

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Whatever their origin all the novelists dealt with in this dissertation share a common condition which I have called colonial consciousness.

While Africa and India were under British rule, the black Americans, as pointed out by some recent socio-economic and psychological studies, have lived in an "internal colony" in the U.S. ever since they were brought there as slaves. But their plight has not been different from the others. If anything, it has been worse than the other colonized people of the world due to slavery, segregation and colour prejudice.

Based on the exploitation of natural and human resources of the colonized nation, colonialism perpetuates itself through oppression and aggression. The system by creating a myth of the colonizer and the colonized, is supported by a social organisation, a government, a judicial system and an educational pattern. It throws the colonized out of the history making process, calcifies his society and deadens his culture which in turn helps maintain the myth of the superiority of the colonizer over the colonized. It further produces a racial culture based on a hierarchical system that attaches importance to distinctions of colour, caste, religion, creed

and even language. A distinct mythology, ideology and philosophy is developed around these distinctions which systematically eliminate a 'raison d' etre' for the colonized whose historical past is distorted, disfigured and finally destroyed if it is not strong enough to hold itself.

Due to this historical process that changes the socio-economic structure of the society a new type of 'social character' (in the Erich Frommian sense of the term) is produced. Consciousness, being a 'social product' (Marx) is thus altered and reshaped by colonialism.

"Colonial consciousness" so formed, has a hierarchical system of interdependent variables and constants. Racism being a constant is central to this philosophy. The other variables are the historical past and its distortion which results in the loss of and or forming confusion of group and individual identities, colour prejudice, a caste or class system.

✱ As the historical conditions of colonialism were different in these three geographical regions, the form of the corresponding change in the social structure also differed. In the traditional (tribal) societies of Nigeria and Kenya the colonial consciousness had to grapple with the problems of collective consciousness as their social structure started breaking under the pressure of colonial forces of

disruption mainly because of the acceptance of a new religion and language by them.

The African novelists depicting either a tribal world or a 'transitional' society take up the question of collective identity. Almost all the heroes of Achebe, Ngugi and Aluko living in the colonial world are at peace with themselves, but are at war with the world which is falling apart under the forces of colonialism and all that goes with it - an alien culture and religion, Western education, a social structure based on individualism, a system of government, an economic order with consumer economy etc.

In the case of India, there was no perceptible change in the social structure due to colonialism, perhaps because of the Hindu ethos and also because of British policy of indirect rule after the mutiny of 1857. The traditional caste ridden society became more rigid and formal, as in Anand's Untouchable and Coolie. Hindu ethos which had already withstood the pressures of earlier onslaught of other alien cultures made the Hindus, more so the Brahmins, more traditionalistic, ritualistic and philosophical. While Ramaswamy is preoccupied with some metaphysical questions in The Serpent and the Rope, Padmanabha Iyer keeps worrying about the Marxist dialectics in Comrade Kirillov. Both of them ignore sordid realities of existence. R.K. Narayan, on

the other hand, takes up the colonial paradigm of the colonizer and the colonized and examines its psychological implications as in the case of Vasu and Natraj who act out the Prospero complex and the dependency complex between themselves in The Man Eater of Malgudi.

With the black American writers colonialism is an every day reality in the form of white racism. Being denied the attributes of citizenship (like the Harijans in India) the blacks in the U.S. have no reliable community and support system. Living in an industrially advanced society, the black protagonists of Wright, Ellison and Baldwin try to achieve their identities individually. Colonial consciousness in their case takes the form of racial or colour consciousness. Black protagonists who are young and rebellious sometimes don even 'negative' identities. Having being born in a disjointed society, these characters yearn for a real human contact. Its need becomes all the more acute because they usually are away from their homes and natural community in pursuit of their individualistic goals which they cannot attain because of the colour of their skin. Alienation, therefore becomes a defining feature of these characters. Though having real sociological roots, it tends to be existential in nature, particularly in the fiction of Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison.

