ALIEN GODS

The Third World intellectual in the metropolitan country is ill at ease; he is accepted as an input to the economy but rejected on other grounds. In this article A. Sivanandan, Director of the Institute of Race Relations, London, analyses the various subjective factors in the life of the immigrant intellectual in Britain.

A. Sivanandan

"Wherever colonization is a fact, the indigenous culture begins to rot. And among the ruins something begins to be born which is not a culture but a kind of sub-culture, a sub-culture which is condemned to exist on the margin allowed by an European culture. This then becomes the province of a few men, the elite, who find themselves placed in the most artificial conditions, deprived of any revivifying contact with the masses of the people".

Aime Cesaire

On the margin of European culture, and alienated from his own, the "coloured" intellectual is an artefact of colonial history, marginal man par excellence. He is a creature of two worlds, and of none. Thrown up by a specific history, he remains stranded on its shores even as it recedes. And what he comes into is not so much a twilight world, as a world of false shadows and false light.

At the height of colonial rule, he is the servitor of those in power, offering up his people in return for crumbs of privilege; at its end, he turns servant of the people, negotiating their inpendence even as he attains to power. Outwardly, he favours that part of him which is turned towards his native land. He puts on the garb of nationalism, vows a return to tradition. He helps up with the beat of the tom-tom and the ritual of the circumcision ceremony. But privately, he lives in the manner of his masters, affecting their style and their values, assuming their privileges and status. And for a while he succeeds in holding these two worlds together, the outer and the inner, deriving the best of both. But the forces of nationalism on the one hand and the virus of colonial privilege on the other, drive him once more into the margin of existence. In despair he turns himself to Europe. With something like belonging, he looks towards the Cathedral at Chartres and Windsor Castle, Giambologna and Donizetti and Shakespeare and Verlaine, snow-drops and roses. He must be done, once and for all, with the waywardness and uncouth manners of his people, released from their endemic ignorance, delivered from witchcraft and voodoo, from the heat and the chattering mynah-bird, from the incessant beat of the tom-tom. He must return to the country of his mind.

But even as the "coloured" intellectual enters the mother country, he is entered into another world where his colour, and not his intellect or his status, begins to define his life—he is entered into another relationship with himself. The porter (unless he is black), the immigration officer (who is never anything but white), the customs official, the policeman of whom he seeks directions, the cabman who takes him to his lodgings, and the landlady who takes him in at a price—none of them leaves him in any doubt that he is not merely not welcome in their country, but should in fact be going back to where he came from. That indeed is their only curiosity, their only interest: where he comes from, which particular jungle—Asian, African or Caribbean.

There was a time when he had been received warmly, but he was at Oxford then and his country was still a colony. Perhaps equality was something that the British honoured in the abstract. Or perhaps his "equality" was something that was precisely defined and set within the enclave of an Empire. He had a place somewhere in the imperial class structure. But within British society itself there seemed no place for him. Not even his upper-class affectations, his B.B.C. accent, his well pressed suit and college tie afford him a niche in the carefully defined inequalities of British life. He feels himself not just an outsider or different, but invested, as it were, with a separate inequality; outside and inferior at the same time.

At that point, his self-assurance which had sat on him, as depicted by T. S. Eliot, "like a silk hat on a Bradford Millionnaire" takes a cruel blow. But he still has his intellect, his expertise, his qualifications to fall back on. He redeems his self-respect with another look at his Oxford diploma (to achieve which he had put his culture in pawn). But his applications for employment remain unanswered, his letters of introduction unattended. It only needs the employment officer's rejection of his qualifications, white though they be, to dispel at last his intellectual pretensions.

The certainty finally dawns on him that his colour is the only measure of his worth, the sole criterion of his being. Whatever his claims to white culture and white values, whatever his adherence to white norms, he is first and last a "no-good nigger", a "bleeding wog" or just plain "black bastard". His colour is the only reality allowed him; but a reality which, to survive, he must learn to cope with. Once more he is caught between two worlds; accepting his colour and rejecting it, or accepting it only to reject it—apeing still the white man (though now with conscious effort at survival), playing the white man's game (though now aware that he changes the rules so as to keep on winning), even forcing the white man to concede a victory or two (out of his hideous patronage, his grotesque paternalism). He accepts that it is their country and not his, rationalizes their grievances against him, acknowledges the chip on his shoulder (which he knows is really a beam in their eye), and, ironically, by virtue of staying in his place, moves up a position or two—in the area, invariably, of race relations.

