramatizes Richard Wright's themes of oppression, exploitation, corruption, and flight. It is the story of Fishbelly,

the son of Tyree Tucker, a prominent black mortician and owner of a brothel whose wealth and power were attained by forging business arrangements with corrupt white police officers and politicians. The riveting narrative centers on the explosive and tragic events that shape and alter the relationship between Fish and his father.

In the case of Fishbelly, Wright shows how the absorption of the societal values by a colored kid can take distorted shapes. Of course, it could be said that he lives within a dream, or rather a nightmare. As he reads newspapers showing sexy women, there is distortion in the boy's treatment, such a distortion caused by society. Fishbelly's story opens when he is five years old with the incident that gave him his nickname. Fishbelly grows chapter by chapter to young manhood. He figures out his parents, his black neighbourhood and black school, his black friends in a small southern town. Tyree, his father, is the undertaker for their community. But his elevated financial standing implies other sources of income. Scenes of Fishbelly at school and with his friends depict the boy's growing awareness of what Tyree does, including the man's easy infidelities. The child's first arrest for trespassing with his friends on a white man's property awakens him to the racial situation as well as to his father's mysterious standing in the white community.

The attraction Fishbelly experiences for white women rises from the milieu in which he grows up: school with conversation between comrades, the street, the family, and the funeral firm of his father (whom he catches unaware with a woman apparently white). Fishbelly knows that he could be lynched as had happened to his friend Chris, if he ever seduced a white woman. Fishbelly awakens from the dream of a young boy protected by his mother to the realities of race, sex, money, oppression and the inherent dishonesty involved when a black man decides to survive above the level of downtrodden apathy.

Money and sex constitute, for Fishbelly, the essential realities of the world where he was born. More and more he looks like Tyree, his father. If Fishbelly prefers money to honesty; it is because he has seen Tyree make a fortune on corruption of whites. He is going to give up school and work in his father's business. When Tyree is murdered, Fishbelly wants to avenge him, but he is advised by Emma, Doctor Bruce, and Gloria – respectively his mother, father's close friend, and sweetheart – not to react under penalty of death. If he treats his unsuccessful colored brothers in a despicable

way, it is because he believes that the scorn of blacks leads to success. He learns this irony from whites when he sees them scolding, despising, and insulting blacks: "ape, sonofabitch, godamit Negro". Coming out of jail, Fishbelly goes to France because he can no longer live in such conditions. He escapes. Is escape a solution? For all blacks, no! Individually, perhaps! Fishbelly has no choice.

## 2. Methodology and key words

This work is based on the African American perspective. Bressler argues that, "African-American criticism frequently operates on a binary oppositions, viewing the white American as the oppressor of black art and people. Its understanding of racial issues, and its concept of what being Black means, these evidences combine to create a school of criticism that is unique, multifaceted, and ever growing" (Bressler, 2011, p.210).

On the same view, Tyson adds that "African American criticism is the study of a body of literature written by a specific group of marginalized people and a theoretical framework. As a framework, African American criticism can be used to analyze any literary text that deals with African American issues, regardless of the race of its author, although the work of African American writers is the primary focus" (Tyson, 2006, p. 394).

However, African American criticism, whose aim is to examine that "black literature was a distinctive literary practice with its own aesthetics and should not be dubbed a subcategory or a footnote of American literature (Bressler, 2011, pp. 216 - 217). African American criticism chiefly deals with literature written by the oppressed in the United States.

In this article, we will attempt to discuss five key concepts below:

### 2.1. *Literary significance*

First, 'literary' means concerning the writing, study, or content of literature, especially of the kind valued for quality of form. For example, "the great literary works of the nineteenth century." Merriam-Webster adds that literary means of, relating to, or having the characteristics of humane learning or literature.

Second, 'significance' is defined as the quality of being worthy of attention, importance, the meaning to be found in words or events. Merriam-Webster, the

dictionary online says that ‘significance’ means something that is conveyed as a meaning often obscurely or indirectly. It is also the quality of conveying or implying.