Though the main cause of alienation of the colonized might be political, it, however, operates because of the

psychological, social and cultural conflicts between the two contrasting world views of the colonizer and the colonized. Having been given a peripheral view of the colonizer's culture through the colonial education, the colonized evaluates his own culture only superficially, and thus develops a 'marginal' personality. The 'black-white men' of Aluko and Achebe perhaps are the most representative of this phenomenon. These characters get uprooted because of their marginality. But the heroes of Raja Rao and Narayan are deeply entrenched in the Indian tradition. Moreover, colonialism, for them, is an extraneous condition. They, therefore tend to be bi-cultural. Raja Rao's Govindan Nair is the most illustrative of this phenomenon. Being well versed in both the Indian and the Western ways of thinking, he tries to synthesize and consequently evolves a metaphysical view of reality, which makes him a 'Jivan Mukta' - a holy outsider.

A search for a usable past of his people is a common feature of all the novelists of the colonies. Achebe and Ngugi indulge in this search deliberately and re-create a sense of the past both for the projection of a self image as also for creating a sense of community, Narayan and Raja Rao do not make any deliberate effort, as the past for them, is an ever brooding presence. Raja Rao's experiate characters flaunt it at a moment's notice, Narayan's heroes talk about it unconsciously. The search for pedigree, however, is most



arduous in the case of the black Americans as is demonstrated by Alex Ha.ley in Roots. Ellison, Baldwin and Wright reject their African past almost completely, but look for a usable past on the American continent. While most of the protagonists in the novels of Wright and Ellison are rootless, some of Baldwin's black heroes are firmly rooted in the black American culture of survival.

One interesting by-product of colonialism is the novel being written by the colonial novelists. Cultural confrontation in all its combinations and permutations, obviously, forms the content of this novel. Another feature, on the formalistic plane, is the accommodation of the novelistic form to the local traditions. If African novel incorporates the African oral tradition of the folk tales, the Indian novels lean heavily on narrative techniques of the classical Sanskrit literature. The black American fiction, being a kind of a midhouse between the mainstream American fiction and the traditional narrative techniques like the folk lore, 'spirituals', 'blues' and work-songs, is distinctive because of the narrative strategies it evolves to accommodate the latter. It however, mostly remains Western^o in its form and technique.

At the present stage of its development, perhaps, it would be premature to come to some definite conclusions regarding the evolution of a novelistic form in the novels

under study. However, we can tentatively divide these novels in three categories on the basis of the formalistic strategies evolved by the novelists to accommodate the colonial consciousness of their protagonists.

First category therefore consists of such experimental fiction which extends the limits of the available fictional form to adapt itself to the native narrative techniques. While Kanthapura is a 'sthala purana', The Interpreters a yoruba ritualistic drama and Invisible Man, a blues in the garb of a novel. Narayan tries to accommodate the 'Desi-Marga' tradition of Sanskrit tales to the novelistic form, though not always successfully.

In the second category we can put all those novels which make an experimental use of English but accommodate the colonial consciousness of their protagonists in the traditionally available formalistic modes of narration. All about H. Hatterr and The Voice are representative of this variety. The novels of T.M. Aluko and Mulk Raj Anand are crude specimens of this variety.

The Third group of novels forms a kind of half way house between the first two categories. Here the experimentation is both at the formalistic and linguistic planes, partially, though. The novelist, here, evolves fictional strategies to accommodate the colonial consciousness of its protagonists through the native narrative techniques and

domesticated English. The Cat and Shakespeare is a happy marriage of Indian and Western narrative techniques as also a successful example of domesticated English. Achebe's weaving of the oral tradition of the Igbos into the available fictional fabric through a domesticated English is another successful example of this kind of fiction. Most of the fiction of Ngugi, and Baldwin too belongs to this category.

Besides colonial consciousness, another common condition the novelists under study share is the use of the language of the oppressor. They, in fact, have Wrenched it away from their erstwhile colonial masters in compensation for the plunder of their own national past and have domesticated it to suit their needs. While Raja internalises the speech patterns and rhythms of Indian languages in English, Achebe reproduces the rhythm, syntax, structure as well as proverbial patterning and speech patterns of the Igbos in English. Okara inverts the word-order, violates English syntax, departs from conventional vocabulary, not to give a 'local colour' to his novel, but to convey a sense of urgency which perhaps can be conveyed through the Ijaw idiom only. Baldwin and Ellison pattern their novels on the blues and spirituals and re-create their 'survival culture' through Black English the beauty and power of which lies in its succinctness and songified sentence patterning. Thus, all

these novelists collectively re-vitalize the linguistic resources of English which they have domesticated.