The British media uses the "Coloured intellectual", whatever his field of work, as white Africa uses the Chief: as a spokesman for his tribe.

For it is here that his skilled ambivalence finds the greatest scope,

his colour the greatest demand. Once more he comes into his own—as servitor of those in power, a buffer between them and his people, a shock-absorber of "coloured discontent"—in fact, a "coloured" intellectual.

But this is an untenable position. As the racial "scene" gets worse, and racism comes to reside in the very institutions of white society, the contradictions inherent in the marginal situation of the "coloured" intellectual begin to manifest themselves. As a "coloured" he is outside white society, in his intellectual functions he is outside black. For if, as Sartre has pointed out, "that which defines an intellectual.....is the profound contradiction between the universality which bourgeois society is obliged to allow his scholarship, and the restricted ideological and political domain in which he is forced to apply it", there is for the "coloured" intellectual no role in an "ideological and political domain", shot through and through with racism, which is not fundamentally antipathetic to his colour and all that it implies. But for that very reason, his contradiction, in contrast to that of his white counterpart, is perceived not just intellectually or abstractly, but in his very existence. It is for him, a living, palpitating reality, demanding resolution.

Equally, the universality allowed his scholarship is, in the divided world of a racist society, different to that of the white intellectual. It is a less universal universality, as it were, and subsumed to the universality of white scholarship. But it is precisely because it is a universality that is particular to colour that it is already keened to the sense of oppression. So that when Sartre tells us that the intellectual, in grasping his contradictions, puts himself on the side of the oppressed "because, in principle, universality is on that side", it is clear that the "coloured" intellectual, at the moment of grasping his contradictions, *becomes* the oppressed—is reconciled to himself and his people, or rather, to himself in his people.

If this man manages to compromise, to hide from things; if he succeeds, by some kind of pretence, vacillation or balancing act, in not living that contradiction..... I do not call him an intellectual; I consider him simply a functionary, a practical theoretician of the bourgeoisie". (*Jean-Paul Sartre in "Intellectuals and Revolution"*.)

To put it differently. Although the intellectual qua intellectual can, in "grasping his contradiction", take the *position* of the oppressed, he cannot, by virtue of his class (invariably petit-bourgeois) achieve an instinctual understanding of oppression.

The "coloured" man, on the other hand, has, by virtue of his colour, an *instinct* of oppression, unaffected by his class, though muted by it. So that the "coloured" intellectual, in resolving his contradiction as an intellectual, resolves also his existential contradiction. In coming to consciousness of the oppressed, he "takes conscience of himself", in taking conscience of himself, he comes to consciousness of the oppressed. The fact of his intellect which had alienated him from his people now puts him on their side, the fact of his colour which had connected him with his people, restores him finally to their ranks. And at that moment of reconciliation between instinct and position, between the existential and the intellectual, between the subjective and objective realities of his oppression, he is delivered from his marginality and stands revealed as neither "coloured" nor "intellectual"—but BLACK.

Black is here used to symbolize the oppressed, as white the oppressor. Colonial oppression was uniform in its exploitation of the races (black, brown and yellow) making a distinction between them only in the interests of further exploitation—by playing one race against the other and, within each race, one class against the other generally the Indians against the blacks, the Chinese against the browns, and the coolies against the blacks the Chinese against the browns and the coolies against the Indian and Chinese middle-class. In time these latter came to occupy, in East Africa, and Malaysia for example, a position akin to a comprador class. Whether it is this historical fact which today makes for their comprador role in British society is not, however, within the scope of this essay. But it is interesting to note how an intermediate colour came to be associated with an intermediate role.

"Black: opposite to white. **Concise Oxford Dictionary.** "White: morally or spiritually pure or stainless, spotless, innocent. Free from malignity or evil intent, innocent, harmless especially as opposite to something characterized as **Black". Shorter Oxford Dictionary.**

He accepts now the full burden of his colour. With Cesaire, he cries:

I accept.....I accept.....entirely, without reservation.....
my race which no ablution of hyssop mingled with lilies can ever purify
my race gnawed by blemishes
my race ripe grapes from drunken feet
my queen of spit and leprosies
my queen of whips and scrofulae
my queen of squamae and chlosmae
O royalty whom I have loved in the far gardens of spring lit by chestnut candles!
I accept. I accept

Aime Cesaire, **"Return to My Native Land".**

And accepting, he seeks to define. But black, he discovers, finds definition not in its own right but as the opposite of white. Hence in order to define himself, he must first define the white man. But to do so on the white man's terms would lead him back to self-denigration. And yet the only tools of intellection available to him are white tools—white language, white education, white systems of thought—the very things that alienate him from himself. Whatever tools are native to him lie beyond his consciousness, somewhere, condemned to desuetude by white centuries. But to use white tools to uncover the white man so that he (the black) may at last find definition requires that the tools themselves are altered in their use. In the process, the whole of white civilization comes into question, black culture is re-assessed, and the very fabric of bourgeois society threatened.

