

Amiri Baraka's *The Slave*: A postcolonial Reading A Research Paper

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Abstract

This research paper revolves around the idea of slavery as examined in Amiri Baraka's one-act play entitled *The Slave* (1964). The play carefully examines the tensity that breaks out between the American blacks and the whites living in contemporary American society. The tension between those blacks and the whites is the result of the fact that the whites often look at the former down and humiliate them in every situation possible. Another factor that stimulates the white to humiliate the blacks is their belief in the racial discrimination. But, the blacks look at themselves as human beings that should have their rights to actualize themselves in every aspect of life, for they hate the fact that they are regarded as being inferior to the whites. The blacks find that there is no power to support themselves and raise their voice in the face of the whites except literature that can be attempted by anyone, a black or a white. Therefore, Baraka's *The Slave* can be considered a violent cry in the face of the whites that points to the idea that the blacks have their own identity and culture together with the right to express themselves freely, so that they can unfold the miserable situation they have been in.

The paper aims at unfolding those representations which fix the way how the blacks are badly treated by the whites and how they have struggled to crystallize their unique identity as human beings having the very rights enjoyed by the whites. Thus, the blacks reject their being victimized by the Whites and try to free themselves from the shackles of servitude. The play shows that the blacks are not only enslaved by the Whites, but they are also enslaved by their hatred toward them.

دراسة في أدب مابعد الاستعمار لمسرحية "العبد" للمسرحي اميري باراكا

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الملخص:

يدور البحث حول فكرة العبودية التي تمت الاشارة لها في مسرحية الفصل الواحد لأميري باراكا الموسومة "العبد" (١٩٦٤). تختبر المسرحية بدقة التوتر الذي يحصل بين الشخصيات الاميركان السود والبيض ضمن المجتمع الاميركي المعاصر إذ ان هذا التوتر كان نتيجة حقيقة ان البيض غالبا ما ينظرون الى السود نظرة دونية وكذلك يقومون بإذلالهم بشتى الطرق الممكنة إذ ان العامل الذي يدفعهم لاذلال السود هو ايمانهم بالتفرقة العنصرية، إلا أن السود ينظرون الى انفسهم كإناس لهم حقوقهم لتحقيق ذاتهم كبشر في نواحي الحياة كافة وذلك لانهم يكرهون حقيقة انهم يعدون ذوي منزلة دون منزلة البيض. ولم يجد السود القوة اللازمة لدعم قضيتهم ورفع صوتهم بوجه البيض باستثناء الآداب والفنون التي متاحة لأي شخص سواء كان اسودا او ابيضا. لذا نجد ان مسرحية باراكا (العبد) تعد صيحة عنيفة في وجه البيض والتي تكشف فكرة ان السود يمتلكون هويتهم وثقافتهم الخاصة بهم إضافة الى حقهم للتعبير عن آرائهم بحرية كيما يكونوا قادرين على كشف الظرف التعيس الذي وجدوا انفسهم فيه.

ويهدف البحث ايضا الى كشف المعطيات التي تحدد الطريقة التي يعامل بها السود بصولة سينة من قبل البيض وكيف ناضل السود لبلورة هويتهم المتفردة كاناس لهم ذات الحقوق التي يتمتع بها البيض. وبناء على ذلك نجد ان السود يرفضون كونهم وقعوا ضحايا بيد البيض وانهم يحاولون تحرير انفسهم من قيود العبودية تبين المسرحية ان السود ليس مستعبدين من قبل البيض فحسب وانما هم مستعبدين ايضا بالكراهية التي يكنوها نحو البيض.

The Synopsis of *The Slave*

The *Salve* is one-act play published and performed in 1964. It tackles the tensely relationship between the blacks and whites in modern American society in which the latter badly undermine the former. The play centers around an African black character namely Walker Vessels who visits his ex-wife's place of residence, Grace, with her white husband called Easley. What makes Vessles pay this visit is the fact that he is looked at as being enslaved by whites and by his

being a hater of the whites who have placed him in this critical situation.

The setting of the play indicates that the action takes place during a time of the great conflict between the blacks and the whites against whom the former have risen up to deform the American status as a civilized country. Vessels, the father of two racially mixed daughters dwelling at the same flat of their mother's white husband, comes with his pistol to kill Grace and her husband intentionally. He fails to do so because the latter and the two girls have been killed due to the collapse of their house.