## 2.2. *Richard Wright*

George Perkins, Barbara Perkins and Phillip Leininger (1991, pp.1165-1166) say that Richard Wright was born September 4, 1908, on a plantation in Roxie, Mississippi, near Natchez and spent his youth in Memphis. He lived in the South until 1927, when he moved to Chicago. He later resided in New York City.

At the age of nineteen he went north to Chicago where he worked as a street cleaner, dishwasher, post-office clerk and porter. He then wrote a fictional work about his childhood in the South and his experiences in Chicago.

In 1937, Richard Wright joined the Federal Writers’ Project. His collection of five short stories, *Uncle Tom’s Children*, was published in 1938 and won the annual magazine award.

The publication of *Native Son* in 1940 was to make him world-famous. This was followed, in 1945, by the autobiographical *Black Boy*. His other novels were *The Outsider* (1953), *Savage Holiday* (1954), *Lawd Today* (1963), and *The Long Dream* (1958). His five non-fiction books are *Twelve Million Black Voices* (1941), *Black Power* (1954), *The Color Curtain* (1956), *Pagan Spain* (1957), and *White Man, Listen* (1957).

Richard Wright’s articles have appeared in major publications throughout the world, and his short stories are included in several anthologies. His books have been translated into many language and are frequently reissued in various countries throughout the world.

Richard Wright exiled himself from America after the Second World War and married his wife Ellen Poplar, a white woman.

On November 28, 1960, he died in Paris at the age of fifty-two.

## 2.3. *The term ‘Black’*

The Merriam online dictionary defines the term ‘Black’ first as of the very darkest color owing to the absence of or complete absorption of light; the opposite of white. Second, as belonging to or denoting a human group having dark-colored skin, especially of sub-Saharan African ancestry. Third as of or relating to any of various

population groups of especially African ancestry often considered as having dark pigmentation of the skin but in fact having a wide range of skin colors.

Therefore, the use of the noun *Black* in the singular to refer to a person is considered offensive. The plural form *Blacks* is still commonly used by Black people and others to refer to Black people as a group or community, but the plural form too is increasingly considered offensive, and most style guides advise writers to use *Black people* rather than *Blacks* when practical.

Black is a color among other colours: white, yellow, red associated to the race. The black color is assigned to the skin dark color of African Americans and to black Africans. The term 'Black' is used several times in Richard Wright's novels especially in *The Long Dream* under analysis. This term seems to be used pejoratively by the oppressor white seeing black as the inferior race.

#### 2.4. *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)*

There are different definitions of CDA with regard to different schools. First, Dianna (2018) argues that CDA is a qualitative analytical approach for critically describing, interpreting, and explaining the ways in which discourses construct, maintain, and legitimize social inequalities (<https://doi.org/10.177/1932202x18758260>). Second, methodologically speaking CDA is an application of discourse analysis, it is generally agreed that methods from discourse studies, the humanities and social sciences may be used in CDA research (Norman Fairclough, 2001, p.5).

Farahmandian and Shao state that, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is applied to uncover the socio-cultural aspects of texts by analysing their in-text language. Modality, Metaphor, and Racist Discourse are three major arguments to be studied under the CDA approach. (Farahmandian and Shao, 2020, p.389). Hence, by analysing the predominant concerns of these three parts, this article brings and reinterprets the serious problematic issues including power, the black oppression, social limitations and racist ideology.

From the definitions above, it can be inferred that, CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice. Therefore, this article studies the language and the situation of the blacks in the USA during the 1940s through Richard Wright's *The Long Dream*.

