Cultural nationalism is recognized by many who think in an revolutionary manner as a distinct and natural stage through which one proceeds in order to become a revolutionary, such as not always the case, and many people remain at the level of a cultural nationalist all of their lives. In the United States, cultural nationalism can be summed up in James Brown's words: "I'm Black; I'm Proud!"

Cultural nationalism manifests itself in many ways but all of these manifestations are essentially grounded in one fact: a universal denial and ignoring of the present political, social, and economic realities and a concentration on the past as a frame of reference. This phenomenon is not unique to this stage of the revolution in which we find ourselves: neither is it unique to the United States Black "Wretched of the Earth" struggle for freedom. Frantz Fanon, in THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH, said that this phenomenon is "there is no taking of the offensive -- and no redefining of relationships. There is simply a concentration on a hard core of culture which is becoming more and more shrivel-filled-uptight and empty."

By Linda Harrison

ON CULTURAL NATIONALISM

There is a myth and fantasy. A man who lives under slavery and any of its extensions rarely regains his dignity by rejecting the clothes of his enslaver; he rarely regains his dignity except by a confrontation on equal grounds with his enslaver. All men can die, and that is the only thing that equalizes them. Under many systems those with money die less often. Any confrontation which gages men, no matter what their social or economic position, in equal chance to die under equal conditions is leveling for those who consider themselves at the bottom and degrading and oppressing for those who are at the top. To see himself as an equal place with his enslaver is to realize that the costs we receive and oppose do not have the device right to do so. There is nothing to be proud of in colonization and slavery and only out of the initiative of the oppressed can come something meaningful and amending to his existence. Quoting Fanon: "The desire to attach oneself to tradition or bring abandoned traditions to life again does not mean going against the current of history but also opposing the current that he suffers under similar systems of exploitation that have left him destitute."

Cultural Nationalists in their theory support many of the evils which have been denounced in the past. In the absence of constructive and creative platforms and actions, the support and profit from "being Black" they become part of the agenda. The isolation and suppression of people of color that does not challenge the dominance of the dominant and exploitative forces-political, economic, and social forces -- is a culture which either pro-slavery, pro-colonialist or completely made up in which case completely useless. This cultural nationalism is most always based on racism. We have "White Love," and "Kill the Honkey." These statements ignore the social and political analyses of the relationship between the government and the people and the symbols of the voters and they ignore the possibility of allies. In all cases cultural nationalism -- in the midst of struggle, seeks to the cultural nationalism for the oppression of the people. By Linda Harrison

All quotations except the last one from "THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH" by Frantz Fanon.