



## The Few and Far Between Symbiosis of Black and White: Never Intermixed

Timuçin Buğra Edman<sup>1</sup>

Zeliha Işık<sup>2</sup>

Manuscript information:

Received: November 06, 2017

Accepted: February 19, 2018

### Abstract

This article presents a comparative study of two eminent philosophers and three different works on the axis of the colonizer and the colonized.<sup>1</sup>The article, on the one hand, reflects the mind of the colonizer and the colonized, on the other hand it will reveal the relations of this echo in selected works to confirm that both the east and the west are nourishing their beneficiary consuming machine on their victims in the neo-liberal system. Albert Memmi's *The Colonizer and the Colonized* involves the black man's war of existence against the exploiting white man while it purports to present how colonialism encapsulates the colonized. It will also play a major role in the synthesis of the selected works that include different times and places. John Maxwell Coetzee's *Disgrace* is a novel about the dilemma of an elderly white academician in a scandalous indignity, and Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is about a young Pakistani lad's rushing towards a career in the United States during the aftermath of 9/11. What makes these two men so akin is not their skin colours but something else. It's like a piece of whole that is far from each other but actually so close. On the other hand, in his book *Black Skin White Masks*, Frantz Fanon investigates different dimensions of irritating existence of the worthless one: the colonized. As a psychiatrist Fanon explains how the colonizer, after all human beings come to be so intolerable and relentless to the colonized ones and why the colonized people always come to a dead end when it comes to get rid of the sense of otherness no matter what they do to get equal rights with the colonizer. The tension between the colonizer and the colonized, which can be depicted as a social schizophrenia has been exemplified in the play of Amiri Baraka, *Dutchman*. In the light of the brilliant ideas

### Author 1

Istanbul Aydın University.

E-mail:

[timucinedman@outlook.com](mailto:timucinedman@outlook.com)

### Author 2

Karabuk University.

E-mail:

[isikzeliha1@gmail.com](mailto:isikzeliha1@gmail.com)

---

<sup>1</sup> Inspired from Albert Memmi's seminal work *The Colonizer and the Colonized*.

presented in *Black Skin White Masks*, the play of Amiri Baraka *Dutchman* will be analysed in terms of the concepts of the colonizer, the colonized, psychology of racism and dehumanization through the fictional characters *Clay*, the man of colour and *Lula*, the white woman. Ultimately, this article will try to confirm that the intersection points of both the colonizer and the colonized are not their skin colours but their minds. If there is any freedom to be reached, this should start from liberating the minds, thus by decolonizing the minds, not by distinguishing the skin colours.

**Keywords:** Segregation, Duality, Intuitivism, Identity Crisis, Neo-liberalism

*Cite as:*

Edman, T. B. & Işık, Z. (2018). The Few and Far Between Symbiosis of Black and White: Never Intermixed. *European Journal of Educational and Social Sciences*, 3 (1), 1 - 9.

## INTRODUCTION

This study is not going to glorify one side and criticize the other. In a first instance, the purpose of the article is not to be oriented to the west or east. Rather, it is to show that the variables in the basic structure of the two main components of the article are not imposed on sound foundations and that we cannot make general definitions in this post-modern era when we live with all the effects of neo-liberalism. Although there are many literary works involved in the study, the main purpose of the article is not to repeat itself by once again revealing the analysis that everyone already knows. The works in this article have been chosen to confirm the hypothesis of the article. In other words, the reason why different literary works are brought together from different literary worlds is that, regardless of how far apart or diverse cultures they are, both the east and the west are nourishing their beneficiary consuming machine on their victims in the neo-liberal system. It is a verifiable claim that blacks and whites, Muslims and Christians, or western and eastern regions will never mix with each other wherever they are concerned. Ultimately, the fundamental individual can turn into a family; a family into a neighbourhood; a neighbourhood into a village; a village into a state or a country on the way to becoming a community. However, all these artificial associations can be reduced to indivisible individuality. Therefore, when a South African white professor comes into contact with his black student, everything that he knows has collapses down in *Disgrace*. On the contrary, a black man with a white woman may not be the demolition of all the taboos in *Dutchman*. A bright young Pakistani who has assimilated himself to be one of the westernized people by not counting his origin becomes a *Reluctant Fundamentalist*. America and South Africa may be places that are so different but never the same. Contrary to the belief that multi-culturalism is a diversity, we are in a world where all the miscellany races rage for the same purpose: This purpose is, in fact, people are no more born into differences, they are merely placed into the artificial differences to induce the clash of this artificial and uncordial new world order.

