The conference of Negro-African Writers and Artists (Le Congrès des Écrivains et Artistes Noirs) opened on Wednesday, September 19, 1956, in the Sorbonne's Amphitheatre Descartes, in Paris. It was one of those bright, warm days which one likes to think of as typical of the atmosphere of the intellectual capital of the Western world. There were people on the café terraces, boys and girls on the boulevards, bicycles racing by on their fantastically urgent errands. Everyone and everything wore a cheerful aspect, even the houses of Paris, which did not show their age. Those who were unable to pay the steep rents of these houses were enabled, by the weather, to enjoy the streets, to sit, unnoticed, in the parks. The boys and girls and old men and women who had nowhere at all to go and nothing whatever to do, for whom no provision had been made, or could be, added to the beauty of the Paris scene by walking along the river. The newspaper vendors seemed cheerful; so did the people who bought the newspapers. Even the men and women queueing up

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before breakfast—for there was a bread strike in Paris—did so as though they had long been used to it.

The conference was to open at nine o'clock. By ten o'clock the lecture hall was already unbearably hot, people chocked the entrances and covered the wooden steps. It was hectic with the activity attendant upon the setting up of tape recorders, with the testing of earphones, with the lighting of flashbulbs. Electricity, in fact, filled the hall. Of the people there that first day, I should judge that not quite two-thirds were colored. Behind the table at the front of the hall were eight colored men. These included the American novelist Richard Wright; Alcione Diop, the editor of Présence Africaine and one of the principal organizers of the conference; poets Leopold Senghor, from Senegal, and Aimé Césaire, from Martinique, and the poet and novelist Jacques Alexis, from Haiti. From Haiti, also, came the President of the conference, Dr. Price-Marx, a very old and very handsome man.

It was well past ten o'clock when the conference actually opened. Alcione Diop, who is tall, very dark, and self-contained, and who rather resembles, in his extreme sobriety, an old-time Baptist minister, made the opening address. He referred to the present gathering as a kind of second Bandung. As at Bandung, the people gathered together here held in common the fact of their subjugation to Europe, or, at the very least, to the European vision of the world. Out of the fact that European well-being had been, for centuries, so crucially dependent on this subjugation had come that racism from which all black men suffered. Then he spoke of the changes which had taken place during the last decade regarding the fate and the aspirations of non-European peoples, especially the blacks. "The blacks," he said, "whom history has treated in a rather cavalier fashion. I would even say that history has treated black men in a resolutely spiteful fashion were it not for the fact that this history with a large f is nothing more, after all, than the Western interpretation of the life of the world." He spoke of the variety of cultures the conference represented, saying that they were genuine cultures and that the ignorance of the West regarding them was largely a matter of convenience.

Yet, in speaking of the relation between politics and culture, he pointed out that the loss of vitality from which all Negro cultures were suffering was due to the fact that their political destinies were not in their hands. A people deprived of political sovereignty finds it very nearly impossible to recreate, for itself, the image of its past, this perpetual recreation being an absolute necessity for, if not, indeed, the definition of a living culture. And one of the questions, then, said Diop, which would often be raised during this conference was the question of assimilation. Assimilation was frequently but another name for the very special brand of relations between human beings which had been imposed by colonialism. These relations demanded that the individual, torn from the context to which he owed his identity, should replace his habits of feeling, thinking, and acting by another set of habits which belonged to the strangers who dominated him. He cited the example of certain natives of the Belgian Congo, who, accable des complexes, wished for an assimilation so complete that they would no longer be distinguishable from white men. This, said Diop, indicated the blind horror which the spiritual heritage of Africa inspired in their breasts.

The question of assimilation could not, however, be posed this way. It was not a question, on the one hand, of simply being swallowed up, of disappearing in the mass of western culture, nor was it, on the other hand, a question of rejecting assimilation in order to be isolated within African culture. Neither was it a question of deciding which African values were to be retained and which European values were to be adopted. Life was not that simple.

It was due to the crisis which their cultures were now undergoing that black intellectuals had come together. They were here to define and accept their responsibilities, to assess the riches and the promise of their cultures, and to open, in effect, a dialogue with Europe. He ended with a brief and rather moving reference to the fifteen-year struggle of himself and his colleagues to bring about this day.

