

Negro Travels A Separate, Lonesome Road

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women
merely players.
They have their exits and
their entrances;
And one man in his time
plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.

That was written by William Shakespeare more than three centuries ago—and the Negro is still trying to get into the act. For years he was a mere prop, a nonentity. Then he became a stagehand, setting up the scenes for others and a backstage servant of the stars. Now, prepared to play his part he stands confidently in the wings, awaiting his big break and an opportunity to go out before the footlights and perform as an individual; to suc-

ceed on merit alone or fail regardless of race.

For the average black man the curtain will fall on his own life drama without his having heard the onstage call. He, too, travels the seven stages, but along a separate and lonesome road.

INFANCY—

At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.

The Negro male comes into the world handicapped. His chance of survival is only half that of a white male (four out of every 100 die in infancy), his life expectancy is 6.4 years less. If his is an average Negro family, he will be born in the South (57 per cent), in a city (71 per cent) in a rented home (64 per

cent) one of four children. Except for a pampered few, Junior will do his "mewing" in the arms of his mother who more likely than not is nursemaid to another woman's child.

CHILDHOOD—

And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
And shining morning face,
Creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school

In the wonderful world of children, the Negro child knows no bias. But one day the little white boy with whom he has played all his trusting young life, avoids him. Cornered, the boy blurts out: "My daddy says I can't play with you any more."

Somewhere between his front porch and PS 47, he becomes an outcast. Somewhere between Uptown and Shantytown, he is called "nigger". It is his first encounter with racial prejudice. For the first time, he is made aware of his color and the disadvantages of "difference". He has come to the fork in the road.

"They have their exits and their entrances," wrote Shakespeare. The Negro child exits prematurely from the schoolboy stage into an adult world of fear and hate, of prejudice and segregation. His entrance is a separate one. His first reading lesson is the sign above its door.

THE LOVER—

And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad,
Made to his mistress' eyebrow.

Once when he was still a tot, his mother whipped him unmercifully. Then she cried. He and a little white girl stood smiling at each other in a department store, while their mothers were shopping. Impulsively, the little girl gave him a piece of her candy. Impulsively he hugged her, as he hugged his sister when she gave him a piece of candy, as he hugged his brother when he had been especially kind. Follow a whipping he never understood and a lesson he never forgot. And another "difference" was implanted in his mind.

THE YOUNG ADULT

Then a soldier,
Full of strang oaths, and bearded like the pard;
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the babble reputation.
Even in the cannon's mouth.

As the days of his adolescence change into the age of young adulthood, the Negro male comes to another separation in the road, but this time the choice is his to make. One path leads to more education, a career and possible greatness. The other and easier path leads away from the schoolhouse and to work. Jobs for Negro youth and men—even menial jobs—are hard to come by. The street gang beckons, and a delinquent is in the making. When called to do his stint in the armed forces, like Shakespeare's soldier, he is also sudden and quick in quar-

rel. Facing the cannon's mouth is easy compared with being sent to a post in the Deep South. A Negro-hating superior officer will pop the "bubble" reputation and the air will indeed be "full of strang oaths".

MIDDLE AGE—

And then the justice
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;

And so he plays his part. The Negro male who survives infancy and has learned to adjust to a subordinate role in the society of which he is a product, often reaches adulthood soul-seared and cynical. Coming largely from the 11 per cent of the youth who have been reared in broken homes and the 15 per cent who come from poverty, and being 11 per cent who are victims of racial discrimination in jobs and education, the male Negro adult is more apt to find himself playing the role of an extra in a crowd scene rather than a speaking role, billed as a member of the cast.

His wisdom is wasted on small chores and routine matters. Instead of being justice, he is occupied with getting it for himself.

LATE MATURITY—

The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,

With spectacles on nose
And pouch on side:
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shruk chank; and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound.

A scale revised to reflect a live-longer, grow-younger, society places maturity at age 50, throwing Shakespeare's sixth stage out of focus with today's mature man. "Up to 50," says Clark Tibbitts, eminent authority on aging, "is the period of establishment; after 50 is the time to capitalize on experience, skills and knowledge stockpiled earlier."

The mature male may be ready to face retirement well established as an honest, law-abiding citizen, but if he is a Negro, he cannot sit back on his laurels. To some white people he is still a boy. There are countries in which he is considered too irresponsible to vote, restaurants in which he is considered not cultured enough to eat. He is not free to move into a better neighborhood or to join a Rotary club or become active in other than the Negro branch of an American Legion Post, veteran though he is. Even at the door of the church he may find no welcome mat.

SENESCENCE—

Last scene of all,
That ends this strang eventful history,
Is second childishness, and oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans everything.

In the seventh and final age, the Negro male has missed his moment of glory. He

exits into the Long Night sans all save faith in his God and the future of his sons, who even now, come out of the wings and take their places on the stage, their seats at the lunch counter and their turn at the polls.

Forecasts Continued Struggle

The "new Negro in America will increasingly struggle for his rights rather than accept unjust treatment, a Negro leader predicted here today.

Dr. Robert Johnson, Nashville native now serving as a consultant to the Field Foundation in New York, said that "the last 10 years has witnessed a sharp increase in the tendency of American Negroes to become orderly and effective aggressors rather than avoiders or accepters."

This more active role is stimulated, Dr. Johnson said, by progress toward desegregation in many parts of the world and in many areas of life.

"The unthinkable of yesterday have become the taken-for-granted of today," he said. He cited integration in many areas of employment, in the armed forces and in major league baseball as examples.

The more aggressive attitudes have been viewed with apprehension among Negroes, Dr. Johnson said.

"In every Negro community there appears to be a cleavage between the mere militant and aggressive leaders and the more compromising or accommodating type of leader," he stated, but added that "the Supreme Court decision and other successful efforts waged by Negroes have raised the status of militant Negroes and lowered the status of accommodating leaders."

One of the techniques which Negroes have found to be effective in changing discrimination practices has been "withholding their hard-earned dollars from discriminatory white merchants and conducting their business by mail order, by trips to larger cities or by setting up their own co-operatives and credit unions, Dr. Johnson said.

Dr. Johnson credited two major events with playing "a large part in altering the Negro's conception of himself and of race relations—the emergence of independent nations composed of non-white peoples, particularly in Africa, and the Supreme Court decision of 1954."

The boycotts and "sit-ins" demonstrations recently employed by Negroes to eliminate discriminatory practices Dr. Johnson termed "one of the most massive social movements this continent has ever known."



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Tells How Enjoy a

The sneezes, throat and the sn bad enough, but results of a cold, in a woman's ap She is demoralized looks it.

Here are some tips to look better while from a cold.

* Pamper yourself with crisp blouses, light scarves around your neck, a fresh flower and avoid dark, so ors.

* Do not put on perfume. Use a light, cologne constantly.

* Buy some in men's white hat for a running nos

* Unless your clothes vises against it, r to the hairdresser sweater and keep round your neck der the dryer, an to the beauty salon cannot sit around hair. Arrange the ment at a time whe get fast service.

* Avoid too m make-up if your watering up const a light touch of shadow will do w the eyes are puff compress in the mo help.

* Wear a bright stick to help your ion and use a m lotion under a fou help a chapped no

* Make up your matter how badly to wear your prett If you manage to your appearance, most lingering cold less of an effect.

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