## 2.5. *The Long Dream*

Victoria Price (2016) writes that, a dream is a series of thoughts, images, and sensations occurring in a person's mind during sleep. Here a dream is described as an occurrence where a person experiences the following aspects:

Thoughts: are ideals that people have. People generally formulate opinions in their minds and thoughts are a result of the same;

Images: these are visuals of objects and people around us. Every day, we get to see just so many things that it is obvious for them to reappear in our dreams;

Sensations: the human body is quite sensitive to stimuli. It will feel sensations even when asleep and will also react to it, regardless of being awake or asleep. All these occur within a person's mind, when they are asleep (Victoria Price, 2016, p. 8).

Hornby (1996) defines the term 'dream' first as a sequence of scenes and feelings occurring in the mind during sleep. Second, it is a state of mind in which the things happening around one do not seem real. And third, the dream is an ambition or ideal especially when it is not very realistic, e.g. achieve/realize/fulfil one's lifelong dream (Hornby, 1996, p.353).

Therefore, 'the long dream' means an ambition or ideal that someone can have during the lifelong with hope that it will be achieved or fulfilled one day as states a saying: "In spite of the duration of the night, the sun will end up by raising." This third definition is close to Wright's *The Long Dream* under analysis that shows out the blacks' dream equality with whites. This dream takes time in duration and it is still going on. It is a "long dream" never achieved.

Richard Wright's fourth published novel, *The Long Dream* (1958) is rich in characterization and plot that dramatizes Richard Wright's themes of oppression, exploitation, corruption, and flight. Kenneth Kinnamon in his Foreword to *The Long Dream* comments that "The Long Dream the greatest strength of *The Long Dream* is its detailed, ample portrayal of life in the racist South as it existed for most of the twentieth century. The novel's main characters are developed with convincing complexity" (Kinnamon, p. xii). Above all, Kinnamon emphasizes that "The Long Dream is convincing in presenting the complexity of the black community and its culture in which these determining factor in the community a wide range of responses is shown, including self-aggrandizing adjustment, rebellion, black gay bashing as a

surrogate for racial supremacy" (Kinnamon, p. xiii). In such a situation, Tyree tells Fishbelly: "A black man's a dream, son, a dream that can't come true" (p.79).

### 3. Results

This section of results deals with four points as shown below in order to depict and criticize the recurrent problem of racism as it is seen via the novel under study in this article.

#### 3.1. *The term 'Black' in The Long Dream*

The term 'Black' in *The Long Dream* is perceived as a pejorative term in the way the oppressor uses it to designate people of color. There are many examples from the novel. This article depicts events and situations in which the term 'Black' is mostly used rudely to oppress the people of color.

To begin with part one of the novel, Fishbelly and his father Tyree undergo the dilemma of being black while in touch with white people. Tyree is forced to corruption of white to protect his business. Sometimes the term "negro or nigger" is substituted to the term 'Black'. Therefore, the first event occurs when Fishbelly sent by his mother to Tyree's office, he is caught by white people playing dice. Fishbelly is asked to play for an unlucky white man who then said: "Niggers are born with luck" (p.15). Then, his defender growled: "Don't queer my luck, you bastard" (p.17).

Similarly, during the debate among comrades Sam, Tony, and Zeke, Fishbelly wanted to know who a nigger is. Sam made his accusation and said: "A nigger's a black man who don't know who he is, 'cause he's too damned dumb to know ... A nigger's something white folks make a black man believe he is" (p.32). From this passage, one can notice the internalization of black people, i.e., people of color would like to be white. They underestimate themselves and put emphasis to the term 'Black'. This is assimilation of race. The passage also stereotypes the problem of existentialism of Black people.

#### 3.2. *Emphasis on the fundamental racial fact of Fishbelly*

According to Geoffrey Summerfield (1970), Richard Wright's use of the term 'Black' is not only a matter of style, but it also serves to emphasize the fundamental



racial fact of Fishbelly, black against white, black subject to white. Conversely, Negroes in Harlem, New York, speak of 'the man', that is, 'the white man'.