Introduction

The deprivation of human rights and the oppressive historical background of slavery in America triggered a revolutionary cultural movement started in 1920 under the name of Harlem Renaissance. It sprang in the central spot of New York ,Harlem, and spread in almost all over the world along with the United States like France, and other Caribbean regions “Postcolonial literary theory critically studies the cultural, societal and historical analysis and modes of discourse of the people of the colonies in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Third World”(Muslih 11). The Harlem Renaissance is a cultural and social movement, which has expressed and reflected literature about the Black communities. Alain LeRoy Locke's anthology *The New Negro* (1925)

tackles various themes of the Harlem Renaissance and the black's unbearable effacement in white societies.

The essence of *The New Negro*, according to Locke was to trace and spotlight the attitudes, beliefs, folklore, and rituals of black's life then reflect precisely most of the details in their literary works to restore their lost dignity back in addition to their wasted rights. The aim of the Harlem Renaissance is to build and crystalize an independent and recognized African American identity whether socially or culturally:

Working with forms ranging from the morality play to avant-garde expressionism, Amiri Baraka (October 7, 1934 – January 9, 2014) throughout his career sought to create dramatic rituals expressing the intensity of the physical and psychological violence that dominates his vision of American culture. From his early plays on “universal” alienation through his Black Nationalist celebrations to his multimedia proletarian pageants, Baraka has focused on a variety of sacrificial victims as his central dramatic presences. Some of these victims remain passive scapegoats who allow a corrupt and vicious system to dictate their fate.

(Mambrol,

2019)

It is believed that the blacks had been since then silenced and made voiceless for a long time; therefore, they had to take brilliant role in the discussion of any representation related to their heritage and produce the kind of art that might help them in freeing themselves from any depressive forces on part of the Whites. The blacks' social and cultural status prospered as the black writers produced their own literary works

that rejected any acts of violence and underestimating the black race. The literary products by African authors portrayed the harsh living existence and ordeals of their ancestors who barely and bravely survived different kinds of spiritual and physical torture practiced upon them by whites “On this basis, it is possible to read and analyze the African-American literary themes through a postcolonial vision.”(Muslih 11). They successfully corrected the distorted images of the Africans as inferior creatures that were recorded in the history of slavery by the white superior race: “I see art as a weapon, and a weapon of revolution” LeRoi Jones, (1934-).

Amiri Barka’s *The Slave*: A postcolonial Reading

Jones is a prominent and well-known political activist, poet, and dramatist. He also writes political and literary essays that enable him to be the founder of the Black Arts Repertory Theater. The brilliance and creative way of writing made him very influential and controversial writer among his companions of the last two centuries. He believes in dedicating and using his literary talent and gift as a weapon to fight back the whites’ supremacy above the blacks skillfully. He has initiated the revolutionary drama in which he dedicates most of his plays to serve the black cause. Unlike other African-Americans writers who reveal their identities in their literary works, Jones used his literature to rebel against and resist the whites’ dominance. It is found that he even

embraces the notion of “black art” in which he tackles the plight of modern black man in the American society and how every black individual tries to survive under the harsh circumstances of racism and segregation. He has written many distinguished plays well-known all over the globe such as *Dutchman*, *The Slave*, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (1963), *Black Magic: Collected Poetry* (1969), *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka* (1984), *The Piercing Tales of the Out & Gone* (2006), a fictional social commentary. According to many critics Jones has left a legacy that reflects the black heritage to the world.

According to critics the literary works by Jones have been classified not only as distinguished plays and poems, but also ones which should be used by a highly qualified writer to serve a noble cause “ African Literature forms a main part of twentieth century world literature”(Kadhem 81). Therefore, he has invested these works to reflect the marginalization of the black people as being minorities in any foreign society especially the American milieu. Black people have been effaced by the white for long fine years even after the abolition whites continue constantly dehumanizing them. The African American thinkers found it necessary to claim their rights as human beings with dignity, and at the same time they find that the best way to announce their cause and calamity to the world and the authorities concerned is to be made via

literature i.e. plays, poems, and novels. Hence, they have managed to tell the world about the tormented black community:

The Revolutionary Theatre should force change; it should be changed...The Revolutionary Theatre must teach [white men] their deaths. It must crack their faces open to the mad cries of the poor...The Revolutionary Theatre Must Accuse and Attack anything that can be accused and attacked. It must accuse and attack because it is a theatre of Victims. (Baraka, "The Revolutionary Theatre")

Historically speaking, "The colonizer started to force its own language. Such practices were faced by producing new African Literature, a literature which concentrates on nationality and Africa internal issues during the colonial and postcolonial period which was known later as Postcolonial Literature" (Kadhem 82). Thus, *The Slave* mirrors an everlasting racial struggle of the 1960s America when it was written then staged. The black people are torn out between two edges either to accept integration in the superior white-dominated society or to endure the unjust and humiliating treatment imposed upon them by whites which means to live without dignity or to revolt and face violence and inevitable deaths for the sake of their dignified life.