His speech won a great deal of applause. Yet, I felt that among the dark people in the hall there was, perhaps, some disappointment that he had not been more specific, more bitter, in a word, more denunciating; whereas, among the whites in the hall, there was certainly expressed in their applause a somewhat shamedface and uneasy relief. And, indeed, the atmosphere was strange. No one, black or white, seemed quite to believe what was happening and everyone was tense with the question of which direction the conference would take. Hanging in the air, as real as the heat from which we suffered, were the great spectres of America and Russia, of the battle going on between them for the domination of the world. The resolution of this battle might very well depend on the earth's non-European population, a population vastly outnumbering Europe's, and which had suffered such injustices at European hands. With the best will in the world, no one could undo what past generations had accomplished. The great question was what, exactly, had they accomplished; whether the evil, of which
there had been so much, above lived after them, whether the good, and there had been some, had been interred with their bones.

Of the messages from well-wishers which were read immediately after Du Bois's speech, the last to come from America's W. E. B. Du Bois. "I am not present at your meeting," he began, "because the U.S. government will not give me a passport." The reading was interrupted at this point by great waves of laughter, by no means well-natured, and by a roar of applause, which, as it clearly could not have been intended for the State Department admiration for Du Bois, was plain speaking. "Any African Negro traveling abroad today must either not care about Negroes or say what the State Department wishes him to say." This, of course, drew more applause. It also very neatly compromised whatever effectiveness the five-man American delegation then sitting in the hall might have hoped to have. It was less Du Bois's extremely ill-considered communications which did this, than the undeniable fact that he had not been allowed to leave his country. It was a fact which could scarcely be explained or defended, particularly as one would have also had to explain just how the reasons for Du Bois's absence differed from those which had prevented the arrival of the delegation from South Africa. The very attempt at such an explanation, especially for people whose distrust of the West, however, justified, also tends to make them dangerously blind and hasty, to be suspected of "caring nothing about Negroes," of saying what the State Department "wished" you to say. It was a fact which increased and seemed to justify the distrust with which all Americans are regarded abroad, and it made yet deeper, for the five American Negroes present, that gulf which yawns between the American Negro and all other men of color. This is a very sad and dangerous state of affairs, for the American Negro is possibly the only man of color who can speak of the West with real authority, whose experience, painful as it is, also proves the vitality of the so transgressed western ideals. The fact that Du Bois was not there and could not, therefore, be engaged in debate, naturally made the more seductive his closing argument: which was that, the future of Africa, being socialist, African writers should take the road taken by Russia, Poland, China, etc., and not be "betrayed backward by the U.S. into colonialism."

When the morning session ended and I was speared forth with the mob into the bright courtyard, Richard Wright introduced me to the American delegation. And it seemed quite unbelievable for a moment that the five men standing with Wright (and Wright and myself) were defined, and had been brought together in this courtyard by our relation to the African continent. The chief of the delegation, John Davis, was to be asked just why he considered himself a Negro—he was to be told that he certainly did not look like one. He is a Negro, of course, from the remarkable legal point of view which obtains in the United States, but, more importantly, as he tried to make clear to his interlocutor, he was a Negro by choice and by depth of involvement—by experience, in fact. But the question of choice in such a context can scarcely be coherent for an African and the experience referred to, which produces a John Davis, remains a closed book for him. Mr. Davis might have been rather darker, as were the others—Mercur Cook, William Fontaine, Horace Bond, and James Ivy—and it would not have helped matters very much.