Language

Take language, for instance. A man's whole world, as Fanon points out, is "expressed and implied by his language": It is a way of thinking, of feeling, of being. It is identity. It is, in Valery's grand phrase, "the god gone astray in the flesh". But the language of the colonized man is another man's language. In fact it is his oppressor's and must, of its very nature, be inimical to him—to his people and his gods. Worse, it creates alien gods. Alien gods "gone astray in the flesh"—white gods in black flesh—a canker in the rose. No, that is not quite right, for white gods, like roses, are beautiful things, it is the black that is cancerous. So one should say a "rose in the canker". But that is not

quite right either—neither in its imagery nor in what it is intended to express. How does one say it then? How does one express the holiness of the heart's disaffection and "the truth of the imagination" in a language that is false to one? How does one communicate the burden of one's humanity in a language that dehumanises one in the very act of communication?

Two languages, then, one for the the colonized—and yet within the same language? how to reconcile this ambivalence? A patois, perhaps: a spontaneous, organic rendering of the master's language to the throb of native sensibilities—some last grasp at identity, at wholeness.

But dialect betrays class. The "pidgin-nigger-talker" is an ignorant man. Only common people speak pidgin. Conversely, when the white man speaks it, it is only to show the native how common he really is. It is a way of "Classifying him imprisoning him, primitivizing him", says Fanon.

Or perhaps the native has a language of his own, even a literature. But compared to English (or French) his language is dead, his literature passe. They have no place in a modern, industrialized world. They are for yesterday's people. Progress is English, education is English, the good things in life (in the world the colonizer made) are English the way to the top (and white civilization leaves the native in no doubt that is the purpose of life) is English. His teachers saw to it that he spoke it in school, his parents that he spoke it at home—even though they were rejected by their children for their own ignorance of the tongue.

But if the colonizer's language creates an "existential deviation" in the native, white literature drives him further from himself. It disorientates him from his surroundings: the heat, the vegetation, the rhythm of the world around him. Already, in childhood, he writes school essays on "the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness". He learns of good and just government from Rhodes and Hastings and Morgan. In the works of the great historian, Thomas Carlyle, he finds that "poor black Quashee.....a swift supple fellow, a merry-hearted, grinning, dancing, singing, affectionate kind of creature ....." could indeed be made into a "handsome glossy thing" with a "pennyworth of oil", but the tacit prayer he makes (unconsciously he, poor blockhead) to you and to me and to all the world who are wiser than himself is 'compel me'"—to work. In the writings of the greatest playwright in the world, he discovers that he is Caliban and Othello and Aaron, in the testaments of the civilized religions that he is for ever cursed to slavery. With William Blake, the great revolutionary poet and painter, mystic and savant, he is convinced that:

My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O! my soul is white,
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereav'd of light.

It is not just the literature of the language, however, that ensnares the native into "whititude", but its grammar, its syntax, its vocabulary. They are all part of the trap. Only by destroying the trap can he escape it.

"He has", as Jean Genet puts it in the "Introduction to Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson", "only one recourse: to accept his language but to corrupt it so skilfully that the white men are caught in his trap". He must blacken the language, suffuse it with his own darkness, and liberate it from the presence of the oppressor.

In the process, he changes radically the use of words, word-order, sounds, rhythm, imagery — even grammar. For, he recognizes with R. B. Laing that even "syntax and vocabulary are political acts that define and circumscribe the manner in which facts are experienced, (and) indeed.....create the facts that are studied".