In *The Long Dream*, when Fishbelly's father, Tyree had trouble with Cantley, a white man and Chief of the police, because of Tyree's flourishing business, Fishbelly noticing injustice tells his father: "You are nothing because 'you are black'" (Wright, 1969, P.193). Fishbelly himself before exiling to France, lamented several times: "Because I am black, I cannot act freely" (Wright, p.194).

Of course, Wright's use of the term 'Black' has various significance. Sometimes 'black' means 'thing', not a human being, sometimes a slave, since blacks were brought from Africa as slaves. Therefore, the real significance that the term 'Black' deserves to take in the novel under analysis is that of a ruled person who requires a salvation first by the black man himself, then by society. The black man has to struggle over and over against social injustice to be respected as a "man".

Furthermore, the most accepted topics for Negroes to read were "sex" and "religion"; and not for example the Ku Klux Klan, the Civil War, France, and how Negro soldiers fared while there; the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution or any topic calling for positive knowledge or manly self-assertion on the part of the Negro. The topics listed were taboos from the white man's point of view. In *The Long Dream*, the attraction Fishbelly experiences for white women comes partly from the fact that he reads newspapers showing sexy white women.

However, "religion" was permitted as another way for whites to enslave and establish domination over Negroes. With religion, Wright's grandmother in *Black Boy*, and Fishbelly's mother in *The Long Dream*, the two women had created fear in their sons' consciousness and they were educating them not to assert their rights, but "conditioned them to hope for little and to receive that little without rebelling," as says Richard Wright in his essay "How Bigger Was Born" (p. xii). Therefore, religion considered in this sense, makes people believe that happiness will be in the Kingdom of God even though they suffer now on the earth. Hence, one can feel how religion, which could help people break the chain of domination keeps them under oppressors' jackboots, and how helpless souls search for a shelter in the supernatural.

In addition, neither Richard Wright nor Fishbelly his central character is a racist and does not contend particularly for a "Négritude" covered with all virtues. Wright

knows that in the multiracial community, the racial problem occurs, taking various shapes according to the period, evolution, place and ideologies. Therefore, the racial problem Wright experienced through *Fishbelly* in the South of the United States, had to stop. Gradually, whites felt that it was necessary to emancipate blacks in all fields. Thus, whites and blacks can work for the development of the community.

### 3.3. *The term 'Black': Richard Wright's matter of style?*

What is a style, or a literary style?

A style, says *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1978), is a general manner or way of doing anything which is typical or representative of a person or group of persons. A style can also be defined as a choice of words, which distinguishes the speaker, or writer from others. In a literary style, writes Richard Wilker (1983), the writer goes out of the ordinary language and creates his own language, a literary or a fictional language (Wilker, 1983, p.17). Therefore, every writer has his ways of expressing himself, i.e., he has his own style. Richard Wright's fictional and non-fictional works are written in their author's specific style characterized by the use of the term 'Black'.

However, in *The Long Dream*, Wright uses alternatively the words 'Negro' or 'Nigger', but the term 'Black' dominates as the leitmotiv of his novel. Sometimes he uses the term 'colored people' for the term 'Black'. For example, in *The Long Dream* he writes: "when you know you a nigger, then you ain't no nigger no more", "I'm black and I live in America and my folks came from Africa" "but you still black, ain't you?"

The change is due to the fact that the words 'Negro' and 'colored people' became old-fashioned. Richard Wright and other young blacks used the word "nigger" colloquially. Most blacks object to the word 'nigger' since it is used by people who believe in white domination, they are naturally sensitive about it. However, to prove they are 'tough' and do not care, young blacks do use it.

In his introduction to *Black Boy* (1970, p.vii), Geoffrey Summerfield says that Richard Wright's use of the term 'Black' seems to be partly a matter of style. Does Wright use the term 'Black' on purpose or is he aiming at an ideology? If it is the matter of style that influenced the style, where did he learn such a way of doing? Undoubtedly he acquired and improved his talent as a writer in the course of his daily experiences, and in the Federal Writers' Project which trained him in literature.