For what, at bottom, distinguished the Americans from the Negresses who surrounded us, men from Nigeria, Senegal, Barbados, Martinique—so many names for so many disciplines—was the banal and abruptly quite overwhelming fact that we had been born in a society, which, in a way quite inconceivable for Africans, and no longer real for Europeans, was open, and, in a sense which has nothing to do with justice or injustice, was free. It was a society, in short, in which nothing was fixed and we had therefore been born to a greater number of possibilities, wretched as these possibilities seemed at the instant of our birth. Moreover, the land of our forefathers' exile had been made, by that travail, our home. It may have been the popular impulse to keep us at the bottom of the perpetually shifting and bewildered populace; but we were, on the other hand, almost personally indispensable to each of them, simply because, without us, they could never have been certain, in such a confusion, where the bottom was, and nothing, in any case, could take away our title to the land which we, too, had purchased with our blood. This results in a psychology very different—at its best and at its worst—from the psychology which is produced by a sense of having been invaded and overrun, the sense of having no recourse whatever against oppression other than overthrowing the machinery of the oppressor. We had been dealing with, had been made and mangled by, another machinery altogether. It had never been in our interest to overthrow it. It had been necessary to make the machinery work for our benefit and the possibility of its doing so had been, so to speak, built in.

We could, therefore, in a way, he considered the connecting link between Africa and the West, the most real and certainly the most shocking of all African contributions to Western cultural life. The articulation of this
He began by invoking what he called the "spirit of the Bushman," in referring to the Bushmen of Africa, as an example of the "true spirit of Africa," as he saw it. He said that the Bushmen were not the only people in Africa who had this "spirit," but that it was a characteristic of all the African races, and that this "spirit" was what made the African continent a unique and special place.

M. Laschak, from Nigeria, spoke at first from the front of the room, in the Yoruba language, a language spoken by five million people in his country. He said that the Yoruba people had a language of their own, and that this language was not only a means of communication, but also a way of thinking and feeling. He said that his people were proud of their language, and that they used it as a way of expressing their culture and history.

In contrast, the English language, he said, was a language of the West, and it was used by the colonizers who had come to Africa. He said that the English language had been used to suppress the African people, and that it was still being used to dominate them.

The discussion then turned to the role of the European Union in African affairs. The European Union was seen as a powerful force in Africa, and it was said that it had a significant influence on the continent.

The discussion then turned to the role of African artists in creating a work of art that was unique to Africa. The artists were encouraged to use their own languages and cultures to create something that was truly African.

The discussion ended with a call for Unity and brotherhood among the African people, and for the protection of African culture and language.
not at all the same distortions which have become one of the principal aims
of the Western world today. They are not the same distortions which
have been imposed on us from the outside, or at least, from the
outside world.

Nothing more could be further from the fact that cultures vanish, under
Under the influence of postmodernism, the concept of "culture" has
become increasingly abstract and detached from its material foundations.
Throughout this process, the role of the artist has been central, as they
transformed cultural norms and values through their work. The concept of
"culture" is thus no longer seen as a static, bounded entity, but rather as a
fluid, dynamic process that is constantly being renegotiated.

The African artists who participated in the exhibition "African Art and the
Global Situation" also sought to redefine the role of the artist in the context of
the globalized world. By blurring the boundaries between traditional and
modern art, they sought to challenge the Western notion of art as a
homogeneous, universal category. Instead, they emphasized the importance of
contextualizing art within specific cultural and historical contexts.

In conclusion, the exhibition "African Art and the Global Situation"
highlighted the complex and multifaceted nature of cultural exchange and
influence in the contemporary world. It underscored the importance of
engaging with the diverse and dynamic forces that shape our understanding
of art and culture.
Rome. If Black Boy, and Senghor, were to be analyzed, it would undoubtedly transpire that the African heritage is which stood out, most, in the living. To sum up, the bonds of the African heritage is which stood out, most, in the living. To sum up, the bonds of the African heritage is which stood out, most, in the living. To sum up, the bonds of the African heritage is which stood out, most, in the living. To sum up, the bonds of the African heritage is which stood out, most, in the living. To sum up, the bonds of the African heritage is which stood out, most, in the living. To sum up, the bonds of the African heritage is which stood out, most, in the living. To sum up, the bonds of the African heritage is which stood out, most, in the living. To sum up, the bonds of the African heritage is which stood out, most, in the living. To sum up, the bonds of the African heritage is which stood out, most, in the living. 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intelligence behind those spectacles is of a very penetrating and demagogic order.

