



## RACIAL PRIDE IN JOHN ALFRED WILLIAMS'S THE ANGRY ONES: A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

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John Alfred Williams is known as best African American writer who protested the White world by his articulation of fictional characters. The present study of this paper focuses on how William's Characterization maintains the racial pride among the indifferent situations. It also focuses on how his characters assimilated with Americanism and find out the way in which how these characters overcame from the bitter experiences. His fictional writings made an impact in the mind of readers to revive memories of Williams' near –fatal depressions that exhibits through his characterizations. His writings mirrored that Blacks are more American, ideally, than in America itself. Black characters in the black writings are as much utopia seekers as anyone else who wants to search his identity and freedom. Racial discrimination and Marginalized black characters started to protest against those negative things which led them to face dangerous circumstances in their life.

Williams first novels *The Angry Ones*, deals primarily with the difficulties of an educated and articulated Blackman in a white world. He would see the story he had written at the age of thirty, become his published novel at the age of thirty –five. As I said earlier, *The Angry Ones* (1960), is the story of an educated black Stephen Hill, a black public relations man, who faces the ordeal of maintaining dignity and finding employment in the Newyork city. Newly arrived from Los Angles, he waits for right job. It takes time but Steve Hills faces rejections in all the places wherever he went for employment, spent more than six months without getting acceptable work that made him to have fatal depression. According to Earl A. Cash, IN *The Evolution of a Black Writers*” an educated black faces a double burden, since his academic exposure has made him aware of what rights here are for man, of the infinities possibilities that exist –but not for Him” (P:34). How Steve Hill confronts the harsh reality is the focus of the novel. (Eash A. Cash, PP:34).

*The Angry ones* is largely autobiographical m. it documents the hard times Williams had faced when he settled in Newyork in the mid-fifties. He had worked for a vanity publishing house and knew first hand their discrimination a black encountered in the advertising and publicity fields at that time. Perhaps, feelings of his own experiences constructed him to produce such an autobiographical rather that imagined world.

In most of his novels Williams would never wander far from actual facts and experiences with which he was closely familiar. Williams started to writer his novel with the apologetic tone, later in the decade turns to the militant protest. At the beginning of the Novel *The Angry Ones* stresses the point that blacks are exploited by the business world that is controlled by whites. According to Williams, the Black characters serve primarily as scapegoats for their white employers and friends.

According to Herman Beavers, in his book *African American writers, talk the birth right of Black in American Democracy*: The novels deals with the life of Steve Hill, a bright and ambitious black man who simply wants to make a life in New York City the traditional way: Marriage, children, satisfactory employment. *The Angry Ones* opens with Steve being dropped off in

Philadelphia after driving cross-country with a friend from California. Williams's decision to open the story in Philadelphia intimates that his novel concerns the struggle for freedom. Through brief, Steve presence in Philadelphia, the birth place of American democracy”, establishes the fact that he will grapple with how to liberate himself from the self-doubt and exploitation that will bring down his closest friends, Just as Americans liberated themselves from British rule. (Herman Beavers PP:816).

So, Steve Hill, like Williams, is an educated Black who must face upto being black and all that it implied in the late fifties. Plot wise the novel appears to be but another one formula protest novel. Its main character encounters racial discrimination rebelliously and the narrator passes by no opportunity to intrude with didactic commentary against racism. A close examination of this Williams works, however, reveals subtle treatment of themes which elevates the book from prose formula fiction.

*The Angry Ones* is the weakest of Williams's five Novels of the decade, but it presents some of the important themes of the period. The economic exploitation of blacks and their sense of alienation from American society are topics that are stressed throughout the novel, but of great significance is the role of the Negro as a sexual scapegoat. This is actually according to Noel Schracfnael in his books says” the sexual mythology concerning black virility causes the protagonist's white friend burdened by an unfaithful wife to become insane jealous of the Negro”. (PP:148). This sexual mythology is pointed out by Earl. A. Cash in his criticism *The Evolution of Black Writers*:

The bigoted white boss and the Black well-intentioned employee is an example of a conflict which might be found in any protest novel. And in *The Angry ones*, Steve Hill is placed opposite Rollie Culver, his White boss. But, an extra dimension is added. Culler is a calculating homosexual. Besides that, he is a



shrewd businessman. He knows that no matter how good Steve is, his job opportunities are limited because of his black skin. Hence, he sees Steve as cheap labour and refuses to increase his salary unless Steve is willing to surrender himself to him. (PP; 34) (Earl A. Cash).