Richard Wright's style is typical of a kind of literature that has been called "literature of fight" such as the works of many South African writers; but as for him, it is a non-violent fight which is near the Mahâtmâ Gandhi's or Martin Luther King's. Wright's style is dynamic, for it can be used at all times and at any place either in a multi-racial or in a multi-tribal community.

However, it should be noticed that in "The Alien Land of Richard Wright", in *Black Voices* (1963), Saunders Redding argues that:

Wright was no dedicated craftsman, like Hemingway; no novelist-philosopher, like Sartre and Camus; no brilliant stylistic innovator, like Joyce and Faulkner. His talent was to smite the conscience – and to smite the conscience of both white and black Americans. Whites read him and lamented, "Is this what our democracy has done?" Blacks read him and quavered, "Is this us?" (Redding, 1963, p.53).

This quotation explains that Wright's style is genuine, since there is neither too much borrowing from other writers, nor is there any influence upon his style although some scholars used the term 'Black' about blacks' oppression before him. Wright's use of the term 'Black' is a target to awaken both blacks and whites consciousness for the equality of race.

#### **3.4. Richard Wright's thought on Black American culture**

Hornby (1995) in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines culture as "the customs, arts, social institutions, etc. of a particular group or nation." Therefore, we can speak of the African culture or the Western culture because every nation has its own culture, and hence there is the black American culture.

According to Tyson (2006, p.362) a culture is the awareness of belonging to two conflicting cultures. First, the African culture, which grew from African roots and was transformed by its own unique history on American soil, and secondly the European culture imposed by white America. However, for black writers, the double consciousness has meant having to decide whether to write primarily for a black audience, a white audience, or both. This decision involves, in turn, the kind of language the writer uses (Tyson, 2006, p.363).

In *Black Boy* (Richard Wright, 1970, p.64), Richard Wright says that "these fantasies were no longer a reflection of my reaction to the white people. They were a part of my living, of my emotional life; they 'were a culture', a creed, a religion." Let

us say it clear that we all have fantasies, often with less good cause than Richard Wright. A "culture", in the sense in which he uses the word here, embraces all the customs and habits, traditions and beliefs that distinguish any one nation, race, tribe, or group. Now, a failure to understand another person's culture can lead to stupid forms of intolerance.

Additionally, Gustave Le Bon cited by Senghor (1971, p.8) writes:

The clearest impression brought back from my distant travels to the most diverse countries, is that each people possesses a mental constitution as fixed as its anatomical characteristics. From that mental constitution its feelings, thoughts, institutions, beliefs and its arts derive.

Senghor (1971, p.8) adds, that is what culture is, "the psychic constitution which, in each people, explains its civilization." In other words, it is a certain way, proper to each people, of feeling and thinking, of expressing itself and of acting. This "certain way", or character, as one would say today, is the symbiosis of the geography and history, of race and ethnic group.

Now, is Richard Wright really fair to blacks? What of the liveliness of their religion, or the vitality of their jazz? When in *Black Boy* (p.31) Wright speaks about "the cultural barrenness of black life", he seems to criticize his black folks suggesting that they cannot produce their own culture irrelevant to American culture. Hence, it is an aberration to affirm that Wright could belong to the "Négritude" group. It could be a misunderstanding of Richard Wright's thought, to think that there is a common core to "Négritude" and Wright's use of the term 'Black' as concerns the assimilation of Blacks' culture.

Wright hopes to see the achievement of change in American society, since both blacks and whites are linked by the same culture, all are citizens of the United States. Thus, in Richard Wright's thought, syncretism is quite possible in spite of some differences between whites and blacks.

However, since the problem in this American world is not only of the skin color of people, but merely the issue of cultural difference; it is important to have a glance at Homi K. Bhabha's ideas on culture. Among Bhabha's key concepts developed in the field of culture, I focused my attention on cultural difference, enunciation, and stereotype. Such terms describe ways in which colonized people or marginalized people have resisted the power of colonizer/oppressor, according to Bhabha's theory.