The cultural crisis through which we are passing today can be summed up thus, said Césaire: that culture which is strongest from the material and technological point of view threatens to crush all weaker cultures, particularly in a world in which, distance counting for nothing, the technologically weaker cultures have no means of protecting themselves. All cultures have, furthermore, an economic, social, and political base, and no culture can continue to live if its political destiny is not in its own hands. "Any political and social regime which destroys the self-determination of a people also destroys the creative power of that people." When this has happened the culture of that people has been destroyed. And it is simply not true that the colonizers bring to the colonized a new culture to replace the old one, a culture not being something given to a people, but, on the contrary and by definition, something that they make themselves. Nor is it, in any case, in the nature of colonialism to wish or to permit such a degree of well-being among the colonized. The well-being of the colonized is desirable only insofar as this well-being enriches the dominant country, the necessity of which is simply to remain dominant. Now the civilizations of Europe, said Césaire, speaking very clearly and intensely to a packed and attentive hall, evolved an economy based on capital and the capital was based on black labor; and thus, regardless of whatever arguments Europeans used to defend themselves, and in spite of the absurd palliatives with which they have sometimes tried to soften the blow, the fact, of their domination, in order to accomplish and maintain this domination—in order, in fact, to make money—they destroyed, with utter ruthlessness, everything that stood in their way, languages, customs, tribes, lives; and not only put nothing in its place, but erected, on the contrary, the most tremendous barriers between themselves and the people they ruled. Europe never had the remotest intention of raising Africans to the Western level, of sharing with them the instruments of physical, political or economic power. It was precisely their intention, their necessity, to keep the people they ruled in a state of cultural anarchy, that is, simply in a barbaric state. "The famous inferiority complex one is pleased to observe as a characteristic of the colonized is no accident but something very definitely desired and deliberately incited by the colonizers." He was interrupted at this point—not for the first time—for long and prolonged applause.

"The situation, therefore, in the colonial countries, is tragic," Césaire continued. "Wherever colonization is a fact the indigenous culture begins to rot. And, among these ruins, something begins to be born which is not a culture but a kind of subculture, a subculture which is condemned to exist on the margin allowed it by European culture. This then becomes the province of a few men, the elite, who find themselves placed in the most artificial conditions, deprived of any revivifying contact with the masses of the people. Under such conditions, this subculture has no chance whatever of growing into an active, living culture." And what, he asked, before this situation, can be done?

The answer would not be simple. "In every society there is always a delicate balance between the old and the new, a balance which is perpetually being reestablished, which is reestablished by each generation. Black societies, cultures, civilizations, will not escape this law." Césaire spoke of the energy already proved by black cultures in the past, and, declining to believe that this energy no longer existed, declined also to believe that the total obliteration of the existing culture was a condition for the renaissance of black people. "In the culture to be born there will no doubt be old and new elements. How these elements will be mixed is not a question to which any individual can respond. The response must be given by the community. But we can say this: that the response will be given, and not verbally, but in tangible facts, and by action."

He was interrupted by applause again. He paused, faintly smiling, and reached his peroration: "We find ourselves today in a cultural chaos. And this is our role: to liberate the forces which, alone, can organize from this chaos a new synthesis, a synthesis which will deserve the name of a culture, a synthesis which will be the reconciliation—at dépouillement—of the old and the new. We are here to proclaim the right of our people to speak, to let our people, black people, make their entrance on the great stage of history."

This speech, which was very brilliantly delivered, and which had the further advantage of being, in the main, unassailable (and the advantage, also, of being very little concerned, at bottom, with the economic or political calculation which heard it the most violent reaction of joy, Césaire had spoken for those who could not speak and those who could not speak thronged around the table to shake his hand, and kiss him. I myself felt stirred in a very strange and disagreeable way. For Césaire's case against Europe, which was watertight, was also a very easy case to make. The anatomizing of the great injustice which is the irreducible fact of colonialism was yet not enough to give the victims of that injustice a new sense of themselves. One may say, of course, that the very fact that Césaire had
without reference to the crimes committed by others. The audience was
shocked and horrified. "This is what our society has come to," one of the audience members said. "We must do something to stop this.