The Slave is a one-act play published and acted at the same year in 1964. It exposes the story of a visit by Vessels, an African American male character, to Grace's place, his white ex-wife, and Easley, her white husband. In it, Baraka focuses mainly on the black man's

degraded social status in American society and how blacks are victimized and spiritually enslaved by the white race that considered to be superior.

The remarkable presentation of the challenging circumstances experienced by the black individual in America during performance made the play as an outstanding literary work simply because the American audience at the time were used to seeing the stereotypical image about black people as being backward slaves who work to amuse them i.e. singing, dancing and other means of fun things. In *Blues People*, Jones discusses the image of the Negro as a "wild savage" and a comic figure that cherish white people. Yet, in the play the Negro distorted image was given more elevated human qualities like sadness, oppression, depression, and devastation. All these mixed feelings enable the protagonist to question the real reason behind his existence, who is he, and what is his main goal in this absurd life till the moment when he had reached what can be called "a post-bestial stage, and at the same time he was to demonstrate the ridiculousness of his inability to act as a "normal" human being". "American Negroes were much funnier than Africans" (Amiri Baraka). The title itself, *The Slave*, clearly indicates the core of the play which is racial discrimination and all kinds of ill-treatment happened to black people. Many critics say that the title bears metaphorical criticism and hidden implications since

slaves were brought in containers to America to be used as tools for servitude.

The Slave is regarded as a prolongation to *Dutchman* as far as the treatment of racism and segregation themes are concerned. The representatives of the white culture are Easley and Grace. The former stands for “the intellectual and cultural aspects of white society, whereas the latter stands for what lies beneath intellectual and cultural constructs—the emotional and experimental aspects of life” (online 21). The African- American protagonist, Walker Vessels, is haunted by the idea of killing his white Ex-wife and her husband as a reaction towards all white superiority against blacks who suffered from all aspects of submissiveness As Dave Harris says "I am obsessed with all the things that have hurt me." (online 1). This was one of the main reasons why Walker Vessels desperately tries to kill Easley and Grace whom he simply considered them “representatives of the white world around [him] but also as embodiments of his white Western perspectives, those perspectives that inhibit his racial pride by encouraging self-hatred.” (Brown147). Vessels is the father of the two daughters who lived in the white household belonging to his ex-wife’s husband had committed his crime killing Grace and her white husband, so that he could reclaim back the custody of the girls, but his dream did not come true because the entire family was killed when their house collapsed to the ground. He falsely thought that by marrying a white

woman in America would offer him a secured life and satisfy his “inferiority complex” as a black -second class citizen. The inescapable fact remains that he belongs to a race that does not match with the white colonial race which used to enslave the blacks and use them for servitude goals like mules. Even Grace has accepted the marriage of a black man to prove that not all white races are cruel towards other races. However she unconsciously could not escape her white origin that imposes racial barriers upon Walker which eventually leads to their divorce:

GRACE. Walker. You were preaching the murder of white people.

Walker, I was, am white. What do you think was going?

through my mind every time you were at some rally or

meeting whose sole purpose was to bring about the

destruction of the white race? (p. 72)

In their conversation the sense of hatred is expressed on the part of the two characters. They exchange accusations based on their racial backgrounds, for each one sees himself victimized by their cultural burdens. The blacks are presenting themselves to the world as victims and the reverse is the case on part of the whites. In the lines above, Grace also tells Walker that the black race is full with anguish and agitation against her people, not only this but also they are working to destroy and annihilate the white race as a reaction to the oppression

exercised upon them earlier. The sense of racial discrimination and rejection in the play reflects the rebellious attitude of the playwright himself as well, Jones states that “I was crying out against three hundred years of oppression; not against individual” (p. 72). They suffered for centuries without being recognized by the entire world:

The dominant type in Baraka’s early plays, the passive scapegoats unaware of their participation in ritual actions, condemn themselves and their communities to blind repetition of destructive patterns. Their apparent mastery of the forms of European American cultural literacy simply obscures the fact of their ignorance of the underlying reality of oppression. Responding to this ironic situation, Baraka’s Black Nationalist plays emphasize the new forms of consciousness, their roots in Africa rather than Europe, needed to free the African American community from the historical and psychological forces that enforce such blind repetition.