Homi K. Bhabha (1994) presents cultural difference as an alternative to cultural diversity. In cultural diversity, a culture is an “object of empirical knowledge” and pre-exists the knower while cultural difference sees culture as the point at which two or more cultures meet and it is also where most problems occur, discursively constructed rather than pre-given, a “process of enunciation of culture as ‘knowledge’” (p.9). Bhabha adds then that it is through enunciation that cultural difference is discovered and recognized. The enunciate process introduces a divide between the traditions of a stable system of reference and the negation of the certitude of culture in the articulation of new cultural, meanings, strategies, in the political present, as a practice of domination, or resistance (p.9). Therefore, cultural difference is a process of identification, while cultural diversity is comparative and categorized. Furthermore, it is that possibility of difference and articulation that could free the signifier of skin/culture from the fixations of racial typology, however, the stereotype impedes the circulation and articulation of the signifier of “race” as anything other than that. One of Bhabha’s central ideas is that of “hybridization” which describes the emergence of new cultural forms from multiculturalism. Instead of seeing colonialism as something locked in the past, Bhabha shows how its histories and cultures constantly intrude on the present, demanding that we transform our understanding of cross-cultural relations.

From this discussion on Bhabha’s theory, it can be said that cultural difference poses a problem between minority group and majority, i.e. blacks marginalized or segregated by whites because of their cultures. They both consider being different from each other, so that one culture sees itself superior to the other and hence imposes its domination upon another. The solution yet to this issue is as Wright’s characters’ expectation through a play is expressed in this excerpt: “Sam, you said you wanted some justice,” Fishbelly argued. “So why didn’t you take the man’s wife and house and money? Zeke’s right. You scared!” “Hell, that wasn’t what I was talking about!” Sam wailed. “I’m talking about equal chance...” (p.106), similarly in *NS*, Bigger Thomas says: “I ain’t asking that at all. I’m black. They don’t give black people a chance, so I took a chance and lost.” (p.330). From the discussion between Tyree and Fishbelly, the problem of equal chance reappears in this excerpt: “White folks know damn well that if they give us *half* a equal chance, we’d beat’ em, come out on top –”.

"But I want a equal chance!" Fishbelly bawled at his father. (...) "Fish, there's *ten* white men in this country for *every* black man," Tyree stated (p.143). It could be noticed how Tyree is docile towards the oppressor, but Fishbelly's aggressive, hence he is of fighting spirit for the minority's empowerment. Again in this excerpt Fishbelly says: "They now if they give us half chance, we'd beat- em" (p.152). But this "half a equal chance" is not given for free, it is to be snatched. It is the product of fighting. This is empowerment. Therefore, the blacks' expectation is not only 'justice', but also and especially 'equal chance' in this American society. This requires minority's empowerment in all sectors of life: political, social, and economic.

#### **4. Discussions and conclusion**

##### **4.1. *Awakening of Black Consciousness***

Black consciousness seeks to give positivity in the outlook of the black people; it works on the knowledge that white hatred is negative, to amass the anger of blacks into purposeful and directional opposition, basing its entire struggles on the realities of the situation, to ensure a singularity of purpose in the black struggles. In other words, black consciousness was not about turning against whites, it was about educating blacks as to how to turn their hatred of white oppression into mind-liberated action (Retrieved on January 21st, 2020 <https://www.google.com>).

A movement of the awakening of Black consciousness stems from American educator W.E.B. DuBois's evaluation of double consciousness of American blacks, being taught what they feel inside to be lies about the weakness and cowardice of their race. The aim of this global movement of black thinkers was to build black consciousness and African consciousness, which they felt had been suppressed under colonialism. Among African thinkers of black consciousness are Frantz Fanon, Léopold Senghor, and Aimé Césaire. This presupposes some questions: what are we? And, what is our identity? From these questions raises also the idea of 'Home' as Toni Morrison's novel entitled "Home". Are the blacks feeling in their skin really being Americans? It is generally considered that the term "home" is wherever we feel we belong: to a place, to another person or to a passing moment. Home is in a sense, acceptance and relatedness: community and connection wherever we are. So, throughout Wright's novels, the idea of home is present since the black people are aware of being Americans, but Bigger Thomas and Fishbelly face trouble and they

don't feel being home to America. (Retrieved on [https://: www. Google Art & Culture.com/](https://www.GoogleArt&Culture.com/) 24 May 2020).

