DIALOGUES OF NEGRITUDE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF BLACK WRITING

FOR THE DEGREE OF PhD
at
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, GOLDSMITH'S COLLEGE
1992
JEAN BAPTISTE POPEAU

BEST COPY

AVAILABLE

Variable print quality

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

ABSTRACT

This thesis undertakes to examine the full implications of Abiola Irele's statement in 'Negritude or Black Cultural Nationalism' that the roots of Negritude '.........lie far down in the total historical experience of the black man in contact with the white.' [Journal of Modern African Studies, 3, 3 (1965) pp321-348]

The first part examines the place of Blacks in Western speculative thought by way of Hegel's comments on Africa and Africans and, the implications for the Negro of Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic. The concept of the Negro in Western speculative thought is analysed generally as manifesting two essential aspects: the Negro is seen as either a negative savage threatening the values of Western civilization or, as heroic rebel. Certain modernist writers are discussed for their view of the Negro as an outsider challenging the comfortable oppressions of bourgeois humanism.

These two views of Blacks are traced in the Western literary tradition in the works of Shakespeare, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Joseph Conrad, Michel Tournier.

In Part Two while making extensive reference to Jean-Paul Sartre's 'Black Orpheus' I take issue with his thesis that Negritude represents a negation of White Culture. I argue that Negritude represents a dialogue which continues to the present, with the Other, and with the Western concept of the Negro. I trace the development of this dialogue in the work of the early exponents of Negritude (Léon Damas, Jacques Roumain) and its two most prominent theorists, Léopold Senghor and Aimé Césaire. The later development of Negritude in the work of James Baldwin and Richard Wright is discussed. I then examine the theoretical position of Wilson Harris as a critique of Negritude. Lastly I discuss the legacy of Negritude and its importance for the problems of modern Black writing.

PREFACE

This study aims to demonstrate that Negritude was the manifestation of a dialogue between Blacks and Western culture and, an internal dialogue between Blacks amongst themselves.

Part One examines the basic structure and content of the discourse about Blacks in Euro-American culture which forms the opening 'thesis' of the dialogue by way of a diachronic examination of certain works of major writers in the Western tradition who have been instrumental in the formulation of the concept of the Negro in the West.

W.F. Hegel's empirical pronouncements upon Africa and the African is analysed in chapter 1 as representative of a line of thought about the Negro in the Western tradition. Hegel's thoughts on the slave in his Master-Slave dialectic are examined as the representation of another line of thinking about the Negro, that is, as the possibilities for rebellion against an oppressive status quo, or as creative negativity. Hegel's comments on the Negro are thus analysed as presenting the Negro as both sterile negativity (in his discussion of Africa in 'Philosophy of History') and creative negativity (in his Master-Slave dialectic). This Manichaean view of the Negro is examined in general by way of a discussion of the writings of Herbert Marcuse, Norman Mailer, Herman Melville, C.L.R. James.

The Western concept of the Negro in literature is discussed in a consideration of Shakespeare's 'Titus Andronicus' and 'Othello', Harriet Beecher Stowe's 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' and Michel Tournier's 'Friday, Or The Other Island'. I argue that Shakespeare's 'Titus Andronicus', Harriet Beecher Stowe's 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' represent the Negro as sterile negativity. 'Othello' and Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' represent more complex views of the Negro in which he is seen as both a figure of negativity and as an agent manifesting the negativity of Europe. Michel Tournier's 'Friday, Or The Other Island' is discussed in terms of its representation of the Negro as creative negativity.

Part Two examines Negritude as a counter-discourse to the discourse on the Negro in Western culture with which the Negro intellectual had long been familiar, having been educated in the Western tradition.

Chapter 6 examines the historical origins of Negritude as a dialogue in which Negro intellectuals engage amongst themselves prior to the dialogue with the Other. I then discuss the theoretical basis of the Negritude of Léopold Senghor and Aimé Césaire. Chapter 7 analyses the Negritude poetry of Aimé Césaire and Léopold Senghor as continuation of the dialogue with the Other in poetry. Chapter 8 examines the debate between James Baldwin and Richard

Wright as a recapitulation of the issues began by the Negritude writers of the thirties. Chapter 9 discusses the theoretical position of Wilson Harris as a Caribbean writer who has refused the dilemmas raised by Negritude, and therefore, as a representation of the possibilities for 'third world' writing after its escape from the oppresive hold of 'Otherness'. My conclusion examines the legacy of Negritude maintaining that this legacy continues to influence present-day Black writing.

A note on spelling
Usually 'Black' or 'Blacks' where they refer to Black people are written in lower case. This can sometimes create the confusing result that a word used to refer to a people or group of peoples lacks the same status as say 'Greek' or 'German'. In order to overcome this confusion wherever Black people are referred to in this thesis 'Black' or 'Blacks' is written in upper case; as is the case with 'White' or 'Whites'. 'Blackness' and 'Whiteness' are also written in upper case wherever they are used to refer to qualities connected to Blacks or Whites as people. Where they are used to refer to the more general values of 'blackness' or 'whiteness' they are written in the usual lower case.

INTRODUCTION

Just as Conrad's Marlow can say, 'All of Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz.........' (1) so my thesis maintains that Euro-American culture contributed to the formulation of the discourse which is Negritude. This study takes up the implication of Abiola Irele's observation in 'Négritude or Black Cultural Nationalism' that,

> *Négritude* in fact appears as the culmination of the complete range of reactions provoked by the impact of western civilisation on the African, and of the whole complex of social and psychological factors that have gone to form black people's collective experience of western domination. Its roots thus lie far down in the total historical experience of the black man in contact with the white. (2)

Negritude is a discourse (the Black man's) in dialogue with another discourse (the discourse of Euro-American culture about the Negro); a discourse manifesting both antipathy and sympathy. Prospero's reference to Caliban in 'The Tempest': 'This thing of darkness I/Acknowledge mine' (3) contains both antipathy and sympathy, acknowledgement of Caliban as both Other ('thing of darkness') and self, just as in Negritude the Black man acknowledges Euro-American culture as both Other and part of his self. It may be that the pain and embarrassment which Negritude has caused certain Black critics is due to an unconscious recognition of the pain of acknowledgement, of finding oneself in the Other; for it must be accepted that this act of ownership is painful or painless according to one's position in the power structure. Caliban's acknowledgement of Prospero is more painful than Prospero's of him. As the master Prospero recognises Caliban only as *his* Other; Caliban is whatever Prospero is *not*: there is no suggestion of his recognising Caliban as an independent self. As the slave Caliban has no choice in his act of recognition. The Negritudist, like Caliban, has been 'taught the language of the West' or steeped in its culture: Negritude is both Caliban's acknowledgement of language and his curse. Caliban is forced to

recognise that the Other is already within his self in the form of his language. In the act of learning the language and culture of the Other the Negritudist had no choice in the inculcation of the Other; the terms of the colonial situation involves this forced ingestion.

The object of this thesis is to delineate the specificity of Negritude. Negritude was similar to other literary and philosophical movements of the thirties such as surrealism, but its specific concerns were, the situation of the Negro in Western culture, the relationship between 'Blackness' and 'literature in the term 'Black literature'. Except in Sartre's famous essay 'Black Orpheus' these concerns specific to Black literature have not been addressed by sociology of literature. There may be a number of reasons for this by I shall consider three. Firstly, Black literature has theoretically been regarded as part of 'Euro-American letters' until the recent attempts at theories of Blackness and literature in publications such as '"Race," Writing and Difference' which discuss the possibility of a Black aesthetic. When André Breton in his introduction to Aimé Césaire's 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal' writes: 'A black man it is who masters the French language as no white man can today,' there is the added implication that Césaire's success is that of an outstanding French, rather than Black writer, yet it was his Negritude or Blackness which Césaire wished to proclaim in his very manipulation of the language.

The second reason rests in the difficulties involved in the analysis of issues of 'race' and literature. These difficulties are discussed in two essays in '"Race," Writing and Difference' (4) in which Henry Louis Gates Jr. rejects the egalitarian and universalist criteria for criticism of literature he terms 'non-canonical,' (for example Black literature) which he thinks is advocated by Tzvetan Todorov. Todorov accuses Gates in '"Race," Writing, and Culture' of inverse racialism in his (Gates's) suggestion that criticism of Black literature ought to emerge out of the Black literary tradition. Gates sees Todorov's advocacy of the search for a genuine universalist criticism which would incorporate Black literature as futile and ultimately racist in its denials of his claims for the values of Black-tradition criticism.

My interest in the complex and difficult debate between Gates and Todorov is in what it reveals, which is, that the 'Euro-American universalist tradition' when it is prepared to consider Black literature at all, searches for

what it considers 'genuine universalist' criteria or over-arching theory which would encompass it, that it considers it 'racist' to give up this attempt. Todorov declares:

> 'It is true enough that analytic concepts strive for universality (even though they never achieve it in practice); to exclude any nation's literature from one's analysis would be a form of discrimination. Naturally, it may turn out that the original concept is incapable of fully accounting for the new facts, in which case it should be either modified or else replaced by a new concept-but one which will in any case have just as much of a universal aspiration. Concepts are a little bit like workers: in order to measure their real value, one has to know what they can do, not where they come from. (5)

Of course for Gates it is precisely 'where they come from' which determines the value of these concepts: there are no 'neutral' concepts in literary criticism. Gates's wariness of the critical canon stems from his awareness of its demands on the Black tradition, namely, that it ceases its search for the 'Blackness' of Black literature in exchange for inclusion into the canon. The search for a universalist theory which Todorov advocates indicates that the critical canon has not hitherto included Black literature; hence the paucity of writing on this literature and the need for this search..... Very few if any of its adherents are engaged in this search. Questions involving 'literature and otherness' which are involved in considerations of Black literature prove just too intractable for a tradition whose self-definition brackets its authors as the 'Same'. The demands of critical practices such as feminist literature, gay literature, Black literature etc. concerned with the particularities of their literatures has challenged the over-arching tendencies of Todorov's universalist tradition to the extent where it finds itself in retreat; it now tends to leave the terrain occupied by these various and 'different' critical approaches whose raison d'être is to a certain extent based upon 'self-definition' and a 'structure of feeling' shared by its practitioners.

This leads us to the third reason for universalist criticism's lack of concern with Black literature: this criticism is, as Gates notes, 'text specific':

'.......the New Critics tended to explicate the metaphysical poets, the structuralists certain forms of narrative, and deconstructionists found their ideal field of texts among the Romantics. While each school of criticism claims for itself what Todorov calls "a universal aspiration," in practice European and American critics tend to write about European and American writers of one specific sort or another........Todorov and Sartre are among the very few [white] critics in this century who have even read the works of the black traditions. (6)

Sociology of literature has been incapable of accommodating Black literature because its 'universality' renders it incapable of taking the particularities of Black literature (what Gates terms its *signifying black difference*) into its theoretical model.

In the case of Negritude, a literary and theoretical movement with a thrust predicated on its Blackness, sociology of literature has proven singularly unhelpful. Negritude demands attention to its own theory of Blackness as well as its literature, something which only Sartre with his flexible phenomenological reading has attempted. Given that Negritude is itself an eclecticism borrowing freely from the European tradition in the formulation of its theories, it is necessary to examine this borrowing as well as the complex and ambiguous relationship in which Negritude engaged with the Other.

In examining the relationship between Negritude and modernism I have referred freely to modernist critics such as A.J. Arnold and R.L. Scharfman whose backgrounds stem from the universalist tradition. My engagement with Negritude however is that of a Black critic and I cannot pretend the neutrality of the universalist tradition. Negritude's appeal to the Black reader was on the basis of a shared understanding which could be 'felt' rather than 'stated' and most Black critics, even those hostile to Negritude, have approached it on the basis of this understanding. Like feminist literature which assumes that women share an experience of theoretical legitimacy, Negritude assumes a shared experience with the Black reader which can be legitimately invoked as a theoretical reference. This notion, as Todorov cautions, carries the danger of its own racism (7) but it should at least be examined as a legitimate intuition.

It could be argued that the Euro-American 'universalist' critical tradition with its built-in biases in favour of literature of the 'Same', and against 'non-mainstream' literatures contains the assumption of a shared understanding with its readers which feminist and Black critics are in the process of challenging. This appeal to an experience is of course obscured by the intellectualist approach of this tradition but it may be felt for example in F.R. Leavis's appeal to the 'English tradition' in his 'The Great Tradition', (8) and in the work of most critics working within that canon who share a notion of an organic appreciation of its critical language. Feminist critics such as Kate Millet who have, for example, pointed to the sexism of some authors in that tradition (9) are faced with the full glare of puzzlement which surfaces from practitioners who assume that the feminist critic has also been part of this organic understanding and cannot understand the feminist's 'deviation'.

This study aims to explore the relationship between the Negritudist and the Other in order to examine more fully the dialogue between Negritude and the culture with which it is engaged. It attempts to fill a gap in the interface between Negritude and canonical criticism. For, while it is clear that Negritudists are fully aware of the extent to which Western culture forms part of their selves, most critics have not been fully prepared to examine Negritude from both its aspects, the African and his Other. Black critics have not fully explored the influence of modernism on Negritude and the extent to which Negritude is a dialogue. Critics of Negritude have not fully considered it as a relationship or dialogue between the Negro and his Other, yet it may be argued that without due consideration to the discourse with which Negritude is engaged in dialogue no full investigation of the complex discourse which is Negritude can begin.

In a chapter titled 'Césaire's Negritude in Perspective' in 'Negritude and Modernism' (10) A.J. Arnold presents a creditable account of the cultural and historical antecedents to Césaire's Negritude but his analysis does not examine the weight of ideological discourse with which Negritude is in dialogue. Arnold seeks to place Césaire's Negritude in perspective by seeking for its antecedents in the *Black* world, that is, in the Latin American writings of figures such as the Puerto Rican Luis Palés Matos, and the writings of

10

White Africanists such as Leo Frobenius and Maurice Delafosse about the Black world. Although Arnold refers to the influence on Césaire of Spengler's 'The Decline of the West', he does not look at the collective weight of Western ideology upon the consciousness of the formulators of Negritude.

In '*Engagement* and the Language of the Self in the Poetry of Aimé Césaire', (11) R.L. Scharfman employs a valuable examination of the relationship between Self and Other in Césaire's poetry but here 'Other' is conceived in psychological terms rather than the full cultural phenomenon which forms the Negro's Other. Jean-Paul Sartre's essay 'Black Orpheus' (12) within the limitations in terms of length accorded to an introduction to a poetry anthology assumes the reader's knowledge of, or acquaintance with the cultural legacy and discourse with which Negritude takes issue. This is quite congruent with Sartre's primary purpose which is to introduce and make a case for Negritude poetry to the (White) reader. I shall not as a Black critic make Sartre's assumption because to do justice to Negritude it is necessary to 'flesh out' the skeleton and scaffolding of this immense and archaic structure of discourse which forms the underside of Negritude, to which Irele refers.

The case for examining with some elaboration the centuries-old discourse which forms the shadow-side of Negritude rests on the fact that as an artistic, ideological and nationalist movement Negritude is unique, as Sartre points out in 'Black Orpheus', in sharing the 'language' of the Other. Sartre notes that most ethnic minorities struggling for independence took pains to revive, or revivify their national languages: 'The particular traits of a Society corresponds exactly to the untranslatable expression of its language.' (13) The Negritude theorists however shared the 'same' language (French) as their Other and were therefore locked in dialogue with the Other in the process of acquiring that language. The process of dis-assimilation which is Negritude had therefore to take place within that same language and not in their 'native' language as with the Irish or Hungarian nationalists. Negritude is not a sudden revolutionary movement of consciousness but the result of a relationship in the language in which the Negro had had very little 'say'. But although,as Sartre maintains metaphorically gagged (1 4) for centuries, the Negro had been able to absorb the discourse about him within the interstices of the culture which sought his unconscious absorption.

In order to place Negritude in perspective it is necessary to examine the outline of the discourse with which Negritude engages consciously and

11

unconsciously in dialogue. I intend a diachronic examination of the discourse along the two essential lines in which I perceive it as organised. This examination will begin later in this introduction.

Aimé Césaire notes that Negritude as a term and an idea was formulated by 'a few dozen Negroes of diverse origins', (15) from Guiana, Haïti, North America, the Antilles, all of whom came together in the Paris of the thirties. Césaire thinks he used the term first (16)but it was an idea which emerged out of the group's consciousness. He declares that it was really the collective response of those Black intellectuals to the politics of assimilation:

> Until that time, until my generation, the French and the English -but especially the French-had followed the politics of assimilation unrestrainedly. We didn't know what Africa was. Europeans despised everything about Africa, and in France people spoke of a civilized world and a barbarian world. The barbarian world was Africa, and the civilized world was Europe. Therefore the best thing one could do with an African was to assimilate him: the ideal was to turn him into a Frenchman with a black skin.(17)

Césaire quotes in 'A Discourse on Colonialism' a case epitomising assimilation: he knew a poor Martinican pharmacist who used his spare time writing sonnets to literary competitions. He felt very proud when one day one of the poems won a prize and 'The judges hadn't even realised that his poems were written by a man of color. To put it in other words, his poetry was so impersonal that it made him proud. He was filled with pride by something I (Césaire) would have considered a crushing condemnation.' (18)

Negritude represented an idea and a literature which attempts a break from the assimilated or 'impersonal' Negro to a Negro fully aware of his difference and fully prepared to produce art proclaiming this difference. Negritude was formulated by Blacks who were assimilated members of the Euro-American cultural world. Césaire, like Léopold Senghor, the other 'father' of Negritude, was thoroughly steeped in French and Western culture. For the Negritudists it was essential that they recognised, consciously or unconsciously, that the Other, in the form of Western culture was already part of themselves and could not be negated by a mere act of will.

In 'Black Orpheus' Sartre the Hegelian engages in empathy with Negritude, after which he purports to report to the White French reader the result of his dialogue with Negritude, why it is 'the only great revolutionary poetry written today'. (19) Sartre engages with Negritude poetry both as a Hegelian theorist and a sensitive phenomenologist. As a phenomenologist Sartre's analysis is unsurpassed: he engages with the poetry as a committed supporter of the freedom of 'third world' peoples. As a Hegelian his analysis leads to Frantz Fanon's cry of 'betrayal'. (20)

In Hegel's 'Philosophy of History' in which the German state is seen as the ultimate goal of historical development, Africa is but a moment in the dialectical analysis of World History, a moment having 'no historical importance' (21) In Sartre's dialectical analysis of Negritude, it (Negritude) is but a moment of the history of class struggle. Directly citing Hegel Sartre posits Negritude as the movement of a dialectical progression: the relentless rationalist takes the sensitive phenomenologist in hand. Negritude may the collective song of the Black man, 'a song of everyone and for everyone', (22) but it is also, 'the weak phaze of a dialectical progression' in which 'the subjective existential ethnic concept' 'race' passes into the 'objective, positive, exact' concept 'proletariat':

> ....the theoretical and practical affirmation of the white man's supremacy is the thesis; the position of Negritude as an authentic value is the antithesis. But this negative function is not self-sufficient, as the Negroes who make use of it know very well; they know that it is aiming to prepare a synthesis or realisation of the human being in a classless society. Thus Negritude exists to destroy itself.........(23)

Sartre's Hegelianism leads him to assert the supremacy of class which he maintains comes from 'intellection' over race which he says comes from Carl Jaspers's concept of 'comprehension': the objects of intellection are of higher value than the objects of comprehension. But Negritude is both poetic knowledge *and* ideology. Sartre's announcement of its demise ignored its possibilities as poetic knowledge. As poetic knowledge its legacy continues, as I shall argue later.

According to Sartre political engagement of the writer, as he declares in the mid forties in 'What is Literature', means a commitment to the aspirations

of the proletariat as the most progressive class of the twentieth century. Clas
was the dominant concept in which to discuss issues of authorial
commitment. Even when discussing the aspirations of a Black literary
movement whose dynamics was clearly determined by the Blackness of its
members and their collective colonial experience (although some members (
the Negritude movement were also communists) Sartre inclined towards cla
analysis as the ultimate theoretical determinant. Consequently despite his
recognition of the different modes in which proletariat and Negritude
emancipation manifests (the working class through its normal involvement i
industry and technics; the Negro through his telluric involvement with
nature), Sartre concludes with an analysis which assimilates Negritude into
the class struggle. His analysis betrays the interests of the particular
theoretical model Sartre brings to Negritude-the Hegelian dialectic-as being
ultimately more important to him than an undogmatic dialogue with
Negritude in which the theorist would be prepared to modify his theory to
take into account this new phenomenon. Rather we see Sartre manifesting in
his analysis the all-encompassing tendency towards mastery of the object
inherent in that strain of modernism which has been most heavily influencec
by The Enlightenment. (24)

It is important that Sartre's analysis saw Negritude as a poetic movement-his
was an introduction to an anthology of *poetry*. This fact seems to have
conditioned his analysis of the movement. It is well known that Sartre saw
prose as an instrument of action as compared to poetry which was for him a
narcissistic creation for the poet's and the reader's contemplation, not a mean
of action. In an interview Sartre has with Pierre Verstraeten ('The Writer and
His Language') in 'Politics and Literature' Verstraeten notes: 'There is
something narcissistic about poetry, then?' Sartre replies: 'There is something
deeply narcissistic about poetry but it passes naturally through the other
person. In prose, on the other hand, there is an element of narcissism but it is
dominated by the need to communicate.' (25) For Sartre poetry is, unlike
prose, dominated by this element of narcissism which is represented by the
tendency towards contemplation or self-reflection, the communication in
depth which is poetry is 'retrospective' whereas that of prose is
'prospective.' (26) Sartre saw Negritude poetry as *the* great revolutionary

poetry of the twentieth century, but, given his view of poetry, it was not surprising that he considered Negritude poetry as a moment to be surpassed, especially as he saw Negritude poetry as part of modern poetry, and: 'In this kind of poetry I think that the poetic moment is in fact always a pause. And to begin with it was very often a pause of self-pity, of complacency with self seen as wish, as desire. It is the moment when desire objectifies itself through words, but above and beyond their articulation.' (27)

Sartre's position has similarities with Mikhail Bakhtin's division between prose and poetry which Tzventan Todorov notes in 'Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogic Principle'. Todorov notes that from the first edition of Bakhtin's book on Dostoevsky, (28) prose, which is regarded by Bakhtin as intertextual, is 'opposed to poetry which isn't.' (29) Bakhtin, like Sartre, distinguishes between the communicability of prose and 'poetic complexity' which 'locates itself between the discourse and the world':

> In the poetic image in the narrow sense (image-trope) all action-the dynamics of the image-takes place between the word (in all of its aspects) and the object (in all of its complexity). The word bathes in the inexhaustible riches and the contradictory variety of the object, in its "virginal" and as yet "unnamed" nature; it does not presuppose anything outside the frame of its context (to which are added, of course, the treasures of the language). The word forgets the heterological present condition of this awareness. (30)

For Bakhtin a poem is a speech act indistinguishable from its utterer:

> The language of the poet is his *own* language; he is wholly immersed in it, and inseparable from it; he makes use of each word, form, and expression according to its intended purpose ("without quotation marks" as it were) that is, as the pure and unmediated expression of his own intention......Every word must express in unmediated and direct fashion the poet's design; there must be no distance between the poet and his discourse..........[the prose writer, for his part,] does not speak in a given language, from which he distances himself to a greater or lesser degree, but he speaks *through* language, as it were, a language that has gained in thickness, become objectivized, and moved away from his mouth. (31)

This formulation of Bakhtin's recalls Césaire's explanation for his choice of poetry as a means of expressing his Negritude. In order to manifest his Black, Martinican, Antillean self in the French language, Césaire had to choose a form which would best announce his *personal* entry into a language in which he had hitherto been 'assimilated', that is, rendered invisible. It was natural to choose poetry Césaire declares, for the poet creates his own language whereas the prose writer serves language. (32)

Sartre saw poetry as dominated by narcissism and stasis whereas (literary) prose, although containing an element of narcissism, could be used by the writer as an instrument for negotiating reality. He did not make an absolute division between poetry and prose but in the spectrum of communication poetry as an object created by the poet for contemplation represents for Sartre a moment of reflection inviting the reader to indulge in that moment of stasis. In the discussion with Sartre Verstraeten notes:

> So the narcissism of poetry is simply a multiple narcissism, affecting not the author alone but also the reader. The reader's attitude to poetry is analogous to that of the poet as he writes. Wouldn't this mean that communication was as it were ruled out, since from both points of view the object of poetry would be a kind of self-satisfaction? '

Sartre replies: 'This is what I believe poetry is all about-or at least has been since Romanticism.' (33)

Sartre's appraisal of Negritude was, I maintain, conditioned by his view of modern poetry generally. Due to his admiration for its political thrust Sartre did not argue that Negritude suffered the same problem of communication as the rest of modern poetry; on the contrary he referred to Césaire's surrealist poetry as 'directed automatic writing' communicating Césaire's overwhelming passion. (34)

Sartre's ambivalence towards Negritude poetry however, is evidenced in his attempts to characterise it:

16

And how can we say what it (Negritude) is? Now it is a lost innocence that only existed in a distant past, now a hope that will only be realised in the future City. Now it is contracted in a moment of pantheistic fusion with nature, now it stretches to coincide with the entire history of humanity; now it is an existential attitude, now the objective whole of Negro-African traditions. Does one discover it? Does one create it?..........Is it necessity or liberty? Does the authentic Negro's behavior flow from his essence as consequences flow from a principle, or is one a Negro as the person faithful to a religion is a believer, that is in fear and trembling, in the anguish and perpetual remorse of never being enough what one would like to be? Is it a factual condition or a value? (35)

It is clear that Negritude, like poetry, cannot entirely be encompassed by a putative analyser. Negritude overflows signification: any analysis of it depends upon the point of view of the analyser. Negritude I shall argue is essentially a poetic knowledge; the Negro's expression of his own situation. As a poetic knowledge it resists appropriation and absorption by any modernist theory such as Sartre's.

Despite Sartre's view that poetry resists communication my thesis argues that the Negritude writer was engaged in a dialogue with the Other, with himself, and with other Blacks. With himself because in addressing Western culture it was necessary to address that culture within himself. Sartre notes that the poetry of Negritude is primarily addressed to other Blacks; (36) and of course in speaking to other Blacks the poet was engaged in an internal dialogue, but also in a dialogue with the Other because Negritude literature is revolutionary literature aimed at a changed of consciousness in the culture of the Other.

In Todorov's book on Bakhtin mentioned earlier he notes in the chapter titled 'Intertextuality' that Bakhtin's later formulations about poetry moved towards the point where he (Bakhtin) thought that not even poetry could avoid a degree of intertextuality, of dialogue between 'voices'. Bakhtin had asked himself:

17

> Isn't every writer (even the purest lyric poet) always a "playwright" insofar as he distributes all the discourses among alien voices, including that of the "image of the author" (as well as the author's other *personae)?* It may be that every single-voiced and nonobjectal discourse is naive and inappropriate to authentic creation. The authentically creative voice can only be a *second* voice in the discourse. Only the second voice-*pure relation,* can remain nonobjectal to the end and cast no substantial and phenomenal shadow. The writer is a person who knows how to work language while remaining outside of it; he has the gift of indirect speech. (37)

Todorov considers that the above remarks was evidence of an internal dialogue within Bakhtin himself (38) and they obviously manifest as an unfinished dialogue but the essential import of this formulation is, as Todorov notes, that '........the distribution between prose and poetry set up earlier is annulled here. Even the purest lyric poetry no longer avoids the representation of its own language.' (39)

Using Bakhtin's later concept of poetry as a suggestive prompt it is possible to formulate Césaire's 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal' (40)(the supreme voice of Negritude) to take a specific case, as an example of poetic dialogism. The poem is a grand dramatic work with several voices in dialogue but I shall concentrate in this thesis on what I think are the two essential dialogic voices, that is, the voices of the Negro and his Other.

Césaire's vision of the Negro as a telluric 'Friday-figure' (related to the hero of Michel Tournier's 'Friday, Or The Other Island') (41) can only properly be contained in poetry. Césaire's vision of the diasporan Negro associates him with Desire, a lack and a search for an unconscious located in Africa, and, if Sartre's theory that poetry is essentially a manifestation of self as Desire has truth, then it becomes clear why Negritude had to manifest essentially as poetry. A manifestation of the Negro situation, Negritude is an enigmatic object which ultimately resists appropriation and control. It was both a dialogue *and* a declaration of difference, or break, an acknowledgement of the Other within the Negro *and* a resistance to assimilation.

In 'Philosophy at the Limit', David Wood shows that this resistance to assimilation in the act of a movement towards the Other in dialogue is an

important point of debate in modern thought. In a chapter titled 'Vigilance and interruption; Derrida, Gadamer and the limits of dialogue', Wood's conclusions towards a long examination of a dialogue or failure of dialogue between Derrida and Gadamer includes a consideration of Derrida's view that a dialogue with the Other must be accompanied by the possibility for 'interruption', in fact Derrida claims that interruption is an intrinsic aspect of the process. Wood notes:

> Derrida claims both that interruption must always be possible and that it has always already happened.........grasping the otherness of the other is a condition for my relating to him or her as other, and the reactivation of that grasp must always be possible. And all this must somehow be understood without giving *grasp* any real cognitive status, for that would turn interruption into second order knowledge, rather than marking a limit to knowledge. (42)

What I want to elicit from the above remarks is the notion of a dialogue with the Other as one which resists tendencies towards absorption. Wood's interpretation of Derrida's notion of 'interruption' is that,

> What we think of as a relation to the other is only a relation to the other *as other*, if it builds in some sort of break in our common appropriative understanding, in which the other is tacitly treated as an alter ego. In the very process of grasping what the other is saying, at the very point of understanding, we must take a step back, allow that movement of assimilation to be interrupted. (43)

Negritude was a dialogue punctuated by what was for the Negro a necessary break or interruption, or Sartre's 'moment of separation'. The interruption was a break with the centuries-old process of assimilation in which the Negro had been absorbed in Euro-American culture as the Other whose otherness was unrecognised. The White man was considered the Negro's alter ego in much the same way that Prospero considers himself Caliban's alter ego; Caliban is *his* 'thing of darkness' and is not an Other in his own right. Negritude represented a declaration of otherness, an assertion of difference as the only point at which a dialogue could begin.

19

In its dialogue with modernism Negritude is a gift offered to the Other which nonetheless resists dissolution into the all-encompassing tendencies of modernist theorising. As such Negritude uncannily anticipated the post-modernist tendencies of other groups such as gays and feminists who insist on the theoretical values of their particular experiences, indeed on theoretical particularity as a principle of post-modernist practice.

If as Césaire holds the poet creates his/her own langauge, every poem is a new object, a gift which can be accepted but not appropriated. What emerges from Sartre's dialogue with Negritude is his uneasiness before this gift. After his dialogue of empathy Sartre 'surpasses' Negritude in a 'higer' Hegelianism in favour of the class struggle. He was unwilling, or perhaps unable to alter his theoretical construct in order to absorb the gift which Negritude offered. It is clear that Sartre's Hegelianism did not allow for such a modification. But perhaps there are understandable reasons for this, as I shall discuss later.

Negritude's 'moment of separation' which Sartre sees as its raison d'être recalls the moment of negativity which Susan Rubin Suleiman notes certain French feminists engage in as a moment of recuperation in the face of oppressive male ideologies to be found in language. In the case of Luce Irigaray Suleiman notes in 'Subversive Intent' that her project is no less than the creation of a language which would contain the difference of feminist eroticism:

> Irigaray's claim is that the recognition of the specificity of female eroticism necessarily implies a recognition of the specificity of women's relation to language. In opposition to the logic of "phallic" discourse-characterised by linearity, self-possession, the affirmation of mastery, authority, and above all unity-feminine discourse must struggle to speak otherwise. "Si nous continuons à nous parler le même langage, nous allons reproduire la même histoire"-"If we continue to speak the same language, to each other and to ourselves ["nous parler" has both meanings], then we shall reproduce the same story and the same history;" so begins the concluding text of Ce Sexe qui n'en est pas un, "Quand nos lèvres se parlent" ("When our lips Speak Together"), in which Irigaray attempts not so much to theorize about, but actually to *write*, a "feminine" text. (44)

But Irigaray's 'moment of separation' which manifests as the attempt to invent a language in which to speak about woman's pleasure and woman's love for woman-indeed, 'a language that will be addressed exclusively *to* women' seems to have been gradually abandoned by her in a movement towards a new relationship with the Other:

> .....Irigaray's subsequent work suggests that she did not consider the exclusionary logic of "Quand nos lèvres se parlent" as her permanent ideal. In *Amante marine* (1980), a set of essays "about" Nietzsche, the first long essay consists of meditative fragments addressed directly to the male philosopher. Although the tone is accusatory, the fact that the female speaker chooses the form of direct address (using the familiar tu) suggests a recognition of the other as a possible interlocutor. This possibility is even more emphasized in *Passions élémentaires (1982),* a set of fragments addressed to a male lover. The lover is accused of a certain blindness, and of the traditional male attempt to imprison the beloved woman in his rigid conception of her. At the same time, it is-albeit tentatively-suggested at the end that a real dialogue and a genuine encounter between the lover and the female speaker might be possible, one in which each would retain his/her difference even while uniting with the other. (45)

Suleiman also notes that Irigaray's development from retreat to dialogue with the Other does not involve a radical change of language:

> ....it is interesting that Irigaray's poetic *language* (should we call it "feminine"?) does not change in moving from the celebration of love between women to the (tentative) celebration of a (possible) love between a man and a woman. Jane Gallop was no doubt right in suggesting that the emphasis on a "female homosexual economy, a female narcissistic ego" may be, for Irigaray, but the first step-necessary for women in order to find an adequate representation of themselves and an adequate language, and necessary too in order to avoid being engulfed by the male homosexual economy, but not something "raised to an ideology." (46)

This moment of recuperation or separation before a proper dialogue with the Other can begin would seem to correspond to Verstraeten's conception of

poetry in his dialogue with Sartre, as, a lucidity which 'may actually be his (man's) lucidity and awake in him areas of darkness of which he is not yet in control,' (47) whereas the approach to the world (and presumably the Other) would tend to manifest in prose which Verstraeten, like Sartre, sees as a more effective medium for coming to terms with the world.

In the case of Negritude it becomes clear that it is, like Irigaray's relationship with the Other, both a negativity or moment of separation, *and* a movement towards the Other. The Negritude poem is both an internal object for the Negro poet and other Blacks and an external engagement with the Other in dialogue. Negritude poetry is what Bakhtin would characterise as 'poetic drama' when he considers that every writer is always a 'playwright' in so far as he distributes all the discourses among alien voices, including that of the 'image of the author'. (48) What is common to so much of Negritude poetry is the sideways glance to the word of the Other which Bakhtin attributes to 'the underground man' of Dostoevsky's short story, 'Notes From The Underground' that is, 'extraordinary dependence on it (the Other's word) coupled with extreme hostility toward it and with non-acceptance of its judgement' (49).

Negritude poetry obviously participates in modern poetry in its use of surrealism, its concern with the political realities of the modern Negro, its 'hermetic' qualities. Yet it is clear that much of this poetry 'wears its heart on its sleeve' and is engaged in a passionate relationship with the Other.

Negritude was both an ideology and a poetic movement. Sartre did not fully explore Negritude as poetic knowledge in his view that it represented a negation of White culture.'Black Orpheus', Sartre's introduction to *the* most comprehensive statement of Negritude at the time (1948), an anthology of Negritude poetry compiled by Senghor, took this collective statement of Negritude as its major pronouncement and ignored its other ideological writings such as the essays in *Tropiques,* a magazine edited by Aimé Césaire, his wife Suzane Césaire and friends, (April 1941-September 1945).(50) Both Césaire, and Senghor formulated their ideologies of Negritude using disparate writers of the modern movement from largely *European* sources: Césaire in *Tropiques,* especially during the above-mentioned dates; Senghor in various publications. (51) But they seem to

have used these European sources to formulate their Blackness without any major heart-searchings. It was generally recognised by the Negritude writers that in using French they were using the language of the Other, but as Fanon notes, to use a language is to assume the burden of that culture of which the language is a part: (52) in using the ideas of thinkers such as Gobineau, Lautréamont, Frobenius, Nietzsche, from the European tradition the Negritudists tacitly acknowledged that European culture was already inside them, the Other was already part of them.

The negation of White culture which Sartre considers the raison d'être of Negritude, is thus really not a feasible possibility. In an interview with René Depestre Césaire suggests that his use of surrealism in poetry was an attempt to break with what was in the writer's consciousness, ('it's true that superficially we are French, we bear the marks of French customs; we have been branded by Cartesian philosophy, by French rhetoric.......') in order to reach the more fundamental, Africa, in his unconscious. (53) And even here Césaire's knowledge of Africa was mediated through the Other, that is, European sources: Frobenius, and Delafosse, to name but two. (54) Even if one tried to salvage Sartre's notion by substituting his idea of a negation of White culture with a negation of White *supremacist* culture, one is still left with the problem of disengaging this latter from the rest of Western culture when the whole of this culture in its stance towards the Negro is fundamentally 'supremacist'. (55)

In a break with Sartre's concept, I argue that Negritude represented the Negro's dialogue with himself and with the Other. With himself because in addressing Western culture it was necessary to address that culture within himself. With the Other, because Negritude literature is revolutionary literature aimed at a change of consciousness in the culture of the Other.

In order to affect the Other's consciousness it was necessary to make himself visible within the Other's field of perception, that is, the Other's language, by a 'Negritudization' of this language. Césaire notes: '......for me French was a tool that I wanted to use in developing a new means of expression. I wanted to create an Antillean French, a black French that, while still being French, had a black character.' (56) This insinuation into the language has a two-fold effect: in it the Negro recognises himself and other Blacks, as if for the first time in the language of the Other in which he had

hitherto been 'assimilated', that is, made invisible. This act necessarily involves what Sartre calls a moment of separation or negativity in which the Negro estranges the language (from the Other's viewpoint) and says to the White user, 'I bend the language for my own purposes; if you appreciate my use of it that's your affair.' (57) But this moment of negativity is only one movement of a dialogue for, if it were to become the sole ontological status of Negritude it would mean a negation of what is already an intrinsic part of the Negritudist. What Sartre takes to be Negritude's ontological status, a negation of the racism of Western culture is, I argue, but one aspect of the dialogue between the Negritudist and the *concept* of the Negro in Western culture.

In his tendency towards systematization Hegel seems to sum up much of Western speculative thought about the Negro. Other philosophers made pronouncements about the Negro, as Henry Louis Gates Jr. notes, notably Hume and Kant, but they were usually partial allusions to certain popular values of 'lived ideology' as it related to the Negro, although they did begin to indicate a certain structure of thought. Thus Hume notes in an essay, 'Of National Characters'(1748), that the Negro is part of a system of inferiority; there are 'four or five different kinds' of species of men and all the others apart from the White are lacking in accomplishment. (58) Kant went on to discuss Hume's essay in section 4 of his 'Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime' (1764) in which he maintains that 'so fundamental is the difference between [the Black and White] races of man..........it appears to be as great in regard to mental capacities as in color.' (59) Kant moreover went on to equate Blackness with stupidity:

> Father Labat reports that a Negro carpenter, whom he reproached for haughty treatment toward his wives, answered : "You whites are indeed fools, for first you make great concessions to your wives, and afterward you complain when they drive you mad." And it might be that there were something in this which perhaps deserved to be considered; but in short, this fellow was *quite black* from head to foot, a clear proof that what he said was stupid. (60) (my emphasis)

The popular common sense system of thought to which Hume and Kant appeal equates the Negro with the 'uncivilized', with all those generalities which characterise the Other of the European.

Hegel's references to the Negro enables us to 'see' the place of the Negro in Western thought by a thinker who was embarked, as he saw it, on the systematization of the whole of Western thought and who therefore summarized in the process this thought as it related to the Negro. With Hegel Otherness is also systematized. His philosophy arrives at the point in the beginning of the nineteenth century through which subsequent Western views of the Negro as either or both negative savage and anti-bourgeois hero may be discerned as I shall discuss later.

Hegel's system for world history 'places' Africa as a footnote to be transcended, a region on the threshold of history, the not-yet of history. In his 'Philosophy of Mind' the Negro is also 'placed' in the section titled 'Anthropology' as on the threshold of humanity: 'Negroes are to be regarded as a race of children who remain immersed in their state of naïveté.' (61) Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic on the other hand suggests possibilities for the Negro in bondage (a s he was at the time of its writing), which have been productively referred to by modern theorists of Negro psychology such as Frantz Fanon. (62)Hegel thus anticipates modernism's development of the concept of the Negro as productive negativity. Herbert Marcuse notes in 'Reason And Revolution' that in Hegel ".....the process of labor likewise determines the development of consciousness. The 'life and death struggle' between master and servant opens the path to self-conscious freedom." (63) As a member of the modern proletariat the Negro is a necessary part of this development to 'self-conscious freedom.' If, as Marcuse notes '......the existence of the proletariat.........vitiates the whole of bourgeois society' (64) then the Negro is part of this negation of bourgeois society. Indeed it is Marcuse himself, who with the abdication of the White proletariat places the Negro and other 'disadvantaged groups' in the forefront of this negation.

Hegel's conscious determination to place the Negro in the system of Western thought allows us to perceive the Negro's position as a summation of two ideological lines which apparently conflict. In certain modern thinkers this conflict is resolved however. Norman Mailer for example suggests that it is the Negro's very 'primitivity', placing him outside the controls of bourgeois influence which enables him to emerge as anti-bourgeois hero.

It is the very closedness of Hegel's systemic speculation which allows it freely to embody and transform aspects of 'lived ideology' with an 'unself-consciousness' which allows us to 'read' this ideology at its most concrete. If, as Ludwig Wittgenstein maintains, language is 'on a holiday' during philosophical speculation (65) we are, in Hegel's speculations on Africa and Africans, able to see the contours of European thought about Blacks as if watching ideology 'letting its hair down'.

Another area of cultural production which I choose for prolonged study in its capacity to reproduce ideologies involving the Negro is literature. Just as Hegel's production and re-production of Western thought about Blacks represents an unrestrained view of the place of Blacks in the Western mind, so certain works of literature may be said to embody in their unselfconscious relationship with certain ideological positions the White view of Blacks in a way which allows us to perceive it at its most vivid. It is in literary works with their dense and concentrated relationships with various ideologies that it is possible to 'read' the Western view of Blacks most efficaciously. Like a philosophical text, it is the apparent freedom from ideologies of the real, the turning-its-back stance which makes literature an efficacious means of examining these ideologies. Terry Eagleton notes that " ' The textual real' is related to the historical real, not as an imaginary transposition of it, but as the product of certain signifying practices whose source and referent is, in the last instance, history itself.' " (66) It is the text's apparent ignoring of history in the business of creating the 'textual real' which enables us to read its relationship with ideology as its 'unconscious' as Pierre Macherey claims. (67). The 'spontaneity' of the text obfuscates what Eagleton calls its "peculiar conjuncture of 'concrete' and 'abstract' ":

> The literary text......is characterised by a peculiar conjuncture of 'concrete' and 'abstract'. It resembles historiography in its density of texture, yet is analogous to philosophical discourse in the 'generality' of its object. It differs from both in taking this 'abstract' object as concrete. The text strikes us with the arresting immediacy of a physical gesture which turns out to have no precise object- as though we were observing the behavior of a man urgently gesticulating, and so *intimating* an actual state of affairs, only to realise that his gestures were in some sense mere ritual and rehearsal-learnt, studied actions which indicated nothing immediate in his environment, revealed, rather, the *nature* of an environment which could motivate such behavior. (68)

Not only do we perceive much about the man's environment which may not be stated, but I would argue that the literary text allows us to delineate much about the contours of its ideological environment which no other form of textual production does.

The case for the choice of literary texts as the most valuable containers of the nature of ideology's representations of the Negro in Euro-American culture is thus extremely powerful. Eagleton notes:

26

It is useful.........to think of the text not merely as the *product* of ideology, but as a *necessity* of ideology-not in an empirical sense, since ideologies without literature have certainly existed, but theoretically, in that fiction is the term we would give to the fullest self-rendering of ideology, the only logical form that such a complete rendering could assume. And this is not, of course, because fiction is 'untrue', and so a fit vehicle for 'false consciousness', but rather that in order to reconstruct a society's self-representations we would finally encounter the need to cut them loose from particular 'reals' and mobilise them in the form of situations which, because imaginary, would allow for the range, permutation, economy and flexibility denied to a mere reproduction of the routinely lived. (69)

Fiction, as a product of the imagination is ideally placed to represent ideologies about the Negro, which, as Frantz Fanon and other Negro theorists have shown, function partly at the level of the imaginary:

..........it would be impossible to ascribe too much importance to the way in which white children establish contact with the reality of the Negro. In the United States, for example, even if he does not live in the South, where he naturally encounters Negroes concretely, the white child is introduced to them through the myth of Uncle Remus. (In France there is the parallel of ....-*La Case de l'Oncle Tom.) (70)*

'Africa' is in the Western imagination a product of what Edward W. Saïd calls in 'Orientalism' the 'textual attitude':

A text purporting to contain knowledge about something actual........is not easily dismissed. Expertise is attributed to it. The authority of academics, institutions, and governments can accrue to it, surrounding it with still greater prestige than its practical successes warrant. Most important, such texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it. (71)

'The Negro' is the product of certain 'key' texts, encountered from childhood,

Fanon indicates, which have played major roles in the formulation of the concept of the Negro in the West. 'Othello', 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', 'Robinson Crusoe', 'Heart of Darkness' among others, have popularised a certain range of ideologies involving the Negro whose power entered the Western imagination long before any modern re-evaluation of these works which could produce a different 'reading' and a different set of ideologies. In any case it is clear that no 'alternative readings' could avoid having to come to terms with those original ideologies, and 're-reading' those works with reference to them.

Every Black child eventually has to come to terms with the folk concept of the Negro in Western culture as mere negation, an unbridled will bent on the enactment of its own reality-evil. In 'Black Skin White Masks' Frantz Fanon reiterates the gross terms of this concept:

> In Europe, the black man is the symbol of Evil. One must move softly, I know, but it is not easy. The torturer is the black man, Satan is black, one talks of shadows, when one is dirty one is black-whether one is thinking of physical dirtiness or moral dirtiness. It would be astonishing, if the trouble were taken to bring them all together, to see the vast number of expressions that make the black man the equivalent of sin. (72)

Historically there are for the Negritudist innumerable signposts pointing to his evil negativity; from the pronouncements of an Edward Long amongst the Jamaican planters of the nineteenth century, (73) to Thomas Carlyle's outburst on the 'nigger question' (74) after the 1865 rebellion on the same island, to the eminent Victorians who thought they had discovered the key to 'civilization' in 'race' and 'naturally' placed the African on the lowest rung of the ladder to civilization, (75) to W. F. Hegel's banishment of Africa from history and his denial of humanity to the African. The Negritudist has

to address a discourse of negativity about the Black permeating Euro-American culture with a historical intensity dating back to the ideological needs of slavery as a system. (76)

28

To portray the Negro as manifesting only one form of negativity in Western culture however would be to fail to provide a complete account of Negro negativity, it would leave out the aspect of that negativity which seems to have been formulated out of the Negro's *situation* (in the Sartrean sense) (77) within Western society. As a slave, and an ex-slave still carrying the 'colour' of slavery (78) in his person the Negro is associated with negation of the claims of bourgeois humanism. The origins of this particular image of negativity, a sort of creative negativity, stems perhaps from the reverberations of the San Domingo revolution, the first successful modern slave revolution, in which a country of poorly armed Blacks defeated armies from England and France and spread fear amongst the planters of the Caribbean and the Southern States of America. Although this rebellion reinforced the view of the Negro as an evil negativity, it also helped to cast him in a new role as freedom fighter in which he was supported, as C.L.R. James shows in 'The Black Jacobins', (79) by an important section of the revolutionaries of The French Revolution, and other progressives of Europe. Eugene Genovese declares in 'From Rebellion to Revolution' that the San Domingo and French revolutions had reciprocal and supportive effects upon each other. (80)

This second form of Negro negativity which is celebrated by figures such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Norman Mailer, Jean Genet, Herbert Marcuse, is associated with the Negro's social and political role in his rejection of the inflated claims of the Western tradition as it is encapsulated in bourgeois humanism.

I shall examine these two forms of negativity in Euro-American speculative thought and literature in a general elaboration of the original *discourse* to which Negritude is a dialogic reply.

It is a fact that Blacks have historically been used as 'illustration' (81) in Western literature; long before Black literature began to be recognised they were the early *objects* of Western literature. In a survey of Euro-American literature I examine the debate between the two aspects of Negro negativity as they manifest in this discourse in certain key works of the Western tradition from Shakespeare to the modern period. In 'Titus Andronicus' Shakespeare introduces a view of the Negro as evil negativity which is broadened and developed in 'Othello' so that Othello is far from the

one-dimensional figure of negativity which is Aaron of 'Titus Andronicus'.
Harriet Beecher Stowe's 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' is dominated by the Negro as
evil negativity which in its elevated sentimentality masks its reality with
piety. The evil negativity of the Negro is dominated, buried, and eventually
exported back to Africa: the only resolution two of the Black characters can
conjure to their awful plight in America is emigration to Africa, a symbolic
desire entertained by many Americans of the novel's period of publication
(the mid nineteenth century) including president Lincoln. But the novel was
probably one of the most successful publications of the nineteenth century,
was more successful in Europe than America in terms of sales, (particularly
in England) praised by grand figures of the European tradition such as
George Sand, and Count Leo Tolstoy. President Lincoln was said to have
attributed the triggering of the American civil war to the effects of the book.
The iconic role of the novel in the formation of the concept of Negro
negativity in the Western consciousness cannot be exaggerated. Although the
sentiments of the book were perhaps understandably welcomed by Black
anti-slavery liberationists of the nineteenth century, for all Blacks of the
twentieth century 'Uncle Tom' has become a painful symbol of Negro
negativity as passivity. This hatred of Uncle Tom as symbol is probably
fuelled by the Black's awareness that it is through this consciousness he is
viewed by the Other in their every meeting: Uncle Tom is a barrier which has
perpetrated the 'invisibility' of Blacks.

Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' is a representation of the complexity
of the relationship between the Negro and the Other in the European
imagination. Straddling the nineteenth and the twentieth century, appearing
as the successor to a whole tradition of frontier-novels set in Africa, the novel
is a metaphorical representation of a certain limit for such frontier-novels
containing in its tortured exaggerated adjectives, (F.R. Leavis) (32)
representations of the limits of language, of the underlying failure at the heart
of language on which Sartre theorised. In 'Black Orpheus' Sartre refers to the
failure of language in the presence of Being, a failure wherein lies the origin
of poetry:

> The reaction of the speaker to the failure of prose is what Bataille
> calls the holocaust of words. As long as we are capable of believing
> that a pre-established harmony governs the relations between Word

and Being, we use words without seeing them, with a blind confidence. "Words are sensorial organs, mouths, hands, windows open on the world"-at the first failure of language we realise that all this is gibberish. We see the whole system as no more than a mechanism that has broken down and whose giant arms, still in motion, point off into space. We judge the idiotic business of calling things by names. We understand that the essence of language is prose and that the essence of prose is failure. (83)

'Heart of Darkness' represents the failure of the language of the frontier-novel in the presence of the Being of Africa at a time when the European powers were already beginning to destroy the frontiers of sentimental-Africa, the mythical country of these novels, in favour of new frontiers and new maps, playing, like Conrad's Marlow, with their own fond dreams of the continent.

The novel perhaps also represents, as Wilson Harris claims in 'The Frontier on Which *Heart of Darkness* Stands', the limits of the nineteenth century novel form:

> The novel-form Conrad inherited is the novel-form in which most, writers, black and white, write today. For comedy of manners is the basis of protest fiction, fiction of good guys and bad guys, racist guys and liberal guys. Comedy of manners is the basis of realism that mirrors society to identify refinements of behaviour that are social or anti-social, heroic or anti-heroic. (84)

For Harris Conrad's novel led him to the limits of the liberal sentiments of the nineteenth century novel. Harris thinks Conrad's awareness of the awful failure of the traditions of European liberalism in the Congo led him to a dreadful desolation manifest in the pages of 'Heart of Darkness': '...............an exhaustion of spirit that froze Conrad's genius and made it impossible for him to cross the frontier upon which his intuitive imagination had arrived.' (85)

'Heart of Darkness' also contains the limits of 'noble savagery' as applied to the African in the European liberal imagination. There was never much nobility in 'noble savagery' representing in its European self-reflection more a critique of Europe than a glorification of 'the savage'. The old concepts of 'noble savagery' and the representation of the African as a slave of modern

capitalism, jostle and contend in the novel. In a work which contains as Harris notes, the nihilistic limits of parody, (86) the very frontiers of 'noble savagery' are exposed. The African is both the noble savage, beckoning Marlow to an appreciation of older atavistic values, and the 'nigger', the modern coolie of capitalism. But, in Conrad's portrayal of the failures of Western liberalism's pretensions in Africa, he is also, I contend, the progenitor of the future man of Negritude. The man of Negritude is engendered in the novel, in the ashes of bourgeois humanism's pretensions to be the putative torch-bearer for the future of mankind.

'Heart of Darkness' has had far-reaching effects upon European literature and the European imagination in its portrayal of Africa, both on the continent of Europe and in England, and the novel stands on the frontier at which a different concept of Negro negativity could begin to be created in the Euro-American consciousness. The Negro's Other in the book, the European, through self-examination discovers his own 'heart of darkness' not as hitherto in Euro-American literature in the evil of Negro negativity, but in himself. The novel represents a point at which issues of Negro negativity and the meaning of 'Otherness' can be freshly examined.

'Friday, Or The Other Island' is not perhaps a key work in the European tradition, but it is a re-writing and a re-reading of a key work, Daniel Defoe's 'Robinson Crusoe', a novel famous for its representation of the Negro as the eternal worker and help-mate and servant. In 'Friday, Or The Other Island' Michel Tournier progresses out of the ambiguities of Negro representation in 'Heart of Darkness' in representing the Negro as creative negativity. Friday's negativity in Tournier's novel is a creative exemplar to Robinson. Friday's role is altered from Defoe's to Tournier's novel in which he moves from servant to brother, from pupil to unsuspecting educator of Robinson's sensibilities. His destruction of the capitalist ethos which Robinson has so painfully cultivated leads to a liberation of both servant and master into a democratic brotherhood and new-found resolution with nature, in Robinson's case. In Tournier's novel Friday symbolically fulfils the recuperative mythical role powerfully suggested for the Negro in Césaire's 'Cahier ....' as a bringer of peace and absolution to the troubled Western mind groaning under the abstractions of capitalism. Tournier's novel is a fine signpost in its representation of a different concept of Negro negativity which also manifests in the ideas and works of major figures in the

Euro-American tradition such as Norman Mailer, and Jean Genet. Tournier's is a modernist re-writing of Defoe's work representing Negro negativity in the modernist sensibility, a sensibility which seeks painfully to undermine the ideology by which the Negro has been portrayed in the Western tradition, sometimes falling into the trappings of noble savagery in its troubled self-reflection, but essentially seeking the Negro's actual conception of his role in Western culture.

This new-found sensibility is itself aware of standing on the borders of this different concept of Negro negativity. The writers who employ it seem aware that it is a view of the Negro which has hardly been explored.

I shall examine the two forms of Negro negativity in Western culture in greater detail in this essay in the next chapter 'The Place of Blacks in European Thought' but at this point it is reasonable to say that Tournier, Mailer and Genet have inaugurated a discussion around this second form of Negro negativity which is connected with his role as agent rather than as 'biological symbol' as in the first concept of Negro negativity, which has not yet been popularised, and, which perhaps cannot be popularised for reasons which I examine in the next chapter.

In the second part of this thesis I discuss the view that Negritude is a dialogic reply to the two concepts of the Negro in Western culture. I discuss the ideological position of the primary formulators of Negritude, Léopold Senghor and Aimé Césaire in relation to these two views of the Negro. I examine the various influences on their ideologies and the differences in theoretical emphasis manifest in their response to the view of the Negro in Western culture.

Since the two aspects of Negro negativity are related in their *manifestation* in Western culture, that is the views of the Negro as evil negativity, and as a subverter of bourgeois humanism are often discussed together, it is logical to find both views answered dialogically in the works of these two writers. It is possible to argue however that Senghor is more of an apologist for the concept of the Negro as evil negativity, whereas Césaire's emphasis both defies this negativity and celebrates the other, creative negativity.

Senghor, the older of the two coming from a more settled background of the Serer people, in Joal, a tiny village on the coast of Senegal, may be said to be the more 'conservative' of the two. His curious adoption, for example, of a certain strain in the writings of the racist Count Gobineau in order to render it a 'progressive' statement of the Negro's virtues, follows a certain ideological line which David Nicholls traces to the cultural nationalists of Haïti, leading to the murderous strong-arm rule of a figure like Papa Doc Duvalier. (87) Césaire may be said to be the modernist thinker of the two in his liberal use of such theorists as Freud, Nietzsche, Bergson the French philosopher, in the formulation of a Negritude ideology which dialogically replies to the view of the Negro encapsulated in the second form of negativity.

The relationship of both Senghor and Césaire with surrealism is important in any discussion of their dialogue with the two forms of Negro negativity. Surrealism as a method which sought to challenge and undermine Western culture at its roots by cutting beneath its surface reality to its sur-reality or 'sub-reality',and appealed to the superior 'knowledge' of 'primitives'. was bound to appeal to thinkers from a people who, then as now, were regarded as having their roots in the 'primitive'. In seeking to value what in Western culture had hitherto been regarded with condescension, the surrealists were regarded as natural allies by the Negritudists.

Senghor and Césaire would have claimed to be allies of the surrealists rather than their pupils: both claimed to have been practising their own method of surrealism long before coming into contact with metropolitan surrealism. If metropolitan surrealism sought to promote the value of 'primitive knowledge', Senghor's surrealism engages in dialogue with the Western view of African 'primitivism' while Césaire's surrealism is used in the creation of Negritude as a poetic knowledge engaging in a critique of the predominant Western scientific concept of knowledge. The knowledge of the 'primitive' which the metropolitan surrealists sought in experimentation is celebrated in Césaire's 'Cahier..............'

The scope of Black literature studied

This thesis is primarily concerned with Black literature written during the period of Negritude's influence. It considers Negritude's influence to have spread from its inception in the early thirties to the post-thirties period, from the literature of the 'Harlem Renaissance', that literary movement stemming from the group of writers associated with the most populous Negro quarter of New York in the twenties, to the works of Léon Damas, Jacques Roumain, and other Caribbean writers of the thirties, to the writings of Richard Wright and James Baldwin covering the early forties and stretching to the sixties. I make extensive reference to the importance of the Haïtian revolution to the Negritude movement, and some reference is made to the importance of the contribution of Haïtian writers such as Jacques Roumain to the creation of the movement but to cover the contributions of the major figures of Negritude in Haïti would have required a longer study. This study is primarily concerned with the works of Senghor and Césaire as the two major *ideological* formulators of Negritude since it is largely an examination of the ideological configurations of Negritude. Apart from Wright and Baldwin this study does not pretend to cover the body of literature and ideas of the present period such as the work of Eldridge Cleaver, George Jackson, E. K. Brathwaite, in the Caribbean, the women writers, such as Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker, all of which may be said to have developed issues in their works inspired by Negritude.

Ellen Conroy Kennedy notes in her introduction to her book 'The Negritude Poets' that in 'Nobody knows My Name' Baldwin answers his own question, "Do the earth's black populations [have] anything that can legitimately be called culture?" Baldwin responds thus:

> ....there *was* something which all black men held in common, something which cut across opposing points of view, and placed in the same context their widely dissimilar experience. What they held in common was their precarious, their unutterably painful relation to the

white world. What they held in common was the necessity to remake the world and no longer be controlled by the vision of the world and of themselves held by other people. What, in sum, black men held in common was their ache to come into the world as men. (88)

It may be argued that the debate between Baldwin and Wright, passionately concerned with the literature which emerges from this 'unutterably painful relation to the white world', is a legacy of the debate begun by earlier Negritudists.

I am largely concerned with Black literature written in the Americas although the writings of Léopold Senghor from Senegal as one of the major formulators of Negritude ideology is studied. This study concentrates on the Negritude of the African diaspora scattered in the Americas as a Negritude manifesting a certain coherence. Negritude stemming from Continental Africa although having much in common with Americas Negritude-the sympathetic world-views of Césaire and Senghor being one of those common characteristics, a shared history of colonialism and imperialism being another-has its own system of coherence built around a certain relationship to the debate begun by Senghor. The adherents of Continental Negritude either support Senghor's world view, or, in the case of some of the younger Black writers, react violently towards it. In any case Continental Negritude oscillates around the debate begun by Senghor.

Americas Negritude has a different orbit although the orbits of Continental and Americas Negritude, naturally meet and interlink. Americas Negritude may be said to circulate around the debate begun by Césaire, although it does not have the radical relationship with him that Continental Negritude has with Senghor. Americas Negritude is more diffuse and closer to modernism than Senghor's Negritude.

Diasporan Negritude is therefore the main concern of this thesis. It is not surprising that it was Negroes from the African diaspora who were predominant in the affirmation of their cultural heritage while living in the hostile ideological and linguistic environment of Euro-America though of course colonialist oppression affected Blacks everywhere. The Negritudists of continental Africa may be said to have had a less traumatic ideological and psychological complex of problems to confront due to the 'advantages' of a

supportive history and coherent geography. The Negritudists of the Americas may be said to be the 'lost' children of the continent, historically, geographically and psychologically. But Negritude encompassed Blacks on all the continents in which they lived.

In one of the most comprehensive compilations of Negritude poetry in translation produced at present, Ellen Conroy Kennedy in 'The Negritude Poets' divides the anthology into: 'Caribbean Poets in French', African Poets in French', 'Indian Ocean Poets in French', thereby indicating the scope of Negritude poetry, and, the language of the Other which was their means of communication. Much of the original passion of Negritude is shared by the writers from the Americas, continental Africa, and the Indian Ocean.

Although most of the Negritude writers were based in the Francophone world it is well known that Negritude poetry was also written in Spanish, in the Latin American world of Cuba and Brazil for example, as Julio Finn notes. (89)

From whichever continent it originated the essential thrust of Negritude manifested as a rejection of the negative concept of the Negro in Western culture.

In the first chapter I shall examine the major functional 'prisms' through which Blacks have been perceived in Euro-American culture, that is, as a sterile negative force or, as a negativity which in its rebelliousness and opposition to bourgeois humanism is a positive force for social and political change.

References

1. Joseph Conrad, 'Heart of Darkness', Penguin, (London 1982) p71.

2. Abiola Irele, 'Negritude or Black Cultural Nationalism', 'The Journal of Modern African Studies' 3,3 (1965) (pp321-48) p322

3. William Shakespeare, 'The Tempest', Edited by Oscar James Campbell, Alfred Rothschild, Stuart Vaughan, Bantam Books, (London, 1964) Act. v. sc. 1. 275-276

4. Henry Louis Gates Jr. 'Writing "Race" and the Difference it Makes', and 'Talkin' That Talk', in '"Race," Writing and Difference', Univ. of Chicago Press, (London, 1986.) pp1-20, and 402-409.

5. Tzevetan Todorov, '"Race," Writing, and Culture', Op. Cit. p376

6. Op. Cit. p406

7. Op. Cit. p376

8. F.R.Leavis, 'The Great Tradition', Penguin Books, (London 1974) p11

9. Kate Millet, 'Sexual Politics': Double day and Co. Inc. (New York) 1970.
See chapters on 'The Literary Reflection' (pp235-363) in which Millet attacks standard figures of the canonical tradition: D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and positively evaluates Jean Genet.

10. A.J. Arnold, 'Modernism and Negritude', Harvard Univ. Press, (London, 1981). pp21-49.

11. R.L. Scharfman, '*Engagement* and the Language of the Subject in the Poetry of Aimé Césaire', Univ. of Florida Press, (1987)

12. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', 'Stand' (quarterly magazine), Part 1, (vol 5. No. 4) pp2-12, and Part 2, (vol 6 no. 1) pp7-22

13. Op. Cit. Part 1 'Stand' (vol. 5 no.4) p7.

14. Op. Cit. Part 1. 'Stand' (vol 5 no. 4) p2

15. Aimé Césaire, 'Discourse on Colonialism', Trans. by Joan Pinkham. Monthly Review Press. (London 1972) p72.

16. Ibid.

17. Op. Cit. pp72-73.

18. Op. Cit. p73.

19. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', 'Stand' (vol 5 no. 4) p3.

20. Frantz Fanon, 'Black Skin white Masks', Paladin, (London 1970)   p94

21. W.F.Hegel, 'Philosophy of History', Dover Publications, (New York 1956) p99.

22. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', 'Stand' (vol 5 no4.) p3.

23. Op. Cit. (vol 6 no. 1.) pp17-18.

24. In 'Herbermas and Modernity', R.J. Bernstein makes it clear that this problem of modernity was a central issue in the thought of Theodore Adorno. He notes that, 'In the 'Dialectic of Enlightenment,'

Horkheimer and Adorno attempt to relate the one-dimensional character of modern processes of rationalization to an internal tendency to reification and instrumental reason which is inherent in conceptual   thinking as such, i.e., in symbolically mediated cognition and action. In most radical passages of the 'Dialectics of Enlightenment,' formal logic, the law of non-contradiction, and   the general "identifying" nature of conceptual thinking appear as the ulitimate roots of a process of rationalization,   which according to   its internal logic terminates in   the reduction of reason to formal and instrumental   reason, in the establishment of a completely rationalized   system of domination, and liquidation of the autonomous subject.

'R. J. Bernstein, (editor) 'Herbermas and Modernity', Polity Press. (Oxford 1985) p47.

25. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Politics and Literature', Trans.by J. A. Underwood, John Calder. Calder & Boyars (London 1973) p99

26. Op. Cit. p102.

27. Op. Cit. pp106-107.

28. Mikhail Bakhtin, Problemy tvorcestva Dostoevskogo'. Lenigrad 1929. English version, 'Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics' trans. by R.W. Rostol, Ardis, (1973).

29 . Tzvetan Todorov, 'The Dialogic Principle', Manchester Univ. Press (1984) p64.

30 . Ibid.

31.. Op. Cit. p65.

32.. Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire-Langage Identité Culturelle-Négritude Afrique-France-Guyane-Maghred-Martinique. Editions Jean-Michel Place, Paris, 1980 pp144-145. (interview with Césaire)

33. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Politics and Literature', p99.

34. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', Part 2, 'Stand' (vol 6 no. 1) p8.

35. Op. Cit. Part 2 'Stand' (vol 6 no. 1) p17.

36. Op. Cit. Part 1 'Stand' (vol 5 no. 4) p3.

37. Tzvetan Todorov, 'The Dialogic Principle', p68.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal', Présence Africaine, (Paris, 1971)

41. Michel Tournier, 'Friday, Or The Other Island', Penguin (1984)

42. David Wood, 'Philosophy at the Limit', Unwin Hyman, (London 1990) p127.

43. Ibid.

44. S.R. Suleiman, 'Subversive Intent: Gender, Politics, and the Avant Garde', Harvard Univ. Press. (1990) p125.

45. Op. Cit. p126.

46. Op. Cit. p127.

47. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Politics and Literature', p106.

48. Tzvetan Todorov, 'The Dialogic Principle', p68.

49. Mikhail Bakhtin 'Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics', p193.

50. A.J. Arnold, 'Modernism and Negritude', p13, Arnold notes that Césaire edited *Tropiques* in Martinique from 1941 to 1945.

51. See John Reed & Clive Wake 'Léopold Sédar Senghor:Prose and Poetry' Oxford University Press, (London 1965) for a collection of extracts from Senghor's prose works.

52. Frantz Fanon, 'Black Skin White Masks', Paladin, (London 1972) p29.

53. Aimé Césaire, 'Discourse on Colonialism', p68.

54. A.J. Arnold, 'Negritude and Modernism', p89.

55. Frantz Fanon, 'Black Skin White Masks', Fanon disputes C.G.Jung's notion that this attitude of supremacy is psychical; declares it to be cultural (p135).

56. Aimé Césaire, 'Discourse on Colonialism', p67.

57. Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire...........' p145.

