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Elucidation of the Antecedent of Black Ipseity from selected poems

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Abstract

What defines a person as being black? Identity, culture, skin colour, other people or something else? Only an individual can determine what defines him/ her. If the African- American people lived in a society that did not care about skin colour, there would not be a "black identity". Americans consider Africans as black not on the basis of African ancestry, but based on whether it's visible. Being black is definitely more than just an appearance, to be 'black' somewhere down in spirit, is to connect with the ancestors and know what has been taught, what you thought was truth. The writer James Baldwin had said "people are trapped in history and history is trapped in them." Some people reject the black identity and this has led to criticism from those who believe that they had a right and a voice to stand up for their race and culture and their individuality. This paper speaks about the antecedents of the black identity through he selected poems of African-American writers.

Index terms: Identity, culture, African ancestry, criticism, race, individuality, antecedents.

Introduction

For many generations the black people had to cope with the oppression and injustice within the white society. These people have learned to survive in the most difficult conditions. In this contemporary world, the discrimination of race is back and the new Black Lives Matter movement has begun. Tracing back to the colonization, the white man had a different image of the black man, as opposed to how the African people viewed themselves in terms of identity. This had already been in the twentieth century, where the black intellectuals in Harlem had started the concept of the 'self'.

The New Negro Movement had fostered a new identity. What exactly is the term 'identity'? It is the quality of being oneself. It can be said that the Harlem Renaissance was the start for the African slaves to find their nature and self. Culture is said to be two way, what goes around comes around. The factors that influenced the identity of the Black community were culture, tradition and celebrations, gender and country. Since, they were brought as slaves the trace of ancestral background was not possible because it ended with a slave bill. The trauma underwent by these people is not normal, they were stripped of their culture, identity and above all their families. Sulieman El - Hadi in his poem "The Drama" says: " Are you ready to relax and gather up the facts, From the things I'm about to say, It's a little tale of drama overlayed with pain and trauma, And curtain call is each and every day" (4 - 8). People often tend to shift away from the view that all human beings are created by God and there is no discrimination.

The Harlem Renaissance played a great role in the ending of the racial discrimination, many people indulged in writing and this led to the development of African- American literature. The slave system was both psychological and physical. "The slaves were taught discipline, were impressed again and again with the idea of their own inferiority to 'know their place', to see blackness as a sign of subordination, to be awed by the power of the master, to merge their interest with master's, destroying their own needs." (18) The process of African American people migrating to the north in the early 20th century lead to the Harlem Renaissance. Harlem Renaissance on African American Literature.

Harlem Renaissance was an African American cultural movement of the 1920s and early 1930s that was centered in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. Harlem Renaissance is the name given to the time from the end of World War I and through the middle of the 1930s depression. It was known then as the "New Negro Movement", named after an anthology, titled *The New Negro*, of important African Americans works, published by philosopher Alain Locke in 1925. The renaissance was concerned with a group of writers and highbrows associated with Harlem, the district of Manhattan, during the migration of African Americans from other parts of U.S. This cultural movement marked the first time in American history that the white population took notice of the literature of African Americans. Even though some believe that Harlem renaissance has no influence on Africa America literature and community, Harlem Renaissance became the period in which a group of gifted black writers produced an widespread identifiable body of literature in the three outstanding categories of essay, poetry, and art.

The Harlem Renaissance or the New Negro Movement was encouraged by Marcus Garvey, founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), Alan Locke, the author of "New Negro" and W. E. B. Du Bois, editor of *The Crisis* magazine. This movement expressed the pride in blacks and motivated many African Americans to celebrate their culture through literature and art. Harlem Renaissance helped shape American culture, while adding its own elements to the American's tradition. It offered new ways of seeing and understanding what it meant to be Black at this crucial time in history. Aberjhani, an American historian, columnist, novelist, poet, and an editor, indicate in his book *Journey through the Power of the Rainbow* that "The best of humanity's recorded history is a creative balance between horrors endured and victories achieved, and so it was during the Harlem Renaissance."⁽⁸¹⁾ This shows that the movement led to new styles of literature and new philosophical ideas concerning the issues that African Americans faced in the early twentieth century America. This vital change in African American mindsets has survived throughout the centuries and persists even to this day.