In effect he brings to the language the authority of his particular experience and alters thereby the experience of the language itself. He frees it of its racial oppressiveness (black *is* beautiful) and invests it with says Fanon "the universality inherent in the human condition", and he writes:

As there are hyena-men and panther-men
so I shall be a new man
a Kaffir man
a Hindu-from-Calcutta man
a man-from-harlem-who-hasn't got-the-vote

Aime Cesaire

The discovery of black identity had equated the "coloured" intellectual with himself, the definition of it equates him with all men. But it is still a definition arrived at by negation, by rejecting what is not. And however positive that rejection, it does not by itself make for a positive identity. For that reason, it tends to be self-conscious and overblown. It equates the black man to other men on an existential (and intellectual) level, rather than on a political one.

But to "positivize" his identity, the black man must go back and rediscover himself—in Africa and Asia —not in a frantic search for lost roots, but in an attempt to discover living tradition and values. He must find, that is, a historical sense, "which is a sense of the timeless as well as the temporal, and of the timeless and temporal together", which "involves a perception not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence", says T. S. Eliot. Some of that past he still carries within him, no matter that it has been mislaid in the Caribbean for over four centuries. It is the presence of that past, the living presence, that he now seeks to discover. And in discovering where he came from he realizes more fully where he is at, and where, in fact, he is going to.

He discovers, for instance, that in Africa and Asia, there still remains despite centuries of white rule, an attitude towards learning which is simply a matter of curiosity, a quest for understanding—an understanding of not just the "metalled ways" on which the world moves, but of oneself, one's people, others whose life styles are alien to one's own—an understanding of both the 'inscape' and fabric of life. Knowledge is not a goal in itself, but a path to wisdom; it bestows not privilege so much as duty, not power so much as responsibility. And it brings with it a desire to learn even as one teaches, to teach even as one learns. It is

used not to compete with one's fellow beings for some unending standard of life, but to achieve for them, as for oneself, a higher quality of life.

"We excel", declares the African, "neither in mysticism nor in science and technology, but in the field of human relations ..... By loving our parents, our brothers, our sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, nephews and nieces, and by regarding them as members of our families, we cultivate the habit of loving lavishly, of exuding human warmth, of compassion, and of giving and helping..... Once so conditioned, one behaves in this way not only to one's family, but also to the clan, the tribe, the nation, and to humanity as a whole". (19)

Dunduzu Chisiza in "The Outlook for Contemporary Africa".

Chisiza is here speaking of the unconfined nature of love in African (and Asian) societies (not, as a thousand sociologists would have us believe, of "the extended family system"), in marked contrast to Western societies where the love between a man and a woman (and their children) is sufficient unto itself, seldom opening them out, albeit through each other, to a multitude of loves. The heart needs the practice of love as much as the mind its thought.

The practical expression of these values is no better illustrated than in the socialist policies of Nyerere's Tanzania. It is a socialism particular to African conditions, based on African tradition, requiring an African (Swahili) word to define it. *Ujamaa* literally means "family-hood". "It brings to the mind of our people the idea of mutual involvement in the family as we know it", says Nyerere. And this idea of the family is the sustaining principle of Tanzanian society. It stresse co-operative endeavour rather than individual advancement. It requires respect for the traditional knowledge and wisdom of one's elders, illiterate though they be, no less than for academic learning. *But the business of the educated is not to fly away from the rest of society on wings of their skills, but to turn those skills to the service of their people.* And the higher their qualifications, the greater their duty to serve. "Intellectual arrogance", the Mwalimu has declared, "has no place in a society of equal citizens".

The intellectual, that is has no special privilege in such a society. He is as much an organic part of the nation as anyone else. His scholarship makes him no more than other people and his functions serve no interest but theirs. There is no dichotomy here between status and function. Hence he is not presented with the conflict between the universal and the particular of which Sartre speaks. And in that sense he is not an intellectual but 'everyman'.

The same values obtain in the societies of Asia, sustained not so much by the governments of the day as in the folklore and tradition of their peoples. The same sense of "family-hood", of the need to be confirmed by one's fellow man, the notion of duty as opposed to privilege, the pre-occupation with truth rather than fact and a concept of life directed to the achievement of unity in diversity, characterize the Indian ethos. One has only to look at Gandhi's revolution to see how in incorporating, in its theory and its practice, the traditions of his people, a "half-naked fakir" was able to forge a weapon that took on the whole might of the British empire and beat it. Or one turns to the early literature and art of India and finds there that the poet is less important than his poem, the artist more anonymous than his art. As Benjamin Rowland remarks "Indian art is more the history of a society and its needs than the history of individual artists". The artist, like any other individual, intellectual or otherwise, belongs to the community, not the community to him. And what he conveys is not so much his personal experience of truth as the collective vision of a society of which he is part, expressed not in terms private to him and his peers, but in familiar language—or in symbols, the common language of truth.