Dr. Marcus James, a priest at the Anglican church in Jamaica, picked
up where Excel did: "I am a Christian, and I am ashamed. We are failing
our communities. We need to do more to prevent these atrocities."

The audience applauded loudly, and many of them stood up to
express their support. "We must stand together against this evil,"
one of the audience members shouted.

This was the moment when the audience realized the power of unity
and the need for action. They knew that they could not let this continue,
and they were determined to do something to make a difference.

"We are stronger together than we are apart," one of the audience
members said. "We must work together to create a better future for
our society."
PICON'S AND CON'S

The English did not know the language, but they were astonishingly good at making up words that they could use as needed. They were also very good at adapting to the local customs and ways of life. The English also knew that they were not the most important people in the world, and they were willing to learn from the people they were ruling. This made them very effective at governing.

The Dutch did not know the language, but they were also very good at making up words that they could use as needed. They were also very good at adapting to the local customs and ways of life. The Dutch also knew that they were not the most important people in the world, and they were willing to learn from the people they were ruling. This made them very effective at governing.

The English and the Dutch were both very good at governing, but they had different approaches. The English were more focused on the present, while the Dutch were more focused on the future. The English were also more focused on the individual, while the Dutch were more focused on the community.

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Wright then went on to speak of the effects of European colonization in the African colonies. He said that the African people had been treated very poorly, and that their culture had been destroyed in many ways. He mentioned that the enslavement of Africans had been one of the worst aspects of colonization.

He also talked about the spread of diseases, particularly the volcano in Africa. These diseases had been very devastating to the African population. He said that the disease had spread quickly and that it had taken a toll on the African people.

He then went on to talk about the ethical implications of colonization. He said that it was wrong to treat people in such a way, and that it was important to consider the impact that colonization had on the African people.

Wright ended his speech by saying that it was important to remember the lessons of the past and to work towards a more just and equitable future.
have been extremely difficult, even though there was no black world as such. At any rate, the conference was not intended to be the same. Under the circumstances, it was an absolute necessity for the nearly inadmissible complications of the world in general and was a very difficult task to get out of these circumstances. On the other hand again, where on the other hand at all, at any rate, the general principles of the conference were similar.

As in the way with documents, a bit of the thing was carefully worked and diminished. The committee on the committee of the conference, which had nothing to do with the document, into one short letter, in short, very similarly. It was not a committee, by which the letter made the conference. At any rate, the document was there, the document of the conference, as far as I know, was not absolutely necessary. This was not the case with documents, a bit of the thing was carefully worked and diminished.
any other people." He then made a reference to the present Arab struggle against the French, which he declared to be "the only real war" against the French, in which he was interested. But "The French," he added, "are not alone against us. We are all against them, in Europe."

At a later date, the same idea was expressed by a French writer, who said that the French are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe. This idea was also expressed by a German writer, who said that the German people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

As to the "French," the same idea was expressed by a Russian writer, who said that the Russian people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

The same idea was also expressed by a Belgian writer, who said that the Belgian people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

The same idea was also expressed by an American writer, who said that the American people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

The same idea was also expressed by an Italian writer, who said that the Italian people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

The same idea was also expressed by a Spanish writer, who said that the Spanish people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

The same idea was also expressed by a Dutch writer, who said that the Dutch people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

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As to the "English," the same idea was expressed by an American writer, who said that the American people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

As to the "English," the same idea was expressed by a Belgian writer, who said that the Belgian people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

As to the "English," the same idea was expressed by a Spanish writer, who said that the Spanish people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

As to the "English," the same idea was expressed by a Dutch writer, who said that the Dutch people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

As to the "English," the same idea was expressed by a German writer, who said that the German people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

As to the "English," the same idea was expressed by a Russian writer, who said that the Russian people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

As to the "English," the same idea was expressed by an American writer, who said that the American people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

As to the "English," the same idea was expressed by a Belgian writer, who said that the Belgian people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

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As to the "English," the same idea was expressed by a Russian writer, who said that the Russian people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.

As to the "English," the same idea was expressed by an American writer, who said that the American people are not alone in their war against the English, but that it is a war of all against all, in Europe.