The Harlem Renaissance movement impacted the changes that took place in the African American community because of the growth of communities in the north. The societal base of this movement included the Great Migration of African American from South to North due to the industrialization in the city. Harlem Renaissance is among literary and artistic movements due to its association to civil rights and reform organizations. It encircled everything from political writings to jazz poetry, and is particularly remembered for poets such as Countee Cullen, James Weldon Johnson, and Claude McKay. Langston Hughes was perhaps the best-known Harlem Renaissance poet. *The Crisis* magazine, an official magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) that was mainly subscribed to by blacks; and *Negro World*, the newspaper of Marcus Garvey's helped greatly in publishing the African American writing. Harlem renaissance gave the African American writing a visibility and opportunity for publications. These publications published poetry, short stories, and essays sent in by black writers, and it encouraged them to do more, such as write, and make all forms of art, because expression was one way to freedom.

Harlem was described by Alain Locke (1886-1954) as "not merely the largest Negro community in the world, but the first concentration in history of so many diverse elements of Negro life."⁽⁴⁴⁾ "The New Negro" is the closest to a statement of standards that Harlem Renaissance has. Locke promoted African-American artists, writers, and musicians, encouraging them to look to Africa as an inspiration for their works. His essay, *The New Negro* describes in general the awareness of the potential of black equality, he says that no longer would blacks allow themselves to adjust themselves or comply with unreasonable white requests. He is just trying to create a political awareness on self- confidence the blacks have developed. In fact, Houston A. Baker, Jr., in his book *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*, indicates that "Locke succeeded in writing our first national book, offering . . . the sounds, songs, images, and signs of a nation."⁽⁴⁷³⁾ Baker praised Locke for writing the *New Negro* book because it marks the commencement of the Harlem Renaissance, and African American use it to enhance their self- confidence. It is very clear that Harlem Renaissance gave black people a cultural differentness through literature.

Literature was a great way people use to show their motivation, pain and feelings. W.E.B. Du Bois is an American sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, author and editor, who wanted equal rights for African American. He used literature to spread motivation for the black. He was an enthusiastic peace activist and advocate reduction of racism. Du Bois published his collection of 14 essays named, *The Souls of Black Folk*, in 1903, and this showed the intellect of black race. He was a literary and cultural inspiration that helped activate the Harlem Renaissance and the powerful art about the African American experience. Du Bois used his influential role in *Crisis* magazine to expose and oppose racism and injustices, such as lynching and segregation. He promoted African American artistic talents in his writing called "A Negro Art Renaissance." He wanted black artist to realize their ethical assignment by being committed to showing the issue of racial equality in their work; in response to their own experience. His writings are a defining text of the New Negro Movement because of its deep effect on an entire generation that created the center of Harlem Renaissance. This movement produced work that was both initiated in modernity and an engagement with the African American culture. The Harlem Renaissance created African American literature in the United States and influence many authors throughout the twentieth century.

The Harlem Renaissance was a transformable period in time when poetry changed a nation of African-Americans to an incredible level. Langston Hughes was one of the leading black writers in that time period, and wrote many different types of literature. He wrote, and created a new literary art form called jazz poetry. His poem *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*, provides solid unity for the African American history. His poetry covered the issues faced by African-Americans with a combination of music, cheerfulness, and culture. Hughes spoke essay spoke to the concerns of the Harlem Renaissance as it celebrated African American creative innovations such as blues, spirituals, jazz, and literary work that engaged African American life. For most of the writers and artists when he wrote in his essay "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (1926) that black artists should be able to express themselves freely as an individual, i.e. an artist work should be looked at not by what color the skin of the artist is, but by the meaning and the quality of the work. He wants the African American artists to realize who they are as an individual artist and person, not just

color in the background of life but seeking to portray the Freedom Movement. Another writer African American poet who was a leading figure in Harlem Renaissance is Countee Cullen (1903-1946). He also dealt powerfully with racial themes in poems like "Black Christ", the story of a lynching victim who returns to life to speak of his ordeal. Through his poetry and books, he promoted equality, condemned racism and injustice, and celebrated African American culture and spirituality.