In western society, on the other hand, art creates its own coterie. It is the province of the specially initiated, carrying with it a language and a life-style of its own, even creating its own society. It sets up cohorts of interpreters and counter-interpreters, middlemen, known to the trade as CRITICS, who in disembowelling his art show themselves more powerful, more creative than the artist. It is they who tell the mass of the people how they should experience art. And the more rarified it is, more removed from the experience of the common people, the greater is the artist's claim to ART and the critic's claim to authority. Did but the artist speak directly to the people and from them, the critic would become irrelevant, and the artist symbiotic with his society.

It is not merely in the field of art, however, that western society shows itself fragmented, inorganic and expert-oriented. But the fact that it does so in the noblest of activities is an indication of the alienation that such a society engenders in all areas of life. In contrast to the traditions of Afro-Asian countries, European civilization appears to be destructive to human love and cynical of human life. And nowhere do these traits manifest themselves more clearly than in the attitude towards children and the treatment of the old. Children are not viewed as a challenge to one's growth, the measure of one's possibilities, but as a people apart, another generation, with other values, other standards, other aspirations. At best one keeps pace with them, puts on the habit of youth, feigns interest in their interests, but seldom if ever comprehends them. Lacking openness and generosity of spirit, the ability to live dangerously with each other, the relationship between child and adult is rarely an organic one. The adult occupies the world of the child far more than the child occupies the world of the adult. In the result, the fancy and innocence of children are crabbed and soured by adulthood even before they are ready to beget choice.

Is it any wonder then that this tradition of indifference should pass on back to the old from their children? But it is a tradition that is endemic to a society given to ceaseless competition and ruthless rivalry —where even education is impregnated with the violence of divisiveness, and violence itself stems not from passion (an aspect of the personal), but from cold and calculated reason (an aspect of the impersonal).

In the face of all this, the black man in a white society—the black man, that is, who has "taken conscience of himself", established at last a positive identity—comes to see the need for radical change in both the values and structure of that society. But even the revolutionary ideologies that envisage such a change are unable to take into their perspective the nature of his particular oppression and its implications for revolutionary strategy. White radicals continue to maintain that colour oppression is no more than an aspect of class oppression, that colour discrimination is only another aspect of working-class exploitation, that the capitalist system is the common enemy of the white worker and black alike. Hence they require that the colour line be subsumed to the class line and are satisfied that the strategies worked out for the white proletariat serve equally the interests of the black. The black struggle, therefore, should merge with and find direction from the larger struggle of the working-class as a whole. Without white numbers, anyway, the black struggle on its own would be unavailing.

But what these radicals fail to realize is that the black man, by virtue of his particular oppression, is closer to his bourgeois brother (by colour) than to his white comrade. Indeed his white comrade is a party to his oppression. He too benefits from the exploitation of the black man, however indirectly, and tends to hold the black worker to areas of work which he himself does not wish to do, and from areas of work to which he himself aspires, irrespective of skill. In effect, the black workers constitute that section of the working-class which is at the very bottom of society and is distinguished by its colour. Conversely, the attitude of racial superiority on the part of white workers relegates their black comrades to the bottom of society. In the event, they come to constitute a class apart, an under-class: the sub-proletariat. And the common denominator of capitalist oppression is not sufficient to bind them together in a common purpose.

A common understanding of racial oppression, on the other hand, ranges the black worker on the side of the black bourgeois against their common enemy: the white man, worker and bourgeois alike.

In terms of analysis, what the white marxists fail to grasp is that the slave and colonial exploitation of the black peoples of the world was so total and devastating—and so systematic in its devastation—as to make mock of working-class exploitation. Admittedly, the economic aspects of colonial exploitation may find analogy in white working-class history. But the cultural and psychological dimensions of black oppression are quite unparallelled. For, in their attempt to rationalize and justify to their other conscience "the robbery, enslavement, and continued exploitation of their coloured victims all over the globe" the conquistadors of Europe set up such a mighty edifice of racial and cultural superiority, replete with its own theology of goodness, that the natives were utterly disoriented and dehumanized. Torn from their past, reified in the present, caught for ever in the prison of their skins, accepting the white man's definition of themselves as "the quintessence of evil.....representing not only the absence of values but the negation of values.....the corrosive element disfiguring all that has to do with beauty or morality" violated and sundered in every aspect of their being, it is a wonder that, like lemmings, they did not throw themselves in the sea. If the white workers' lot at the hands of capitalism was alienation, the blacks underwent complete de-racination. And it is this factor which makes black oppression qualitatively different from the oppression of the white working-class.