58. David Hume, "Of National Characters." *The Philosophical Works,* ed. Thomas Hill Green and Thomas Hodge Grose, 4 vols. (Darmstadt, 1964), 3:252n. 1; Quoted by Henry Louis Gates, in '"Race," Writing and Difference', p10

59. Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime,* trans. John T. Goldthwait (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1960), p111. Quoted by Gates, Op. Cit. p10

60. Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime,* p113, Quoted by Gates, Op. Cit. p10

61. W.F. Hegel, 'Philosophy of Mind,' Being Part Three of The *Encyclopaedia of The Philosophical Sciences* (1830). Trans. by William Wallace, Together with the Zusatze in Boumann's Text (1845) Trans. by A. V. Miller, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, (Oxford 1971), p42

62. Frantz Fanon, 'Black Skin white Masks', Paladin, (London 1970) (see pp15 154-158)

63. Herbert Marcuse, 'Reason and Revolution', Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, (London 1969), p259

64. Op. Cit. p261

65. Ludwig Wittgenstein, 'Philosophical Investigations,' Basil Blackwell (Oxford 1968), (38)

66. Terry Eagleton, 'Criticism and Ideology', New Left Books, and Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, (London 1976), p75

67. Pierre Macherey, 'A Theory of Literary Production', Routledge & Kegan Paul, (London 1979), p85

68. Terry Eagleton, 'Criticism and Ideology', p75

69. Op. Cit. pp77-78

70. Frantz Fanon, 'Black Skin white Masks', p123

71. Edward Saïd, 'Orientalism', Penguin Books, (London 1987) p94

72. Frantz Fanon, 'Black Skin white Masks', p134

73. quote by P.D.Curtin, 'The Image of Africa', vol. 1. Univ. of Wisconsin Press, (1964). p36. from Edward Long's ,'A History of Jamaica', 3 volumes, (London 1774) II, 373-74,

74. Thomas Carlyle 'Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question', Frazer's Magazine, XL. pp670-79, (Dec. 1849) quoted by P.D. Curtin in 'The Image of Africa', vol.2. p381.

75 See P.D. Curtin, 'The Image of Africa', vol 2. chapter 15, pp363-387 for numerous references to pseudo-scientific racism.

76.Op. Cit. vol. 1. pp270-273. Curtin shows that much of this argument was based on economic issues.

77 R.D.Cumming, (ed.) 'The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, Methuen (London 1968) p275.

78. M.I. Finley, 'Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology', Chatto & Windus, (London 1980) p97.

79. C.L.R. James 'The Black Jacobins', Vintage Books, (1968) James quotes such examples of the importance of the Haïtian revolution as this: 'On August 11th, the day after the Tuileries fell, Page, a notorious   agent of the colonists in France, wrote home almost in despair. "One spirit alone reigns here, it is horror of slavery enthusiasm for liberty. It is a frenzy which wins all heads and grows every day." Henceforth the Paris masses were for abolition, and their black brothers in San Domingo, for the first time had passionate allies in France.' (p120)

80. see E. Genovese, 'From Rebellion to Revolution', Louisiana State   Univ. Press, (1979) p90.

81. David Dabydeen, 'Hogarth's Blacks', Dangaroo Press, (1985). Dabydeen demonstrates that the previous 'invisibility' of the Blacks in Hogarth's paintings is a product of their 'reading'.

82. F.R.Leavis, 'The Great Tradition', Penguin (1974) see pp204-207 for Leavis's discussion of Conrad's 'adjectival excesses'.
83. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', part 1, 'Stand', (vol, 5, no4) p8.
84. Wilson Harris, 'Explorations', Dangaroo Press, (Denmark 1981) p135.
85 Op. Cit. p137.
86. Ibid.
87. David Nicholls 'From Dessalines to Duvalier' Macmillan, (London 1988) see chap. 6 'Literature and Dogma (1930-1945)' pp165-190.
88 .E.C.Conroy (editor) 'The Negritude Poets' Thunders Mouth Press (N.York 1989) Pxxv
89. Julio Finn, 'Voices of Négritude', Quartet Books (London 1988). See pp131-151 (on 'Afro-Cubanism') and pp152-161 (on 'Negritude in Brazil').

PART ONE THE PLACE OF BLACKS IN EURO-AMERICAN THOUGHT AND, LITERATURE.

CHAPTER 1

THE PLACE OF BLACKS IN EURO-AMERICAN SPECULATIVE THOUGHT

Introduction

In the introduction I discussed the idea that Negritude was a response to the manifestation of the concept of the Negro in Euro-American thought in the two forms in which it occurs, that is, as a sterile negativity and a creative negativity. In this chapter I analyse the function of these two views of the Negro in detail as they occur in the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel, the work of figures such as C.L.R. James, Herman Melville, Norman Mailer and Herbert Marcuse. I argue that despite Hegel's strictures against the African in 'The Philosophy of History', his Master-Slave dialectic posits the Black as having the potential for creative negativity. The view of the Negro as creative negativity is a product of the modern period which has been overshadowed by the legacy of sterile negativity.

From early in his contact with modern Europe the Negro was regarded as the embodiment of regression and evil, pure sterile negativity. It is possible to argue, as I shall later, that this view of the Negro was in part due to the negative circumstances of this first contact-the purchase and bargaining over slaves-the need for a justification of the subsequent treatment of the slaves which resulted from it. Nevertheless it remains a fact that the tendency of many prominent eighteenth and nineteenth century European thinkers-Hegel being the most prominent- was the refusal of human recognition to the Negro. Hegel in 'The Philosophy of History' banishes Africa out of the current of History and refuses the Negro recognition except as the embodiment of pure otherness. Such a refusal became the original ground for slavery and repression of Negroes in the Americas: Hegel was thus one of the first apologists for slavery.

Yet this view of Negro negativity is contradicted by Hegel's analysis of the role of the slave in his Master-Slave dialectic. Hegel's analysis shows the continuing negation of the given by the slave as a means of overcoming his

situation and fulfilling the project of mankind towards freedom and the realisation of an authentic political state.(1)

Despite his reactionary sympathies therefore, Hegel demonstrates the creative negativity of the slave, and points to another view of Negro negativity in Western thought. This view is symbolised in the revolutionary upheavals in Haïti in the 1790s. Although some contemporary figures recognised the symbolic importance of the formation of the first modern state from a slave rebellion by Negroes, and its leader was celebrated by Wordsworth (in 'To Tousssaint L'Ouverture': it is significant that it comes under the heading, 'poems dedicated to liberty'), (2) the true significance of that revolution has only recently been recognised by contemporary historians. C.L.R. James in 'The Black Jacobins' (3) places the Haïtian revolution fully in the current of modern revolutionary uprisings, and shows how many of its ideals and aspirations were fuelled by the recent French revolution of 1789. Other commentators have recognised that it was the rebellious slaves of Saint Domingue who caught the revolutionary temper of the times and moved with the progressive forces of the day, as opposed to the reactionary French colons whom they were fighting.

In this second role of creative negativity, the Negro as potent symbol of rebellion as well as being the symbolic colour of labour, is characterized as one of the forces who created the modern proletariat. It is in this role that the Negro has haunted Western Capital, one of the results of which has been racism, the expression of a desire to divide the Black, from the White proletariat.

Negro negativity has been embraced by serious modern writers such as Arthur Rimbaud, Norman Mailer and Jean Genet as a valuable aspect of creative activity. Mailer saw important links between the values of the White American hypster, and Negro negation of White American values. (4) Genet sees both Negroes and outsiders such as himself as engaged in a creative rebellion against bourgeois values. Jazz, while condemned at one time as 'jungle music' became recognised as a vital revolutionary and influential force in modern music.

Negro negativity is thus both celebrated and reviled, embraced and feared

as having a double aspect. Whether it has a double aspect in itself is of no great importance for us, since, it is the ideological view of the Negro with which we are concerned, and ideology is only tangentially concerned with reality.

Negativity and sterility

One of the most important reasons for what I shall from now on term the first form of Negro negativity is the necessity which the slave-owning classes saw for the creation of an ideology counter to the efforts of the anti-slavery movement, at its height in the late eighteenth century and greater part of the nineteenth century. This need for the elaboration of an ideology was, as M.I. Finley notes in 'Democracy Ancient and Modern', specifically the problem of modern slavery which had the task of persuading populations supposedly living under 'free' and 'democratic' institutions to participate in the institution of slavery. Finley notes that in antiquity, slave- owning societies had no such task: 'In ancient Greece, with its open exploitation of slaves and foreign subjects, there would be little scope for ideology in the Marxist sense.' (5) This task of modern slavery has been examined in detail by historians such as Duncan J.Macleod in 'Slavery, Race and the American Revolution' who show that racism was one of the important weapons for overcoming the contradictions posed by slavery as an institution contrary to the ideals of the American revolution: racism sought to persuade the majority of White Americans throughout the country that Black was the colour of slavery. (6)

This ideological programme had a long historical precedence stemming from the original European characterization of Africa and Africans, or 'negroes' (the term used by European commentators during the first contacts with Africa). Most sympathetic historians of African history such as P.D.Curtin and Basil Davidson, agree that European historiography is highly conditioned by the original mode of contact between Europe and Africa-that is, the search for markets by European adventurers along the African West coast. One of the first products to be marketed was slaves. The basis of the original contact was therefore negative: this negativity was compounded

by the fact that this historiography when it focused on Africa, was fuelled largely by ignorance.

The major early source of African history came from the African Leo Africanus, published in a collection of travel literature by Samuel Purchas in the seventeenth century. It was much in vogue in eighteenth century Britain. After Africanus most European information was gained by a mixture of hearsay, reports, and the biased accounts of adventurers involved in the slave trade. European interest centered largely on West Africa given its part in the production of slaves. Most institutions and values integral to Africa were ignored as being of little interest to men bent on pursuing basic commercial goals; thus as P.D. Curtin notes, not much of African culture was studied:

> An elementary knowledge of political structure was essential for traders who had to deal with the African authorities. Certain aspects of material culture and the African systems were equally crucial, especially when they concerned the slave trade into the interior or the market demand for European goods. (7)

But other than those aspects, the essential structure of African social formations were ignored. The account of travellers showed a traditional love of the exotic and spectacular, while ignoring the fundamental:

> The European travellers wrote to please their audience as well as to inform. Religious beliefs were of no interest: they were mere "pagan error". But spectacular festivals, human sacrifice, judicial ordeals, and polygamy were "curiosities," and were therefore recounted at length. Thus the reporting often stressed precisely those aspects of African life that were most repellent to the West and tended to submerge the indications of a common humanity. This love of the extra-ordinary was partly the reflection of a much greater European interest in the exotic- an interest blending genuine intellectual curiosity with a libidinous fascination for descriptions of other people who break with impunity the taboos of one's own society. (8)

This biased account was based not simply upon the need for the creation of a self-justifying ideology for the slave trade, but also as Curtin notes, on the creation of a mythology dependent upon ignorance for its effectiveness. (9)

Like all ideologies, further contact and further knowledge does nothing to alter the basic elements of this view of Africa. Curtin notes that further Western contact with Africa might reduce 'pride of colour', but 'pride of culture' continues through the centuries:

> Many otherwise well-informed people continue to think of pre-colonial Africa as a series of 'primitive' societies, still in the stone age or only just emerging from it under the impact of Europe. They tend to accept an older historical tradition which held that Africa was static, while Europe, and to a lesser extent, Asian and American civilization advanced during the past few millennia........(10)

Edward Said notes in 'Orientalism' that the process of imposing explanatory forms and patterns on other cultures is a perennial and human process:

> It is perfectly natural for the human mind to resist the assault on it of untreated strangeness; therefore cultures have always been inclined to impose complete transformations on other cultures, receiving these other cultures not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver, they ought to be. To the Westerner, however, the Oriental was always *like* some aspect of the West...............(11)

What, on considering the above quotation from Said's book, powerfully suggests itself is the notion that where for the West the Oriental was always *like* some aspect of itself, the African was always his Other; the African contained the repository of the strange, exotic, deviant, sexually perverse which reinforced the West's sense of its 'sameness' and integrity. This view is boldly present in Hegel's comments on Africa.

4

The Role of Speculative Philosophy: Hegel

It is quite likely that Hegel would have read these accounts of seventeenth and eighteenth century historiography concerning Africa, such as they were. J.N.Findlay notes in a foreword to Hegel's 'Philosophy of Mind' that he was quite prepared to venture into naturalistic empiricism where it suited his ideological interests. Thus the 'Philosophy of History' is scattered, in the section on Africa, with the unattributed reports of travellers and much hearsay evidence quoted as unqualified fact. Findlay notes that the 'Subjective Spirit' section of 'Philosophy of Mind' begins with 'Anthropology', in which Hegel makes similar disparaging remarks about Africa and Africans as in 'Philosophy of History', a section replete with ideological tendentiousness: 'On this topic (anthropology) Hegel has so much to say of a purely naturalistic cast as to assort ill with the common notions of his philosophy.' (12)

Hegel's discourse is conditioned by a notion repeated in 'Philosophy of History', which makes much of the connection between race and environment. Thus Findlay notes of 'Philosophy of Mind':

> There is, ...an immense stress on the environment, from whose diffused readiness for psychical centrality the individual soul is carved out: Hegel even talks in terms of regional souls, though he makes plain that it is only in individual persons that such souls become fully actual. There is, further, an immense emphasis on race. Lack of experience of the changes wrought by emigration, or large-scale industrialization, and other economic or social changes, leads Hegel to believe in such things as an unchangeable Arabian spirit conditioned to monotheism by the desert, in an English soul whose environment favours intellectual intuition, in a negro soul compelled by African geography to remain permanently apathetic and naive, etc. etc............... (13)

Such notions connecting the environment of Africa with the character of

Africans, either mystically (Hegel) or shallowly, exercised, as Curtin notes, common currency during the period in which Hegel was writing:

> Whatever their views in detail, (Western commentators on Africa, my parenthesis) one assumption was almost universal. They believed that African skin colour, hair texture, and facial features were associated in some way with the African way of life (in Africa) and the status of slavery (in the Americas). Once the association was made, racial views became unconsciously linked with social views, and the common assessment of African culture. Culture prejudice thus slid off easily toward colour prejudice..............(14)

As with most ideologies it is extremely difficult to piece together the various elements of this diffused system of values. Hegel however adopts its most essential elements in what he has to say about Africa. There is first of all the racial assumption of a connection between the terrain of the area the commentators call 'Africa' (this concept of 'Africa' will be examined later) and the nature of its inhabitants (skin colour, hair texture etc). The character of 'Africans' or 'Negroes' is also thought to be intimately connected with the terrain: briefly, the wild and other-worldly nature of the terrain is vaguely associated with the 'savagery' of Africans. Given they inhabit an other-worldly environment, it follows, according to this formulation, that the African is the Other of humanity which, for the purposes of this system is embodied by the European. It follows also that African social and political organisations are negative reflections of social and political organisations of that adopted by the fully human European.

It is necessary to look in detail at this formulation. An essential line of this formula is the notion of 'Africa Proper' as an ahistorical entity shut-in upon itself. Thus according to Hegel in 'The Philosophy of History': 'Its isolated character originates not merely in its tropical nature, but essentially in its geographical condition..............the land surrounded by these mountains is an unknown upland from which on the other hand the Negroes have seldom made their way through.' (15) The static character of the geography is associated with the lack of movement of the Negroes, which will later be associated with lack of 'development'.

The continent in which Africans dwell is, according to this view, characterized by a peculiar situation; it is a land divided by geography and history into three parts, only one part, the land south of the Sahara, is said to represent 'Africa Proper'. This arbitrary system is the traditional one devised by European historiography. In this schema, Egypt is historically separate

from Africa south of the Sahara, as is North Africa which, according to Hegel, properly belongs to the European world. That Hegel's division is governed by a prejudice, (and indicates the original prejudice on which it is grounded) is manifest by his choice of language in making the division. Egypt, he declares in 'Philosophy of History', 'was adapted to become a mighty centre of independent civilisation, and therefore is as isolated and singular in Africa, as Africa itself appears in relation to other parts of the world.' (16) The northern part of Africa, 'was to be-must be attached to Europe-.......Here in their turn have Cartaginians, Romans and Byzantines, Mussulmen, Arabians had their abode, and the interests of Europe have always striven to get a footing in it. ' (17) No argument is advanced as to why only one part of the continent is to be regarded as either isolated or properly belonging to Europe, historically, if not geographically. The clue lies perhaps in the declaration that North Africa is a 'magnificent territory' which on that basis cannot properly (sic) be associated with 'Africa Proper'.

In this kind of ideological programme contradictions are accommodated easily; it is possible, in the same sentence, to use the same word to refer to different entities. Thus in Hegel's formula, Africa consists of 'North' Africa, 'Egyptian' Africa, and 'Africa Proper', only one of these parts having true reference; in only one of these uses of the word is it being employed 'properly'. One part of Africa-South of the Sahara-names the whole, just as one people (Ethiopians) name the continent's population. Synecdoche is the

operating principle in this system of thought and its effect is the creation of the image of Africa in European ideologies as an undifferentiated mass, of the absence of diversity, absence of the movement which makes an impact on history possible.

The human life of such a fabulous nether world, is necessarily characterized

by retrogressive excess reminiscent of the content of cheap science fiction. Thus Hegel in 'The Philosophy of History':

At the death of a king hundreds are killed and eaten; prisoners are butchered and their flesh sold in the markets; the victor is accustomed to eat the heart of his slain foe. When magical rites are performed, it frequently happens that the sorcerer kills the first that comes in his way and divides his body among the bystanders.' (18)

In this ideology, the African is Other: abstract, sterile negativity. That he is the Other of the European rests simply in the bountiful fact that the European represents the summit of humanity. It is not surprising, locked as he is in the world of unreal nature, that the African, for Hegel, is incapable of attaining a unified consciousness:

> In Negro life the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet attained to the realisation of any substantial objective existence-as for example, God, or Law,-in which the interest of man's volition is involved and in which he realises his own being. This distinction between himself as an individual and the universality of his essential being, the African in the uniform, undeveloped oneness of his existence has not yet attained; so that the knowledge of an absolute Being, an Other and a Higher than his individual self, is entirely wanting. (19)

Within Hegel's discourse therefore, Africa is a metaphor for difference and negativity, the Negro a symbol of inhumanity and excess. Thus at the end of his chapter on Africa in 'Philosophy of History', Africa is dismissed from world history:

> At this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the world; it has no movement or development to exhibit. Historical movements in it-that is in its Northern part-belong to the Asiatic or European World...........What we properly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, and which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the World's History. (20)

The Negro is refused recognition within the common stream of humanity. In a classical apology for slavery Hegel excuses New World slavery by suggesting that though evil, it is preferable to African slavery since it brings the Negro closer to 'civilisation':

> Negroes are enslaved by Europeans and sold to America. Bad as this may be, their lot in their own land is even worse, since there a slavery quite as absolute exists; for it is the essential principle of slavery, that man has not yet attained a consciousness of his freedom, and consequently sinks down to a mere Thing-an object of no value. (21)

This form of negativity associated with the Negro is therefore essentially linked to his status as slave. Every characteristic of slavery: violence, inhumanity, uncontrollability, is attributed to the Negro. Through this propaganda the victim is made responsible for, and characterized by, the negativity of the object of his victimisation. As an intrinsic part of this ideology, racism, the form of this negativity became an eternal aspect of the Negro.

Negativity and creativity

Although the slave owners and their propagandists such as Hegel were bent on the refusal of Negro recognition, the Negro nevertheless made himself recognised throughout the history of slavery in the Americas by his constant rebellions culminating in the Haitian revolution of 1791. The thing-like human, whose humanity in any case could not entirely be dismissed by the slave owner, (as Sartre notes, '......in order to treat a man like a dog, one must first recognize him as a man') (22) transformed himself into a person capable of an autonomous bid for freedom. There was a symbolic overturning of all those characterizations of the Negro which form the basis of the first form of negativity: the passage from slave to person involves a form of creative negativity; that is, the negation of a state of injustice and unfreedom to a state of universal freedom. The existential crisis the slave must undergo to advance through fear and trembling to freedom is recognised and celebrated universally-Wordsworth's poem to Toussaint L'ouverture was a symbol of radical celebration of the Haitian revolution throughout Europe.

The Haitian revolution was an example of the slave forcing the recognition of his humanity upon a master determined to refuse it, and a contradiction of Hegel's characterization of the Negro in terms of mere sterile negativity.

Historically, the peculiar legal situation of the slave (i.e. one of essential lawlessness), ensures that any action by the slave intended to restore his humanity, is regarded by the planter as an act of negation. The slave soon learns that he is a victim of lawlessness: his situation is one of criminality. The ideological image of Blacks as criminals or potential criminals which persists today has its roots in slavery. From the earliest, slave-owning ideology had to justify absolute repression of the slaves with reference to the innate criminality of the Blacks: 'the Negroes', according to a memoir C.L.R.James cites, published in 1789, are said to be, 'unjust, cruel, barbarous, half-human, treacherous, deceitful, thieves, drunkards, proud, lazy, unclean, shameless, jealous to fury, and cowards.' (23) Clearly those are qualities attributable to people outside normal civil society. But of course the slaves were for all practical purposes outside the law, and outside society. The planters, as the masters on the spot were aware, if not the lawmakers in the metropolis, that they were engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the Negroes. The governor of Martinique declares in a letter: 'the safety of the whites demands that we keep the Negroes in the most profound ignorance. I have the reached the stage of believing firmly that one must treat the Negroes as one treats beasts.' (24)

In this grave struggle the planters knew that total repression and treatment of the Negroes as 'one treats beasts' would involve the criminalisation of the Blacks to the extent where they would then recognise that the law afforded them no protection. Reference to the innate criminality of the Blacks as a justification of slavery needed the thorough criminalisation of the Blacks through repression as a means of demonstrating this criminality. It was necessary to show the Blacks through capricious terror that recourse to the law was pointless in order to ensure the demonstration of their own lawless nature.

This does not mean that slaves did not make recourse to the law: on the contrary, slaves had to have an acute sense of legality; they learned that appeal to the law was their only support under a system which left them at a helpless disposition vis a vis the planter. Duncan Macleod in 'Slavery, Race

and the American Revolution' cites hundreds of cases where slaves sought support from the law in the teeth of White slave-owning opposition:

'Hundreds of slaves were freed by the direct action of the courts and hundreds of others were stimulated to abscond from their masters in order to place their own cases before the courts or merely to assert their own freedom.' (25)

Dr. Eric Williams in 'Capitalism and Slavery' refers to the astuteness of the Caribbean slaves regarding their situation, and the closeness with which they kept in touch with happenings in London which might affect their legal status:

> The consensus of opinion among the slaves, whenever each new discussion arose or each new policy was announced, was that emancipation had been passed in England but was withheld by their master ....All over the West Indies the slaves were asking 'why bacchra no do that king bid him?' So deeply was the idea embedded in the minds of the slaves that some great benefit was intended for them by the home government (in England) in opposition to their masters that they eagerly seized upon every trifling circumstance in confirmation. (26)

Nonetheless the slaves soon learned that the very law which protected other workers regarded them as outlaws the moment they attempted the most basic act towards restoration of their humanity: full restoration would mean absolute illegality and total embrace of their image of negativity.

Internationally, the image of the Black which circulated after the San Domingue revolution was not only that of a criminal, but a dangerous revolutionary. The creative negativity of the Black's revolt in San Domingue, that is its symbolic value for Blacks elsewhere was recognised by astute political commentators at the time. After the Denmark Vesey plot, (27.)which was understood at the time to have been inspired by the Haitian uprising, Edwin Clifford Holland described the Blacks as 'Jacobins':

Let it never be forgotten that our Negroes are freely the Jacobins of the country; that they are the Anarchists and the Domestic enemy: the common enemy of civilized society, and the barbarians who would if they could, become the destroyers of our race. (28)

The term 'Jacobin' was an unconscious acknowledgement of the far-reaching and international nature of the San Domingue revolution, a grudging recognition of the 'political respectability' of Negro negativity. As Eugene Genovese notes, the term connected the Negro revolution to the international revolutions of the period:

For a decade and more the Haïtian revolution proclaimed something new to Afro-America, as the American and French revolutions had to Euro-America. More accurately, these revolutions formed a single process that spoke to the whole world and signalled the beginning of a new era. The French Revolution, especially the Jacobinism that reshaped the course of history.......would have developed differently had the colonial question, posed with special urgency in Saint Domingue, not intervened.........the revolutionary ideology that emerged in the 1790s was fed from both sides of the Atlantic. It Africanized France in ways that helped send the colonist Girondists to a well deserved fate; it Europeanized Saint Domingue in ways that pointed toward the rise of a modern state. (29)

Having examined some of the historical reasons for the connection of Blacks with social negativity and political menace a consideration of Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic will enable us to examine the situation of Blacks from a philosophical perspective. According to Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic it is only through a complete embrace and understanding of the lived negativity of slavery that the slave is able eventually to overcome it. It is this act of overcoming negativity, manifesting itself as positive activity towards freedom, which labels the slave as a dangerous potential revolutionary. What the slave's enemies recognise at this stage is his willingness to pay the ultimate price for the realisation of freedom; it is in this sense that he becomes the image of negativity.

In order to consider how the slave justifiably acquires this reputation it is necessary to make an extensive examination of Hegel's dialectic. Hegel's dialectic represents a stage in the development of consciousness, on the road to universal selfconsciousness. It has been criticised by Sartre as idealist (in 'Critique of Dialectical Reason') (30) and Hegel himself admitted that it represented a primitive stage in human development, when men occur as 'single separate individuals'.

As separate individual consciousnesses each consciousness is dissatisfied and cannot attain full self-consciousness until it is recognised by another self-consciousness. When two consciousnesses meet, a series of contradictions are put into process:

> On the one hand, the 'I' is wholly universal, absolutely pervasive, and uninterrupted by no limit, is the universal essence common to all men, the two mutually related selves therefore constituting one identity, constituting so to speak, one light; on the other hand, they are also two selves rigidly and unyeildingly confronting each other, each existing as a reflection-into-self, as absolutely distinct from and impenetrable by the other. (31)

The contradictions arise from the treatment of each other as immediate thing-like objects instead of as free existences. The contradictions would be overcome, Hegel declares, if the two consciousnesses were to recognise the

mutual essence of the Other, that is, his freedom, and were willingly to undertake to treat the Other according to this essence:

> ....only in such a manner is true freedom realised; for since this consists in my identity with the other, I am only truly free when the other is also free and is recognised by me as free. This freedom of one in the other unites men in an inward manner, whereas needs and necessity bring them together only externally. (32)

Instead of the overcoming of these contradictions, each consciousness seeks the annihilation of the Other in its bid for recognition. The result is a battle in which each puts the Other in peril. In this life-and-death struggle, the death of one of the combatants does not end the problem of recognition, although it ends the rude immediacy of one party. The contradictions set up by the absence of full recognition remains with the death of either of the combatants, 'for the survivor receives just as little recognition as the dead.' (33) Life is as necessary to the solution of the problem as freedom. The fight ends in a partial negation with inequality. One side prefers life to freedom, surrendering his right to recognition, while the other gains recognition as the master. It is out of this unequal resolution that the status of master and slave arises, setting in train the dialectic which is to end in favour of the slave.

The status of master and slave is only a partial resolution of the contradictions inherent between the two consciousnesses. The master subjugates the will of the slave and has it working at his disposal. He is able to enjoy the products of the work of the slave, but fails to win the recognition he seeks since a despised slave cannot give him true recognition. His sense of worth therefore remains unfulfilled:

> As long as the natural state of life persists on both sides, the self-will of the slave surrenders itself to that of the master, receives for its content the purposes of its master who, on his part, receives into his self-consciousness, not the slave's will, but only care for the support of the slave's physical life; in such a manner that in this relationship the realised identity of the self-consciousness of the subjects, in

relation is achieved only onesidedly.' (34)

According to Wilfried Ver Eecke Hegel concludes at this point that the master has failed to create a way of life which will satisfy his desire: 'Because it is the purpose of Hegel to find a figure who is what he wishes to be, it is natural that Hegel drops the figure of the master after concluding to its failure.' (35) For Jean Hyppolite in 'Genesis and Structure of Hegel's "Phenomenology of the spirit" ': 'the path of mastery is a dead end in human experience; the path of servitude is the true path of human liberation.' (36) It is more accurate however to say that Hegel describes in the master's state one moment of freedom, that of 'the negativity of egotistic individuality', within the somewhat abstract terms of his analysis. In order to continue his analysis he must leave that negative moment of freedom of the master and move on to the analysis of the slave's situation.

With reference to the slave's situation Jean Hyppolite notes that the slave is the slave of life, rather than the master, for the slave is a slave because he chose servitude and life rather than risk death in the original struggle with the Other. What he gradually learns, and what the master was not interested in learning, is that life is essential to freedom. Freedom becomes a project to be realised rather than an immediate given, to be realised in fear, servitude and labour. The slave encounters the realities of the world, of life, of objects, in this project towards liberation. For the master, 'the independence of the being of life and resistance of the world to desire do not exist.' (37) The master appears to the slave as Truth, as a truth external to himself. But this truth is also within the slave, for he has known fear, has feared death, has encountered uncertainty and Kierkegaardian 'dread', that primordial, uncharacterizable fear: 'this consciousness experienced anguish not concerning this or that thing, not at this or that instant, but concerning the entirety of its essence, for it has felt the fear of death, the absolute master.'(38) The slave is thus able to attain self-consciousness through a process in which he encounters the whole meaning of life:

Human consciousness can take shape only through this anguish

throughout the *whole* of its being. At that point, specific attachments, the dispersion of life in more or less stable forms, disappear, in that fear man becomes cognizant of the totality of his being, a totality never given as such in inorganic life. (Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: Jean Hyppolite) (39)

In the act of overcoming fear, the slave becomes fearless; in the struggles with reality, through labour, the slave acquires the capacity for constant struggle. He learns that struggle is the only means of realising liberation. He is prepared for the absolute risk-death-in his project towards freedom. For the Other, the master who recognises this capacity in the slave, it is the slave who now becomes the object of fear: this strange being, forged in fear and struggle becomes frightening in his new-found capacity, and willingness to risk all; he becomes unknowable. C.L.R.James recounts in 'The Black Jacobins' that during the most ferocious fighting in the Haitian war of independence, a Black woman admonished her quailing companion thus:

"You do not know how sweet it is to die for liberty!" And refusing to allow herself to be hanged by the executioner, she took the rope and hanged herself. To her daughters going to execution with her, another woman gave courage: "Be glad you will not be the mothers of slaves." The French, powerless before this fortitude, saw in it not the strength of the revolution but some peculiarity special to Blacks. The muscles of a Negro they said, contracted with so much force as to make him insensible to pain. They enslaved the Negro, they said, because he was not a man, and when he behaved like a man they called him a monster. (40)

James cites many examples in 'The Black Jacobins' of the sacrifices which the ex-slaves were prepared to make for freedom which rendered them incomprehensible to their former masters:

Half a century later Lemmonier-Delafosse (who believed in slavery) wrote in his memoirs: 'But what men these blacks are! How they fight and how they die! One has to make war against them to know their reckless courage in braving danger when they can no longer have recourse to stratagem. I have seen a solid column, torn by grape-shot from four pieces of cannon, advance without making a retrograde step. The more they fell, the greater seemed to be the courage of the rest. (41)

It is not only the ex-slave's psychology that the former master cannot understand when combined with his determination to destroy the given social reality, the ex-slave becomes the very embodiment of negation. For the master, the slave's assumption of negativity arises from the fact that he, the master, stuck in the original negativity of egotistic individualism, as described by Hegel, cannot understand the power of the slave's positive bid for freedom. He ascribes the slaves's actions to the workings of perversity. The truth is that it is the master, engrossed within the enchantments of his reactionary horizon, who is incapable of understanding the march of events. Circumscribed by the privileges of the given, and the limitations of his

egotism, he cannot understand the slave's negation of the given: to the master, negation of his world constitutes absolute negation; this he connects with the slave. For the slave, freedom necessitates the destruction of the given which is the ground and condition of his slavery; hence the slave's justifiable image as an agent of negation.

The counter to the slave's unknowability at the point of revolt is the master's conceit-'knowledge' of the slave. Most slave-owning societies, Duncan Macleod notes, propagate the ideology of the 'happy slave', the 'docile, useful and happy' slave, at least if 'well managed'. (42) Part of the prevailing ideology of the slave owners was their 'knowledge' of their slaves as opposed to the ignorant distance of the do-gooding abolitionists and trouble makers. Some owners in the Southern states of America coupled fondness with this 'knowledge'. Yet more often than not it was the most trusted and familiar slave who turned out the most unknowable.

No one has conveyed the ironies of the master's 'knowledge' of the Negro

more acutely than Herman Melville in his short story 'Benito Cereno'. Captain Delano is the perennial quiet American: honest, kind, with a homespun knowledge of Negroes. No matter what strange situation he finds himself in relation to Negroes he reverts to the familiar in the act of defining them: his 'knowledge' is a protective suit which he dons in situations where it is the unknowability of the Negro which assails him.

From the early sighting of the fog-enclosed ship the captain is faced with a constantly shifting series of appearances whose unfamiliarity he endeavours to resolve. Upon first appearance the ship seems 'a whitewashed monastery after a thunderstorm, seen perched upon some dun cliff among the Pyrenees', and its Negroes 'black friars pacing the cloisters'. (43) Upon closer approach the captain fancies he discerns the 'real' nature of the ship, a Spanish merchantman, 'carrying negro slaves, amongst other valuable freight.' (44) But as we are to learn later, what the captain takes to be the 'true character' of the ship is another misinterpretation: for these are Negro slaves who have made themselves masters of the ship, and have forced its Spanish captain into an elaborate charade confounding familiarity and unfamiliarity, knowledge and appearance.

Bemused by the menacing and unfathomable behaviour of the Blacks and captain Don Benito's inexplicable tolerance, Delano clings desperately to his knowledge of the 'proper' relations between the races. Observing the relationship between Babo the Black slave, and his captain, 'the black upholding the white', he muses upon 'the beauty of that relationship which could present such a spectacle of fidelity on the one hand and confidence on the other.' (45) Delano likes Negroes and treats them with the familiarity of 'Newfoundland dogs' in 'normal' circumstances; these being strange circumstances, he nonetheless clings to the reassuring notion that Don Benito could not be 'so far renegade' as to act in complicity with Blacks against his colour. For the Negroes, they are incapable of dissimulation: 'they were too stupid.' In mulling over the strange behaviour of the Blacks it is Don Benito therefore whom he suspects; hasn't Don Benito praised the Blacks and maligned his own sailors? The Whites being 'by nature', 'the shrewder race', 'a man with some evil design, would he not be likely to speak well of that stupidity which was blind to his depravity, and malign that intelligence from which it might not be hidden?' (46)

Events conspire both to confuse and reassure Delano; the more befuddled he becomes by the growing strangeness of Don Benito's behaviour, controlled by the elaborate masque which Babo has organised, the more he seeks for reassurance in his experience of Blacks, a series of accumulations over the years which convinces him of their established role in slave society. It is established legend that Blacks make excellent servants: 'most negroes are natural valets and hair-dressers' they perform with tact and discretion, 'gliding briskness, not ungraceful in its way, singularly pleasing to behold, and still more so to be the manipulated subject of.' (47) The 'natural' docility of the Negro, 'arising from the unaspiring contentment of a limited mind, and that susceptibility of bland attachment sometimes inhering in indisputable inferiors,' which leads hypochondriacs like Johnson and Byron to cling to their Black servants, 'almost to the exclusion of the entire white race'. is, for this White gentleman from Massachusetts a social fact which enables him to 'read' some of the actions of the Negroes on board ship as social events almost 'natural' in their setting: indeed he uses metaphors of nature to describe their actions. A sleepy Black woman suckling her child becomes, 'a doe in the shade of a woodland rock. Sprawling at her lapped breasts, was her wide-awake fawn, stark naked, its black little body half lifted from the deck, crosswise with its dam's; its hands, like two paws, clambering upon her; its mouth and nose ineffectually resting to get at the mark; and meantime giving a vexatious half-grunt, blending with the composed snore of the negress.' (48) The pastoral clichés betray the unoriginality of unreflective ideology, as does his remarks about the other negresses: 'tender of heart and tough of constitution.' It is these negresses who, he will later learn, were 'knowing to the revolt, and testified themselves satisfied at the death of their master, Don Alexandro ; that, had the negroes not restrained them, they would have tortured to death instead of simply killing, the spaniards slain by command of the negro Babo.' (49)

Just as his 'knowledge' of the 'natural' maternal instincts of negresses blinds him to the truth about the Black women on board the slave ship, so his understanding of the relationship between Babo and Don Benito leads him to the conclusion that it is almost a love relationship (at one point he perceives a 'fight' between Babo and Don Benito where they both 'draw blood' as 'a sort of love-quarrel'). What he is incapable of registering, due to his immersion in the values of slavery [his: 'ah, this slavery breeds ugly passions in man,' (50)

63

is equivalent to a disingenuous sigh] is slavery's capacity to subvert the relationship between the races. Thus he misinterprets the deadly battle between Babo and Don Benito as a complex, almost homosexual intrigue.

His bland reflection of racist ideology extends to everyone. Delano suspects Don Benito almost till the last, until Don Benito jumps into the water, of conspiring against him, for are not spaniards reputedly inclined towards conspiracy? Melville throughout the story holds up for display the deadliness of the bland characterization of racism. Delano's good-humoured 'innocence' is really a blind complacency seeking to protect itself against awareness of the underlying violence of slavery and its resultant racism. Everywhere on board the ship Delano encounters menace and threat amongst the Blacks: from the clashing of hatchets, the 'noisy indocility of the blacks,' the attack of the Black boys against the young Spaniards with its copious drawing of blood; Delano observes these events incapable of connecting them with the violence at the heart of slavery. When he encounters a lawless situation his recourse is to appeal to the 'master' Don Benito to restore 'law'. Incapable of understanding the lawlessness of slavery itself, never does it occur to him that he has stumbled upon a situation of hidden lawlessness presided over by Babo rather than Don Benito.

It is clear towards the end of the story that Delano is confused by the reversal of the usual configurations of his system for encountering the world: thus the boat is controlled by the Black 'slave' rather than the White 'master'. Babo is a small man who is all intellect: it is 'his brain (that hive of subtlety) not body' which schemes and leads the plot. When captured he yields easily to *Delano's* superior muscular strength. The usual ideological configurations concerning Blacks and Whites are reversed. Delano's 'knowledge' is a cloak protecting him from the negativity underlying slavery; the unknowability of the uprisen Black is nothing but this negativity.

Babo is symbolic of the Black as absolute, but creative negativity, forged by slavery into the person who is prepared to risk all for freedom: it is this residue of negativity which Blacks, as those who were once enslaved by Euro-America carry in that culture whose racist structure has modified but not fundamentally altered with time.

This tendency towards negation of a repressive status quo turns, in post

slavery society to political rejection of an unjust social order, and what I call creative negativity. This aspect of Negro negativity is less acknowledged in Western culture, due undoubtedly to the pervasive and centuries-old image of the Negro which is associated with the first form of negativity. It has of course suited the propagandists of capitalism since the beginnings of slavery to concentrate on the image of the Negro as sterile negativity, but Negro oppositionism has always had its champions among White dissenters: from the supporters of the dubious concept of noble savagery and its reverse racism, to the supporters of the revolutionary vision of Jazz, to such figures as Sartre who hailed Negritude poetry as 'the only great revolutionary poetry written today', (1948) (51) to Herbert Marcuse, who in 'One Dimensional Man' assimilated the Negro with those perpetrating the 'absolute refusal', that is, rejection of the repressive consensual social machine:

> They exist outside the democratic process; their life is the most immediate and the most real need for ending intolerable conditions and institutions. Thus their opposition hits the system from without and is therefore not deflected by the system; it is an elementary force which violates the rules of the game, and, in doing so, reveals it as a rigged game. When they get together and go out into the streets, without arms, without protection, in order to ask for the most primitive civil rights, they know that they face dogs, stones, and bombs jail, concentration camps, even death. Their force is behind every political demonstration for the victims of law and order. (52)

Norman Mailer associates the American Negro's creative negativity with existential courage and an essential oppositionism towards bourgeois humanism. In 'The White Negro' Mailer portrays the 'American existentialist', the White hypster as seeking a knowledge and existential truth within the province of the Negro:

> Any Negro who wishes to live must live with danger from the first day, and no experience can ever be casual to him, no Negro can saunter down a street with any real certainty that violence will not visit him on his walk. The cameos of security for the average white:

mother and the home, job and the family, are not even a mockery to millions of Negroes; they are impossible. The Negro has the simplest of alternatives: live a life of constant humility or ever-threatening danger. In such a pass where paranoia is as vital to survival as blood, the Negro had stayed alive and begun to grow by following the needs of his body where he could. Knowing in the cells of his existence that life was war, nothing but war, the Negro (all exceptions admitted) could rarely afford the sophisticated inhibitions of civilization, and so he kept for his survival the art of the primitive, he lived in the enormous present, he subsisted for his Saturday night kicks, relinquishing the pleasures of the mind for the more obligatory pleasures of the body, and in his music he gave voice to the character and quality of his existence, to his rage and the infinite variations of joy, lust, languor, growl, cramp, pinch, scream and despair of his orgasm. (53)

Some relic of noble savagery languishes in this portrait of the Negro of course ('.......he kept for his survival the art of the primitive......') but the resonance which bursts through is a sense of enormous possibilities for the Negro's contribution in the battle for the sensibilities of young America: 'In such places as Greenwich Village, a *ménage-à-trois* was completed-the bohemian and the juvenile delinquent came face-to-face with the Negro, and the hipster was a fact in American life........And in this wedding of the white and the black it was the Negro who brought the cultural dowry.' (54) For Mailer the Negro's contribution lies in the infusion of young America with an existential experiential method powerful enough to challenge the values of bourgeois America. Once again there is a certain sentimentality at the heart of this contrast which refers back to noble savagery but also a sense of the possibilities for a re-configuration of sensibilities which could challenge the future of the American social scene:

It is obviously not very possible to speculate with sharp focus on the future of the hipster. Certain possibilities must be evident, however, and the most central is that the organic growth of Hip depends on whether the Negro emerges as a dominating force in American life.

Since the Negro knows more about the ugliness and danger of life than the white, it is probable that if the Negro can win his equality, he will possess a potential superiority, a superiority so feared that the fear itself has become the underground drama of domestic politics. (55)

For Mailer the prospects for this creative form of Negro negativity are fearful, unknown and exciting:

A time of violence, near hysteria, confusion and rebellion will then be likely to replace the time of conformity. At that time, if the liberal should prove realistic in his belief that there is peaceful room for every tendency in American life, then Hip would end by being absorbed as a colourful figure in the tapestry. But if this is not the reality, and the economic, the social, the psychological, and finally the moral crises accompanying the rise of the Negro should prove insupportable, then a time is coming when every political guidepost will be gone.........(56)

The possibilities for this Negro negativity was of course manifest during the late sixties and early seventies in America, the era of 'Black is beautiful' echoing the 'it is good and beautiful to be Black' of the thirties Negritude movement, of the Black Panthers, George Jackson, Angela Davis; these figures represented prospects for America's future which White liberals were only dimly and fearfully prepared to contemplate but which had echoes of Mailer's pronostications in 'The White Negro'.

In his introduction to the prison letters of George Jackson, 'Soledad Brother', Jean Genet refers to the possibilities for this Negro negativity in Mailer's terms, as an apocalyptic response to the willed oppression of American life:

The revolutionary enterprise of the American black, it seems, can

come into being only out of resentment and hatred, that is, by rejecting with disgust, with rage, but radically, the values venerated by the whites, although this enterprise can continue only starting from a common language, at first rejected, finally accepted, in which the words will no longer serve concepts inculpated by the whites, but new concepts. (57)

Genet's conception of Black negativity here is associated with the *active* role of Black Americans as a revolutionary force:

We have known for a long time now that the black man is, from the start, natively, the guilty man. We can be sure that if the blacks, by the use of their violence, their intelligence, their poetry, all that they have accumulated for centuries while observing their former masters in silence and in secrecy-if the blacks do not undertake their own liberation, the whites will not make a move.(58)

In 'An Essay on Liberation' Herbert Marcuse refers to the cultural equivalent of the political negativity to which Mailer and Genet allude in his reference to the Blacks' appropriation and reversal of certain central concepts in the Western tradition:

.........the blacks 'take over' some of the most sublime and sublimated concepts of Western civilization, desublimate them, and define them. For example, the 'soul' (in its essence lily-white ever since Plato), the traditional seat of everything that is truly human in man, tender, deep, immortal-the word which has become embarrassing, corny, false in the established universe of discourse, has been desublimated and in this transubstantiation, migrated to the Negro culture: they are soul brother; the soul is black, violent, orgiastic; it is no longer in Beethoven, Schubert, but in the blues, in jazz, in rock 'n' roll, in 'soul food'. Similarly the slogan 'black is beautiful' redefines another central concept of the traditional culture by reversing its symbolic

value and associating it with the anti-colour of darkness, tabooed magic, the uncanny. (59)

But he also indicates the difficulty which Blacks have in inaugurating a new sensibility via their new-found creative negativity, for while 'these political manifestations [such as the reversal of traditional concepts: my parenthesis] of a new sensibility indicate the depth of the rebellion, of the rupture with the continuum of repression', (60) they also,

> ....bear witness to the power of the society in shaping the whole of experience, the whole metabolism between the organism and its environment. Beyond the historical ones: the objects which the senses confront and apprehend are the products of a specific stage of civilization and of a specific society, and the senses in turn are geared to their objects. This historical interrelation affects even the primary sensations: an established society imposes upon all its members the same medium of perception; and through all the differences of individual and class perspectives, horizons, backgrounds, society provides the same general universe of experience. (61)

For it is that society which has established in its members 'the same general universe of experience' through which they have perceived the Negro hitherto, which the Negro seeks to affect. If the Negro as evil negativity has been created in the consciousness of the White Euro-American through the 'power of society in shaping the whole of experience' and if this concept of the Negro is based, as Frantz Fanon claims upon the Negro as the 'Other...........the unidentifiable, the unassimilable', (62) it is not surprising that the view of Negro negativity which is based upon his body, rather than his actions, his Being rather than his Doing, is the one which has greater sway in Western culture. The view of the Negro as the 'embodiment of sin' is based upon his colour, fantasies about his sexuality, his slave past, on race theories, all of which place stress upon his 'biological image', and has a longer historical resonance than the view of the Negro as a creative negativity.

As the Black perspective on Negro negativity, theorists such as Frantz Fanon have emphasised what the Negro has always envisaged from the Haitian revolution to later decolonialization, that is, the central political and cultural importance of Black negativity. The putatively revolutionary class in Euro-America according to Marxist analysis, the White working class, joined the bourgeois ruling class years ago, partly due to the spin-off of benefits to be enjoyed from bourgeois exploitation of its colonies. They have driven the foremost critical social theorists to despair. Marcuse can only envisage a discarded under-class, as challenge to a repressive American societal system, 'the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races', for, ' "the people" (the working class: my parenthesis) have "moved up" to become the ferment of social cohesion. Here rather than in the redistribution of wealth and equalisation of classes is the new stratification characteristic of advanced industrial society.' (63) The working class is no longer the truth of bourgeois society as Marx envisaged; it is the Blacks who are acknowledged as taking on the mantle of the negative.

The working class has joined the bourgeoisie in paying homage to the values of a sham humanism. In his preface to Fanon's 'The Wretched of the Earth' Sartre emphasises that the whole of Euro-America, proletariat and high minded intellectuals, have benefitted from the exploitation of the 'third world' for the creation of its bogus humanism:

> You know well enough that we are exploiters. You know too that we
> have laid hands on first the gold and metals, then the petroleum of the
> 'new continents', and that we have brought them back to the old
> countries. This was not without excellent results, as witness our
> palaces, our cathedrals and our great industrial cities; and then when
> there was the threat of a slump, the colonial markets were there to
> soften the blow or to divert it. Crammed with riches Europe accorded
> the human status de jure to its inhabitants. With us, to be a man is to
> be an accomplice of colonialism, since all of us without exception
> have profited by colonial exploitation. (64)

This humanism has not of course included the exploited of the colonies, nor

has it traditionally included the exploited races within Euro-America itself. From the abolition of slavery onwards, after which they were nominally 'free' to sell their labour, Blacks have endured the status of colonial peoples within the metropolitan areas themselves, so that although a small minority of the Black middle class may have attempted to throw in their lot with the White bourgeoisie, the majority of Blacks have recognised the common cause they share with Blacks in the third world.'Thus Black negativity in Euro-America has been maintained by its recognition of its common interest with the revolutionary movements in the third world, in short by its universalism, in common cause with the oppressed across national and cultural boundaries, even with the White oppressed within the metropolitan areas themselves. The Black has moved from the derisive position of 'victim' associated with the period of slavery to that of a challenger of the status quo.

To conclude: the image of the Negro in Euro-American culture may be divided into two aspects of negativity. The first form of this negativity represents an attempt at dehumanization and dismissal of the Negro into the category of what Sartre calls 'the anti-human'. All workers were thus labelled under capitalism in its infancy, as Sartre argues in 'Critique of Dialectical Reason', (65) but the White worker was 'free' to sell his labour and was thereby partly able to disguise the sham humanism of the bourgeois owners of capital; the Negro under slavery, and colonialism, suffered and thereby exposed, the naked negativity of bourgeois exploitation thus inheriting its image.

The second aspect of Negro negativity is more complex and difficult to define, since in an important sense it has operated under the shadow of the first. It has been obscured by abolitionists, (of slavery) liberals, and 'humanists', all with their fond notions of the nature of the Negro. It has been left fittingly, to Negro theorists like C.L.R. James, and Fanon to recuperate the political importance of Negro negativity. Sartre is one of the few among Euro-American thinkers to have recognised the enormous revelatory importance of Negro negativity in exposing the sham and empty values of the European tradition.

In the next chapter I shall examine the 'illustration' of these two views of Blacks in Euro-American literature.

References

1 W.F. Hegel. 'Philosophy of Mind', (Being Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of The Philosophical Sciences (1830). Trans. by William Wallace, Oxford at the Clarendon Press. (1971). Zusatz, p175.

2 William Wordsworth. 'The Poetical Works', London: Simpkin Marshall & Co. (London 1867). p444.

3 C.L.R. James, 'The Black Jacobins', Vintage Press. (N. York1962).

4 Norman Mailer, 'The White Negro' from 'Advertisements for Myself', Andre Deutsch, (London 1961).

5 M.I. Finley. 'Democracy Ancient and Modern. The Hogarth Press, (London,1985), p104.

6 Duncan Macleod 'Slavery, Race and the American Revolution', CUP. (London1974). (see ch.4).

7 P.D. Curtin, 'The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850'. (Vol. 1.) University of Wisconsin Press. (1964), p23.

8 Op. Cit. p23-24.

9 Op. Cit. p32.
10 Op. Cit. pp30-31.
11 Edward W.Said, 'Orientalism', Routledge & Kegan Paul, (London1987), p67
12 W.F. Hegel's, 'Philosphy of Mind', (Being Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of The Philosophical Sciences (1830) Foreward by William Wallace, pXII
13 Op. Cit. ppX111
14 P.D. Curtin,'The Image of Africa', p30.
15 F. W.Hegel, 'Philosophy of History', Dover Publications Inc. (N. York 1956,) pp91-92.
16 Op. Cit. p92.
17 Op. Cit. p93.
18 Op. Cit. p95.
19 Op. Cit. p93.
20 Op. Cit. p99.
21 Ibid.

22 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Critique of Dialectical Reason' Trans. by Alan Sheridan-Smith, Verso Press, (1978), p111.

23 C.L. R. James, 'The Black Jacobins', p17.

24 Ibid.

25 Duncan Macleod, 'Slavery, Race and the American Revolution' p122.

26 Eric Williams, 'Capitalism and Slavery', Andre Deutsch, (1975), p203.

27 E. Genovese, 'From Rebellion to Revolution' Louisiana State Univ. Press, (1979) p90. (The plan was to 'kill all the white men and children and all the black women save the young' in Martin County, North Carolina.)

28 Op. Cit. p96.

29 Op. Cit. p90.

30 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Critique of Dialectical Reason',Trans. by Alan Sheridan-Smith, Verso, (1982). (p158ff)

31 F. Hegel, 'Philosophy of Mind', pp 170-171.

32 Op. Cit. p171.

33 Op. Cit. p172.

34 Op. Cit. p173.

35 Wilfried Ver Eecke, 'Negativity and Subjectivity', Brussel: Paleis der Academiën, (1977). p162

36 Jean Hyppolyte 'Genesis and Structure of Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit" ', Trans. by Samuel Cherniak & J. Heckman. Northwestern Univ. Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy . (Evanston 1974). p174.(ff)

37 Op. Cit. p173.

38 Op. Cit. p175 (quote from Hegel)

39 Ibid.

40 C.L.R. James, 'The Black Jacobins' pp361-362.

41 Op. Cit. p368

42 Duncan Macleod', 'Slavery, Race and the American Revolution' p83.

43 Herman Melville, 'Benito Sereno' from, 'Billy Budd, Sailor and Other Stories', Penguin, (1985), p219.

44 Ibid.

45 Op. Cit. p231.

46 Op, Cit. p254.

47 Op. Cit. p264.

48 Op. Cit. p251.

49 Op. Cit. p301.

50 Op. Cit. p270.

51 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', Trans. by Arthur Gillette,'Stand' quarterly Magazine, (vol 5 no. 4). p3.

52 Herbert Marcuse, 'One Dimensional Man', Sphere Books, (London 1970), pp200-201.

53 Norman Mailer, 'The White Negro', in 'Advertisements For Myself", Published by André Deutsch (London) 1961 p285.

54 Ibid.

55 Op. Cit. p300.

56 Ibid.

57 Jean Genet, introduction to 'Soledad Brother', (The Prison Letters of George Jackson) Jonathan Cape and Penguin Books, (London, 1970), p22.

58 Op. Cit. p24.

59 Herbert Marcuse, 'An Essay on Liberation', Penguin Books: (London 1973) pp42-43.

60 Op. Cit. p43.

61 Ibid.

62 Frantz Fanon, 'Black Skin White Masks' Paladin Books, Trans. by Charles L. Markmann. (1972), p140, p114.

63 Herbert Marcuse 'One Dimensional Man', p200.

64 J.P. Sartre, preface to Franz Fanon's 'The Wretched Of The Earth', Penguin Books, Trans. by Constance Farrington, (London 1971), pp21-22.

65 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Critique Of Dialectical Reason', Book 11 ch. 8, pp735-818.

CHAPTER 2

SHAKESPEARE: TITUS ANDRONICUS, AND OTHELLO

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the manifestation of the Elizabethan view of Blacks
and Shakespeare's modification of it. I show that Shakespeare's Blacks from
'Titus Andronicus' to 'Othello' manifests his increasingly complex view of
Black negativity. In 'Othello' the Black is used to reveal the negativity *within*
society as well as in Othello himself.

By the time Shakespeare came to write 'Titus Andronicus' and 'Othello' the
notions circulating in Elizabethan England around 'Blackness' were already
well formed. As G.K. Hunter notes in 'Othello and Colour Prejudice', (1) the
evidence of mindless and total acceptance of the image of Black men as
devils was common in the use of 'Moors' or 'Morians' in civic pageants. There
were Moors in London Lord Mayors' pageants in 1519, 1521, 1524, 1536,
1541, 15551, 1589, 1609, 1611, 1624, who seem to have acted as bogey-man
figures to clear the way before the main procession.

By the early 1600's Moors were regarded as exotic but 'barbarous',
meaning, savage and cruel. (2) The Renaissance attitude towards Blacks as
essentially other, sometimes splendid and exotic, but with the innate capacity
for evil, was already in formation.

In 'Titus Andronicus' Shakespeare seems to present the Black man, the
Moor, using the image created by negativity of the first form, a representation
which is then challenged in 'Othello' using certain elements of negativity of
the second form. Aaron in 'Titus Andronicus' is the quintessential stage
villain, the epitome of the connection between Blackness and evil: as G.K.
Hunter notes, 'Shakespeare has the doubtful distinction of making explicit
here (perhaps for the first time in English literature) the projection of black
wickedness in terms of negro sexuality'. (3) Shakespeare was here probably
the originator, long before its time, of a twentieth century tendency, that is,
the recognition of the death of the Platonic Eros, and the inauguration, as

75

Antonin Artaud suggests, of the modern connection between blackness and sexual freedom. Artaud notes:

> Now one may say all true freedom is dark, without knowing exactly why. For the Platonic Eros, the genetic meaning of a free life, disappeared long ago beneath the turbid surface of the Libido which we associate with everything sullied, despicable and ignominious in the fact of living...... (4)

Aaron is representative of a force or tendency connecting darkness and sexual excess to which Tamora readily succumbs. All this is conveyed in their most poignant meeting:

> And after conflict, such as was suppos'd
> The wand'ring prince and Dido once enjoyed,
> When with a happy storm they were surpris'd,
> And curtain'd with a counsel-keeping cave,
> We may, each wreathed in the other's arms,
> Our pastimes done, possess a golden slumber.......' (5)

Generally Aaron behaves as the perennial stage villain who, as Auden suggests in 'The Joker in the Pack', (6) enacts evil for its own sake, as an experimenter:

> But I have done a thousand things
> As willingly as one would kill a fly,
> And nothing grieves me heartily indeed
> But that I cannot do ten thousand more. (7)

In 'Othello' Shakespeare challenges his gothic thesis of the Black man as pure negativity suggested in 'Titus Andronicus': he produces a new synthesis suggesting the great complexity of the relations between Black and White. The stage Black villain of 'Titus..........' is replaced in 'Othello' by the many-sided and realistic White villain, the unalloyed lust which forms the basis of the relationship between Tamora and Aaron is replaced by the spiritualised,

poignant sexual relationship between Othello and Desdemona-in marriage. Aaron is the Black outsider who deceives and manipulates the White characters in the play, releasing all their potentialities for violence and murder; Iago is the White Venetian insider who manages to deceive all the other White Venetians as well as the Black outsider, releasing out of Othello his own murderous fears and uncertainties. In 'Titus........' things are comparatively 'cut and dry', truth is simpler: as if to symbolise this, the product of the sexual relationship between Aaron and Tamora is a Black boy; he has neither the colour nor the sex of Tamora, thus enabling her sons to desire his murder legitimately as an outsize and forbidden product of their mother's monstrous behavior. Othello is a Black man with a simple soul; Desdemona 'saw his visage in his mind'. She also is a comparative innocent against the sophistication of Venetian society. Iago is the White villain with a black mind who deceives both Black and White innocents.

Venetian society is one built on trade, political cunning and courtesanship, with a potential for violence and disorder (of which we obtain a glimpse as Iago rouses Brabantio against Othello for having married his daughter). It is those values Othello is most urgently called upon to defend, albeit at the colonial outpost of Cyprus. Cyprus, threatened by the Turks, is the symbolic soft underbelly of Venice: it is there that the violence manifest as potential in Venice actualises itself as an exaggerated version of the violence contained and diverted by urgent political and military matters in Venice. The colonial outpost serves as a distorted and caricatured image of values present in the metropolis.

Othello then is the agent of negativity carrying within himself, and on himself as a Black stranger, the seeds of negativity which lie near the surface of Venetian society.

Iago is pure 'honest' negation, untied to any sense of values except the exercise of his will. As such, W.H. Auden plausibly suggests that Iago is like Aaron all too representative of a type of 'joker in the pack' of civilised society, of the experimental ethos in the West, the blind will to know even to the extent of self-destruction and destruction of the object.

Othello is Iago's experimental object and, one of Iago's main weapons is his native knowledge of Venetian society, in particular its racism and

hypocrisy. This is what enables him to speak 'honestly' to Othello, treating this racism as a reality, even when plain speaking includes a not-so-veiled insult:

> Ay, there's the point: as, to be bold with you,
> Not to affect many proposed matches
> Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,
> Whereto we see in all things nature tends,
> Foh! One may smell in such a will most rank,
> Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural........(8)

Iago can feel 'bold' enough to reproduce the most offensive 'natural' (sic) prejudices of a racist society because he is doing no more than that, repeating and reproducing the language reflective of 'a form of life' in which he is thoroughly steeped.

Othello's awareness of Iago's knowledge of the negativity at the heart of Venetian society rouses the negation and fear present in his unconscious as a Black stranger in a sophisticated society. At the beginning of the play we see Iago rousing Brabantio's people against Othello: a powerful sense of, and reason for his uneasiness is suggested early on. One cannot agree with C.L.R. James therefore that, 'the senate has no consciousness whatever of his colour'. (9)

Othello is made unequivocally aware of his position before the senate by Brabantio's accusation of witchcraft in subduing his daughter, his suggestion of the unnaturalness of her marriage to a man she should properly and naturally (sic) 'fear to look upon'. Everything Othello learns at this stage conjoins to reinforce his uneasy awareness of the pervasive acceptability of racism in Venetian society: it is this knowledge upon which Iago the experimenter will play later on the exotic and turbulent shores of a colonial outpost where it can assume monstrous and exarggerated shapes.

The negativity of Venetian society manifests itself early on in the play to Othello as a perturbing ambiguity and irony. At first this ambiguity is playful and humorous. We see it in Othello's apparent indifference to, or ignorance of social mores, manifest in his speech, within which it is possible to discern the sophisticated voice of the Other in the innocence of Othello's own reports.

Thus it is possible to discern the voice of the subtle Venetian coquette in the report of his wooing of Desdemona. One can in fact discern a complementary wooing, her wooing of him:

> She wished she had not heard it; yet she wished
>
> That heaven had made her such a man. She thanked me,
> And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,
> I should but teach him how to tell my story,
> And that would woo her. (10)

In his report of the beginnings of friendship between himself and Brabantio it is possible to detect the Venetian's urbane interest in the exotic tale of the Black man from the wild culture; to detect also that the relationship was not one of friendship. The Black general was invited to elaborate upon his story as the gilded and unworldly stranger, nothing more:

> Her father loved me, oft invited me,
> Still questioned me the story of my life
> From year to year-the battles, sieges, fortunes
> That I have passed.
> I ran it through, even from my boyish days
> To th'very moment that he bade me tell it.......(11)

If negativity assumes the form of ambiguity and irony at first, it will later, within Othello, turn into a perturbation which destroys judgement. Othello's situation universalizes that of the Black immigrant in any alien society: his is a negative presence which reveals much of the negativity within the society itself. Thus the play implicitly draws the audience either in Shakespeare's time, or our own time, ineluctably into his situation in the full Sartrean sense, (12) since the audience must use its awareness of the racism within its society in order to feel the complete impact of Othello's situation. Unlike the closed world of 'Macbeth' say, 'Othello' opens up the debates between the characters and relies upon the uneasinesses of its White audience. Thus, as G.K. Hunter suggests, the audience is uniquely involved in the play:

Our involvement in prejudice gives us a double focus on his (Othello's) reality. We admire him-I fear that one has to be trained as a literary critic to find him unadmirable-but we are aware of the difficulty of sustaining that vision of the golden world of poetry; and this is so because we feel the disproportion and the difficulty of his social life and of his marriage (as a social act). We are aware of the uneasy responses that Iago can command, not only of people on the stage but also in the audience. (13)

In this involvement the audience must come to terms with the complex and contradictory ideologies connected with colour and race coursing through its own society.

Othello's perturbation is based not only on his ignorance of Venetian society but on his literal-mindedness, his inability to fully 'read' reality. G.M. Matthews notes in "'Othello' and the Dignity of Man": that his (Othello's) ignorance is a counterpoint to his belief in Iago's knowledge of Venetian society. Yet it is impossible to believe that Othello is entirely ignorant of the extent of racism in Venetian society. We see him powerfully confronted with it in the person of Brabantio at the start of the play. Given his nobility of soul, it is possible, as a Black person to understand Othello's *confusion* in the face of such racism. The first encounter with the full force of racism produces in the Black person an element of shock in the face of the irrational: this shock can engender confusion. It is only his love for Desdemona he says which induces him to marry into Venetian society, to give up his 'unhoused free condition.' He is acquainted with the racism of Venetian society but does not fully understand its sophistication: what he does know only confuses him: he is 'perplexed in the extreme'.

As a soldier Othello is above all a believer in facts, a 'facts-and-figures' man: he does not care for the values of ideology. He is employed as a mercenary in a complex society but he would rather stay out of its ideologies. He opposes the infidel Turks only as the immediate enemy. Othello is trapped by Iago precisely because he thinks Iago possesses knowledge of his society's ideologies and sophistication.

With subtle irony Shakespeare undermines the audience's usual expectations: it is the Black man, who as the blind believer in logic, in cause

80

and effect, is tripped up by his reliance upon 'facts'. It is the White man who uses magic: G.M. Matthews notes correctly that, 'the element of fantasy and reliance on magic is one of the "realist" Iago's most striking characteristics.' (14) Iago's most commanding capacity is the facility with which he masquerades magic as logic: 'some of his logic, even when it is not designed to mock the half-witted Roderigo shows an opportunism that is simply bizarre.' (15) Iago's success in poisoning Othello's mind is due to the fact that he finally induces Othello to discount his reliance on 'honest' facts.

Othello demands proof that Desdemona is unfaithful: he even demands such proof with the threat of dire consequences should Iago fail to meet his demands:

> Make me to see't: or, at the least, so prove it
> That the probation bear no hinge nor loop
> To hang a doubt on-or woe upon thy life! (16)

Ultimately however questions of 'proof' fail to matter to Othello; the 'facts' mean very little. He demands 'ocular' proof of the 'facts' through things, which he thinks are the ultimate support of facts: what he actually later comes to accept is that facts are a matter of relations, not just things. After the elaborate charade he observes between Cassio and Bianca, supposedly with his handkerchief as the key 'fact', he does not uphold his demand for ocular proof:

> IAGO And did you see the handkerchief?
> OTHELLO Was that mine?
> IAGO Yours, by this hand! (17)

Iago is able to convince him with *verbal* reassurance rather than visual proof. Of course Iago is telling the truth: the handkerchief *is* Othello's, but Othello is not here upholding the original standard of proof he demanded. The ocular proof which he demands is in a sense satisfied by his view of the scene between Cassio and Bianca and the part played by the handkerchief for, what Othello learns is something we learn as a matter of social development: that is 'facts' can constitute a complex set of relations. It is this knowledge which

he thinks Iago possesses, and of which he thinks he has just been given an acute demonstration after that scene. The uncanniness of the scene and of the 'facts' in it, plus Iago's explanation of it, might well appear magical to Othello.

Thus as G. M. Matthews demonstrates, Othello's investment of magical properties to the handkerchief is the result of the magical effects of Iago's manipulation of the 'facts'. As Matthews notes, the *actual* virtue of the handkerchief might be the symbolic importance attached by both lovers to it as Othello's first remembrance whose loss might be interpreted as a 'symptomatic act': (18) 'but Iago's plot loads it with fictitious *mana* as a symbol of infidelity.' (19) Othello, who has relied upon facts hitherto, seems

to invest the handkerchief with magical and spirit-like properties, (having just had his latest unbalancing interview with Iago) seemingly in order to scare Desdemona into an awareness of the enormity of her action in losing it. Thus, as Matthews suggests, behind Othello's evocation of hocus pocus in the making of the handkerchief lies the magic of Iago: '.....it is Iago's magic that went into the web, the absurdity of the hallowed works and maidens-heart dye corresponding to the irrational significance he has made Othello attach to it.' (20) Every attempt by Othello to seek to attach his suspicions to some aspect of reality lands him on the nothingness of Iago's magic.

Iago and the negativity of freedom

Brabantio is the decent White man to whom Jean Paul Sartre refers in 'Saint Genet' who has cultivated Being and Goodness only to discover sexuality and freedom in his daughter as if for the first time. He is the 'decent man' who refuses recognition of the wild negativity of freedom:

> The decent man will make himself deaf, dumb, and paralysed. It is he who has eyes that see not and ears that hear not. He is, by virtue of himself, the most abstract negation: the negation of negation. He will define himself narrowly by traditions, by obedience, by the automatism of Good, and will give the name *temptation* to the live, vague seething which is still himself, but a himself which is wild, free, outside the limits he has marked out for himself. ('The

Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre', edited by Robert D. Cumming) (21)

His citing of drugs and charms as the agencies of Othello's wooing is thus a refusal to acknowledge his awareness of the negativity of Desdemona's freedom. For that would be to recognise the negativity of his own freedom: 'his own negativity falls outside him, since he denies it with all his might.' (22) His recourse is to make of this recognition of negativity an otherness which he heaps upon Othello; it is on Othello that he loads his daugthter's excess, Othello, whom he deems responsible for the alienation of his daughter's Being into the wild negativity of sexual freedom. The accusation of drugs and magic is thus a recourse to the irrational in the face of this recognition.