### *The New World Order and the Myth of the New Citizen*

Undeniably, the understanding of the owner-slave among the people lasts until ancient times. The difference between slaves and free people could be determined in quite separate ways. Being from the noble class, becoming rich, being white, being a member of a different religion, and even being a woman or a man could be a decisive factor. But perhaps one of the most interesting proposals comes from Aristotle, which has even influenced today from the Ancient World. Aristotle tried to explain the distinction between slave and master with *eudaimonia*, which goes beyond technical rationalism. Aristotle claims that “the natural slaves cannot achieve eudaimonia, the best kind of human life. The reason they cannot do so is that eudaimonia consists in virtuous activity” (Heath, 2008). In other words, though slaves do have practical reasons, they are not in a position whereby they make a virtuous choice since the inferior ones’ lack of independent everyday rationality. Though this assertion sounds very primitive and illogical today, the very foundation of this diagnosis relies on some solid



facts. More precisely, the factors that cause rationality to become active and the factors that cause it to remain in the imaginary dimension will be more descriptive for today. That is to say, the power possessed is the most effective role in decision making and decision-executing, while the knowledge is like a car without an engine if there is no authority to perform it. Therefore, humanity separated as slave-master yesterday became a part of a new order which is not very different today. Some refuse to be part of the system, while others become part of this new formation. However, Aristotle's thought emerges differently when it is knotted with the existing neo-liberal viewpoints. Foucault, for example, has argued that in this new form of administration, the new world citizens are people under the same roof. He argued that these new world citizens should raise their voices against these despotic rulers, who interpret their so-called democracy according to their interests by holding their power in their hands:

There exists an international citizenship that has its rights and its duties, and that obliges one to speak out against every abuse of power, whoever its author, whoever its victims. After all, we are all members of the community of the governed, and thereby obliged to show mutual solidarity.... It is a duty of this international citizenship to always bring the testimony of people's suffering to the eyes and ears of governments... The suffering of men must never be a silent residue of policy. It grounds an absolute right to stand up and speak to those who hold power. (Foucault, Foucault, 'Confronting Governments: Human Rights,' 474.2001a: 474-5)

Due to its multi-cultural demography, America should be one of the places where this new world citizen sample can be best observed. Stuck between his Pakistani identity and newly molded Americanized character, Mohsin Hamid's *Changez* confesses that: "I attempted to act and speak, as much as my dignity would permit, more like an American" (Hamid, p.74). This new 'Paki-Americanized' entity follows him wherever he goes. During a business trip in Manila, he asserts that "I was the only non- American in our group, but I suspected my Pakistaniness was invisible, cloaked by my suit, by my expense account, and – most of all- by my companions." (Hamid, p.82).

The more abstract *Changez* himself is from his country, the more abstracted the system would be, and the more American or world citizen he could have benefited from. Any individual who contributes to the system will be able to live in this system, while individuals who do not contribute to the system will be dismissed from this system. In fact, such a systematic loop can be best described by the theory of beehive. Thousands of bees in a beehive keep their bullet standing in the position of both the soldier and the worker, fulfilling the queen bee's instructions to be able to see their acceptance in their columns, focusing on a single task. If it is understood that a bee does not benefit the bee hive, or if it does not comply with the order, then the bee is either thrown or destroyed. This is because the bee does not obey the system as well as it slows down the system. Eventually, such behavior can already be an anarchist trigger to the system itself. Kevin Kelly, in his influential book *Out of Control* connects this theory with the concept of democracy:

It's an election hall of idiots, for idiots, and by idiots, and it works marvelously. This is the true nature of democracy and of all distributed governance. At the close of the curtain, by the

choice of the citizens, the swarm takes the queen and thunders off in the direction indicated by mob vote. The queen who follows, does so humbly. If she could think, she would remember that she is but a mere peasant girl, blood sister of the very nurse bee instructed (by whom) to select her larva, an ordinary larva, and raise it on a diet of royal jelly, transforming Cinderella into the queen. By what karma is the larva for a princess chosen? And who chooses the chooser? (Kelly, 1994, p. 7)

The new citizen is nothing more than a mere bee in the hive. When 9/11 terrorist attacks occurred, Changez finds himself out of the hive. He recognizes that he doesn't belong to that hive. Just as the other bees in the circle can detect the arrival of a bee from a different colony, Changez finds himself thrown to the east of the ancient world, far beyond America where he thought he once found the new world citizenship. Being both a colonized one and the colonizer, the place of America is very slippery. This country has witnessed the both sides of the blade. On the one hand, they desperately need the young minds to develop further, on the other hand, they have to observe every situation that could be harmful or threatening to the system in order to maintain this late hybrid structure, which they have established through neo-liberalism. This system is not limited with some countries. As depicted in a very inspirational article, "The Fate of Sustainable Development Under Neo-liberal Regimes in Developing Countries" ShamsulHaque notes that:

More recently, neo-liberal inclinations have also come to represent the dominant ideological position of various Asian, African, and Latin American regimes. The global trend toward neo-liberal economic reforms has affected almost all developing countries (Walton and Seddon, 1994, p.333). In Asia, the shift toward a neo-liberal policy stance can be found in countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines. Although the major economic success stories of East Asia (for example, Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore) were originally based on a state-centered perspective (Xing, 1995), they have increasingly moved toward a more neo-liberal, pro-market approach. In the case of Africa, the neo-liberal perspective, involving a reduction in the role of the state and its welfare functions, has gained prominence, especially in countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zaire, and Zambia (Walton and Seddon, 1994, p.165; Harvey, 1991, p.133)

The increase in the number of countries making the transition to the neo-liberal system can understand at the time of the collapse that the system they see as a hope is not useful to anyone other than those who actually design the system. Benefactors are the creators of the system that caused these countries to breakdown when they want to rise again after every failure. As a matter of fact, it is true that in neo-liberalism, minority power loots the nations and spoils the environment. It is a global system and it is present in comprehensive and aggressive interventions in all spheres of social life on the ideological pretext of not intervening to these nations in any way. It imposes a specific form of social and economic regulation based on the prominence of finance, the integration of international elites, the subjugation of the poor in all countries, and universal consent to the interests of the United

States (Saad-Filho and Johnston, p.18-22). Therefore, the third world countries have become the victims of this new system in the disillusionment of the decolonization.

### ***Disillusionment of the Decolonization***

The process of independence may mean that an exploited country will be either restrained herself or instigated. If in such condition the latter is on the nail, it should be argued how much independence can be claimed since it is generally the ex-colonizer who first succours. For many, many centuries, the exploited African nations have become so accustomed to the creation and operation of their systems that they suddenly stumble and fall when they are left on their feet. Therefore, they need another support to stand, and this support is usually based on the logic that the old friend who exploited them will not be the enemy. Albert Memmi states the same problem in his work *Decolonization and the Decolonized*:

Why do they continuously beg for aid from the ex-colonizer? How can a country demand independence and at the same time ask for continued subsidies from the former colonizer? Black Africa continues to solicit the intervention of foreign troops to control internal dissent. The French soldiers who operate in the Ivory coast did not invade the country, they were called in by the local government. Why didn't they request assistance from another African country?(Memmi,2006, p.22)

These Afro-countries, which are independent on the surface, are now more difficult to recover once they receive support from the former colonialists. Each debt tries to close with a new debt. While the neo-liberal cycle brings the feeling that these countries have developed themselves economically in the short run, the other side slowly transfers all their teeth to all the assets of the country. Once it enacts an explicit procedure of social and economic parameter based on the prominence of finance, the incorporation of world-wide elites, the subjugation of the poor starts to be discernible until it modifies all the poor people into new slaves who struggles to survive under the regular life standards. South Africa can be a notable example to that where more than 90% of the black population has been consummated by the Dutch ex-colonizers who decolonized African people. Behind the fascinating atmosphere of Cape Town, there are Africans living wretchedly in misery. Their living conditions have been so bad for years that even after Mandela, segregation and its resonance is in utmost level. In shanty towns of South Africa, exploited African people wandering around to find some shelter of some food in their shabby clothes while the ex-colonizers supposedly improving their conditions:

In Black Africa the tourist who takes the trouble to stray from his air-conditioned hotel or the luxurious out-of-the way camps used by vacationers, and dares to enter the local homes, will be horrified by what he finds...Or the children, as attractive as

ebony dolls, dirty and partially dressed, many of whom will soon become statistics, numbering among the premature dead. (Memmi, p.5)

Of course, the identity crises of blacks, educated and dominated by whites in their own countries, cannot be ignored while there are whites living in their artificial heavens they have created by means of luxury and money that they have made on Black Africans. White professor David Lurie, the descendant of the South African colonists, is the decolonized South Africa's new neo-liberal anti-hero in J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*. As the title suggests, the relationship with David Lurie's student Melanie Isaacs - or rather, such a relationship that David's student Melanie have been forced to enter - does not only ruin David's career, but also exposure how the white man exploited the black African in disgrace. It is strange that regarding Melanie "a week ago she was just another pretty face in the class" in the eyes of David, "now she is a presence in his life, a breathing presence" (Coetzee, 2003, p.23). Melanie Isaacs would never have existed for David if she had not been beautiful, just like the misery that European or American tourists would not notice unless they ventured out of their air-conditioned hotels and roamed the back streets of Africa. However, in both cases, neither African shanty towns' nor Melanie's existence is reset because they do not draw attention. Just as their assets are not reset, their existence must not depend on the existence of the others. So, Melanie should not make sense on David. African people should not be suffering because the others recognize the agony they have. The difference of black people should not be understood through a binary opposition of white people. In *Disgrace*, the struggle of South African people to have a better life is vivid yet what motivates them is not their intuitivity<sup>2</sup> but white man's willingness to lift the black man into the so-called standards of his culture. As Fanon notes, "the colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards"(Fanon,1986).This is exactly what happens between Melanie Isaacs and David Lurie. At the point of satisfying the sexual pleasures of David Lurie, Melanie was a very good young prey for David. In the end, this fresh and beautiful black woman was an excuse for David to rejuvenate himself. However, Melanie had to go through a certain white ritual so that she could come to her own level. First Professor Lurie talks about music, then painting and finally Byronic poetry. He displays his bourgeois life style lavishly to remind their differences. Although David is much older than Melanie, David's intellectual accumulation and skin colour have raised him so much that such shortcomings could not be considered. After all, wasn't it really a blessing that David has coupled with Melanie?

He takes her back to his house. On the living-room floor, to the sound of rain pattering against the windows, he makes love to her. Her body is clear, simple, in its way perfect; though she is passive throughout; he finds the act pleasurable, so pleasurable that from its climax he tumbles into blank oblivion.(Coetzee, p.19)

<sup>2</sup>The generic form of this word is intuitively, however, in most of the post-colonial writings and glossaries, intuitivity is generally used and accepted instead of noun form. An example can be found here: <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=intuitivity>



The events that happened to Melanie are embodied in the process described by Fanon. Melanie struggled in this helplessly stranded life style imposed upon her, and was able to adhere herself to neither David's life nor her previous life. In fact, the only concrete fact is that the old life of Melanie that is being usurped in this way will never be the same again as it was before. As Fanon states, "having judged, condemned, abandoned his cultural forms, his language, his food habits, his sexual behaviour, his way of sitting down, of resting, of laughing, of enjoying himself, the oppressed flings himself upon the imposed culture with the desperation of a drowning man"(Fanon, 2004, p.39). This is what happened to Melanie's life and to South Africa. The exact situation Fanon mentions takes place for Clay in the same vein with Melanie. We see that Clay is not allowed to sit in a train peacefully but rather he is disquieted by Lula who reminds him of Clay's "narrow shoulder clothes come from a tradition Clay ought to feel oppressed by" and she asks "what right do you have to be wearing a three-button suit and striped tie" (Baraka, 1964)? It is seen that Clay keeps singing another tune till the end; however it comes to light that Lula was singing death march for Clay from the beginning. It is clear that the intention of Lula who does not take serious or listen to Clay was not to have a decent conversation or to negotiate with him but to kill Clay because Lula rejects the very existence of colored people altogether. Therefore, South Africa, which is the victim of colonial rule has become outmoded, and dependent even after colonialism, is one of the emblematic signs that white and black will never ever intermixed. Of course such discrepancy is not limited with South Africa or some other African countries. As Memmi claims:

Generally speaking, the third world is poor and dying of starvation. Potentially it has the wherewithal to supply the needs of all citizens, but lacks organization and suffers from an ineffective, absurd, and scandal-ridden system of distribution. Why in the Middle East, a world that is still based on a feudal order, do certain Bedouin families possess such fabulous wealth from land where they arrived more or less by accident? We could, it is true, ask the same question about the American settlers. Why is that all members of the human community do not share equally the gifts provided by nature? But I'd like to put that utopia aside for now. The fact remains that any continent, no matter how poor it may appear, contains the wherewithal to feed all its inhabitants. So why the present disaster? (Memmi, 2006, p.7)

Of course, the system weaknesses and disproportionate sociological structure are not only seen in the old African colonies, but also in the Middle Eastern countries. Such an unbalanced distribution is brought about by the neo-liberal system. Countries where production can be balanced at least by consumption and oil sales can certainly be dragged into a different cliff following the oil fields that will be consumed in the near future. However, as the sole interest of the neo-liberal system is to maintain its sustainability, it imposes a hidden slavery through its level of welfare and fosters religious, ethnic, cultural and geographical differences in order to prevent a common awakening.



## CONCLUSION

When we look at the rest of the world, the backward (or backward-looking) countries, namely the 3rd world countries, always take the smallest part of the share. Unending wars, constant chaos and a miserable situation in the midst of disaster and an environment where disasters can be conceived at any moment are the point in question. Moreover, what we actually call black and white in this setting, the skin colours now include only the constant ongoing contrasts. The divergences appear such as Muslim-Christian, Muslim-Jewish or Christian-Jewish strains, Asian-European, European-American and many more. In this chaotic turbulence, while some continue to live at the lowest point where humanity can collapse the others constantly raise their standard of living. All these conflicts and wars ultimately push the other groups back further, eventually leading to a strengthening of a certain chest. This kind of result gradually brings back new slavery as one side constantly goes backwards culturally and economically. It should not be forgotten that all these obstacles are artefacts, even though the examined works in this text focus on the congestion created by social, religious and racial differences. What creates this stagnation from the beginning is that the neo-liberal system tries to create a world that while a handful of winners exploit the world, the rest becomes more and more encumbered under this dirty mass.

## REFERENCES

- Basaran, T., Bigo, D., Guittet, E. P., & Walker, R. (Eds.). (2017). *International Political Sociology Transversal lines*. New York: Routledge.
- Coetzee, J. M. (2014). *Disgrace*. London: Penguin Books.
- Fanon, F. (2004). *Toward The African Revolution: Political Essays*. New York: Grove.
- Hamid, M., Rau, R. F., & Stritzelberger, I. (2013). *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Braunschweig: Diesterweg.
- Haque, M. S. (1999). The Fate of Sustainable Development Under Neo-Liberal Regimes in Developing Countries. *International Political Science Review*, 20(2), 197-218. doi:10.1177/0192512199202005
- Heath, M. (2008). Aristotle on Natural Slavery. *Phronesis*, 53(3), 243-270. doi:10.1163/156852808x307070
- Kelly, K. (2003). *Out of Control The New Biology of Machines, Social Systems and The Economic World*. New York: Basic Books.
- Memmi, A. (2006). *Decolonization and the decolonized*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press.
- Saad-Filho, A., & Johnston, D. (2005). *Neoliberalism: a critical reader*. London: Pluto.