Although, the New Negro Movement has been over since, the effects of the authors and words written are still generally known today. African American artists engaged culture to work for goals of civil rights and equality. Jazz was an important musical contribution of the Harlem Renaissance. Specifically, jazz helped to break down a number of social boundaries of the period. It helped to highlight the piano as an instrument that anyone could play, not just wealthy people. It also made black music and culture much more attractive to white people, effectively helping to break down the boundaries between the races in terms of musical composition and musical culture. These artistic contributions and the subsequent blurring of racial boundaries laid the groundwork for what would eventually be the major civil rights struggle for equality after World War II. Amiri Baraka in his poem, talks about the want for music in the own style and how they flourished in their own style, this poem JA ZZ : (The "Say What?) IS IS JA LIVES gives an idea of the music they produced in the place of their belonging,

Yes Bees!

God Electric

Come Coming

Fire Jism

S H A N G O

CANTO JONDO

Eternity Power

Living Power (1-8).

Amiri Baraka in this poem shows how the people had been enriched by their own music and their way of worship after the Harlem Renaissance, it shows the culture they had followed and their place of identity in a White society. Today's black culture is the direct descendant of the Harlem Renaissance. Black culture will continue to grow with no constraints on what can be said or cannot be. The main idea of being free and open about everything regarding life has been passed down through the ages of black culture to the music and poetry that is seen today.

The "new Negro" was a concept of the second half of the 19th century, after the Civil War, when African-Americans were hoping to represent themselves in new, progressive ways, either in the halls of politics or in culture. There was a movement from the old Negro that is, the plantation slave to the new Negro, African-Americans who were considered more refined, educated, sophisticated, and involved in the political process. In Kalamu ya Salaam poem I Live in the Mouth of History, she says:

i live for the day when i can wake up

without voices of morality telling me to hate being who i am

without images of consumption suggestion the brightest life is white

without broadcast of commercialism prostituting my womanself

without sirens of authority seeking to incarnate black male genitalia

without bullets of unfriendly fire lacerating the social air (17- 22).

Most people in the mouth of history hoping that civilization would spit them out, so that they could have a modern tongue, yet the seed of their blackness still remains within them. "Slavery is the price I paid for civilization and the choice was not with me" says Zora Neale Hurston in her essay How it feels to be the colored me. Writers began to feel that they should depend on the patronage of the whites: they should strike their own path and use their culture to their advantage. The white writers had their own stereotypes against them, and had not represented them in three dimensions. It was therefore, their duty to portray the blacks as human with all the foibles a human possesses. Langston Hughes's essay, The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain, published in 1926, exhorted fellow artists, in no uncertain terms, to draw out their vast cultural black heritage and create works that would establish an identity of their own. All this was part of the literary movement that later came to be called the Harlem Renaissance. "Criticism should aid creation", Africanism is a conception based on as Niama Lesile Joann Williams in her poem Afrocentricity says:

the birth of an idea is violent
 as eddie b. and sara sweated beneath the hanging tree
 it formed
 as douglas dreamed of freedom
 it planned
 as Dubois wrote of our souls
 it wept
 and then took aim and shot
 on richard wright's page. (1-9)

The term racialism is a belief that moral and intellectual characteristics are biologically determined. This was broken by the writers of the time and it came to be more of a creative and lively writing which had induced its readers. Sonia Sanchez in her poem, Poem for July 4, 1984 says :

This is the time for the creative
 Man. Women. Who must decide
 that she. he. Can live in peace.
 Racial and sexual justice on
 this earth. (36-40)

Being what the people think they are not, is exactly what kills the superior and strips him of his pride. In the poem something easy for Ultra Black nationalists so you wanna kill white people ... Kenneth Carroll says:

love your family
 love your people
 love your culture
 love Africa
 love to learn
 love yourself.

it jes' kills
 them when you
 do that.(1- 9)

People believed that they could not kill the superior, or be away from the pangs that held them. The poet tries to tell that it is because of their nationality that they have an identity in this world. Through their suffering the spark to freedom was set ablaze, Suliaman El- Hadi in his poem, The Drama says: "It's like a terrible dream designed to make you scream But you know that this is our reality It's the story of our loss and the devastating cost To our future and our efforts to be free" (1- 4) (33). The terror the African- American people faced was undoubtedly the explosion of the mind to which they cannot connect, it has been in the past that the people suffered but it is not so in their future. As Lamont b. steptoe says:

tell them
 it was how they wounded each other
 how they
 destroyed their children
 how they destroyed themselves
 how they destroyed faith (18-23).