Iago of course also cites the cultural shibboleth of the Black man's unbridled sexuality as one of the reasons for his hatred of the Moor: he suspects the Moor with his wife; he is not sure that the Moor has cuckolded him but his fear of Othello's sexuality is all the justification he needs. He is fully aware of the cultural image of Black sexuality when he rouses Brabantio with news of Desdemona's marriage with graphic sexual imagery in terms of ugly animality:

> Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
> Is tupping your white ewe. (23)

Iago uses the sexual shibboleth in his general tendency to employ in the infinite inventiveness of his negative will whatever means are at hand in the pursuit of his purposes.

The opposite of the right-thinking man, Iago recognises that good or evil action rests in the infinite possibilities of freedom:

> ....'Tis in ourselves that we are thus, or
> thus. Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills
> are gardeners. So that if we will plant nettles or sow
> lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with
> one gender of herbs or distract it with many, either to
> have it sterile with idleness or manured with industry,

why the power and corrigible authority of this lies
in our wills. (24)

Iago represents the possibilities of freedom bent towards negation: his is the infinite inventiveness of the will bent towards evil. He deceives not only Othello but all the other major characters with his seemingly magical capacity to transform situations to his own use.

He represents the possibilities for negation in the European world confronted with the Black man. He is the Other of the decent right-thinking white man in the audience who, as Sartre suggests, would readily recognise Iago as his evil Other:

> His own negativity falls outside him.........it becomes a pure negation that poses itself for its own sake, a pure rage to destroy that goes round in circles, namely Evil. Evil is the unity of all his impulses to criticize, to judge, to reject insofar as he refuses to recognize them and regard them as the normal exercise of his freedom and insofar as he relates them to an external cause. It is his dangerous inclination to develop his ideas to their ultimate limits when decency or discipline bids him stop midway. It is his anxiety, his fundamental disbelief or his individuality that comes to him from without, like Another himself, to tempt him. It is what he wants but does not want. It is that object of a constant and constantly rejected will which he regards as other than his "true" will. In short, it is the maxim, both in him and outside of him, of the other's will. (25)

Iago should both invite the audience's complicity and discomfort it by his embodiment of the capacity of freedom to incline towards negation. Like Hitler, he is society's 'thing of darkness' which it would refuse to acknowledge precisely because of his disguise as 'Other'. For that reason the White audience should feel uncomfortably close to Iago as the representative of its Other confronting the Black man in its society. The audience should be disturbed by Iago's tendency to use all the European shibboleths about the Black man in his destruction of Othello.

The simple one-dimensional representation of the Black man as absolute negativity in 'Titus Andronicus', is challenged by the complexity of the treatment of negativity in 'Othello'. We have moved from the direct and abstract representation in 'Titus Andronicus' to the ironies of 'Othello' in which the audience can no longer heap its own negativity onto the Black villain. Though perhaps not a 'hero', Othello is the catalyst, the unveiler of negativity, the figure who triggers off complex debates about negativity which involves the audience's awareness of the function of racism within its society.

In the next chapter I examine the manifestation of Blacks in Harriet Beecher-Stowe's 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' which in many ways is a regression from Shakespeare's view of Black negativity.

References

1 G.K. Hunter, 'Othello And Colour Prejudice': from, 'Interpretations of Shakespeare', British Academy Shakespeare Lectures, Selected by Kenneth Muir, Clarendon Press, (Oxford 1985), p187.

2 G.M. Matthews, " 'Othello' and the Dignity of Man," from, 'Marxists on Literature', an Anthology, ed, by David Craig, Penguin books, (1975), p112.

3 G.K. Hunter, 'Interpretations of Shakespeare'. p191.

4 Antonin Artaud, Collected works, Volume 4, Trans. by Victor Corti, Calder & Boyars, (London 1974), pp19-20.

5 Shakespeare.W, 'Titus Andronicus', The Arden Shakespeare, Ed. by J.C. Maxwell, Metheuen & Co. (London, 1953,) Act. 2. Sc. 21- 26

6 W.H. Auden, 'The Dyer's Hand', and other Essays, Faber & Faber, (London, 1948). See, pp269-272.

7 Shakespeare. W. 'Titus Andronicus' Act v, sc. 1, 141-144.

8 Shakespeare. W., 'Othello', The New Penguin Shakespeare, Ed. by Kenneth Muir, Penguin Books, (1983) Act. 3, 161-165.

9 C.L.R. James, 'Spheres of Existence', Allison & Busby, (1980), p141.

10 Shakespeare W. 'Othello', Act. 1, sc. 3, 161-165.

11 Op. Cit. Act 1, sc. 3, 128-132.

12 Robert Denoon Cumming, (ed.) 'The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre', Methuen, (1968), p275.

> 'If the for-it-self is nothing other than its situation, then if follows that being-in-situation defines human reality by accounting both for its being-there and for its being-beyond............And the situation is the organized totality of the being-there, interpreted and lived in and through being-beyond.

13 G.K. Hunter, 'Interpretations of Shakespeare', p207.

14 G.M. Matthews, " 'Othello', and the Dignity of Man", 'Marxists on Literature', p121.

15 Ibid.

16 Shakespeare W. 'Othello' New Penguin Shakespeare, Act 3, sc3, 362-365.

17 Op. Cit. Act 4, sc. 1, 172-174,

18 G.M. Matthews, 'Marxists on Literature', p124.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Robert Denoon Cumming, 'The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre'. p386-387

22 Op. Cit. p387.

23 Shakespeare W. 'Othello'. Act. 1, Sc. 1. 89-90.

24 Op. Cit. Ac. 2, Sc. 3, 316-323.

25 Robert Denoon Cumming, 'The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, P387.

CHAPTER 3
HARRIET BEECHER STOWE: UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

In this chapter I argue that 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' is a sentimental tract which demonstrates the contemporary wish (at the time of publication) to be rid of Black negativity for ever. There is no hint of a positive Black negativity in the novel which nonetheless has been highly influential in the formation of the Western view of Blacks.

Publication

'Uncle Tom's Cabin' seems to have entered American mythology almost immediately after publication. Published about a decade before the civil war, it was hailed immediately as a major pamphlet exposing American slavery. It was celebrated throughout Europe as one of the most important books of the nineteenth century. Three newspapers in Paris published it simultaneously; eighteen publishing houses in London brought out forty editions of it; the book was translated into thirty seven languages, and three times in Welsh. In England a petition in twenty six folio volumes with the signatures of half a million women 'praying for the abolition of slavery', (1) was presented to Harriet Stowe. All over Europe restaurants, creameries and bazaars were named after 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'.

Leo Tolstoy regarded the novel, with Dostoevsky's 'House of the Dead', as of supreme importance. Why, despite the recognition of its failings by its great critics, was the novel such a popular success? The most important reason seems to have been its role in the creation of the Euro-American concept of the Negro, and the ideological debate surrounding the Negro in the last half of the nineteenth century. The novel has furnished Blacks with a lasting phrase of contempt-'Uncle Tom'- but for the nineteenth century Whites its mythologies had wider reverberations.

One of the major successes of the novel was its capacity to create its own myths quickly. Thus, as William Wilberforce is mythically regarded as the agent of the abolition of the slave trade, so Mrs Stowe in the introduction to the London edition of 1961 is credited with starting the American civil war,

by no less a figure than Abraham Lincoln: '.......when the American Civil War broke out partly over the question of emancipation, President Lincoln addressed Mrs Stowe in Washington with the words, "so you're the little woman who made this great war". ' (2) She is also credited with the ending of the fugitive slave law of 1850: '....at home, in America, the dynamic power of the story made it impossible to enforce the fugitive slave law......'(3)

The commercial reception of a novel can sometimes form part of its mythology, part of its 'fiction', but in this case it indicates the spirit in which the novel began to be 'read' by its popular, and famous readers, soon after publication. It is credited soon after publication, with major achievements in social change. The opposite, factually-argued case put up by modern Negro historians in explanation of these changes is more convincing. (4) The claims made for the novel rested upon the notion of Negro helplessness prior to its publication, claims which once again have been countered by modern historians.

The position of Blacks prior to publication of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'

Prior to publication of the novel the Unites States was engaged in major processes of change which, as C.L.R. James notes in 'A History of Negro Revolt', was not visible to all protagonists. It is unlikely that Mrs Stowe would have been aware of those processes. C.L.R. James and Vincent Harding (5) note that the Negro, by protest and escape had begun to react to the fugitive slave law of 1850 with an acute sense that forces were about to break out nationally which would have profound impact upon his situation. These forces James says were the product of economic and political factors arising out of the *situation* of the country:

> The South had dominated the Federal Legislature for more than half-a-century, but with the increasing industrial expansion of the North, that domination was now in danger. Both North and South were expanding westward. Should the new states be based on slavery as the South wanted or on free capitalism as the North wanted? This was not a moral question. Victory here meant increasing control of the legislature by the victors. The moment the North were strong enough

they decreed that there was to be no further extension of slave-territory. Nothing else remained for the South but war. Had the Southerners won, their reactionary method of production and the backward civilization based upon it would have dominated the United States. (6)

They were also part of the sweep of the historical process:

> ....the San Domingo revolution, the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, the emancipation during the Civil War in America, all these events are but component parts of a single historical process. However confused, dishonest, selfish, idealistic or sincere, might be the minds of the abolitionists, they were in the last analysis the agents of the economic necessities of the new age, translated into social and political, sometimes, even, religious terms. (7)

Negroes had not been passsively watching the transformation of the social and political situation of America as suggested by Mrs Stowe in her novel.

For a long time they had been escaping from the South to the North where slavery was officially abolished; they had formed anti-slavery societies which aided in the flight of fugitives to Canada.

Elsewhere in the Americas, the European powers were engaged in the subjugation of subject peoples. In Britain's Jamaica, Governor Eyre authorised the persecution of Negroes who had revolted after a lengthy period of starvation and low wages, in 1865. Nearly five hundred Blacks were killed and thousands whipped. Thomas Carlyle and Charles Dickens were the leading supporters of the governor as controversy raged in Britain. In all these events occurring at the height of Victorian rule, the Indian Mutiny (1857) , the Jamaican revolt (1865), the American Civil War, "race" played a prominent part in the debates about them, and Blacks were acutely aware of the historical forces surrounding their cause.

Theories of "race"

The 1850s was not only a period of strife within subject empires, it was also a period when the Victorians were seeking an explanatory principle for the development of societies based on 'race': 'race' was meant to be a fundamental explanatory principle for the Victorians as the theory of relativity is to modern physicists. The troubles within the British empire, along with the debates across the United States surrounding Black slavery gave a new urgency to those theories. As Philip D. Curtin notes in 'The Image of Africa', the theories assumed a Euro-American phenomenon: there were 'scientists' co-operating across frontiers and oceans in the search for the holy grail of 'race'. These included by 1855, Carus of Germany, Gobineau of France, and Robert Knox of Britain: 'In the trans-Atlantic exchange of ideas, Britain gave the anti-slavery crusade to America in the 1830s and received back the American racism of the 1850s.' (8)

Prominent among the new theorists of 'raciology' was the views of Robert Knox whose 'Races of Man' was first presented in lecture form in 1846. As Curtin notes, his blustering charlatan posture did not prevent his gaining widespread admiration from contemporaries such as Charles Darwin:

> Knox also leaned slightly toward charlatanism, ready and able to serve the ordinary man's desire to know the full implications of the new biology. He called his system "transcendental anatomy", implying a rather nebulous extension beyond the range of empirical data. His conclusions were presented without qualification, without question, and without solid evidence. In this way he reached a wider audience than most scientists could hope to reach.........('The Image of Africa') (9)

Most Victorians were ready to follow Knox in his notion that in human affairs 'race is everything: literature, science, art -in a word, civilization depends on it.' (10)

In 1845, one year before the publication of Knox's book, Thomas Carlyle had published his 'Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question' in Fraser's magazine. For Carlyle Africans had been created inferior by design in order

to serve their European masters: 'That, you may depend on it, my obscure Black friends, is and was always the Law of the World, for you and for all men: to be servants, the more foolish of us to the more wise; and only sorrow, futility and disappointment will betide both, till both in some approximate degree get to conform to the same.' (11)

After publications by Carlyle and Knox, the mid 1850s was a bumper year for racist publications:

> Nott and Gliddon accepted Knox and proclaimed that human progress came from a "war of races." Bulwer Lytton, later to become Secretary of State for the Colonies, presented his own racial interpretation of history. In France, Count de Gobineau began publication of his 'Essai sur L'inegalité des races humaines', the most famous and perhaps the most influential of all racist works in the nineteenth century, and de Gobineau based his theory solidly on the groundwork laid during the previous decade-on Knox, Morton, and Carus. (12)

These theories ran the full gamut, from those which like that of Knox viewed the Negro with fear:

> Look at the Negro, so well known to you, and say, need I describe him? Is he shaped like any white person? Is the anatomy of his frame, of his muscles or organs like ours? Does he walk like us, think like us, act like us? Not in the least. What an innate hatred the Saxon has for him and how I have laughed at the mock philanthropy of England!........and yet this despised race drove the warlike French from St. Domingo, and the issue of the struggle with them in Jamaica might be doubtful. (13)

to those who regarded him as the exemplication of Christian forebearance:

Greg held a low opinion of African intellectual ability; but he thought Negroes were racially endowed with an imitative quality. They could therefore assimilate what the West had to offer. Europeans also had their racial faults, and it was in this context that Greg laid down his famous contrast between their "vehement, energetic, proud, tenacious, and revengeful" character set against the natural Christian submissiveness of the Africans. ([14])

What is evident is that the ideological debate, up to and sometime after the publication of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' assumed Negro negativity of the first form. Negro negativity was regarded with fear or pity: the idea of its having possibilities for creativity did not enter the debate.

Noble savagery

The concept of noble savagery might be regarded as a favourable difference within an overall negative view of the Negro, but where it was applied it did not amount to a notion of negativity of the second form. To begin with it had, as the phrase suggests, no concept of the Negro as a *social being*. It was largely an abstract literary cult yanking 'primitive' peoples under a general label for the convenience of its adherents who in any case were united more in a common opposition to European values rather than the welfare of those peoples, notes P.D. Curtin:

> beyond any doubt, the use of the savage hero as a literary device helped to create a much more favourable emotional climate for Africans than they otherwise have enjoyed, but it was not so wholly favourable as might appear. The writers in this vein had no intention of suggesting that Africans were better than Europeans, or that their culture, on balance, measured up to the achievements of Europe. ([15])

Curtin notes that the effects of the 'noble savagery' movement on the treatment of Africans in Euro-America was neither long-lasting nor important:

After its phase of greatest popularity in the last three decades of the eighteenth century, the theme of the noble Negro died out slowly with an occasionaly re-appearance throughout the first half of the nineteenth. Its importance for English thought about Africa is very difficult to assess. It certainly helped to form a vague and positive image of the "good African", and it was widely used by the anti-slave trade publicists for exactly this purpose. On the other hand it was very much a literary convention, not a rationally supported affirmation about savage life. Aside from those who used it for polemic anti-slavery ends, literary men had no intention of speaking as ethnographic popularizers. They were principally social critics of their own world. (16)

The development of the theme of noble savagery by Christian missionaries gave it a sharper more bitter twist and led to the popularization of certain ideas about the African which are epitomized in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'. On the one hand the African was characterized as dwelling in a land unsurpassed in physical beauty but living according to the values of a moral dungheap. Thus figures such as Reverend D.J.East could confidently state that : 'Africa is a moral wilderness, and her inhabitants, as they have been too correctly described, are wolves to each other.' (17.) On the other hand within this same savage was assumed to rest an unsurpassed capacity to embrace the gentle virtues of Christianity. From these viewpoints the Negro is either a vengeful savage below the human, or a meek and abstract Christian lacking in the vivid human qualities associated with the pagan European. The effect, as James Baldwin argues in 'Everybody's Protest Novel', from either angle, is the dehumanization of the Negro. (18) It is not difficult to discern the figure of Uncle Tom in this latter formulation of the meek Christian.

One of the reasons for the phenomenal popularity of the novel, apart from its emergence at the height of the proliferation of 'theories of race', was its reinforcement of the 'missionary image' of the Negro created by the missionaries themselves. The importance of the missionary image cannot, as Curtin notes, be overemphasised here:

The missionary image was all the more important, because it reached

its real flowering in the 1830s and '4os when the possible antidote of critical scholarly investigation based on first-hand information was lacking. From the death of Bowdich to the expedition which took Barth to Africa in 1849, the ethnography of Africa depended almost entirely on data supplied by men who happened to be in Africa for some other purpose. (19)

As has been stated, this missionary image presented the Negro as both savage and uniquely disposed towards transformation by the virtues of Christianity. The missionaries claimed that this Christian version of the Negro had surplanted the eighteenth century literary motif of noble savagery:

> While the missionary literature preserved and extended the christianized image of the noble savage, missionary ethnography killed once and for all the secular, eighteenth-century literary motif-so much so that a missionary commentator could even boast of the deed: "The universal degradation and misery of unreclaimed man, even of that boast of a false philosophy, the North American Indian-has chiefly, by the circulation of Missionary information, become a fact as fully accredited as that of his existence. In vain would it be for a certain class of Europeans to paint in glowing colours as they once did, the virtue of Asiatic pagans....." (20)

If the noble savage motif had allowed for the humanity of the Negro, the missionary image boasted that it had eradicated it: it had replaced this humanity with a Christian meekness incapable of hostility to colonial forces. The value of this missionary programme with its alternative image, at a time when rebelliousness (in India, and Jamaica for example) was raising its head and theories of race were rampant, was inestimable. Curtin notes that the missionaries bear a special responsibility for the popular image of Blacks held by the British at that time-the mid nineteenth century:

The missionaries were not alone to blame for the increasing cultural arrogance of the British public, but they bear a special responsibility. The views presented in their popular press were unequivocal, and they were very widely circulated. By contrast, their more sophisticated reports and works of scholarship were circulated to a narrower public in journals like the Church Missionary Intelligence-or else remained in the files...........It is hard to escape the conclusion that the systematic misrepresentation of African culture in the missionary press contributed unintentionally to the rise of racial as well as cultural arrogance. (21)

'Uncle Tom's Cabin' was immediately recognised as falling squarely within this missionary role: it was a unique literary organ of the missionary image.

Uncle Tom's Cabin's Manichaean dualities

The Christian message is popularly recognised as playing an important part in the novel which contains several Manichaean dualities: darkness and light, masculinity and feminity, domesticity and freedom, to name a few. These dualities, sentimentally represented are easy devices with which to tap the reader's sympathy. The capacity of Christian teaching to underpin and support with a respectable aura such Manichaeanism is not to be underestimated in the determination of the reasons for the novel's popular success. As has been noted, such simple Manichaeanism was already part of the language of missionaries operating in Africa at the time who saw Africans as at once savages and 'natural Christians'. It is also congruent with a certain popular image of Christianity which sees it as embracing ancient and elemental dualities such as darkness and light, soul and body and so on.

Such Manichaeanism was also supported by the burgeoning scientific racism of the period which as I have mentioned, in its attempt to define the concept 'race' placed 'the races' in neat abstract categories which were meant to hold for all time.

The support of the great novelists of the day for the novel, a popular sentimental tract was an indication not only of the place of the Negro in the collective unconscious, but a manifestation of the extent to which this

95

Manichaeanism had spread to all parts of the collective unconscious, from 'the highest' to 'the lowest'. It was congruent with the desire of Euro-American thought to represent the Negro in similar abstract terms. George Eliot said Mrs Harriet Becher Stowe had 'invented the Negro novel': she should have said Mrs Stowe had invented the Negro, the Negro of Western thought, of the period.

Below is a schema representing the basic dualities in the story:

Selby: humane but weak master.	Haley: inhumane and strong master.
Mrs Selby: pious and weak, trapped in domesticity and female impotence.	Eliza Harris: restless, has 'male' adventure involving danger and physical prowess in her bid for freedom.
George Harris: mixed race (Black and White), escapes and is willing to die for his freedom. Goes *upwards* towards Canada. Takes his freedom for the sake of his family.	Uncle Tom: feminine and domestic temperament (timidity and care), no interest in Freedom as a value. Sacrifices his freedom for the sake of family. Is sold *downwards* farther South.
Augustine St. Clare: Southern feminine temperament, open and honest. Tolerance of his slaves redeems oppressive aspect of his masculinity.	Ophelia: (sister to Augustine) Northern coldness and intolerance, lack of involvement with humanity of slaves.
Eva St. Clare: etiolated goodness, illness, pale golden-haired ethereality.	Topsy: Black, changeableness, earthiness, 'badness', mischievousness.

The novel's ideology is constantly at war with Mrs Stowe's would-be pious sentiments. Thus the actions of the major characters Eliza and George Harris who escape and fight are implicit and ironical denunciations of Uncle Tom's pious impotence. Part of Uncle Tom's supposed saintliness is his willingness to sacrifice his freedom for his family, yet George Harris performs the more heroic task, that is, taking his freedom to maintain the *integrity* of his family. Within Mrs Stowe's schema White equals freedom, equals human, Black equals slave, equals non-human. The mulattoes' escape to freedom compares with the plight of Hegel's slave in his Master-Slave dialectic, who must go through the whole gamut of trials and tribulations before gaining his full humanity. The escape of the mulattoes is a critique of the abstract non-humanity of Uncle Tom's position and a vindication of the humanity of the White characters.

Mrs Stowe's schema for the humanity of the characters may be represented thus: White-man, Mulatto-potential man, Negro-devil, animal. A corresponding cosmology would be: White-heaven, Mulatto-purgatory, Negro-hell.

This basic abstract schema manifests throughout the novel. Thus Eliza and George escape *upriver* towards Canada; Uncle Tom is sold *downwards* (hell) farther South into worse degradations. Tom is a simple agricultural labourer (backwardness); George Harris is an inventor of agricultural machinery (progressive); one is shown to be closer to the Whites -in his mechanical aptitude- than the other. The Mulatto characters escape to freedom because they can disguise their Blackness, they can 'pass for White', that is, they can move from one cosmological world to another by denying the third.

The feminist debate

The novel has recently been of great interest to feminists for its advocacy of the values of female domesticity versus patriarchal oppression. This debate has recently been fully aired in a book titled 'New Essays on Uncle Tom's Cabin'. (22) Feminists see the novel as positing another concept of the possibilities for the union (of the United States) as opposed to

those of patriarchy. Yet the most dynamic female character, Eliza Harris escapes out of impotent domesticity via 'masculine' adventure and physical prowess into freedom. It is true she is succoured by a successful domesticated quaker community but that is portrayed as an unusual reward for escape rather than a reflection of the norm. The domestic norm portrayed is that of timidity, impotence and care.

Mrs Stowe's declaration that her objective is 'to awaken sympathy and feeling for the African race, as they exist among us' (23) is significant here. According to Jean Fagan Yellin in 'New Essays on Uncle Tom's Cabin', (24) Mrs Stowe's declaration 'suggests that sympathy is a force essentially destructive of human injustice'. Yet what we are shown throughout the novel is the essential impotence of   mere domestic sympathy which Mrs Stowe attempts to celebrate. Yellin seems to acknowledge this when she notes that although most of the female characters in the novel have easy access to this 'revolutionarty power' (female sympathy), none of these characters uses it in a revolutionary way: '.....instead, Uncle Tom's Cabin shows individual women using the power of sympathy to enable them to act effectively in private against slavery when the servile institution threatens the domestic sphere. Stowe's female Christians act successfully against slavery without walking out of their own front doors'. (25)

The idea that some of these women act against slavery when it threatens the domestic sphere is somewhat strange when the normal domestic situation involves the underpinning of the institution by the household as in the slavery of classical antiquity. The idea is ironical in view of the fact that these sympathetic women are able to exercise their consciences due to the domestic support provided by the very institution whose excesses they are supposedly countering. Mere domesticity is therefore shown to be a failure against the institution. On the contrary modern slavery depended for its perpetuation upon the front of a pious domesticity. Uncle Tom's relative domestic bliss at the St. Clare home is a concealed advertisement for the values of slavery.

Yellin maintains that: 'To the extent that, within the process of defending Christian domestic values, Stowe's emphasis on individual sympathy and on the doctrine of Higher Laws functions not only as a critique of chattel slavery but also as a critique of racist patriarchal capitalist culture in America, and to the extent that it suggests an alternative society grounded in egalitarian Christianity and proposes a loving maternal ethic in opposition to patriarchal

values, Uncle Tom's Cabin endorses nineteenth century radical ideas.' (26)
Yet elsewhere in her paper Yellin admits that the ideas Mrs Stowe endorses
in the novel were those of her sister, Catherine Beecher which were not
particularly radical; in fact they opposed the ideas of genuine radical
feminists such as Angela Grimké who argued for female opposition to
slavery both in the domestic and the political sphere, recognising that
domestic alleviation of the worst effects of slavery was not enough. Only by
taking their fight into the political arena could White American women
mount an effective opposition to slavery. Like Harriet Beecher Stowe Grimké
appealed to a higher Christian law, but in favour of a genuine political
radicalism which opposed the unjust laws of men: '....she had proposed that
these women flaunt the statutes forbidding emancipation and literacy in
obedience to a Higher Law, and counselled that, if apprehended, they should
practice the doctrine of Christian resignation: ' "If a law commands me to sin
I will break it; if it calls me to suffer, I will let it take its course
unresistingly".'

In a direct reply to Grimké's position Catherine Beecher argued that women
could act only in the domestic arena; action in the political arena would be
contrary to their nature:

> A man may act on society by the collision of intellect in public
> debate; he may urge his measures by a sense of shame, by fear and by
> personal interest; he may coerce by the combination of public
> sentiment; he may drive by physical force, and he does not outstep the
> boundaries of his sphere. But all the power, and all the conquests that
> are lawful to women are those only which appeal to the kindly,
> generous, peaceful and benevolent principles.

> Woman is to win every thing by peace and love........But this to all
> be accomplished in the domestic and social sphere. (27)

It is not difficult to read her sister's position, hardly 'radical', in Harriett
Stowe's novel. The book preaches domestic resistance to White women, and
Christian resignation to Black slaves. As Yellin notes, it hardly sees its Black
characters as subjects at all: 'Stowe's serious concern with the morality of free
white "women of the nominally free states"...........contrasts dramatically with

99

her summary treatment of the moral conflicts of her black and mulatto female characters.............' (28)

Eva and Uncle Tom: White saint, Black saint

Two of the purported central heroic Christ-like characters of the novel are hardly subjects at all: Eva is the absurd doll-like child who would like to sacrifice herself for the good of the slaves; Uncle Tom is the foolish slave who does sacrifice himself-for nothing. Eva is a totally unrealised character whose vividness Stowe's purple prose and horrifying sentimentality is incapable of carrying:

> Has there ever been a child like Eva? Yes, there have been; but their names are always on grave-stones, and their sweet smiles, their heavenly eyes, their singular words and ways, are among the buried treasures of yearning hearts. In how many families do you hear the legend that all the goodness and graces of the living are nothing to the peculiar charms of one who is not! It is as if Heaven had an especial band of angels, whose office it was to sojourn for a season here, and endear to them the wayward human heart, that they might bear it upward with them in their homeward flight..........(29)

Eva is the White sacrificial angel whose role is to purge the evil from the Black characters in particular, and turn them towards Christianity: an absurd object of authorial manipulation lacking the freedom of a subject. The other, Black sacrificial victim, is just as absurd a figure. James Baldwin has a good point in referring to Uncle Tom as 'sexless' in 'Many Thousands Gone': (30) in being allowed so much time in arboreal bliss alone with Eva reading the Bible, Uncle Tom is the impotent Negro whose sexuality has been denied by Eva's parents. Uncle Tom is the one aspect of the White Manichaean view of the Negro which sees him as at once a representative of uncontrollable sexuality, and impotent; the embodiment of violence and the most likely Christian. It is the 'uncle' aspect of him which dominates Uncle Tom and ironically robs him of the humanity suggested by the word. Remove 'uncle' from his name and therefore from his character and he could easily become

the other aspect of this Manichaean view.

That Stowe chose to stress one part of this Manichaeanism whilst she must have been aware of its negation everywhere in reports of slave rebellions, escapes to Canada and political struggle, is an indication of the real purpose of her novel. Its popular success was due to its portrayal of the missionary image of the Negro which, as Philip Curtin suggests, had done so much to perpetuate the contemporary image of the Negro of Stowe's time. By making him the object of pity and therefore contempt, Stowe was helping in the ideological battle against what was becoming a feared and hated figure-the Negro as the subject of his own liberation.

It is the Negro as negativity of the first form which the novel portrays. Stowe suggests that one means of overcoming this negativity, where the characters are 'fortunate' enough to be of mixed race (George and Emily Harris), is for Negroes to adopt the White aspect of themselves in order to embrace their freedom and humanity. Given that from her portrayal Black and White cannot co-exist in her America, Stowe proposes an idea with which many of her contemporaries including Abraham Lincoln had been toying, that is, the emigration of the Black out of White America. This notion is masked by rendering it in terms of the central thesis of the 'missionary image': that is, the view of the Negro as the potentially great Christian who can only manifest his true Christian capacities among his fellow Blacks. Thus in George Harris's sentiments the missionary project and political policy create a new blend:

> I trust that the development of Africa is to be essentially a Christian one. If not a dominant and commanding race, they are, at least, an affectionate, magnanimous, and forgiving one. Having been called in the furnace of injustice and oppression, they have need to bind closer to their hearts that sublime doctrine of love and forgiveness, through which alone they are to conquer, which it is to be their mission to spread over the continent of Africa. (31)

Church and state combine at once to expel and embrace the Negro, a neat ideological sleight of hand calculated to appeal to its White readers. The Manichaean view of the Negro is employed subtly: the rebellious Negro is

delivered to the civilizing christian Negro for future education before the reader's very eyes: thus, what James Baldwin terms 'a theological terror' (32) is exorcised.

The popularity of the novel lies therefore in its unique illustration of the White Manichaean view and the suggestion of an end to this 'theological terror'. The novelist, as George Eliot said, created 'the Negro novel' for the White Euro-American world; she helped in the creation of the popular image of the Negro, domesticated this image and suggested the possibilities for overcoming this harrowing, rebellious contemporary figure. The Negro could be tamed, vanquished and expelled in Mrs Stowe's novel, if not in reality.

The importance of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' thus lies in its representation of Euro-America's attempts to contain and domesticate the Negro 'terror'. Some years later Joseph Conrad was able, in 'Heart of Darkness', to situate this 'terror' where it lies, in the White psyche, and to show its connection with another development in the relationship between Blacks and Whites-imperialism.

In the next chapter I show that Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' in its complex view of Blacks is the beginning of a process whereby modern Euro-American writers refer to Black negativity as a means of commenting on the negativity of Western society.

References

1 Harriet-Beecher Stowe,'Uncle Tom's Cabin', Everyman Library. J.M.dent, (London,1961). Introduction. pv.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 C.L. R. James in 'A History of Negro Revolt' [Race Today Publications, (London 1985). p23] argues for the North's need to end the domination of the legislature by the South in the face of (the North's) continuing industrial expansion, while most Negro historians maintain that Negro rebelliousness and the operation of the 'Underground Railroad' to Canada rendered enforcement of the fugitive slave law impossible. Vincent Harding argues

trenchantly for the twin policies of defiance and 'exodus' as the successful methods of Negro opposition to the F.S.L ['The Other American Revolution'. Centre for Afro-American Studies, Univ. of California and Institute of the Black World. Atlanta Georgia, (1980). p53.]

5 Ibid. (both references)

6 C.L.R, James, 'A History of Negro Revolt', pp23-24.

7 Op. Cit. p24.

8 P.D.Curtin, 'The Image of Africa', Univ. of Wisconsin Press, (1964). vol 2. p372.

9 Op. Cit. p381.

10 P.D. Curtin, quote from Knox's 'Races of Man', in 'The Image of Africa', p378,

11 Op. Cit. p381.

12 Ibid.

13 Op. Cit. p379.

14 Op. Cit. p376.

15 Op. Cit. (vol 1) pp49-50.

16 Op. Cit. (vol. 1) p51

17 Op. Cit. (vol 2) p327.

18 James Baldwin 'Notes of a Native Son', Corgi Books, (1970) p9.

19 P.D.Curtin, 'The Image of Africa', (vol 2) p328.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 E.J.Sundquist, (editor) 'New Essays on Uncle Tom's Cabin', CUP. (1986).

23 Harriet-Beecher Stowe, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', Dent Edition, pXl

24 See Jean Fagan Yellin, in 'New Essays on Uncle Tom's Cabin', p100.

25 Op. Cit. p101.

26 Ibid.

27 'Op. Cit. p86 (quote from Angela Grimké's 'Appeal to the Christian Women of the South'), p20

28 Op, Cit. p87.

29 Harriet-Beecher Stowe, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', p263.

30 James Baldwin, 'Notes of a Native Son', p21.

31 Harriet-Beecher Stowe, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', p429,

32 James Baldwin, 'Notes of a Native Son', p13.

CHAPTER 4

JOSEPH CONRAD'S 'HEART OF DARKNESS'

In this examination of 'Heart of Darkness' I shall discuss the novel's dialogue with the nineteenth century view of Blacks which still sees them as sterile negativity. I examine the function of 'Africa' and the role of Blacks in the novel in the modern period. I argue that in using Africa as a means of making certain complex comments about Europe Conrad was already anticipating modernism's more sophisticated view of Black negativity. I discuss the notion that the role of Blacks presages the birth of the Black man of Negritude.

If in the Renaissance and the Classical periods the African was regarded in Euro-American thought as the Other, a number of occurrencies were to alter this notion of Otherness in what Michel Foucault terms the Modern Period. (1) The African could no longer be regarded as the 'pure' mythical 'Other' of the Renaissance, a figure born more of imagination than reality, or as the exotic noble savage of the Classical Period, once again a product of European imagination. Closer knowledge of the African during the colonial period was accompanied by European man's increased self-knowledge; a self-knowledge which saw the disappearance of the African as simple 'Other', no longer could Western man declare with Prospero's confidence that this 'thing of darkness', (2) the African, is his Other; the perturbations of the Modern Period compelled Western man to seek for the possibilities of Otherness within himself. For the African, the future man of Negritude, this spectacle was to have profound significance in his relationship with Euro-America in the twentieth century.

The self-knowledge of Western man was associated with the development of the 'human sciences', Foucault maintains; with this objectivisation of Western man and the increasing importance of the human sciences emerged a number of phenomena associated with the 'discovery' of man. Modern man discovered his profound solitude with the proclamation by Nietzsche and others of the death of God, and therefore the absence of an ultimate law-giver, or source of morality: the existentialist, Sartre declared, '....finds it extremely embarrassing that God does not exist, for there disappears with

Him all possibility of finding values in an intelligible heaven.' (3) Thus as Foucault argues, the modern ethical form is predicated on the absence of morality:

> The modern one (ethical form) .... formulates no morality, since any imperative is lodged within thought and its movement towards the apprehension of the unthought; it is reflection, the act of consciousness, the elucidation of what is silent, language restored to what is mute, the illumination of the element of darkness that cuts man off from himself, the reanimation of the inert-it is all this and this alone that constituted the content and form of the ethical. Modern thought has never, in fact, been able to propose a morality. But the reason for this is not because it is pure speculation; on the contrary, modern thought, from its inception and in its very density, is a certain mode of action. Let those who urge thought to leave its retreat and to formulate its choices talk on; and let those who seek, without any pledge and in the absence of virtue, to establish a morality do as they wish. For modern thought, no morality is possible. (4)

Modern thought is a free act outside the confines of morality: hence its dangers, and Foucault rightly castigates those who maintain 'there is no philosophy without political choice, that all thought is either "progressive" or "reactionary".' (5)

Foucault notes that from early in the nineteenth century thought was no longer concerned with theoretical self-reflection, (its 'own being') but was constitutive of an act:

> As soon as it functions it offends or reconciles, attracts or repels, breaks, dissociates, unites or reunites; it cannot help but liberate and enslave. Even before prescribing, suggesting a future, saying what must be done, even before exhorting or merely sounding an alarm, thought, at the level of its existence, in its very dawning, is in itself an action-a perilous act. (6)

Kurtz in 'Heart of Darkness' is a representation of the dangerous negativity of which modern thought is capable, allied with the freedom to enact thought. Marlow discovers in Africa that the Other is not the African but the modern representative of the dangerous negativity of freedom, Kurtz, the figure who has the freedom to embrace both thought, and what Foucault calls 'the unthought'. If Marlow has prior to his journey to the Congo associated the West with the enlightenment of thought he discovers as if for the first time, at one of its 'outposts of progress' (7) in the colonies that the West contains within itself thought, and the darkness which is 'the unthought'. Marlow discovers that thought, civilization, and 'the unthought' are inseparable: one of the essential themes of the novel is given profound illumination by Foucault's observation:

> As a matter of fact, the unconscious, and the forms of the unthought in general, have not been the reward granted to a positive knowledge of man. Man and the unthought are, at the archaeological level, contemporaries. Man has not been able to describe himself as a configuration in the episteme without thought at the same time discovering, both in itself and outside itself, at its borders yet also in its very warp and woof, an element of darkness, an apparently inert density in which it is embedded, an unthought which it contains entirely, yet in which it is also caught. The unthought (whatever name we give it) is not lodged in man like a shrivelled-up nature or a stratified history; it is, in relation to man, the Other........(8)

Kurtz is therefore not an extraordinary Mephistophelean figure but the representation of the modern bourgeois who has had the freedom and the will to embrace both thought, and that 'element of darkness', 'the unthought'.

Kurtz it is clear, is not a lone figure operating in an unprecedented void: rather he is representative of modern man. It is not accidental that Foucault locates the development of the unthought in modern man within the nineteenth century, the period of the development of modern colonialism:

This obscure space so readily interpreted as an abyssal region in man's nature, or as a uniquely impregnable fortress in his history, is linked to him in an entirely different way; it is both exterior to him and indispensable to him: in one sense, the shadow cast by man as he emerged in the field of knowledge; in another, the blind stain by which it is possible to know him. In any case, the unthought has accompanied man, mutely and uninterruptedly, since the nineteenth century. (9)

Negritude manifested as a challenge to the modern period.

Colonialism and violence in 'Heart of Darkness'

Negritude arose out of the womb of the discourse on Africa propagated by Kurtz and his forerunners: this is its indelible legacy and was also to prove its tragedy. In 'Heart of Darkness' this discourse manifests itself before the silenced African. Yet it is he, who I shall argue, was ultimately to become the man of Negritude. This silenced victim waiting in the womb of History, curbed by a discourse of violence, was later to proclaim his speech in the counter-discourse of Negritude.

All this is not readily manifest in Conrad's novel. The Africans in the novel are largely speechless. Within the silences of the novel lies the strangled voices of the Africans who are described more in terms of objects than as consciousnesses. The most significant 'walk on' part by an African in the story is the announcement of Kurtz's death in an ironic reversal of the usual heroic proclamation in romantic tales-'Mistah Kurtz-he dead' (although there is a presentiment here of the future challenge of Negritude in his irreverence). Otherwise Africans are not allowed action in the novel; they are only allowed to be, in the form of half-animate objects. They are beasts of burden: when their life-span is reached they die silently like discarded workhorses.

Yet if they have no speech, the speech of the Europeans takes place in the presence of the Africans: they can understand and speak it when necessary. The premise of African quietism in a period when resistance to European incursion was widespread (10) operates within the novel's own closed world. The novel's silence towards African speech and its closedness

towards the historical realities of its time in which the African was a significant protagonist renders it a closed ideological creation, one in which the ideological representations of Africa by Europe are interrogated but within a foreclosed set of precepts. The novel is a challenge to Europe not on behalf of Africans but in the name of Europe's own ideals. It is a condemnation of bourgeois philistinism and rapaciousness in the name of the virtues represented by its two 'heroes', Authenticity and Duty. For Marlow, Kurtz represents 'reality' despite his 'evil' nature: he is the figure of authenticity compared to the 'hollow men' and 'stuffed clerks' of colonialism encountered by Marlow on his journey. Marlow is the 'heroic' representation of Victorian duty and the work ethic.

The reading of the novel with Kurtz and Marlow as heroes, the African terrain the silent heroine, forever penetrated, forever remaining impenetrable in its mysteriousness is a particular ideological reading; the absence of speech from the gagged witness to this rape is overlooked in this reading. The dehumanisation of the African occurs in the act of reading itself, since that too involves an embarrassed or silent overlooking of his humanity: reading of the novel could become an act of participation in this violence. This is the dilemma facing any child of colonialism reading the book. If, as Jean-Paul Sartre notes in agreement with Frantz Fanon, colonialism is the normalisation of violence, (11) this normalisation manifests within the tissue of the text: the traditional reading of the text, with those two central figures as heroes, partakes of this violence. If we agree with Michel Foucault that discourse is 'a violence which we do to things, or........a practice which we impose on them.......' (12) the discourse in the novel contains and represents in its silences the violence done to the Africans.

Conrad demonstrates this normalisation of violence in a number of striking images. Early on his journey Marlow encounters a French 'man-of-war' anchored off the coast of the African continent. As in a film of the French director Jean Luc Goddard in which the audience and the protagonists will often stumble on the aftermath of scenes of violence and move on as though they were normal, so Conrad provides in cinematic imagery, a picture of 'violence-as-normal' on the African continent:

.........we came upon a man-of-war anchored off the coast. There wasn't even a shed there, and she was shelling the bush. It appears the French had one of their wars going on thereabouts. Her ensign dropped limp like a rag; the muzzles of the long six-inch guns stuck out all over the low hull; the greasy, slimy swell swung her up lazily and let her down, swaying her thin masts. In the empty immensity of earth, sky, and water, there she was, incomprehensible, firing into a continent. (13)

The initial imagery is one of detached violence as a continuing occurrence upon which Marlow the observer comments with reciprocal detachment; 'There wasn't even a shed there, and she was shelling the bush'. The sentence is meant to contain a juxtaposition between its first and second half, yet the 'and' runs contrary to this movement towards juxtaposition: the 'and' counters with a suggestion of a normal if surrealistic occurrence. All the other images in this extract are of violence as sordid normality. Marlow thinks the French are having 'one of their wars', the tattered old boat with its flag 'limp like a rag', sits lazily on the slimy swell shooting routinely into the bush. The feminine image of a dilapidated old boat firing 'incomprehensibly' into the mystery of Africa is meant to be a slight ironical coda, a mock comic overture to Marlow's journey into the heart of Africa. Yet as Jacques Darras reminds us, we should not be deceived into taking Marlow at his word:

> We must not take Marlow on his own word alone. It is in the *silence* of the text that, by reading between the lines, we can *see*. Just as Marlow must fish his way among the various vignettes of the colonial drama, the reader must take care not to succumb to the sirens of the text but must be ready to shift course at any moment to avoid them. His mind must constantly be on the alert and he must be ready to leave the mainstream of the narration, to make detours, to adventure on the less trodden paths in the forest of meaning. Many of the problems of interpretation which arise in treating this text arise from the fact that, even though we have been warned not to do this, because we are always trying to find his sailor's wisdom we never let Conrad leave his ship. In this nutshell of a story, on board this light

embarcation of a ship's model scarcely heavier than the paper-boats of Rimbaud on their puddles in the north of France, the most important part of the story is not the centre or the nut, but the outside shell. In other words we must turn away from the story's centre and look at it from the outside in order to understand what it really means. Rather than staying on the main road, we must risk losing our way on the less frequented paths. (14)

If as a Black man I am to search for the African as *subject* in the novel, it is essential to deviate from the laid-out critical lines for reading 'Heart of Darkness'. None of these usual paths will allow me to read the African point of view in the story. It may legitimately be said that the African does not have a point of view, he is not a subject in the book, he is rather an object: of violence, contempt, the structured racism of colonialism. Despite, or perhaps because of the fact that he is the object of the 'violence-as-norm' of colonialism the African view-point is a 'structured absence' ignored in traditional criticism.

F.R.Leavis in 'The Great Tradition' makes one oblique reference to the African in 'Heart of Darkness'. Leavis's reference is interesting: 'There is the grove of death' he notes when commenting on Conrad's success with vivid accuracy of detail. Leavis makes no reference to the fact that the grove contains a collection of dying Africans. To refer to 'the grove of death' without reference to those dying in it is to make quite a revealing critical leap. It is objects which are personified in the novel and Africans who are described, in general, as though they were objects. This mode of description is one of the central ideas of 'Heart of Darkness'. For of course the reduction-to-thing is one of the essential modes in which colonial violence manifested itself in the relationship between Africa and the West. V.Y. Mudimbe demonstrates that this reduction was manifest at the 'intellectual' level in the 'disciplines' of Christianity and anthropology:

If there is a difference between missionaries' and anthropologists' interpretations, it comes from the intellectual particularity of their respective missions. In order to "save souls", the missionary

undertakes the task of integrating his understanding of the local community into a process of reduction grounded in a theology of salvation defined within Western historicity. On the other hand, the anthropologist wants to contribute to the history of humankind by paying careful attention to all of its regional peculiarities and interpreting them according to a methodological grid of analysis of generalization which also, depends upon the same Western historical experience.......(15)

This act of reduction, of violence-as-reduction, manifested itself therefore at both the intellectual and the physical level. The first complemented the second. The physical violence meted out to the Africans was sustained by a structure of ideological violence maintained by disciplines such as Christianity and anthropology.

Marlow describes with awful vividness the effects of the physical aspect. It is a world in which things are described in anthropomorphic terms by Marlow: he comes upon a boiler 'wallowing in the grass' and 'an undersized railway-truck lying there on its back with its wheels in the air.' The movement in this extract is from the playful 'wallowing' which contains a notion of animation to the railway-truck which looks like a 'carcass', to 'more decaying pieces of machinery'. This movement from 'animation' to 'decay' could act as a diversion when we finally arrive at the reduced human beings. The effect of Marlow's play might be to 'place' the Africans as one more dead and decaying part of the landscape, to forget that their reduction is the result of unalloyed violence. And of course Marlow's cinematic descriptive sweep induces this process with the Africans announced towards the end of the description of dead and decaying machinery in this form: 'To the left a clump of trees made a shady spot, where dark things seemed to stir feebly.' The movement is from the solid determined animation of the trees which 'make a shady spot', to the Africans who 'seemed to stir feebly'. The description in terms of objects continues in the very next paragraph: the Africans are characterized in terms of the very objects used to enslave them: 'joints of their limbs was like knots in a rope,' and 'the clink (of their chains) kept time with their footsteps,' leads logically to the reference to them as 'this raw matter.' (my parenthesis)(16)

The act of reduction-as-violence and the violence of reduction are contained in those descriptions and we must go beyond Marlow's initial playful, divertingly ironic overture, to these descriptions, (which recall the comic opening with the mean gun-boat shelling the mysterious African coast) to realise the full 'horror' of the treatment meted out to the Africans.

For Leavis the Africans are necessarily invisible by virtue of the very ubiquity of their presence as objects-of-violence. Ian Watt in 'Conrad in the Nineteenth Century' (17) seems to take a more enlightened view of the African position in referring to his early encounters with the African as indications of Marlow's awareness of him as the Other of the negativity of Western society. Watt refers to the episode where Marlow hears drumming off the coast of Africa and is impressed by it as an inexplicable but

authentic aspect of tribal life beckoning to the human in him: '...what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity-like yours-the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar.' (18) But this reference to the African by Marlow is in terms of 'noble savagery' carrying all the dubious baggage of sentimentality associated with it. There is no recognition in Marlow's account of the African as the repressed slave who will become the subject of Negritude philosophy, that is, the African-as-potential-citizen. Yet it is the African-as-future-citizen to whom violence is being meted out. The reference to primitives who remind Marlow of his kinship with them and of the relic of the primitive within himself is sentimental reductionism for, it is always likely that violence will be the response to this primitive in order to excoriate him from your psyche. A citizen on the other hand has certain social rights, one of them being freedom from violence. As the degraded object in Conrad's tale the African is hardly the future citizen.

It is essential that I find the African in 'Heart of Darkness' and determine his point of view for, that despised creature lies in the womb of Negritude. It is the dawn of his consciousness that Césaire will gloriously proclaim in 'Cahier D'un Retour Au Pays Natal'. It is this silent African whom Césaire will make speak with a coruscation of images in his magnificent poem. This object of derision lying bleeding and supine in 'Heart of Darkness' will emerge from

his chrysalis in the nineteenth century into the turbulence of the twentieth century where his speech will join a babel of speeches proclaiming

new-found freedoms, but where his will have strange significance for it was wondered throughout the centuries of his silence whether he was capable of speech at all. This person whose soul was scattered across the Americas, both on its two continents and on the splintered islands of the Caribbean, will later join hands across oceans even to the very source of his homeland, in the celebration of a new-found negativity and the negation of colonial values as they manifest throughout the tissue of 'Heart of Darkness'. He must be a man for his humanity, though negated within the text, and invisible within the 'visual field' of traditional criticism, is a given. Sartre notes: 'This is the contradiction of racism, colonialism and all forms of tyranny: in order to treat a man like a dog, one must first recognise him as a man.' (19) If I am to seek the African's speech, to consider his role as mute slave in the novel, it must be as the slave who will endure to proclaim his universal citizenship in Negritude philosophy, the voiceless man with the capacity to speak, the object of violence with the capacity for counter-violence. The real drama for me, as the child of colonialism is not the mock-epic encounter between Kurtz and Marlow, nor the fundamental philosophical debate between them whose real centre lies in Europe, but the silent violence occurring at the edge of the screen, for, that man who is being treated as less than human is the same man who will sing the universality of man in Césaire's poem. It is this blindspot within Europe's perceptive field who will become the subject of Negritude.

Heart of Darkness in Europe

Hammond and Jablow in 'The Africa That Never Was' think that 'Conrad's indictment' as such 'was more a condemnation of society than of empire, and his pessimism was directed more toward the inner corruption of mankind than at the evils of colonialism.' (20) Certainly 'Heart of Darkness' is, Jacques Darras reminds us, really just as much of a critical examination of European values, as of its deeds in The Congo. Darras notes that Conrad makes ironic reference to European mythology in his use of the conventions of the 'Quest' and 'The Holy Grail':

> The Grail is a marvellous image from the East which appears at the crossroads of commerce and religion. A funeral urn covered with precious gems, it is the image of rare perfection, with both a real and symbolic value. At times the Grail appears to the knights who, like Percival, often realise the full significance of their experience too late; at other times, Christ himself is the object of the quest. Just as we have counterfeit pilgrims who close the procession behind Marlow and Kurtz in the heart of Africa, so we have in 'Heart of Darkness' a fraudulent imitation of the Grail. In Conrad's story, the Grail is not the gold but the ivory which all the outposts, and agents venerate and to which they are completely devoted........' (21)

Conrad's suggestion is that fundamental European myths and values have been rendered ironic by the Carliers, Kayerts and Kurtzs of European-Africa: the further implication being that the colonial situation is only a mirror-image of the metropolitan one. 'Heart of Darkness' is a de-centered tale whose real centre lies in Europe. Just as colonial Cyprus in 'Othello' is the displaced centre of Venice, containing in exaggerated form the values operating in the metropolitan area, so Africa in 'Heart of Darkness' is the displaced site of ideologies having their origins in Europe. Marlow's Other in the novel is not an African but another European-Kurtz.

A Pole of Aristocratic descent, from a country somewhat removed from colonial engagement in Africa, (Poland was used however to being the object of colonial engagement by major powers such as Russia and Germany)

interrogates the ideologies of the colonial project: he interrogates Europe through Africa and discovers, as T. S Eliot wrote, 'the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history'. (22) V.Y. Mudimbe notes that the stance adopted by Europe towards Africa, as manifested in Christianity and anthropology was by no means an interrogative one; it was one based upon reduction and closure. If we agree with Jacques Darras that 'Heart of Darkness' represents an exploration in compressed form, an extended journey using short-cuts, 'dramatic short-cuts' and 'ideological short-cuts'; (23) it also represents a complex exploration of European values on the terrain of Africa:

> The iconography of the book, which includes a fair amount of traditional Christian imagery, only does so within the context of Western culture as a whole; it is only one mythology among many. Marlow advances to the heart of an essentially cultural landscape, to the centre of a continent whose culture, with few exceptions, has disappeared to make room for the theatre of the West. (24)

In one of his celebrated references to historical development Marx notes: 'Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.' (25) There are at least two condensed, miniature versions of the plot of 'Heart of Darkness' at the beginning of the narrative: one of them is a tragic account, the other ends in pure farce. Much has been made of the comparison made by Conrad between the colonial conquest of Britain by the Romans and the British conquest of Africa. At one point in his tale Marlow introduces a fantasy meant to be the reverse of the conquest of Africa by White males:

> Well, if a lot of mysterious niggers armed with all kinds of fearful weapons suddenly took to travelling on the road between Deal and Gravesend, catching the yokels right and left to carry heavy loads for them, I fancy every farm and cottage thereabouts would get empty very soon. (26)

Jacques Darras suggests that Conrad means to make an ironic reference to the tradition of the adoration of Roman civilization by European intellectuals by comparing the Roman invasion of Britain with an African invasion of the British coast. For Darras:

> The paradox of Marlow is voluntarily ambiguous. These 'niggers' whose invasion he imagines ironically, are only disguised as Romans. If we accept the historical relationship established by the Victorians, these 'niggers' can only be Romans in disguise. Consequently, Conrad is using prejudice to combat prejudice. (27)

This reference to the Roman conquest of Britain seems to me quite an important motif in the novel, for this conquest is described in heroic terms. The next description of conquest in the narrative (Europe of Africa), takes quite a different, farcical turn. Marlow describes with heightened imaginative force the feelings of a Roman commander approaching the British coast as if it were 'the other day'. This coast could, in Marlow's description, be any awe-inspiring 'savage' country, and Marlow notes of England, 'darkness was here yesterday.' The description could be of 'darkest Africa' of the European imagination: 'sand-banks, marshes, forests, savages,-precious little to eat fit for a civilized man.........'; and 'fog, tempests, disease, exile, and death-death skulking in the air, in the water, in the bush.' But the Roman soldiers are described in heroic terms: 'They were men enough to face the darkness.' The 'decent young citizen in a toga,' meets all the aweful challenges the land has to offer: 'the savagery, the utter savagery.......all that mysterious life of the wilderness that stirs in the forest, in the jungles, in the hearts of the wild men.' His true heroism lies in the fact that, 'There's no initiation either into those mysteries. He has to live in the midst of the incomprehensible, which is detestable.' Marlow imagines the soldiers fall from grace as a tragic fall, an understandable surrender to 'The fascination of the abomination-you know.........the powerless disgust, the surrender, the hate.' This colonial conqueror's fall from grace therefore is described in heroic terms as a tragic break from the traditions of Roman civilization.

In terms of the novel's structure, this description of the fall of innocence is followed a few pages later by Marlow's account of the fate of the captain

whom he replaces in getting his command and his job in Africa. This commander's fall is nothing if not farcical. He is killed, not in some heroic enterprise but 'a scuffle with the natives,' in a quarrel arising out of a misunderstanding over some hens. The captain had been in Africa a couple of years, engaged in what Marlow refers to ironically as 'the noble cause', but he felt anything but heroic, on the contrary he 'felt the need at last of asserting his self-respect in some way.' His recourse is the belabouring of an old Black man: 'Therefore he whacked the old nigger mercilessly......' The old man's son, 'made a tentative jab' with a spear which 'went quite easily between the shoulder blades.' Marlow's account is entirely in keeping with the spirit of the captain's fall: 'I couldn't let it rest, though; but when an opportunity offered at last to meet my predecessor, the grass growing through his ribs was tall enough to hide his bones.........' It is 'through this glorious affair' that he gets his first command long before he expects it.

The Black man of Negritude could not but observe that this second fall from grace contains all the ingredients marking Europe's involvement in Africa in the modern period: here is history repeating itself as farce, as Marx observed, with a whimper in the modern period. The two historical structures outlined so early in the novel are crucial to the overall plot of 'Heart of Darkness'. European man's actions in Africa are displayed as ranging from the farcical to the tragic with the occasional mixture of the two.

A typical example of the farcical and the tragic inextricably mixed is the shelling of the coast by the tattered little gunboat. As is the case in this novel, the farcical almost seems to mask the tragic. The farcical is associated with the actions of the Europeans; the tragic with its effects upon the Africans, but we are almost induced to lose sight of the Africans before the seductive mask of the farcical:

> Pop, would go one of the six-inch guns; a small flame would dart and
> vanish, a little white smoke would disappear, a tiny projectile would
> give a feeble screech-and nothing happened. Nothing could happen.
> There was a touch of insanity in the proceeding, a sense of the
> lugubrious drollery in the sight; and it was not dissipated by
> somebody on board assuring me earnestly there was a camp of
> natives- he called them enemies!-hidden out of sight somewhere. (28)

The absurdity of diminution, the comic banal figure of the little boat, and of what Hannah Arendt termed, with reference to the Eichmann trial, 'the banality of evil' (29) serves as a mask for the fact that it is terrified people its little gun is popping at, that they are unlikely to perceive the impact of its projectile as 'a feeble screech', and that something is indeed happening, something terrifying, unknown, and tragic-from the African view-point. Thus we are led to the African point of view; it is necessary to use our imagination for its recuperation, for we are led by a Marlow who seems capable of recognising only the farcical, not the tragic inhumanity; but we know that it has not entirely been erased in the ashes of the banal.

It is perhaps an awareness of this element of the farcical 'horror' of Kurtz's involvement in the Congo which has led some critics to seek some recuperation for him with reference to his Mephistophelean heroism. The future inheritor of Negritude is more likely to adopt Joseph Warren Beach's stance who, writing in 1932 suggested that: 'Kurtz is a personal embodiment, a dramatization of all that Conrad felt of the futility, degradation and horror in what the Europeans in the Congo called "progress", which meant the exploitation of the natives by every variety of cruelty and treachery known to greedy man.' (30) It is this disturbing account of Europe's incursion into Africa which Conrad displays before the inheritors of Negritude: even as the dormant victim of violence lying in the womb of history he cannot help observing the absurdity of Europe's pretensions in Africa.

Conrad's irony is not acceptable to all Black critics however. Chinua Achebe the famous Nigerian novelist regards Conrad as 'a thoroughgoing racist', (31) a 'simple truth' often glossed over in criticism of his works. 'Heart of Darkness' is of course full of masks: there are the masks adopted by the narrator, by Marlow and by Conrad. Masks are by definition ambiguous: Achebe it would seem has uncovered what he considers the mask disguising Conrad's absolute racism. A racism moveover so obvious as to be ignored or 'glossed over' by White critics for whom 'white racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely unremarked.' (32) When told by European students of the novel that its real centre lies in Europe, not in Africa this only confirms his sense of Conrad's racism:

Which is partly the point. Africa as setting and backdrop which eliminates the African as human factor. Africa as a metaphysical battlefield devoid of all recognizable humanity, into which the wandering European enters at his peril. Can nobody see the preposterous and perverse arrogance in thus reducing Africa to the role of props for the break-up of one petty European mind? But that is not even the point. The real question is the dehumanization of Africa and Africans which this age-long attitude has fostered and continues to foster in the world. And the question whether a novel which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art. (33)

Achebe then goes on to cite evidence outside the novel from Conrad's other non-fiction writings of his racism. Such evidence as he does cite indicates that Conrad shared some of the 'ideological currency' of his time regarding the Negro. It would of course have been surprising if he didn't. Achebe cites an example from Conrad's notes about his encounter with a Black Haïtian:

A certain enormous bush nigger encountered in Haiti fixed my conception of blind, furious, unreasoning rage, as manifested in the human animal to the end of my days. Of the nigger I used to dream for years afterwards. (34)

He counterposes this example with one from Conrad's 'A Personal Record' in which Conrad declares an exalted encounter with 'his first Englishman':

[his] calves exposed to the public gaze........dazzled the beholder by the splendour of their marble-like condition and their rich tone of young ivory......The light of a headlong, exalted satisfaction with the world of men.........illumined his face.....and triumphant eyes. (35)

And there are of course many examples of Marlow's use of the term 'niggers'

to describe Africans, as well as his exalted view of the role of Englishmen in Africa: he likes to see a large amount of red on the map because 'one knows that some real work is done there.........' (36) It is well known that Conrad, a naturalised Englishman, had fond notions of the role of England at least amongst the European powers in Africa: Conrad wrote of the Boers during the Boer War:

> That they -the Boers-are struggling in good faith for their independence cannot be doubted; but it is also a fact that they have no idea of liberty which can only be found under the English flag all over the world. (37)

All this evidence points to the notion that Conrad shared in the ideology of his age and class and profession, allowing for the particularities of his origins and situation as a Pole steeped in a knowledge of the problems of colonialism. The leap from this thought to the conclusion that the author of a work of fiction created out of the complexities of the unconscious   is racist, is a great one for one novelist to make about another. Wilson Harris the Guyanese novelist from a Caribbean culture where a mixture of origins, cultures and values is the norm (African, Indian, Amer-Indian, Chinese, for example) has some sympathy with Achebe's view, 'in the light of Western malaise, and post-imperial hangover,' (38) but finds it ultimately wrong. Harris senses in Achebe's judgement, or failure of judgement with regard to Conrad's novel, 'a certain incomprehension in Achebe's analysis of the pressures of form which engaged Conrad's imagination to transform biases grounded in homogeneous premises.' (39) Part of Achebe's problem with 'Heart of Darkness' is explained by Harris as stemming from his African origin where, 'by and large, tradition tends towards homogeneous imperatives.' (40)

The situation is different in South America from which Harris originates:

> The crucial hurdle in the path of community, if community is to create a living future, lies in a radical aesthetic in which distortions of sovereign institutions which, therefore, may begin to penetrate and

unravel their biases, in some degree, in order to bring into play a complex wholeness inhabited by other confessing parts that may have once masqueraded themselves as monolithic absolutes or monolithic codes of behaviour in the Old Worlds from which they emigrated by choice or by force. (41)

In the non-homogeneous societies of the Caribbean and South America the novelist in Harris's view must come to terms with the ground of biases which in their original worlds 'may have once masqueraded themselves as monolithic absolutes or codes of behaviour' in order to create a new vision of community in which such biases may be reabsorbed into works of fiction which would explore the cross-cultural threads and fundamental humanity of man. All this can only be produced in the unconscious of a novelist who leaves behind or re-absorbs his biases in the act of creating the work of fiction. (42)

Harris finds some of Achebe's problems with Conrad's novel located in the problems of the novel form itself which Conrad had inherited, namely the nineteenth century novel, and its appeal to the liberal conscience: 'The novel-form Conrad inherited.................was conditioned by a homogeneous cultural logic to promote a governing principle that would sustain all parties, all characterizations in endeavouring to identify natural justice, natural conscience behind the activity of a culture.' (43) The liberal culture displays its inherent tendency towards oppression leading to fascism at times of extremity (for example Germany 1933). Harris thinks this tendency is part of the thematic thrust of certain works in the Euro-American tradition:

It was with works of disturbing imagination such as Poe's *Arthur Gordon Pym* and James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, both published in the 1830s, Melville's *Benito Cereno*, in the middle of the 19th century, and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, at the beginning of the 20th century, that the logic of man-made symmetry or absolute control of diversity, the logic of benign or liberal order, disclosed hideous biases within a context of heterogeneous bodies and pigmentations. For the truth was that the liberal homogeneity of a culture becomes the ready-made cornerstone upon which to construct

an order of conquest, and by degrees 'the horror, the horror' was intuitively manifest. (44)

Harris considers that part of Achebe's problem with Conrad's novella is his refusal to focus on 'the crucial parody of the proprieties of established order that mask corruption in all societies, black and white.' (45) Conrad's parody is a problem for any Black reader of the novel in which as has been mentioned earlier, various masks are displayed by the various narrators of the work . and the ultimate mask may be the mask of liberalism adopted by Conrad himself. Harris senses in Conrad's parody 'a foreboding about the ultimate essence of *Heart of Darkness* and 'an exhaustion of spirit that froze Conrad's genius and made it impossible for him to cross the frontier upon which his intuitive imagination had arrived.' (46) He thinks that Conrad's problem rested in the nature of parody itself: '

> My view is that parody tends to border upon nihilism, a fact all too clear in modern fiction and drama. Parody is the flag of the death of god, the death of faith, and without faith imaginative art tends to freeze and cultivate a loss of soul. Perhaps god has been so conditioned by homogeneous or tribal idols that freedom of spirit seems a chimera. When I speak of the necessity for faith I am not referring therefore to cults of idolatry but to a conviction written into the stars as into one's blood that creation is a priceless gift beyond man-made formula or calculation of Faustian will.

> Conrad's despair is so marked that one is conscious of infinite desolation within the very signals he intuitively erects which bear upon a radical dialectic of form. His parody-like Beckett's parody-remains formidable because it cuts to the bone and heart of liberal complacency. But the transition beyond parody which humanity needs neither Beckett nor Conrad fulfils. (47)

Here Harris alludes to one of the cultural complexities in which Conrad's novel is steeped: that is, the Euro-American base (the origins of 'liberal democracy') of a form of parody resulting from the 'death of faith' or, as

Theodor Adorno says of Beckett's heroes, 'the abdication of the individual'. It is a parody which is inimical to the spirit of writers like Harris and Achebe, stemming from 'third world' countries, even though Harris indicates a closer more sympathetic understanding of it than Achebe. What Harris's implied criticism of Conrad and Beckett seems however to discount, is the perennial artist's right to display rather than find solutions to social realities.

Harris indicates one of the profound problems inherent in Negritude as an ideology. For Negritude seems doomed to a perpetual dialogue with parodies. By seeking for example to counter the ideological creation which is negativity of the first form, Negritude inevitably found itself in danger of circumscription by a parody. If 'Uncle Tom' in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' is a parody of the Christianized, deodorized, sexless Negro, if the Blacks in 'Heart of Darkness' are parodies of the noble savage (itself a parody based on the 'defects' of the Euro-American male) any ideological movement setting out to counter these ideologies was bound to fall into the danger of circumscription by parodies. Senghor's embrace of Leo Frobenius's 'African essence' as having much in common with the 'German spirit', (48) leads him to the concept of a fossilised and preserved African soul, (emotivity) in contradistinction to a European essence (intellectuality). One ideology contrasts another; one ideology has been created out of another.

Christopher Miller notes that the younger generation of post-independence African writers criticise Senghor for his ideological reliance on Frobenius which they see as a form of assimilation; they contend that: 'Senghor's reliance on Frobenius' anthropology could *only* have led to cultural assimilation and the erasure of difference, for it was a sign of alienation in the first place.' (49) I shall consider the demise of Negritude at the conclusion of this thesis.

Kurtz and 'The Intended'-the relationship between Europe and Africa

Ian Watt records that in a letter to William Blackwood, Conrad explained 'the interview of the man and girl locks in-as it were-the whole 30,000 words of narrative description into one suggestive view of a whole phaze of life, and makes of that story something quite on another plane than an anecdote of a man who went mad in the centre of Africa'. (50) F.R. Leavis in 'The Great Tradition' dismisses the scene with Kurtz's Intended as melodramatic excess:

> It is not part of Conrad's irony that there should be anything ironical
> in this presentment of the woman. The irony lies in the association of
> her innocent nobility, her purity of idealizing faith, with the
> unspeakable corruption of Kurtz; and it is developed (if that is the
> word) with a thrilled insistence that recalls the melodramatic
> intensities of Edgar Allan Poe..........(51)

This is another example of Leavis's condescension towards Conrad in his
appraisal of this work. The scene assumes greater importance if it can be
regarded as the adoption of another of Marlow's masks: the gruff sailor
paying court to a deceived woman's illusion for the preservation of her
necessary innocence since, as Marlow knows after the long incursion in
which he has encountered both reality and the masks of European ideologies,
human beings cannot bare too much reality or, as Carl Jaspers notes with
reference to Friedrich Nietzsche's position on truth, authentic truth 'ceases to
be such whenever its existence assumes any sort of   determinate
form.' (52) Thus faced with her illusion, which is her way of encountering
reality Marlow, who has failed to find Truth on his journey, and has come to
recognise that this failure is a necessity of lived life, does not attempt to take
away the mask with which she encounters life, being a dealer in masks
himself.