(Mambrol, 2019)

The history of racism in America has been traced back to the discovery of the New Continent by Columbus. The slave trade began and black men were captured and sailed to America as laborers. They lived in miserable situations and suffered from bad conditions. They were hungry, thirsty and ill. Their social status was low, privileges and rights were granted for White Americans only. The black had no rights and they were expected to work all the day regardless of their physical ability and their healthy status “The inferiority of the black is

explicitly reflected in which the white is superior and the black is less than human beings.”(Fatah 85). They remained so until the outbreak of the civil war, that extended from 1861 to 1865, between the South and the North. The North was finally emerged victorious. Only then Black slavery ended in America. Despite the fact that slavery was abolished in the 1860s, its legacy continued. The black were still unable to assimilate themselves into the American Culture, especially in the South.

American racism established its way in every aspect of life such as education, voting rights, citizenship, immigration, and so on. One of the most racist aspects was that of education. The White and the Black were separately taught whether in private or in public schools. Employment also was subject to American racism. The majority of the Blacks were miners, carpenters, soldiers, or laborers enrolled in industrial works in factories, doing tiring and unskillful jobs. In addition, their living standard was very low “Any kind of oppression aims at undermining the sources of effective power embodied in the culture of the oppressed, sources that can be a strong catalyst for effecting the much-coveted change in society. To achieve social domination of the dominated and marginalized groups, some strategies are used to arrange the fundamentals of rule within the social system” (Saleh1).

But in 1968 The Civil Rights Act declared that the Blacks had the same opportunity as the White to choose their living conditions so the dream of equality remains unattainable for them.

Oh, fuck you (Hotly) Fuck you...Just fuck you, that's all! (Keeps voice stiffly contained, but then it rises sharply) I mean really,

just fuck you. Don't tell me about any goddamn killing of anything. It that's happening, I mean it this shelling town is being flattened, let it ... It needs it. (p. 49)

Easley Grace's white husband does not waste any chance to provoke Walker as a low rank citizen. He keeps verbally abusing him emphasizes his inferiority as colored citizen. Therefore, Walker responds in a very impolite way that foreshadows the action of revenge at the end of the play. He pays his ex-wife a visit to see his daughters and take them back with him. Easley teases Walker and drives him angry to the extent that they start a physical confrontation which has ended Easley's life tragically at Walker's hands.

No wonder that Walker was not willing to be driven to this unexpected end as he orders Easley to "shut up": "I don't want to hear anything else from you" (p. 80). The playwright presents a protagonist who outbursts his anguish towards the whites in an act of murder to unleash his feelings of anguish towards the oppressors of his race:

WALKER looks at GRACE slightly, and
EASELY throws himself on him. The chain

falls backward and the two men roll on the floor. EASLEY trying to choke WALKER. WALKER trying to get the gun out of his pocket...Suddenly, WALKER shaves one hand in EASELY'S face, shooting him without taking the gun from his pocket. EASELY slumps backwards, his face twisted, his mouth open and working. WALKER rolls back off EASELY, pulling the gun from his pocket. He props himself against the chair, staring at the man's face (p. 80).

Walker's conflict is internal: the narrator is torn between what he is expected to be according to the standards of the whites and what his placement is as a black man in a white society. Such a struggle affects his ability to comprehend his true-self and to reconcile the two sides of his identity: "He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face" (Du Bois 2-3). Consequently, he is obliged to have "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warnings ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Bios 11). Walker's spoken exchanged insults with Easley and Grace is a mere a manifestation to question his past experience with them. He expresses the total refusal towards all past liberal socializing behavior with non-black people as reflected in the play. The significance of Walker's character is to examine not only the false conceptions about liberal values, but also the double standards of the

whites in applying these fake values such an idea recurs specifically in Walker's angry exchanges with Easley, as this one at the end of Act One shows:

WALKER. (Nodding) Well, what do you think? You never did anything concrete to avoid what's going on now. Your sick liberal lip service to whatever was the least filth. Your high Aesthetic disapproval of the political. Telling the sick ghosts of the thirties strange whatever chance we had.

EASLEY. What are you talking about? (p. 74).

It is a scholarly axiom that Baraka does not waste any chance in his literary works to refer to the injustice of the political exercises made against his race a long time ago. His revolutionary drama reflects the predicament of the black people in the past time and even the present time. Thus, Walker's aggressive attitude towards the white is more of a reaction than of an action. The blacks are not bad in nature; rather, they want to be taken seriously in a society that oppresses them for centuries:

If *The Slave* is tragic, Theodore R. Hudson affirms, its tragedy consists of Vessels being a victor at the same time he is enslaved, and he "no longer has a capacity for love and compassion: [Vessels] had gone from disaffection to specific rage against a social order to undifferentiated hate for all white people" (Hudson 156).