Having stated my argument, I would like to refer to Bernth Lindfors who re=tells a famous story of six blindmen and an elephant. When these blindmen encountered the elephant for the first time, each man seizing on the single feature of the animal, maintained his limited opinion on the nature of the beast. The elephant, therefore, became "a wall, a spear, a snake, a tree, a fan, or a rope, depending on whether the blind man had first grasped the creature's side, tusk, trunk, knee, ear or tail." The tale he tells us epitomises the problem a critic faces when he confronts a new work of art, more so if it is from another culture :

"It is impossible for him to see the thing whole. He may inspect it with the greatest curiosity and scholarly care, counting its parts, studying its structure, analysing its texture, probing its private recesses, measuring its real and symbolic dimensions, and trying to weigh its ultimate significance, but he will never master all its complexity, never understand everything that make it live and move as an independent artistic creation. He simply cannot help but perceive it from his own limited point of view which has been conditioned by his previous cultural experiences. In a desperate effort to make some sense of unfamiliar lines and contours he may resort to comparisons with other forms he knows quite well, drawing parallels where oblique coincidences happen to intersect. The elephant thus becomes a wall, a spear, a snake, a tree, a fan, a rope, and the blind men bicker about the accuracy of their perceptions while truth stands huge and unrecognised in their midst."

The truth may or may not stand unrecognised, but the researcher certainly makes no claim for knowing the whole truth. More so, when he has tried to encompass such diverse cultures *QS*. Indian, Nigerian, Kenyan and black American, which share two common conditions of colonialism and English language, not of a homogenous nature, though. To quote Lindfors again :

"If we could learn to accept the fact that no individual is capable of telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth about a literary work, we would then be in a better position to evaluate the contribution a critic makes....We would not expect perfection for we would realise that literary criticism is a fickle and uncertain art in which no one has the final word." 1

1. Bernth Lindfors, "The Blind Men and the Elephant."

African Literature Today, No.7 (1975), p.53-64.

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COLONIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

"When Suffering Knocks at your
door and you say there is no
seat for him, he tells you not
to worry because he has brought
his own stool. The whiteman is
like that"

(Moses, a village elder in
Chinua Achebe's Arrow of God)

COLONIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Empires have been won, expanded and kept for many reasons since the Greco-Roman days. One of the most prominent among these is " the colonizing motive : the need to provide space for surplus or dissident or in the case of settlements - criminal population."¹ But this motive often gets mixed up with the other motives like the economic, the aggressive, the strategic, the missionary and the leadership motives. [Colonialism therefore " is political and economic subjugation as well as exploitation and spiritual enslavement of countries, which are, as a rule, less developed socially and economically, by the ruling, exploiting classes of other countries."²] The term also refers to a policy which is designed to preserve this system for the benefit of the colonizer.

The history of colonialism goes back to ancient Rome and other slave owning states like Carthage. Later on Venetians, the Portuguese and the Dutch took to colonization. It was in the early seventeenth century that the European powers joined the race for colonization. The two big

1. Richard Faber, The Vision and the Need

(London : Faber & Faber, 1966), P.15-16.

2. K. Brutents, A Historical View of Neo Colonialism

(Moscow : Novoshi Press, 1972), P.5.

colonizers however, were the British and the French. At the turn of this century there was a big competition among the European empires to annex territories of Asia, Africa and Latin America : " From 1876 till 1914 five imperialist powers - Britain, France, Germany, the United States of America and Japan - siezed a territory of 22.3 million square kilometers with a population of 236.8 million. In all, by the outbreak of first world war, colonies and dependencies accounted for roughly 67 per cent of world's territory and 60 per cent of its population."³ The continents of Asia, Australia, Africa, Latin America except for some small pockets here and there, were subjected to colonialism.

The explorers and adventurers like Hawkins, Drakes, Frobisher, Raleigh paved the way for colonization in Elizabethan England. Men like Thomas More through their concepts of Utopias provided the moral philosophy for colonialism. More imagined an ideal community living on aa island of the Atlantic undisturbed by the troubles of old European societies. Though the Elizabethans turned their mind to colonization they however could not establish any successful colony. It was only in 1606 that the first British colony was founded at Jamestown in Virginia. This

3. K. Brutents, A Historical View of Neo Colonialism. P. 7.

colony made slow progress. Its population reached a total of five thousand by 1635 which assured the success of England's first Colony. Bermuda Islands were colonized in 1609 and Maryland in 1632. The charters for founding the colonies were given by the English king himself. By about the middle of the seventeenth century the greater part of the North American seaboard had been occupied by English colonialists. The English were rivalled by the French and the Dutch in their expansion of the colonies.