The woman is symbolic of Europe in relation to its own deeds in Africa.
Europe made Kurtz, just as the woman is evidently a product of Kurtz's
overwhelming influence and, is symbolic of the system of ostrich-like self-
deception which creates the right conditions for Kurtz's corruption to flourish.
And it is Europe's own products: Kurtz, Rhodes, Livingstone et al who in turn
were responsible for its own illusions of Empire, its ideologies of subjection.
Europe, like the Intended, viewed its empire through Kurtz-nurtured illusions,
celebrating its fustian trappings while masking its darkness. What comes
home to Marlow on his return to Europe is that this act of masking occurs in
the heart of Europe itself. The sepulchral city at which he stops on his way
out to Africa, and the 'cold monumental whiteness' of the Intended's fireplace,
are symbolic white masks for Europe's own darkness. The white marble of
the woman's fireplace recalls the ivory which Kurtz has collected at the
expense of so much darkness, and so many dark bodies, and for which he

wants only 'justice', an absurd rhetorical mask hiding his deeds in the Congo.

T.S. Eliot recognised the central role which the figure of Kurtz plays in the European tradition in his use of the notion of the hollowness behind the mask as a symbol of European decadence. Ian Watt notes that 'The hollowness which Kurtz shares with the pilgrims is what led T.S. Eliot to use the savagely contemptuous announcement in Pidgin by the manager's servant, "Mistah Kurtz-he dead," as the epigraph to the The Hollow Men. Eliot's epigraph presents Kurtz as a symbol for the faithless and inner emptiness of the modern world in general'. (53) The importance of Kurtz for Eliot seems to have lain in Eliot's recognition of the ubiquity of his type-all over Europe.Eliot's symbolic use of him also puts into perspective claims for Kurtz's Mephistophelean heroism: is Kurtz a hero, or a 'hollow man' full of empty jabber?

Marlow comes back to Europe knowing something of the truth, and therefore knowing the essential meaninglessness of certain European 'ideals' such as 'Justice', 'Freedom', 'Civilization', when applied to its deeds in Africa. but, Marlow also learns something of what Nietzsche regarded as the essential incommunicability of the truth. He would like to communicate the truth to the Intended but its ineffability makes communication impossible, besides, he no longer knows what Truth is. Why not leave the woman, who through lack of experience with its essential shifting darkness, thinks she knows Truth, with her own glittering illusions. The woman, like Europe, is convinced that she has a grasp of Truth. Ian Watt notes that the Intended, like the Russian is one of those characters 'addicted to the idealising abstractions of public discourse, to a language that has very little connection with the realities either of the external world or of their inner selves.' (54)

Europe, like the Intended,is convinced by the rhetorical lies of the ideology of Empire: this is the full horror which confronts Marlow on his return. He has his first inkling of this in his visit to the Intended. As with many of the important 'scenes' in the novel, the episode begins with an ironical coda or overture. Marlow contemplates her portrait: 'I know that the sunlight can be made to lie, too, yet one felt that no manipulation of light and pose could have conveyed the delicate shade of truthfulness upon those features.' (55) The woman is one of those who has been convinced by the manipulations of

the public language of ideology, of European 'enlightenment', to the point where they have invaded her inner self which has now become composed into 'a delicate shade of truthfulness.' Faced with the woman's spouting of the empty bombastic rhetoric of ideology and her belief in Kurtz, Marlow can hardly communicate his discovered, paltry 'truth'. Marlow tells her a 'lie' about Kurtz, but his act is hardly a lie, more an act of good grace, or what is sometimes called 'good manners'. Faced with the lie of the woman's belief in the 'truth' of Kurtz, Marlow does not shatter the woman's delicate protective carapace. His disorientation, which exists before his visit to the woman, can only increase.

Marlow's problem becomes a perennial one of Western civilization: the difficulty of communication, of communicating private 'truths' across the grotesqueness of the 'lies' of public ideologies. In 'An Outpost of Progress' the narrator states: 'Everybody shows a respectful deference to certain sounds that he and his fellows can make. But about feelings people really know nothing. We talk with indignation or enthusiasm; we talk about oppression, cruelty, crime, devotion, self-sacrifice, virtue, and we know nothing real beyond the words. Nobody knows what suffering or sacrifice mean-except perhaps the victims of the mysterious purpose of these illusions.' (56) Here Conrad seems to be making common cause with the victims of such 'illusions' as 'suffering', 'oppression', that is, the future man of Negritude: only he can experience the full meaning of these concepts, yet it is his voice which is stilled beneath the clamour of their public and empty use.

Those who, through experience, have an inkling of the meaning of these concepts, such as Marlow, and the future man of Negritude, cannot, or are not allowed to communicate; those like Kurtz who spout only public lies, or 'the idealising abstractions of public discourse', communicate only 'empty jabber': the twain cannot meet; 'The Best lack all conviction while the worst /are full of passionate intensity.' (57)

Despite his exhortations in terms of the concepts of enlightenment, Kurtz's use of concepts such as 'justice' and 'civilization', has been recognised by critics as masking the ultimate embrace of amoral darkness. Conrad has developed the notion of darkness in his tale from its connection with sterile negativity in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', to a view of the creative value of the negativity of darkness. Kurtz's however is a destructive embrace of

127

darkness. He is linked in his demonic amoral will-to-dominate to the furious demonic energy of archetypes such as Gerald Creighton in D.H. Lawrence's 'Women in Love', who is regarded as 'full of go' even if it is not certain where this 'go' goes to, except perhaps in the servitude of the modern industrial machine represented by his father's mine. Captain Ahab in Herman Melville's 'Moby Dick' is a similar figure though different from Creighton and Kurtz to the extent that his energy is harnessed towards the realisation of an essential project-the destruction of the whale-whereas Kurtz and Creighton seem possessed of overwhelming directionless energy. All these modern figures are ultimately destroyed by the amoral force of their all-consuming energy; they become its object of consumption. It is a modern form of energy which Richard Wright discovered in his America of the twenties and thirties as I shall discuss later.

Compared to Kurtz, Marlow's awareness of darkness is creative since it leads him to an understanding of the empty rhetoric of what passes for 'truth' and an appreciation of the real values, the necessary lies, on which civilization is based. This new-found understanding of the reality of civilization means a break from the simplistic 'truths' associated with colonialism. It leads to the notion of the universality of colonialism as a process-'this too has been one of the dark places in the world'-and the universality of the wrestle with darkness. Wherever colonialism manifests, whether in modern Africa or ancient Britain, the darkness of civilization manifests in the excesses of its representatives. The 'heart of darkness' which is exposed in the process is the reality of the glittering values of civilization, built not on universal 'truths' as Kurtz and his ilk would maintain, but on naked power: the 'universality' of truths or values in this context is no more than the triumph of the 'truths' of one group over another, or one class over another. This is what Nietzsche argued and Marlow learns.

Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' emerged at the dawn of the twentieth century as part of a general number of manifestations which represented challenges to established European values; Marxism had already announced its challenge to bourgeois society in the mid-nineteenth century; Freudianism dadaism, surrealism, Nietzschean philosophy, were all challenges to established bourgeois values pointing to the darkness of its 'unthought'. Negritude was to join this general negation, borrowing from its various elements. The

'scramble for Africa' and its accompanying Kurtz-like excesses of violence and oppression produced a reciprocal awareness on the part of the African of the empty rhetoric of European values, an awareness which was to manifest in the future cry of a product of the African diaspora, Frantz Fanon, the universal speech of the man of Negritude:

> Let us waste no time in sterile litanies and nauseating mimicry. Leave this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everwhere they find them, at the corner of every one of their own streets, in all the corners of the globe. For centuries they have stifled almost the whole of humanity in the name of a so-called spiritual experience. Look at them today swaying between atomic and spiritual disintegration. (58)

and

When I search for Man in the technique and the style of Europe, I see only a succession of negations of man..............(59)

The focus of the Negro had completed the shift from the origins of the discourse which had constructed him as a 'thing of darkness', to an examination of the negativity at the heart of European civilization.

In the next chapter I shall examine the full manifestation of the Black as creative negativity in Michel Tournier's 'Friday, Or The Other Island'.

References

1 Michel Foucault: 'The Order of Things', Tavistock Publications (Gt. Britain, 1970). Foucault places the modern age at the beginning of the nineteenth century. (pXX11)

2 W. Shakespeare, 'The Tempest' Edited by Oscar James Campbell, Alfred Rothschild, Stuart Vaughan, Bantam Books, (London, 1964) Act. v. sc. 1. 275-276

3 Quoted by Joseph Chiari in 'The Aesthetics of Modernism', Vision Press Ltd. (1970). p32.

4 M. Foucault. 'The Order of Things', p328.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Title of one of Conrad's stories in 'Tales of Unrest'. Penguin (1987). pp 83-110.

8 'The Order of Things'. p326.

9 Op. Cit. pp326-327.

10 See A.B. Davidson, 'African Resistance and Rebellion Against the Impositon of Colonial Rule', in 'Emerging Themes of African History' edited by T. O. Ranger: East African Publishing House (Nairobi 1969), pp177-188, also, R.I. Rotber and Mazuri: (A.A.) 'Protest and Power in Black Africa' (by various authors). Ed. by R.I. Rotberg & A.A. Mazuri, Oxford University Press, (London 1970) ppxxx-1274.

11 Jean-Paul Sartre. 'Critique of Dialectical Reason', Trans. by Alan Sheridan-Smith. Ed. by Johnthan Ree. Verso. (1976.) p111.

12 Michel Foucault: 'Text, Discourse, Ideology' in 'Untying The Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader', edited by R. Young: Routledge & Kegan Paul, (London and Henley. 1981) p67.

13 Joseph Conrad, 'Heart of Darkness', Penguin Books (London 1982) p20.

14 Jacques Darras, 'Conrad And The West: Signs of Empire', trans. by Anne Luyat and Jacques Darras. Macmillan. (London 1982) pp86-87.

15 V.Y. Mudimbe, 'The Invention of Africa : Gnosis, Philosophy   And The Order of Knowledge', Indiana Univ. Press, (1988). p66.

16 Joseph Conrad, 'Heart of Darkness', pp22-23.

17 Ian Watt: 'Conrad In The Nineteenth Century', Chatto and   Windus. (London. 1980). p225.

18 Joseph Conrad, 'Heart of Darkness' p51.

19 Jean-Paul Sartre. 'Critique of Dialectical Reason', Trans. by Alan Sheridan-Smith. Ed. by Johnthan Ree. Verso. (1976.) p111.

20 D. Hammond and A. Jablow, 'The Africa That Never Was : Four Centuries of British Writing About Africa', Twayne Publishers Inc. (N. York,1970). p106.

21 Jacques Darras, 'Conrad and the West', p50.

22 Frank Kermode, (editor) 'T.S.Eliot's Prose' Faber & Faber (London 1975) p177

23 Jacques Darras, 'Conrad and the West', 81-82.

24 Op. Cit. p90.

25 Lewis S. Feuer, (ed.) 'Marx and Engels Basic Writing on Politics and Philosophy': The Fontana Library, Collins, (1971) p360.

26 Joseph Conrad, 'Heart of Darkness', p28.

27 Jacques Darras, 'Conrad and the West', p62.

28 Joseph Conrad, 'Heart of Darkness', p20.

29 Hannah Arendt,'Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil'. Penguin Books (London 1977).

Arendt used the term 'banality of evil' to describe Eichmann's lack of imagination and true understanding of the enormity of his crimes. He, 'never realized what he was doing'. (p287)

30 Quoted by C.B. Cox, in 'Joseph Conrad: The Modern Imagination', J.M. Dent , (London, 1974) p2.

31 Chinua Achebe, 'Hopes and Impediments', Heinemann Educational Books, (London 1986) p8.

32 Ibid.

33 Op. Cit. pp8-9.

34 Op. Cit. p9.

35 Ibid.

36 Joseph Conrad, 'Heart of Darkness', p14.

37 Henryk Zins, 'Joseph Conrad in Africa', Kenya Literature Bureau (Nairobi 1982). p137.

38 Wilson Harris, 'Explorations', Dangaroo Press (Denmark 1981) p134.

39 Ibid.

40 Op. Cit. p135.

41 Ibid.

42 Wilson Harris, (talk given at conference of the 'Association for the teaching of African, Asian & Caribbean Literature', Aston University, 1985). Harris stated that he realised in writing his first published novel 'Palace of the Peacock', he was 'absorbing my biases'.

43 Wilson Harris, 'Explorations', p135.

44 Op. Cit. p136.

45 Op. Cit. p137.

46 Ibid.

47 Op. Cit. pp137-138.

48 Christoper Miller, 'Theories of Africans', from '"Race," Writing & Difference', p291. (Miller quotes from examples of Senghor's fascination with 'the German spirit').

49 Op. Cit. p292.

50 Ian Watt, 'Conrad in the Nineteenth Century', p244.

51 F.R. Leavis, 'The Great Tradition', Penguin Book, (London, 1974) p209.

52 Carl Jaspers, 'Nietzsche An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity', trans. by C.F. Wallraff & F. J. Schmitz. A. Gateway Edition, (Chicago, 1965) p220.

53 Ian Watt, 'Conrad in the Nineteenth Century', p245.

54 Ibid.

55 Joseph Conrad, 'Heart of Darkness', p104.

56 Joseph Conrad: 'An Outpost of Progress', from, 'Tales of Unrest', Penguin Books, London 1987, pp99-100

57 W.B. Yeats, 'The Second Coming', <u>The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W.B.Yeats'</u>, Ed. by Peter Allt. & R.K.Alspach, Macmillan. (N.York. 1966) p402.

58 Frantz Fanon, 'The Wretched of the Earth', Penguin Books, trans. by Constance Farrington, (1971) p251.

59 Op. Cit. p252.

CHAPTER 5

FRIDAY, OR THE OTHER ISLAND: MICHEL TOURNIER

Where Daniel Defoe's original (1) established Friday the Black man as pure untutored negativity which had to be mastered for use as servant material, Michel Tournier's portrayal of this negativity in 'Friday, Or The Other Island' (2), enables Friday to emerge as a creative force from which Robinson has much to learn. Tournier's view of the Black man challenges the overwhelming Euro-American tradition representing another view of Black negativity with which the Negritude theorists could have a productive dialogue. Negritude had a dialogue with both aspects of the Euro-American view of the Black. The negativity of the Black represented in Tournier's novel is a negativity with which Césaire's Negritude was most in sympathy.

Both Tournier and Defoe begin their portrayal of Friday as a tabula rasa of primitivity.

Defoe's original novel was firmly within the mainstream of eighteenth century values in its portrayal of Friday as Robinson's 'thing of darkness' who must be mastered, taught the rudimentary language of service, and generally controlled with the firm hand of patriarchy before he can be utilised as a tame slave. Robinson as a restless member of an emergent bourgeoisie is intent upon the colonisation and utilisation of everything and everyone he can get his hands on. His first instinct on landing on the island is expropriation. For this he needs the tools of the colonialist-weaponry-for which he returns to the womb of the ship: 'I had the biggest magazine of all kinds now that was laid up, I believe, for one man......' (3) The colonialist requires as much of the paraphernalia of the metropolis as possible in order to begin the business of colonisation: '..............but I was not satisfied still; for while the ship sat upright in that position, I thought I ought to get everything out of her that I could.........(4)

It is quite in keeping with his instinct for exploitation that his first thought on seeing the luckless Friday running away from his pursuers is the opportunity it affords him to acquire a slave should he rescue him: '...it came now very warmly upon my thoughts, that now was the time to get me a

servant, and perhaps a companion or assistant, and that I was called plainly by Providence to save this poor creature's life.' (5) The sentence repays analysis. Robinson's first 'warm' thought tends toward acquisitiveness and exploitation: 'now was the time to get me a servant' (servant at the time of Defoe's writing was a euphemism for 'slave'). Only after this immediate instinct does he consider the Black man a potential 'companion'. The sentence is rounded off with a pious gloss: '........and that I was called plainly by Providence to save this poor creature's life.........' The duties of Providence seem comically and cynically yanked to instinctive acquisitiveness.

Once he is acquired, the Black man is named, and taught his place in the scheme of things: '........I likewise taught him to say Master: and then let him know that was to be my name...........'(6) He is also taught all that is necessary to be a good slave: '............made it my business to teach him everything that was proper to make him useful, handy, and helpful........' (7)

Tournier's Crusoe adopts the same attitude towards Friday in the early part of their encounter. He too regards Friday's negativity as a dangerous tendency to be subdued: for him Friday is a wild savage without a shred of virtue to mitigate his primitiveness:

> Not only is the man coloured, a coastal Arancanian, but he is clearly not of pure blood. Everything about him points to the half-cast, a South American Indian crossed with Negro. If he had even attained the age of reason and were capable of appreciating his own insignificance in face of the civilization I represent.' (8)

Tournier's Robinson regards Friday as a force to be mastered, whose mastery will be rendered easier by his untutored and immature age: 'That companionship has now been vouchsafed me in its primitive and rudimentary form, but this will at least make it the easier for me to mould it to my requirements.' (9)

Unlike Defoe's hero whose relationship with Friday does not fundamentally change from that of benign patriarchy, Tournier's Robinson begins to alter his relationship with Friday after an explosion unwittingly set off by Friday

forces him to embark on a re-examination of his life and his attitude to the
Black man. Up to that point, before the arrival of Friday, Crusoe has
undergone a series of changes none of which have left him satisfied. He has
gone from a state of despair in which he rolls in a marsh used by pigs, to an
infantile period of seclusion in the womb-like calm of his cave, to a state of
'vegetative sexuality' with the earth in which he masturbates into the island's
soil. He has been governor, military commander and administrator of the
island, employing his time with Calvinistic parsimony and strictness. None of
these states have been entirely fulfilling. Nor once he arrives, is he entirely
successful in subduing Friday to his will:

> Friday was instinctively repelled by the sober order which Robinson
> imposed on the island and which had enabled him to survive. It
> seemed indeed that he belonged to some quite other order, wholly
> opposed to that order of earth and husbandry, on which he could only
> have a disrupting effect if the effort were made to confine him within
> it. (10)

Friday is a young Ariel whom this dour earth-bound Prospero has not
entirely been able to quell. The explosion makes an alteration which
Robinson has secretly longed for: beneath his apparent confidence his island
has been a source of oppression from whose force he has secretly longed for
liberation.

Seemingly for the first time Robinson begins to look towards Friday for the
source of that other island beneath his cultivated world: he begins to
contemplate Friday and his being afresh: '..........it was for Friday to show
him the way to something else, substituting for a way of life he had found
intolerable some other order appropriate to himself, which Robinson was now
eager to discover.' (11) He discovers that beneath the apparent aimlessness
and disorder of Friday's life lies an instinctive order:

> Friday's freedom, as Robinson discovered in the days that followed,
> was something more than a mere negation of the order that the
> explosion had destroyed. His experience during his early days on
> Speranza had made Robinson too familiar with the life of utter

purposelessness, at the mercy of every whim and prey to every frustration, for him not to realize that there was an underlying wholeness, an implicit principle, at the heart of Friday's way of life. (12)

Up to the explosion Robinson has not properly *seen* Friday, blinded as he has been by the ideological excrescences of the metropolitan world whose values he has cultivated, and by his own routine, his 'ways of seeing' his island and its beings. Friday has been merely an instrument for the organisation of his world: the explosion disrupts his scheme and his habits of perception. For the first time he begins to observe Friday: 'Robinson now observed Friday with a passionate interest in his every act and in the effect of his actions upon himself, where they were producing an astonishing metamorphosis.' (13) This observation leads to a recognition of Friday not only as Robinson's Other but as a being in his own right:

> Here he comes. Shall I ever learn to walk with his natural majesty? Do I sound absurd if I say that he seems clothed by his nakedness? He carries his body like a sovereign affirmation, he bears himself like a monstrance of flesh. His animal beauty proclaims itself, seeming to create a nothingness around it. (14)

Hitherto Friday was the Other to be treated with hostility and indifference: now he becomes the whole of humanity in his own person, given the absence of anyone else on the island:

> As I think of it, there is nothing very astonishing in the almost crazed intensity with which I watch Friday. What is unbelievable is that I should have lived so long with him without, so to speak, seeing him at all. How account for that blind indifference, when for me he is the whole of humanity assembled in one person, my son and my father, my brother and my neighbour, my nearest and my farthest? I must concentrate every emotion that man feels for his fellows upon this sole 'other', because what would otherwise become of my ability to

feel? What should I do with pity and hatred, admiration and fear, if Friday did not inspire those emotions in me? (15)

The explosion not only disrupts his ways of looking at his world but his perception of time: his adoption of Western linear time has inevitably led to a sense of emptiness, given the absence on the island of the successive events used to mark time in the metropolitan area. Robinson notes that his linear measurement of time had worked hitherto: 'Formerly every day, hour and minute leaned in a sense towards the day, hour and minute that was to follow, and were all drawn into the pattern of the moment, whose transcience created a kind of vacuum. So time passed rapidly and usefully, the more quickly as it was usefully employed, leaving behind an accumulation of achievement and wastage which was my history.' (16) After the explosion the cyclical measurement of time assumes a much greater importance for him:

For me the cycle has now shrunk until it is merged in the moment. The circular movement has become so swift that it cannot be distinguished from immobility. And it is as though, in consequence, my days had re-arranged themselves. No longer do they jostle on each other's heels. Each stands separate and upright, proudly affirming its own worth. And since they are no longer to be distinguished as the stages of a plan in process of execution, they so resemble each other as to be superimposed in my memory, so that I seem to be ceaselessly re-living the same day. Since the explosion destroyed my calendar-mast I have felt no need to record the passing of time. (17)

The shattering of his water-clock in the explosion is symbolic of the sudden alteration of his relationship with time: 'The memory of that accident and the events leading to it is imprinted on my mind with a vividness which in itself is evidence that time stopped when the water-clock was shattered. Are we not now living in eternity, Friday and I?' (18)

Up to the explosion Robinson has been oppressed by Time which he associates with 'the tyrannous routine of the cultivated island.' (19) To escape from its imprisonment he had sought refuge in the bowels of the cave into a

zone of 'timelessness'. Friday's explosion transports him into a realm where he is released from Time's oppression into a perpetual present:

> ....I am fixed in a moment of innocence. Speranza is no longer a virgin land which I must make fruitful, nor Friday a savage whom I must teach to behave. Both call for all my attention, a watchful and marvelling vigilance, for it seems to me-nay, I know it- that at every moment I am seeing them for the first time..........(20)

Robinson's view of time here recalls C.G.Jung's reference to a central myth of Western man, that is the belief in 'progress with time'. In 'Memories, Dreams, Reflections', Jung recalls passing the lone figure of an impressive Arab rider while travelling in the North African desert:

> Here was a man who certainly possessed no pocket watch, let alone a wrist watch; for he was obviously and unselfconsciously the person he had always been. He lacked that faint note of foolishness which clings to the European. The European is, to be sure, convinced that he is no longer what he was ages ago; but he does not know what he has since become. His watch tells him that since the "Middle Ages" time and its synonym, progress, have crept up on him and irrevocably taken something from him. With lightened baggage he continues his journey, with steadily increasing velocity, towards nebulous goals. He compensates for the loss of gravity and the corresponding sentiment d'incompletude by the illusion of his triumphs, such as steamships, railways, aeroplanes, and rockets, that rob him of his duration and transport him into another reality of speeds and explosive accelerations. (21)

Jung suggests that European man's concern with linear time involves both a loss and an oppression: the subsequent 'gain' which he perceives as 'progress' is largely illusory. For both Tournier and Jung 'primitive man' has a healthier relationship with Time than Western man. If Robinson's changes in time leave him unsatisfied before his revelation: Friday's relationship with Time,

like that of Jung's Arab, leaves him with inner self-satisfaction which represents the absence of Time's oppression.

Western man's restless concern with Time would seem to be one of the effects of capitalism with its tendency towards a constant assault upon the present and the past ('history is bunk') in favour of a future good. One of the contradictions of Margaret Thatcher's position towards Europe is the support for the restless values of the market, with its implied acceptance of capitalism's assault upon the present and the past, and, the desire for the preservation of the values of a parliamentary tradition. Tournier portrays Robinson the putative capitalist caught up in the vicissitudes of his adventures in Time, as saved from the oppression of his system by the spirit-like Friday.

Friday has, prior to the explosion been a silent subverter of Robinson's regime: the explosion is a liberation both of himself and Robinson. Robinson had hitherto oppressed both himself, with Time, and Friday, with labour. He regards himself as owner of the island with Friday having only the rights of a servant. On Robinson's island, time is if not money, production, in which he ceaselessly employs Friday. Ian Watt in 'Robinson Crusoe as Myth' compares Robinson's belief in the work ethic to that of the Victorians and suggests that Defoe was in effect inaugurating the ideology of the modern age: 'The dignity of labour is the central creed of the religion of capitalism.' (22) As long as Friday remains the faithful servant the routine continues without any dawning of awareness on his part. The explosion, though accidental, is a culmination of Friday's silent acts of subversion; it is a culmination which finally allows Robinson full awareness of that 'other island' which he had dimly glimpsed at times he called his 'moments of innocence'.

Tournier acknowledges that his Friday shares the predicament of the thousands of Fridays who came to France as immigrants during the sixties, to whom he would have liked to dedicate his book. Those immigrant Fridays are similarly ignored by their French Robinsons. Those who must absorb all that French culture has to offer them with no prospect of a reciprocal exchange are the victims of the 'Robinson complex' in French society which has:

..........set its fat white buttocks down on their brown bodies and
reduced them to absolute silence. They sweep our streets, pick our
strawberries, mow our lawns carry our burdens, and beg at our doors,
yet we behave as though they had nothing to say, nothing to say to us
at any rate, nothing to teach us, and yet everything to learn by
attending our schools, learning to speak the civilized tongue of
Descartes, Corneille, and Pasteur, acquiring our civilized manners,
and most of all by making us forget-stupid, blind Crusoes that we all
are-who they are and where they come from. (23)

The immigrant situations which Tournier describes for France is a
widespread phenomenon in Europe: in countries as rich as Germany, Italy,
The Netherlands, Belgium, Britain, Black Fridays from relatively poor
countries are employed as an invisible presence within the bowels of the
industrial system without any appreciation of the contributions, negative or
positive which they actually make to their host societies. 'Beware' Tournier
warns, 'lest these mute masses erupt one day with the sound of thunder.' (24)

Unlike Defoe's novel which displays the classic lines of eighteenth century
racism and modern colonialism in Robinson's treatment of Friday, Tournier's
book is written by someone who had the benefit of anthropology, a discipline
not yet invented in Defoe's day. Tournier's years of study at the Musée de
l'Homme, in Paris had taught him that there are no 'savages', 'only men living
in civilizations different from our own and most rewarding for us to
study.' (25) For Tournier this should lead the enlightened European to the
notion that: 'If you must live on an island in the Pacific,' it would be better to,
'learn from a native well versed in methods adapted to local conditions.' (26)
Far from learning anything from Friday, Defoe's Crusoe, enclosed by the
ideology of eighteenth century racism, considers himself the sole bearer of
civilization charged with combatting Friday's wild negativity:

What was Friday to Daniel Defoe? Nothing: an animal, at best a
creature waiting to receive his humanity from Robinson Crusoe, who
as a European was in sole possession of all knowledge and wisdom.
Once properly broken in by his master Crusoe, Friday could never

aspire to anything more than to be a good servant. The idea that
Crusoe might have been able to learn something from Friday would
never have occurred to anyone before the age of anthropology. (27)

The myth of Friday and Crusoe has, Tournier notes 'over the past few
decades..........taken on a significance that Daniel Defoe was a thousand
leagues from suspecting.' (28) The twentieth century author who, with the
benefit of anthropology and psychology, posits a much richer result from the
encounter between Crusoe and Friday than Daniel Defoe, must still avoid
intimations of Noble Savagery, with all its implications. Both Rousseau and
Montesquieu used the notion of the 'savage' for their own dubious purposes,
Tournier maintains: in the case of Rousseau, 'All the virtues he imputed to
the "savage" were merely mirror images of the vices of which he accused the
"civilized".' (29) Rousseau's praise for Defoe's 'Robinson Crusoe' as the only
book he would choose for Emile's edification and amusement excluded
Friday in whom he saw 'nothing but the germs of society and domestic
slavery.' (30) Rousseau foresaw the time when Friday would no longer be of
value to Crusoe as a companion. For Tournier: 'What Rousseau does not see,
apparently, is that Crusoe is destroying his desert island by reconstituting a
civilization in embryo, just as he is perverting Friday by reducing him to the
role of servant.' (31)

Friday's accidental destruction of their cave and its paraphernalia in
Tournier's novel is thus an obliteration of this reconstituted civilization and a
blow at Rousseau's attempted perversion of Friday's being. The slave's
negativity liberates both himself and his master. From then on a true
companionship is possible in which they regard each other as if for the first
time, and a creative relationship is launched. They touch each other
figuratively and literally for the first time:

> Then he knelt down beside me and began to examine me with an
> extraordinary intentness. His fingers wandered over my face, patted
> my cheeks, followed the curve of my chin, tested the flexibility of my
> nose. He made me raise my arms above my head, and bending over
> my body he explored it inch by inch like an anatomist preparing to

dissect a corpse. He seemed to have forgotten that I lived and
breathed, that thoughts might enter my head, that I might grow
impatient. But, understanding all too well the thirst for humankind by
which he moved, I made no attempt to stop him. (32)

A few pages earlier Robinson had also touched Friday, seemingly for the first
time:

> I put my hands on his knees, making of them cups to fit the shape of
> the knee to feel its life. In its hardness and dryness, by contrast with
> the softness of the thigh, the knee is the key of the vault on which the
> earthly frame is borne, raising it aloft in a living equilibrium to the
> sky. There is no movement of the body, no tremor, no impulse of
> hesitation, that does not proceed from that warm, moving disc and
> return to it. During several seconds my hands learn that Friday's
> motionless stance is not that of a stone or tree-stump, but the
> quivering outcome, constantly varied and readjusted, of a series of
> actions and reactions, the play of all his muscles. (33)

It is the master who has most to learn in this reconstituted relationship. The
servant has had of necessity to learn about his master in their relationship,
anticipating his whims and needs even in the secret process of undermining
the master's system. In any classic Master-Slave relationship the slave learns
more about the master than the master about the slave since his interest
depends upon this knowledge. In Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic it is the
slave's knowledge which holds the key to the future:

> Since the slave works for the master and therefore not in the exclusive
> interest of his own individuality, his desire is expanded into being not
> only the desire of this particular individual but also the desire of
> another. Accordingly, the slave rises above the selfish individuality of
> his natural will, and his worth to that extent exceeds that of his
> immediate will and is only formally recognized by an unfree

consciousness. This subjugation of the slave's egotism forms the
beginning of true human freedom. (34)

It is quite appropriate therefore that it is Robinson who is most astounded at
his new-found discovery of Friday: 'what is unbelievable is that I should have
lived so long with him without, so to speak, seeing him at all........'

The relationship has turned full circle from its initial premises when they
first encounter each other: it is Robinson who is delivered from his inhuman
system into a relationship with nature and the Other in which his full
humanity can manifest. Robinson learns to value the Black man's negativity
as a creative force. Unlike Defoe's Robinson whose ideological position
towards Friday does not change from the beginning to the end of their
encounter, Tournier's Robinson is more of a 'flesh and blood' creature (35)
whose relationship with Friday alters over time as his understanding of his
own situation deepens.

By taking a popular myth which portrays the Black person as sterile
negativity albeit in a ' benign' form, and altering its essential ideological
framework to represent the Black as a negativity of importance, Tournier
joins a small number of authors who have attempted to alter the predominant
image of the Black in European literature.

The works of speculative philosophy and creative literature examined in the first part of this study have been the major representations of the literature about Blacks in the Western tradition, works which have been instrumental in the *formulation* of the concept of the Negro in the Western tradition. Hegel represented much of speculative thought in his comments about Africa and Africans. If the nineteenth century novel has been an agent in the formulation of our concept of Reality, as Stephen Heath notes (36), we can also say that these works examined have been the major points of a large body of writing about the Negro in which he was formulated as the *object* of Western thought. 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' was written on *behalf* of Negroes: George Eliot's claim that Mrs Stowe 'has created the Negro novel' contains the suggestion that Mrs Stowe had written the novel the Negro would have liked to have written, on the Negro's behalf.

Whether as the first form of negativity or as a critique of bourgeois humanism, the Negro has read about himself for centuries in the Western tradition. 'Titus Andronicus' and 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' contain the contradictory image of the Negro as vengeful savage in the former, and pious Christian in the latter. 'Othello' and 'Heart of Darkness' contain hints of noble savagery while making implicit reference to the negativity at the heart of Venice and Europe respectively: the Negroes in these works are objects for a critical examination of their societies.

Popularly, 'Othello' has coined the image of the uncontrollable Negro too overcome by passion to value love. 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' has fashioned the missionary image of the Negro tamed and reduced by Christianity into the forebearing slave of popular image. Topsy is everyone's 'bad' Negro urchin. 'Heart of Darkness' presents the complex image of 'the savage' reduced to piteous 'nigger' and capitalist slave by bourgeois rapaciousness and, the 'noble savage' lost in his darkness into whose borders the European wanders only at the peril of spiritual disintegration.

Tournier's modernist re-writing of 'Robinson Crusoe' cannot be said, like the other works just cited, to be a popular success. It engages with a popular work

in whose shadow it is bound, in a sense, to languish. The counter-image of Friday as a creative negativity which Tournier presents in his novel is overshadowed by the popular image of Friday as mere unthinking helpmate presented in Defoe's novel: the latter image has embedded itself in the popular imagination over a few hundred years whereas Tournier's novel is a twentieth century work in French which has not entered the popular imagination in the way of its inspirer. Defoe's novel represents Friday squarely within the contours of popular ideology's view of the Negro, as does Shakespeare's 'Othello', and Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' to some extent. Of course both Shakespeare and Conrad also interrogate the values of this popular ideology, as discussed earlier, and scholarship has elicited this in the European critical world. It is however the popular readings of 'Othello', 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', and 'Heart of Darkness' which have been the more influential in the formulation of the image of the Negro, rather than their critical readings. It is those popular readings of the major works of the European tradition, and, other works reflecting popular ideology, which have been most influential in formulating the Negro as Other.

A sense of being the Other has historically penetrated the psyche of the Negro living in and under, Euro-American culture. W.E.B. Dubois captures this peculiar state in this extract from 'The Souls of Black Folks':

> The Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second sight in this American world, - a world which yeilds him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. 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 a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness-an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

> The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, -this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. (37)

The Negro would seem to have internalized the sense of difference created of him by the culture, resulting in this 'peculiar' internal sense of otherness. Thus as we shall see later many of the Negritude writers seek a reconcilation of selves in their creative writing.

Early Negro authors seem to have tried to overcome this sense of difference by writing according to the values of the dominant culture, thus rendering themselves part of the norm. Both the slaves Jupiter Hammon, and Phyllis Wheatley wrote in support of the idea of slavery as the salvation of the Blacks. Jupiter Hammon wrote in support of a certain Christian line on slavery:

> God's tender mercy brought thee here
>
> Tost ov'r the raging main
>
> In christian faith thou has a share
>
> Worth the gold of Spain.......(38)

He baldly declares, in an essay titled 'An Address to the Negroes of the State of New York', 'For my own part I don't wish to be free.' (39)

Well versed in the Bible and the classics, Phyllis Wheatley, like Jupiter Hammon, adopting the values of the dominant ideology, writes turgid borrowed verse in support of slavery:

'Twas mercy brought me from Pagan land,

Taught my benighted soul to understand

That there's God, that there's a Savior too:

Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.

Some view our sable race with scornful eye;

'Their colour is a diabolic dye'.

Remember, Christians, negroes, Black as Cain,

May be refined, and join the angelic train. (40)

The Negritude writers were, for the first time among Negroes, prepared to celebrate Otherness and emphasise difference to be capable of engaging in a genuine dialogue with the dominant culture. Henry Louis Gates Jr. notes in 'Criticism in the Jungle' that every Black writer carries two traditions within his or her self:

> In the instance of the writer of African descent, her or his texts occupy spaces in at least two traditions-the individual's European or American literary tradition, and one of the three related but distinct black traditions. The 'heritage' of each black text written in a Western language, then, is a double heritage, two-toned, as it were.........Each utterance........... is double-voiced.(41)

The Negritude writers were fully conscious of the fact that the African traditions within them had been repressed in a history of assimilation. Their emphasis of difference and the value of these African traditions represented the attempt to produce a climate where a dialogue between   Western and African culture could begin.

In the next chapter I examine the historical antecedents of Negritude and the theorical terms in which Senghor and Césaire conceived the dialogue.

References

1. Daniel Defoe, 'Robinson Crusoe': McGraw-Hill Publications Company. Maidenhead, Berkshire, for Quaker Oats Company, (1960), (all further references will be to this edition)

2. Michel Tournier, 'Friday, Or The Other Island,' Trans.by Norman Denny. Published by Penguin, (1974). (all further references will be to this edition)

3. Daniel Defoe, 'Robinson Crusoe', p29.

4. Ibid.

5. Op. Cit. p77.

6. Op. Cit. p81.

7. Op. Cit. p84.

8. Michel Tournier, 'Friday, Or The Other Island', p119.

9. Op. Cit. pp119-120.

10. Op. Cit. p153.

11. Op. Cit. p154.

12. Op. Cit. p155.

13. Op. Cit. p156.

14. Op. Cit. p175.

15. Op. Cit. 177.

16, Op. Cit. p176.

17. Op. Cit. p174.

18. Ibid.

19. Op. Cit. p175.

20. Ibid.

21. C.G.Jung, 'Memories, Dreams, Reflections,' Recorded & Ed. by Aniela Jaffe. Trans. from the German by Richard &Clara Winston. Collins. Paperback. (1982). p268.

22. Ian Watt, 'Robinson Crusoe As Myth. ' from 'Sociology of Literature and Drama'. Ed. by Elizabeth & Toms Burns, Penguin Education, (Middlesex. 1973). p235.

23. Michel Tournier, 'The Wind spirit', an autobiography, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer. Collins. (London. 1989). p197.

24. Ibid.

25. Op. Cit. p189.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Op. Cit. p190.

32. Michel Tournier, 'Friday, Or The Other Island', pp177-178.

33. Op. Cit. p176.

34, W.F. Helgel, 'Philosophy of Mind', [Being Part Three Of The Encyclopaedia Of The Philosophical Sciences', (1830)]. Trans. by William Wallace. OUP. (1973). p175.

35. Robinson's feminization of his island recalls the Negritude poets' image of Africa as feminine. [Aimé Césaire in 'Return to My Native Land', Présence Africaine. (1971). p74] is typical of these poets in his feminine empathy with the earth of the continent:

From thinking of the Congo

I have become a Congo buzzing with forests and

rivers where the whip cracks like a great flag

the flag of the prophet

where the water makes

likouala-likouala...............

36. Stephen Heath, 'The Nouveau Roman', Elek Books, (London1972)p20

37. E.B. Dubois, 'The Souls of Black Folk,' reprinted in 'Three Negro Classics' (New York: Avon, 1965), quoted in 'Metaphor and Metonymy in *Their Eyes*' Barbara Johnson, in 'Black literature & Literary Theory', Ed. by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Routledge, (London 1984) p214.

38. Jupiter Hammon, 'Evening Thought', quoted by Kinfe Abraham:'From Race to Class', Grassroots Publisher, (London 1982), p37

39. from Wagelin, 'Jupiter Hammon: American Poet', quoted by Kinfe Abraham, Ibid.

40. Quoted by Kinfe Abraham, Op. Cit. p38. Cited in Herbert G. Renfro's, 'Life and Times of Phillis Wheatley' and 'Life and Works of Phillis Wheatley', Washington D.C., 1961, and in William H. Robinson's 'Early American Poets, Dunbugue: Iowa, 1969.

41. Henry Louis Gates Jr. 'Criticism in the Jungle', quoted by Barbara Johnson, in 'Metaphor and Metonymy in *Their Eyes*', 'Black Literature & Literary Theory', Ed. by Henry Louis Gates Jr. p214.

PART TWO   NEGRITUDE AND DIALOGUE

CHAPTER 6

HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL ORIGINS OF NEGRITUDE

In this chapter I examine the origins of Negritude as a manifestation of an internal dialogue between Blacks from Africa and the Americas *prior* to the dialogue with Euro-American culture. I examine the origins of Negritude in 'The Harlem Renaissance', the poetry of Leon Damas and Jacques Roumain. I then compare the theoretical positions of Léopold Senghor and Aimé Césaire in the light of Wole Soyinka's critique of Negritude.

The Harlem Renaissance

Negritude had its origins in the dialogue the Negro began with himself and other Negroes. Firstly the Negro examined his situation in the world and saw it as one of negativity. In a dialogue between himself and other Negroes this sense of negativity was confirmed: he recognised the universal condition of all Negroes as negativity. The Blacks of America communicated the particular mode of their situation to the Caribbean students studying in metropolitan Paris. The Caribbean students were in dialogue with their African counterparts, also in Paris.

The movement primarily involved in recording the situation of American Blacks in the early twenties was the Harlem Renaissance. Lilyan Kesteloot notes in 'Black Writers in French' (1) that the Black American renaissance, centered around the most vibrant and populous Negro quarter in New York developed at about the time that their White counterparts were breaking away from the romantic tradition and turning towards critical realism manifesting itself in an interest in social problems. Steinbeck, Hemingway, Dos Passos, Faulker, Caldwell and the Black author Richard Wright were the most prominent exponents of this new realism. The most prominent authors of the Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes, Claude Mckay, Jean Toomer, Countee Cullen, and Sterling Brown, also turned towards this new realism, and this manifested itself in 'a clearer conception of their situation, exposing the injustice and prejudice that made Black Americans outcasts in their own land, and demanding rehabilitation of Negro cultural values and their total independence of the White world.' (2) But these writers were still partly dependent upon white readers and wholely dependent upon White publishing

houses for the expression of their Negro values. It was a period when White intellectuals acted as patrons for the Black arts: 'white intellectuals introduced black authors to publishers downtown and urged the publication of their works;........whites flocked uptown, above 125th Street nightly, hungry for jazz and blues and frequenting nightclubs that few blacks could afford to attend, even if permitted to enter.' (3) Negro art offered something to White followers recovering from the deprivations of the first world war, suffering from a poor quality of life under unpopular political leadership, fearful of the prospects for the economy in the period fomenting the antecedents to the 1929 economic crisis, and thus welcoming what they saw as a distracting diversion. Langston Hughes captures the unprecedented popularity of Negro art in that period in 'The Big Sea':

> ....It was a period when every season there was at least one hit play on Broadway acted by a Negro cast. And when books by Negro authors were being published with much greater frequency and much more publicity than ever before or since in history. It was a period when white writers wrote about Negroes more successfully (commercially speaking) than Negroes did about themselves........It was the period when the Negro was in vogue. (4)

Two movements seemed to have coincided: on the one hand the aim towards more authentic artistic expression enshrined in the emotional credo of the Renaissance; on the other, the desire on the part of the Whites for Negro expression in whatever form.

This was a new development in the traumatic relations between Black and White Americans. Charles T. Davis notes that the meaning of the Harlem Renaissance can only be fully understood in the context of the popular image of the Negro in the psyche of White America, especially in the 'three stormy decades' before the emergence of the renaissance:

> We know something of the erosion of Negro rights and privileges in America that occurred in the 1890s and in the early years of the twentieth. It involved voting rights, public accommodations

(including the use of libraries), public parks, public transportation, housing facilities, and, not to be forgotten, public toilets and public drinking fountains. What is often forgotten today is the powerful white supremacist rhetoric, pseudo-intellectual and apparently authoritative, that sustained the oppression of black citizens. Many of the names of these champions of white civilization and white honour have been forgotten, but even today we can expect a mild response from a reference to Thomas Dixon's work, especially The Leopard's Spots, and Lothrop Stoddard's The Rising Tide of Color. From Dixon's novel came the movie masterpiece Birth of a Nation; never has a more inventive movie technique been lavished upon a foundation so shoddy. But we cannot evade the fact, though we should like to do it, that a part of the popularity of the movie was dependent upon the wide acceptance on the part of the American people of Dixon's assumptions. The rhetoricians presenting the necessity for protecting a white civilization had done their work well. (5)

Davis's recollection of the underlying assumptions underpinning Thomas Dixon's novel shows them to be based on deep-seated cultural notions of the Negro based on the popular view of him as sterile negativity. Here is Davis's list of Dixon's assumptions:

1. Change "white" to Anglo-Saxon and assert that civilization is being carried by the Anglo-Saxon race, now being threatened by hordes, black or yellow. There was always a convenient German scholar lurking in the background ready to prove that the cherished democratic assembly came from an obscure convocation of Teutonic warriors.

2. Say that the black man is lower on the evolutionary scale and

cannot be expected to participate in civilisation on a level of equality. Biological factors prevent him from ever offering a contribution-after all, science is science, even when reduced to making generalizations

from statistics about head size or test scores. History has offered numerous examples of the destruction of the seats of higher culture by barbarians, and America must be careful to avoid the fate of Rome, which by some enormous leap of the historical imagination is to be considered a frontier or precursor of Anglo-Saxon culture.

3. "Lower" means closer to the animal state. The black is more of an animal than the white man. For that reason, he is sexually superior to the white man, who is more refined. More-over, the most automatic object of the lust of the black man is the white woman, who must be protected at all costs.

3. "Lower" also means that the black man lacks the sense of responsibility demanded of a fully mature human being in our society. Every Southerner knows that a black person must be treated like a child, that he or she cannot be trusted with food valuables in the big house, that he cannot maintain a stable household and function as a responsible father or mother. No doubt, "mammies" are different.

5. What counts for these white theoreticians is "history." The life of a black man is worth less than that of a white man because history is carried by the white race. Acts of violence are unfortunate but they may be necessary to protect the integrity and the future of the race. (6)

The response of the Harlem Renaissance writers to this long-established thesis was a powerfully conceived anti-thesis which was, as Charles T. Davis maintained, nothing if not courageous: 'The Renaissance, looked at from the point of view of this racist assault, becomes a fascinating if not outrageous (in that distortion is extreme) phenomenon.' (7) In the answer to the power of the long established discourse the Renaissance writers answered with an emotionally-charged counter-discourse:

1. There is a rich black culture that stands unrecognized beside the white, evident in the emotional associations surrounding the spirituals or in the intimations of Africa that come in dreams, race memories, or flights of fancy. Characteristically, those intimations do not arouse the

vision of an early republican democracy, but of kingdoms, priests, and noble lovers.

2. The idea of progress or of evolution is faulty. The emotional side of man has been neglected in the mad rush toward a more perfect technology. What is desirable is harmony with one's self, with one's community, and with nature. More primitive societies than our present one offer models that we should follow. Look to Africa, the West Indies, or, it we wish, to Mexico and the vestiges of Indian culture in New Mexico.

3. Yes, the black man is closer to the animal state than the white man is, but this proximity is good. The black affirms the senses, lives a fuller, richer life, has an opportunity for happiness unavailable to a white man. Yes, too, the black people are better lovers and can give and receive more satisfaction than their fairer and less gifted brothers and sisters.

4. The life of the vagabond, as Mckay has pictured it in Home to Harlem and in Banjo, is desirable, superior. It makes possible the full enjoyment of the senses. We can discard the restricting, dehumanizing conventions of middle-class society, as baggage hindering the birth of a free spirit.

5. Finally, what counts for the black participants in the Renaissance is not "history" or the "future," or a place in a neon sun, but life, its richness and its variety. Every bit of life is precious and must be nourished. (8)

Davis uses the epithet 'inversion' to describe the method of these writers:

What we observe here is amazing. The technique of response to racist attacks is inversion-quite literally to make that which was considered bad, good; and that which was considered good, bad. It is argument through distortion of the profoundest kind, through a set of grotesques, if American middle-class values are accepted as cultural norms. (9)

This method of 'inversion' was to inspire the Negritude writers working on the mainland of Europe a decade or so later.

Programme and Values of the Harlem Renaissance

Langston Hughes's declaration encapsulated the meaning and fervour of the Harlem Renaissance's programme which was essentially a programme of youth:

> We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know that we are beautiful and ugly too. The tom-tom weeps and the tom-tom laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves. (10)

Hughes's statement points to realism as the underlying basis of the programme: the Black writers intended to examine their individuality, the traditional role of the artist, but an important aspect of this individuality was their 'dark-skinned selves' and they were no longer going to shy away from confrontation with that aspect of themselves. This self-examination was no longer going to be under the gaze of the White critics: Hughes suggests the beginning of a new indifference towards this gaze. The Black writers were no longer going to regard themselves in the extreme, rather, they were going to consider themselves as 'ordinary' people with both a 'beautiful' and an 'ugly' aspect. Nor were they going to write under the aegis of their more authoritarian Black critics such as W.E.B. Du Bois, who demanded both the freedom of the new realism and, 'propagandist' art. Darwin T. Turner points out some of the contradictions which the Renaissance writers had to face from Du Bois:

If one extracts the essence of Du Bois's instruction to Black readers
...............one recognizes a general pronouncement that literature by
Blacks must be unflinchingly true to Afro-American life even in its
pictures of the ugly and the unheroic. It also must be didactic and
beautiful. Even viewed superficially, the proposition seems difficult
to use as a touchstone for any single work of art. (11)

The Black writers were going to make free reference to Africa as part of the
very warp and woof of their emotional heritage; they acknowledged a benign
reference to that 'dark' part of themselves. Langston Hughes embraces Africa
in this act of self-acknowledgement, in 'Negro':

I am a Negro:

    Black as the night is black,

    Black like the depths of my Africa.

I've been a slave:

    Caesar told me to keep his door-steps clean.

    I brushed the boots of Washington.

I've been a worker:

    Under my hand the pyramids arose.

    I made mortar for the woolworth Building.

I've been a singer:

    All the way from Africa to Georgia

    I carried my sorrow songs.

I made ragtime.

I've been a victim:

The Belgians cut off my hands in the Congo.

They lynch me still in Mississippi.

I am a Negro:

Black as the night is Black,

Black like the depths of my Africa. (12)

Claude Mckay in his novel 'Banjo' adopts all the values established by
Hughes as the essence of the Negro renaissance. The novel was hailed in
America and by the putative creators of Negritude for its realistic portrayal of
Negro life, its celebratory stance, its acknowledgement of a common soul
with Africa and Africans. In the confrontation with his 'dark-skinned self'
Ray, the main protagonist and authorial voice makes some pointed criticisms
of Euro-American values which was to find echo with the creators of
Negritude. There is the scorn of christian morality:

As far as I have been able to think it out the colored races are the
special victims of biblical morality-Christian morality.............I don't
think I loathe anything more than the morality of the Christians. It is
false, treacherous, hypocritical. I know that, for I myself have been a
victim of it in your white world, and the conclusion I draw from it is:
that the world needs to get rid of false moralities and cultivate decent
manners-not society manners, but man-to-man decency and tolerance. (13)

There is wariness of the dubious benefits to be conferred on Blacks by modern industrial civilization:

> The more Ray mixed in the rude anarchy of the lives of the Black boys-loafing, singing, bumming, playing, dancing, loving, working- and came to a realization of how close-linked he was to them in spirit, the more he felt that they represented more than he or the cultured minority the irrepressible exuberance and legendary vitality of the Black race. And the thought kept him wondering how that race would fare under the ever tightening mechanical organization of modern life. (14)

Lilyan Kesteloot conveys the sense of excitement which followed the publication of Mckay's novel:

> Banjo was the first novel to articulate the Negro problem fully and clearly. Blacks in Paris could not remain indifferent to so many revolutionary ideas. But they were also attracted by Banjo's free and easy style, by its human warmth, the reality of its characters. Senghor, Césaire, and Damas can still cite entire chapters. "What struck me in this book," said Aimé Césaire, "is that for the first time Negroes were described truthfully, without inhibitions or prejudice." Banjo's success did not stop with the first "triumvirate" of Black writers. Sembene Ousmane pointed out during the same period in Mirage de Paris that Banjo was displayed in black-student bookshelves right next to books by Délafosse. In Rue Cases Nègres, Joseph Zobel remarked on the interest aroused in Zobel by Mckay's novel. Among writers of the younger generation, Sembene Ousmane in Le docker noir was more influenced by Banjo than by the novels of Richard Wright, to which Le docker noir is occasionally compared. (15)

Kesteloot indicates that the primary importance of the American Negroes' poetry to the young Parisian students creating Negritude was the daring with which the Americans were prepared to utilize traditional Negro virtues: 'On a

literary level they brought spontaneity of expression, freedom of rhythm and inner music.' (16) The students were soon reading and translating and learning from their American masters: Léon Damas was influenced by the form of Langston Hughes's poem's; Senghor also translated Hughes as well as Countee Cullen and Jean Toomer.

For Senghor the essential characteristic of this poetry are the virtues it shares with African verse:

> It is essentially nonsophisticated like its African sister. It remains close to song. It is made to be sung or recited and not to be read-thus the importance of the rhythm-Negro rhythm, so tyrannical under its aspect of freedom-thus the importance of its music, so difficult to retain in translating Toomer. These are the characteristics of the picture which, rare or in profusion, adhere closely to an idea of feeling. The words restored to their original purity keep their paradisiac power, and this often explains clarity of the text.

> In a word, poetry of flesh and of the earth, to put it as Hughes, does, the poetry of a peasant still in contact with tellurian forces. And that explains the cosmic rhythm, this music and these pictures of flowing water, rustling leaves, beating wings, twinkling stars. (17)

Aimé Césaire, a student of surrealism also appreciated this poetry:

> From this poetry, which might seem like the sort Valéry called "loose," "defenseless," written only to the rhythm of a juvenile spontaneity, at the exact point of intersection between the ego and the world, a drop of blood oozes. A drop. But of blood.........

and

> There is its value: to be open on man in his wholeness. What others bring to poetry is a preference for the exterior world or for man at his most noble, the finest flower of his thought or feelings. And what

indicates that greater or lesser nobility is the fear of oneself, a capitulation of the being to the seeming to be, a refusal to accept one's complete nature. But such weakness is unknown to the Negro poet. His treasure lies in those depths disdained by others...........

and

Where the role of an earlier literature was to seek out the grotesque, the absurd or exotic aspects of the ordinary Negro, this Negro now becomes the poet's hero. He is described seriously, with passion, and the limited power of his art-by a miracle of love-succeeds, where more considerable means fail, in suggesting even those inner forces which command destiny. Is creating a world of minor importance? Evoking a world from the outlandish inhuman creatures that used to be displayed row after row as if in a ten-cent store? And where once we could find nothing but a vision of crude puppets, to reap new ways of suffering, dying, enduring, in a word, to carry the sure weight of human existence. (18)

Kesteloot notes that more than aesthetic standards, 'it was the human values of sincerity, love, and humility that touched Césaire. He was so deeply affected that without hesitation he proposed this type of poetry as a model for all Negro poets.' (19)

Most of these American writers were materialist, anti-Christian, and rebellious; their essential political orientation was towards socialism and humanism: indeed many of these writers had had some connection (which tended to be brief) with the Communist Party in America. But the movement was full of its complexities; with protagonists ranging from the 'right' to the 'left' of the political spectrum. Some of those writers were relatively privileged socially, and came from comfortable backgrounds. Some like Langston Hughes came from poor backgrounds and were politically committed to the left. Victor A. Krammer in his introduction to 'The Harlem Renaissance Re-examined' notes that '..........the complexity of the movement

we label, retrospectively, The Harlem Renaissance is due to the interactions of enormous numbers of forces'. (20)

Whatever the complexities of the position of the Harlem Renaissance writers, the essential importance of the relationship between them and the students of the Negritude movement was the latter's adoption of the Renaissance writers' affectivity. What most impressed the Black students in Paris about the position of these Black American writers was (a) its sweeping boldness and courage, (b) its tone of rebellion. Aimé Césaire notes in an introduction to this poetry that,

> The dominant feeling of a Negro poet is a feeling of intolerance. An intolerance of reality because it is sordid, of the world because it is caged, of life because it is deprived of the great road to the sun. And now from the dark heavy dregs of anguish, of suppressed indignation, of long silent despair, a hiss of anger is rising. On the shattered foundation of its conformities, America wonders uneasily from what atrocious hatred this cry is the deliverance. (21)

The greatest influence of the Renaissance writers' position was that of a powerful and supportive counter-force to the prevailing thesis of White supremacy.

White Supremacy in the Thirties

For the Black person racism in the thirties was not just a question of local or national oppression, not just the petty or frightening confrontations in the district in the Southern States of America you lived in, or the semi-legal racist practices in the USA, France, or the countries of the Caribbean: racism in that period assumed an apocalyptic threat in the form of dictatorships determined to codify and enact racist theories which had hitherto formed part of the collective unconscious in the Euro-American tradition. There was Hitler in power in Germany, Franco in Spain and Mussolini in Italy who had sufficient influence on the rest of the

European powers to enable him to invade Ethiopia, the symbolic home of the Black person, with only feeble protest.

Hitler's programme for the enslavement of 'inferior peoples' included Jews, Slavs, and Gypsies but there is no doubt that Negroes would have been included if they formed large percentages of the populations of Europe at that time. Frantz Fanon noted that anti-Semitism and Negrophobia are part of the same complex:

> At first [I] thought it may seem strange that the anti-Semite's outlook should be related to that of the Negrophobe. It was my philosophy professor, a native of the Antilles, who recalled the fact to me one day: 'Whenever you hear anyone abuse the Jews, pay attention, because he is talking about you.' And I found that he was universally right-by which I meant that I was answerable in my body and my heart for what was done to my brother. Later I realized that he meant, quite simply, an anti-Semite is inevitably anti-Negro. (22)

This was a period of lynchings in the Southern States of America, of anti-colonial riots in the West Indies, (23) of Indian nationalist agitation, and the massacre of poorly-armed Ethiopian soldiers by Mussolini's triumphant army. In the poor Black countries of the world racism was rampant, but was being confronted.

If capitalism and Christianity seemed tools of the dictators, Communism seemed to many of the Black writers of the thirties to be an ideology which not only opposed bourgeois oppression but supported the liberation of Blacks. Progressive movements like surrealism were attracted to Communism partly in response to its advocacy of liberation for man. Many of the Harlem Renaissance writers were attracted for the same reason. Langston Hughes indicates a certain poignant naïveté in his belief in the values of the Russian revolution of 1917:

> The end of the war! [World War]. But many of the students at Central

[High School] kept talking, not about the end of the war, but about Russia where Lenin had taken power in the name of the workers, who made everything, and who would now own everything they made. "No more pogroms," the Jews said: no more race hatred.........The daily papers pictured the Bolsheviks as the greatest devils on earth, but I didn't see how they could be that bad if they had done away with race hatred and landlords-two evils that I knew well at first hand. (24)

This naïveté was shared by many Western intellectuals at the time.To many Black intellectuals of the thirties communists seemed the only group interested in the fate of Blacks suffering under oppressive social conditions. The communist review 'Novel Age' devoted several issues to American Negro poetry during 1930 and 1931, publishing folk-songs of Black workers, laments of Negroes exploited by Whites, with strong editorial comments. A spirit of Negro revolt was revealed for the first time to a European public which had hitherto been used to the resignation and unhappiness of the spirituals. It was no longer a question of revolt but revolution:

If I had my weight in lime

I'd whip mah Cap'n till he went stone blin'

Pay day Come and we all git nuthin'

Cap'n he tryin' to cheat me fo' suttin

I'm gonna spit in his coffee

spit in his tea

De lawd help dis nigger if he catch me

Sistern an' Brethern

Stop foolin' with pray When black face is lifted

Lawd turnin' away

We're buryin' a brother

They kill for the crime Tryin' to keep

 What was his all the time

When we's tucked him under

What you goin' to do

Wait till it come

They arousing fo' you too

Your head tain' no apple

 For danglin' f''om a tree

Your body no carcass

For babecuin' on a spree

Stand on your feet

Club gripped 'tween your hands

Spill their blood too

Show 'em yours is a man's. (25)

Joining the communist party seemed the most potent form of rebellion to many Black writers of that period. Against a social system which seemed to

be assuming global and apocalyptic proportions in its programme of racism, the communists seemed to stand alone with the only spirit worth cultivating at the time-opposition.

Negritude in Metropolitan France

'Negritude as we had then begun to conceive and define it [from 1928-1935] was a defence and attack and inspiration rather than an instrument of construction'. (Léopold Sédar Senghor.) (26)

Léopold Senghor's reiteration that in its origins Negritude was both 'defence and attack' is weighty with meaning: Negritude was a defence of Negro culture and civilization and simultaneously, an attack against the prevailing discourse of Western racism. Its origins therefore attest to the violence of its attack against the notion of the Negro as sterile negativity.

There had been previous attempts to state the Negro viewpoint among the Black students, namely 'La Revue du Monde Noir', (1930) which lasted six issues, and 'Le Cri des Nègres' (banned as communist). 'La Revue du Monde Noir' was, as Lilyan Kesteloot notes, essentially a cultural magazine. 'Légitime Défense' followed these two previous publications and had an immediate impact. It was uncompromising in tone:

The admonitions of the first few pages look very much like a manifesto. Declaring themselves "suffocated by a capitalistic, Christian, bourgeois world," a few young colored natives of Martinique, students in Paris, aged twenty to twenty-three, are determined no longer "to compromise with the disgrace surrounding them." To attain this end, they propose to use the new arms that the West itself is offering: Communism and surrealism. Choosing as masters Marx, Freud, Rimbaud, and Breton, they declare war on that "abominable system of coercion and restrictions which destroys love and delimits dreams, generally known as Western civilization." Above all, they vehemently attack the bourgeoisie of the West Indies,

who seem to them a stiff, unnatural, and ridiculous reflection of the impunged Western values. In their vocabulary of student polemic, abuse is intermingled with professions of faith. "Of all the filthy bourgeois conventions, we particularly despise humanitarian hypocrisy, the stinking emanation of Christian decay. We hate pity. Sentiment means nothing to us," the young rebels declare, and, utterly rejecting the "borrowed personality" worn by blacks and mulattoes of the West Indian bourgeoisie, these students take the "infernal road of absolute sincerity." "We refuse to be ashamed of what we feel." (27)

These young Black students were prepared to proclaim their difference from bourgeois Western civilization in making common cause with two protest movements within it-Marxism and surrealism.   Kesteloot notes that the writers of this manifesto were, with one exception, mulattoes belonging to the West Indian bourgeiosie they condemned. Addressed to all West Indians, their call nonetheless carried an important message to the bourgeois mulattoes: "We consider that they especially suffer from capitalism, and because their ethics are materially determined that they seem to offer a generally greater potential for revolt and joy." (28) The students began their campaign therefore with a civil war: a war against their elders who had succumbed to the values of racism in their slavish imitation of their European masters. The colonial bourgeoisie is always years behind the developments in the very culture he seeks to emulate: 'In 1932 West Indian poets were still patterning themselves on the French Parnassian school and had not followed the evolution of poetry towards realism, naturalism, and symbolism.' (29)

   These elder poets had learned to see themselves as seen by the Other. A healthy act perhaps, but not if the the Other is only prepared to see you as exotica. It is an act of violence perpetrated by the colonizer whose success lies in the fact that its ineluctable medium is cultural transmission. Frantz Fanon in 'Black Skin White Masks' maintains that the European collective unconscious is transposed to the Antillean through cultural imposition: 'Hence there is no reason to be surprised when an Antillean exposed to waking-dream therapy relives the same fantasies as a European.' (30) This collective unconscious contains elements of anti-Negro fantasy, therefore:

'..........it is normal for the Antillean to be anti-Negro. Through the collective unconscious the Antillean has taken over all the archetypes belonging to the European.' (31)

This act of looking at yourself through or with the eyes of the Other was manifested in the exotic poetry of the Martinican poets of the 1930s.

Lilyan Kesteloot refers to the literary exhibition organised in Paris by the ministry of colonies in 1945 with the title 'The Happy Antilles', 'in honour of the islands with a poet's heart:'

> The exhibition brought together a number of authors who had written about the West Indies, from Madame de Maintenon to Gilbert Gratiant, including Heredia, Loti, de Regnier, Francis Jammes, René Maran, and Saint-John Perse. (The name of Aimé Césaire was only mentioned.)

> ....Already in that period, and even earlier as indicated by the dates of the poems, we find that Frenchmen in France had a charming, idyllic, and exclusively external vision of the islands, and cared not at all about real conditions there. That blindness was maintained by the organizers of the exhibition, with their insistence on the "happy life" of the West Indies. The preface to their catalogue gave notice that "the mission of a colonizer must not be limited to progress and prosperity. More than any other colonies, Martinique and Guadeloupe have remained faithful to the decor, attitudes, and rhythms of centuries past. The world as it is now developing must not sacrifice poetry to economic problems." (32)

A typical example of the kind of poems exhibited is exemplified by this extract from Gilbert Gratiant, a Martinican who imitates not only the poetic forms of Metropolitan France but the language, in "Martinique Totale":

> Coffre à baisers

Colibri du tourisme

Bijou géographique

....

Cher jardin des petits cadeaux

Sol pour les démarches souples

Et l'ample enjambée des femmes de couleur

Petit cirque des corridors du coeur

Familiere boîte a surprise

....

Jet d'eau de menus mots d'amour

Cage de femmes au language d'oisseau parleurs

Cascatelle chantante de syllabes-caresses

Chaude patrie des beau yeux

Des longues mains et des gorges assurées.............

(Coffer of kisses

Hummingbird to tourists

Geographic gem

....

Dear garden of small gifts

Ground for the supple footsteps .

 And ample stride of colored women

Small circus of the hallway of the heart

Familiar Jack-in-the -box

....

Fountain of fine words of love

Cage to women who speak like talking birds

Singing waterfall of syllable caresses

Warm land of lovely eyes,

Long hands, firm breasts.............)(33)

Lilyan Kesteloot quotes René Ménil as maintaining that the natural
tendency of exoticism is 'to miss the seriousness and authenticity of a foreign
country's drama and to see only the decor, the external picturesque, and man
as part of this decor.' (34) In other words it is not so much a case of missing
the reality of the country but a deliberate 'making-the-other-invisible' in order
better to maintain the power of your own refracting lens. The act of
persuading the other 'not to see himself' results in the Antillean Negro's
pathological self-hatred which Fanon describes in 'Black Skin White
Masks'. (35)

The violence of the young poets of Légitime Défense against their elders
was not just the traditional ferocity of civil wars but an act born out of their
knowledge that the latter knew of the reality of the islands' poverty (unlike
some of the metropolitan poets writing about the West Indies who had not
stepped foot there) but succumbed nonetheless to the oppressive ideology of
exoticism exemplified in their use of the outdated Parnassian style which the
students regarded as incapable of rendering the reality of the islands. It was to
surrealism the students turned as a means of rendering reality.

Surrealism and the Negritude writers

"Nous acceptons, sans réserve, le surréalisme auquel en 1932, nous
lions notre devinir." (Légitime Défense, 1932) (36)

For the students the main importance of surrealism was its critique of the
West. It was the spirit of surrealism which attracted them. At an obvious

level they were attracted by the anti-colonialist stance of the surrealists and their rejection of Western values which they, the students, were engaged in countering.

The surrealists' adoption of Freud's vision of the world of the child and the so-called primitive, with its rejection of the superiority of Western Reason and its anti-colonialist stance, was particularly appealing to the students:

> In the twentieth century, the European artist, swept along by the reasonable and the useful, can guard against the drying up of his sources of inspiration only by returning to a so-called primitive vision, the synthesis of sensorial perception and mental image. Black sculpture has already been put to brilliant use. Today it is particularly the plastic arts of the red race that give us access to a new method of knowledge and correspondence. In his La poésie moderne et le sacré ("Modern poetry and the sacred"), Monnerot has skillfully demonstrated the affinity between surrealist poetry and Indian poetry which, I affirm, is still as alive and as creative as ever. (André Breton) (37)

The surrealists were generally Marxist in politics (38) and progressive in social outlook: anti-colonialism seemed a natural aspect of their negation of bourgeois values. If bourgeois society upheld the values of patriotism and colonial repression the surrealists declared their anti-patriotic sentiments and their support for those fighting against colonial exploitation.

