

Plus-pain

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Plus-pain. What is the plus-pain that I talk about so often? It is the current pain of the black man living in this Cuban land of cross-breeds and color prejudices. Observe that I do not say prejudice of race, but of color, since all who do not appear to be black in Cuba are considered white.

The most interesting and intelligent thing would be, as the Parisian journalists who visited us years ago stated, to enjoy and praise all of the shades of our rich native pigmentation. Their exact words were “from the ivory white to the peach black.”

Plus-pain is not the pain that our slave grandfathers consecrated to their African gods under the foremen’s whip. Neither is it the pain of the freed black man who lived during our colonial period, through a strange despotism affirmed by the denial of the Cuban people. It is the current pain of the Afro-Cuban, the black man who made a stupendous contribution to the independence of the country. The one whose mind was cultivated at the University, institutes, professionals schools or, at the least, our public schools of primary learning.

This is neither the pain that the slave receives from the cruel master, nor the pain that the freed black man of the colonial period suffers under the authority of a metropolitan Machiavellism. Now, it is the pain that a

freed black brother receives from a white brother who suffers from the misconception of being a one-eyed king in a land of blind men. The white brother is commonly a captive and victim of his sad inability to understand his black co-citizens’ spiritual values, which are so valuable that they have the ability to stop the dangers that threaten everybody’s Cuban pride and country.

While still admitting that Afro-Cubans suffer the intimate pains of a Cinderella, why call this pain a “plus-pain” by antonomasia, that is, use an epithet or title in place of a proper name?

Let us try to respond with a simple example. The Afro-Cuban, in general, belongs to the working class, the official bureaucracy or the free professions. The other social occupations are forbidden to the Afro-Cuban by the same sociological incomprehension of the white Cuban.

As a worker, public employee, or professional, the black Cuban is subjected to all the iniquitous pressures and pains of the whites who are their social class partners. But, when advances in modern worldly sociology impose on us relief that is specific to the working class, the benefits given to white workers are not given to black workers, bureaucrats or professionals. They have to “battle it out” to get a piece of the action. The proletarian pain and the pain determined by the class of the black man increases

with the racist pain. His pain is then a genuine plus-pain.

Our social protection law requires that some businesses employ women as clerks. In effect, they are employed. There are even some devout souls who write pathetic pamphlets denouncing that they (the women) are paid low salaries. Further, there are unique striking groups to defend them. Yet, none of these sensitive souls pay attention to the fact that not one single dark-skinned woman works in those businesses. There is no sensitivity among the majority of whites to suffer for the denial of black women's rights to the same job that the Republic assures for all Cuban women or to address the denial of black women's rights to many industrial jobs that are only made available to white women.

This is an example of the plus-pain that can be extended to both the women and men of color in all work spheres, even in jobs that whites formerly despised as "black people jobs." Nothing remains for us but the indispensable to prolong the agony.

Additionally, the plus-pain is the pain of understanding. If Afro-Cubans did not have the mental superiority of understanding the blindness of their white countrymen, their lives would be consumed by rancour and resentment which is dangerous to the high interest of Cuban pride, the country and the supreme cause of the proletariat or working class. As in certain countries, blacks would be the reserve for the capitalist to break up strikes and they would occupy places that their Cuban white comrades currently deny them. The Afro-Cubans would come to demoralize the job market and hold back the sociologic progress of Cuba.

Not that! We suffer the plus-pain and hope that a ray of light will brighten white intelligence or that the avalanche of social

progress will impose salvaging equalities on its own.

There is little work for Cuban youth. Yet, that little work is not shared with the Cuban youth of color. Only the most depressive jobs remain for them. Generally, these jobs are cultivated for them, like poison, by the idleness of the dominators of the Cuban society.

Selling newspapers is not a sin. Selling them the way they are sold in Cuba is to foster vice and crime. Very few whites are seen selling newspapers. It's a black stain that scatters on the streets selling newspapers. It is also a black stain that occupies the jails, the presidios, and the ill-fated reformatory of Guanajay.

The black conscience suffers the plus pain of seeing that the white conscience doesn't notice that while the third part of our population remains immersed in all the miseries and subordination, Cuban pride will vegetate freely.

The black man remains stoic and smiling, showing the purity of his soul which is clean of resentments. The black man smiles thanks to this cleanliness. The clean tone of his healthy laughter can still be heard, although this laughter is often confused with that of an insensible being or a submissive man. He hopes that the white man will learn to value the fraternal and intelligent sense of that perennial or occasional smile, like the most welcoming attitude of a race that knows how to love and that cannot be happy unless in the most sincere confraternity.

Until this phenomenon that seems miraculous happens, the black man will continue to suffer his specific pain. This is the plus-pain.