The seeds of the British Raj were sown in India when the British traders landed on the shores of Surat in 1613. In 1639 Francis Day "acquired the site of Madras from a neighbouring rajah."⁴ Thirty years later the lease of Bombay was accepted at the trifle rental of £10. It was however only after the death of Aurangzebe in 1707 that European colonizers became very active in India. With Dupleix's arrival in India in 1730 French colonies were established in Pondicherry and a few other areas. Robert Clive of the East India company finally crushed the French colonialists in India at the battle of Plassey in 1757. By 1803 the English had taken possession of Bengal, Behar and Orissa. Mysore became a British vassal principality after Tipoo's defeat. With the conquest of Punjab in 1849, the whole of India was turned into a British colony.

4. Basil Williams, The British Empire

(London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1944), P.53.

While the British were establishing their empire in India, American colonies had declared their war of independence in 1776. By 1781 the British had no control over the American colonies which had become independent. So, the British alongwith other European powers turned their eyes to the African continent. By now the Tsarist Russia and the United States too had joined the race for colonization. The U. S. had already planted the African Negro on its soil by participating in the slave trade. So, her interest in the African continent was intensified with the arrival of the colonizing nations on the African scene. However, England had picked up outlying posts all over the world during the Napoleonic wars. From Malta in the Mediterranean, Trinidad and Tabago in the West Indies, Mauritius and Seychelles in the Indian ocean, the British had established forts on the West coast of Africa. They were mainly used as re-fuelling stations by the merchant and navy ships in the beginning. The English interest in Africa was re-vitalized with the establishment of the Royal Niger Company in 1886. Nigeria became a part of the British Empire in 1900. Imperial British East Africa company took over possession of Kenya and Uganda around this time. England also took control of Egypt in the North in 1882 from the French, though it could be declared a British Protectorate only in 1914. The other old Crown colonies on the West Coast were Gambia and Sierra Leone - two very important centres of slave trade. By the turn of this century England had Kenya,

Uganda, Nyasaland, Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia in the East and central Africa, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, Nigeria and parts of Togoland on the West coast under its control. Thus while in 1876 only ten per cent of the African territory was in the hands of the European powers, by the end of the Nineteenth century only two African countries Ethiopia and Liberia remained independent. "The political map of Africa just before the collapse of the colonial system shows 52 territorial units. Of these Britain held 20; France 18; Portugal 5; Spain 4; Italy; and Belgium 2." ⁵

Thus European colonialism was a grim reality for the peoples of Asia Africa and the Carribeans. It ate into the body politic of these nations and destroyed their power structures, social institutions and traditional values. Basil Mathews writing in the hey day of colonialism spoke very proudly of the British achievement in Africa.

"The one thing that is impossible now and for ever more is for the white peoples to separate their lives. Africa will more and more be a central part of the life of the white peoples. Especially it is true of the British people; for from the upper Nile to the cape of Good Hope, one unbroken British rule runs over some thirtyfive millions of Africans of all races." ⁶

5. I. I. Potekhim, African Problems

(Moscow : Nauka Publishing House, 1968), P.97.

The situation of the blacks in the U.S. too is comparable to the colonized peoples of Asia and Africa. Albert Memmi has dedicated the American edition of his book, The Colonizer and the Colonized "to the American Negro, also colonized." Wohs-letters⁷ use colonialism as a metaphor to describe the situation of the Negro in the U. S. The comparison enables us to explain the social, political and economic conditions of the ghettos which operate almost like colonies where the Whiteman is the investor (the colonizer) and the black labourer is the colonized. They maintain that the blacks form an undeveloped country within the U. S. They however do not agree to use colonialism in the black American context rather loosely as is being done by the Black Nationalists.

Narrowing down the definition of colonialism to "cross-cultural political domination" Curtin argues that the Afro-American situation in the U. S. cannot be called colonialism, as the blacks in America are "thoroughly Western in all important aspects of culture."⁸

Lawrance W. Lavine ably argues against this kind of

6. Basil Mathews, The Clash of colour

(London : Edinburgh House Press, 1928), P.63.