Aragon's 'Fragments of a lecture given at Madrid at the Residencia des Estudiantes' in 1925 attacked the bourgeois state and supported its anti-colonial enemies:

> We shall triumph over everything. And first of all we'll destroy this civilization that is so dear to you, in which you are caught like fossils in shale. Western world, you are condemned to death. We are Europe's defeatists......Let the Orient, your terror, answer our voice at last! We shall waken everywhere the seeds of confusion and

discomfort. We are the mind's agitators. All the barricades are valid, all shackles to your happiness damned. Jews, leave your ghettos! Starve the people so that they will at last know the taste of the bread of wrath! Rise, thousand-armed India, great legendary Brahma. It is your turn, Egypt! And let the drug-merchants fling themselves upon our terrified nations! Let distant America's white buildings crumble among her ridiculous prohibitions. Rise, O world! See how dry the earth is, and ready, like so much straw, for every conflagration. Laugh your fill. We are the ones who always hold out a hand to the enemy. (39)

In his introduction to Césaire's 'Cahier ɒ'ʊn Retour Au Pays Natal', André Breton attacks racism as one of the principal foes of the surrealist movement: '.........I have been definitely convinced that nothing will be possible as long as some taboos are not removed, and man's blood is not cleansed of the lethal toxins fostered by the belief in the supernatural (however sluggish this belief may be growing), by the "esprit de corps" which clings absurdly to nations and races and by the epitome of abjection-the power of money.'(40)

In their critique of their Martinican elders the Black students wanted a poetry which was not afraid to render reality no matter how sordid or sublime. They welcomed Breton's lament for the lost values stemming from the unconscious involved in the West's embrace of rationalism. And his determination to: 'deal the fatal blow to the so-called "common sense" that has impudently usurped the title of "reason", the pressing need to do away with the deadly dissociation of the human mind in which reason has managed to sieze all the power at the expense of its subconscious counterpart.' (41) They welcomed the surrealists' violent criticism of the logic and 'lucid ideas' of classic French thought. René Ménil summed up the West Indian surrealists' criticism of this thought:

Those logical reasons for the real causes are a deceptive fantasy. From here on in it is apparent that all socratic speculations on the conduct of individual persons and peoples are miserably misleading in the

stagnant mud of "lucid ideas"!

.......[The new sciences] are finally opening new paths enabling man to reach man, that is to say, enabling us to bypass the absurd zone of our false reasoning and to reach the level where essential and vitally preoccupying energies come into play. (42)

Césaire celebrated the poetry of the Harlem Renaissance poets for its rendering of reality. For Césaire this poetry shares the African cultural trait which is 'a refusal, or, better, this hatred of the [abstract] concept,' and this hatred seems to him 'nothing other than the very African affirmation of the feeling of the primacy of life on which Frobenius long ago insisted with success.' (43)

Senghor's poetry on the other hand was never a wholesale imitation of European surrealism given his recognition of an 'African surreality'. When asked by Jacqueline Leiner whether he had started to write before meeting with the surrealists, Senghor was emphatic that he was not very influenced by the surrealists; he had already discovered their techniques in the poetry of Black Africa:

.........Mais je dois dire que je n'ai pas été très influencé par les surréalistes. J'avais déjà trouvé leurs procèdés dans les poèmes négro-Africains. Le surréalisme n'a fait que nous confirmer, nous, écrivains noirs, dans notre négritude, mais il n'a pas donné naissance a notre négritude. (44)

Césaire was much closer to the spirit of European surrealism in his poetry but he uses surrealist techniques for his own directed purposes as Sartre observed in 'Black Orpheus'. (45)

We shall be examining the work of these two major figures of Negritude later in this essay. At this point it is necessary to examine their precursors, some of the less well-known figures of the movement. The precursors of Senghor and Césaire may be said to be representative of 'early Negritude'.

Léon Damas, Early Négritude

Léon Damas was an 'assimilated mulatto' for whom assimilation is equivalent to ingestion of White bourgeois values with the subsequent loss in the spontaneity of childhood. Lilyan Kesteloot notes that Léon Damas was robbed of the chance of a 'Negro' childhood by his bourgeois upbringing. He used to envy his country cousins who spoke Creole and could throw themselves into the noisiest games without being reprimanded, while he was patiently inculcated with '"good manners", religion and the violin, together with the bourgeois prejudices of his mulatto milieu.' (46)

Léon Damas's work which became known before that of Césaire (his first collection 'Pigments', was published in 1937) may be said to be an example of this form of 'early Negritude' answering the original discourse which posits the Negro as sterile negativity directly, sometimes with sophistication but always with an anger born out of the blackness and emptiness presented by this first form of negativity. Their anger at the White man's racism, the thesis of the original discourse, manifests in the reiteration of difference, unlike the negation and then the reabsorption of difference which is Aimé Césaire's position. Whereas Césaire's protest never quite left the main-stream of those confronting bourgeois colonialist society manifest in the oppositionist movements of the thirties, and later, theirs remained a Black protest.

As a surrealist Damas is not interested in art for art's sake. His is an attempt to render the self; to pursue his obsessions. In poem after poem his disgust with his bourgeois European upbringing, and his self-disgust, manifest. Surrealism was a means to an end for Damas, but it was an end of supreme importance since that end was himself. 'The language of Western rationalism, the French language in his case, only emphasised this difference from its metropolitan speakers. This language kept him trapped within difference, not only from the Other, but from himself since it was incapable of rendering this self.'

Jacqueline Leiner notes in 'Imaginaire–Language Identité Culturelle–Négritude' that Léon Damas as a mulatto poet was led to ask himself André Breton's question posed in 'Nadja': "Qui suis-je? Qui étais-je, il y a des siècles? Qui je hante?...." '' (47) ('Who am I? Who was centuries ago? Who haunts me?') To render the uniqueness of their experience it was

necessary for the Negritude poets to break from the established French
language of rationalism a language which maintained the distance between,
in the case of Damas, his self as a student in Paris and, his Guyanese culture.
It was the language of his adolescent culture *and* one dominated by the Other,
and it was responsible for the divorce between himself and the Other. Banned
from speaking the native Creole in his childhood he was divorced both from
the language of his childhood by experience, and from that of the native
Frenchman by his awareness of its incapacity to render his self. The solution
necessitated a violence which would distort the French language until it
rendered him back himself: 'Il doit faire violence à cette langue qui l'a berné,
l'a rendu captif de toutes sortes de liens et de leurres et surtout il doit lui faire
dit des choses qui ne sont point dans le sens français..........(48)

(He must violate this language which has deceived him, made him captive
through all sorts of ties and false claims and above all he must make it say
things which do not exist in the French sense.)

   Damas turned to surrealism as a means in his quest to undermine the very
structure of the language of classicism: 'Damas, refusant toute littéature
d'imitation, "de décalcomanie", s'attaquera à la structure, à la syntaxe, au
lexique du français classique qui ne correspondent pas à son expérience
subjective et rendant au langage sa virginité ....'(49) ('Damas, refusing all
literature of imitation "of carbon-copying" will attack structure, syntax, the
lexicon of classical French which does not correspond to his own experience,
in rendering language its purity......') He was aided in this enterprise by one
of the surrealists Robert Desnos, who was also daringly engaged in breaking
the limits of language: '..........s'avançait téméairement sur la voie de
l'inconnu.' (.....he advanced boldly on to the realms of the unknown) In the
company of Desnos on long Saturday evenings Damas: 'vit cette "opération
de grande envergure portant sur le langage" qui characterisera le surréalisme
et tendra à fournir à chacun la possibilité de construire sa propre maison, pour
reprendre l'expression de Heidegger.' (50) ('Damas saw this "operation of
vast dimensions bearing upon language" which will characterize surrealism
and will provide everyone with the possibility of each building his own
house, in the words of Heidegger')

For the surrealists language was not a fixed construct: "Elle est un fluide qui

vient révéler ou émouvoir notre être fluide qui leur permet de ne prêter aucune espèce de créance à une soi-disante opacité de l'expérience qui ne pourrait pas être atteinte par le language." (51) ("It is a fluidity which comes to reveal or unleash the fluidity of our being, a fluidity which permitted them to lend no credence to a sort of opaque experience which could not be attained through language.") The eternal elusiveness of language's reality was a means for Damas of embarking on the attempt to communicate the incommunicable, of assaulting the gap between Being and language; 'de supprimer le divorce entre l'être et son expression.' (52)

In poem after poem Damas's disgust with his bourgeois upbringing, and his self-disgust, manifest, notably in 'There Are Nights'.

There are nights with no name

there are nights with no moon

when the clammy soffocation

nearly overwhelms me

the acrid smell of blood

spewing

from every muted trumpet

On those nights with no name

on those nights with no moon

the pain that inhabits me

presses

the pain that inhabits me

chokes............(53

'Hiccups' one of his most famous poems begins with an expression of both physical and metaphorical constriction:

> I gulp down seven drinks of water several times a day
>
> and all in vain
>
> instinctively
>
> like the criminal to the crime
>
> my childhood returns
>
> in a rousing fit of hiccups...................(54)

Damas's poems express an attempted act of elimination of the bourgeois from his soul and, a search for the 'Negro' in his self. Hence his rejection of the customary 'neutral' French term 'black' for self-reference, as recorded by Robert Desnos, who wrote the introduction to 'Pigments', Damas's first book of poems:

> His name is Damas. He is a Negro. Let's clear the ground a bit. With Damas, there is no question of his subject matter or how he treats it, of the sharpness of his blade or the status of his soul.
>
> Damas is a Negro and insists on his Negro-ness and on his condition as a Negro. This is what will raise the eyebrows of a certain number of civilizers who deem it right that in exchange for their freedom, their land, their customs and their well-being, persons of colour ought to be honoured by the name of "black". (55)

Damas's is very much the anti-thesis to the thesis of White racism. The poems in 'Pigments' are quintessentially protest poems. In searching for the reality of his self the poet often finds this self entwined with the Other. With irony and bitterness he seeks separation:

I have waltzed friends

madly

waltzed to such a point that often

I thought I had an arm

about the waist of

Uncle Gobineau

or cousin Hitler

or that good aryan gumming out his years

on some park bench...........(56)

In another poem he discovers this self as an object of disgust:

Reality

From having done nothing up to now

destroyed nothing

built nothing

dared nothing like the jew

or the yellow man

for the organized escape from mass inferiority

I look in vain for

the hollow of a shoulder

in which to hide my face

my shame of the

Re-

al-

i-

ty. (57)

Echoing Aimé Césaire's solidarity with those who have never invented, or discovered in 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal', the dispossessed Black poor, Damas assumes the burden of their emotion.

Damas's is a graphic representation of the poignant anguish of Negro protest. The protester, seeking himself in the Other is doomed to a perpetual disappointment: forever circumscribed by the haunting presence of this Other he is fated to an eternal return to the poverty of a self unrecognised by the Other.

Frantz Fanon argues that it is not so much a case of the Other not recognising the Negro, as the price the Negro pays for a too easy recognition by the Other:

> The other, however, can recognize me without struggle: 'The
> individual, who has not staked his life, may, no doubt, be recognized
> as a *person,* but he has not attained the truth of this recognition as an
> independent self-consciousness.' (Quote from Hegel's
> 'Phenomenology of Mind') (58)

For Fanon the Negro's problem arises out of history: he did not fight for his freedom. (This academic statement flies in the face of the findings of historians such as Robin Blackburn and C.L.R. James whose researches point to the overwhelming importance of slave revolts and revolutions on the demise of modern slavery.) (59) Fanon suggests that the slave granted freedom without struggle by the master, gains liberty without the authentic recognition needed to make him complete. Differing from the particular thesis of Hegel's 'Master-Servant Dialectic' Fanon maintains that unlike the

181

reciprocity of recognition eventually gained by the slave in Hegel's dialectic through work: 'what he (the master) wants from the slave is not recognition but work.' (60) Fanon thinks the Negro does not turn towards the object for the source of his liberation as in Hegel's dialectic, but towards the master. Thus the Negro is less independent than Hegel's slave.

Jacqueline Leiner suggests that Damas's situation is an illustration of Albert Memmi's theory developed in 'Portrait du colonisé.' The colonised seeks to become the Other according to Memmi, to recover the aspects of the self severed by colonisation: "Il (le colonisé) tente soit de devenir l'autre, soit de reconquérir toutes ses dimensions dont l'a amputé la colonisation." (61) ["He (the colonized) strives to become the other, in order to reclaim all his dimensions from which colonization had cut him off."]

In another of his famous poems 'Blues', Damas pleads for a lost pre-colonial childhood before 'the hour of uprooting came':

....

Give my black dolls back to me

  so that I can play with them

  the simple games of my instincts

  instincts that endure

  in the darkness of their laws

  with my courage recovered

  and my audacity

  I become myself once more

  myself again

    out of what I used to be

    once upon a time

once

without complexity

once upon a time

when the hour of uprooting came.......................(62)

Jacques Roumain (1907-1944)

New Negro Sermon

In His face they spit their icy scorn,

As at a black flag flying windswept by snow

To make of Him, poor nigger, the god of those in power,

From His rags, relics to embellish altars;

From His gentle song of poverty,

From the trembling lamentation of His banjo,

The haughty thunder of the organ;

From His arms that hauled the heavy cotton

On the river Jordan,

The arms of those who wield the sword;

From His body, worn like ours from the plantations

Like a glowing coal,

Like a black coal burning in white roses,

The golden necklace of their fortune;

They whitened His black face beneath the spittle

of their icy scorn......... (63)

'New Negro Sermon' was included in Léopold Senghor's anthology:
'Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poésie Négre et Malgache' published in 1948. In
her introduction to 'New Negro Sermon' E.C.Kennedy notes: 'With no
attempt at subtlety, Roumain communicates the irony of a society which
proclaims the qualities of Jesus Christ.........as divine, only to utterly betray
these attributes.' (64) Kennedy points to the underlying fact that under the
influence of Surrealism the poets of Negritude were interested in realising
what Sartre calls 'a tension of the soul'.

In 'New Negro Sermon' Roumain's intention to lay bare the hypocrisy of
bourgeois Christianity is a refusal to play the game and accept the terms of
this Christianity at face value. Roumain chooses a brutal, direct attack as the
most appropriate weapon, an attack which includes what Charles T. Davis
terms 'reversal', that is, a transposition of established hierarchical values.

Roumain's method was congruent with the Negritude poet's reversal of such
dualities as 'Black/White', 'good/evil' which was for Sartre, a deconstruction
of an accepted Manichaeanism:'

> '................the word "black" contains at one and the same time all that
> is Evil and that is "Good". It describes an almost unbearable tension
> between two contradictory classifications: the academic hierarchy and
> the racial hierarchy.........The white man possesses a secret blackness
> and the Negro a secret whiteness, a suddenly arrested fluttering
> between Being and Non-being...................' (65)

Jacques Roumain's choice in 'New Negro Sermon' is a direct presentation of
his Black Christ before the reader. Through his own act of reversal Roumain
reminds the bourgeois of his (the bourgeois's) participation in what Foucault
terms the 'unthought', that is, the realisation of the dangerous negativity of
freedom. The bourgeois has chosen to reverse all the values of Christ's
teaching in his way of life: by presenting the bourgeois with this Black Christ
as his Other Roumain faces him with a metaphorical object whose haunting
presence cannot be avoided through subtlety.

The Negritude ideology of Césaire and Senghor compared

If Jacqueline Leiner is right in her suggestion that the work of Léopold Senghor and Aimé Césaire emanates from their being it is necessary to begin an examination of the theoretical and literary work of the two most prominent figures in the Negritude movement with a brief biographical look at the world which formed their being. I shall begin with a brief biographical summary followed by a comparison and contrast of their theoretical positions on Negritude.

Léopold Sédar Senghor was born in Joal, a small village on the coast of Senegal. His people were Serers, members of a minority tribe among the more numerous Wolofs. The Senghors were Catholics in a country where Islam and indigenous animist religions had been dominant since the middle ages. Senghor enjoyed an untroubled and peaceful childhood whose background, in his own words, forms the essential spiritual and emotional basis for his poetry:

> "since I must explain my poems," he wrote in an epilogue to Ehiopiques (Ethiopics), "I'll confess that nearly all the beings and things they evoke are from my canton: a few Serer villages lost among the sandflats, the woods, the channels, and the fields. I need only mention their names to revive the kingdom of my childhood. I lived then in this kingdom, saw with my eyes, with my ears heard the fabulous beings beyond things; the ancestral spirits in the tamarind trees, the crocodiles, guardians of the springs; the sea cows, who spoke to me, initiating me in turn to the truths, of night and noon." (66)

At fifteen, Senghor left this world for Dakar, Senegal's capital city. There he went to secondary school and encountered his first example of racism in the form of a professor-priest, "who told me we (Africans) were savages, that we had no traditions, no civilization, that we were merely responsive to the hollow sound of words, without putting ideas behind them." (67) Senghor's reaction took the form of a determination to use reason to prove his fifteen year old intuition: "...I had an intuition about black African civilization, the intuition that we had roots in a profound spiritual tradition." (68) With a

scholarship Senghor came to Paris for his further studies where he was to meet Aimé Césaire and the two students were to play a major part in the developments of the Negritude movement.

Aimé Césaire was born of a family which valued learning if not wealth. His father used to recite the poetry of Victor Hugo to the children. From an early age Césaire attended on scholarship, a school consisting of the children of far richer families than his own. What struck the young Césaire however was the 'moral leprosy' of his native land and its poverty. (69) As a student on scholarship in France Césaire went first to Lycée Louis-Le-Grand, where he met Léopold Senghor, his senior by seven years. Césaire admits Senghor taught him everything he knew about Africa.

The two students read and discussed the work of French and German anthropologists Delafosse and Frobenius, 'who were propounding the astonishing idea that Africa had civilizations, a history, art, and cultures of its own.' (70)

Negritude was for both Senghor and Césaire initially the product of simple intuitions. For Senghor this intuition manifested at fifteen: for Césaire,

> Negritude is........ a concrete rather than an abstract coming to consciousness. What I have been telling you about - the atmosphere in which we lived, an atmosphere of assimilation in which Negro people were ashamed of themselves - has great importance. We lived in an atmosphere of rejection, and we developed an inferiority complex. I have always thought that the black man was searching for his identify. And it has seemed to me that if what we want is to establish this identity then we must have a concrete consciousness of what we are - that is of the first fact of our lives: that we are black; that we were black and have a history, a history that contains certain cultural elements of great value; and that Negroes were not...... born yesterday, because there have been beautiful and important black civilizations. (71)

Both were intuitively aware, having been steeped in the language of the original anti-Negro discourse, of the power of this discourse and the manner in which this power manifested, that is, in the negation of African history, as Césaire notes: 'At the time we (the Negritude poets) began to write people could write a history of world civilization without devoting a single chapter to Africa, as if Africa had made no contributions to the world.' (72)

Their object in theorising Negritude was therefore the elaboration of their original intuitions. It embraced both an attempt to formulate a counter-discourse to the original discourse and an elaboration of the 'situation' of the Negro as they saw it: the two aims were of course intermingled:

> We were not dazzled by European civilization. We bore the imprint of European civilization but we thought that Africa could make a contribution to Europe. It was also an affirmation of our solidarity. That's the way it was: I have always recognized that what was happening to my brothers in Algeria and the United States had its repercussions in me. I understood that I could not be indifferent to what was happening in Haiti or Africa. Then, in a way, we slowly came to the idea of a sort of black civilization spread throughout the world. And I have come to the realization that there was a "Negro situation" that existed in different geographical areas.... (73)

Senghor and Césaire were the children of the man of Negritude, the emancipated Negro whose immediate ancestors were silenced in 'Heart of Darkness'. Having been steeped in Western education, they naturally turned, in the course of theorising the 'situation' of Negroes,to disparate figures of the Western tradition - ethnologists, philosophers, psychologists, surrealists, communists - to create a pot pourri fired by their original intuitions.

It is a fascinating fact that, as Césaire himself affirms, he and Senghor thought, 'our liberation placed us on the left': yet some of the European figures to whom they turned in their act of 'inversion', their counter-discourse, were racist and fascist. They made use of Arthur Gobineau who, as Michael D. Biddiss notes referred to the Negro as 'a civilizational nullity'. If Gobineau was read by bourgeois theorists as an anti-democratic racist they (the Negritudists) were not deterred in making their

own favourable reading of his pronouncements, pronouncements such as: 'Artistic genius, which is equally foreign to each of the three types (of human races) arose only after the intermarriage of White and Black.' (74)

Nor were they deterred from using a figure such as Leo Frobenius to whom Jahneinz Jahn refers as a precursor to fascism:

> No doubt, Frobenius was a pacesetter of fascism. His lack of critical acumen, his contempt for analytical knowledge, his hatred of any kind of education, his irrationality, his pseudo-scientific speculations, his megalomania, his petty hatred of the French, his Germanitude, his longing for a "leader", and his juvenile enthusiasm for war - "Where the blades of swords and the heads of spears jerk into the enemy's body, where the breadth and the splashing blood of fighting men flow together, there splendid manhood grows with blessed intoxication-" and many other features besides, are part of that agitation which drove Germany into the arms of Hitler. (75)

Frobenius had been a rambling theorist but he had supported the idea of an African-wide culture stretching from the ancient Egyptian period based upon the notion of an African soul or 'paideuma'. Senghor and Césaire tended to use Western theorists whose ideas, like theirs, turned out to be developments of their original intuitions: Frobenius was one such figure. In 'The Voice Of Africa', published in 1913, Frobenius engages in a long telegraphed dialogue with Senghor and Césaire in his proclamation of the positivity in African culture:

> ....Is it not...........obvious that such skill in the arts, such great · commercial expansion, such town-planning and such municipal construction, must be the product of prolonged historical civilization? Are not the facts, taken as a whole, here altogether against the narrow-minded view which is inclined to reject the value of the whole and of everything connected with it upon the evidence of unessential, quaint excrescences, (cannibalism) such as the civilization of every nation must of necessity disclose? (76)

Frobenius's theories were based upon sympathy rather than on ethnology's traditional 'scientific objectivity'. He saw himself as engaged in a kind of Germanic 'soul-empathy' as against the Anglo-Saxon disdain for the African:

> Light in Africa? In that portion of the globe to which the stalwart Anglo-Saxon Stanley, gave the name of "dark" and "darkest"? Light upon the peoples of that continent, whose children we are accustomed to regard as types of natural servility, with no recorded history; mere products of the moment? What light can there where, to the general eye, there is no rule but that of the "insensible fetish," and where all power is said to degenerate into the reign of brute-force alone, beneath a sun whose rays seem but to scorch and wither the world it shines upon? A great light of the church assured us, once, that these "niggers" had no soul and were but the burnt-out husks of men.' (77)

Léopold Senghor makes it clear that it was the spirit of Frobenius's ideas which appealed to the Negritude writers:

> We let ourselves be seduced by the glowing theories of Leo Frobenius, according to which the Negro soul and the German soul are sisters. Were they not - one as well as the other - daughters of the 'Ethiopian culture', which meant 'surrender to a paideumatic essence,' emotional capacity, and a sense of reality, while the 'Hamitic culture,' with which Western rationalism is related, expressed the desire for domination, the gift for invention and the sense of fact? Leo Frobenius had included us in a new 'Sturm und Drang'... following his agitation we stood up against the order and the values of the West, especially against its reason. (78)

Senghor' speech on receiving the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, refers to concepts of Frobenius which are developed in both his work and that of Césaire. Although speaking for the Negritude writers in general in his enthusiasm for Frobenius's ideas, the naïve and uncritical embrace of these ideas is all Senghor's: "Frobenius demonstrated to us that the 'concept of the barbaric Negro is a creation of Europe,' that the Negro is characterized by his

ability to be moved not by facts, but by the 'essence of phenomena' and to express these in an 'immediate, unaffected and serious' style...." (79)

A. J. Arnold in 'Negritude and Modernism' refers to the enthusiasm which Césaire's periodical 'Tropiques' lavished on Frobenius's book 'Kulturgeschichte Afrikas [History of African culture]. (80) Arnold indicates the importance for the Negritude writers of the connection between Oswald Spengler's views in 'The Decline of the West' and those of Frobenius, on whom Spengler drew in writing his book. He notes that what attracted the Negritude writers was the implication in the work of Frobenius and Spengler of a cyclical alteration in the fortunes of colonialist countries: 'Spengler shared with Frobenius a cyclical view of universal history that could only signal the end of the dominion of colonial oppression of blacks in both Africa and the Caribbean (in the eyes of Negritude writers, at least)'. (81)

The Negritude Writers and Modernism

In 'Negritude and Modernism' A. J. Arnold makes it clear that Césaire shared a similar interest in Frobenius and Spengler with modernist writers such as Ezra Pound, and W.B. Yeats, two artists, and ideologes of the right. He states that André Malraux's interest in Frobenius led him to make Frobenius a character in his novel 'The Walnut Trees of Altenburg.' (82) The interests of these European artists of the modern period in two figures like Frobenius and Spengler whose writings form a central part of the European tradition is of course not surprising. Arnold's suggestion however that as a figure who was thoroughly immersed in the European tradition, and was writing in the same period as these European writers, Césaire would have tended to share the same modernist 'mind set', has much validity:

> It is very important, I believe, for us to become more aware of the
> extent to which the Negritude writers paralleled and prolonged a
> mental set that existed, sometimes diffusely but occasionally with a
> remarkably similar focus (as the examples of Spenglerian and
> Frobenian thought demonstrate quite clearly), in the work of the
> foremost modernist writers of their own and the preceding generation.
> There is probably no direct connection to be made between Césaire
> and Pound, Yeats, or Malraux. Yet Césaire had at his disposal the

same European intellectual tradition as these writers when he set out to become the poet of negritude. He did not dredge up Mother Africa from some atavistic racial memory, despite some early claims to the contrary......Some further probing of Césaire's points of contact with modernism will help us to place his work in much broader context as well as to assess its contributions to world literature. (83)

The Negritude writers shared the same sources, and were similarly influenced by the same historical developments, were open to the same ideologies as the European modernists but used these experiences in the creation of their own ideology. Negritude was part of modernism.

This enables us to place in a certain context the fact that the Negritude writers were prepared to use ideologies of the right and left in the creation of what they saw as a progressive movement. If Michel Foucault's view that modern thought lacks a sense of morality has a certain truth, the Negritude theorists seem to have accepted intuitively his additional rejection of the notion that all thought must be either 'progressive' or 'reactionary', despite their sense of themselves as being on the left.

It is a crucial fact that Senghor and Césaire were not ideologues of art but artists formulating an ideology which would complement their art. Arnold seems to suggest that Aimé Césaire fails in his attempt to reconcile engagement and art in the work of art itself: 'It is a paradox of the negritude movement that it simultaneously cultivated a rhetoric of protest and an intensely subjective poetics: the one discursive and polemical, turned toward the world; the other, lyrical and looking inward to a personal renewal, turned toward a form of spiritual salvation or revelation.' (84)   On the other hand it may be legitimately suggested that what Arnold unearths is not a paradox but the triumphant reconciliation of the relationship between engagement and art. For the Negritude writers 'engagement' here had a different connotation to Sartre's concept of political engagement since, in an important sense, it was an engagement in which they had no choice, that is, their engagement in the aspirations of the Black world as Black artists - which was really their engagement in themselves - during that historical period when for bourgeois humanism the very being and meaning of the Black world was a matter for interrogation.

Sartre urged the European artist to support the liberation of the European working class as the class which would necessarily inherit the future: for him it was a matter of ethical and logical necessity which still involved the willed choice of the writer.

(See 'What is Literature') (85)

Sartre objected to the notion that a fascist like Louis Ferdinand Céline could make a good novelist on the basis that Literature, being based on the appeal to the reader's freedom, an enemy of freedom like a fascist, could not write good literature. Sartre's argument seems faulty on inspection: there seems no reason why a fascist should not be capable of writing a good novel if it means suspending his/her fascist values in using the methodology of the good novelist. Céline has been recognised as an important twentieth century writer by critics who praise the accuracy of his morbid delineation of modern life. Sartre encountered the reality, in considering the case of writers like Céline, that the modern work resists political classification and direction.

Césaire and Senghor were practising poets and behaved as such in the formulation of an ideology, that is, they took disparate elements from 'the world' of the period in which their work was being formulated without regard to the 'politics' of these elements. A. J. Arnold's translation of Césaire's most important theoretical pronouncement on poetry indicates something of their method here. Here is Césaire on the relationship between the poet and 'the world' in 'Poetry and Knowledge':

> More and more the word promises to be an algebraic equation that makes the world intelligible. Just as the new Cartesian algebra permitted the construction of theoretical physics, so too an original handling of the word can make possible at any moment a new (theoretical and heedless) science that poetry could already give an approximate notion of. Then the time will come again when the study of the word will condition the study of nature. But at this juncture we are still in the shadow..
>
> Let's come back to the poet. Pregnant with the world, the poet speaks. (86)

Pregnant with 'the world' of the ideologies of their time, theirs was an amoral disruption and dislocation of established discourse - an ideological amorality. This attack against the discourse involved a fricative process in which the smooth carapace of a bourgeois imperialist world is rubbed with the various elements of modernism: Communism, surrealism, and Freudiansm; attacked with the negations of the enemies of bourgeois humanism such as Gobineau, Frobenius and Nietzsche, with the object of creating a counter-discourse to the racism of the Western tradition to be found in the values of bourgeois humanism. Here they echo the Black students who had proclaimed in the manifesto of 'Légitime Défense' in 1932, war against '...... all the filthy hypocrisy, the stinking emanations of Christian decay. We hate pity. Sentiment means nothing to us.....'   Senghor and Césaire were prepared coldly to use all anti-bourgeois thinkers of the left or the right against the current enemy which represented the oppressive racist aspects of the Western tradition.

The Negritude ideology of Césaire and Senghor contrasted

The Negritude of Senghor and Césaire was conditioned by their situation as exiles in a European metropolis. Senghor was for that period in the Thirties in Paris temporarily exiled from all that he knew of Africa and his childhood experiences. His Negritude was formulated during this period of alienation, as S. Washington BÂ notes:

> The actual experience of exile followed by the analysis of its causes constitutes the first step towards the recognition of this negritude, which is both cause and effect. It was the constant opposition between his own sensitivity and values and those of Europe that led Senghor to analyse, conceptualize, and formulate into a credo those qualities proper to his mode of being. (87)

Césaire was of course also living away from his native land, but the Antillean world of that period was, and still is, a situation conducive to alienation. Césaire as a member of the diaspora was living in a state of permanent alienation in his colonial situation, whether in the metropolis or in the colony.

Gerald Moore notes that the particular type of Negritude of the 30s and 40s whether that of diasporan figures, or Africans such as David Diop and Senghor was determined by exile from Africa and a sense of alienation from the metropolitan country in which they happen to be dwelling. (88) For the Antillean figure it was a double alienation; from Africa, as a 'native-land-of-the-heart' and from the depressed and alienated world of the Caribbean.

Senghor's concept of Negritude conveys a sense of deliberation and elaboration suggested by the quotation from S. Washington BÂ earlier which makes it a systematic abstraction. Césaire's theorising on Negritude in contrast, born out of action, suggests provisionality and search.

No matter how complex its elaboration, Senghor's concept of Negritude can be analysed into a few a simple tropes, which Wole Soyinka amongst others has suggested are both too simple, and superficial. Senghor's emotional intuitionism leads him to the notion of a Manichaean division between Europeans as analytical and dominated by sight as their essential means of perception; Africans are emotional, and dominated by touch. This essentialist dualism is elaborated in various forms in Senghor's writings. A few examples will suffice to provide a flavour of his pronouncements.

In 'The African Apprehension of Reality' he makes a marked contrast between the European and the African psyche:

> Let us consider first the European as he faces an object. He is, or at least he was from the time of Aristotle until the 'stupid nineteenth century', an objective intelligence, a man of will, a warrior, a bird of prey, a steady gaze. He first distinguishes the object from himself. He keeps it at a distance. He freezes it out of time and, in a way, out of space. He fixes it, he kills it. With his precision instruments he dissects it in a pitiless factual analysis. As a scientist, yet at the same time prompted by practical considerations, the European makes use of the Other that he has killed in this way for his practical ends. He makes a means of it. With a centripetal movement he assimilates it. He destroys it devouring it. "White men are cannibals," an old sage from my country told me a few years ago. "They have no respect for life." (89)

Compared to the European, the African has an entirely different relationship to the object:

> The African is as it were shut up inside his black skin. He lives in primordial night. He does not begin by distinguishing himself from the object, the tree or stone, the man or animal or social event. He does not keep it at a distance. He does not analyse it. Once he has come under its influence, he takes it like a blind man, still living, into his hands. He does not fix it or kill it. He turns it over and over in his supple hands, he fingers it, he feels it. The African is one of the worms created on the Third Day...a pure sensory field. Subjectively, at the end of his antennae, like an insect, he discovers the Other. (90)

The European and the African also have a contrasting relationship with Reason according to Senghor:

> Reason is one in the sense that its purpose is to apprehend the Other, that is, objective reality but the modes of knowledge....... 'forms of thought' .....are different and linked to the psycho-physiology of each race.

> The life-surge of the African, his self-abandonment to the Other, is thus actuated by reason but here reason is not the eye-reason for the European, it is the reason-by-embrace which shares more the nature of the logos than ratio. Ratio is compass, set-square and sextant, measure and weight whereas the logos, before its Aristotelian tempering, before it became diamond, was living speech. Speech, which is the most typically human expression of negro-sensory impression, does not cast the object, untouched, into rigid logical categories. African speech, in raising itself to the Word, rubs and polishes things to give them back their original colour, with their grain and their veins, shooting through them rays of light to restore their transparency, penetrating their sur-reality, or rather their underlying reality, in its first freshness. Classical European reason is analytical and makes use of the object. African reason is intuitive and participates in the object. (91)

Senghor also thinks the European and the African have different concepts of the art object:

> In Greco-Latin esthetics, which survived in the West until the end of the nineteenth century, art is 'imitation of nature', or rather, a rectified imitation. In Africa, it is an explanation and understanding of the world, a sensitive participation in the reality which underlies the world, that is, in a surreality, or rather, in the vital forces which animate the world. The European finds pleasure in recognizing the world through the reproduction of the object, which is designated under the name of the 'subject'; the African, in becoming vitally acquainted with the world through image and rhythm. (92)

Senghor's Negritude consists of both a physio-psychological elaboration ('emotivity') and a linguistic-philosophical development; the two are meant to be complementary. In a chapter in his book 'Structural Models and African Poetics' Sunday Anozie attempts an analysis of Senghor's Negritude based upon the linguistic-philosophical component. In Senghor's own view, his two views of Negritude as emotivity, and, 'the sum of african values' are congruent since, '.....it is their emotive attitude towards the world which explains the cultural values of Africans.....' (93) Anozie's analysis of Senghor's Negritude consists of an examination of the 'sum of african values' concept in terms of its linguistic basis. In a short passage in his essay 'La Problématique de la Négritude', Senghor examines the structure of the word 'Négritude'. According to Senghor the word derives its root structure from the rules of traditional or orthodox grammar, in particular rules which define and differentiate the difference between the two suffixes -ité (from the Latin - itas) and -itude (from the Latin -itudo). Referring to work done on these two suffixes by the linguistic faculty of Strasbourg University (France), Senghor notes:

These two suffixes, employed with the meaning in low Latin, today are used in forming abstract words from adjectives. They denote situation or state, quality or fault, and the way in which these are expressed. (94)

On the basis of this grammatical model, Negritude is for Senghor, 'a negro way of expression'. This leads him to reject a possible alternative word 'Negrité' instead of 'Negritude' as a definition of the Black essence:

Again, the two words have the same meaning, are formed from suffixes of the same meaning. The only difference is that the suffix -itude is more learned; ....it would serve to form less abstract words, more often to designate a state rather than a quality. (95)

Anozie notes the unique value for Senghor of the concept designated by 'Negritude'. He quotes Senghor as stating: '.......the originality of the French word 'négre' with the suffix -itude rather than -ité is that it passes from the concrete to the abstract, from the material to the spiritual.' (96)

Anozie demonstrates how Senghor also derives his concept of Negritude from a morphological parallelism between French, Latin and some African languages, notably Peul, the language with which Senghor grew up, spoken by the West African ethnic group of the same name. (97) Being derived from a complex of physio-psychological and linguistic-philosophical theories all of which leads to its notion as 'Black essence', Senghor's Negritude may be termed 'objective' and that of Césaire 'subjective'.

Although he acknowledges that 'The vision of Negritude should never be underestimated or belittled' (98) Soyinka analyses the essential flaws in its ideology, one of which he considers to be its tendency towards over-simplification, the characterization of the African world which is meant to be the object of its study, from an external superficial view-point. Soyinka accuses the Negritude ideologists of domination by European dualism, which is itself responsible for the negative image of the African in European thought. Dominated by Manichaeanism they produced a Manichaean ideology which failed to come to terms with the reality of the African world, which, he maintains, 'is most radically anti-Manichaean.' (99) This Manichaeanism is an important aspect of the ideology which Senghor was supposedly countering, in which he was of course thoroughly steeped.

Contrary to Senghor's position some feminist theorists are fully aware of the power of this 'universalist' Manichaeanism in its capacity to recruit followers from amongst its victims. In 'The Female Eunuch' Germaine Greer notes the manner in which the acceptance of Freud's theory of Femininity depended on the dissemination of a language whose success was assured in its active embrace by a host of women psychologists. The psychological 'explanation' of female ontology is an acute reflection of the cultural linguistic system created about women, in whose formation it has played a crucial role. Greer suggests that much if not all of Freud's theory of femininity formulates itself as a closed language. Of Freud's theory she notes: 'We learn something about his linguistics but nothing about the reality to which they refer.' (100) Some theorists would maintain that in Freud's system there is no difference between language and 'reality', the one inter-penetrates the other.

Feminist objectors of Greer's tendency would argue that the power of this language lies in its very self-referentiality, its tautological force, conveying the hidden power of oppressive phallocentrc 'universalism':

> The woman who resists her sexual role and ignores the message of her vaginal bleeding, that she should be bearing children, remains fixated in an infantile, aggressive state of penis envy. She may be sexually active but her response is still masculine, attached to her clitoris, and not originating in the receptive orifice, the vagina. The mature

woman's masochism stems from her desire to submit to the aggression of the appetant male, and it is only controlled by her protective narcissism which causes her to impose moral, aesthetic and physical conditions. During the necessary interval between maturity and mating she expresses her sexuality in passive fantasies; only when impregnated is she completed, for the child signifies her lost genital and her achievement, the fantasies fade, the masochism-narcissism is replaced by energy in the protection and socialization of the child. It is quite a neat description of an existing mechanism, and it has proved seductive even to female theorists, who did not dare to counterpose their subjective experience against what seemed to be objective fact. Besides, it had a moral weight. (101)

Julia Kristeva in an interview in 'Psycho-Analysis and Politics' argues for an outright rejection of the 'man'/'woman' dualism endorsed by Freudianism. Hers is a rejection of the metaphysical fixedness of the whole concept of the 'being' of woman:

> ....feminist practice can only be native, at odds with what already exists so that we may say "that's not it" and "that's still not it." In "woman" I see something that cannot be represented, something that is not said, something above and beyond nomenclatures and ideologies. (102)

Kristeva's is a reversal of the process whereby Manichaean psychology recruits women psychologists in the oppression of women: she uses male writers as allies in her rejection of Manichaeanism:

> ....it is what modern texts never stop signifying: testing the limits of language and sociality-the law and its transgression, mastery and (sexual) pleasure-without reserving one for males and the other for females, on the condition that it is never mentioned. From this point

of view, it seems that certain feminist demands revive a kind of naïve romanticism, a belief in identity (the reverse of phallocratism)..........(103)

Her critical practice is one of dissolution:

> I pay close attention to the particular aspect of the work of the avant-garde which dissolves identity even sexual identities; and in my theoretical formulations I try to go against metaphysical theories that censure what I just labelled "a woman"-that is what, I think, makes my research that of a woman. (104)

Kristeva's method is a negativity; it resists the Real ("that's still not it"), it resists identity, it rejects Senghor's positing of a theory (of 'Negrohood') as a counter to what he perceives to be the 'theory of the Negro' in Western culture. Both women and Negroes have been 'identified' or theorised in Western culture as Other. Kristeva's refusal to engage in the game of identity which might mean engaging in Senghor's act of making this Otherness a positivity is a post-modern feminist position. To place Senghor's stance in perspective it should be seen as the position of a Black theorist of the thirties facing a particular situation, that is, the defence of the Black world in a historical climate of apocalyptic racism.

For Soyinka the Negritude theorists manifestly fail to avoid the kind of Manichaeanism Kristeva strives to escape. Soyinka analyses the illusions under which he considers the Negritude ideologists were labouring:

> (a) Analytical thought is a mark of high human development.
>
> The European employs analytical thought.
>
> (b) Analytical thought is a mark of high human development.
>
> The African is incapable of analytical thought.
>
> Therefore the African is not highly developed. (105)

Of course slavery and colonialism took their justification from syllogism (b). The revaluation of certain basic tenets of European values in modern thought has meant, Soyinka thinks, a 'rephrasing of premises and conclusions'. (106) He notes that the European liberal tacitly rejects the conclusions of the two syllogisms while vaguely holding on to their premises.

The Negritude ideologists were so dominated by both syllogisms that Soyinka thinks they dared not challenge them. Instead they sought a reconstruction of syllogism (b) while leaving (a) intact, thereby accepting 'the battleground of Eurocentric prejudices and chauvinism'. (107) Their reconstruction of (b) took this form:

> (c) Intuitive understanding is also a mark of human development.
>
> The African employs intuitive understanding.
>
> Therefore the African is highly developed. (108)

After this dualistic characterization of Whites (intellectual) and Blacks (intuitive) Soyinka says they posited a romantic synthesis: 'the black leaven in the white metallic loaf,' (109) that is, the Black 'soul-amelioration' of harsh Western military-industrial life, a naïve device Soyinka thinks:

> How could the mistake ever have been made that the new propositions in (c) wiped away the inherent insult of (b), which was merely a development of the racist assumptions of (a)? They said, oh yes, the Gobineaus of the world are right; Africans neither think nor construct, but it doesn't matter because -voilà- they intuit! And so they moved to construct a romantic edifice, confident that its rhythmic echoes would drown the repugnant conclusion of proposition (b), which of course simple refused to go away. (110)

Soyinka's critique is more applicable to Senghor's ideology than that of Césaire. A.J. Arnold notes that Césaire has recorded the difference in ideological position between himself and Senghor with regard to Negritude.

Césaire notes that though they were close in the thirties: 'Later on things changed somewhat and there is one point on which I no longer agreed at all with Senghor......: it seemed to me that Senghor made a kind of metaphysics out of negritude; there we parted company. He tended rather to construct negritude into an essentialism as though there were a black essence, a black soul,.......but I never accepted this point of view.' (111) Senghor's position is structurally close to Soyinka's description, a highly elaborated concept based upon a notion of a European and an African essence.

This position of Senghor is supported by Frobenius's essentialist view of African art. Christopher L. Miller in a discussion of the writing of Frobenius on Africa notes that his discovery of the 'essence' of African art represented a form of repression. Having found what he considers the essence of African art, Miller notes that Frobenius considers that 'the essence preexists the art in which it is found; it *governs*........it manifests itself, it releases itself.' (112) Here essence precedes existence. (113) Frobenius's view was formed during his visit to the Congo in 1906, chronologically part of the period of the 'scramble for Africa', during which the idea of an African 'essence' and an African 'style' in art would have been readily acceptable in Euro-American culture. Miller notes that for Frobenius this style represents a mummification, 'a perfect primitivism' (114) which manifests in its formulation by Frobenius as a sense of subjection: '......it is a style posited as a totality by Frobenius's discourse that rules over Africa...............Africans themselves are *subject* to, even subjugated by, an essence discovered by an outsider, of which, like Monsieur Jourdain and his "prose", they may be wholly unaware.......' (115)

Senghor represents the overwhelming desire to counter the Western concept of the Negro as negation, sterile negativity. His wish for a dialogue with Frobenius is a need for a supporter who can explain the African essence to the Western tradition.

Césaire's ideology is both more *limited* and more *ambiguous* than that of Senghor. More limited due to Césaire's refusal to systematize his version of Negritude. His interview with René Depestre in 'A Discourse on Colonialism' indicates Césaire's reluctance to theorise his original intuition, his desire to maintain the integrity of this intuition as a matter of 'concrete consciousness' rather than a systematic metaphysics:

I would like to say that everyone has his own Negritude. There has been too much theorizing about Negritude. I have tried not to overdo it, out of a sense of modesty. But if someone asks me what my conception of Negritude is, I answer that above all it is a concrete rather than an abstract coming to consciousness. What I have been telling you about -the atmosphere in which we lived, (in the 30s) an atmosphere of assimilation in which Negro people were ashamed of themselves- has great importance. We lived in an atmosphere of rejection, and we developed an inferiority complex. I have always thought that the black man was searching for his identity. And it has seemed to me that if what we want is to establish this identity, then we must have a concrete consciousness of what we are-that is, of the first fact of our lives: that we are black; that we were black and have a history, a history that contains certain cultural elements of great value..........(115)

Césaire's Negritude is actional in the sense that it is an intuition which is found as an agent in the compound of his poetry. Like most compounds it is extremely difficult, if not impossible to separate an 'element' from it. Césaire's Negritude ideology is more ambiguous than that of Senghor in that it carries the uncertainty of action. His Negritude is both simple and complex: simple, because it is based on 'a simple intuition' instinctively understood by all Blacks; complex, because Césaire is fully aware that in its negotiations with reality lies a necessarily thorny path of evasions and contradictions. Characteristically in 'Cahier d'un retour au pays natal' it is the negativity of Césaire's Negritude which is dwelt on, recalling Kristeva's negative stance vis a vis any description of 'woman':

my Negritude is not a stone, its deafness
thrown against the clamour of the day
my Negritude is not a speck of dead water
on the dea eye of earth
my Negritude is neither a tower nor a cathedral... (117)

Césaire's poetry is ineluctably merged into his Negritude. Just as Wilfred
Owen said of his war poetry that 'the poetry is in the pity', so Césaire's
Negritude is in his poetry.

It is in this sense that Césaire can say that his Negritude is a realisation of a
'concrete consciousness' since, despite its famous complexity, his poetry is an
attempt at capturing the palpable reality of the Negro's situation. We shall
return to this notion of 'concrete consciousness' when discussing Césaire's
poetry in detail later in this thesis but suffice it to note at this stage that
'concrete consciousness' is based on a simple intuition: 'a concrete
consciousness of what we are-that is, of the first fact of our lives: that we are
black.' If Senghor's Negritude is elaborated on an abstract concept based upon
the place of the Black in history and a metaphysical notion of the Being of
the Black, Césaire stresses its opposite. The notion of 'concrete
consciousness' seems of course problematic: the two terms would seem to
carry an inherent contradiction. It is clear however that Césaire is here
stressing not the nature or structure of consciousness, but of the object of

consciousness. Césaire suggests that Negro collective consciousness needs to
start with a simple objective reality, that is, the fact that all Africans
diasporan or continental, are Black, that this fact must be recognised as a
crucial aspect of their lives. Allied to the recognition of the 'simple fact' is the
full willingness to recognise the concomitant aspects of this fact: that is,
Blacks as Africans have a history of significance.

Césaire's concept of Negritude has a historical beginning and is subject to
time, whereas Senghor's metaphysical concept carries like all metaphysical
concepts a history-less and timeless connotation. Césaire indicates when and
how the concept began to take shape: it was in the Paris of the 30's, and it
began as a resistance to the assimilation which was practiced by Blacks in the

colonies in particular. The term arose amongst the students thrown up in Paris
from Africa, Guiana, Haïti, North America, the Antilles etc. out of their
common consciousness:

> I have a feeling that it was somewhat of a collective creation. I used
> the term first, that's true. But it's possible we talked about it in our
> group. It was really a resistance to the politics of assimilation. Until
> that time, until my generation, the French and the English-but

especially the French-had followed the politics of assimilation unrestrainedly. (118)

Contrary to the assimilationist tendency the term indicated the affirmation of difference. Against the racism which denies difference under an oppressive and sham Sameness, the students affirmed the integrity of Difference. Against the characterisation of their affirmation as an 'anti-racist racism' (Jean-Paul Sartre) the students could legitimately claim that theirs was simply the defence of the integrity of African culture: every culture had the right to affirm its integrity; only by manifesting its difference can it properly recognise its similarities with other cultures.

In the next chapter I move from the discussion of the theoretical positions of Césaire and Senghor to an examination of the relationship between the Negro and his Other, in their poetry.

References

1. Lilyan Kesteloot' Black Writers in French': A Literary History of Negritude, Trans. by Ellen Conroy Kennedy. Temple Unite. Press. (1974).

2. Op. Cit. p59.

3. Henry Louis Gates Jr.(editor) 'Black is The Colour of The Cosmos': Essays on Afro-American Literature and Culture, 1942-1981. Charles T. Davis. Garland Publishing Inc. (N. York.1982). p68.

4. Quote by Langston Hughes: L. Kesteloot in 'Black Writers in French', p60.

5. Henry Louis Gates Jr. 'Black is The Colour of The Cosmos', p71.

6. Op. Cit. pp71-72.

7. Op. Cit. p72.

8. Op. Cit. pp72-73.

9. Op. Cit. p73.

10. Quoted by L. Kesteloot in 'Black Writers in French', p59.

11. Darwin T. Turner, 'W.E. B. Dubois And The Theory of A Black Aesthetic',in, 'The Harlem Renaissance Re-examined', by Victor A. Kramer. (ed.) AMS. Press. (N. York. 1987). p18.

12. Langston Hughes 'Selected Poems of Langston Hughes'. Pluto Press, (1986). p8.

13. Claude McKay 'Banjo', Harvest Press. (N. York. 1957). p268.

14. Op. Cit. p324.

15. Lilyan Kesteloot, 'Black Writers in French', pp72-73.

16. Op. Cit. p73.

17. Quoted by L.Kesteloot, in 'Black Writers in French'. Ibid.

18. Quoted by L.Kesteloot in 'Black Writers in French' from 'Tropiques no. 2
    (July 1941, pp41-42,) pp73-74.

19. Op. Cit. p74.

20. 'The Harlem Renaissance Re-examined'. p2.

21. Quoted by L. Kesteloot from, 'Introduction à La nègre Américaine', in
Tropiques, no. 2. (July 1941, Fort-de-France, Martinque) in 'Black Writers
in French' p57.

22. Frantz Fanon, 'Black Skin White Masks', Paladin. Trans. by
C.L.Markmann. (1972), pp86-87.

23. 23. See K. Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings: The Jamaican Labour Rebellion of
1938 and Its Aftermath,* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), for the 1930s
troubles in Jamaica, and, Susan Craig, *'Smiles And Blood: The Ruling Class
Response to the Workers Rebellion in Trinidad and Tobago',* New Beacon
Books, (London, 1988) for the 1930s troubles in Trinidad and Tobago.

24. Lilyan. Kesteloot, 'Black Writers in French', p64.

25. Quoted by L. Kesteloot from 'Negro Songs of Protest', Lawrence Gellert,
    New Masses. Nov. 1930. p11. 'Black Writers in French' p48.

26. Lépold Senghor, 'Léopold Sédar Senghor: Prose and Poetry', selected and
trans. by John Reed and Clive Wake, OUP. (1965). p99.

27. L. Kesteloot, 'Black Writers in French', p15.

28. Op. Cit. p16.

29. Op. Cit. p20. (ff).

30. Frantz Fanon, 'Black Skin White Masks', p135.

31. Ibid.

32. L. Kesteloot, 'Black Writers in French', pp29-30.

33. Op. Cit. pp33-34.

34. Op. Cit. p34.

35. Frantz Fanon, 'Black Skin White Masks', ch. 6.

36. Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire-Langage Indentité Culturelle-Négritude', Afrique-France-Guyane-Maghredb-Martinque. Editions Jean-Michel, Place (Paris, 1980.) p72.

37. L. Kesteloot, 'Black Writers in French'. p39.

38. Maurice Nadeau 'The History of Surrealism', Trans. from the French by Richard Howard. Johnathan Cape, (London 1972).

'The surrealists' relationship with Marxism was always fraught and complex. They were not prepared to give up their internal experiments for the sake of Marxism. Pierre Naville expressed their point of view clearly: 'In the realm of facts, on our part no ambiguity is possible: there is not one of us who does not desire the shift of power from the hands of the bourgeoisie to those of the proletariat. Meanwhile, it is no less necessary, as we see it, for the experiments of the inner life to continue and this, of course, without an external check, even a Marxist one.' (p131).

39. Op. Cit. p111.

40. André Breton, introduction to: 'Cahier d'un retour au pays natal' Aimé Césaire. Présence Africaine, (Paris, 1971). p14.

41. L. Kesteloot, 'Black Writers in French', p258.

42. Op. Cit. p259.

43. Gregson Davis 'Non-Vicious Circle', Twenty Poems of Aimé Césaire; Trans. by Davis, Stanford Univ. Press. (Stanford. California1984). p39.

44. Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire-Langage Identité Culturelle-Négritude,' p70.

45 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', Part 2, 'Stand' vol. 6. no. 1. p8

46. Lilyan Kesteloot, 'Black Writers in French,' p127.

47. Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire-Langage Identité Culturelle-Négritude', p70.

48. Op. Cit. p71.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Op. Cit. p72.

53. Ellen Conroy Kennedy, (editor) 'The Negritude Poets', Anthology of Translations from the French. Thunders Mouth Press, (N. York. 1989). p46.

54. Op. Cit. p48.

55. Op. Cit. p41.

56. Op. Cit. p56.

57. Op. Cit. pp58-59.

58. Frantz Fanon, 'Black Skin White Masks', p156.

59. See C.L.R. James, 'A History of Negro Revolt', Race Today Publications

60. Frantz Fanon, 'Black Skin White Masks', p157.

61. Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire-Langage Identité Culturelle-Négritude', pp73-74, a quotation from: 'Portrait du Colonisé', précédé du 'Portrait du Colonisateur', (Paris J.J. Pauvent, 1966). p156.

62. E.C.Kennedy, 'The Negritude Poets', pp52-53.

63. Op. Cit. p25-26

64 Op. Cit. p20

65. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', Part 2. 'Stand' vol. 6. no 1. p10.

66. E.C.Kennedy, 'The Negritude Poets', p122.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Op. Cit. p62.

70. Op. Cit. p63.

71. Aimé Césaire, 'Discourse on Colonialism': Monthly Review Press, (London. 1972). p76.

72.Ibid.

73. Op. Cit. pp76-77.

74. Michael D. Biddis, 'Father of Racist Ideology', The Social and Political Thought of Count Gobineau': Weindenfeld & Nicolson. (1970). p119.

75. Janheinz Jahn,'Leo Frobenius: The Demonic Child', Trans. by Richard Sander. Occasional Publication. African and American Studies and Research Centre. Univ. of Texas at Austin (1974). p17.

76. Ibid.

77. Op. Cit. p19.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. A.J. Arnold, 'Modernism and Negritude', Harvard Univ. Press. London
1981. p51,

81. Ibid.

82. Op. Cit. p52.

83. Ibid.

84. Op. Cit. pp58-59.

85. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'What is Literature', Trans. by Bernard Frechtman,
Harper & Row. (N. York. 1965). See especially, pp155-291.

86. Aimé Césaire, 'Poetry and Knowledge', trans. by A.J. Arnold, 'Sulfur' no.
5. (1982) pp24-25,

87. S.W.BÂ, 'The Concept of Negritude in the Poetry of Léopold Sédar
Senghor', Princeton Univ. Press. (1979), p28.

88. Cosmo Pieterse and Donald Monro (editors): 'Protest and Conflict in
African Fiction', Heinemann Educational Books, (London 1974). pp36-38.

89. Clive Wake & John Reed, 'Léopold Sédar Senghor: Prose and Poetry',
p29.

90. Op. Cit. pp29-30.

91. Op. Cit. pp33-34.

92. Op. Cit. p83.

93. Sunday Anozie, 'Aspects of Senghor's Poetic Theory' in 'Structural
Models and African Poetics', Routledge & Kegan Paul. (1981). p35.

94. Op. Cit. p82.

95. Op. Cit. pp92-83. (Anozie's translation).

96. Op. Cit. p83.

97. Op. Cit. pp83-85.

98. Wole Soyinka, 'Myth, Literature And The African World', CUP. (Cambridge, 1976). p126.

99. Op. Cit. p93.

100. Germaine Greer 'The Female Eunuch', Paladin, (1973). p92.

101. Op. Cit. p93.

102. Elaine Marks & Isabelle de Courtivran, (editors) 'New French Feminisms', An Anthology. Univ. of Massachusetts Press. (1980). p137.

103. Op. Cit. p138.

104. Ibid.

105. Wole Soyinka, 'Myth, Literature And The African World', p127.

106. Op. Cit. p128.

107. Ibid.

108. Op. Cit. p129.

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid.

111. A.J. Arnold: 'Modernism and Negritude'. p44

112 . Christopher L. Miller, 'Theories of Africans 'in '"Race," Writing and Difference' Ed. by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. University of Chicago Press, (London, 1986, p290

113. See Jean-Paul Sartre: 'Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions': Methuen (London 1973) p28.

'Hence it is impossible to regard emotion as a psycho-physiological disorder. It has its own essence. its peculiar structures, its laws of appearance, its meaning. It cannot possible come from *outside* the human reality.'

Sartre's theory that a human activity or attitude discloses the human in the activity not as essence behind the phenomenon but as that which manifests in the phenomenon, is applicable here. Sartre's theory, with which I agree, negates the views of Frobenius and Senghor of a pre-existent essence of African art which manifests itself in different forms.

Sartre repeats this rejection of an essence prior to human existence in 'Politics and Literature' in which he rejects structuralism:

"..........reject–because it would be possible to erect a theory of structures on that basis–structuralism as being something behind me. I believe that man is at the centre, or, if there are things behind him, that he internalizes them. There is nothing prior to man...................except man becoming himself, but there is nothing prior to him which is behind him and to which man is to bear witness. (p92)

114. Christopher L. Miller, "Race," Writing and Difference', p291.

115. Op. Cit. p290.

116. Aimé Césaire, 'A Discourse on Colonialism', pp75–76.

117. Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier d'un retour au pays natal', p16.

118. Aimé Césaire, 'Discourse on Colonialism', p72.

CHAPTER 7

THE NEGRITUDE POETRY OF AIMÉ CESAIRE AND LÉOPOLD SENGHOR

In this chapter I examine the complexity of the relationship between the Negro and the Other in the Negritude poetry of Aimé Césaire and Léopold Senghor. I argue that the Negritude philosophy of Césaire manifests as a more complex thought in his poetry than that of Senghor in *his* poetry. In the previous chapter it was noted that Senghor has elaborated his Negritude philosophy into a metaphysic based upon the Negro as a life-fulfilling Other to the abstractions of Euro-American life. I shall argue in this chapter that Césaire's Negritude poetry manifests as an idea which is embodied in the poetry in contrast to Senghor's Negritude poetry in which ideas already expanded in his essays are stated without elaboration. If, as Sartre notes, Césaire's poetry *shows* but does not describe Negritude, Senghor's poetry *states* elements of his Negritude proselytizing whose concepts enter pre-formed into the poetry. More space is therefore required to explore the complexity of Césaire's Negritude poetry compared to Senghor's.

Aimé Césaire: Language, Ideology and Poetry

Negritude began as a cultural renaissance embracing an Antillean and African decision to espouse the difference of the Negro. Historically the Caribbean Negro had learned through culture to laugh at the African as a degraded symbol of difference: he had projected his own awareness of difference onto the continental African in self-conscious laughter. Negritude represented a negation of this projection. The Black man desired to grasp the negative contents of the collective consciousness, in reality himself, in order to achieve a double negation. Michel Leris declares in 'Who is Aimé Césaire', that this affirmation was not a case of the victims of history repeating their oppressor's moral failure with a counter-affirmation of superiority:

The Black race is no more the chosen people than any other and, if
one has sovereign privilege, it is that of having for centuries, because
of the slave trade   and the enslavement of nearly all of Africa,
undergone material and moral attacks that make of Blacks the
"humiliated and offended" *par excellence*. It goes without saying that
one could not truly and wholly live one's negritude without affirming
the value of Black African cultures..............This does not mean,
however, that African cultures are decreed to be superior: what must
be obtained for them is finally the right to equality or, most precisely,
the right to be what they are and to remain *different*. (1)

Although in his famous introduction to the anthology of Negritude poetry,
'Black Orpheus', Sartre calls the ideology of Negritude an 'anti-racist racism'
he qualifies this phrase by suggesting at the very beginning of his essay that
Negritude was a necessary reaction:

Just what were you hoping when you took the gags out of all these
black mouths? That they were going to sing your praises? And when
the black heads that our fathers brought down to earth rose up did you
expect to read adoration in their eyes? Here are men, standing,
looking at us, and I wish that you might feel as I do the thrill of being
seen. For 3,000 years the white man has enjoyed the privilege of
looking without being seen; he did nothing but look, the light of his
eyes drew forth all things from their native shadow, the whiteness of
his skin, condensed light, was another way of looking. The white
man, white because he was a man, white as day, white as truth, white
as virtue, lit up all creation like a torch, revealing the essence, secret
and white, of its creatures. Today these black men are returning our
looks, staring us down; they are, in their turn, black torches lighting
the world and our white heads are no more than Chinese lanterns
buffeted by the wind. (2)

If the White man lived his ' Whiteness' through the oppression of Blacks it
follows that Negritude, the manifestation of Blackness, must involve a
relationship with this oppression. According to thousands of years of the
European tradition the very humanity of the person is at stake in their
willingness or unwillingness to counter their own oppression. It follows that
in grasping his humanity and proclaiming his Negritude the Negro was doing

nothing more than fulfilling the terms of this argument. To call the Negro's expression of his humanity 'anti-racist racism' is to say no more than that the form of oppression countered by the Negro was 'racism' and, any counter to racism assumes the danger of circumscription by the very ideological structures it opposes.

Sartre notes that the White man lived his whiteness under the assumption of seeing without being seen. And, in Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic, although the master fails to 'see' the slave, i.e. to grant him recognition, the slave's interests are best served by an acute 'seeing' and critical observation of the master.

It is the shock or 'thrill' of being seen which leads to the cry of 'anti-racist racism': the shock of 'Black looks' perceived as if for the first time which leads to the notion that these looks must be overwhelmingly hostile. In fact as Sartre notes much of the literature of Negritude and the voice of Negritude is largely representative of a Negro gaze turned towards, and seeking the Negro self: 'These Negroes are writing for and talking to Negroes; their poetry is neither satirical nor imprecatory: it is the gaining of self awareness.' (3) And, 'His aim is not to know himself, or come to grips with himself in a state of ecstasy, but to discover and, at the same time, become what he is.' (4)

'Objective Negritude' (Senghor, Birago Diop) is a celebration of 'a negro trait', 'the negro world', 'the negro way of expression'; 'subjective Negritude' (Césaire) is more representative of the Negro delve into himself which Sartre likens to the descent of Orpheus in search of Eurydice. (5) If the search of 'subjective Negritude' often turns a hostile gaze upon the Other it is because within this search lies the haunting presence of the Other arching over the psychology of colonized peoples.

Sartre notes that the Other haunts the colonized in language:

> The coloniser manages to be the eternal mediator between the colonised: he is present, forever present, present when absent, even in the most secret meetings. And, since words are ideas, when the Negro declares in French that he rejects French culture he is taking back with one hand what he is pushing away with the other, he is equipping himself with a stone-crusher- the enemy's thinking machine. This in itself might not be so bad. But a syntax and a vocabulary forged in former terms, thousands of miles away, to answer other needs and

designate other objects do not provide the Negro with the means to speak about himself, his worries and his hopes. French thought and language are analytical. What would happen if the Negro genius were the result of a synthesis.? (6)

Black language must necessarily be a synthesis, the result of a fusion of European vocabularies and African forms (see Morgan Dalphinus 1984) (7) for the Black must undermine the very concept of 'purity' whether in language or culture since it is this concept of purity which the racist has utilised against him. (Leopold Senghor declares :'......we're all cultural half-casts', meaning, we're all the product of 'impure' cultures.) (8) This act of undermining, which Sartre calls 'the moment of separation, or of negativity' (9) is not so much an 'anti-racist racism' to use his terms, but the perpetual negation of racism as an ideology. Since racism is present in every aspect of White culture this act of opposition may assume the appearance of a perpetual negation.

Césaire's Negritude poetry utilised the tradition of protest within European culture and made use of surrealism as the current poetic method fitting squarely within that tradition. Sartre connects what he sees as the act of negation of White culture ('The Negro's white culture must die if his black soul is to be reborn within him') (10) implicitly with the aspirations of surrealists whose aims were if not the death of White culture, the destruction of Western culture in its oppressive form as they experienced it. Like the surrealists Césaire sought a method which would undermine the oppressive forms in French culture when he started writing poetry. His aim was nothing less than the explosion of the French language; surrealism was an agent of detonation in the search for the integrity of the Negro: 'It (surrealism) was a weapon that exploded the French language. It shook up absolutely everything. This was important because traditional forms-burdensome, overused forms- were crushing me.' (11)

Césaire's aim was not the destruction of White (racist) culture or, the moment of negativity to which Sartre refers, rather it was the creation of a dialogue in which the Black poet forces himself in the Other's visible field. In order for a genuine dialogue or exchange of discourses to begin, it was

necessary to present the Other with his authentic Black self and not the caricature which had been created by the Other over centuries. In an interview with Jacqueline Leiner in 'Tropiques' Césaire declares that his aim has been the reconstruction of the French language in order to render himself in the language. In a statement which touches the essential meaning of Negritude Césaire notes that his aim as a Black poet was the transformation and re-construction of the French language in order to render it a proper medium for the announcement of himself or rather his selves:

>..............mon effort a été d'infléchir le français, de le *transformer* pour exprimer, disons: " ce moi, ce moi-négre. ce moi-créole, ce moi-martiniquais, ce moi-antillais." C'est pour cela que je me suis beaucoup plus intéressé à la poésie qu'à la prose, et ce *dans la mesure où c'est le poète qui fait son langage.* Alors que, en général, le prosateur se sert du language.' (12)

>(........my effort has been to bend the French language, to transform it in order to express, let us say, "this self, this black creole, Martinican, Antillean self." That's why I am much more interested in poetry than in prose, precisely to the extent that the poet creates his language. The writer of prose, on the other hand, generally serves language.)

For Césaire the unique advantage of the Black poet using French is that he can say: 'Je refais une langue qui n'est pas le français. Que les Français s'y retrouvert, ça, c'est leur affaire!' (13)

(I re-create a language that is not French. If the French rediscover their language in mine, well, that's their affair.)

Hence the relevance of Sartre's observation that the Negritude poets were not writing primarily for Frenchmen but for Blacks.

The shock for the European user of the language, the astonishment which leads to the notion of an 'anti-racist racism' is the discovery of the Black within the interstices of that which he had thought closest to himself- his language-turning a sometimes hostile gaze onto those who hitherto lacked the experience of being seen.

The European reader's tendency may well be as Sartre anticipated: "Well,"

you may say, "should we be interested in this poetry as anything other than a document? We can't really enter into it."˟(14) And Jacqueline Leiner notes that Césaire's poetry has been labelled 'hermetic'. (15) Yet Césaire's language is recognisably French, a Black poet's way of writing French, and Césaire has been hailed by the foremost critics (notably Sartre and André Breton) for his unique contribution to the language. Perhaps the disquiet caused the White French reader by Césaire's poetry is precisely the recognition of the presence of the Black poet in the language and the consequent extent to which it has been estranged. The aim of the Negritude poet, that is, the disruption of the White reader's comfort with his own language, has been achieved.

Jacqueline Leiner notes that for Sartre the colonised poet surrounds his words with a personal emotional charge: he uses words for his own purposes and pleasure,and is not the servant of words. :'Comme le suggère Sartre, le poète-tel le colonisé- aborde les mots avec un sentiment d'étrangeté; si c'est un imaginatif, il leur confère une charge affective tout à fait personelle..........Libre en face d'eux, il les sert à son gré et ne s'en sert point.') (16) (As Sartre suggests, the poet, that is the colonized, invests words with his own peculiar emotion; if he is imaginative, he confers on them an entirely personal emotional charge..............In a state of freedom before words, he uses them for his own pleasure and does not serve them in any way.) 'Accomodez-vous de moi. Je ne m'acommode pas de vous!'(17)Césaire declares in 'Cahier D'un Retour Au Pays Natal' (Take me as I am . I don't adapt to you.)

