

DIMENSION

To misperceive this difference of degrees as a difference of kind is also to ignore a further crucial dimension to the question of change in South Africa. Black consciousness is a rejection of the idea that the ideal for human kind is "to be like the whites". This should lead to the recognition that it is also bad for whites "to be like the whites". That is, the whites themselves are oppressed in South Africa. In an important sense both whites and blacks are oppressed, though in different ways, by a social system which perpetuates itself by creating white lords and black slaves, and no full human beings. Material privilege is bought at the cost of mental atrophy. The average white South African is scarcely one of the higher forms of life. For whites who have recognised this the desire to change South Africa is not merely the desire "to do something for the blacks". It is the urgent need for personal dignity and the air of freedom and love.

Having said all this, I would like to return to my earlier assertion that white critics of white supremacy are not a significant political force. This statement needs qualification in two ways. Firstly, although as a group white radicals are not a vital force, many of them have skills which make them useful as individuals in political activity.

Secondly, there is one major area of political work where they are perhaps best equipped to work. This is, as proponents of black consciousness have pointed out, in the area of changing white consciousness. It is vitally important to analyse the ways in which whites oppress themselves, and to devise ways of bringing home to them the extent to which the pursuit of material self-interest empties their lives of meaning.

LITTLE THOUGHT

Very little thought has been given to this problem. The characteristic "liberal" approach has been either to argue that the end of apartheid is really in the material interest of the whites, or else simply to appeal to abstract ethical principles, as against material self-interest, without making any attempt to show how the infringement of these principles vitiates the unique life of each individual. Whilst whites are wedded to materialism they will fight against change. In order to bring about this change as smoothly as possible there should be as many whites as possible who want to become full human beings and who recognise that to do so requires co-operation with all their fellows in changing South Africa.

At present, white consciousness is cabbage consciousness a mindless absorption of material from the environment. The synthesis which both Steve Biko and Alan Paton were looking for, the synthesis of cabbage consciousness and its antithesis black consciousness, is human consciousness, and it is the possibilities and promises of human consciousness that we all need to explore.

I have tried to show in this article where the attacks by "black consciousness" on "white liberalism" are justified, and where they are too sweeping. Finally I would like to say that it seems to me that the time has come when both sides could fruitfully bury the argument. By now it should be clear to even the most insensitively paternalistic "white liberal" that he or she needs to examine his or her values very carefully indeed. For the proponents of black consciousness the best way to convince black people that salvation will not come from "white liberals" is by simply getting on with the work of community organisation.

OTHELLO IS NO MOOR!

Rand Daily Mail

CAPE TOWN.— A unique presentation of Shakespeare's "Othello" opens at Cape Town's Space Theatre on June 22 — without an Othello.

This is because British playwright Donald Howarth, on finding that he was not allowed to cast a Black man in an all-White production, has adapted the play to conform with the rules of South Africa. He has overcome the problem by reconstructing the play, leaving out the Moor, Othello, and introducing three new characters.

He says in spite of this the play does not differ drastically from Shakespeare's original version. In rewriting some of the lines Mr. Howarth has adhered to established "Shakespearean language" but emphasises that he has tried to make the action more suitable to modern times.

Mr. Howarth, who once firmly supported the British boycott of South African theatre, said that after meeting Athol Fugard and Yvonne Bryceland during the London run of the play *Bosman and Lena*, decided to come to South Africa to take a "closer look." He said he had grown tired of the "total freedom" of Britain.

Discussing the strong comic elements of *Othello* he said that people were "so serious as to be almost inhuman." He said he wanted to crack this attitude and make people laugh. However, with his limited knowledge of South African audiences he was "slightly apprehensive".