In most of the Williams novels the White homosexual employer or Patron would become a recurring figure thoroughly. Not only does a Steve Hill have to submit to the racial slights of the white business world, but he also has to submit to Rollie Culver's a White boss amorous overtones. It is as if Williams were saying that Black too often has to give over his manhood physically as well as psychologically to survive in the white world. Other Black writers except Williams had long emphasized this only psychological surrenders; but not many confronted the physical one. Instead of having Steve commits a brutal act at some points in the novel, Williams shows tremendous insight into the effect of black violence on some whites: when Rollie tries to seduce Steve, Steve hits him; then notices that "he kind of smiled with his eyes.... I wondered if he liked that sort of thing"(The Angry Ones , Williams PP: 70). Later Steve's suspicion would be confirmed about to strike Rollie again, he notes that Rollie "had been ready to stand there and feed on my violence" (PP: 182). Then he resolves:

Let them shake and except the violence they deserve, but never give it to them...Because they deceive strength from it, as Rollie wanted strength from me now. But I wasn't going to give it to him. (The Angry Ones, Williams PP: 182).

This is according to Williams' about Black retaliation. Steve Hill refused to surrender his physical one before the White oppression to his Boss Rollie Culver. The Vanity Press is pre-occupied by Women both White and Colour, except Steve and Rollie. Steve Hill was ready to quit the job rather to surrender before the homosexual exploitation. Another key things to remember about the racial pride in the writings of John Alfred Williams "The Angry Ones, Steve Hill was accused of having an affair with his wife Bobbie. The fact that Lint is white and that he so quickly falls into a state of racial animosity, though slightly impossible , shows how the quest for masculine dignity often jeopardize relationships between black and white men. Williams also projected in his earlier novel "The Angry Ones" (1970), the White and Black romantic involvements need not be and are not so limited in real life.

It is possible that both individual Steve and Lois could be quite same and honestly in love with each other. Williams also presented the same type of interracial romances in his Night songs between Keel and Della and Max and Margrit in The Man Who Cried I am falls into a same pattern relationship. Williams portrayal of Black characters in all his novels including The Angry Ones, predominates in romances over White characters. But it is also possible that both individuals could be exploiting each others; and such is the case with Steve and Lois . on the one hand Lois is a mixed-up girl who uses Steve as means of rebelling against the daily horrors at work or on the Streets. After maliciously asking Lois to marry him, Steve mercilessly hits her with his assessment of their relationship.

You used me as a tool against your parents against your mother. You wanted to get even with her... I used you too, baby. Oh, hell, I'm not clean in this. You had many faces, Lois, and I realize now I hated every white one of them. Near every time I called you, it had been a bad day for me, and I had to get back, if not at them directly at you, and that worked out fine. It kept me from going nuts... what is it you can't accept, Lois- that negroes can think and feel and want revenge?... you wanted revenge for the way people treated you. We're even. Retaliation all around." (PP: 165)

Apart from interracial romances, Williams surpasses the peripheral study of race which may be found in a protest novel can be illustrated in his handling of certain themes. For instance, black pride is an important ingredient for the black who wants to forge ahead but maintain dignity and integrity. But in The Angry Ones, Williams demonstrates the limitations of racial pride. Obie Robertson, journalist friend of Steve's finds himself jobless. He determines not to compromise by taking just any job that comes along. While his pride soars, he sinks further into poverty and despair. At one point in his despondency, he ponders his plight as a black man refusing to accept the harshness of racism:

There's got to be a flaw in me... it can't be the thing, its got to be me...but I ... can't believe discrimination can be this horrible ... no, I can't believe it . I've got a flaw and I've got to work it out (PP: 160)

Herman beavers talks about Steve Hill's integrity in his book African American writers:

Steve quits his job at rocket and calls a man at an employment agency he had visited some weeks earlier. The novel ends with a cautious optimism- Steve emphasizing his integrity by quitting an unacceptable job and beginning to search for the security of an others, which emphasizes integrity over middle-class responsibility.( PP :817).