Césaire does not write poetry in French Creole. His critique of the French language and French culture is perpetrated within them. Césaire and Senghor declare their complete comfort in the French language. As an Antillean growing up with the French language Césaire had no other language of scholarship to compete for his attention, unlike a writer like Albert Memmi growing up in a mixture of French and Arabo-Berber culture. Arabo-Berber was less permeable to French culture than Martinican culture consequently Memmi had, Jacqueline Leiner notes, to make a particular effort to learn French at school: '................en rentrant de l'école, il s'enfirmait et répétait les mot, à haute voix, pendant des heures, pour être sûr qu'il les pronounçait

correctement.' (18) (On re-entering school, he isolated himself and repeated the [French] words aloud for hours, to ensure that he had pronounced them correctly. (My translation) A Martinican cannot escape French even in his creole for French provides its vocabulary even while Africa supplies its linguistic structure. And there is a certain logic in manifesting your identity in the same language which has spent centuries in its denial.

Not for Césaire the problem of other colonialist writers struggling with French and the difficulties of finding themselves in a 'foreign language':

> Le français, "langue arrachée de haute lutte", pour Kateb Yacine, "exil", pour Malek Haddad, "instrument d'altération de la personnalité", pour Frantz Fanon, "outil de libération et reflet douteux de la réalité", pour Albert Memmi, autant de problèmes étrangers à Aimé Césaire. (19)

> (French, "language culled from a great struggle" for Kateb Yacine, 'exile' for Malek Haddad, "instrument of the alteration of the personality" for Frantz Fanon, "tool of liberation and doubtful reflection of reality", for Albert Memi: unfamiliar problems for Aimé Césaire.)

Césaire's poetic dynamic has been, as a historically displaced and alienated Antillean to establish Martinican roots and express the Martinican world in the French language: '............la dynamique spéciale de la complexe réalité biologique" Martiniquaise.' (20) (.......the special dynamic of the complex, biological, Martinican reality.) Like the students in the 30s who had originally attacked their elders for their slavish use of the Parnassian method, Césaire realised that it was not enough to continue this excoriation: it was necessary to express the real Martinican soul, to enter the marvellousness of the Martinican world, its tales and legends, in order to discover their own reflection: 'Il recommande au "Narcisse Martiniquais," de plonger ses regards dans le miroir du Merveilleux: ses contes, ses légendes, ses chants où il verra s'inscrire lumineuse, l'image sûre de lui même.' (21) ('He advises the Martinican Narcissus to contemplate his image in the mirror of wonder: his tales, legends, songs where he will see luminously inscribed a true image of himself') This whole movement was a counter to the imperialist 'exotic backwater' view of the island taken by the older French and Martinican

poets during the 30s which was mentioned earlier: Césaire and his 'Tropiques' contributors were intent on expressing the uniqueness and richness of the Martinican world: 'Dans le concert impérial d'une culture commune nous avons un son spécial à rendre que jusqu'ici nous n'avons pu faire sortir du nous..........seuls, nous pouvons exprimer ce par quoi nous sommes uniques.' (22) (By totally embracing a common culture we have a special sound to emit which up till now we have not been able to exude....we can only express our uniqueness.)

Congruent with the desire to express the unique reality of place is the poet's desire to find himself in words. Literature, and poetry in particular, is for Césaire a unique medium of liberation: national and personal liberation are part of the same movement. At the national level: literature is a means of 'seizing the past, illuminating the present, pursuing the future, playing a unique role in the fulfilment of the Antillean destiny.' (23)

At the personal level Césaire invests poetry with tremendous powers of liberation. His 'poetic manifesto' translated by A.J. Arnold as 'Poetry and Knowledge' written in 1944, makes claims for poetry which contain the seeds for his own liberation:

FIRST PROPOSAL

Poetry is that process which through word, image, myth, love and humour establishes me at the living heart of myself and of the world.

SECOND PROPOSAL

The poetic process is a naturalizing process operating under the demential impulse of imagination.

THIRD PROPOSAL

Poetic knowledge splatters its object with all its mobilized richness.

FOURTH PROPOSAL

If affective energy can be endowed with causal power as Freud indicated, it is paradoxical to refuse it power and penetration. It is conceivable that nothing can resist the unheard of mobilization of force that poetry necessitates, or the multiplied élan of those forces. (24)

Poetry is a prospective tool and a means of recuperation for Blacks as Césaire declares in a lecture given in Haiti in 1944: "Une démarche de prospection et de récupération de l'être?" (25) (A quest for the search and recuperation of the self?) Césaire's answer to his own question is not in doubt. Words are the means by which the poet literally finds and seizes himself: (26) this search for self is of course bound only to a relative degree of success.(27)

This aspiration towards national and personal emancipation, against the imperialist tendency which would lose the (French) Antilles in the French world (assimilation) and lose the Black poet in the French language is a natural movement for the Negritude poet which puts into perspective A.J.Arnold's puzzlement at the 'paradox' of the Negritude movement; that is, the conjunction of protest and subjective poetics; one view turned towards the world, the other. turned towards spiritual speculation. What for Arnold is a problem. is for Césaire nothing but a natural development in his act of liberation of Blacks in general and himself in particular. It was perfectly natural for Césaire to announce all of his different selves as an amalgam in the act of entering into the French language. For him there were no divisions between his Negro self, his Creole self, his Martinican self, his Antillean self. This Manichaean division between the personal and the public self, and

Arnold's suggestion that there should be a different 'art' for each self, is not an indulgence which is open to Césaire and other Black poets. For Césaire to utter himself is to utter other Blacks. To create art for art's sake, or art for Césaire's sake would be to engage in a truly 'hermetique' activity, ignorant of the world around you. Césaire indicates the profound meaning of what it is to be a Black writer in the latter half of the twentieth century, when he notes that, there is a kind of intolerance in the collective situation (for Blacks) which must engage the Black writer. (28) To ignore this situation would be to engage in a monstrous egotism. The vision of the Black writer more than any other writer must be turned simultaneously towards the world and himself. To engage with the Black situation is to be aware of a prevailing intolerance. For the Black writer within a European language, engagement amounts to the creation of a space for the manifestation of his/her various 'selves' and paradoxically to make meaningless the concept of different 'selves.' Césaire is here directly contradicting Sartre's notion in 'What is Literature' that it it is 'foolish........to require a poetic engagement.' (29)

Césaire's 'Cahier............' has been performed in aid of a political party during an election in 1973, (30) and is obviously so popular in Martinique as to be read and performed regularly, even though the rest of his oeuvre may be regarded as 'hermétique.' (31)

'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal':the fusion of the political and the aesthetic

> Notebook of a Return to the Native Land is a very ambitious poem. Although its subject matter is blackness in a white world, its forms are a sophisticated hybridization of many elements of modern European modes and even specific works, yet his tone never falls into the burlesque that has frequently swallowed up critical parody. The epic intention and a surrealist brand of seriousness constantly draw him back to the high road. In the loose, modern sense Césaire created in the Notebook the epic of negritude. (A.J.Arnold. 'Modernism and Negritude') (32)

'Cahier..........' is a grand epic requiring an entire study to do justice to its myriad themes: it is not feasible therefore to examine the whole poem here. I shall examine the poem from the perspective of its importance for the Negritude movement, for any consideration of Césaire's philosophy of poetry as delineated in 'Poetry and Knowledge', and, for his Negritude philosophy.

Césaire's poem is in the great line of revolutionary poetry in the European tradition. It is, as A.J.Arnold notes, both political and personal: a 'struggle to transcend racism and the effects of colonization' as well as the struggle to 'establish contact within himself by breaking down the barriers of alienation.' (33) First published at the beginning of a war seen as the epitome of a battle for freedom against oppression, (the second world war) the poem has been read as a great political document. Yet its success lies in its capacity to condense political protest with the complexity of finely-wrought poetry encompassing dense references within the European tradition. The poem is sufficiently complex and 'grand' to have assumed the status of a modern epic masterpiece, yet remains an acutely personal statement of

Césaire's. Its direct psychical communication to the Black and White reader (perhaps from their different view points) is part of its power: Césaire is no doubt referring to 'Cahier.........' when he says that ordinary Martinicans sometimes understand his poetry more readily than academics. (34) Césaire's poem contains the dialogues in which Negritude engaged with both friend and foe within the European tradition. For Césaire Lautréamont with his 'subversive excess' (35) was a friend of Negritude whose method he employs in his attack against both the colonial and the aesthetic order of his day. A.J. Arnold notes that Césaire praised Lautréamont for having discovered "the chilling hysterical power of Parody." (36) Césaire has modified Lautréamont's version of parody and his modification 'involves a complex relationship to nineteenth-century literature and to more recent authors, a relationship in which parody per se plays a relatively minor role.' (37) Césaire employs Lautréamont's parodic method as a critical model, for his own purposes:

> Césaire embraces subversive excess, in the manner of Lautréamont, for the purpose of challenging entrenched positions, both literary and political. It is this subversion of a consecrated style for its potentially corrosive effect that initially provides grounds for comparison. From the outset Césaire's poem works to arouse a similar effect of nauseated disgust with the existing order. (38)

The order under attack here is both political and aesthetic. To reinforce this notion Césaire has begun 'Cahier...........' since 1956 with the statement of hatred for the 'flunkeys of order':

> At the end of the dawn......
>
> Go away, I said, with your mug of a copper,
>
> your mug of pig, go away. I detest the flunkeys
>
> of order and the beetles of hope. Go away, you
>
> evil charm, little punk of a monk. (39)

If Lautréamont is, in his subversive surrealism a friend of Negritude's negativity, Saint-John Perse whose 'beautiful-Antilles-of-my-childhood' sentiments Césaire parodies, is the enemy of Negro emancipation as a supporter of the order Césaire attacks. Césaire's dialogue with this strand in the European tradition is a corrosive dialogue of negation. His turning away from the present which is Martinique:

> Then I turned toward paradises lost for him and his kin, calmer than the face of a woman telling lies, and there, rocked by the flux of a never exhausted thought I nourished the wind, I unlaced the monsters and heard rise, from the other side of disaster, a river of turtledoves and savanna clover which I carry forever in my depths......(40)

is not a movement towards the 'paradise lost' sentiments characterised by Saint-John Perse's poetry. On the contrary Césaire mercilessly parodies the sentiments represented by this extract from Saint-John Perse's poem "To celebrate a childhood":

> Palms..........!
>
> In those days they bathed you in water-of-green-leaves;
>
> and the water was of green sun too; and your mother's
>
> maids, tall glistening girls, moved their work legs near you
>
> who trembled..........(I speak of a high condition, in those days,
>
> among the dresses, in the dominion of revolving lights.) (41)

Arnold considers that in the following extract from 'Cahier' Césaire probably meant to parody the poem of Perse's, from which the above extract was taken:

> my queen of spittle and leprosy
>
> my queen of whips and scrofula

my queen of sqasma and chloasma

(oh those queens I once loved in the remote gardens of

spring against the luminations of all the candles of the

chestnut trees!) (42)

Arnold notes that 'The parenthetical exclamation at the end, a device typical of Perse's style, is rendered parodic by the grating contradiction between the concept of the queen and her attributes.' (43)

If in the poetry of Saint-John Perse there is praise for a certain 'order' and grace of the past in these lines:

-other than childhood, what was there in those day

that there no longer is?

Plains, slopes! There

was greater order! And everything was glimmering realms and

frontiers of lights. And shade and light in those

days were more nearly the same thing.........I speak of an

esteem.........Along the borders the fruits

might fall

without [joy] rotting on our lips.

And men with graver mouths stirred deeper shadows,

women more dreams with slower arms................ (44)

Then the opening descriptions of the Martinican capital in 'Cahier........' negate Saint-John Perse's hymn of praise. Césaire's picture of immobility is that of squalidity and colonial disorder:

At the end of the dawn, the city--flat,

sprawled, tripped up by its common sense, inert,

winded under the geometric weight of its eter-

nally renewed cross, at odds with its fate, mute,

baffled, unable to circulate the pith of this

ground, embarrassed, lopped, reduced, cut off

from fauna and flora. (45)

In 'Cahier................' Césaire's engagement assumes the determination to *be* the Negro in his manifestations- the 'humiliated and offended', the despised Negro, the Negro of negativity of the first form and the Negro celebrated for the creativity of his protest. The poet is the Negro in all his disguises and all his manifestations putting aside his role as educated French intellectual. The poet is the Negro in all his forms and none of them: to that extent the poem is full of parodies and false trails. If the Negro as negativity of the first form is a caricature, Césaire caricature's the caricature. If in Euro-American culture the Negro's creative negativity is normally obscured by the first form of negativity, Césaire unearths analyses and defines this creative negativity.

The poet returns to his native land and assumes its burden. The title 'Return to my Native Land' suggests a return to a reality the poet had known, a reality 'native' to him which he is now going to reassume. It is a colonial reality of poverty and repression: a land of 'natives' oppressed by colonials:

And neither the teacher of the class nor the

priest with his catechism can get a word out of

this sleepy Negro lad, although they drum ener-

getically on his shorn skull, for his voice is

engulfed in the swamps of hunger (say-a-single-

word-just-one-and-the-Queen-of-Castille-will-

be-forgotten. Say-a-single-word-just-one, look-
at-the-boy-who-doesn't-know-a-single-of-the-ten-
laws-of-the-Lord.................(46).

A land of torpor and boredom,

    At the end of the dawn, life knocked flat, you

do   not know where to send your aborted dreams,

the river of life is so desperately torpid in its

bed; there is neither swelling nor sinking, but

uncertainty of flowing; there is lamentable

emptiness; the heavy impartiality of boredom

casts its shadow on all things equally; in the

stagnant air not one breach is made by a

bird........(47)

The colonised is always in a dialogue with the Other who is to be discovered even in the 'native-land-of-the heart', even in the colonised's most secret meetings as Sartre articulates it. The poet in addressing his world must address both it, and the Other, Europe, for the Other is to be found in his world also. The extract below contains most of the themes of 'Cahier..........' in its identification of the Negro with all oppressed peoples, in the discovery of Europe, the Other, in all these colonial settings, in the articulation of Negritude as a philosophy for the liberation not only of himself but all insulted-and-offended.

    To leave

    As there are hyena-men and leopard-men, I

    would be a jew-man

    a kaffir-man

a hindu-man-from-Calcutta

a man-from-Harlem-who-doesn't-vote

the famine-man, the insult-man, the torture-man

one can at any moment seize, beat up or kill-

yes really kill him-without having to account

to anybody, without having to excuse oneself to

anyone

a jew-man

a pogrom-man,

a little tyke,

a bum..............(48)

....

Partir.

Comme ils ya a des hommes-hyènes et des

hommes-panthères, je serais un homme-juif

un homme-cafre

un homme-hindou-de-Calcutta

un homme-de-Harlem-qui-ne-vote-pas

L'homme-famine, l'homme-insulte, l'homme-

torture on pouvait à n'importe quel moment

le saisir le rouer de coups, le tuer-parfait-

ment le tuer-sans avoir de compte à

rendre à personne sans avoir d'excuses à

présenter à personne

un homme-juif

un homme-pogrom

un chiot

un mendigot.........

A.J.Arnold connects the reference to the 'humiliated and offended' of the world with a collection of racist fictions published by Paul Morand in 1928 *Magic Noir (Black Magic)*, one of whose protagonists was the Panther-Man who is made to return to savagery after losing his thin veneer of civilisation. Arnold considers that 'Césaire's speaker adopts the point of view of the panther-man to lash out at the racism epitomized by Morand and the ideology he represented.' (49) In 'Cahier........' the panther-man aligns himself with the jew-man, the hindu-man, and other peoples who have been subject to repression.

The single word 'partir' indicates the poet's desire for this spiritual journey from his land-of-the-heart, the necessity of leaving himself in order to expand himself into the self which will embrace the whole of humanity. R.L. Scharfman in '*Engagement* and the language of the Subject in the Poetry of Aimé Césaire' notes that 'partir' 'connotes a threshold as well as a voyage, a kind of on-the -verge-of, which sets in motion a whole tense-desiring mechanism for the subject.......' (50) Scharfman notes:

> The conditional tense of the verb "to be" which identifies the subject is arresting and extra-ordinary, even in a poetic text. It is the condition/al of disalienation. It articulates the subject's desire and manages to hold it suspended in time, neither quite past nor entirely present, nor yet to come, and it indicates the presence of an intrasubjective dialogue. What follows is the magnitude of the wish for *engagement*, for identification. The common denominator of these global types is their shared status as the oppressed and the humiliated of the world.' (51)

Scharfman's further analysis however leads her to a conclusion which identifies another major theme of the poem, that is, the simultaneous identification of the public and the private self, or as A.J.Arnold notes, the positing of a discursive self turned toward the world and a private spiritual

self turned inwards. Both critics suggest a contradiction between these two selves. Scharfman declares that the subject's desire for solidarity with the oppressed in Césaire's poem is deconstructed by the ways in which he represents them: 'The hyphenated descriptions amount to reification, a depersonalization, a reduction to types which degenerates further from the specific racial or geographical categories to more generalised abstractions of moral outrage.' (52) Scharfman's argument fails to account for Césaire's use of irony here and the extent to which the language of depersonalisation being used is the language of the Other. The whole extract illustrates the extent to which the colonised in using a European language engages with the Other. The term 'kaffir-man' is precisely the kind of term no doubt flung by White South African children at their Black servants over the years. The parodic use of these abstract, depersonalised terms, the tone in which they suggest a childish naming, comment upon the reductive effect of colonialism on the peoples it has had to subject to power and language. The poet's play with the terms suggests the beginning of the process of dis-alienation, a desire to liberate those peoples from the abstract violence suggested in those terms:

> the famine-man, the insult-man, the torture-man
>
> one can at any moment seize, beat up or kill-
>
> yes really kill him-without having to account
>
> to anybody, without having to excuse oneself to
>
> anyone...........

Scharfman's comments upon the following section of the poem again suggests the poet's failure in the act of engagement with humanity. Scharfman refers to the chiasmic structure of this section:

> I should discover once again the secret of great
>
> communications and of great combustions. I
>
> should say storm. I should say river. I should
>
> say tornado. I should say leaf. I should say tree.

I should be wet by all rains, made damp with

all dews. I should roll like frenzied blood on

the slow current of the eye of words like mad

horses, clots of fresh children, curfews, vestiges

of temples, precious stones far enough away to

discourage miners. Whoever would not compre-

hend me would not comprehend the roaring of

the tiger. (53)

....

Je retrouverais le secret des grandes commu-

nications et des grandes combustions. Je

dirais orage. Je dirais fleuve. Je dirais tor-

nade. Je dirais feuille. je dirais arbre. Je

serais mouillé de toutes les pluies, humecté

de toutes les rosées. Je roulerais comme du

sang frénétique sur le courant lent de l'œil

des mots en chevaux fous en enfants frais

en caillots en couvre-feu en vestiges de temple

en pierres précieuses assez loin pour décou-

rager les mineurs. Qui ne me comprendrait

pas ne comprendrait pas davantage le rugis-

sement du tigre.

Scharfman notes: 'The subject's poetic quest at..........the beginning of the
passage is for the hidden, the great, the bridges of language that constitute
meaning. This is linked to the secrets of nature and by extension to the entire
cosmos.' (54) But she considers that the poetic subject has failed in this
however: '.........the grandiose desire to be penetrated by and speak of the

whole cosmos in order to reveal the secrets of the "grandes communications" disintegrate into disembodied, detached, isolated words, fragments.' (55) Scharfman's comments suggest a failure of communication on Césaire's part in the use of surrealism. Yet despite its complex use Césaire's surrealism has the merit of 'directed automatic writing' in which as Arnold notes: '............words must be transmuted, wrenched from an imprisoning syntax, and be allowed to reform according to the logic of desire. (56) This 'logic of desire' above all is communicated to the reader.

Scharfman's comments link indirectly with Sartre's reference to the explosive use of surrealism by Césaire: 'A poem of Césaire, ...bursts forth and turns on itself like a rocket, suns come out of it, whirling and exploding into new suns; it is a perpetual surpassing..........', and, 'the density of these words, thrust into the air like stones spat out by a volcano.......'(57) In a discussion with Jacqueline Leiner Césaire himself refers to the explosive nature of his poetry. His poetry is a descent into himself: there is an incubating period followed by an explosion triggered by the imagination:

> La poésie est certainement une descente en soi-même, mais c'est aussi une explosion! Il y a quelque chose d'incubateur dans la poésie. Je vous expliquais, un jour que, au fond, ma poésie est une poésie *péléène*. Il y a des choses que je n'exprime pas, qui s'accumulent, et puis, un beau jour, qui sortent......... (58)

> (Poetry is certainly a descent into the self, but it is also an explosion! There are several incubating elements in poetry. I could explain to you one day how, my poetry is profoundly *Peléène*. There are things I can't explain, they build up, and then, one wonderful day erupt....)
> (my translation)

Sartre points to both the explosive mixture which is Césaire's poetry and to the disciplined engaged direction of Césaire's concern, which Sartre distinguishes from the concerns of the French metropolitan surrealists. We shall examine the relationship between Negritude and surrealism later in this study, but Sartre's reference to Césaire's use of surrealism is of particular importance to the Black reader at this point when, as in the case of Scharfman, references to the 'difficulty of communication' of Césaire's poetry

in 'Cahier.....' are made: '..........we can speak here of automatic writing that is engaged, even directed, not that reflection intervenes, but because the words and images perpetually translate the same torrid obsession.' (59) Césaire's is not mere mechanical automatic writing creating images in all directions with the fortuitous hope of reaching the reader's unconscious with some of them: the Black reader cannot, as Sartre insists, but be moved by the powerful effect and the overall import of Césaire's images.

Céaire refers in the interview with Jacqueline Leiner, to the poet's sense of possession. He refers to the poet as being seized by the world as in a Voudou trance: 'Il est saisi, autrement dit, il est possédé, exactement comme dans le vaudou.' (60) The reference to voudou leads Césaire to a discussion of a study by Michel Leiris who has discovered a phenomenon typical of the Antilles, cases of 'rites de la possession': you dance and suddenly the guy is transformed into something else: 'On danse, on danse et, brusquement, "le type" est possédé; il est passé à autre chose. Il n'est plus monsieur un tel où Mademoiselle une telle; il est Chango, il est Ogou, il est Erzulie. Il *est*, et il le *mine* et il *le jou!*' (61) There is a similarity here in this account of 'possession', to a phenomenon of the Trinidad carnival in which the banker and the clerk suddenly become transformed on carnival day into masqueraders by the band leader and lose their humdrum images. Behaviour, and language, undergo carnivalesque changes as these figures lose themselves in their new roles. In 'Poetry and Knowledge' Césaire had referred to the poet as being 'pregnant with the world.' In the interview he says the poet is seized by the world and he plays the world, and mimes the world. The notion is repeated in 'Cahier.....' in which the Negro is portrayed as the possessor but not the conqueror of the world:

not caring to conquer, but playing the game

of the world.... (62)

The extract to which Scharfman refers illustrates the explosive aspect of Césaire's verse. The poet seeks both to communicate and explode; to communicate this 'explosion', to discover secrets of 'communication' and 'combustions'. What is unconsciously communicated is the evocation of

turbulent nature as muse:-tornado, river, storm-the desire to be as powerful and clear as 'the roaring of the tiger' is simultaneous with the most obscure demented images: 'I should roll like frenzied blood on /the slow current of the eye of words like mad/ horses.' The primitive unconscious tunes into the current of Césaire's meaning long before the intellect has begun its painful ascent to their 'sense'. Herein lies Césaire's suggestion that ordinary Martinicans understand his poetry better than trained academics.

In the interview with Jacqueline Leiner Césaire is reminded that he had written in 'Tropiques' that the poetic process is a process of naturation, a return to nature under the demential impulse of the imagination: ('Vous avez écrit, dans Tropiques, que la "démarche poétique est une démarche de naturation, sous l'impulsion démentielle de l'Imagination".') (63) Césaire notes that the process of a return to nature is a return to his own nature ('un retour à la nature profonde de soi-même.') (64) He is asked '........pourquoi sous l'impulsion démentielle de l'Imagination?'(65) He goes on to explain the important role that imagination plays in his creative act: it is the spark which sets off the explosive mixture incubating in the poet over time:

> ....je crois que le déclic vient de l'Imaginaire!Il faut qu'il y ait un *fiat,* et ce *fiat,* c'est l'Imagination qui le donne. Il n'y a aucunne raison que le mélange devinne explosif, s'il n'y a pas un *déclic!* A mon avis, c'est le rôle de l'Imaginaire. (66)

> (I believe that the trigger comes from the imagination! There must be deliberation, and this is provided by the imagination. There is no reason for the mixture to become explosive, without a spark! In my opinion that is the role of the imagination.)

For the ordinary Martinican and the 'ordinary' Black reader in general Césaire's poetry communicates this 'logic of desire' long before it communicates its 'sense'. Césaire's Negritude is seized by the Black world in the process of his embrace of the Black world. 'Cahier.......' is the spark which ignited Negritude for which Césaire is renouned, whether for his fortune or his misfortune, by the Black world. 'Cahier.............' not only introduced the term Negritude but introduced Negritude as a poetic knowledge to the Black world so that it might begin to know itself. This did not necessarily presage a

negation of the White world as Sartre and other commentators have argued. Only by knowing itself could the Black world fully engage in authentic discourse with the Other. Only through a recognition of the Black man's new-found 'dawning of awareness' as Sartre terms it, could the Other begin a genuine dialogue with the Black man, not now a historical product of the Other as Sartre declares of the Jew in 'The Anti-Semite and the Jew' (67) but a self-creation. This creation of self involved the utilisation of myth.

'Cahier.........' as myth

Although written after 'Cahier.......' Césaire's seminal essay, 'Poetry and Knowledge' throws much light on 'Cahier.......' as epic myth: in the light of 'Poetry and Knowledge' 'Cahier..........'can be read as a grand epic myth in which Césaire establishes the Negro's place in the vanguard of the battle against bourgeois humanism. Negritude joins in the battle in Césaire's poem, providing vital forces which are particular to the Negro.

In 'Poetry and Knowledge' Césaire revives the mythic clash between Science (Reason) and Poetry, Apollo and Dionysus, placing himself squarely among the list of modernist poets, poets of darkness and rebellion, ranged against the oppressive monster of Western Reason. Evoking Samuel Beckett many of whose novels parody the claims of Mathematics to knowledge, (68) Césaire criticises Mathematics, ('............what eludes its abstract and logical activity is reality itself') (69) and excoriates Science: '..........scientific knowledge enumerates, measures, classifies and kills.' (70) He enumerates the losses suffered by mankind in its obeisance to scientific knowledge:

> To acquire it mankind has sacrificed everything: desires, fears,
>
> feelings, psychological complexes.

> To acqire the impersonality of scientific knowledge mankind depersonalised itself, deinvidualized itself. An impoverished knowledge, I submit, for at its inception-whatever other wealth it may have-there stands an impoverished humanity. (71)

Against this failed scientific knowledge is pitted poetic knowledge:

The Ariadne's thread of this discovery: some very simple observations on the faculty that permitted the human whom one must call the primitive scientist to discover the most solid truths without benefit of induction or deduction, as if by flair.

And here we are taken back to the first days of humanity. It is an error to believe that knowledge, to be born, had to await the methodical exercise of thought or the scruples of experimentation. I even believe that mankind has never been closer to certain truths, than in the first days of the species. At the time when mankind discovered with emotion the first sun, the first rain, the first breath, the first moon. At the time when mankind discovered in fear and rapture the throbbing newness of the world. (72)

Césaire's evaluation of the 'primitive' early knowledge of mankind before its systematization and reification into 'scientific knowledge' recalls Friedrich Nietzsche's account of the origin of knowledge which traces the triumph of systematic (scientific) knowledge as the result of a power struggle: 'Over immense periods of time the intellect produced nothing but errors. A few of these proved to be useful and helped to preserve the species: those who hit upon or inherited these had better luck in their struggle for themselves and their progeny.' (73) For Nietzsche the power of scientific knowledge is a product of its efficacity in the life-struggle, not of its truth: '......the *strength* of knowledge does not depend on its degree of truth but on its age, on the degree to which it has become incorporated, on its character as a condition of life. Where life and knowledge seemed to be at odds there was never any real fight, but denial and doubt were simply considered madness.' (74) In Nietzsche's account poetic knowledge which would contemplate reality in awe loses in the struggle with the sweeping impulses of scientific knowledge:

At bottom, every high degree of caution in making inferences and every sceptical tendency constitute a danger to life. No living beings would have survived if the opposite tendency-to affirm rather than suspend judgement, to err and *make up* things rather than wait, to assent rather than negate, to pass judgement rather than be just-had not been bred to the point where it became extraordinarily strong. The course of logical ideas and inferences in our brain corresponds to a process and a struggle among impulses that are, taken singly, very illogical and unjust. We generally experience only the result of this

struggle because this primeval mechanism now runs its course so quickly and is so well concealed. (75)

In Nietzsche's account this triumph of scientific knowledge over the poetic impulse is a matter of necessity triumphing in the will to power. For Césaire it represents a loss to mankind of which it became aware in the mid-nineteenth century. Césaire posits 1850 as the birth of modernism in poetry: 'The revenge of Dionysus upon Apollo.' (76) A.J.Arnold accuses Césaire of 'a very crude representation of modern science' in positing the myth of science versus poetry, although Arnold admits that this division was plausible during the nineteenth century. The whole science/poetry opposition has its mythical history, C.P. Snow's 'two cultures' concept being only one development of this division. But Césaire does not himself hold this opposition as absolute; for him science and poetry may meet in the image, the means to trancendence and truth: '........because the image is forever surpassing that which is perceived because the dialectic of the image transcends antimonies, on the whole modern science is perhaps only the pedantic verification of some mad images spewed out by poets........' (77) And of course many modern scientists admit to effecting their most creative thinking in mental images. The modern scientist and the poet meet in their thorough reliance on the imagination.

The most productive myth generated out of 'Poetry and Knowledge' and expanded in 'Cahier........' is the myth of science and its product, instrumental reason, as representative of bourgeois humanism and the Negro as symbolic opposition to this form of knowledge. Césaire was not the first poet to employ the Negro as symbolic of the outcast, and scourge of bourgeois humanism. Rimbaud, one of the poets alongside Lautréamont who Césaire considers begun the modern period, in the 'Mauvais Sang' section of 'Une Saison En Enfer' had used 'nègre' as a symbol of the outcast:

Je suis une bête, un négre. Mais je puis être sauvé. Vous êtes de faux négres, vous maniaques, féroces, avares. Marchand, tu es nègre; magistrat, tu es nègre; général, tu es nègre; empereur, vielle démangeaison, tu es nègre........ (78)

(I am a beast, a Negro. But I can be saved. You are false Negroes, you maniacs, fierce, miserly. Merchant, you're a Negro; magistrate, you're a Negro; general, you're a Negro; emperor, old mangy itch, you're a Negro.........)`

R.L.Scharfman notes that whether or not Rimbaud had genuine sympathy for the Negro his metaphorical use of the Negro was important for Césaire. Scharfman states: 'In Rimbaud's text, the subject's identification with the Gaul, pagans, the niggers, is a dramatization of his alienation, of his battle with damnation, of his noncoincidence with self. Because "je est un autre," it is the otherness in the "nègre" which functions in "Mauvais Sang." ' (79)

As a Black poet Césaire makes profound use of Rimbaud's symbolic Negro. As Scharfman declares, for the Black poet 'nègre' is no longer a metaphor for alienation: 'The cliché images of the nigger that emanate from the other are the cause for his alienation. His subject is not granted the same latitude of poetic choice as Rimbaud's, except at the price of inauthenticity.' (80) In Césaire's 'Cahier.......' it is bourgeois humanist society which is a metaphor for alienation ('reason') and Negritude which stands opposed to this alienation. Césaire's employment of the mythic science versus poetry opposition in 'Poetry and Knowledge' becomes 'reason' versus 'Negritude' in 'Cahier........'. In 'Poetry and Knowledge' the Black theorist allied himself with the modernist 'poets of darkness' and, poetry of 'the deaths-head army of freedom and imagination'.(81) In 'Cahier........' the Black poet places Negritude at the service of the excoriation of bourgeois humanism. The Negritude of 'Cahier..........' is a supreme poetic value, a poetic knowledge opposed to the knowledge of bourgeois humanism-instrumental reason.

It is necessary to examine Césaire's full elaboration of the meaning of 'nègre' (all of which is contained in the values of Negritude), in another poem 'Mot', from the anthology 'Lost Body', (Corps Perdu, 1950) because this will help in the development of my mythic reading of 'Cahier ....'.

Much of Césaire's meanings for 'nègre' may be read in 'Mot', and these meanings are further employed in other poems such as 'Cahier...........'.

MOT

Parmi moi

de moi-même

à moi-même

hors toute constellation

en mes mains serré seulement

le rare hoquet d'un ultime spasme délirant

vibre mot

j'aurai chance hors du labyrinthe

plus long plus large vibre

en ondes de plus en plus serrées

en lasso où me prendre

 en corde où me prendre

et que me clouent toutes les flèches

et leur curare le plus amer

au beau poteau-mitan des très fraîches étoiles

vibre

vibre essence même de l'ombre

en aile en gosier c'est à force de périr

le mot nègre

sorti tout armé du hurlement

d'une fleur vénéneuse

le mot nègre

tout pouacre de parasites

le mot nègre

tout plein de brigands qui rôdent

des mères qui crient

d'enfants qui pleurent

le mot nègre

un grésillement de chairs qui brûlent

âcre et de corne

le mot nègre

comme le soleil qui saigne de la griffe

sur le trottoir des nuages

le mot nègre

comme le dernier rire vêlé de l'innocence

entre les crocs du tigre

et come le mot soleil est un claquement de balles

et comme le mot nuit un taffetas qu'on déchire

le mot nègre

　　　　dru savez-vous

dú tonnerre d'un été

　　que s'arrogent

　　　　　　des libertés incrédules　　(82)

WORD

　　　Within me

from myself

to myself

outside any constellation

clenched in my hands only

the rare hiccup of an ultimate raving spasm

keep vibrating word

I will have luck outside the labyrinth

longer wider keep vibrating

in tighter and tighter waves

in a lasso to catch me

in a rope to hang me

and let me be nailed by all the arrows

and their bitterest curare

to the beautiful center stake of very cool stars

vibrate

vibrate you very essence of the dark

in a wing in a throat from so much perishing

the word nigger

emerged fully armed from the howling

of a poisonous flower

the word nigger

all filthy with parasites

the word nigger

loaded with roaming bandits

with screaming mothers

crying children

the word nigger

a sizzling of flesh and horny matter

burning, acrid

the word nigger

like the sun bleeding from its claw

onto the sidewalk of clouds

the word nigger

like the last laugh calved by innocence

between the tiger's fangs

and as the word sun is a ringing of bullets

and the word night a ripping of taffeta

 the word nigger

dense, right?

from the thunder of a summer

appropriated by

incredulous liberties

R.L. Scharfman notes a division between the images connected with 'nègre' in 'Mot'. In the third stanza the poetic subject perishes and 'le mot nègre' (nigger) 'is substituted as subject and becomes a model for the process of production, since it engenders its own 'free associations.' (83) The poem itself records the possibilities for the word which emerge from the unconscious of the poet:

> The effect of the appearance of the full phrase "le mot nègre" is shocking, violent, revelatory. It is as if the subject itself were unconscious of what sound the vibrating word would produce and yet compelled, at the same time, to invoke it. The word echoes in the text with a force all its own, capable of infinite repetition and unusual association. (84)

Scharfman notes a break in the images connected with 'nègre': at first the 'free associations' which the word engenders are connected with images of pain which are connected with the limits of the word, signalled by the repetition of 'tout'. Scharfman sees this collection of uncoordinated images 'which do not cohere into a single signified that can be interpreted and forgotten' (85) as a fight against repression by the poetic subject. Undoubtedly the images in the first section in which 'nègre' is invoked up to, 'âcre de corne' evoke images of sterile negativity: '...........the howling of a poisonous flower', '....filthy with parasites', '........loaded with roaming bandits', '........screaming mothers/ crying children,' '..........a sizzling of flesh and horny matter.' It is as though the word has to wade through these images engendered in the poetic subject by the Other before arriving at the second set of images of the word which denote the total liberation of 'nègre'. 'Hurlement' meaning 'howling', 'yelling', 'roaring', suggests the howling of the Other in the poet's unconscious. All these first set of images suggest the negative effect of the Other working on the poetic subject's unconscious so that the images which emerge are the mob's images, the ones which fix and conceptualise the Black according to the traditions of bourgeois humanism.

With the second set of images engendered by 'nègre' Scharfman notes that 'a change occurs in the text with the intervention of the signal for comparison and substitution, the "comme".' (86) Comparison and substitution,

quintessential poetic devices lead the word 'nègre' into new realms of the poetic, the surreal: 'Until this point, "le mot nègre" has been associated with memories of alienation, humiliation, and victimization. Now the associations take on a dangerous, menacing tone, transforming pain into a device of poetic aggression.' (87) If the first set of 'nègre' designate conceptual knowledge, the second set of 'nègre' designate poetic knowledge. This transformation turns around the use of 'comme': initially indicative of the self-conscious intervention of metaphor, it ('comme') serves now as a way of introducing and embracing a whole new analogous structure that permits 'le mot nègre' to function as a word among words, special, different, but equal:

> et comme le mot soleil est un claquement de balles
>
> et comme le mot nuit un taffetas qu'on déchire
>
> le mot nègre
>
> dru savez-vous
>
> dú tonnerre d'un été
>
> que s'arrogent
>
> des libertés incrédules...........

For Scharfman the poem's 'reinvestment' of 'le mot nègre' raises it to the level of a poetic image in the same way that sun and night are:

> Its contiguous positioning next to these two grants it a new participatory status among the most basic of structuring elements: day and night, light and dark, white and black. Moreover, the menacing possibility attributed to "soleil" and "nuit," the shocking sounds and tearing, are assimilitated into the force of "dru..........du tonerre d'un été." Most important of all, however, is the way in which the word "nigger" reconstitutes the other and a plural subject at the end of the poem. The power that the "mot" of the poem projects is appropriated triumphantly by the plural subject, itself surprised at the metamorphosis into freedom that the poem engendered by redeeming "le mot nègre." (88)

The movement in the use of 'nègre' is from its 'conceptual' use in which the legacy of the Other is acknowledged to its poetic use in which it is the freedom of the poetic subject which is paramount.

This movement from 'poetic-conceptual' to poetic freedom is discussed in Césaire's interview with Jacqueline Leiner in which he argues against Sartre's notion that the image represents a debasement of knowledge ('une dégradation du savoir'). Césaire contradicts Sartre's view with the notion that far from being a debasement of knowledge, the image is pregnant. The image represents a surpassing, an advancement and an enrichment rather than an impoverishment: ' Et puis, c'est un dépassement de soi; j'avance, je ne recule pas dans l'image. Ce n'est pas une dégradation, au contraire! C'est plutôt un enrichissement: "J'appréhende"; c'est quelque chose qui me permet de cueillir, de prendre, de dépasser, d'aller de l'avant. J'engrange. J'étreins, je ne recule pas. Ce n'est pas un appauvrissement, c'est un enrichissement. (89) Césaire argues that Sartre's preference for the concept rather than the image is representative of a Western bias which privileges the concept over the image, privileges logical reason over reason by analogy (the essential engender of the image). Recalling his wariness of scientific knowledge in 'Poetry and Knowledge' Césaire argues that Europe's preference for logical reason represents both the basis for its successes and its drawbacks. Everything gained in this embrace of reasoning was lost in the poetic sphere. For Césaire the surrealist conception of the image represents a return to the primitive by the European tradition. (90) Here is the implicit connection between surrealism and Negritude: if Negritude represents the quintessential poetic knowledge, surrealism in its return to a pre-scientific, pre-conceptual knowledge meets Negritude in this celebration of poetic knowledge.

Césaire confirms in the interview with Jacqueline Leiner that he wrote surrealist poetry long before meeting André Breton. The meeting between the two was an encounter in which the older poet recognised a true adherent of surrealism who had begun writing surrealist poetry long before the 'Surrealist Manifesto': 'Ma poésie.................ne sortait pas de *Manifestes du surréalisme* de Breton, mais de courants qui préparaient déjà le surréalisme.' (91)

In the poem 'mot' it is the second set of images engendered by 'nègre' when, as Scharfman notes the poem jumps 'into the liberating realm of the

surreal' (92) in which the poetic word is at its most open. Scharfman notes:

> The other, reader, friend, enemy, is postulated simultaneously in the
> menacing address "savez-vous," whose form is partly affirmative,
> partly interrogative, and whose seme articulates the gravity of this
> new-found freedom: it is a knowledge with which one must contend.
> This address to the other, the capacity to address the other with "le
> mot nègre" in its form, compels recognition of the new relationship to
> the word.The reversal is the source of the "libertés incrédules." The
> subject takes the liberty from the other, as it were, by reappropriating
> the "nigger" which is so often thrown at it. It does this for everybody,
> as the plural indicates. (93)

Scharfman's reflection that 'it does this for everybody' suggests the universal
liberating effect of Negritude in its embrace of surrealism, both pre-
conceptual poetic movements.

Speaking of 'Cahier................,' Césaire's first major poem, Scharfman notes:

> What the *Cahier* teaches the essay ('Poetry and Knowledge') is that
> the roots of all poetry can be traced to a nostalgia for the impossible
> plenitude of the primitive that civilization has repressed. Through the
> revaluation of its own primitiveness, the poetic subject (of
> 'Cahier........,) transforms the nostalgic mode into the creative one,
> establishing negritude at the forefront of the opposition.' (my
> parenthesis) (94)

Césaire aims to argue in 'Poetry and Knowledge' that this desire for 'the
impossible plenitude of the primitive' is not only that of the Negro poet but
that of mankind suffering from the repressions of instrumental reason. In
'Cahier...........' the Negro as symbol of the colour of 'darkness' and 'the
primitive' stands as the proud presentative of this 'nostalgia for the plenitude
of the primitive'. 'Cahier.........' attempts as Sartre states not only to argue for
this plenitude but to embody it: 'Césaire's words do not describe Negritude,
do not define it, do not copy it from the outside as a painter does his model;
they create it; they compose it in front of our very eyes.......' (95) Read in

245

conjunction with 'Poetry and Knowledge', Césaire's Negritude in 'Cahier........'
is not simply 'Negro protest' or a celebration of Negro emotion against White
reason: his Negritude joins with surrealism in a general opposition to
bourgeois humanism and its hypocrisies, Western Reason and its repressions.
The Negro is a symbol for those who are supposedly scandalized by the
inventions of Western Reason:

Those who invented neither powder nor compass

those who never tamed steam or electricity

those who did not explore sea or sky

   but they know in their innermost depths

the country of suffering

those who knew of voyages only when uprooted

those who are made supple by kneelings

those domesticated and Christianized

those inoculated with degeneracy......(96)

(Ceux qui n'ont inventé ni la poudre ni la

boussole

ceux qui n'ont jamais su dompter la vapeur

ni l'électricité

ceux qui n'ont exploré ni les mers ni le ciel

mais ils savent en ses moindres recoins le

pays de souffrance

ceux qui n'ont connu de voyages que de

déracinements

ceux qui se sont assoupis aux agenouillements

ceux qu'on domestiqua et christianisa

ceux qu'on inocula d'abâtardissement.....)

The poetic subject enumerates a catalogue of the Negro's supposed failures which, as Scharfman notes contains an inner contradiction signalled by the word 'mais':

> The structure of this catalogue itself is important in terms of the revalorization that is being discussed here. For it separates into two symmetrical parts, divided by the conjunction "mais" which signals a contradiction. The negative form of the first part appears as an indictment in terms of technological values. But the second part of the passage demystifies this evaluation, negates the negative by positing, in the ironic assertive form, the alienating, abusive consequences of these technological achievements. (97)

The text at this point signals a revaluation: like the thief Jean Genet who chooses to become the Other that the good people have made him, (98) Césaire chooses to assert the value of Negritude as affectivity, a means of being-in-the-world. Affectivity can be lived as a willed act, a choice:

> Eia for those who invented nothing
>
> for those who have never discovered
>
> for those who have never conquered
>
>
> but, struck, deliver themselves to the essence
>
> of all things,
>
> ignorant of surfaces, but taken by the very
>
> movement of things
>
> not caring to conquer, but playing the game
>
> of the world

truly the elder sons of the world

porous to all the breath of the world

fraternal space of all the breath of the world

bed without drain of all the waters in the

world

spark of the sacred fire of the world

flesh of the flesh of the world

panting with the very movement of the world (99)

....

(Eia pour ceuz qui n'ont jamais rien inventé

pour ceuz qui n'ont jamais rien exploré

pour ceux qui n'ont jamais rien dompté

mais ils s'abandonnent, saisis, à l'essence de toute chose

ignorants des surfaces mais saisis par le movement de toute chose

insoucieux de dompter, mais jouant le jeu du monde

véritablement les fils aînés du monde

poreux à tous les souffles du monde

aire fraternelle de tous les souffles du monde

lit sans drain de toutes les eaux du monde

étincelle du feu sacré du monde

chair de la chair du monde palpitant du mouvement même du monde!)

This choice is also a form of knowledge, 'knowledge-by-embrace' as Senghor terms it, a form possessed by poets, women, children, primitives, a form which the surrealists sought in experimentation:

those who know the feminine nature of

the moon's oily flesh

the reconciled exultation of the antelope

and the star

those whose survival moves in the germina-

tion of grass

Eia perfect circle of the world and close

concordance! (100)

(ceux qui savent la féminité de la lune au

corps d'huile

l'exaltation réconciliée de l'antilope et de

l'étoile

ceux dont la survie chemine en la germina-

tion de l'herbe!

Eia parfait cercle du monde et close concordance!)

The Negro, marginalised in Western culture on the one hand as one form of negativity plays here the central role in another fertile negativity, standing as symbol for all those who possess this knowledge. Scarfman notes they (those possessing this knowledge) cannot be circumscribed by definition; they become the very possibility of definition:

> It is significant that "ceux qui" cannot be defined except to say that they are the possibility for definition, that without them there is the absence of meaning, and, at the same time, that they are the superlative degree of meaning, the quintessence of meaning. The centrality of their position is becoming secured. (101)

Here Kristeva and Césaire meet in their refusal of definition for 'woman' or

'Negro' making them the very possibilities of definition, or the refusal of definition.

The Negro along with all the 'humiliated and offended' can now embark on a redefinition of hierarchies in which the language of bourgeois humanism can be legitimately challenged.

Negritude and a redefinition of hierachies

Césaire's mentor in the act of a redefinition of traditional hierachies is the poet Mallarmé, who made him conscious of the arbitrariness of language:

> For my part, I am not a prisoner of the French language. I try, and
> have always wanted, to *bend* French. That's why I have had a strong
> affection for Mallarmé, because he has shown me, because I have
> understood through him, that language, at bottom, is arbitrary. It is not
> a natural phenomenon.......Mallarmé was always surprised and struck
> by the incongruous notion that we have had of calling day *le jour* and
> night *la nuit,* when the sonorities of the two words would lead one to
> expect the contrary. It would be more natural to call night *le jour,*
> with that long, heavy vowel, [suggesting] a thing that falls down on
> you from above, just like the night; whereas *nuit,* with its brightly
> colored "i," is much better suited to the light of day. (102)

Césaire's aim is to counter the arbitrariness of language by restructuring it in his writing in order to render a more natural correspondence between word and object. This counters the tendency of the White Frenchman, the Other, who invests langage with naturalness and accepts its racist hierachies at the level of the unconscious. Césaire as a poet living in a colony, determined on investing language with his 'Black West Indian self', must counter the complacency of the Other with the poet's traditional weapons, play and reconstruction of language to indicate its arbitrariness.

In 'Black Orpheus' Sartre comprehensively delineates the Black poets' complex relationship with the main metaphorical hierarchies associated with 'white' and 'black'. The Black poets must overcome the usual associations of 'white' as pure value and 'black' as sterile negativity, but even in the 'native' languages of Black African poets for example, 'night' is connected with the

terrors of the night and 'day' with the hope of a new dawn. The Black poets do not wish to deny these universal associations in their use of French. Sartre notes:

> ....the superiority of the white man over the negro is more complex than the simple superiority claimed by the coloniser: in it are expressed our universal adoration of Day and our nocturnal terrors, which are universal too. In this sense, the Negro poets re-establish the hierarchy they have just overthrown. They wish in no way to be poets of the night, advocates of a desperate and vain revolt...............And so it turns out that the word "black" contains at one and the same time all that is Evil and all that is Good. (103)

The tension between the use of "black" and "white" is dialectical:

> It describes an almost unbearable tension between two contradictory classifications: the academic hierarchy and the racial hierarchy. It gains from this tension a poetry as extraordinary as the self-destroying objects created by Duchamp and the Surrealists. The white man possesses a secret blackness and the Negro a secret whiteness, a suddenly arrested fluttering between Being and Non-being........(104)

There is also a tension in the different uses of "black":

> When David Diop says the Negro is "black as misery" he is presenting him as pure privation of light. But Césaire develops and deepens this image: the night is no longer absence, it is refusal. Black is not a colour, it is the destruction of the borrowed light that shines from a white sun. The Negro revolutionary is negation because he wishes to become pure destituion; in order to build his Truth he must first destroy the Truth of others. Black faces, stains of night that haunt our days, embody the obscure workings of the Negativity that patiently nibbles away at concepts. Thus by a turnabout that curiously recalls the reversal of the humiliated and insulted Negro when he claims his due as "dirty nigger", it is the privative aspect of the shadows that lays the foundations of their value. Liberty is the colour of night. (105)

If the sun is usually a metaphor for enlightenment, philosophy, exalted knowledge, Apollo, in European thought, Césaire challenges these uses in associating the sun with the phallic sexuality of Negritude:

> Blood! Blood! All our blood stirred by the
>
> male heart of the sun (106)

If light has been appropriated by Europe in the creation of an intolerable world of technological strangulation:

> Hear the white world
>
> horribly fatigued by its immense effort
>
> its rebellious articulations crack under the
>
> hard stars
>
> its inflexibilities of blue steel pierce the
>
> mystic flesh
>
> hear its treacherous victories trumpeting
>
> its defeats
>
> hear with grandiose alibis the pitiful stum-
>
> bling
>
> Mercy for our omniscient and naive con-
>
> querors! (107)

Césaire re-appropriates the sun as a beneficient light shining on the 'upright patience' of Negritude. 'Sun' and 'moon' join in one Dionysiaic dance involving those who are stirred by the 'male heart' of the sun and 'those who know the feminine nature of/the moon's oily flesh'. For Sartre '............Negritude, in its profoundest source, is an androgyny':

This profound unity of vegetable and sexual symbols is certainly the greatest originality of Negro poetry, especially at a time when............most white poets' images tend toward the mineralisation of what is human. Césaire, on the other hand, turns sea, sky stones into vegetable and animal. More precisely, his poetry is a perpetual coupling of men and women metamorphosed into animals, into vegetables, into stones, with plants and animals metamorphosed into man. Thus the Negro testifies to a natural Eros; he exemplifies and incarnates it! (108)

This con-fusion of the usual metaphorical associations in 'black' and 'white', 'night' and 'day', 'male' and 'female' not only brings to the consciousness of the White user of the language its arbitrariness as a system but marks the Negro poet's penetration of the language in order to manifest his self. Césaire's objective is not simply the negation of the Other's Truth, as Sartre argues, rather it is the demonstration to the White French man of the absurdity of his Manichaean investment of values in his own language; arbitrary values which he takes to be 'natural'. Césaire's objective becomes not the destruction of the values of the Other as the con-fusion of values out of which new more humane values may emerge. The dialogue with the Other begins with a determination to overthrow all existing values which have made it impossible for the Other to *visualize* the Black man, and have made the Black man incapable of accepting himself, locked as he has been, in the interstices of oppressive Manichaeanism, as Césaire suggests in 'Cahier...............':

and the Negro each day more base, more

cowardly, more sterile, less profound, more

exteriorized, more separated from himself,

more shrewd with himself, less immediate with

himself. (109)

As a symbol of fecundity Scharfman points out that Negritude is quite rich:

The image of negritude as phallus serves several functions for the subject. As a corrective device, it revalorizes the black man, symbolically castrated throughout the text by the forces of oppression. It is the perfect metaphor for the desired union between the subject and the primal forces in nature. It is the bridge leading backward to the primitive past and forward to a disalienated future, a bridge whose way is barred to those encumbered by the weight of "civilization." Negritude is Césaire's own neologism, and this is its first intervention in his poetry. The extent to which it functions as a bridge to the people is attested by the fact that the signifier creates a new signified, that after the publication of the *Cahier* there is a "negritude movement," there are "negritude poets," and so on. (110)

Negritude began as a pregnant symbol and its poetry was as important as its ideology. Indeed as mentioned earlier, in Césaire, the ideology was 'embedded' in the poetry. It was as a poetic knowledge that surrealism had its most profound effect upon Negritude.

'Cahier.............' humour and Blackness

The true poet, Césaire writes, 'plays the game of the world', the poet seizes the world and is seized by the world: the poet accepts the totality; tolerance is the basis of humour. The true poet knows,

> ....that mankind is a subject empty of errors...........that nothing is less strange than the contradictoriness one discovers in mankind. It is humor first and foremost that assures me it is as true to say the thief makes the opportunity as: "opportunity makes the thief........."

> Humor alone assures me that the most prodigious turnabouts are legitimate. Humor alone alerts me to the other side of things. (111)

Césaire's contention is that traditional Kantian synthetic judgement and Aristotelian logic are barriers to transcendence, the raison d'être of poetry:

> The barriers are in place; the law of identity, the law of non-contradiction, the logical principle of the excluded middle.

> Precious barriers. But remarkable limitations as well. (112)

254

It is the image which breaks down barriers: 'It is by means of the image, the revolutionary image, the distant image, the image that overthrows all laws of thought that mankind finally breaks down the barrier.' (113)

In 'Cahier...........' irony as humour indirectly attacks the images of the Negro pedalled by Euro-America traditionally, but lacerates the poet with aweful memories of degradation:

> I know my crimes; there is nothing to be said in
>
> my defence.
>
> Dances. Idols. Backsliding. Me too.
>
> I have assassinated God with my laziness with
>
> my words with my gestures with my obscene
>
> songs.
>
> I have carried the plumes of the parrot, the skin
>
> of the musk-rat
>
> I have exhausted the patience of the missionaries
>
> insulted the benefactors of humanity.
>
> Defied Tyre. Challenged Sidon.
>
> Worshipped Zambezi.
>
> The extent of my perversity confounds me! (114)

R.L.Scharfman considers that the Negro poet's irony arises out of a complex relationship with the Other:

> The scope of the crimes confessed, their nature, their geographical and historical distance from the subject are all ironic statements. The origin of this confession lies not with the subject but, again, with the other. The subject is confessing to what it has been accused of, not to that of which it is guilty........here one cannot help but think of the victim of torture from whom only the parrotlike echo of the other's

discourse is extracted, not the truth. The subject remains intact, even
as it seems to be accusing itself.......' (115)

Joining the surrealists in the attack against Reason, Césaire shams
madness:

Because we hate you, you and

your reason, we call upon

the early dementia, the flaming madness

of a tenacious cannibalism....... (116)

Césaire's whimsical humour is directed against those who see the Negro as
not so much anti-rational, but outside the confines of rationality altogether, 'a-
rational' as it were. If the surrealists engaged in a simulated derangement of
the senses in order to reach the irrational, being part of the Western system of
Reason themselves, Césaire's madness suggests with its reference to
cannibalism, a primitivism which is the stuff of a-rationalism. It pokes fun at
the Western image of the Negro with poignant hints of the Negro's pain. A.J.
Arnold notes that Césaire's view links directly to Freud's concept of humour:

> Humour is not resigned; it is rebellious. It signifies the triumph not
> only of the ego, but also of the pleasure principle, which is strong
> enough to assert itself here in the face of the adverse real
> circumstances...............the denial of the claim of reality and the
> triumph of the pleasure principle, cause humour to approximate to the
> regressive or reactionary processes which engage our attention so
> largely in psycho-pathology. By its repudiation of the possibility of
> suffering, it takes its place in the great series of methods devised by
> the mind of man for evading the compulsion to suffer. (117)

Black humour is at once painful and serious: Césaire uses humour to invoke
pain and undermine Reason.

Conclusion

A.J. Arnold has outlined much of the influences on Césaire from the modernist movement (118) which indicates that Césaire's Negritude poetry was the result of a reconnaisance within the European tradition in which he ran away with everything necessary to create his Negritude. The Negritude of Césaire, like that of many of the others in the movement (Senghor, Roumain, Damas) took issue with the very tradition from which it borrowed most as Arnold suggests:

> Beyond any possible doubt, when Césaire began to elaborate his own artistic vision, he did so using the means provided by some of the foremost European writers of the previous generation. His approach to historiography as well as his understanding of depth psychology and the workings of the imagination derived from European models. However, the literary purposes to which Césaire subsequently put these modes of thought were complex with respect to his attitude toward Europe and North America. In attempting to challenge the world view that had engendered colonialism and slavery, Césaire was constrained by his education to forge weapons out of the adversary's own arsenal. The dialectics of negritude gradually took shape as the negation of a negation. Pure positivity was presumed to exist in an idealized African past. Modern Europe represented the negation of that ideal, and its French manifestation in rationalism was held accountable for the spiritual homelessness of the descendants of enslaved Africans. (119)

Negritude joined the protest within the European tradition which as Arnold states was in terms of Negritude's ideals, a negation. Arnold's suggestion that Negritude was 'the negation of a negation' has some affinity with Sartre's dialectical senario which also posits Negritude as the anti to the thesis of European racism.

If, as I maintain, Negritude is a dialogue however rather than simply a negation of a negation,   borrowing from the European tradition in the formulation of Negritude need not connotate the painful and problematic dilemma for Césaire to which Arnold alludes: ' As a black Martinican,

Césaire stood inside and outside the culture of France and of Europe. His struggle was to prove especially painful and its outcome especially problematical, because in attacking modern Europe he was at the same time attacking a part of himself.' (120) If the Other is yourself, borrowing from the Other may be a means of developing the dialogue and should not be the painful process Arnold suggests. In Césaire's case borrowing from the Other does not involve a radical transformation of that which is borrowed in order to fling it back in a changed form. Césaire used what he took from the European tradition to enhance his Negritude: whether from Frobenius or Nietzsche, what is borrowed is used to create a Negritude which engages in dialogue with negativity of the second form, i.e. a negativity which regards the Black's telluric and life-enhancing qualities as a valuable critique of certain aspects of the European tradition against which, as Arnold notes, Modernism was also ranged.

The Negritude Poetry of Léopold Senghor

TO NEW YORK

(for jazz orchestra with trumpet solo)

1

New York! At first your beauty confused me, your long-legged

girls of gold.

I was shy at first under your metal-blue eyes and your frosty

smile,

So shy. And your agony seething in the depths of skyscraper

streets

Lifting owl-eyes to the sun's eclipse.

Your sulphurous light and livid towers whose heads thunder

back at the sky-

Your skycrapers challenge tornadoes with their muscles of steel

and skins of bright, polished rock.

But after two weeks on the bald-headed walks of Manhattan.

At the end of the third week, the fever strikes like the pounce of

a leopard-

Two weeks without wells and pastures, and the birds of the air

swoop suddenly dead under the high-ashed terraces.

Not a flowering smile of an infant with his hands in my own

cool hands,

Not a mothering breast, only nylon legs-legs and breasts with

no smell or sweat.

No tender word for there are no lips, nothing but false hearts

bought with hard money.

No word in a book of wisdom. The palette of painters blooms

with crystalline flowers.

Nights of insomnia, O nights of Manhattan! tormented by

flickering lights while motor horns howl of empty hours

And dark waters bear off hygenic love like bodies on the flood

of dead children.

II

Now is the time of signs and reckonings.

New York! Now is the time of hyssop and manna.

You have only to listen to God's trombones-let your heart beat

the rhythm of blood, your blood.

I have seen in Harlem the humming of noise, of solemn colours

and sweet blazing smells-

It was teatime at the drugstore deliverers!

I have seen them perparing the festival of night in flight from

the day. I proclaim the Night more true than the day.

That is the pure hour down in the streets when God nurtures

life like seeds before memory

And the amphibious bodies strut like radiant suns.

Harlem! Harlem! How I have seen you, Harlem! A green breeze

of cornfields springs from the pavement ploughed by the

naked feet of Dan dancers

In body-waves of silk and spear-headed breasts and ballets of

lilies and fanciful masks.

And under police horses roll the mangos of love from low

houses.

I have seen on your sidewalks, rivers of white rum, rivers of

black milk through the blue haze of cigars.

I have seen your sky snowing at evening, flowers of cotton and

seraphic wings and socerers' plumes.

Listen, New York! Listen to your man's voice of copper, your

vibrating voice of the oboe, your agony choked with tears of

blood-

Listen to the distant beating of your nocturnal heart, the pulse

and the blood of the tom-tom, blood of the tom-tom,

tom-tom.

III

New York! I say to you, New York! Let the black blood flow in
   your blood-

Let it grease your joints like living oil-

Let it bend your bridges like hips and supple vines.

See the coming again of ancient days, the union recovered,
   reconciling the Lion, the Bull, and the Tree;

Thought shall be linked to act, ear to heart, sign to sense.

See the murmuring rivers of musk crocodiles and manatees with

the eyes of dream. And no need to fancy sirens.

It is enough to open your eyes to the rainbow of April

and your ears, above all your ears, to God who blew in a

breath of saxophone-laughter, the earth and the heaven in

six days

And who lay down on the seventh day to sleep the great sleep of

the black man.

À New York
(pour un orchestre de jazz: solo de trompette)

1

New York! D'abord j'ai été confondu par ta beauté, ces grandes

filles d'or aux jambes longues.

Si timide d'abord devant tes yeux de métal bleu, ton sourire de

givre

Si timide. Et l'angoisse au fond des rues à gratte-ciel

Levant des yeux de chouette parmi l'éclipse du soleil.

Sulfureuse ta lumière et les fûts livides, dont les têtes foudroient

le ciel

Les gratte-ciel qui défient les cyclones sur leurs muscles d'acier

et leur peau patinée de pierres.

Mais quize jours sur les trottoirs chauves de Manhattan

-C'est au bout de la troisième semaine que vous saisit la fièvre

en un bond de jaguar

Quinze jours sans un puits ni pàturage, tous les oiseaux de l'air

Tombant soudain et morts sous les hautes cendres desterrasses.

Pas un rire d'enfant en fleur, sa main dans ma main fraîche

Pas un sein maternel,des jambes de nylon. Des jambes et des

seins sans sueur ni odeur.

Pas un mot tendre en l'absence de lèvres, rien que des cœurs

artificiels payés en monnaie forte

Et pas un livre où lire la sagesse. La palette du peintre fleurit

   des cristaux de corail.

Nuits d'insomnie ô nuits de Manhattan! si agitées de feux

   follets, tandis que les klaxons hurlent des heures vides

Et que les eaux obscures charrient des amours hygiéniques, tels

   des fleuves en crue des cadavres d'enfants.

II

Voici le temps des signes et des comptes

New York! or voici le temps de la manne et de l'hysope.

Il n'est que d'écouter les trombones de Dieu, ton cœur battre au

   rythme du sang ton sang.

J'ai vu dans Harlem bourdonnant de bruits de couleurs

   solennelles et d'odeurs flamboyantes

   -C'est l'heure du thé chez le livreur-en-produits-

   pharmaceutiques

J'ai vu se préparer la fête de la Nuit à la fuite du jour. Je

   proclame la Nuit plus véridique que le jour.

C'est l'heure pure où dans les rues, Dieu fait germer la vie

   d'avant mémoire

Tous les éléments amphibies rayonnants come des soleils.

Harlem Harlem! voici ce que j'ai vu Harlem Harlem!

   Une brise verte de blés sourdre des pavés labourés par les

   pieds nus de danseurs Dans

Croupes ondes de soie et seins de fers de lance, ballets de

   nénuphars et de masques fabuleux

263

Aux pieds des chevaux de police, les mangues de l'amour

       rouler des maisons basses.

Et j'ai vu le long des trottoirs, des ruisseaux de rhum blanc des

       ruisseaux de lait noir dans le brouillard bleu des cigares.

J'ai vu le ciel neiger au soir des fleurs de cotton et des ailes de

       séraphins et des panaches de sorciers.

Écoute New York! ô écoute ta voix mâle de cuivre ta voix

       vibrante de hautbois, l'angoisse bouchée de tes larmes tomber

       en gros caillots de sang

Écoute au loin battre ton cœur nocturne, rythme et sang du

       tamtam, tamtam sang et tamtam.

III

New York ! je dis New York, laisse affluer le sang noir dans ton

       sang

Qu'il dérouille tes articulations d'acier, comme une huile de vie

Qu'il donne à tes ponts la courbe des croupes et la souplesse des

       lianes.

Voici revenir les temps très anciens, l'unité retrouvée la

       réconciliation du Lion du Taureau et de l'Arbre

L'idée liée à l'acte l'oreille au cœur le signe au sens.

Voilà tes fleuves bruissants de caïmans musqués et de lamantins

       aux yeux de mirages. Et nul besoin d'inventer les Sirènes.

Mais il suffit d'ouvrir les yeux à l'arc-en-ciel d'Avril

Et les oreilles, surtout les oreilles à Dieu qui d'un rire de

       saxophone créa le ciel et la terre en six jours.

Et le septième jour, il dormit du grand sommeil nègre.   (121)

New York is for Negritude poetry the symbol of the alienated and alienating West:

> 'its inflexibilities of blue steel pierce the mystic flesh'

Césaire declares of the West. For Senghor the 'blue metallic eyes' of New York, recalling Césaire's image, encapsulate the hard cold alienation of Euro-America. This is an alienation with which every Western Negro has been acquainted.

Senghor the Black poet carries his store of images from nature with him into the heart of the metropolis:

> ....at the end of the third week, the fever strikes like the pounce
>   of a leopard-
>
> Two weeks without wells and pastures, all the birds of the air
>
> Swoop suddenly dead under the high-ashed terraces.

Senghor's advice to the jungle which is new York where,

> 'Nights of insomnia, O nights of Manhattan! tormented by
>   flickering lights, while motor horns howl of empty hours
> And dark waters bear off hygenic love, like bodies on the flood
>   of dead children.. . . . ...

is to respond to the teeming Black life in its midst. This reads very much like Wole Soyinka's 'black-leaven-in-white-loaf' accusation. Senghor's advice is based on his vision which reads like a fond dream:

> I have seen on your sidewalks, rivers of white rum, rivers of
>   black milk through the blue haze of cigars.

I have seen your sky snowing at evening, flowers of cotton and,
seraphic wings and sorcerers' plumes.

Listen, New York! listen to your man's voice of copper, your
        vibrating voice of the oboe, your agony choked with tears of

blood-

A dream transposing Africa to the New World:

                              ....a green breeze

of cornfields springs from the pavement ploughed by the

naked feet of Dan dancers

Body-waves of silk and spear-headed breasts and ballets of

lilies and fanciful masks.

The basic ideological thrust of Senghor's Negritude, that is the idea of of the
diasporan Negro as the store of African values which can humanize even the
most alienated of cities, which can bring the spirit of the earth to the
metropolis in one transforming bath of humanism:

New York! I say to you New York! let the black blood flow in

    your blood-

Let it grease your joints like living oil-

Let it bend your bridges like hips and supple vines.

See the coming again of ancient days, the union recovered,

    reconciling the Lion the Bull, and the Tree.....

The essential lightness and ironic touch of Senghor's fancy is however
manifest in the last few lines of the poem:

It is enough to open your eyes to the rainbow of April

And the ears, above all your ears, to God who blew in a

　　breath of saxaphone-laughter, the earth and the heaven in

　　six days

And who lay down on the seventh day to sleep the great sleep of

　　of the black man.

God, to whom New York has been advised to listen is Negro, or at least he
sleeps a Negro sleep. The Negro is both earth and spirit: he is the
White man's alter ego, his spirit of the earth from which he has shut his soul
in the hard metropolis.

The poem's three verses represent a classic dialectical pattern: thesis, anti-
thesis, synthesis. The first verse states the thesis: alienated White
technological city dominated by modern bourgeois anomie. Second verse:
anti-thesis: Harlem, the Black blood coursing unrecognised through this
jungle of anomie-its potential salvation. The third is a romantic synthesis in
the form of an appeal in which White angst and alienation is cured by Black
life-fulfilment. Senghor's Negritude manifests in the basic arguments of this
poem. Although rendered in a sophisticated and ironic tone, the essential
simplicity of Senghor's ideology lacks appeal.