Being known as an American citizen rather than other names was the goal for the people. Among their struggle their only joy was that they viewed themselves as a person in their own culture. As Daniel Gray- Kontar in his poem not no socialism/ communism classical, but some power to the people jazz, says:

black and white
 is black is white is/ black is white is/ black is white
 is

white
 rilly
 Black? (97- 102)

"Harlem nights the politically correct collect at Kimako's "Trying to make it real compared to what?""(59- 63)
 Every political scenario had a phase of the Harlem effect on both sides of the people. The people needed their own freedom to develop their identity, but the white people feared that they would lose their superiority and would never gain it back, in Sonia Sanchez's Poem for July 4, 1994 , this is clearly seen, she says:

It is essential to smell the beginning
 words where Washington, Madison, Hamilton,
 Adams, Jefferson assembled amid cries of:
 "The people lack information"
 "We grow more and more skeptical"
 "This Constitution is a triple- headed
 monster"
 "Black are property"(4- 11).

It was after this that this effected he lives of the people, they broke this superiority and paved their way to their own identity and their culture to be known in books of literature and in the society. Sonia Sanchez's Poem for July 4, 1994, states:

All of us must finally bury
 the elitism of race superiority
 the elitism of sexual superiority
 the elitism of economic superiority
 the elitism of religious superiority (45- 49).

Since, they fought a good fight, they were able to walk free, their freedom was a struggle, but they reach it with patient hope. Kalamu ya Salaam says, " I live in the heart of irrational jingoism nitroglycerin in my brain & a pacemaker restraining my freedom"(12- 13) (195). The Harlem effect as it was the only thing that changed the idea of the black people is apt seen in Eugene B. Redmond's poem "The death of the cool became the birth of an Ancestor" (15- 16) (172). Talking about racism is not a common thing, most people prefer to speak about it in their inner circle because they have the feeling that it would reflect a bad opinion on them. Thinking of racism in this manner is the dominant discourse within the minority people. Professor Wekker argues that in a

system where black people and white people live together, there is a certain leaking of principles from the dominant group to the subordinate groups. In order to survive you have to "buy into the dominant thought," according to WEB Du- Bois. Identity was the only thing that the African- American people longed for, they had the urge to find their true self, Singal says "Human mind, like body, is ever evolving, Will- power of the individual concerned is an important input which influences in a big way the result of this evolutionary process" (139). The African- American people has possessed this strong will- power to be known as individuals. Richard Rykard in his poem A whole two weeks after The Million Man March; and still, if you'd ask me, this is all I could say about it... says:

The souls of black folk
 rising
 up from slavery
 No invisible men here, with no name in the street.
 Brothers smiled at me
 sisters and fathers and the
 children of fathers
 Looked at me in relief
 bold black relief (74- 82).

When it comes to identity, Blacks have a perplexing, yet unique positioning in America now more than ever. Most African Americans, have no close ties, if at all, to their African lineage, which makes them somewhat unidentifiable with the Mother country. It can be understood that the term African American is said discontent or any other names like Black or Negro have no true sense of identity. By calling them as black or negro, people still remind them of the slavery that they lived in which were brought by the racists of that time. Radhika. R. Dhariwal in her novel The PetPost Secret says:

Slaves do not have the 'Right to a Name'- they cannot be their own person, lay claim to their home or have their own fame. If a creature does not have this right, he is forced to work for a master so he can sleep at night. For only a master will pay a no- name a cent, and that is that only way a slave can make rent. And if a slave goes bad and deserts his master; he will lose everything all the faster. For without a name a creature is nothing - he is just beholden to whoever is king.(101)

This way the really trait of the people, because they were treated as creatures without a name, yet that was not the only thing that mattered, they did not want to lose their culture, and their nationality. They were slaves to the Americans but that was not the concerned thing, their identity was the most important. If they wanted to trace their background, it ended with the slave bill, and so they wanted to create their own background and identity with their own African culture. Michelle Clinton in her poem History as Trash says:

... of a colored gentleman in a high collar
 all bourgie & tiff & proper
 like he could read
 a portrait rescued from the trash
 by my negro hands I hand picked
 a picture of this brother (3-8).