The main tenet of the black consciousness movement itself was the development of black culture, black literature. The poets and writers of the Black Consciousness Movement saw themselves as spokespersons for blacks in the country. They refused to be beholden to proper grammar and style, searching for black aesthetics and black literary values. The attempt to awaken a black cultural identity was thus inextricably tied up with the development of black literature.

The Black Consciousness Movement aimed at empowering the weakened minds of the oppressed by reconstructing their wrong-informed sense of identity. Blacks need to rediscover their identity as people who can achieve great things. Before Blackman could liberate himself from the shackles of white oppression he must first acknowledge that, the type of Blackman today has lost his manhood. As long as black oppression exists the need for Black Consciousness will always exist.

The language used and addressed to blacks in *The Long Dream*, awaken their conscious to speak out what they are. It is however to be said that in *The Long Dream*, the unfair treatment between the whites and blacks is explicit through the language expressions that appear in the novel. In addition, from the language of the novel, it can be perceived that the domination of the white people over the black people in education, employment, and legal protection is severe; for instance, the black people were often given an undesirable or stereotypical concept by the white men such as 'nigger,' 'murderer,' 'fool,' 'black servant' and 'lazy negro'.

In *The Long Dream*, for instance, Tucker, Fishbelly's father who became wealthy, treats miserable blacks in a despicable manner. He is an oppressor for the oppressed black folks. Freire (1980: 32) defines his pedagogy of oppressed as the pedagogy of people committed in the struggle for liberation. Hence, it is quite normal that the pedagogy of oppressed people ought to enlist its disciples among oppressed people who know or begin, in a critical way, to recognize themselves as oppressed.

The first thing of an educational action is to awaken the consciousness of the educated people, who must become aware of their existential conditions as ruled persons. The best pedagogy of liberation is built by the oppressed and for the

oppressed. This will enable the educated people to search the best existential conditions for human dignity and harmony in society. However, it could be an aberration and also unbelievable for oppressors to urge and practice a liberating educational system.

Wright's style of fiction is for him the only way to attack his antagonists, to struggle for democracy, and to defend blacks' rights. His style is at once a weapon and ammunition. The "literature of fight" can take another shape and be called "literature of liberation" since its aim is to make oppressed people free.

#### 4.2. *Black Africans and the blackness*

According to Merriam-Webster online dictionary, Blackness is first the property or quality of being black in colour, for example when the grey hair is changed to blackness. Second, Blackness is the fact or state of belonging to any human group having dark-coloured skin ([www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com)). For example in *The Long Dream*, Fishbelly's experiences of discrimination and segregation have made him far more aware of his blackness than ever before.

This point deals with the correlation between black Africans and the blackness. In other words, it would like to show how black Africans think about the blackness. Are Africans shame or proud of being black? This question leads to rethink the concept of "Négritude" which raised discussions among African scholars.

However, St Clair Drake in his "Hide my Face", in Hill's *Black Voices* (1963) argues that the term "Négritude" was first used by the Martinician poet Aimé Césaire and by the Senegalese scholar-poet Léopold Cedar Senghor. Then, the black American scholar Samuel Allen has pointed out in his essay "Tendencies in African Poetry": "The term is not amenable to easy definition. It represents in one sense the Negro African poet's endeavor to recover for his race a normal self-pride, a lost confidence in himself, a world in which he again has a sense of identity and a significant role" (Hill, 1963, p.83). But, in another dimension, the term "Négritude" denotes the assumption that there are impulses, traits, and conceptions of the world which are characteristic of blacks.

