**FRANTZ FANON (1921-1961)**

‘THE NEGRO AND LANGUAGE’

*We have to change ourselves in order to fit the language.*

* Says the black man has two dimensions; ‘one with his fellows, the other with the white man.’
* ‘He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle.’ Here Fanon is suggesting that in order to become a part of the cultural language in which they find themselves in ‘the mother country’, they must shed their ‘blackness’ in order to achieve status in society higher than that of the pre-conceived prejudices of Black people still evolving from ‘monkey into man’. In doing so, they become ‘whiter’ in order to become a part of the language which they adopt from this new country. He suggests that this creates an inferiority complex within the ‘souls’ of the colonised people, especially amongst the well-educated, who have to essentially bury their ‘local cultural originality’ in order to fit in. A prime example of this would be Harris.
* Refers to Williams idea of the ‘country and the city’. He uses example of a man returning from the capital Paris. Fanon explains how that when the man returned from this city back to his home country, he would never run out of ‘praises’ for the Capital. Emphasises the idea shown in the Lonely Londoners by Selvon, especially through Galahad, who not only talks about but glorifies London’s station, so that if he were to return back to Trinidad you could almost certainly assume that his depiction of London would come across as almost dream-like, whereas in reality it is not.
* The natives themselves would hold these men who returned as, Fanon puts, ‘demigods’ as they had escaped to places, which to the natives, sounds like another world to that than they are used to and haven’t had a chance to see as they ‘have never crawled out of their holes.’ The ‘newcomers’, those who are returning back home, become in Fanon’s observations as ‘oracles.’ He suggests that even a small amount of time away from home is enough to transform the men who left as equals into men who look down on their own kind, and they are only betrayed by their speech.
* Goes as far as to say those who return and don’t live up to the ideals and expectations of the awaiting people, if he does not adhere to their pre-conceived ideas, then they are deemed a ‘joke’ and ridiculed, which will be felt even by their children. I am reminded of the phrase, if you don’t talk the talk, don’t walk the walk.
* Suggests language is power; ‘The one who expresses himself well…is inordinately feared’
* The change which occurs within a Black man is so substantial that Fanon believes scientific studies on men who come to France for even as little as one month, will have a noticeable physical and psychological change. Uses the example of a boy returning home from France where he asked his father what a piece of apparatus was, his father then drops the tool on his son’s foot, and the son soon remembers the name of said tool.
* ‘A white man addressing a Negro behaves exactly like an adult to a child.’
* ‘This may be the reason for contemporary Negroes: to prove the existence of a black civilisation to the white world at all costs.’
* To speak the pidgin language of the Negro is to trap and isolate the Black man from the rest of the world.