The people were brought to America originally as slaves, their families torn asunder and their origins deliberately obliterated, Sekou Sundiata in his poem Notes from the Defense of Colin Ferguson says, "If it's race at all its Race with the big R, the way you might call a lion a cat"(32-33) . The African American people grew up completely with roots so they had to look at the White Masters to strive to be more like them. DuBois says:

In defense of slavery and the slave trade, and for the upbuliding of captialistic industry and imperialistic colonialism, Africa and the Negro have been read almost out of the bounds of humanity. They lost in modern thought their history and culture. All that was human in Africa was deemed European or Asiatic. Africa was no integral part of the world because the world which raped it had to pretend that it had not harmed a man but a thing. (79- 80)

Writing made the people realise their potential, to work harder to freedom and to speak up for what they believed, which is called identity. Nikky Finney in her poem *Fishing Among the Learned* says, "A poet needs to hope beyond hope inside the polished granite of Academe" (117-118). Roland Barthes in his essay, "The Death of the Author" makes a celebrated statement that "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author". He further remarks: "Writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subjects slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting from the very identity of the body writing" (221). Nikky Finney says, "If we do what we've always done, we're gonna get what we've always gotten"(178- 179).

Identity was the only cause of their freedom, the way to be known as Americans. They only wanted it to escape from the so called superior race, to live a life of their own, to have rules of their own, and the like. Safiya Henderson - Holmes in her poem "C" in *Colors: Blue* says, "I'm a black female disguised as a scary bag of bones"(1). Women always face double oppression, at home and society. Before the beginning of feminism everything was against the female. When women stood up for what they believed, to gain their identity, there was nothing the society could do about it, because they are basically bound with the will to attain their success in all possible ways. The suffering of the woman as being coloured is shown by Nikki Giovanni in her poem *Nikki-Rosa*, brings out her hard childhood she had to face, but all that did not matter, the love for herself and her nation is more important, she says:

and I really hope no white person ever has cause

to write about me

because they never understand

Black love is Black wealth and they'll

probably talk about my hard childhood

and never understand that

all the while I was quite happy. (27- 33)

Poetry and feminism go hand in hand, in her famous essay *Poetry is not a Luxury*, Audre Lorde expressed the link between both these two things:

For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams towards survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. The farthest external horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, craved from the rock experiences of our daily lives. (36- 39)

As a woman in society, the African- American women had no track to freedom, being coloured is not what determines identity, but writing does, Safiya Henderson - Holmes in her poem "C" in *Colors: Red* says:

A poem. But not a poem about tumors. I want to be a story. But not a word about pain. I want to be a performance piece. But no one uttrance about the "C" word. I can't write. I won't write. But then how to create myself out of this unknown self? What to create with this bare head and bare heart. My lover says I'm beautiful. But he's away. (7)

So what defines a person as being black? It depends on who is been asked. Skin color is just that, skin color. The only cultural aspect that can identify this is the fact that most black Americans share a loaded history and consequently have similar experiences. In the same white society, being a African- American man was an oppression, Daniel Gray- Kontar in his poem, not no socialism/ communism classical, but some power to the people jazz, he says:

rilly,
 im a brown man
 but they got we callin we
 Black
 and we dont even know that we aint
 Black
 and they got we callin we
 Black
 When we are rilly
 African. (1- 10)

The African man was told that he is inferior to the White man, who is his superior. Accordingly with no evidence, he became the slave as the white became the master. Eventually even after slavery was abolished, the same attitudes of the white society remained the same. Having to accept this racist attitude the Black man hated himself. Daniel Gray- Kontar says:

black is capitalism.
 white is capitalist.
 black is imperialism.
 white is imperialist.
 black is racism.
 white is racist.(32- 37)

It is time that the so called master race and the people who need their identity find out what black and white really means, not on the bases of colour or culture but by individuality. Identity was not a easy aspect that the African- American people had gained it was the will- power that they had within that set the path to their destiny, being an individual is the most important thing in society, more over being treated as a human being is important. Robert Farr in his poem van/Dyke says:

this is my "i'm tired of all the bullshit"
 beard.
 this is my
 TAKE OFF THE WIG beard.
 this is my Baraka beard.
 my Harlem nights
 in New York City beard,
 or standin' on the corner
 howlin' at the moon
 black
 beard.
 black beard?
 yes.
 this is my black beard.