However, Allen notes that, in fact, "Négritude" has a dialectical dimension, that it involves what Jean-Paul Sartre calls in his *Black Orpheus* anti-racist racism; it accentuates discrimination in order to win respect and abolish differences. Hence,



those who assert their “Négritude” most vigorously have never isolated themselves from the main stream of French intellectual and political life and are deeply aware that man, ultimately, is man and that his race is an attribute, only, of his more basic membership in the human community.

Given the controversy among pioneers of “Négritude” influenced and indoctrinated by European scholars, “Négritude” failed in its first step. For example, when Senghor argues, “emotion is Negroid, reason is Hellene”, it seems that he is no longer faire to the Négritude movement in spite of his arguments which do not fit with the ideology.

It is to be noticed that in “Négritude”, there is an exaggeration within the declaration of Aimé Césaire and of L.S. Senghor. Such declarations are criticized by some African scholars. When Césaire argues that “Négritude” is the refusal of being assimilated, he finally agrees that “Négritude” must be the consciousness of being black; this involves the self-acceptance without complaining about one’s blackness. Therefore, pioneers of “Négritude” who claim in vain the revival of the African culture, are in a vicious circle. It is better to show in daily life that one is proud of being black and African, instead of shouting all over the world as if one is ashamed and hence complains of one’s blackness.

#### **4.3. *Wole Soyinka’s Tigritude versus Wright’s term ‘Black’***

When Richard Wright claims “because I am black”, Wole Soyinka reacts: “The tiger does not shout its tigritude.” It is paradoxical to conceal the two ideas yet from two black men. However, Wole Soyinka quotes: “A tiger does not proclaim his tigritude, he pounces”. In other words, a tiger does not stand in the forest and say: “I am a tiger”. For example when you pass where the tiger has walked before, you see the skeleton of the duiker, you know that some tigritude has been emanated there. This means that let your achievements and abilities speak for you. Do not blow your own trumpet, except during an interview. Even at an interview, you must blow up your trumpet in such a way that what it produces is nice to hear, rather than noise to the ear. If you are gorgeous or good or great, people will know. Tigers do not call attention to themselves. The thing about calling attention to everything we are doing

is that it can distract or put undue pressure on us  
(<https://www.quotes.yourdictionary.com>).

Emily Dickinson's verses emphasizes this teaching when he says: "Fame is a bee. It has a song -. It has a sting -. Ah, too, it has a wing" (Dickinson, 1788). Dickinson metaphorical bee is a lesson of self-acceptance and proudness of one's own race. To come back to Soyinka's words, a tiger does not shout its tigritude, it acts. In other words, it is to be reminded that in a free environment a tiger does not proclaim its tigritude, a tiger jumps on its prey. Similarly, the duiker (antelope) will not paint 'duiker' on his beautiful back to proclaim his duikeritude; he will be known by his elegant leap. Or to put it another way, Soyinka's criticism to Négritude seems strong by this example on the duiker and duikeritude.

Therefore, had Wright been alive, he would have confessed of the overuse of the term 'Black' in his writings since to proclaim the blackness reduces psychologically and ontologically the manhood of black people. What is important and striking in Wright's use of the term 'Black' is that the terms serves as a weapon for the awakening of Black's consciousness. Also, by his writings, Wright struggles for the black minority's empowerment in order to give them equal chance to the white people.

This is what Cidinha da Silva, a Brazilian author says: "My black identity is what makes me 'me' and grants me my membership of the world. I know where I come from, who and where I am (and why I'm specifically there), as well as where I plan to end up. I'm a black woman and I experience all the associated adversities within a society that's structurally racist and multi-ethnic, like the one exists in Brazil" (<https://www.quotes.yourdictionary.com>). Da Silva is not complaining of her blackness. She is proud of being black, but she is struggling against racism system that puts black women underestimated.

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### **Endnotes**

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