S. Okechuwu Mezu in 'The Poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor' argues that
Senghor displays the influence of Gobineau's racism in the suggestion that
what New York needs for its recuperation is the emotional vitality of its
Blacks. (122) The essence of this idea of Blacks as the potential salvation or
salve to a Europe on the brink of spiritual decay is repeated with variations
in other poems. In 'Prayer to the Masks' the Negritude idea manifests in the
last two Stanzas:

In your image, hear me!

Now dies the Africa of empires-the dying of a pitiable princess

And Europe's too, to whom we're linked by the umbilicus.

Fix your immutable eyes on your subjugated children,

Who relinquish their lives as the poor their last garments.

May we answer present at the world's rebirth,

Like the yeast white flour needs.

For who would teach rhythm to a dead world of cannons and machines?

Who would give the shout of joy at dawn to wake the dead and orphaned?

Tell me, who would restore the memory of life to men whose hopes are disemboweled?

They call us men of cotton, coffee, oil.

They call us men of death.

We are men of dance, whose feet take on new strength from stamping
the hard ground.

(123)

The Black is the life-giving catalyst needed to revive a dying colonialism, the yeast in a white leaven. The Black is offered as a necessary term in a Manichaean premise: the European world is dying of its abstractions; the only answer to this White etiolation is the Blackness to which it is in any case 'linked by the umbilicus.'

In 'Ode for Three Kôras and Balaphong' it is the African night which is called upon to bring a resolution to the poet's Manichaeanism. Africa is called on to resolve the deathly complexities of Europe with its life-enhancing simplicities:

Night delivering me from reasons, salons, sophisms, from pirouettes and pretexts, from the calculated hatred of slaughter humanized.

Night dissolving all my contradictions, melting contradictions in the

primal unity of your negritude.

(124)

Negritude is posited as a neutralising bath capable of dissolving opposition and strife which is associated with the European's language-'reasons', 'sophisms', 'contradictions'- as well as his life-style. Negritude is an all-consuming pre-linguistic, primal solution.

Senghor's Negritude ideas as they manifest in his poetry represent the soft underbelly of Negritude which becomes apparent when it is elaborated into an abstraction. 'To cure the European of the deadly etiolation of his language Senghor must portray the African as a simple primitive lacking the sophistication of the European, or, as a super being capable of overcoming all the contradictions of language and life.'

Senghor's Negritude poetry thus lacks the explosive complexity of Césaire's which depends upon a sophisticated relationship with the Other, sometimes bitter, sometimes sardonic and full of irony. There is in Césaire's Negritude, none of Senghor's simple desire to overcome what Sartre terms the calm unity of contraries.'

Negritude as dialogue: Robinson and Kurtz, Friday and Césaire's 'Cahier........'

Negritude literature is the product of a dialogue with Euro-American literature; in Negritude, self-consciously Black literature declares its Blackness in the shadow of the Other. Black literature is a response to the complexity of Euro-American thought about the Negro. 'The Negro was at least two aspects of negativity. If Kurtz and Defoe's Robinson manifest one view of the Black as negativity of the first form, Tournier's Robinson represents the other view of Blacks in which the Euro-American White figure is capable of a dialogue with the Black man.

Tournier's Friday would speak Negritude if he was capable of articulating his thoughts. Many of Friday's actions and Robinson's 'reading' of them are philosophically close to Negritude as a poetic knowledge. Friday's knowledge of, and relationship with his island are unspoken manifestations of the Black man's relationship with earth as elaborated in Césaire's 'Cahier........'

At first in Tournier's novel Robinson interprets the negativity of Friday's freedom as negativity of the first form, that is as mere negation bent only on the interest of its negative will, in the 'mere negation of the order' (125) he has so painfully cultivated. This negativity seems enthroned in the

explosion which destroys Robinson's cave. It is part of a very traditional Euro-American view of the Black which is parodied in 'Cahier.......' in which the poetic subject parodies his 'crimes' in a mock assumption of the burden of the Other's speech about him:

> I know my crimes; there is nothing to be said in
>
> my defence.

But Robinson's growth and his dawning awareness of the creative value of Friday's negative freedom is manifest in his recognition of the 'underlying wholeness, an implicit principle, at the heart of Friday's life.' (126) Similarly in the teeth of Euro-America's proclamation that he is nothing but a manifestation of negativity of the first form, Césaire's Negro proclaims that like Tournier's Friday, he has an implicit knowledge of the earth and his way of life has an unacknowledged order which the Euro-American Robinson has yet to discern:

> ....struck, deliver themselves to the essence
>
> of all things,
>
> ignorant of surfaces, but taken by the very
>
> movement of things......

A dialogue is possible therefore between Tournier's Robinson and Césaire's Negro: Tournier's Robinson would recognise the elaboration of the Negritude of Césaire's Negro as negativity of second form. The howling and 'demented' tone of Césaire's subject is due to the fact that his peroration is delivered not only to Tournier's Robinson but to the rest of Euro-America whose view of him is not so benign. His speech assumes here in that section of the poem the equivalence of a demented carnival dance before the unconvinced Euro-American holding the negativity-of-the-first-form view of the Negro:

For those who explored nothing

For those who never mastered

Eia for joy

Eia for love

Eia for grief at the udders of reincarnated

tears

Kurtz of 'Heart of Darkness' and Defoe's Robinson are perfect representatives of this Euro-American view. Neither have a dialogue with the Negroes of their respective narratives in any meaningful sense of the world. Defoe's Robinson speaks *to* Friday rather than *with* him. His speech to Friday is strictly utilitarian, designed to mould him into a useful second pair of hands for the exploitation of the island's resources: Friday is ultimately another resource to be exploited as long as his use-value lasts. Prior to his encounter with Friday on the island Robinson has been a slaver in 'the trade', to use his euphemism. On acquiring a boy, Xury, he promptly sells him to a captain 'undertaking to set him free in ten years if he turned Christian': a typical pious gloss on Robinson's part.

Kurtz is Defoe's Robinson without the pious Christian morality; the twentieth century man in whose thought, as Foucault notes, morality is no longer possible. Kurtz, like Robinson does not have any dialogic relationship with the Blacks he encounters. Yet this is not due to Kurtz's lack of language. On the contrary Jerry Wasserman in an essay titled 'Narrative Presence: The Illusion of Language in Heart of Darkness', suggests that Marlow's admiration for Kurtz stems from his recognition of Kurtz as a plenitude of language. Wasserman thinks that Marlow sees Kurtz as the bearer of civilization and enlightenment in his command of language: '...........Marlow sees Kurtz's cry (Kurtz's final cry of 'horror'-my parenthesis) as an affirmation of language itself, the foremost expression of civilization.' (127) Wasserman suggests that Kurtz's demise stems from his inability to deal with the external 'darkness' surrounding him; Kurtz's command of language and the enlightenment this represents are overwhelmed by the invading darkness of the African jungle:

Almost every reference Marlow makes to him concerns his mastery of and identification with language. It is thus fitting that Kurtz should have been assigned to write a report for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs, to oppose the savage silence with the "noble burning words" of Western culture. But his postcript reveals that he has not successfully survived. His communion with the wilderness has driven him insane and revealed to him hidden "in the magnificent folds of eloquence the barren darkness of his heart".........He was all language, eloquence, and therefore all facade: "hollow at the core"..........stripping himself of the accoutrements of civilization to communicate with the silent wilderness left him nothing but his own inner darkness. (128)

Yet is not Kurtz's real failure his inability to reconcile the vacancy of his eloquence with the barreness of his self as Wasserman records in a quote from the novel: ".......in the magnificent folds of eloquence the barren darkness of his heart." Wasserman seems to assume, mistakenly, that this hollowness of Kurtz is due to his succumbing to the 'darkness' of Africa rather than the manifestation of a darkness already present in the bourgeois Kurtz. His magnificent eloquence does not amount to genuine communication precisely because it lacks a sense of awareness of doubt or hesitation, or Marlow's awareness of the inadequacy of speech, the hollowness or silence at the heart of language.

Kurtz is incapable of dialogue with the African because he is incapable of any genuine dialogue with himself, his own internal darkness. His is a representation of colonialism's overweening eloquence, its inability to enter into dialogue with the culture of the colonized: only degradation or replacement of the culture will do.

Kurtz oppresses and exploits the Black males he meets and has a relationship with a Black woman in which no question of any dialogic exchange is intimated. Kurtz's desire to civilize the Blacks is not based on any genuine dialogue, although it may be based on a presumed 'knowledge' of them like that of Delano in 'Benito Cereno'.

Césaire's Negritude in 'Cahier...............' unlike Kurtz's speech represents authentic internal dialogue as well as a dialogue with the Other. The internal dialogue is manifest in the self-laceration, the demented attempted to excavate to the very core of the poet's soul, the self-doubt, and the excoriation

of self as well as the Other. The poem is a manifestation of the existential experience of Negrohood. Surrealism as a method helps to reach the silence at the core of language and to indicate the silence of Negritude. Sartre notes of the Negritude poets: '..........since Negritude is silence, they express it by using "allusive words, never direct, words which reduce themselves to silence".'(129) In this pursuit the Negritude poets join a tendency of the modern movement: 'From Malarmé to the surrealists the ultimate goal of French poetry seems to me to have been this self-destruction of the language.' (130)

Césaire's Negro is engaged in a dialogue with his Other which he, unlike Kurtz, cannot avoid. In 'The Foundation of Our Unity Arising from the Colonial Epoch' J.Rabemananjara in a speech at the second congress of Negro writers and artists of 1959 noted that the Negro intellectual has been forced into a dialogue with the Other, the Euro-American, in the act of absorbing the Other's culture:

> We're, in the same way as Mauriac or Malaparte, the real inheritors of the Greeks and Romans, the Gauls and Saxons, the Vikings and Iberians. Our masters in thought are Homer and Socrates, Aristotle and Cicero, Plato and Virgil, Montaigne and Bacon, Pascal and Dante, Cervantès and Shakespeare, Racine and Camoëns, Dickens and Voltaire, Spinoza and Hegel, Nietzsche and William James, Swinburne and Kierkegaard, James Joyce and Valéry..............We really recognize, from the intellectual point of view, that we have full share in the vast universe of the West.(131)

The Other, in the form of his culture is part of the Negro and any dialogue with the Other becomes partly an internal dialogue. This Negro is not an untutored Friday oblivious of the cultural domination of the Other (Tournier), he is Césaire's Negro railing against the Other's view of him as negativity of the first form out of a tortured intimacy with the Other's culture. This is a situation of reciprocity in which just as Prospero can acknowledge Caliban as his 'thing of darkness', so Caliban is able to acknowledge some of Prospero in himself in the very act represented by Negritude, of affirming difference from the Other. For Rabemananjara what all the colonial and ex-colonial Calibans

have in common, no matter what their racial origins, is the experience of colonial domination, an experience which induces a tension born out of a conflict between the legacy of the 'original culture' in the Black intellectual and the influence of his Western culture:

> It is this, this obscure, mysterious gift which makes us different from our Western brothers. They will never feel the torment or the rending, the fire and nip of which we feel against our sides, for they will never have to experience the kind of tension that is in us, born of our faithfulness to our original well-spring and of our attachment to their culture.
>
> Before it helped us to reach a state of balance and mastery this culture transformed our brains into a permanent home for conflict,and it only shows itself to be fruitful and beneficial to us in the sense that it thrives on the very substance of our division........(132)

One way of resolving this tension, is that employed by Césaire, that is, the transformation of the language of the Other in the act of using it. The reciprocal infusion of the Negro into the very intimacy of the Other's means of communication ensures that the Other is forced into a recognition of, and dialogue with the Black. Earlier Black writing which was but a pale imitation of the language of the Other (sic) such as the poetry of Phillis Wheatley, could not demand the kind of attention from the Other that the literature of Negritude commanded. It it the agitational voice of Negritude which commands the attention of the Other. Sartre notes:

> A poem of Césaire..........bursts forth and turns on itself like a rocket, suns come out it, whirling and exploding into new suns; it is a perpetual surpassing, Césaire does not aim to overtake the calm unity of contraries, but to make one of the contraries of the "black-white" couple rise like a male sex in its opposition to the other. The density of these words, thrust into the air like stones spat out by a volcano, is Negritude defining itself against Europe and colonisation. (133)

Kurtz represents the absence of genuine communion with man, and nature.

Kurtz's colonialist exploitation of the natural and human resources of Africa leads to negation and death. His final utterance about the Africans: 'exterminate the brutes', is the ultimate cry of negative exploitation at the end of its tether. Tournier's Robinson learns that Friday's use of the earth's resources leads to a more fruitful relationship with the earth than his. Under Friday's tutelage he changes his appearance and his skin colour. He begins to enjoy his body: '.......... he found that a body which is accepted and rejoiced in-even vaguely desired, in a kind of unconscious narcissism- is not only a better instrument for use in dealing with the external world, but also a sturdy and loyal companion.' (134) He begins to relinquish some of his Northern seriousness in admiration for Friday's Southern playfulness: 'In company with Friday he engaged in sports and pastimes which formerly he would have considered beneath him.' (135) He begins to worship the sun like the worship of Césaire's Negro in 'Cahier...............' for the 'male heart of the sun.' His relationship with nature changes from sullen exploitation to communion.

Between Kurtz's negation of nature and man and the celebration of nature represented by Tournier's Friday lies the benign bourgeois exploitation of earth by Defoe's Robinson, the infancy of bourgeois exploitation. The celebration of the earth by Tournier's Friday (who is half-Indian) recalls the North American Indian relationship to the land which is one of guardianship rather than ownership or expropriation. Hence Tournier's Friday and Césaire's Negro join in the modern concerns of 'New Age' and other conservationists for a radical break with the bourgeois domination of earth, and seek a genuine dialogic relationship with nature.

In the next chapter I examine the manifestation of the Negritude debate between Senghor and Césaire as developed in the thought and fiction of James Baldwin and Richard and Wright.

References

1 Michel Leiris, 'Who is Aimé Césaire?' 'Sulphur' no. 5 (1982) (pp7-16) p12

2 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus' Translated by A.Gillette in 'Stand': part 1,vol. 5 no. 4, p2. [Part 2, vol. 6. no.1. pp7-22)] 'Black Orpheus' was first published as an introduction to 'Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et Malgache' compiled by L. Senghor. Presses Universitaires, Paris, 1948.

3 Op. Cit. vol. 5.no4, p3

4 Op. Cit. vol.5. no 4. p11

5 Op. Cit. vol. 5.no. 4.p7

6 Op. Cit. vol. 5. no4. p8

7 Morgan Dalphinis See 'Caribbean & African Languages' by , Karia Press (London 1985), Introduction, pp1-17.

8 John Reed and Clive Wake.' (editors.) 'Léopold Sédar Senghor: Prose and Poetry' Oxford Univ. Press (London, 1965), p76

9 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus' 'Stand' vol. 5. no. 4, p5

10 Op. Cit. vol. 5.no 4. p11

11 Aimé Césaire, 'Discourse on Colonialism', Trans. by Joan Pinkham. Monthly Review Press. (London 1972) p67

12 Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire-Langage Identité Culturelle-Négritude' Afrique-France-Guyane-Maghred-Martinique. Editions Jean-Michel, Place, (Paris, 1980) pp144-145

13 Op. Cit. p145

14 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', 'Stand' vol. 5. no. 4. p3

15 Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire-Langage Identité Culturelle-Négritude'p150

16 Op. Cit. p88

17 Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal', Présence Africaine, (Paris. 1971) p87

18 Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire-Langage Identité Culturelle-Négritude' p145

19 Op. Cit. p86

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid

22 Op. Cit. p87.

23 Op. Cit. p88

24 Aimé Césaire, 'Poetry and Knowledge', trans. by A.J. Arnold in 'Sulphur' no 5 (1982) (pp16-32) p30

25 Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire-Langage Identité Culturelle-Négritude 'p88

26 Op. Cit. p142-143

27 Op. Cit. p143

28 Op. Cit. p152

29 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'What Is Literature'. Trans. by Bernard Frechtman. Harper & Row. (N. York. 1965). p12.

30 Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire-Langage Identité Culturelle-Négritude' p150

31 Ibid

32 A. J. Arnold. 'Modernism and Negritude', Harvard Univ. Press, (1981). p168

33 Op. Cit. p133

34 Ibid.

35 Op. Cit. p136

36 Op. Cit. p135

37 Ibid.

38 Op. Cit. p136

39 Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal', Présence Africaine, (1971), p28

40 Ibid

41 A.J. Arnold, 'Modernism and Negritude', p137

42 Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal', Présence Africaine, (1971), p128

43 A.J. Arnold, 'Modernism and Negritude', p137

44 St-John Perse, *Eloges and Other Poems,* Trans. by Louise Varèse (New York: Pantheon, 1965), pp6-7, quoted by A. J.Arnold, (Ibid).

45 Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal', p32

46 Op. Cit. p38

47 Op. Cit. p50

48 Op. Cit. p56

49 A.J. Arnold, 'Modernism and Negritude', p145

50 R. L. Scharfman, '*Engagement* and the Language of the Subject in the Poetry of Aimé Césaire', Univ. of Florida Press. (1987). p35

51 Ibid

52 Op. Cit. pp35-36

53 Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal', p58

54 R.L. Scharfman '*Engagement* and the Language of the Subject in the Poetry of Aimé Césaire', p36

55 Op. Cit. p61

56 A. J. Arnold, 'Modernism and Negritude', p147

57 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', Part 2. Stand. vol. 6. no. 1, p8

58 Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire-Langage Identité Culturelle-Négritude' p146

59 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', Stand. vol.6. no. 1 p8

60 Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire-Langage Identité Culturelle-Négritude' p147

61 Ibid

62 Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal', p116

63 Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire-Langage Identité Culturelle-Négritude' p146

64 Ibid

65 Ibid

66 Ibid

67 Jean-Paul Sartre; 'The Jew is one whom other men consider a Jew: that is the simple truth from which we must start. In this sense the democrat is right as against the anti-Semite, for it is the anti-Semite who *makes* the Jew.' 'Anti-Semite and Jew', Trans. by G. J. Becker. Schocken Books, (New York. 1965). p69.

68 Martin Esslin 'Mediations', Essays on Brecht, Beckett, and the Media', Abacus, (1983,) In 'Watt' and 'Molloy' Samuel Beckett's Heroes engage in, or as in the case of Watt, are confronted with, a plethora of mathematical games. Martin Esslin considers that these games have value as parallels of the artist's cognitive 'exploration of the possible modes of existential experience'. (p85) Esslin continues,

> The parallel here is with mathematics, which, dealing as it does with mere patterns of the mind, without any direct reference to observable reality, could itself be regarded as a form of intellectual game, and while attaching, itself, considerable importance to the theory of games, yet serves to provide a key to reality, actual and potential, theoretical and practical. A mind that has, quite arbitrarily constructed a space with different numbers of dimensions will, by dint of having journeyed that way, return with a firmer grasp of the two-dimensional world..........(pp85-86)

But it may be argued that the comic and unresolved puzzles Beckett's characters set themselves with the aid of mathematics, manifest his parodies of the pretentions of mathematics as a solver of the problems of reality. Michael Robinson in 'The Long Sonata Of The Dead', maintains that Molloy's famous deduction that he hardly farts at all after working out how many times he farts in an hour, is a condemnation of Mathematics: 'Self-knowledge is the desire of every Beckett hero, but the ability of mathematics to further this search is spendidly debunked. The abstract science of the mind may analyse the regularity with which man farts, but that is as close as it will come to a defintion of the Self.'(Michael Robinson,The Long sonata of the Dead, Rupert Hard-Davis, (London 1969). p49

69 Aimé Césaire, 'Poetry and Knowledge' 'Sulphur' no. 5 (1982) p17

70 Ibid

71 Op. Cit. p18

72 Op. Cit. pp18-19

73 Friedrich Nietzsche, 'The Gay Science', trans. by Walter Kaufmann, Vintage Books (N.York. 1974), p169

74 Ibid

75 Op. Cit. pp171-172

76 Aimé Césaire, 'Poetry and Knowledge' 'Sulphur' no. 5 (1982) p19

77 Op. Cit. p28

78 A. Rimbaud, 'A Season in Hell, The Illuminations', (Une Saison En Enfer. Les Illuminations) A new trans. by E. Rhodes Peschel OUP. (London 1973) p53

79 R.L. Scharfman,'*Engagement* and the Language of the Subject in the Poetry of Aimé Césaire' p45

80 Ibid

81 Aimé Césaire, 'Poetry and Knowledge' 'Sulphur' no. 5, (1982) p19

82 Aimé Césaire, 'Mot' from 'Lost Body' (Corps Perdu) see 'Aimé Césaire' (The Collected Poetry), trans. by C. Eshleman and A, Smith, University of California Press, (London 1983). pp229-231. First published 1950. (Editions Fragrance) illustrated by Pablo Picasso.

83 R.L. Scharfman, '*Engagement* and the Language of the Subject in the Poetry of Aimé Césaire' p88

84 Ibid

85 Op. Cit. p90

86 Ibid

87 Ibid

88 Op. Cit. p91

89 Jacqueline Leiner, 'Imaginaire-Langage Identité Culturelle-Négritude' p151

90 Ibid

91 Op. Cit. p138

92 R.L. Scharfman, '*Engagement* and the Language of the Subject in the Poetry of Aimé Césaire' p90

93 Op. Cit. p91`

94 Op. Cit. p64

95 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus' 'Stand' vol. 6. no. 1. p9

96 Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal', p110

97 R.L. Scharfman, '*Engagement* and the Language of the Subject in the Poetry of Aimé Césaire' pp57-58

98 Jean-Paul Sartre: 'Genet the thief will await himself as the others await him, with *their* expectations. Foreseeable to others, he will attempt to foresee himself. He will be afraid of his future thefts. Unforseeable to decent people, he will become unforeseeable to himself; he will wonder every morning whether the new day will be marked by a theft.........' ['Art and Salvation', from'The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre', ed. by R.D. Cumming Methuen, (London,1968), p389]

99 Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal', p116-118

100 Op. Cit. p118

101 R.L. Scharfman,'*Engagement* and the Language of the Subject in the Poetry of Aimé Césaire', p60

102 Gregson Davis, (translator) 'Non-Vicious Circle' :Twenty Poems of Aimé Césaire. Stanford Univ. Press, (California, 1984) p14.

103 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus' Part 2 'Stand' vol6, no 1, p13

104 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus' Part 1.'Stand' vol5, no.4, p10

105 Ibid

106 Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal', p118

107 Op. Cit. pp118-120

108 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', part 1, 'Stand', vol5, no.4 pp10-11

109 Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal', p136

110 R.L. Scharfman, '*Engagement* and the Language of the Subject in the Poetry of Aimé Césaire' p61

111 Aimé Césaire,'Poetry and Knowledge' 'Sulfur', no. 5 (1982) p26

112 Op. Cit. p27

113 Ibid

114 Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier D'un Retour Au Pays Natal' p76

115 R,L. Scharfman,'*Engagement* and the Language of the Subject in the Poetry of Aimé Césaire' p44

116 Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier D'un Retour Au Pays Natal' p72

117 A.J. Arnold, 'Modernism and Negritude', p65

118 Op. Cit. see, chap. 2, 'Césaire and Modernism', pp50-70.

119 A.J. Arnold, 'Modernism and Negritude', p70

120 Ibid.

121 Léopold Senghor, 'To New York' (Á New York) from 'Selected poems/ Poésies choisies.' Trans. by C. Williamson. Rex Collings. (London 1976). pp86-91

122 S. Okechuku Mezu: 'The Poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor': Heinemann Educational Books. (London 1973) p64

123 Ellen Conroy Kennedy, (editor) 'The Negritude Poets', Anthology of Translations from the French. Thunders Mouth Press, (N. York. 1989). p133

124 Op. Cit. p134

125 Michel Tournier, 'Friday Or The Other Island', Penguin (1984), p155

126 Ibid

127 Jerry Wasserman 'Narrative Presence: The Illusion of Language in Heart of Darkness', from 'Critical Essays on Joseph Conrad', Ed. by Ted Billy. G.K. Hall & Co. (Boston Massachusetts. 1987). p106

128 Ibid

129 'Black Orpheus'

130 Op. Cit.

131 J. Rabemananjara, 'The foundations of our unity arising from the colonial epoch', 'Second Congress of Negro Writers and Artists' (The Unity of Negro African Cultures) Présence Africaine no. 24-25. Feb.-May. (1959) .p81

132 Op. Cit. p82

133 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus' Part 2, 'Stand', vol. 6 no. 1. p8

134 Michel Tournier,'Friday And The Other Island', p157

135 Ibid

THE NEGRITUDE OF JAMES BALDWIN AND RICHARD WRIGHT

In this chapter I examine the debate between James Baldwin and Richard Wright in the USA as a parallel of the debate between Césaire and Senghor. I analyse the Baldwin-Wright debate as a discussion about the place of the Negro in modern Western society.

Neither Baldwin nor Wright develop their Negritude into a system. It is possible however to delineate through their novels and essays the lines of their Negritude which, I maintain, takes up some of the challenges set by Negritude of the thirties. The main issues formulate themselves around the questions, 'What is the place of the Negro in the modern world? What ought to be the relationship of the Negro with his Other? Where or who is his Other?'

For Baldwin the relationship with the Other ought to be based on love. He condemns Wright's Bigger Thomas in 'Native Son' as a victim of his own consuming hatred for the Other. Baldwin argues that Bigger is still the Uncle Tom, the victim.

To the question where or who is the Other, Baldwin wants to locate each Black American's Other within himself: each Black American carries his own 'nigger' within himself with which he has an ironic relationship. For Wright as an ex-communist the Other is in the social and political matrix: only by changing this matrix can the Negro end his oppression.

James Baldwin's 'Another Country'

The characters in Baldwin's novel do metaphorically inhabit another country where their complex sexual and personal relationships take place on the margin of the native land. They take foreign lovers, spend time abroad, and even when they live in America, in cosmopolitan New York, their values and lifestyles are largely divorced from the mass of the city.

Rufus Scott of 'Another Country' is the nearest equivalent to Bigger

Thomas but he is confused by both hatred and love for the Other, whereas Bigger's psyche is dominated by the absolute clarity and vividness of his hatred for the Other. Rufus is described as the victim incapable of a free expression of love, or the recognition that others love him. He is the aspirant victim who throws himself from the George Washington Bridge out of his incapacity for gracious sacrifice: 'You took the best, so why not take the rest,' is his sacrificial motif. Instead of the attempt at redemption of the hatred surrounding him due to his relationship with a White Southerner, Rufus kills himself, confused by a mixture of impulses of love and hate. Baldwin portrays him as the victim who fails to accept his situation with grace.

The tone and texture of Baldwin's language prepares us early for the view of Rufus as the victim fallen from a biblical notion of grace. Rufus wanders around New York city under the weight of its skyscrapers: 'Beneath them Rufus walked, one of the fallen-for the weight of this city was murderous-one of those who had been crushed on the day, which was every day, these towers fell.' (1)

Rufus is caught between hatred and helpless love for the Southern White woman and is principally responsible for her confinement in a mental hospital after the failure of their relationship. Rufus's important weakness for Baldwin is a failure of necessary love. To love the Other for Baldwin, is to love him as you would yourself, or your family. Rufus connects the woman Leona with his family: ['For to remember Leona was also-somehow-to remember the eyes of his mother, the rage of his father, the beauty of his sister.'] (2) but he fails to add that element of affection which would show a complete understanding of the connection, in Baldwin's terms.

Rufus is caught and enmeshed within his incapacity to reconcile love and hatred of the Other. He plays at a gig in a spot in Harlem where a refrain blows from the horn: 'Do you love me?': 'This.........was the question Rufus heard,.........unbearably endlessly.....' But Rufus is incapable of answering it.

If love is accompanied by a capacity to enter into the situation of the Other, to make connections, Baldwin suggests that Rufus fails in the necessary requirements for loving the Other. On first meeting Leona, he is at first touched by pity for her reduced state; he recognises that she ought to be

treated with the affection deserving of a person rather than a category: 'Something touched his imagination for a moment, suggesting that Leona was a person and had her story.........'.(3) Later however he disdains her as the category, 'poor Southern White gal'. He is moved both by friendship for Vivaldo Moore and, the desire to treat him as 'the liberal White Bastard'.

This confusion is manifest in an ambivalence towards his own sexuality: about his male lover Eric we are told: 'Rufus had despised him because he came from Alabama; perhaps he had allowed Eric to make love to him in order to despise him more completely.' (4) Rufus despises his lover not only for his origins, but because of his (Rufus's) own ambiguities about his sexuality: 'He had despised Eric's manhood by treating him as a woman, by telling him how inferior he was to a woman, by treating him as nothing more than a hideous sexual deformity. But Leona had not been a deformity. And he had used against her the very epithets he had used against Eric, and in the very same way, with the same roaring in his head and the same intolerable pressure in his chest.' (5)

For Baldwin, the principle of revolutionary love begins in, and is nurtured in the family. The Black family is also a negating force, the other side of all the values manifested in White society. Rufus has emerged out of a Black family whose values are based on love; it is against that background that we are to understand his story. It is the love of the family which is foregrounded, not Rufus's hatred.

Unlike Rufus, his sister Ida, the other main Black protagonist, is able to love despite the ambiguities of her feelings towards the Other. She hates the society which has killed her brother but is able to love individual members of it such as Vivaldo with the sacrificial offering of her ego and herself accompanying the sexual act. Rufus's suicide is a useless sacrificial act, made out of conflicting love and hatred. Ida's movement from hatred to love is, for Baldwin, nearer to the ideal, an offering of oneself out of the desire for redemption of the Other.

For Baldwin love is a vital principle of survival especially for the Negro: '........if we had not loved each other none of us would have survived. And now you must survive because we love you, and for the sake of your children and your children's children,' he writes to a relation in 'The Fire Next Time'. (6) This vital principle of Negro recuperation, which has served them down the road of American history, must be used not for the purposes of integration with Whites but as a means of reclamation of the Other for altering the course of American history. The supreme act of negation through sacrifice:

> The really terrible thing, old buddy, is that *you* must accept *them*. And I mean that seriously. You must accept them and accept them with love. For these innocent people have no other hope. They are, in effect, still trapped in a history which they do not understand; and until they understand it, they cannot be released from it. (7)

Although it depends upon an approach to the Other, this principle embodies subversion and negation since it depends upon overturning the White American's glazed-eyed view of his own history, and of his self-image, through a continual re-vision of the Negro's place in it.

What Baldwin demands is not simply a re-vision of the Black's place in American life, but a visualisation of it. As an activity, vision implies the capacity for changes of perception; but for the White American the assumed fixity of the Negro's place was an important aspect of this incapacity for visualisation. Baldwin notes that the Negro's movement out of fixity into the White American's field of vision was bound to have a revolutionary effect: 'Well, the black man has functioned in the white man's world as a fixed star, as an immovable pillar: and as he moves out of his place, heaven and earth are shaken to their foundations.' (8) A traumatic experience for the White American for the effect of the Negro's act is to begin the process of seeing in itself: 'And if the word *integration* means anything, this is what it means: that we, with love, shall force our brothers to see themselves as they are, to cease fleeing from reality and begin to change it.' (9) Rufus's problem is that he is as confused and lacking in a capacity for perception as White American society.

Richard Wright's 'Native Son'

Wright depicts Bigger Thomas as a young boy whose life is steeped in negation from the beginning of the novel. Bigger is an uneducated, unemployed twenty year old living in one room with his family in a slum neighbourhood. A social product certainly, but one with his own individual restless energy, capable of productive or unproductive use.

From the opening pages of the novel Bigger's situation is metaphorised with horrifying vividness. The opening chapter is titled 'Fear': Bigger is wakened by an alarm clock and disturbed by a rat in his family's small room, fearful of, and feared by its occupants: 'The rat's belly pulsed with fear. Bigger advanced a step and the rat emitted a long thin song of defiance, its black beady eyes glittering, its tiny forefeet pawing the air restlessly.'(10) And, 'The rat scuttled across the floor and stopped again at the box and searched quickly for the hole; then it reared once more and bared long yellow fangs, piping shrilly, belly quivering.' (11) Bigger, like the rat he corners and kills, will also be crushed with ruthless inevitability.

From then on the novel charts Bigger's fate. He is employed by a do-gooding White landlord as a chauffeur whose company also owns the tenement buildings where he lives. Alienated from friends and family because of his overwhelming awareness of the horrifying effect of the social structure upon the latter, he accidentally kills the daughter of his employers and burns the body in the cellar. From there on the novel assumes the aspect of crime fiction. Bigger knows that although he killed 'accidentally' he was fated to kill since he has already perpetrated countless killings in his imagination. Like Macbeth he assumes the negative burden of his crimes. He pretends he has kidnapped the murdered girl and kills a reluctant accomplice, his Black mistress. Chased through the empty city slums, he 'reads' his fate through the frantic press bulletins about the killings. He is caught in the darkness on top of a building in the city where he was always condemned. His Jewish lawyer Max, pleads the moral and socialist case for the resigned murderer at his trial but the horror of Bigger's fate is contained in the overwhelming burden of the novel which supports Bigger's final words: 'I didn't want to kill!.......But what I killed for, I am! It must've been pretty deep in me to make me kill! I must have felt it awful hard to murder.......' (12) And, 'What I killed for must've been good!........It must have been good! When a

man kills, it's for something.......I didn't know I was really alive in this world until I felt things hard enough to kill for 'em.......'(13)

For Baldwin, Richard Wright's failure in 'Native Son' lies in the portrayal of Bigger's life as abstract, without that necessary background of a rich counterbalancing life principle, capable of putting Bigger's hatred in perspective. Baldwin considers the novel dominated by Bigger's perspective, until near its end where the perspective switches towards the view of Bigger as social victim. According to Baldwin Bigger's perspective is but one aspect of the complex relationship between Blacks and the rest of American society:

> Native Son does not convey the altogether savage paradox of the American Negro's situation, of which the social reality which we prefer with such hopeful superficiality to study is but, as it were the shadow. It is not simply the relationship of oppressed to oppression, of master to slave, nor is it motivated merely by hatred; it is also, literally and morally, a *blood* relationship, perhaps the most profound reality of the American experience, and we cannot begin to unlock it until we accept how very much it contains of the force and anguish and terror of love. (14)

Baldwin's use of the term 'blood relationship' to describe the relationship between Black and White Americans, and his view that the essence of this relationship is 'love' suggests an emotional belief that this relationship is almost beyond analysis and intellectual examination, a direct contrast to Wright's attempts to understand the situation of the Negro using all the analytic tools of modern knowledge. Herein lies the essence of the contrast between their Negritude to which we shall return.

Bigger is the tethered monster of Black Americans, the dark secret of an ironic mode of life, the irrational monster the Black American must continually placate in operating the Reality Principle, according to Baldwin: '.........and it is this, this necessary ability to contain and even, in the most

honourable sense of the word, to exploit the "nigger", which lends to Negro life its high element of the ironic and which causes the most well-meaning of their American critics to make such exhilarating errors when attempting to understand them.' (15)   Wright's presentation of Bigger's story is for Baldwin a failed one: Baldwin regards Bigger as the abstract product of an abstract society, going inevitably to his doom, watched in self-satisfied horror and amazement, and not without a certain pride in its creation, by the society which produces him. Bigger is an icon of the negativity within White society, but the very mechanicality of the relationship between Bigger and that society, an abstract negativity, allows for the absence of the possibility of redemption of Bigger and of society.

Baldwin's view of Wright's protagonist stems from his notions of the human, human relationships, the individual, the social, and the relationship between the individual and social realms. These notions are stated with a certain directness indicating both a line of argument and an emotion. 'Literature and sociology are not one and the same' Baldwin declares in 'Everybody's Protest Novel' indicating the finical determination of any 'Professor of High Culture' to preserve 'Literature' from 'Sociological tract'. Literature, for him, should concern itself with the incontestable 'thereness' and mystery of the human as compared to the social being. This absolutist division would seem to stem from a passionate impatience with White America's view of the Negro:

> He is a social and not a personal or a human problem; to think of him is to think of statistics, slums, rapes, injustices, remote violence; it is to be confronted with an endless cataloguing of losses, gains, skirmishes; it is to feel virtuous, outraged, helpless, as though his continuing status among us were somehow analogous to disease-cancer, perhaps, or tuberculosis-which must be checked, even though it cannot be cured. In this arena the black man acquires quite another aspect from that which he has in life. We do not know what to do with him in life; if he breaks our sociological and sentimental image of him we are panic-stricken and we feel ourselves betrayed. (16)

But Baldwin's suggestion that Wright also treats his protagonist as an

abstract figure is misplaced. In his introduction to the novel, Wright indicates that one of his problems in writing Bigger's story was the avoidance of the focus on Bigger as the sole visible subject. Bigger is 'the common man' but Wright had to reproduce his vivid individualism and difference: Bigger and his fate were so common on the American scene in the thirties that paradoxically, if Wright had concentrated solely upon the intricacies of this fate, this focus would have made the novel nothing but a common crime fiction. Wright's problem was to draw out the universality of Bigger as a type, and the commoness of his story as history whilst maintaining his visibility. He felt reverberations of Bigger's negative energy during this period, in Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Russia, in White America (in 'the waves of recurring crime, the silly fads and crazes, the quicksilver changes in public taste, the hysteria and fears.......') (17) as well as amongst rebellious Negro youth. Wright's penetrating perception of the universality of Bigger's negative energy suggests he was fully aware that Bigger was not just a 'Negro problem', but it was nonetheless the Negro who assumed the burden of this negativity. As an agent of negativity the Negro would be used as the symbol for the projection of all the excess and wildness manifest in American society.

To the extent that Bigger's fate is marked out and metaphorised early in the novel as a non-productive negativity, Baldwin's observations about the protest novel are relevant here; the very abstractness of Bigger's fate makes for his invisibility and the absence of a centre for the novel.

But the novel is only a protest to the extent that Picasso's Guernica, for example, is a protest. When asked by two German soldiers, who was responsible for the painting, Picasso said, you. Picasso's painting contains the abstractness and the vividness of an individual act of horror, making the abstract (that is, the universal responsibility as well as the responsibility of the German war machine) visible. Wright also says to White America, 'you did this', and Bigger's rebellion is a productive negation to the extent that it makes the abstract and invisible visible. If he focused solely on the pity and horror of Bigger's fate the abstract would continue to remain invisible. The occasional hostile White American critic's reaction to the novel (see Richard Wright Reader) (18) was congruent with the extent to which it revealed the horrifying negativity of the whole American social and political scene, and made vivid the metaphorical Bigger which, as Baldwin admits, every Black

American carries within him. The White American was forced to see the Negro by being faced with the negativity of his own society, and told, you did this. There was always talk throughout American history of sending the Blacks elsewhere (usually Africa); get rid of the Blacks it was thought, and you get rid of the negativity of the social structure. Wright, as Baldwin was to echo later, was saying, the negativity is your doing.

Both Baldwin and Wright indicate, in their protagonists Rufus Scott and Bigger Thomas, the continued sense of exclusion of the freed slave and his decendants from the bourgeois social and political process. This theme of exclusion is of course an important concern of modern literature-for example in the works of Kafka, Jean Genet, Samuel Beckett.

This sense of exclusion is the concomitant of the twentieth century situation of political man in which the superimposition of the state over the individual as a universal having an independent existence has become an historical fact. In this situation the division between the individual and the social/political becomes a meaningful one.

In ancient slave-owning societies the freed slaves who had become citizens could fully participate in the political process whereas the participation of the Black person in the American political system was until recently discouraged by many of his White fellow citizens. M.I. Finley notes that participation in the democratic process in Athenian society was regarded as an ethical duty: Thucydides quotes Pericles as declaring: "A man may at the same time look after his own affairs and those of the state........We consider anyone who does not share in the life of the citizen not as minding his own business but as useless." (19) Finley notes that Athenian participatory democracry may have been an anathema to elitists such as Plato and Aristotle but it was efficacious in ensuring the participation of the demos, or common man:

> Athens therefore provides a valuable case-study of how political leadership and popular participation succeeded in coexisting, over a long period of time, without either the apathy and ignorance exposed by public opinion experts, or the extremist nightmares that haunt elitist theorists. (20)

In Contrast many modern theorists of democracy regard participation as a positive danger. W.H. Morris Jones in an article titled 'In Defence of Apathy' argued for the benefits of the apathy of a substantial proportion of those elligible to take part in the democratic process.(21) The exclusion of the Black person from the political process was of course not just a matter of choice; it was one of the legacies of slavery.

Legacies of slavery

The contradictions arising from the status of the slave manifest after emancipation or manumission in both ancient and modern slavery, especially in the areas of sexuality and family life. They arise from the peculiar situation of the slave as both product of, and symbol of the negativity at the foundation of the system.

One aspect of ancient slavery shared by modern slavery, is the idea of the 'answerability' of the slave with his body. Finley notes in 'Ancient Slavey and Modern Ideology' (22) that corporal punishment was, with a few exceptions, reserved for slaves in ancient slavery. Slaves were permitted to give evidence only under torture. Most historians, he notes find this latter provision irrational, yet if 'the slave was answerable with his body', as ancient societies formulated it, there was some logic behind this practice. Behind the practice lay what Finley calls the 'ambiguity' of ancient slavery, and what historians of modern slavery call its 'irony'. Finley states the dilemma of modern slavery thus: 'If a slave is a property with a soul, a non-person and yet indubitably a biological human being, institutional procedures are to be expected that will degrade and undermine his humanity and so distinguish him from human beings who are not property.' (23)

Both ancient slavery and modern capitalist slavery share the attempted degradation of the slaves through their sexuality. Finley notes that the answerability of the ancient slaves with their bodies manifested itself in the direct sexual exploitation of slaves by their masters and the latter's family and friends. Seneca writes: 'Unchastity (impudicitia) is a crime in the freeborn, a necessity for a slave, a duty (officium) for the freedman.' (24) Noteworthy here is the capacity of slavery to overturn morality: what is a crime for a 'freeborn' is a 'necessity' for a slave. Slavery breeds negativity: the slave is given licence, nay coerced into overturning conventional morality, thereby

exposing the negativity of its basis. Modern slavery in the Americas was a negation of family life as preached to Christian congregations in the metropolis. The fittest males were used to breed the next generation of slaves with randomly-chosen females. The slave master was free to rape and violate his female slaves. Part of the legacy of this sexual system is the Negro's connection with all the negative aspects of sexuality in Western ideology and fantasy. (25)

Naming and violence were also important connections which ancient slavery shares with modern slavery and indicates an important aspect of the situation of both the protagonists of 'Another Country' and 'Native Son'. The Greek habit of referring to male slaves of any age as 'boy' (Païs) is reminiscent of the American habit of referring to Black males as 'boy' a habit still prevalent in the deep South and South Africa. Finley sees an important connection in a work of Artistophanes, who, writing on this point, (Wasps 1297-8, 1307) once invented an etymology of 'païs from 'paiein', 'to beat', 'and that was not the only one of his jokes to point to a hard reality.' (26) The reductive act of naming, and the reductive capacity of violence was something which both ancient and modern slavery shared: naming was associated with violence, ownership with branding. In modern slavery a change of owner (and therefore a change of name) was often accompanied by a violent separation from family and kin. One of the false notes of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' is that his changes of owners is not accompanied by changes in Uncle Tom's name or in his nature: he remains the upright victim throughout the vicissitudes of his fortune. Rufus Scott and Bigger Thomas on the other hand are two figures who have evidently internalised the violence of a democracy which seems both to embrace them in the solid all-American sounds of their names and simultaneously exclude them from the social fabric as invisible outsiders.

What is so galling for Baldwin about Bigger's family life, that is, the fact that it is shown as having failed him, is quite congruent with the history of family life under slavery. Modern slavery generally made for the dissolution of family life. Finley mentions a recent American study in which it was calculated that even on the low estimate that a mere 1.92% of the slave population of the Southern states was sold in any given year, the statistical consequence was that any given slave had a virtually 50% chance of being

sold at least once in the course of a 35-year lifetime' and on average 'would witness 11.4 sales of members of his family of origin and of his own immediate family.' (27) The strength of Negro family life was upheld despite the effects of slavery. The weakness of Bigger's relationship with his family may reasonably be connected with the degradation of family life under slavery, the poverty, and the effects of unemployment described in the novel.

Bigger Thomas is also a product of the chronic effects of modern slavery. One of the differences between ancient and modern slavery was the slave's transformation from human object to a subject with full citizenship rights upon manumission in ancient slavery. He changed from non-person to person, from non-citizen to citizen; children born subsequently were also freed persons. Ancient freedmen could melt into the surrounding society after a few generations. Freed slaves in modern capitalist slavery not only carried an external sign of the origin of slavery in skin colour, but also the economic, social, and psychological effects; all of which made easier their exclusion from social and political processes.

This exclusion of the Black from the social process was of course enshrined in the ideologies of slavery and post-slavery. If the concept 'person' carries with it the idea of a figure with constitutional rights, the American constitution relegated slaves to non-persons, 'other persons', 'such persons', and persons 'held to service or labour'. But the historical triumph of the American Negro has been the refusal of Baldwin's division between the social and the human, or the recognition that the social is a guarantee of the human. It is the Negro more than any other who has had to make the outward movement from himself to the social order. This movement manifests necessarily it would seem, in the negation of this order.

Negation as philosophy and social act

In 'Black Skin White Masks' Frantz Fanon outlines the philosophical basis for the Negro's movement towards negativity:

> In effect, what happens is this: as I begin to recognise that the Negro
> is the symbol of sin, I catch myself hating the Negro. But then I
> recognise that I am a Negro. There are two ways out of this conflict.
> Either I ask others to pay no attention to my skin, or else I want them

to be aware of it. I try then to find value for what is bad-since I have unthinkingly conceded that the Black man is the colour of evil. In order to terminate this neurotic situation, in which I am compelled to choose an unhealthy conflictual solution: to rise above the absurd drama that others have staged around me, to reject the two terms that are equally unacceptable, and, through one human being, to reach out for the universal. (28)

Under slavery the Negro was forced to choose his humanity: out of this choice emerges the embrace of universal freedom. This choice which was strictly no choice at all, (I am denying Sartre's admitted idealistic notion of existential choice in such a situation) is necessarily an eschatological one, literally, a question of life or death. After deciding to fight an owner determined to break his spirit, Fredrick Douglass notes:

> This battle with Mr Covey, undignified as it was and as I fear my narration of it is, was the turning point in my 'Life as a slave'........I was a man now.......I was no longer a servile coward, trembling under the frown of a brother worm of the dust, but my long-cowed spirit was roused to an attitude of independence. I had reached the point at which I was not afraid to die. This spirit made me a freeman in fact, though I still remained a slave in form. When a slave cannot be flogged, he is more than half free. He has a domain as broad as his own manly heart to defend, and he is really 'a power on earth'. (29)

Either the slave exists as a slave, i.e. a non-person, or he rebels against the existing order: either way involves an embrace of the negative. Robin Blackburn, editor of 'New Left Review' in a talk to the Centre For Caribbean Studies, University of London,Goldsmiths College, (30) noted that under capitalism, slavery was meant to be a state of being; the slave was meant to be nothing other than what he was, to have no transcendent possibilities or possibilities for transcendence. Any act of self-choice necessarily meant a negation of this state. Out of this embrace emerges the understanding of negation as a continuous liberating process. Thus Douglass notes:

Power concedes nothing without demand.......Men may not get all they pay for in this world; but they must certainly pay for all they get. If we ever get free from all the oppression and wrongs heaped upon us, we must pay for their removal. We must do this by labour, by suffering, by sacrifice, and if needs be, by our lives, and the lives of others. (31)

Out of this embrace emerges also, the positive espousal of freedom as a universal. Those who have emerged out of the experience of slavery are sometimes the most advanced in finding solidarity with the oppressed of all peoples. Douglass writes:

.........Though I am more closely connected and identified with one class of outraged, oppressed and enslaved people, I cannot allow myself to be insensible to the wrongs and suffering of any part of the great family of man. I am not only an American slave, but a man, and as such, am bound to use my powers for the welfare of the whole human brotherhood.........`(32)

The man of Negritude may be seen as the rebel determined to alter the universal 'man' through a subversion of the society which negates it. It means an embrace in common cause with those engaged in a radical redefinition of 'man'. Given the state's oppressive stance towards the Negro's freedom, this embrace of the universal necessarily means a negative stance towards the state. For Douglass the ex-slave this negative stance continues after emancipation, remains even as the state alters its attitude towards the Negro, since it is part of the very structure of negation which has created change initially. Douglass mounts a critique of the American state during slavery:

What, to the American slave, is your fourth of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham, your boasted liberty, an unholy licence; your

national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery.......There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States, at this very hour............(33)

And this critique is echoed years later by Richard Wright in a letter to a Uraguayan sculptor, who wonders whether a realistic depiction of the plight of the United States Negro would not prejudice the anti-facist war effort:

There are 13,000 black people in the United States who practically have no voice in the government that governs them........who, daily and hourly, are restricted in their behavior to an orbit branded as inferior; who must, for the most part, live their lives in artificially marked-off, ghetto-like areas of our cities and countryside; and whose manliness and self-assertion generally warrant instant reprisal!

Can you know this and hesitate to speak or act?..........(34)

The Negro discovers the social in the act of collective negation. One of the aims of the slave system was of course to prevent the formation of a collective consciousness amongst the slaves; hence the separation of the slaves from the same tribe, the disruption of family life, the sale from owner to owner. The slave was meant to operate as an isolated individualised capitalist commodity, with only the consciousness required to enable him to work intelligently, without merging with others in common cause.

The triumph of the American Negro has been the discovery of the universal as outlined by Fanon, out of a situation of individual isolation, and the discovery of a collective consciousness of negativity. This negativity moves, as noted by Fanon, from a contemplation of the absurd contradictions of the Negro's situation within the social structure, a movement indeed from the personal to the social. As part of a co-ordinated drive towards emancipation,

Fredrick Douglass's critique of the state was a productive negation. Wright's critique was part of the left's condemnation of the state, which has, through its support of racism, betrayed its putative democratic aims and failed its Blacks.

Wright's Bigger Thomas is an example of those who feel betrayed by the state. Many of its White critics refused to accept the vision of negativity which 'Native Son' unmasked for, Wright was suggesting that the Negro's necessity for negation in that era could manifest authentically only as rebellion. Only the Bigger Thomas's of American Negro life showed any capacity for rebellion Wright maintains; and rebellion was the only genuine form of negation possible. From Nat Turner to Malcolm X this form of negation has had immense attraction for a sizeable proportion of American Blacks during certain turbulent periods of American history such as the early nineteenth century, the 1930s and 1960s.

The Negritude Philosophies of Baldwin and Wright

Both Baldwin and Wright were born in relative poverty but determined not to be the victims of racist America. Born and raised in crime-ridden Harlem, Baldwin was 'icily determined-more determined, really than I knew-never to make peace with the ghetto but to die and go to Hell' before he would, " 'accept my 'place' in this republic!'" (35) Wright's was a transformation even further than Baldwin's, bordering on the fantastic, from poor peasant boy to renowned writer. It involved a movement across worlds and ideas which would have been undreampt of by the young Wright.

As a boy growing up in urban Harlem Baldwin went to a seemingly good school and seemed to have had a relatively good education. His decision to leave Harlem's poverty was based upon a well-built intellectual platform which was smoothly developed. His later statements can sound however like that of someone who is bewildered and confused by his place in the world as a Black man and reacts with simple absorbed ideological responses to situations where his self's integrity is challenged. In 'Notes of a Native Son' he declares:

> I know,.......that the most crucial time in my own development came
> when I was forced to recognize that I was a kind of bastard of the

West; when I followed the line of my past I did not find myself in Europe but in Africa. And this meant that in some subtle way, in a really profound way, I brought to Shakespeare, Bach, Rembrandt, to the stones of Paris, to the cathedral at Chartres, and to the Empire State Building, a special attitude. These were not really my creations, they did not contain my history; I might search them in vain forever for any reflection of myself. I was an interloper; this was not my heritage. At the same time I had no other heritage which I could possible hope to use...........(36)

This experience of being a strange excrescence attached tenuously to the West is repeated when he lives briefly in a small Switz village and the children shout at him and he considers that they at least own the West; a claim he is not in a position to make:

For this village, even were it incomparably more remote and incredibly more primitive, is the West, the West onto which I have been so strangely grafted. These people cannot be, from the point of view of power, strangers anywhere in the world; they have made the modern world, in effect, even if they do not know it. The most illiterate among them is related, in a way that I am not, to Dante, Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Aeschylus, Da Vinci, Rembrandt, and Racine; the cathedral at Chartres says something to them which it cannot say to me, as indeed would New York's Empire State Building, should anyone here ever see it. Out of their hymns and dances come Beethoven and Bach. Go back a few centuries and they are in their full glory-but I am in Africa, watching the conquerors arrive. (37)

The accusation by Baldwin that Wright seems to accord little importance to family life in 'Native Son' has some relevance to Wright's childhood. It was a somewhat fraught upbringing in which the desertion of the father at an early stage of the family, set in train a situation which was bound to have a

profound effect upon Wright's view of the family. Michel Fabre sums up some of the events in his childhood which must have influenced Wright's development as a writer:

> ....such childhood traumas as his father's desertion of the family, his mother's strict enforcement of obedience, finally the necessity for him to depend on the support of relatives, all these rooted Wright's outlook on precariousness, thus increasing his tendency to self-protective rebellion. In *Black Boy*, he decribes himself as emotionally deprived, and he projects upon the community in which he lived an unexpected lack of warmth. Before Wright could confront white racism, he had to assert himself against a black familial environment where Seventh Day Adventism seemed oppressive because it served to justify frugality and the banning of secular entertainments .... Wright's conception of individual freedom was thus forged in opposition to the discipline imposed by the family and religion. (38)

Wright's own childhood fully equipped him for an understanding of the realities of the role the family can play or fail to play in the life of a Negro youth. His traumatic childhood also explains the absence of precious idealism in his depiction of Black family life. The attitudes of the local Black community to his writing when he began to write, troubled him and alienated him further from the oppressive values of 'community' and 'family'.

Wright turned to liberals such as H.L.Mencken and the American naturalists such as T.Dreiser as a means of honing his literary style, and towards communism as a means of understanding his situation as a Black American in philosophical and political terms. He read the French existentialists Sartre, Camus, Simone De Beauvoir, and studied Freudianism: all these influences were utilised in the creation of his Negritude. Despite his traumatic early development therefore, or perhaps because of it, Wright seems to have had a clearer view of his place in the Western world than Baldwin. A typical illustration of this is his introduction to 'Pagan Spain': 'I'm a self-conscious negro and I'm the product of Western culture, living with

white people far from my racial origins.' (39) In a letter to Kwame Nkrumah who was about to take power in Ghana Wright states his view of his own position vis a vis the West before advising Nkrumah about the attitude he should adopt towards certain Westerners:

> .... I cannot, as a man of African descent brought up in the West, recommend with good faith the agitated doctrines and promises of the hard-faced men of the West. Kwame, until they have set their own houses in order with their own restless populations, until they have solved their racial and economic problems, they can never-no matter *what* they may say to you at any *given* moment!-deal honestly with you.......(40)

This distrust of the West did not deter Wright from advocating to Nkrumah that Africans should be forced into the twentieth century, which he acknowledged was a Western creation.

Wright's role as writer was already outlined for him by the critic Jean-Paul Sartre before his coming to Europe. Wright was the great Negro novelist who had discovered his subject even as he began to write: given the situation of Blacks in America Wright could not depict them as other than an oppressed minority:

> Can one imagine for a moment that he would agree to pass his life in the contemplation of the eternal True, Good, and Beautiful when ninety percent of the negroes in the South are practically deprived of the right to vote?.............Thus, if an American negro finds that he has a vocation as a writer, he discovers his subject at the same time. He is the man who sees the whites from the outside, and each of whose books will show the alienation of the black race within American society.(41)

Nor could his writing avoid an element of protest given the abject situation of

the people who formed his subject. Wright saw it as his role to restore the true humanity of the Negro by advocating his right to be an equal part of the social and political processes of America: in the true spirit of Pericles Wright argued that the denial of the Negro's rights in those sphere s was a reduction of his humanity. Bigger Thomas is reduced through lack of a full participation in the social process and his acute awareness of it. Wright's success lay in a skilful blending of the social and the personal, and a careful rendering of the relationship between the two.

Baldwin did not, unlike Wright, begin his writing career with a successful 'protest novel'. 'Go Tell It To The Mountain', his first notable work centers around the lives of a Black family. In a number of his later novels such as 'Another Country','Tell me How Long The Train's Been Gone', 'Just Above My Head', it is Negro family life which is foregrounded as the symbolic Other to the anomie of the American way of life.

Yet even in those works Baldwin could not entirely uphold his own tenet demanding fiction which would highlight the Negro's individuality rather than his societal situation. Baldwin was unable to escape the contradictions of his position: he sought the integrity of an artist; instead he found his role already cast for him as the spokesman for the American Negro, a role he somewhat helped to cast for himself in publications such as 'Notes of a Native Son', 'Nobody Knows My Name', 'The Fire Next Time'.

Wright used realism as the most effective vehicle for his own writing given his interest in examining the social in a bare style after Hemingway.(42) He would claim that his realism is a humanism since the place of man is truly in the social, although he was particularly concerned with the plight of the individual on the margins of society. Baldwin would claim that his humanism is a realism since his portrayal of the Negro family as the background reality which places the actions of a Rufus Scott in perspective foregrounds the values of Negro family life as opposed to the distorted pathological heroes Wright depicts without the accompanying corrective. Wright would claim to have known American life in all its variety and that in portraying it as an abstract nightmare he was describing its reality for many Negroes: the perspective of a Bigger Thomas is an important aspect of the American scene.

There is a necessary dialogue between Wright's position and that of Baldwin; Wright argued against Baldwin that the personal was to be found in the social, that the two were not opposed. Baldwin exaggerated the difference between the existential situation of the Negro as an individual and the Negro perceived as a social category. Wright brilliantly married the two views in his vivid descriptions of the life of Bigger Thomas at the beginning of 'Native Son', and the later court-room discussion of Bigger as an American category.

Throughout his fiction Baldwin himself manifests the impossibility of that separation which he argued for in his criticism of Wright. In 'Just Above My Head' the interweaving lives of its Black characters manifest against a background in which even if they may have relations with individual White people they cannot avoid seeing the White world as a mass, and being seen by Whites in their turn as a category.Thus the main protagonist Hall Montana goes into a bar with a friend and cannot help perceiving the White barman as a type:

> I didn't like his face. He was young, probably the son of the owner, one of those hip white boys who know that they know niggers, know them so well that they can imitate the nigger's language, and this gives them the right to treat niggers like scum.' (43)

Montana complains here in turn that the White barman is guilty of viewing Blacks as a mass out of a condescending 'knowledge'. Throughout his later fiction Baldwin is concerned with the difficulties if not impossibilites of Blacks and Whites perceiving each other as individuals rather than categories.

Baldwin's Negritude shares a common thread with the Negritude of Senghor: both see the values of the Black world as a counterweight to the dissolute forces of the West. Baldwin regards the Black family as a mystical centre of warmth in opposition to the forces of etiolation threatening American life. If for Senghor New York with its hard articulations lacks the life-giving forces of Black humanism, for Baldwin Black humanism which he calls 'love', is the only hope for a lost America: 'You must accept them and accept them with

love. For these innocent people have no other hope.......' (44) Both Senghor and Baldwin seem to be answering the accusations of negativity of the first form: if the Other seeks to deny their humanity they will cure his sickness through a true Christian embrace; Baldwin through love, Senghor through a sexual union of the Black's intuition with the White's intellect.

In contrast the Negritude of Césaire and Wright is secular in outlook and answerable to negativity of the second form: they will celebrate the Negro's difference in the process of mounting a critique of bourgeois humanism. Both these former communists who have studied and absorbed the most progressive aspects of Western culture seem to have a much clearer view of their role as Black men in the Western world than Baldwin and Senghor. They will have the necessary dialogue with the Other, necessary for in the Negro's case the Other is within himself, but on their own terms.

In 'Cahier..........' Césaire celebrates the death of 'the old Negritude', the Negritude of the previous generations, the Negritude which anwers the accusations of the negativity of the first form by a counter-proclamation of the Negro's virtues:

> ....I say hurrah!
>
> my grandfather dies, I say hurrah!
>
> the old Negritude progressively disintegrates.
>
> Let nobody say: he was a good Negro.
>
> The White says that he was a good Negro,
>
> a real good Negro, a good Negro to his old
>
> master......... (45)

Instead Césaire, like Jean Genet, celebrates and makes a virtue of that for which the Negro is most notorious.

Césaire's Negritude is influenced by surrealism, Freudiansm, Marxism, Nietzschean philosophy: all the foremost points of modernism are utilised in a Negritude which seeks to move from the person of the Negro to an

understanding of his situation in the West.

Michel Fabre notes that Wright's consideration of the Negro made a similar outward movement: 'In the thirties and forties he had considered that his role as a black writer forced him first to destroy the stereotypes of the "noble savage" and Uncle Tom and then to expose the definition of "the Negro" given by America.' (46) By the late forties he sees Negro history as symbolic of modern man's movement from agragrian to industrial civilization: '........Negro life in the U. S. dramatically symbolizes the struggle of a people whose forefathers lived in a warm, simple culture and who are now trying to live the new way of life that dominates our time: machine-civilization and all the consequences flowing from it.' (47) In 'White Man Listen' Wright, perhaps naïvely, advocates an embrace of the most progressive aspects of the Western Enlightenment as a means of breaking out of the shackles of tradition in Africa and Asia:

> The white Western world, until relatively recently the most secular
> and free part of the earth.......labored unconsciously and tenaciously
> for five hundred years to make Asia and Africa (that is, the elite in
> those areas) more secular-minded than the West!.........I do
> say"Bravo!" to the consequences of Western plundering, a plundering
> that created the conditions for the possible rise of rational societies for
> the greater majority of mankind...........That part of the heritage of the
> West which I value-man stripped of the past and free for the future-
> has now been established as lonely bridgeheads in Asia and
> Africa........It means that the spirit of the Enlightenment, of the
> Reformation, which made Europe great now has a chance to be
> extended to   all mankind! (48)

This is not to suggest that Wright was content that he had found the answer to the Negro's problem by a judicious utilisation of Western progress. Michel Fabre notes that Wright strove continually for a balanced outlook for the Negro way of life in his writing:

> As a result of this unreconciled striving for a balance between rational

organization and imaginative creativity, Wright's works reflect more than a critical commitment to his race and his country, far more than a passionate fight for social justice. His intellect craved progress and modernity, his feelings could not be content with such. The poet in him always hankered after wholeness of vision, after an organic view of existence which the thinker could not achieve. (49)

Unlike Senghor or Baldwin both Wright and Césaire strove continually for a redefinition of the Negro's place in the West and were not ready to believe that they had found it in a fixed ideological position.

In the next chapter I examine the theoretical position of Wilson Harris as a break from the dilemmas of Negritude.

References

1. James Baldwin, 'Another Country'. Corgi Books. (1964). p3.

2. Op. Cit. p4.

3. Op. Cit. p10.

4. Op. Cit. p35.

5. Op. Cit. p36.

6. James Baldwin, 'The Fire Next Tme': Penguin Books, (1964). p15.

7. Op. Cit. pp16-17.

8. Op. Cit. p17.

9. Ibid.

10. Richard Wright, 'Native Son'. Penguin Books. (1972). p43.

11 . Op. Cit. p44.

12. Op. Cit. p461.

13. Ibid.

14. James Baldwin, 'Notes of A Native Son': Corgi. (1970). p33.

15. Op. Cit. p14.

16. Op. Cit. pp18-19.

17 Richard Wright, introduction to 'Native Son'. Penguin Books. (1972). p18.

18. See for example 'Burton Rascoe: Review of Native Son': Richard Wright Reader. Harper & Row. (1978), pp51-55.

19. M.I.Finley, Quoted in 'democracy Ancient and Modern'. Hogarth Press. (1985). p30.

20. Op. Cit. p33.

21. Op. Cit. p4.

22. M.I. Finley, 'Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology' Chatto and Windus. (London, 1980) p95

23. Ibid.

24. Op. Cit. p96.

25. Frantz Fanon, 'Black Skin White Masks'. See pp112-120 for Fanon's development of the concept of the Negro as an sexual figure in the Western imagination.

26. M.I. Finley, 'Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology',p96.

27. Op. Cit. p76

28. Frantz Fanon, 'Black Skin White Masks', p140.

29. Quoted by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o in 'Writers in Politics', Heinemann Education Books. (London 1981). p130.

30. Robin Blackburn, 'Talk given to 'Centre For Caribbean Studies' Univ. of London, Goldsmiths College. Sep. 1985.

31. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o', Writers in Politics', p131.

32. Op. Cit. p129.

33. Op. Cit. pp136-137.

34. Michel Fabre, 'Richard Wright Reader', pp71-72.

35. James Baldwin, 'The Fire Next Time', p29.

36. James Baldwin, 'Notes of a Native Son', p4.

37. Op. Cit. p140.

38. Michel Fabre, 'Richard Wright Reader', p x.

39. Op. Cit. p110.

40. Op. Cit. p102.

41. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'What is Literature', Harper & Row. (1965). p71.

42. Richard Wright, See Wright's introduction to 'Long Black Song', 'Richard Wright Reader'. p257.

43. James Baldwin, 'Just Above My Head', Corgi books. (1980). p319.

44. James Baldwin, 'The Fire Next Time' p16.

45. Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier d'un Retour Au Pays Natal'. Présence Africaine. (1971). p142.

46. Michel Fabre, 'Richard Wright Reader', p xvi

47. Ibid.

48. Op. Cit. p xix

49. Op. Cit. p xxii

CHAPTER 9

WILSON HARRIS: A BREAK FROM NEGRITUDE'S SELF-OTHER RELATION

In this chapter I argue that Wilson Harris's theoretical position represents a plausible break from the problems and dilemmas created by Negritude for itself.

In Wilson Harris's relationship with the West there is none of Aimé Césaire's qualification, manifest in Césaire's declaration that he became aware that even though his consciousness may have been formed by French culture, his unconscious was African. Césaire's art becomes an attempt to enter into dialogue with this unconscious. Like Igor Stravinsky's dialogue with the music of the folk in 'Les Noces' and 'The Rites of Spring', (1)Césaire's poetry manifests a dialogue within himself of his modernism and ancient African roots. This dialogue manifests as a new poetry which is, in effect, the modern Negro intellectual's imaginary experience:

> From thinking of the congo
>
> I have become a Congo buzzing with forests and
>
> rivers where the whip cracks like a great flag
>
> the flag of the prophet
>
> where the water makes
>
> likouala-likouala
>
> where the bolt of anger hurls a good green axe,
>
> forcing the wild boars of putrefaction to pour
>
> over the beautiful violent edge
>
> of the nostrils.....(2)

This Negro experience is part of Césaire's dialogue with modernism. The Negro's experience is offered as an opening gift in what is to become a more fertile reconstitution of the age-old Manichaean relationship between the Negro and Western culture.

Yet there can be no doubt that Negritude represents a circumscribed dialogue rejected by notable Black writers as (a) demeaning, (b) the voice of appeasement lacking in revolutionary capacity as a 'mere' literary movement. (3)

All the concepts with which Negritude took issue, both in the first form of negativity and the second form, all the concepts of the Black which it offered in its dialogue in exchange were already part of the language of the Other either overtly, or 'unconsciously', in the concepts of noble savagery, for example. Bakhtin notes:

> No member of a verbal community can ever find words in the language that are neutral, exempt from the aspirations and evaluations of the other, uninhabited by the other's voice. On the contrary, he receives the word by the other's voice and it remains filled with that voice. He intervenes in his own context from another context, already penetrated by the other's intentions. His own intention finds a word already lived in. (4)

Negritude as a dialogue with the Other, using 'the language of the Other' could be labelled a part-product of the Other. By engaging in a dialogue with the Other via the *concept* of the Negro in language the Negritudists were ineluctably drawn into using his language.

Here again the Negritude theorists seemed to have anticipated a problem which has become acute for post-modernism. In a talk given to the 'Literature and Philosophy Society' of Warwick University (22.1.91) Robert Young observed that most post-modernist theorists recognised that a removed 'external' critique of post-capitalist society is now no longer a luxury for the cultural critique. Co-option into the machinery of repressive tolerance is the inevitable fate of all cultural critics. The Negritude theorists' inevitable use of the language of the Other had anticipated the fate of the post-modernist cultural critic who becomes co-opted into the very processes he criticises.