The inability of white marxists to accept the full import of such an analysis on the part of black people may be alleged to the continuing paternalism of a culture of which they themselves are victims. (Marxism, after all, was formulated in an European context and must, on its own showing, be Euro-centric). Or it may be that to understand fully the burden of blackness, they require the imagination and feeling systematically denied them by their culture. But more to the point is that, in their preoccupation with the economic factors of capitalist oppression, they have ignored the importance of its existential consequences, in effect its consequences to culture. The whole structure of white racism is built no doubt on economic exploitation, but it is cemented with white culture. In other words, the racism inherent in white society is *determined* economically, but *defined* culturally. And any revolutionary ideology that is relevant to the times must envisage not merely a change in the ownership of the means of production, but a definition of that ownership: who shall own, white only or blacks as well? It must envisage, that is, a fundamental change in the concepts of man and society contained in white culture—it must envisage a revolutionary culture. For, as Gramsci has said, revolutionary theory requires a revolutionary culture.

But to revolutionize a culture, one needs first to make a radical assessment of it. That assessment, that revolutionary perspective, by virtue of his historical situation, is provided by the black man. For it is with the cultural manifestations of racism in his daily life that he must contend. Racial prejudice and discrimination, he recognizes, are not a matter of individual attitudes, but the sickness of a whole society carried in its culture. And his survival as a *black* man in white society requires that he constantly questions and challenges every aspect of white life even as he meets it. White speech, white schooling, white law, white work, white religion, white love, even white lies, they are all measured on the touchstone of his experience. He discovers, for instance, that white schools make for white superiority, that white law equals one law for the white and another for the black, that white work relegates him to the worst jobs irrespective of skill, that even white Jesus and white Marx who are supposed to save him are really not in the same street, so to speak, as black Gandhi and black Cabral. In his everyday life he fights the particulars of white cultural superiority, in his conceptual life he fights the ideology of white cultural hegemony. In the process he engenders not perhaps an evolutionary culture, but certainly a revolutionary practice within that culture. For that practice to blossom into a revolutionary culture, however, requires the participation of the masses, not just the blacks. This does not mean, though, that any ad hoc coalition of forces would do. Coalitions, in fact, are what will not do. Integration, by any other name, has always spelt death—for the blacks. To integrate with the white masses before they have entered into the practice of cultural change would be to emasculate the black cultural revolution. Any integration at this stage would be a merging of the weaker into the stronger, the lesser into the greater. The weakness of the blacks stems from the smallness of their numbers, the "less-ness" from the bourgeois cultural consciousness of the white working class. Before an organic fusion of forces can take place, two requirements need to be fulfilled. The blacks must through the consciousness of their colour, through the consciousness, that is of that in which they perceive their oppression, arrive at a consciousness of class; and the white working-class must in recovering its class instinct, its sense of oppression, both from technological alienation and a white-oriented culture, arrive at a consciousness of racial oppression.

For the black man, however, the consciousness of class is instinctive to his consciousness of colour. Even as he begins to throw away the shackles of his particular slavery, he sees that there are others besides him who are enslaved too. He sees that racism is only one dimension of oppression in a whole system of exploitation and racial discrimination the particular tool of a whole exploitative creed. He sees also that the culture of competition, individualism and elitism that fostered his intellect and gave it a habitation and a name is an accessory to the exploitation of the masses as a whole, and not merely of the blacks. He understands with Gramsci and George Jackson that "all men are intellectuals" or with Angela Davis that no-one is. (If the term means anything it is only as a description of the work one does: the intellect is no more superior to the body than the soul to the intellect). He realizes with Fanon that "the Negro problem does not resolve into the problem of Negroes living among white men, but rather of negroes exploited, enslaved, despised by a colonialist, capitalist society that is only accidentally white". He acknowledges at last that inside every black man there is a working-class man waiting to get out.

In the words of Sartre, "at a blow the subjective, existential, ethnic notion of blackness passes, as Hegel would say, into the objective, positive, exact notion of the proletariat..... "The white symbolizes capital as the Negro labour..... Beyond the black-skinned men of his race it is the struggle of the world proletariat that he 'sings'" .....

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