this is my black beard. (13-27)

The men in society began to speak and fight for their rights, at first, this is the difference between both the African-American men and women. They only had fear for their white masters but it was gone one they began to rebel. Freedom and identity go hand in hand for the African- American people, it was through their fight for freedom that they gained identity in a world, which did not know them. In his poem at general Electric, where they eat their/young Robert Farr says:

because once again

i become

Prometheus.

and gaze

into their ceremonies,

and steal their fire,

and try

to turn them

out. (44- 52)

The people rise to bring a change and to put out their fire of superiority. Educationally, economically and politically deprived the people sort out for a better counsel to make a transition from slavery to freedom. Racial equality was believed to be that the African- American people could secure an elevated in the society convincing the whites of their humanity, morality and worthiness. Samuel F. Reynolds in his poem An Open Letter to All Black Poets says:

It like you be braggin' you humble

It like you be secretly learnin' God's name and then be shoutin' it off da

rooftops.

It like you tellin' me to wake up and you be Rip Van Winkle

It like you be shoutin' you crazy and then tryin to be my shrink

But how you be tellin' me this?

I was told those who know, don't talk

and those who don't know, be tellin' all their bizness

Don't you know thyself. (4- 12)

In using the term White over Black structure and system, the focus will be the White and Black ethnic groups while the White society is referred to as racists, the Black people are referred to the victims of racism, being black is definitely more than just appearance, to be "black", somewhere down in spirit, will connect with ancestors and know that what has been taught, what was thought was truth, because that's what's been told to the great-grandparents, grandparents, parents and then to the present generation, has been laced with lies and deceptions throughout history. Dominique Parker brings the equality and respect that should be shown rather than any other hatred, she says, "If you are unknown I will call you the folks, If you are unknown I will call you whitefolks, If I known you I will call you by your name, If you know me you will know my name" (70- 74).

Taking into consideration the notions of Marx and Engles about the expressions of ideas and interests of the ruling class, they say:

[T]he ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it(14).

This was the same plight of the African- American, they did not have any idea of the production or disposal, that is why the Americans controlled them in the mental aspect and that is why they had been subjects to the master race. Norman Loftis in his poem Delirium says:

In poetic vision, I saw the end
of all wars. I dreamed of a poetic
Language capable of discussing directly
With God without means of religion
Intermediacy what's gone wrong with man
And discerning His plans for the future of mankind. (23-28)

Toni Morrison addresses the issue of identity in a concise manner says that "In this country American means white. Everybody else has to hyphenate?" The aspect of identity is not got in a day, the hyphenated people who recognize their Americanism, is questioned due to the political status as marginalized people, there is always a difference between being African and being American. To be African American is the sole power, the source from the world's suffering which means it's own significance. Quince Troupe in his poem & Syllables Grow Wings There, tells about how the dream of being known through poetry was made true, and what he says:

a blackboard in my mind holds words eye dream -
& blessed are the words that fly like birds into poetry-
& syllables attach wings to breath & fly away there
through music, my language springing round from where
a bright polished sound, burnished as a new copper penny
shines in the air like the quick, jabbing glint of a trumpet. (1- 7)

The issues of identity is always interconnected and it is defined by the power structure that despises them, they embrace their definitions as well as how they are self- defined in ways which cannot be resisted and defy their dehumanization. To internalize the very Americanism that victimized them, they rendered a contradiction to their own identity. The DuBoision dual role of Black existence in America is still theirs to take on, as he writes in The Soul of Black Folk:

The worlds within and without the Veil of Color are changing, and changing rapidly, but not at the same rate, not in the same way; and this must produce a peculiar wrenching of the soul, a peculiar sense of doubt and bewilderment. Such a double life, with double thoughts, double duties, and double social classes, must give rise to double words and double ideals, and tempt the mind to pretense or revolt, to hypocrisy or to radicalism. (85)

Through the phase of racial discrimination, the African American people learned the changing with and without colour. No doubt it change the white man and it civilized the black man.

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