Wilson Harris seeks a language of community which will break with the Manichaeanism of Self and Other, initiated by the Negritudists. In 'The

310

Writer and Society' Harris explores the possibilities for this notion of 'community':

> It is as if within his work he (the writer, my parenthesis) sets out again and again across a certain territory of primordial but broken recollection in search of a community or species of fiction whose existence he begins to discern. By species of fiction I am thinking of a kind of intense visualization within which one is drawn, or driven, to enter overlapping capacities of nature-one breaks, as it were, the spell of self-sufficient social animal; one breaks through, as if were, the one-sidedness of self-sufficient social character. (5)

Harris begins with a desire to escape the biases of conventional society into an imaginary community not yet fully visualised. The search begins with a break from the imprisoning mould of established notions of community. If the Negritudists began with notions of community which moved from 'Black' to 'universal' (Senghor); Harris disdains all such concepts of community. His is a search for an imaginary, pre-conceptual, 'premordial' community not yet formed by any intellectual processes. As a 'third world' writer Harris sees his allegiance not, as is the case with so many Caribbean writers, (George Lamming, Edward K. Brathwaite, Césaire, to name but a few) with the 'people' of that world but with an older imaginary community amongst which the writer can exercise his creative freedom free from the 'biases' associated with existing notions of community. If the fight against assimilation, *for* a genuine universal involved the Negritudists in a dialogue of conflict with the Other, Harris would undermine the whole scenario of 'Self' and 'Other' initiated by the Negritudists which he sees as the seedbed of that conflict.

Harris's position is a deeply philosophical one: the constitution of established 'community' just *is*, for Harris tending towards 'habitual boundaries of prejudice'. (6) To the extent that Philosophy is a critique of the Real (7), Harris's philosophical position is a 'protest position' and he stands in ironical danger of adopting the very stance of protest for which he criticises other Caribbean writers. (8) For Harris creative fiction which would break from the values of established notions of 'community', established within the conventions of the nineteenth century novel, must break from those

conventions. It is worth examining what Harris considers to be the primary configurations of that genre. In 'Tradition and The West Indian Novel' Harris states it thus:

> The novel of persuasion rests on grounds of apparent common sense: a certain 'selection' is made by the writer, the selection of items, manners, uniform conversation, historical situations, etc, all lending themselves to build and present an individual span of life which yields self-conscious and fashionable judgements, self-conscious and fashionable moralities. The tension which emerges is the tension of individuals-great or small-on an accepted plane of society we are persuaded has an inevitable existence. There is an element of freedom in this method nevertheless, an apparent range of choices, but I believe myself that this freedom-in the convention which distinguishes it, however liberal this may appear-is an illusion. It is true of course that certain kinds of realism, impressive realism, and also a kind of fateful honesty distinguished and still distinguishes that novel of individual character especially where an element of great suffering arises and does a kind of spiritual violence to every 'given' conception.....(9)

This genre is also associated for Harris with the values of nineteenth century liberalism, which though it has a certain 'dignity', 'unmasks itself to reveal inordinate ambitions for power where one least suspects it to exist.' (10) The nineteenth century genre is static and ties the creative writer to a notion of community containing both prejudice and power. It is this concept of community to which most West Indian writers have been tied, Harris thinks: 'Therefore the West Indian novel-so-called-in the main-is inclined to suffer in depth (to lose in depth) and may be properly assessed in nearly every case in terms of surface tension and realism-as most novels are assessed today-in the perceptive range of choices which emerges, and above all in the way in which the author *persuades* you to ally yourself with situation and character.' (11)

Harris shares this critique of the nineteenth novel with a modern critic like Stephen Heath, working firmly with the European tradition. Heath notes that our notion of the real has in part been formed by the formal structure of the nineteenth century novel of which we are all readers:

'.............in connection with the novel, it may be described in the notion of the *vraisemblable* of a particular society, the generally received picture of what may be regarded as 'realistic'; such vraisemblable being founded in our own culture by, amongst other things, the novel itself. Evidently this vraisemblable is not recognised as such, but rather as precisely 'Reality'; its function is the naturalization of that reality articulated by a society as *the* 'Reality' and its success is the degree to which it remains unknown as a form, to which it is received as mirror of 'reality' ever confirmed by a fixed source exterior to its discourse.' (12)

One of the failings of this tradition of the novel is the concept of 'person' which it attempts to persuade the reader to accept, that is, a 'fully-rounded' 'character' with biases and prejudices and 'good points' whom we could easily recognise in 'reality' if we were to meet him. It is important here to note that Harris associates the notion of reality created by the nineteenth century novel's ethos with the notion of reality apprehended in most West Indian novels, and the notion of reality which West Indian political thinkers adopt, that is, a notion which tends towards a 'consolidation' of certain biased views of the 'person' as a political, class, and racial 'animal'. Of course this critique applies to Negritude as a 'political' movement tending towards this view of 'person'.

Harris wants to break away from any 'conceptual' view of 'person' as such; his view of 'person' amounts to an 'intuition'. In 'Tradition and The West Indian Novel' Harris indicates the origin of this 'intuition' as connected with 'place' and 'historical entity', rather than 'social being':

The native and phenomenal environment of the West Indies, as I see it, is broken into many stages in the way in which one surveys an existing river in its present bed while plotting at the same time ancient and abandoned, indeterminate courses the river once followed. When I speak of the West Indies I am thinking of overlapping contexts of Central and South America as well. For the mainstream of the West Indies in my estimation possesses an enormous escarpment down which it falls, and I am thinking here of the European discovery of the New world and conquest of the ancient American civilizations which were themselves related by earlier and obscure levels of conquest.

> This escarpment seen from another angle possesses the features of a
> watershed, main or subsidiary, depending again on how one looks at
> it. (13)

This extended metaphor indicates Harris's desire to break with the 'social',
'consolidated' view of 'person' substituting instead a view which seeks to
explain the image of 'person' in a complex consideration of 'landscape'.
According to Harris's metaphor the 'West Indian' is composed of legacies
from South and Central America, European conquest, AmerIndian
civilizations, as well as the Caribbean Islands: a complex set of 'broken'
associations whose variability and nebulousness the writer must seek to
visualise rather than produce into a picture of consolidation. The task for the
creative writer seeking a new sense of 'community' is a large one for Harris:

> It is in this light that one must seek to relate the existing pattern of
> each community to its variable past, and if I may point to the
> phenomenal divide again, the question which arises is how one can
> begin to let these parts act on each other in a manner which fulfils *in
> the person* the most nebulous instinct for a vocation of being and
> independent spirit within a massive landscape of apparent lifelessness
> which yields nevertheless the essential denigration and erosion of
> historical perspectives. This indeed is a peculiarly West Indian
> question, strange as it may appear to some, and in fact a question
> peculiar to every phenomenal society where minorities (frail in
> historical origin or present purpose) may exist, and where
> comparatively new immigrant and racial cells sometimes find
> themselves placed *within* a dangerous misconception and upon a
> reactionary treadmill. And it is right here-if one begins to envisage an
> expanding outward and inward creative significance for the novel -
> that the monument of consolidation breaks down and becomes the
> need for a vision of consciousness. (14)

This 'vision of consciousness' is language in its Heideggerian sense, i.e., as
Being, to which C.L.R.James refers in his commentary on Harris's essays in
'Tradition The Writer & Society'. (15) What interests Harris is the notion of
language as freedom, as a system capable of transforming 'inner and outer

formal categories of experience, earlier and representative modes of speech itself..........' (16) There is a close connection here between Harris's notion that the configurations of the new West Indian novel are to be found in the capacities of language itself and   new criticism's view that the modern creative writer is engaged in a dialogue with language and its possibilities in the creative process itself. (17) In fact it is reasonable to suggest that many of Harris's concerns about writing fiction touch the ideas of modern European criticism though Harris has arrived at these views through his own deliberations.

The subtle and complex re-creation of the 'person' on which Harris is engaged is, he considers, part of the tradition of the Americas: 'The point I want to make in regard to the West Indies is that the pursuit of a strange and subtle goal, melting pot, call it what you like, is the mainstream (though unacknowledged) tradition in the Americas.'(18)

The capacity for freedom contained in language is important for Harris in the face of political tendencies towards prescription and inarticulacy he sees operating today. The vision of 'person' which Harris employs is one which is located in the capacity for expansion of the imaginative realm and the possibilities of language. This different vision of 'person' which is sought by the writer is not an object of pure fantasy. Harris compares the creative writer's imaginative act to that of the Haïtian dancer caught in a trance-like state under the influences of *vodun*.

> ....if the trance were a purely subjective thing-without action or movement-some would label it fantasy. But since in fact it exteriorizes itself, it becomes an intense drama of images in space, which may assume elastic limbs and proportions or shrink into a dense current of shrunken reflection on the floor. For what emerges are the relics of a primordial fiction where the images of space are *seen* as in an abstract painting. That such a drama has indeed a close bearing on the language of fiction, on the language of art, seems to me incontestable. The community the writer shares with the primordial dancer is, as it were, the complementary halves of a broken stage.(19)

There is thus a relation between the writer's imagination and the external. Harris himself has spoken of the sense of inevitability involved during the

creative process when the writing 'has its own logic'. Thus he notes:

> "The 'vision' of the poet (when one comprehends it from the opposite pole of 'dance') possesses a 'spatial' logic or 'convertible' property of imagination. Herein lies the essential humility of a certain kind of self-consciousness within which occurs the partial erasure, if nothing more, of the habitual boundaries of prejudice.'(20)

To recapitulate at this point; it becomes clear that Harris's notion of 'community' and 'person' has moved a long way from the notion of the 'Black' and the 'Negro' contained in Negritude. Whatever else it may be the Negritude concept contains values of 'self-sufficiency' and 'the social' which locate 'community' and 'person' at a different plane to Harris's view of these terms. In the Negritude view of these concepts we can still locate the social constructs and values usually associated with them.

Aimé Césaire would seem to be an exception to this Negritude tendency in his attempt to undermine the unitary self-sufficient image of the Negro as sterile negativity, to explode this image using the subversive possibilities of surrealism. Césaire introduces the Caliban-like image of the Negro as engaged in the language of nature rather than the language of power:

> Not caring to conquer....
>
> ....
>
> Tepid dawn of ancestral virtues ('Cahier.......pp116-118)

But this act of subversion manifests in the shadow of the Euro-American, the Other at which Césaire's statement aims a sideward glance, the Other on whom the sweep of the poetic subject's glance alights with full force a few lines later:

Hear the white world

....

Mercy for our naïve conquerors ('Cahier.........' pp118-120)

So this act of subversion or explosion of the concept of the Negro is always followed by a reconstitution which has to align itself in terms of the Other. This reconstitution manifests in terms of creative negativity but of course both sterile negativity and creative negativity are positions and ideological creations of the Other.

If Negritude represented a dialogue, tense, conflictual, an assertion of difference against prevalent assimilationist tendencies, Harris's work manifests a deconstruction of the terms of the original dialogue. Harris seeks instead a pluralogue among the various races of the Caribbean in which the White voice is but one in the play of voices. If the 'biases' of Negritude are due to the original terms of the dialogue Harris seeks new terms for the pluralogue which will undermine all biases, as he declares in 'Explorations':

> ....within the new art of fiction we are attempting to explore (and I would like to think that this is the visualization of 'Commonwealth'), it is a 'vacancy' in nature within which agents appear who are translated one by the other and who (in a kind of serial illumination- if 'serial' is the right word) reappear through each other, inhabit each other, reflect a burden of necessity, push each other to plunge into the unknown, into the translatable, transmutable legacies of history. Their uniqueness lies in this curious openness to originality as well as change: a constitution of humility in which the 'author' himself is an 'agent' in a metaphysical dimension compounded of losses and gains........(21)

In Harris's first published novel 'Palace of the Peacock' (22) the complex family relationships between three of the characters, Schomburg, Vigilance and Carrol reflects relationships amongst the crew. The relationships amongst the racially-varied crew travelling upriver through the Guianese jungle in

search of 'the folk' is a metaphorical representation of the complex interrelatedness of West Indian peoples, from AmerIndians to Africans, to modern Europeans. Donne, the White captain of the crew who dominates and frightens the folk is nonetheless part of them: "After all", he declares, "I've earned a right here as well. I'm as native as they, ain't I? A little better educated maybe whatever in hell that means. They call me sir and curse me when I'm not looking." Later he says, "The only way to survive of course is to wed oneself into the family." (23)

All the characters are connected by a series of subtle links which, as Harris observes in 'Tradition & The West Indian Writer', connects all West Indians living and dead: 'What in my view is remarkable about the West Indian in depth is a sense of subtle links, the series of subtle and nebulous links which are latent within him, the latent ground of old and new personalities.'(24) In 'Palace of the Peacock' these subtle links of sympathy are part of the warp and woof of the relationships among the crew:

> The whole crew was one spiritual family living and dying together in a common grave out of which they had sprung again from the same soul and womb as it were. They were all knotted and bound together in the enormous bruised head of Cameron's ancestry and nature as in the white unshaven head of Schomburgh's age and presence. (24)

> and

> The unceasing reflection of themselves in each other made them see themselves everywhere save where they had always stood.

> After a while this horrifying exchange of soul and this identification of themselves with each other brought them a partial return and renewal of confidence, a neighbourly wishful fulfilment and a basking in each other's degradation and misery that they had always loved and respected. (25)

Harris's work and his views represents a critique of the protest element of Negritude. By seeking a 'species of fiction' which allows for subtle exchanges between peoples and cultures breaking from the antipathetic element which undoubtedly manifests in Negritude the philosophy of Harris's work may be seen as the future of Caribbean literature *after* it has broken from that element

of ideological antipathy in Negritude towards a new sympathy for the self which can also embrace the Other.

The conclusion to be drawn from the above remarks is that Negritude is still an important force in Caribbean literature. The influence of Negritude is stronger than many Caribbean thinkers are prepared to allow. In my conclusion I want to focus on the legacy of Negritude.

References

1.Leonard Bernstein,'The Poetry of the Earth' from 'The Unanswered Question', Harvard Univ. Press. (London, 1976.) pp357-359.

2.Aimé Césaire, 'Cahier D'un Retour Au Pays Natal', p74.

3. see Stanislas Adotevi, 'The Strategy of Culture' in The Ideology of Blackness (edited with an introduction by Raymond Betts, D.C. Heath & Co. Lexington, Mass, 1971) pp186-196 and reprinted from The Black Scholar LI Nov. 1969 for a critique of Negritude along these lines.

4.Tzevetan Todorov. 'Mikhail Bakhtin: the dialogic Principle', Manchester Univ. Press. (1984), p48.

5.Wilson Harris, 'Tradition the Writer & Society', New Beacon Books, (London, 1967), p48.

6.Op. Cit. p52.

7. see Herbert Marcuse, 'One Dimensional Man', (chap. 5, Negative Thinking: The Defeated Logic of Protest') Sphere Books, (1970) pp105-119. 'Philosophy originates in dialectic; its universe of discourse responds to the facts of an antagonistic reality.' (p107) Macuse shows that philosophy has always been a critique of the Real.

8. See Wilson Harris, 'Tradition The Writer & Society'. On pp29-30, Harris notes that the West Indian novel 'belongs-in the main-to the conventional mould. Which is not surprising at this stage since the novel which consolidates situations to depict protest or affirmation is consistent with most kinds of over-riding advertisement and persuasion upon the writer for him to make national and political and social simplifications of experience in the world at large today.' On page 45 Harris observes, 'In fact it is one of the ironic things with West Indians of my generation that they may conceive of themselves in the most radical political light but their approach to art and literature is one which consolidates the most conventional and documentary techniques in the novel.'

9. Wilson Harris, 'Tradition The Writer & Society', p29.

10.Wilson Harris, The Frontier on Which Heart of Darkness Stands, from 'Explorations', Dangaroo Press, (Denmark, 1981), p135

11. Wilson Harris, 'Tradition The Writer & Society' p30.

12.Stephen Heath, 'The Nouveau Roman', Elek Books, (London, 1972), p20.

13.Wilson Harris, 'Tradition And The West Indian Novel' in 'Tradition The Writer & Society' pp30-31.

14. Op. Cit. pp31-32.

15. C.L.R. James: introduction to 'Tradition and The West Indian Novel', 'Tradition The Writer & Society' p71.

For further discussion of Heidegger's view of language and Being see the chapter titled ".......Poetically Man Dwells........." in 'Poetry, Language, Thought': by Martin Heidegger, Trans. & introduced by Albert Hofstader. Harper Colophon Books. (1971). See also, R. Bernasconi: ' "Where the Word is Wanting.....": George and Heidegger" ' in 'The Question of Language in Heidegger's History of Being': Macmillan, (New Jersey 1985) pp49-64.

16.Wilson Harris, 'Tradition..........' p32.

17. For discussion of the modern conception of the relation between language and writing see, Roland Barthes: 'To Write: An Intransitive Verb?' in 'The Structuralist Controversy': Ed. by Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato: John Hopkins Press. (London 1972) pp134-145 and the subsequent discussion between Barthes, Todorov, Lucien Goldmann and others: pp145-156.

18.Wilson Harris, 'Tradition.........' p32.

19.Op. Cit. pp51-52.

20.Op. Cit. p52.

21.Wilson Harris, 'Explorations', pp17-18.

22.Wilson Harris, 'Palace Of The Peacock', Faber, London 1960,

23.Op. Cit. p58.

24.Wilson Harris, 'Tradition.........' p29.

25.Wilson Harris, 'Palace Of The Peacock', p40, & p100.

CONCLUSION: THE LEGACY OF NEGRITUDE

I ended the previous chapter with the suggestion that the legacy of Negritude is still a potent force in Caribbean literature. Despite the assertions of certain critics of Negritude, Wole Soyinka, Ezekiel Mphahele, Stanislas Adotevi to name but three, the legacy of Negritude is more pervasive than they would allow. Reports of the death of Negritude have been greatly exaggerated.

Like feminism, Negritude lays claim to a theoretical model based upon the experience of a collectivity. It has a double aspect, as an ideology and an 'experience'. Césaire's Negritude, a poetic knowledge which, as noted earlier, he refused to conceptualize, is a reproduction of the experience of Negritude. This knowledge counters the self-proclaiming conceptualization of scientific knowledge: Césaire's major claim for the Negro is a telluric oneness with the earth and a defiance of the pride of Judaeo-Christian knowledge: 'my Negritude is neither a tower nor a cathedral'.

As a 'knowledge' Césaire's Negritude is also an ideology, but, it is engaged in a dialogue with the ideology of the Other. When the poetic subject of Césaire's 'Cahier.......' accuses or denounces himself, it is always with an implicit awareness that it is the ideology of the Other being ironically acknowledged. Claims for the Negro's earth-experience includes a dialogue with the kind of claims made for the Negro Friday in Tournier's novel and involves an irony since it means a dialogue with the Other's view of the Negro, but, it is a playful, not an oppressive irony.

If Césaire makes a claim for Negritude-as-experience Senghor's metaphysical elaboration ultimately reduces Negritude to a Manichaeanism which is 'stated' but not 'felt' in his poetry. The metaphysical bias of Senghor's thought manifests in 'To New York' for example, as a fixed position lacking in ironical self-awareness. Senghor's position is an exemplification of Nietzsche's caveat that truth begins to lose its value the moment it is stated.

Sartre's relationship with the two aspects of Negritude is illuminating as an illustration of its contradictions, which may be those of any movement purporting to be based on the experience of its adherents. Sartre stands

puzzled before Negritude as a poetic experience admitting, 'a white man could never speak suitably about Negritude since he hasn't experienced it internally and since European languages lack the words to describe it.' (1) This suggests that he acknowledges that Negritude is to be communicated among Blacks in the silences and lacunae of the very European languages in which it is expressed. But, as an ideology (which Sartre terms an 'anti-racist racism') Negritude *is* subject to Sartre's judgement which determines that it will eventually be appropriated by the greater class struggle. This notion was symbolically repudiated by Césaire in his break with the communist party. (2)

Since Negritude manifested as both poetry and ideology Sartre was entitled to judge it as ideology even if he approached the poetry with a certain care and empathy. Fanon's cry of betrayal stemmed from the feeling that Sartre's judgement applied to Negritude as a whole. Fanon was later to make a similar critique of Negritude if from a different perspective. Although he celebrates Césaire's Negritude poetry in 'Black Skin White Masks' (3), Fanon later attacked the 'Negro-ism' of Jacques Rabemananjara, and Léopold Senghor, as sentimental conservatism, while denouncing their colonialist political positions. (4) Negritude continues as an *experience* inspired by its poetry, to the present, as I shall argue later in this conclusion.

Negritude theory initiated the notion of 'the Black tradition' and the possibility of a critical theory based upon this tradition which Gates and other Black critics are in the process of formulating. It is reasonable to suggest that Negritude laid the first serious theoretical foundations for such a project. Together with feminist criticism Negritude has thus broken the mould of all-encompassing canonical criticism and raised new issues about the relationship between literature and culture which denies literature's 'neutrality'. A Black reading of such tomes within the critical canon as 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', 'Heart of Darkness', which challenges their comfortable reputations as 'classical Literature' and interrogates their ideologies, is a legacy of Negritude's interrogation of Western culture and its claims to be the representation of the whole of modern culture, despite its barbarities. Negritude pointed to racism as one of its barbarities and begun the challenge not, as in the case of 'Heart of Darkness' and the supporters of Noble Savagery, on behalf of the West itself, but its victims.

Another of Negritude's challenges was to the scientifico/linguistic system of common sense which the Negritudist saw as his chief oppressor. Césaire's 'Cahier..........' challenges the oppressions of instrumental reason and the comfortable racism contained in common sense, in his use of surrealism. The surrealists had of course opposed Western Reason as an oppressive veil upon the workings of the individual's psychology. In his introduction to 'Cahier......' André Breton notes:

> And here comes to the fore in bold characters what has always been the first article in the programme of surrealism: the clear-cut intention to deal the fatal blow to the so-called 'common sense' that has impudently usurped that title 'reason', the pressing need to do away with the deadly dissociation of the human mind in which reason has managed to seize all the power at the expense of its subconscious counterpart. (5)

But the surrealists' attempts to challenge the world of common sense through experiments in 'automatism' were often what Sartre termed 'gratuitous games' (6) since they were part of the very system of Reason they opposed; whereas, for the Negro who was deemed outside this system, there was much more at stake in his challenge. Césaire's surrealism was, as Sartre notes, obsessional 'directed automatic writing', directed towards a revalorisation of such metaphorical symbols as black/white, objective/subjective, rational/irrational, a revalorisation which attempts to scandalise the Western logos which purports to present itself as Reason:

> Metaphysics-the white mythology which reassembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own *logos,* that is, the *mythos* of his idiom, for the universal form of that he must still wish to call Reason.' (7)

Against Reason as oppressive universalism, a Reason whose metaphorical origins are masked by this carapace of universality, and, Nietzsche maintains, by habit, Césaire asserts the originary knowledge erased in the creation of Reason. Reason, a product of white mythology is created at the expense of this knowledge, this 'blackness' which is gradually erased, as Nietzsche

suggests by Reason's success as an efficacious system in the will to power. Or, as Derrida suggests: 'White mythology-metaphysics has erased within itself the fabulous scene that has produced it, the scene that nevertheless remains active and stirring.........'(8) Césaire's is a reverse fricative process, an attempt as with the surrealists, to unearth the scandal in a mythos which 'universalises' itself as Reason. For the Negro, unlike the surrealists the oppressions of this 'Reason' were more than psychological since in one of its masks, 'common sense', it was responsible for his oppression in the form of colonialism and imperialism. Negritude was the *Negro* challenge to Western instrumental reason, a challenge which is now part of modern culture in the form of green-party oppositionism, and feminist protest to name two examples.

Negritude challenged Western culture in the name of a genuinely universal culture (Senghor's 'culture of the universal') in which the Negro's contribution could manifest. As a movement towards this culture they claimed the rights of hybridization: against the claims of 'purity' made by the race ideologies of the thirties they proclaimed the values of 'impure' cultures. In Césaire's case this hybridization manifested in the unity of modernism and African roots. John Berger maintains that this capacity to transcend cultures and history, demonstrated by Pablo Picasso and Césaire, is a reality of the twentieth century:

> Like Picasso, Césaire reaches across history. Like Picasso he would
> have confounded everybody before the twentieth century, because it
> would have seemed impossible then for a man to be in two 'times' at
> once: in the heart of Africa and at the centre of European literature.(9)

In its claim of the right to belong to both Europe and Africa Césaire's Negritude was 'anti-racist', 'anti-purity' and therefore a humanism (if one can define 'humanism' here as a willingness to recognise patterns of human qualities across cultures rather than reserving them only for your 'own'). Susan Rubin Suleiman notes that this use of the heterogeneity of the hybrid as a protest against the 'Law' (10) of the canonical tradition which condemns

the hybrid, is shared by surrealists and feminists. Suleiman refers to the 'perversity' of the surrealists' use of the hybrid (for example in the collage both verbal and visual). She notes that the psychoanalyst Janine Chassequet-Smirgel refers to perversity in art as a challenge to the existing reality, ("perversion is one of the essential ways and means [man] applies in order to push forward the frontiers of what is possible and to unsettle reality ") and considers that Smirgel's ¸is a pretty good definition of Surrealist aesthetics (indeed, of the aesthetics of early twentieth-century European avant-gardes in general) as well as of Surrealist philosophy and cultural politics.' (11)As part of the avant garde, Negritude was also the perversity of Black intellectuals who, as members of a marginalised group, claimed their place in Western culture *and*, their right to retain their Africanness. Seen as belonging nowhere, they claimed the right to belong everywhere. Their demands had the disturbing effect of all such 'perversions': their claims on Africa and their Blackness was seen as racist by Western intellectuals, while Black critics condemned them as displaced *Western* intellectuals.

The Black artist must come to terms with the situation of Blacks in the West, Césaire maintains, which is intolerable. The Negritudists saw themselves caught between despair and rebellion, as Camus defines the situation in 'The Rebel'. For Camus the slave can either continue to exist as he who has no opinions and wants nothing, (12) or he can choose the path of rebellion. The path of rebellion is an assertion of humanity since the alternative, is the path of acceptance and nothingness. Negritude rebellion was therefore, in Camus's terms, a demonstration of the humanity of the Negro and a manifestation of the human condition since it is the lot of man in the twentieth century to be confronted with one form of tyranny or other. If, as Camus maintains, art is a rebellion against reality, the Negritude artists chose to rebel against the reality of their people which was one of oppression: art for art's sake was for them a meaningless concept before the prevailing political reality. Although he eschews Negritude protest, the work of an artist like Wilson Harris protests indirectly against the tyranny of heterogenous systems, Black or White. The writer from a ' third w orld' country cannot avoid this confrontation with history at present.

The pervasiveness of the legacy of Negritude is probably due to the fact that the debates it raises about Blacks, the status and values of Black literature are, as I have attempted to argue, structured into the historical relationships between Blacks and Euro-American culture, between Black literature and the 'europhone' (to use Kwame Anthony Appiah's term) (13) languages in which it is written. The debates of course alter as these historical relationships develop but colonial history develops slowly, or at least unevenly: most Black historians would agree that the period of colonial dependency of Black countries has not yet run its course as far as literary culture is concerned. In Africa and the Caribbean for example the tradition of literary criticism adopted is still under the shadow of the 'great tradition' established in Europe.

As the manifestation of the beginnings of one 'voice' of a dialogue whose terms were already 'given' (the European 'voice' had set the terms of the discourse) Negritude was bound to manifest the 'flaws' of all such beginnings. The accusations of 'reverse racism', of prescriptivism, of a mystical notion of Blackness, of a mythical notion of 'Africans' and 'the African', of ironic domination by the very culture from which the Negritudists sought dis-assimilation, of a mere manifestation of Black intellectual alienation, no doubt all have *some* validity. Yet they were really the flaws of any 'historical system' involving issues of Same and Other, and Negritude was in a sense a historical necessity, (though not the dialectical necessity Sartre outlines), the Negro was bound to assert his resistance to a historical process of assimilation to reclaim his humanity. Even those who lament the excesses of the French and Russian revolutions recognise their 'historical necessity'. The 'flaws' of Negritude were perhaps due to the insistent nature of the issues which it engaged in the thirties in a period of social perturbation and looming world war, when considered thought was at a premium.

Nevertheless even in its beginnings the two premier figures of Negritude, Senghor and Césaire indicated in their work the development from the angry ideological voice of early Negritude to the calm voice of 'universalist culture'. Senghor emphasises in 'The Struggle For Negritude' that advocacy of the uniqueness of Negritude and participation in 'the culture of the universal' is not a contradiction. For him just as the other cultures maintain their uniqueness while participating in 'universal culture', in order to 'have something to offer' universal culture, so Negroes must cultivate Negritude as

their gift to the universal: 'Every people who do not believe they bear a unique message which only they can proclaim, Dostoievsky the Russian tells us, are already a museum piece. How right he is.' (14)

This 'universal culture' is associated in Senghor's meaning with the proverbial homogeneity of twentieth century culture, the 'smallness' of the world to which he thinks Negritude can make a singular contribution:

> With us, or in spite of us, the Civilization of the Universal is growing up before our eyes, thanks to scientific discovery, technical progress, the increase in international and intercontinental exchanges. It would be a pity if Africans were not there at the meeting place. For the civilization of the twentieth century cannot be universal except by being a dynamic synthesis of all the cultural values of all civilizations. It will be monstrous unless it is seasoned with the salt of négritude. For it will be without the savour of humanity. (15)

Senghor's 'moment of separation', in which he delineates the African's particular qualities (continental and diasporan) as 'reason-by-embrace', [an attachment to: 'the force of rhythm...........so dynamic and so entrenched in the Black man's psyche that it persists throughout any and all experiences separating him from his origins', (16) the possession of a life-enhancing essence ('black milk') lacking in the West], develops to the point where he advocates the Negro's participation in 'pan-human convergence towards which mankind is tending.' (17) In Senghor's thought the Negro's participation in the 'culture of the universal' will enable him to lend his Negritude to tackling the 'crisis of Western civilization' manifest in the West's 'loss of way', in its assumed role of 'torch-bearer' for humanity.

To justify his optimism Senghor points to past evidence of the resulting dialogue between European artists and Negro art:

> Some of these contributions have been grouped under the appellation "Negro revolution" and concern the discovery of black sculpture by Picasso and Braque at the beginning of the twentieth century. Primitivism in the plastic arts permitted a return to the object, to form and volume, to direct expression and freedom from academism.' (18)

Senghor also pointed to the influence of Negro Jazz on the music of George Gershwin and Igor Stravinsky's *Rag Time* (1918) of the polyrhythms of *'Rite of Spring (1913). (19).* In 'The Unanswered Question' Leonard Bernstein maintains that the dialogue between modernism and folk art, manifest in Aaron Copland's *'Billy The Kid'*, Stravinsky's *'Les Noces'*, is a persistent aspect of the work of certain modern composers. Negro Jazz was engaged in dialogue by George Gerswin, and Anton Dvorak in his *'New World symphony':* Bernstein sees it as a case of the sophistication of modernism needing to return to the 'roots' of music in order to create a new language. (20) Bernstein refers in 'Findings' to Aaron Copland's complex dialogue with 'the Negro scale' in productions such as *Piano Concerto* (1926). (21).

For the Black world the importance of the issues raised by Negritude in writing, and criticism persists to the present. Kwame Anthony Appiah highlights some of these issues in his essay 'Out of Africa: Topologies of Nativism'. Appiah notes that notwithstanding the importance of Swahili literature the bulk of 'third world' literature is produced in a 'europhone' language. (22) Like theorists of modern late twentieth century Black literature, the theorists of Negritude were also concerned with the fact that, 'colonial education......produced a generation immersed in the literature of the colonizers, a literature that often reflected and transmitted the imperialist vision'. (23) Negritude's challenge to this imperialist vision was a 'Negritudization' of French as in the case of Césaire, as a challenge to this 'natural' imperialist vision masking itself as a 'universalism'.

The concerns of Chinweizu, Onwuchukwa Jemie, Ihechukwu Madubuike who in 'Towards the Decolonization of African Literature' (24) object to the yardsticks of 'pseudo-universalism' as a critical apparatus for appraising African literature, echo the 'Tropiques' group's decision to produce a Martinican literature which would both evoke the particularities of the Martinican world *and* remain universal. Chinweizu et al do not object to a genuine universalism, that is, the universalism supported by T.S. Eliot's view that, 'although it is only too easy for a writer to be local, without being universal, I doubt whether a poet or novelist can be universal without being local too.' (25)They demand a universalism arising out of the local, and not one certified by what they see as Western 'universalism' which is really a

disguised Eurocentricism. This concern echoes the criticism of the Martinican Negritude students in Paris who, objected to their Parnaissian-clinging elders' avoidance of the island's realities in their poetry, out of a worship of metropolitan 'universalism'.

Negritude was the first theory to attempt a comprehensive formulation of the question 'What is Black literature' or 'Black history' or 'Black' anything and, attempt to answer it through a sustained enquiry, as I attempt to show in the chapter on the historical origins of Negritude. The connection between 'literature' and 'race' and the concomitant issues of literature, criticism, and race, is still of vital importance today as Henry Louis Gates Jr. demonstrates in his fervent debate with Tsvetan Todorov in '"Race", Writing and Difference'.

The critics of Negritude would however deny the importance of the issues it raised or, as in the case of Wole Soyinka, object to the crudeness of Negritude's solution if they accept the value of the debate. Negritude's critics fall under two main tendencies: 1, those who accuse Negritude of a dangerous Manichaeanism and reverse racism (E. Mphahlele, W. Soyinka), 2, those who see it as the result of the alienation of a small group of Black intellectuals and see these intellectuals as caring nothing for the material needs of Black and socialist struggle in their concerns with pure cultural emancipation (Stanislas Adotevi).

In Mphahlele's objection there is what he sees as the collaboration of Negritude with the race theories of the South African government in the latter's stress on the differences between the races. Mphahlele fails to recognise that Negritude's stress on difference is a differentiation which seeks to emphasise what the Black has to offer the 'culture of the universal' and that only by this initial moment of difference can genuine participation in 'universal culture' take place. Lewis Nkosi rightly accuses Mphahlele of a psychological domination by the White South African government in his attitude to the claims of Negritude:

'The weaknes in Mphahlele's argument lies in its negative nature, which seems to suggest that no matter how valid the case for negritude may be, if it can be shown that white racists will benefit from its expression it must therefore be suppressed. Surely, this is

conceding too much to white racists: it is virtually to permit them to
dictate the shape and the future of black South Africans, culturally as
well as politically; for to be seen as always reacting to what white
racists might think of your pronouncements on the black cultural
situation scarely suggests an independence of mind. (26)

Mphahlele's appraisal of Negritude is entirely non-theoretical. Mphahlele
maintains in 'The African Image': 'If there is any *negritude* in the black man's
art in South Africa, it is because we *are* African. If a writer's tone is healthy,
he is bound to express the African in him. Stripped of philosophical musings,
the African traits he (Senghor) speaks of can be taken for granted.' (my
parenthesis) (27)

   Mphahlele does not consider the more far reaching concerns which form
the basis of Senghor's 'philosophical musings' and that of Negritudists, such
as, the problem of writing as an African in a 'europhone' language, of
oppressive universalism, of using art forms and structures derived from that
'europhone' language, all of which form some of the underlying concerns of
Negritude still of contemporary relevance.

   Soyinka's critique of Negritude, as a writer determined to avoid
prescriptivism, and intent on securing the critical appraisal of his work
without reference to his blackness is understandable. His critique of
Negritude's Manichaeanism is relevant. Senghor's analysis does rely upon the
Manichaeanism of the very European system of thought he deems to critique.
Yet it is doubtful whether any Black person who has had a Western-
influenced education can avoid the manifestation of such influence,
Manichaeanism being one of them. Soyinka's discussion of the *difference* of
African drama and the African world view in 'Myth, Literature and the
African World' is heavily influenced by Negritude's emphasis of difference.
The most representative chapter manifesting this influence is titled 'Drama
and the African World-view'. Against the European critic's argument that
technological and social developments in the Euro-American world have
resulted in the decline of tragic grandeur, Soyinka stresses the
accommodating capacity of the African world-view:

The assimilative wisdom of African metaphysics recognises no
difference in essence between the mere means of tapping the power of
lightning-whether it is by ritual sacrifice, through the purgative will of
the community unleashing its justice on the criminal, or through the
agency of Franklin's revolutionary gadget. What George Steiner
effectively summarises is that at some stage of intellectual hypothesis,
at some phase of scientific exploration, at each supposition by
European man about the possible nature of things, that architectonic
unity which is the basis of man's regulating consciousness (of which
the most personalised expression is his art) suffers the same fate of
redundancy as the assumptions and theories themselves. For cultures
which pay more than lip-service to the protean complexity of the
universe of which man is himself a reflection, this European habit of
world re-definition appears both wasteful and truth-defeating. (28)

The sweep of Soyinka's argument, and its critique of Western values and
ideas in the process of emphasising difference is a tendency pioneered by the
Negritude theorists. Negritude was a complex, confused mixture of ideas and
values, but it was also a method: Soyinka uses the method of Negritude even
while repudiating its ideas.

If Negritude was a representation of the Black, its later manifestations has
seen variations in the voice among the writers who have assumed its 'spiritual
torch'. Some of the younger writers have changed the dialogue with Euro-
America into a more violent response on the part of the Black displayed in
the work of Leroi Jones (Imamu Baraka), especially in his play 'Dutchman',
in Eldridge Cleaver's 'Soul on Ice', George Jackson's 'Soledad Brother' and
'Blood in My Eye'. These writers break from the conciliatory attitude towards
the Other manifest in the work of James Baldwin and Richard Wright
towards the more insistent voice of late sixties and early seventies America
demanding a radical change in the dialogue with the Other.

In South Africa Steve Biko's demand for a break from the White liberal's
values of 'integration', which he saw as a call to a false unity, in favour of a
clear concept of Black Consciousness, evokes the Negritude demand for
separation and negativity before dialogue:

In terms of a Black Consciousness approach we recognise the existence of one major force in South Africa. This is White Racism. It is the one force against which all of us are pitted. It works with unnerving totality, featuring both on the offensive and in our defence. Its greatest ally to date has been the refusal by us to club together as blacks because we are told to do so would be racialist. So, while we progressively lose ourselves in a world of colourlessness and amorphous common humanity, whites are deriving pleasure and security in entrenching white racism and further exploiting the minds and bodies of the unsuspecting black masses. Their agents are ever present amongst us, telling us that it is immoral to withdraw into a cocoon, that dialogue is the answer to our problem and that it is unfortunate that there is white racism in some quarters but you must understand that things are changing. (29)

Biko's definition of 'Black is beautiful' echo's the 'Black is beautiful' idea in late sixties America, both of which recall the demand for a new pride in Black beauty evoked by Césaire and others. Here is Biko's definition offered to a South African judge:

I think that slogan has been meant to serve and I think is serving a very important aspect of our attempt to get at humanity. You are challenging the very deep roots of the Black man's belief about himself. When you say 'black is beautiful' what in fact you are saying to him is: man, you are okay as you are, begin to look upon yourself as a human being; now in African life especially it also has certain connotations; it is the connotations on the way women prepare themselves for viewing by society, in other words the way they dream, the way they make up and so on, which tends to be a negation of their true state and in a sense a running away from their colour; they use lightening creams, they use straightening devices for their hair and so on...........So in a sense the term 'black is beautiful' challenges exactly that belief which makes someone negate himself. (30)

In Caribbean poetry E. K. Brathwaite's charting of the progress of the Negro wanderer in the Western world and, his critique of colonialism seems to continue the line of Negro introspection and social criticism began by Césaire:

Yeah man!

so went the

mud hut, hole-

hatted glorious

dream. Harlem

was heaven

and Paris a palace

for all.

Yeah man!

and the old man gone

old Uncle Tom gone

rain making souse

of his balls in the soil.

But he's real cool,

man, while we sweat

in this tin trunk'd house

that we rent from the rat

to share with the mouse:

Castries' Conway and Brixton in London,

Port of Spain's jungle

and Kingston's dry Dungle

Chicago Smethwick and Tiger Bay.

Never seen

a man

travel more

seen more

lands

than this poor

path-

less harbour-

less spade. (31)

Ntozake Shange's demand for attention to the singularity of the 'voice' of the Black writer in the same way that pride is taken in the ability to recognise the singular Black musician's voice is a representation of a new development in Negritude. Shange calls for a recognition of the variety of the forms in which the voice of Negritude may manifest, breaking from the notion that Negritude has a collective voice:

> we have poets who speak to you of elephants & avenues/we have others who address themselves to worlds having no existence beyond the word. that's fine. we live all those places. but, if we don't know the voice of a writer/ the way we know 'oh......that's trane'/something is very wrong. we are unfortunately/sellin ourselves down the river again. & we awready know abt that. if we go down river again/just cuz we don't know or care to recognize our particularities/wont nobody come/cuz dont nobody care/if you dont know yr poets as well as yr tenor horns. (32)

If the Negro had for centuries been treated as an *object* of knowledge in Western culture, Negritude was a declaration of the Negro's position as

subject in his own right/write. The demand for the right to manifest this
subjectivity in a variety of voices represents a refinement in the development
of Negritude, a development from the spell which the Other held over early
Negritude. In modern Negritude Negro subjectivity manifests in a variety of
forms both collective and individual, in Africa, and the Americas. Its
emancipation will have truly arrived when the Other will no longer lurk in the
shadow of Negritude's voices. The implication of my examination suggests
however this position will mark the beginning of the end of Negritude for,
the burden of my study has been Negritude as a relation in which the voice of
the Other plays a crucial role.

Afterword

Three of the writers cited in this study, A.J.Arnold, R.L. Scharfman, Jean-
Paul Sartre, who engage with Negritude on a theoretical basis are White. This
engagement perhaps helps to support the thesis that Negritude is a moment of
a dialogue between the Negro and the Other.

As a Black reader my engagement has necessarily been from a different
stance than the writers just mentioned. It was necessary to examine the
discourse to which Negritude is a reply in some detail in order to display in
its full cultural range the discourse with which Negritude was engaged in
dialogue. I have examined the historical development of these two forms of
negativity through literature, but it could no doubt be examined through a
study in terms of social science, or a historical study. This cultural and
historical background is, perhaps for obvious reasons, either assumed (Sartre)
or only marginally acknowledged (Arnold and Scharfman) by these White
writers.

But the changes in Negritude may be 'read' as a rough picture of the
changes in Western culture's attitude towards the Negro. From 'Titus
Andronicus', to 'Friday, Or The Other Island', from sterile negativity, to
creative negativity, the changes in Negritude, may be seen as relating to the
idea of the Negro in Western culture, from the aggression and despair of early
Negritude, to the idea of a 'universal culture' propagated by both Senghor and
Césaire. It is logical that the aggression and despair which characterised early
Negritude should change as the naked racism and colonialism with which it

engaged in the early thirties altered into the relative sophistication of institutional racism and neo-colonialism of the present age. My study has embraced an examination of Negritude's development from the thirties, and the post-Negritude writers most closely influenced by it, namely Baldwin and Wright in the early sixties. A full and comprehensive study of Negritude from the thirties to the present, noting and analysing the dynamics of its changes in sociological and historical terms would discount the current fond notion among a number of Black critics that 'Negritude is dead'. (33)

Such a study might help to explain the violence and aggression towards the Other manifest in the poetry and prose of young Black American male writers of the sixties on the one hand and, the search for the complexities and contradictions of Black history explored in the works of modern Black women writers. works such as Toni Morrison's 'Beloved', Alice Walker's 'The colour Purple', which re-examine the complexities of the relationship between the Negro and the Other in history. It could be seen that these writers are fulfilling Ntozake Shange's desire for the distinctiveness of the Negro writer's voice. Certainly the particular 'signatures' of Morrison, Walker, and Shange cannot be mistaken, forming as they do, the rich diversity into which Negritude has metamorphosed in the late twentieth century.

My thesis has made certain references to African critics and Africa literature where relevant but I have not made extensive reference to African literature for reasons of time and space. Sylvia Washington BÂ's non-critical but comprehensive study of one of the 'giants' of African Negritude in 'The Concept of Negritude in the Poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor' provides an important African view of Negritude.

The impact and importance of Negritude amongst African critics such as Lewis Nkosi, Abiola Irele, to name but two, is not to be underestimated. The pressures which led to the growth of Negritude literature in the Americas were the same pressures which led to the growth of Negritude literature in Africa. In 'The Crisis of Consciousness in Modern African Literature', Omafume F. Onoge maintains that modern African literature was inevitably influenced by the ravages of colonialism and its ideology, which preceded this literature. (34) Onoge notes that even a non-Negritude writer like Chinua Achebe claims to be have been moved by the same impulse to become a writer as that which seized the Negritude writers in the Americas. (35)

Although Onoge thinks, 'Negritude has served as the benchmark from which contemporary controversies about the consciousness of the African writer have been debated', a study of the impact of Negritude on African writing would, as he suggests, have to study Negritude's bearing on writing in Africa post-Negritude. It would have to begin with the essential fact that what Onoge terms Senghor's 'mystical affirmation', that is his making of Negritude into a metaphysics, has a profound antipathy for many African writers.

It may be that the issues raised by Negritude are no longer relevant, that Wilson Harris's desire to break from the antinomies of self and Other initiated by Negritude is the correct direction for Black writers. But perhaps not yet. The still relevant use of the term 'Black' in the concept 'Black writer' would have to be rendered redundant first before that 'withering away' of Negritude occurs. In 'The Intended', (36) a work published in 1991, David Daybydeen an Indo-Caribbean writer engages with issues of language and Blackness, 'nigger-talk' and 'Oxford English', the relationship between the (Black and White) sexes, the colonial's sense of a loss of history. Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' forms a central motif in the novel with which the main protagonist is involved in a constant dialogue. All the issues examined in the novel were first explored by Negritude..............

Appendix

The congresses of Negro writers and artists of 1956, and 1959 marked the institutionalisation of Negritude as an idea in the West. Negritude was given its blessings by the authorities of the metropolitan institutions in which the conferences took place (Paris 1956, Rome 1959). The 1959 conference was addressed by Pope John the XXIII. The 1956 conference was attended by Baldwin, Wright, Césaire, Senghor and other prominent figures in the Black writers' world.

The First World Festival of Negro Art held in Dakar in 1966 continued the legacy of the previous conferences as a forum for the discussion of, and display of Negro art and literature. The 'Pan-African Cultural Festival' of 1969 held in Algiers was supposedly a rejoinder to Dakar's Negritude festival

of 1966. Several of its participators engaged in a critique of Negritude and its reputed failure to become involved in the political emancipation of Blacks. (37)

But Ellen Conroy Kennedy reports that at the Dakar festival many English language writers from North America such as Kenneth Clark, the then Leroi Jones (Imamu Baraka), Robert Hayden, were awarded prizes which brought them recognition onto a world stage. (38)

References

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', Part 2, 'Stand' (vol 6 no. 1) p9

2. Aimé Césaire, 'Lettre à Maurice Thorez', Paris: Présence Africaine, (1956), In his letter to Thorez, head of the French Communist Party, Césaire rejects the party's dissolution of the specificity of the Black situation in the greater class struggle.

3. Frantz Fanon 'Black Skin White Masks', Paladin, (London 1972) pp139-141. On p132 Fanon states: '......I wish that many black intellectuals would turn to him for their inspiration.'

4. Frantz Fanon, 'The Wretched of the Earth'. Trans. by Constance Farrington, Penguin Books. (London 1971) See p189 for Fanon's criticism of Jacques Rabemananjara, and Léopold Senghor.

5. André Breton, Introduction to 'Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal', p24

6. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', Part 2, 'Stand' vol6, no.1. p13

7. Jacques Derrida, 'Margins of Philosophy', Harvester Press. (Sussex, 1982). p213,

8. Ibid

9. John Berger, 'Success and Failure of Picasso', Writers And Readers, (London, 1980) pp138-139.

10. S.R. Suleiman, 'Subversive Intent: Gender, Politics, and the Avant Garde', Harvard Univ. Press. (1990) p148

11. Ibid

12. Albert Camus, 'The Rebel', Penguin Books. Trans. by Anthony Bower, (London 1971) p20

13. See K.A. Appiah,'Out of Africa: Topologies of Nativism', The Yale Journal of Criticism, vol 2. no 1. 1988-1989, pp153-178.

14. see John Reed and Clive Wake, for Senghor's chapter, 'The Struggle For Negritude' 'Léopold Sédar Senghor: Prose and Poetry', Cambridge University Press, (1965), p98.

15. Ibid.

16. Sylvia Washington. BÂ, 'The Concept of Negritude in the Poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor', Princeton Univ. Press, (1973), p80.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Op. Cit. p156.

20. Leonard Bernstein, 'The Unanswered Question', Harvard Univ. Press, (London, 1976) pp359.

21. Leonard Bernstein, 'Findings', Mackdonald, (London, 1982), p57.

22. Anthony Apiah, 'Out of Africa............', Yale Journal of Criticism, vol. 2. no1 p155

23. Ibid.

24, Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie, Ihechukwu Madubuke, 'Towards the Decolonization of African Literature', Howard Univ. Press, (Washington DC. 1983) p106.

25. Ibid.

26. Lewis Nkosi 'Tasks and Masks', Longman, (London, 1981), pp16-17.

27. Quoted by Lewis Nkosi, 'Tasks and Masks', p18.

28. W. Soyinka 'Myth, Literature and the African World', Cambridge University Press, (Cambridge, 1976), p49.

29. Steve Biko 'I Write What I Like', Bowerdean Press, (London,1978) pp50-51.

30. Op. Cit. p104.

31. Edward K. Brathwaite, 'Rights of Passage' Oxford University Press, (London1967) p39.

32. Ntozake Shange 'Nappy Edges', Methuen, (London, 1987), p4.

33. Lewis Nkosi, quotes Sembene Ousmane talking at a conference on African literature [published in Papers of the Dakar and Freetown Conference of African Literature, Ibadan Univ. Press. (1965)]. Ousmane stated that, 'There was a time.......when negritude meant something positive. It was our breastplate against a culture that wanted at all costs to dominate us. But that is past history. Ousmane went some way to admit that there were values of qualities that 'characterised the black races' but maintained that no one had yet worked out exactly what they were: no really thorough study of negritude had ever been undertaken. The reason, according to Ousmane, is that 'negritude neither feeds the hungry nor builds roads'. [Quoted by Nkosi in 'Tasks and Masks', (p16)] Ousmane's critique joins that of Stanslas Adotevi, Wole Soyinka, Ezekiel Mphahlele, in proclaiming the end of Negritude.

34. See, F.Onoge, 'The Crisis of Consciousness in Modern African Literature' from 'Marxism & African Literature', Ed. by G. M. Gugelberger, James Currey (publisher) (London, 1985), p22.

35. Op. Cit. p23.

36. David Dabydeen, 'The Intended'. Secker & Warburg, (London,1991)

37, See Stanislas Adotevi, 'The Strategy of Culture', in 'The Ideology of Blackness' (edited with an introduction by Raymond Betts, D.C. Heath & Co., Lexington, Mass. 1971) pp186-196 and reprinted from The Black scholar LI. Nov. 1969.

38. Ellen Conroy Kennedy, (ed.) 'The Negritude Poets', Thunders Mouth Press, (New York, 1989), pXX

Bibliography

Abraham. K. (1982) *From Race to Class,* London, Grassroots Publisher.

Achebe. C. (1986) *Hopes and Impediments,* London, Heinemann Educational Books.

Adotevi. S. (1971) 'The Strategy of Culture', in, *The Ideology of Blackness,* ed. by Raymond Betts, Lexington, Massachusetts, pp186-196. Reprinted from, *The Black Scholar,* L1 Nov. 1969.

Anozie. S. (1981) 'Aspects of Senghor's Poetic Theory' in *Structural Models and African Poetics,* Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Appiah. K. A. (1988-1989) *Out of Africa: Topologies of Nativism,* The Yale Journal of Criticism, vol 2. no 1. 1988-1989, pp153-178.

Arendt. H. (1977) *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil,* London, Penguin Books.

Arnold. A.J. (1981), *Modernism and Negritude,* London, Harvard Univ. Press.

Artaud. A. (1974) *Collected works,* Volume 4, Trans. by Victor Corti, London, Calder & Boyars

Auden.W. H. (1948) *The Dyer's Hand: and other Essays,* London, Faber & Faber.

BÂ. S. W. (1979) *The Concept of Negritude in the Poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor,* Princeton Univ. Press.

Bakhtin. M. (1973) *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* trans. by R.W. Rostol, Ardis. Original version, *Problemy Tvorcestva Dostoevskogo,* Lenigrad, 1929.

Baldwin. J. (1964) *Another Country,* Corgi Books.

Baldwin. J. (1964) *The Fire Next Time,* Penguin Books.

Baldwin. J. (1970) *Notes of a Native Son,* Corgi Books.

Baldwin. J. (1980) *Just Above My Head,* Corgi books.

Barthes. R. (1972) 'To Write: An Intransitive Verb?' in, *The Structuralist Controversy,* Ed. by Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, London, John Hopkins Press.

Berger. J. (1980) *Success and Failure of Picasso*, London, writers And
 Readers.

Bernasconi. R. (1985) ' "Where the Word is Wanting.....": George and
 Heidegger" ' in. *The Question of Language in Heidegger's History of Being*,
 New Jersey, Macmillan. (edited by Bernasconi)

Bernstein. L. (1976)'The Poetry of the Earth', in, *The Unanswered
Question*, London, Harvard Univ. Press.

Bernstein. L. (1982) *Findings*, London, Macdonald.

Bernstein. R.J. (editor) (1985) *Herbermas and Modernity*. Oxford. Polity Press.

Biddis. M. D. (1970) *Father of Racist Ideology: The Social and Political
 Thought of Count Gobineau*, Weindenfeld & Nicolson.

Biko. S. (1978) *I Write What I Like*, London, Bowerdean Press.

Brathwaite. E. K. (1967) *Rights of Passage*. London, Oxford University Press.

Breton. A. (1971) introduction to: *Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal*, Aimé
 Césaire, Paris, Présence Africaine.

Camus. A. (1971) *The Rebel*, Trans. by Anthony Bower, London, Penguin
 Books.

Césaire. A. (1956) *Lettre à Maurice Thorez*, Paris, Présence Africaine.

Césaire.A. (1971) *Cahier D'Un Retour Au Pays Natal*, Paris, Présence
 Africaine.

Césaire. A. (1972) *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. by Joan Pinkham, London,
 Monthly Review Press.

Césaire. A. (1982) *Poetry and Knowledge*, (*Poésie et Connaissance*) trans. from
 the French by A.J. Arnold, 'Sulfur' no. 5. Reprinted in *Tropiques* no. 12. (Jan.
 1945) in, J. Leiner, ed., *Tropiques* (ed. Facsimile), 2 vols. (Paris: J. M. Place,
 1978).

Césaire. A. (1983) 'Word' (Mot) in, 'Lost Body' (Corps Perdu) *Aimé
Césaire:The Collected Poetry*, trans. by C. Eshleman and A. Smith. London,
 University of California Press.

Chiari. J. (1970) *The Aesthetics of Modernism*, Vision Press Ltd.

Chinweizu. Onwuchekwa .J. Ihechukwu . M. (1983) *Towards the
 Decolonization of African Literature*, Washington D. C. Howard Univ. Press.

Conrad. J. (1982) *Heart of Darkness*, London, Penguin.

Conrad. J. (1987) *Tales of Unrest*, Penguin Books.

Conroy. E. C. (editor) (1989) *The Negritude Poets*, New York, Thunders Mouth Press.

Cox. C. B. (1974) *Joseph Conrad: The Modern Imagination*, London, J.M. Dent.

Craig. C. (1988) *Smiles And Blood: The Ruling Class Response to the Workers' Rebellion in Trinidad and Tobago*, London, New Beacon Books.

Cumming. R.D. (editor.) (1968) *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, London, Methuen.

Curtin.P.D. (1964) *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action 1780-1850*, vol. 1&2. Univ. of Wisconsin Press.

Dabydeen.D. (1985) *Hogarth's Blacks*, Dangaroo Press.

Dabydeen. D. (1991) *The Intended*, London, Secker & Warburg.

Dalphinis. M. (1985) *Caribbean & African Languages*, London, Karia Press.

Darras. J. (1982) *Conrad And The West: Signs of Empire*, trans. by Anne Luyat and Jacques Darras, London, Macmillan.

Davidson. A. B. (1969) 'African Resistance and Rebellion Against the Impositon of Colonial Rule', in *Emerging Themes of African History* edited by T. O. Ranger, Nairobi, East African Publishing House.

Davis. G.(1984) *Non-Vicious Circle: Twenty Poems of Aimé Césaire*, Trans. by G. Davis, Stanford, California, Stanford Univ. Press.

Defoe. D. (1960) *Robinson Crusoe*, Berkshire, McGraw-Hill Publications Company.

Derrida. J. (1982) *Margins of Philosophy*, Sussex, Harvester Press.

Dubois. E. B. (1965) *The Souls of Black Folk*, repr. in *Three Negro Classics*, New York, Avon. Quoted in 'Metaphor and Metonymy in *Their Eyes*', Barbara Johnson, in *Black literature & Literary Theory*, Ed. by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Routledge, (London 1984).

Eagleton.T (1976) *Criticism and Ideology*, London, New Left Books, and Atlantic Highlands, Humanities Press.

Esslin. M. (1983) *Mediations: Essays on Brecht, Beckett, and the Media*, Abacus.

Fanon. F. (1970) *Black Skin white Masks*. London, Paladin.

Fanon. F. (1971) *The Wretched of the Earth*. Penguin Books.

Feuer. L. S. (ed.) (1971) *Marx and Engels Basic Writing on Politics and Philosophy*. The Fontana Library, Collins.

Finley. M. I. (1980) *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology*, London, Chatto & Windus.

Finley. M. I. (1985) *Democracy Ancient and Modern*, London, The Hogarth Press.

Finn. J. (1988) *Voices of Négritude*, London, Quartet Books.

Foucault. M. (1970) *The Order of Things*, Gt. Britain, Tavistock Publications.

Foucault. M. (1981) 'Text. Discourse, Ideology' in *Untying The Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. by R. Young, London and Henley, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Gates Jr. H. L. editor (1982) *'Black is The Colour of The Cosmos: Essays on Afro-American Literature and Culture, 1942-1981*, Charles T. Davis. New York, Garland Publishing Inc.

Gates. Jr. H. L. editor (1984) *Black literature & Literary Theory*, London, Routledge.

Gates Jr. H.L. (editor) (1986) *"Race," Writing and Difference*, London, Univ. of Chicago Press.

Genet. J. (1970) introduction to *Soledad Brother*, (The Prison Letters of George Jackson), London, Jonathan Cape and Penguin Books.

Genovese. E. (1979) *From Rebellion To Revolution*, Louisiana State Univ. Press.

Greer. J. (1973) *The Female Eunuch*. Paladin.

Hammond. D. and Jablow. A. (1970) *The Africa That Never Was : Four Centuries of British Writing About Africa*, New York, Twayne Publishers Inc.

Harding. V. (1980) *The Other American Revolution*, Centre for Afro-American Studies, Univ. of California and Institute of the Black World, Atlanta Georgia.

Harris. W. (1960) *Palace Of The Peacock*. London, Faber.

Harris. W. (1967) *Tradition the Writer & Society*, London, New Beacon Books

Harris.W. (1981) *Explorations*, Denmark, Dangaroo Press.

Heath. S. (1972) *The Nouveau Roman*, London, Elek Books.

Hegel.W.F. (1956) *Philosophy of History*, New York, Dover Publications.

Hegel.W.F. (1971) *Philosophy of Mind*, Oxford, at the Clarendon Press.

Heidegger. M. (1971) "Poetically Man Dwells.........," in, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper Colophon Books.

Hughes. L. (1986) *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes*, Pluto Press.

Hunter. G. K. (1985) 'Othello And Colour Prejudice': in, *Interpretations of Shakespeare*. British Academy Shakespeare Lectures, Selected by Kenneth Muir, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Hyppolyte. J. (1974) *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit"*. Evanston, Northwestern Univ. Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy.

Irele. A. (1965) 'Negritude or Black Cultural Nationalism', *'The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 3,3. (pp341-348).

Jahn. J. (1974) *Leo Frobenius: The Demonic Child*, Austin, Occasional Publication, African and American Studies and Research Centre, Univ. of Texas.

James. C. L. R. (1967) introduction to 'Tradition and The West Indian Novel', *in, Tradition The Writer & Society*, Wilson Harris, London, New Beacon Books.

James.C.L.R. (1968) *The Black Jacobins*, New York, Vintage Books.

James. C.L.R. (1980) *Spheres of Existence*, Allison & Busby.

James. C. L. R. (1985) *A History of Negro Revolt*, London, Race Today Publications.

Jaspers. C. (1965) *Nietzsche An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity*, Chicago, (A Gateway Edition), Henry Regnery.

Jung. C. G. (1982) *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Collins Paperback.

Kermode. F. (editor) (1974) *T.S.Eliot's Prose*, London, Faber & Faber.

Kesteloot. L. (1974) *Black Writers in French: A Literary History of Negritude*, Temple Unite Press.

Leavis. F.R (1974) *The Great Tradition*, Penguin Books.

Leiner. J. (1980) *Imaginaire-Langage Identité Culturelle-Négritude Afrique-France-Guyane-Maghred-Martinique*, Paris, Editions Jean-Michel Place.

Leiris. M. (1982) 'Who is Amé Césaire?' *Sulphur* no. 5 (periodical) (1982)

Macherey. P. (1979) *A Theory of Literary Production*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Macleod. D. (1974) *Slavery, Race and the American Revolution*, London, CUP.

Mailer. N. (1961) 'The White Negro' in, *Advertizements for Myself*, London, Andre Deutsch.

Marcuse. H. (1969) *Reason and Revolution*, London. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Marcuse. H. (1970) *One Dimensional Man*, London. Sphere Books.

Marcuse. H. (1973) *An Essay on Liberation*, London. Penguin Books.

Marks. E. & de Courtivran. I. (editors) (1980) *New French Feminisms*, an Anthology. Univ. of Massachusetts Press.

Matthews. G. M. (1975) " 'Othello' and the Dignity of Man," in, *Marxists on Literature*, an Anthology, ed. by David Craig, Penguin books.

McKay. C. (1957) *Banjo*, New York, Harvest Press.

Melville. H. (1985) 'Benito Sereno' in, *Billy Budd. Sailor and Other Stories*. Penguin.

Mezu. M. (1973) *The Poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor*, London, Heinemann Educational Books.

Miller. C. 'Theories of Africans', in, *"Race," Writing & Difference*, (Gates (1986).

Millet. K. (1970) *Sexual Politics*, New York, Doubleday and Co. Ltd.

Mudimbe. V. Y. (1988) *The Invention of Africa : Gnosis, Philosophy And The Order of Knowledge*, Indiana Univ. Press.

Nadeau. M. (1972) *The History of Surrealism*, London, Johnathan Cape.

Nicholls. D. (1988) *From Dessalines to Duvalier*, London, Macmillan.

Nietzsche. F. (1974) *The Gay Science*, New York, Vintage Books.

Nkosi. L. (1981) *Tasks and Masks*, London. Longman.

Onoge. F. (1985) 'The Crisis of Consciousness in Modern African Literature', in, *Marxism & African Literature*, ed. by G. M. Gugelberger. London, James Currey (publisher).

Pieterse. C. and Donald Monro (editors), *(1974) Protest and Conflict in African Fiction*, London, Heinemann Educational Books.

Post. K. (1978) *Arise Ye Starvelings: The Jamaican Labour Rebellion of 1938 and Its Aftermath,* The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Rabemananjara. J. (1959) 'The foundations of our unity arising from the colonial epoch', *Second Congress of Negro Writers and Artists (The Unity of Negro African Cultures),* Présence Africaine no. 24-25. Feb.-May 1959.

Rascoe. B. (1978) 'Review of Native Son', *Richard Wright Reader,* Harper & Row.

Reed. J. & Wake. C. (1965) *Léopold Sédar Senghor:Prose and Poetry,* London, Oxford University Press.

Rimbaud. A. (1973) *A Season in Hell, The Illuminations, (Une Saison En Enfer. Les Illuminations),* London, OUP.

Robinson. M. (1969) *The Long sonata of the Dead,* London, Rupert Hart-Davis.

Rotber. R. I. & Mazuri. A. A. *Protest and Power in Black Africa,* (by various authors). Ed. by Rotberg & Mazuri, London,Oxford University Press.

Saïd. E. (1987) *Orientalism,* London, Penguin Books.

Sartre. J. P. *Black Orpheus,* 'Stand' (quarterly magazine), Part 1, (vol 5. No. 4) pp2-12, and Part 2, (vol 6 no. 1) pp7-22. Originally published as *Orphée Noir,* (Preface to: *Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poesie Negre et malgache,* ed. by L.S. Senghor, 1948). Also in: *Situations 111,* (Gallimard, Paris, 1949) as *Orphée Noir.*

Sartre. J. P. (1965) *Anti-Semite and Jew,* New York, Schocken Books.

Sartre. J.P. (1965) *What is Literature,* New York, Harper & Row.

Sartre. J. P. (1971) preface to Frantz Fanon's *'The Wretched Of The Earth',* London, Penguin Books.

Sartre. J.P. (1973) *Politics and Literature,* London, Calder & Boyars.

Sartre. J. P. (1978) *Critique of Dialectical Reason,* Verso Press.

Scharfman. R. L. (1987) *Engagement and the Language of the Subject in the Poetry of Aimé Césaire,* Univ. of Florida Press.

Senghor. L. (1976) 'To New York' (Á New York) in, *Selected poems/Poésies choisies,* Rex Collings.

Shakespeare. W. (1983) *Othello*, The New Penguin Shakespeare, ed.by Kenneth Muir. Penguin Books.

Shakespeare. W. (1964) *The Tempest*, Edited by Oscar James Campbell, Alfred Rothschild, Stuart Vaughan, London, Bantam Books.

Shakespeare.W. (1953) *Titus Andronicus*, The Arden Shakespeare, Ed. by J.C. Maxwell, London, Methuen & Co.

Shange. N. (1987) *Nappy Edges*, London, Methuen.

Soyinka. W. (1976) *Myth, Literature And The African World*, Cambridge, CUP.

Stowe. H. B. (1961) *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, London, Everyman Library. J.M.dent.

Suleiman. S. R. (1990) *Subversive Intent: Gender, Politics, and the Avant Garde*, Harvard Univ. Press.

Sundquist. E. J. (editor) (1986) *New Essays on Uncle Tom's Cabin*, CUP.

Todorov. T. (1984) *The Dialogic Principle*, Manchester Univ. Press.

Todorov. T. *"Race," Writing, and Culture*, in Gates Jr. H.L. (editor) (1986) *"Race," Writing and Difference*, London, Univ. of Chicago Press.

Tournier. M (1984) *Friday, Or The Other Island*, Penguin.

Tournier. M. (1989) *The Wind spirit*, an autobiography, London, Collins.

Turner. D. T. (1987) 'W.E. B. Dubois And The Theory of A Black Aesthetic', in, Kramer. V. A. *The Harlem Renaissance Re-examined*. New York, AMS. Press.

Ver Eecke. W. (1977) *Negativity and Subjectivity*, Brussels, Paleis der Academiën.

Wasserman. J. (1987) 'Narrative Presence: The Illusion of Language in Heart of Darkness', in, *Critical Essays on Joseph Conrad*, Ed. by Ted Billy. Boston, Massachusetts, G.K. Hall & Co.

Wa Thiong'o. N. (1981) *Writers in Politics*, London, Heinemann Education Books.

Watt. I. (1973) 'Robinson Crusoe As Myth', *Sociology of Literature and Drama*. Ed. by Elizabeth & Toms Burns, Middlesex, Penguin Education.

Watt. I. (1980) *Conrad In The Nineteenth Century*, London, Chatto & Windus.

Williams. E. (1975) *Capitalism and Slavery*, Andre Deutsch.

Wittgenstein. L. (1968) *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

Wood. D. (1990) *Philosophy at the Limit*, London, Unwin Hyman.

Wordsworth. W. (1867) *'The Poetical Works'*, London, Simpkin Marshall & Co.

Wright. R. (1972) *Native Son*, Penguin Books.

Yeats. W.B. (1966) 'The Second Coming', *The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W.B.Yeats*, Ed. by Peter Allt. & R.K.Alspach, New York, Macmillan.

Zins. H. (1982) *Joseph Conrad in Africa*, Nairobi, Kenya Literature Bureau.