7. Albert and Roberta Wohsletter, "Third worlds around and at home", The Public Interest, No14(Winter 1969), P.88-107.

8. Philip D. Curtin, "The Black Experience of colonialism and Imperialism,"(ed.) Sidney N. Mintz , Slavery, colonialism and Racism

(New York : W.W.Norton, 1974), P.23-25.

approach to the black American Culture. He maintains that the blacks in America have "created a rich expressive culture. Upon the hard rock of racial, social and economic exploitation and injustice."⁹ As revealed through the oral tradition of the black Americans, the relationship of the blacks to the larger American culture has been complex and multidimensional and not thoroughly Western as argued by Curtin. This oral culture has existed in the music of the spirituals, gospel songs, work songs and the blues. Black folk tales and folk heroes have enriched this cultural tradition which has its own dialect to express the predicament of the blacks in the U. S. He therefore concludes that the blacks in America have a continuity of tradition and culture which flows from their African slave ancestors down to the Afro-Americans of today. Black Church, he believes, has further helped in institutionalizing this culture. Spirituals, work songs, blues, black music, folk tales and Church rituals have given expression to black consciousness that forms the core of a separate black identity within the U. S. This could happen because the white Americans did not interfere with many culture patterns as they became associated with Negro inferiority and "peculiar Negro traits". Though Levine does not draw any conclusions in the book he none the less makes his point clear that the American blacks have an oral cultural tradition which is different from the dominant white American culture and goes back to their African origins.

9. Lawrence W. Levine, Black culture and Black consciousness : Afro - American folk thought from slavery to freedom (New York : Oxford Univ. Press. 1977). P.444.

August Meier and Eliot Rudwick, however, do not believe that the American scene is comparable to colonialism. Referring to Black Nationalism they maintain that it is "an ethnic dualism" or "ethnic ambivalence"¹⁰ which is quite similar to that of American Jews and other minority groups. So, according to them the black American identifies himself both with the majority American Society and also with the black minority. They stress that it is not colonial reaction but it is an integrational tendency of the black American who talk of Black Nationalism. They further maintain that by and large the dominant thrust of most black ideologies has been intergrationist. Their theory is based on Gunnar Myrdal's findings in his well known book An American Dilemma.

Meier and Elliot, however, are not in a position to refute John Bracey's hypothesis that "Black America exists in a state of colonial subordination to the white America,"¹¹ because it has been exploited by them politically, economically, socially and culturally. He calls black America an "under developed nation" within the U. S. Contradicting Meier and Elliot's view of the emigrationistic tendency he maintains that while the other immigrant groups like the Jews came to America voluntarily the blacks were brought as slaves "and a few slaves, if any, were ever concerned with joining the mainstream of American society."¹² So, the blacks have also lived in colonial

10. John Bracey, Black Nationalism in America

(New York : Bobbs - Merrill Coy., 1970), P Iiii

11..John Bracey, Black Nationalism in America, P.VI-VIII also refer to Robert Blauner, "Internal colialism and Ghetto Revolt," Social Problems(Spring 1969),P.333-408 and Viet Report, 3,8-9

12. John Bracey, P.444.

(Summer 1968).

subordination to the white Americans. Malcolm X also, enunciating his Muslim programme in 1960, maintained that "as a Collective man of Black people we have been colonized, enslaved, lynched, exploited, deceived, abused etc."¹³ Kenneth Clark as quoted by Wohsletters maintains: "the dark ghettos are social, political educational and above all - economic colonies."¹⁴

Some other studies in this area also reveal that though historically the American Negro has not been colonized as Asian and African nations were by the British or European empires, yet the American system always operated like an internal colony.

Based on the exploitation of natural and human resources of the colonized nation, colonialism perpetuates itself through oppression and aggression. As Jean -Paul Sartre in his introduction to Memmi's book says, "oppression means, first of all, the oppressor's hatred for the oppressed", which creates "a petrified ideology "that" devotes itself to regarding human beings as talking beasts".¹⁵ This, in turn, dehumanizes both the colonizer and the colonized, but more so the colonized. The system creates a myth of the colonizer and the colonized. The colonizer, maintains Memmi, proposes an image of the colonized as lazy, inferior, wicked and even having 'dependency complex'. He is denied humanity and liberty, the two basic traits that differentiate a man from

13. John Bracey, P.414.

14. Albert and Roberta Wohsletter, "Third World abroad and at home", The Public Interest, No.14 (Winter 1969), P.88-107.

15. Albert Memmi, The Colonizer and the colonized (New York: Orien Press, 1965), P.XXVII.

an animal. Ironically the myth of inferiority created by the colonizer to serve his economic and political needs finally gets accepted by the colonized himself. It thus acquires some reality and contributes to the true portrait of the colonized so very helpful to the colonizers for maintaining the colonial status. The myth by now establishes itself as reality and it eats into the fabric of the social, religious and cultural life of the colonized.

