

CHESTER HIMES

22 July 1969

Dear John,

I have been thinking about a line from your letter: "He (Harris) said the white folks won't know what Chester's talking about..." You can tell him I'm simply talking about the quality of hurt. Whites in American have hurt everyone they've touched. The white American male has hurt all non-whites with whom he has come into contact, the strong have hurt the weak, the weak have hurt the weaker; he has hurt the black man seriously, but he has hurt his own white woman mate equally. And that is what I am talking about: The peculiar and essential character (Webster) of this hurt. Not only my hurt, but the hurt of this highlyplaced, highly educated, highly classed (a direct descendant of John Hancock, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence) white woman who is the end product of ~~his~~ his civilization. In her hurt, she comes to me, knowing I have been hurt by the same white man, for succor, for me to absorb her hurt, for sanctuary, for grace. The most important field of human activity is the love relation between male and female, because it is the only creative force given by a Divine power to the human race without which--regardless of all else the human race conceives--it can not exist. And this, alone, is the criterion by which the importance of a man is judged. And in this judgement the American black man stands out superior to the American white man, because he holds the female--the mother of the human race--in greater reverence than the American white man; he is more tender, considerate, arduous, and infinitely more aware of the purpose of the woman on this earth. The white man has the wealth, the glory, the power, the acclaim; but the black man has the love and the capacity for love of the female of the species. And that, to my mind, is more important.

Chuck can tell the white folks that is what I'm talking about. See how that goes down.

all best

Chester

