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L'Afrique et les défis du XXIème siècle
Africa and the Challenges of the Twenty First Century
A África e os desafios do Século XXI

إفريقيا وتحديات القرن الواحد والعشرين

DRAFT VERSION
NOT TO BE CITED

**Ideas of Africa and the African Presence in
the Early Twentieth Century**

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5 - 9 / 12 / 2011

Rabat Maroc / Morocco

Ideas of Africa and the African Presence in the Early Twentieth Century

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Abstract:

This paper seeks to examine how Black intellectuals and artists (African American and African) engaged with their own exclusion from universal History in the early twentieth century. What framework did they develop to restructure universal History and accommodate their inclusion? What competing narratives of the universal emerged from their efforts to decenter world-history written from the vantage point of Europe? It aims at understanding the role of Africa in their reconstruction of the past, the theories and historical methods they relied on, exploring the multiple options of world history, the cyclical history, the grand narratives and non-national history perspectives, to restore Africa to universal history and humanity. It identifies, describes and analyzes two different intellectual approaches-Atlantic and African-to Africa and world history African Americans and Africans were engaging both, but at different moments, and according to changing circumstances that were specific to the contexts in which they were constructing usable pasts. Using similar resources, in this case evidence of African civilization, customs, and culture derived from the social sciences, both groups, as with the West, sought in Africa ways to reassert their authority, in the African American case as citizens of the United States and active members of the international "community of nations," and in the African case as citizens of empire."