Having been thrown out of the history making process, the colonized finally loses interest and accepts the myth of the intellectual, social and even physical inferiority- which is what the colonizer is very eager to establish. As he is usually denied the attributes of citizenship, like voting rights and the discharge of normal civic duties, the colonized accepts the passive roles assigned to him by the colonizer. Education, designed to serve the needs of the colonizer, helps maintain this status of the colonized. It further helps the colonizer in destroying the past of the colonized by changing the frame of reference of history from the colony to that of his native land. The colonizer distorts and disfigures the historical past of the colonized in such a way that it no longer serves any useful purpose. By changing the names of the streets, putting up the statues of his own heroes, designing the buildings after his home country's architecture, the colonizer obliterates every thing from the memory of the colonized about his past and creates an antipathy for his own civilization and culture. The colonized now no more remembers anything of his past before the colonial rule. Moreover,

whatever he tries to remember that too is painted in such a way by the colonizer that the colonized feels ashamed of it. Even the folk tales of the colonized get corrupted in such a way that they too do not serve the purpose they otherwise serve in a dynamic society.

The colonized is finally taught the use of another language. As Caliban, the archetypal colonized, remarks to Prospero, the colonizer in The Tempest

"you taught me language; and my profit on't
Is I know how to curse; the red plague rãd you,
For learning me your language."

(1.II.363)

This happens, maintains Memmi, because "colonial bilingualism is not just linguistic dualism". It is a "linguistic drama" ¹⁶ as the colonized by acquiring the oppressor's language participates in two psychical and cultural realms which are in conflict with each other. Participation in conflicting worlds becomes an every day reality making the colonized feel inadequacy of his own social system, culture and language.

Family and religion (if not intruded upon already by the missionaries) act as the only refuge for the oppressed and the humiliated colonized. Both the institutions of family and religion under these conditions tend to become more formal and rigid. While the individual finds a retreat from the oppressor's world and also an escape from his failures in the outside world controlled by the colonizer in his family and religion, the feeling of group solidarity is released through religious rites.

16. Albert Memmi, P.108.

by all the members of the group. This becomes a means of safeguarding the collective consciousness of the people. Thus the only two institutions of family and religion available to the colonized also get calcified and petrified resulting in a blockage of the dynamics of social structure : "The calcified colonized society is therefore the consequence of two processes having opposite symptoms: encystment originating internally and corset imposed from outside. Both phenomena have one common factor, contact with colonization. They converge on the social and historical catalepsy of the colonized." ¹⁷ This historically cataleptic state of the colonized helps the colonizer in propagating and perpetuating the myth of his racial superiority. Thus racism becomes both an ideology and a defence mechanism in the colonial situation. Racism produces a racial culture based on a hierarchical system that attaches importance to distinctions of colour, caste, religion, creed and even language. It develops its own mythology, ideology and philosophy.

Frantz Fanon in his speech before the First Congress of Negro Writers and Artists in Paris in 1956 analysed the relationship between racism and culture. In this speech, he puts racism which is a cultural element in two categories - primitive racism and cultural racism. The primitive or vulgar racism tries to find its material basis in biology. ^Superiority of a race thus becomes a matter of the size and form of human

17. Albert Memmi, P.102

skulls. "Scientific arguments" are put forward in support of a physiological lobotomy of the African Negro. It is this type of racism which creates colour prejudice also. Cultural racism is only a subtle and more refined form of primitive racism. In cultural racism the object of racism is no longer the individual man but a certain form of existence. This sort of racism carried to its logical extent makes the colonized hate his language, dress, techniques, value system, social institutions, historical past, religion and practically everything that is not connected with the colonizer. Thus, "the social panorama is destructed, values are flaunted, crushed, emptied,"

[Colonialism usually does not aim at killing the native culture. It aims at "a continued agony (rather) than a total disappearance of the pre-existing culture."¹⁸ It aims at "de-culturation through the process of a systematic elimination of a 'raison d'etre' for the colonized". By a kind of perverted logic it "turns to the past of the oppressed people and distorts, disfigures and destroys it."¹⁹

Having lost a 'raison d'etre' the culture of the colonized becomes closed and gets fixed in the colonial situation having no hope or later on even a desire to change the status. So the colonialist through various kinds of oppression like tortures, raids, collective liquidations, fines, etc. breaks the colonized and society but does not kill it or destroy it completely. He makes it sick, calcified

18. Frantz Fanon, "Racism and Culture"

Black Poets and prophets (New York: Mentor Books, 1972),
P.16-17.

19. Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth

(New York : Mentor Books, 1969), P.170.

petrified. So, once dynamic culture gets frozen and its social structure accepts no change. It tends to become non flexible, rigid, formalistic, and even traditional, producing a new type of "social character".

Elaborating his concept of "social character", Erich Fromm says that it "is the intermediary between the socio-economic structure and the ideas and ideals prevalent in a society. It is the intermediary in both directions, from the ideas to the economic basis"²⁰ and vice-versa. This character is shared by most members of the same culture. It channelizes human energy for the purpose of a continued functioning of society by transmitting the required qualities into an inner drive. For example the industrial society had to produce a social character in which necessity for work, for punctuality and for orderliness had to become inherent strivings. Similarly the social character of the nineteenth century middle class was hoarding oriented to help and perpetuate the capitalistic system of economy. Social character also produces a consciousness of its own kind as consciousness is a social product." It is an expression of social existence and is not determined by instinctual drives (in the case of a society) as psychoanalysis sees it. Marx, the architect of historical materialism connected consciousness with the "concrete life of man."²¹

20. Erich Fromm, "Individual and Social character", in Hendrik M. Ruitenbeek, Psychoanalysis and contemporary American culture (New York : Dell's Book) 1969, P.31.

21. Erich Fromm, The Crisis of Psychoanalysis (London : Jonathan Cape, 1970) P.152.

So, white colonialism by exploitation usurpation and oppression has produced a colonial consciousness which, in its turn, has produced a hierarchical system of variables and constants dependent upon each other. Racism being a constant is central to this philosophy. The other variables are : the historical past and its distortion which results in the loss of and or farming confusion of group and individual identities; colour prejudice; a caste or class system based on race or religion.

It was through the "colonial expansion of Europe that racism spread widely over the world and it developed its own mythology and ideology."²² Poets like Kipling, philosophers like Gobineau and Chamberlain and statesmen like Hitler and Roosevelt spread and defended it. It was a part of bourgeois ideology, designed to rationalise exploitation of non white peoples of the world during imperialistic phase of capitalism. In the American context it was a capitalistic device to divide the working class into two hostile segments for better control. It provided a handy philosophy for justification of slavery in America and geographical expansion in Africa and Asia. New Darwinism provided an explanation for the superiority of the whites over the blacks or the coloureds. This coupled with the historical accident of white dominance created ethnocentrism because "every ethnic group considers itself the sole representative of the human race."²³

22. Pierre L. Van Den Bergh, Race and Racism : A Comparative Perspective (New York : John Wiley & Sons, 1967), P.13

23. Corrado Gini, "Race and Sociology", R.E. Kuttner (ed)., Race and Modern Science (New York : Social Sciences Press, 1969), P. 262.

Through the processes of socialization an individual specifies himself with a specific group and discovers similarities and preferences. This "biased Social perception" leads a man to prefer his "in group" with the result that "the out group" becomes a "conceptualized object".²⁴ having real or imaginary traits. A Negro, irrespective of the colour of his skin, will be identified 'black' by the whites. This reaction pattern finally passes into racial prejudice which eventually becomes a reality, which in turn, through the policies of social isolation, segregation, discrimination and some economic, political exigencies leads to socio_cultural and bio_cological conformity. All these factors go into the making of social consciousness. Thus racial consciousness in the case of the U.S. is a specialized kind of colonial consciousness. Almost all the black American novelists deal with this consciousness in one way or the other. We shall examine their work in the context of racial consciousness in the following chapter as also the work of Indian and African novelists in the context of colonial consciousness.

24. A James Gregor, "Evolutionary Theory, Race and Society", R.E. Kuttner (ed.), Race and Modern Science (New York : Social Science Press, 1967), P.290-293.