In the concluding chapters, Williams is not denouncing Black Pride but he is saying that pride alone rarely feeds a hungry mouth or supplies a job. In this sense, Obie contrasts sharply with Steve has pride, but he is William to scheme, to connive, to accept, temporarily, less than he deserves in order to survive. "What Williams bluntly implies is that if survival is the objective one, very well what Steve did; and although one's dignity may not be totally intact, it need not be completely shattered either" (pp:37). (Earl A, Cash).



Another one subject is treated transparently by Williams in his *The Angry Ones*, Security, in which Williams portrayal of Grace childhood friend of Steve, and Steve have conflicting ideas on security. As Steve sees it a man must have his dreams” (PP:5) (*Angry Ones*). and sometimes dreams can be more important than life. So, when a man consider a companion like Grace, he must share his dreams. To Grace he says” you wouldn’t fight or dream with me” (PP: 145) (*The Angry Ones*). as Grace sees it, a black man should accept his pigmentation and not feel a constant need to fight. Steve agrees with their importance, but insists on having the job he wants, a job which would testify to his worth and dignity. He had seen how:

The fierce desire for security was born in her. And it grew. It became encounters which consumed the love we had for each other as if it had never existed. (PP: 37),

The reasons Williams attacks security so violently and repeatedly throughout his work is because an important part of his life had been altered because of disagreement was security. Williams’s characteristics echoed by Steve; “I couldn’t be a social worker, man. I couldn’t stand anyone else’s misery. I got enough of my own. (PP: 105).

As I told that *The Angry Ones* as a autobiographical, Williams implicit his own bitter experiences through Steve Hill because he wants to save car and buildings and fashionable clothes, Williams found his first marriage floundering. On the other hand, his wife was more practical. She wanted to know how the family would survive if he became finances than his writing obtained. Of course, there were other problems as well. With two children and six years of married life behind him, he set out in 1952 to pursue his writing career and to leave job security behind to those who would have them. His whole life style became a protest, then, against considering the attainment of the American dream as the ultimate satisfaction, and he never misses a chance to criticize security and status, handmaiden of the American dreams in his works.

To prevent *The Angry One*, from being overly one-sided, Williams introduced white characters who affirms that Black have no monopoly on sufferings. These characters give a balance to the story nit often found in protest novel which tend to depicts Black as the sole recipients of abuse. All in all, *The Angry Ones* designed the mode of the protest Novel by Williams, but more importantly, it surpasses that mode in its handling of theme and character. A last example of this is the conclusion which is bleak yet hopeful. Rather than have his protagonist totally subdued by his maltreatment, Williams has him survive with Steve Hill’s pride in spite of it. Steve is more conceived than ever that he must continue to fight. And in this sense that the struggle, after he quit his job to face the hostile white world is not won, but it ends bleakly. But in that sense, Williams ends this story with a note of hope which will be attained by the younger black generations in future. Still, the shakiness of this hope in the novel is a reflection of Williams’ view of real life.

Williams, however, is primarily responsible for the establishment of the apologetic novel in the sixties. His first three novels deal with talented or educated blacks who are severely thwarted as individuals by racism. Williams also presents the theme of interracial sexual relationships in which racial prejudice is evoked. In *The Angry Ones* and *In Night Sings*, he illustrates the dynamic nature of sexual racism. This is the dominant theme of apologetic fiction of the period. The racist attitudes were pointed out by Noel Schraufnagal, in his Book “from apology to protest,

The racist attitudes of Whites are revealed primarily through their responses to the sexuality of blacks, which is Often the only aspects of Negroes they are Williams to recognize. On the other hand, blacks either take out their Hatred of the white world on their hatred of the white world on their white world on their white lovers, or they are Made aware of the barbarity of prejudice through a sexual relationship with a member of another race. (PP: 151)

The history of *The Angry Ones* is interesting works of John Alfred Williams, came to Publication with the title of one for Newyork in 1956, but it did not print until 1960, due to many black writers emerged during the times. So it became unpopular among the readers, then the change of the name of the title, instead of One for Newyork, *The Angry Ones* which attracts the attention of readers during sixties and seventies. The name of the novel *The Angry Ones* title itself attracted the Negro readers to know how John Alfred Williams handled Racism in different way rather than his contemporaries. Though the novel, *The Angry one* was not popular among the African Americans at the beginning, after its first effort, it also lost the credits of John Alfred Williams as notable writer during the era for which the author explained many reason for the failure of the novel among the public. However, John Alfred Williams gained world popular novelist after his master piece “*The Man Who Cried I am*” published.

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