Vessels' attempt to break away from slavery can be regarded as a symbol of the actions he takes in this regard. His motion is asserted in his perturbation rather than in his inactivity, which indicates a change in his personality. As a matter of fact, change can only be brought into existence by means of action which appears to be the field of slavery, for pause, passivity and the acceptance of the present humiliating situations are good for nothing in this respect, which form the environment of the slave. Besides, the concept of slavery may revolve around the African legacy of pain, creativity and joy as well. That is to say, the product of African music and songs encompassing the blacks' aspirations for freedom and self-respect are self-expressions addressed to their combat against the whites. They form one significant outlet and pain screams in addition to the pleasurable experience of the artistic quality. To substantiate this account, it is significant to quote Baraka's remark that "the one peculiar referent to the drastic change in the Negro from slavery to 'citizenship' is [her/]his music." To add, the old slave character, Vessel, concludes his speech addressed to the lite blues people, and as follows:

WALKER: Or old, old blues people moaning
in their sleep, singing, man, oh, nigger,
nigger, you still here, as hard as nails, and
takin' no shit from nobody. He say, yeah,
yeah, he say yeah, yeah. He say, yeah, yeah, .
. . . going' down slow, man. Goin' down slow.
He say . . . yeah, heh . . .

Running down, growing anxiously less articulate, more "field hand sounding, blankly lyrical, shuffles slowly around, across the stage (Slave 45).

Baraka could not possibly have skipped the reference to music as an intrinsic element to African American culture, which gives its members their identity. For this specific play, he needed to choose the blues. The African American music is an important part of the African history and culture. It conveys their tradition, history and consequently their culture. It is not newly invented; rather it is originated in Africa. When the blacks were enslaved and taken to America by the whites, they brought it with them, practiced and inserted it within the American culture. It is not just music in the common sense, rather it is a language through which they express and convey their feeling of segregation. Hence they sing for freedom. In addition, it is their medium through which they pass their culture, tradition and wisdom to the coming generations. In the 19th century, a newly invented music emerged in the South that was known as Blues Music. This music comes as a reaction against the segregation law of Jim Crow. Due to their inability to neither confront nor express the injustice befallen them nor fight it back; they use this music to be their tongue that articulates their suffering and frustration. The African American musician W.C. Handy is considered the father of this type of music, for he helps to make it widely spread in America of course with the aid of the new

breakthroughs that progress rapidly by the beginning of the 20th century:

Because the rituals of Baraka's Black Nationalist plays frequently culminate in violence directed against whites, or symbolically white members of the black bourgeois, or aspects of the individual black psyche, numerous critics have attacked him for perpetuating the violence and racism he ostensibly criticizes. These critics frequently condemn him for oversimplifying reality, citing his movement from psychologically complex ironic forms to much more explicit allegorical modes in his later drama; the most insistent simply dismiss his post-*Dutchman* plays as strident propaganda, lacking all aesthetic and moral merit.

(Mambrol,

2019)

In the 20th century, the Jazz music was considered a genre that sprung from the African American communities of the New Orleans. It is a mixture of the blue music and the black music of the New Orleans. By 1918, it came to be the music of multi-races and immigrants as well. During the 1920s and 1930s, it took a new form when the bands focused more on the context. It started to be played in hotels and ballrooms. It was of two groups, the first was "hot" that was meant to be of pure jazz, while the other was called "sweet" because it was concerned with the sentimental parts of songs. To Baraka, music has always meant freedom: "Music is an emotional experience and a philosophical one. . . . Moving in the blue/black streets there was

freedom, a possibility of becoming anything I could imagine. I was completely on my own (and even more so once I realized it) and everything in that world began and was defined by me, in me, by music" (Autobiography 48-50).

EASLEY: (Moving to comfort her) Oh, don't get worried, Grace...you know he just likes to hear himself talk... more than anything ... he just wants to hear himself talk, so he can find out what he's supposed to have on his mind (p.63).

It may be suggested that Easley's continuous remarks about Walker's conservative behavior can be regarded as part of what he calls as "ritual drama" (p. 56), which particularly refers to his liberal behavior during the time when he was a student at a university. Walker's wrongdoings to destroy Easley and to cause the death of Grace have been the consequence his history as person "set in motion" 43 which underlines his triumph as he violently responds to the essence of the dramatic change in his personality. This change has not likely been defined or considered to be useful. The titular slave does not only point to the hero that is a black slave, but it also points to Walker's tragic end and his enslavement as well: this means his victory does not endow him with a sense of freedom, which turns him to be a heavy drunkard throughout the play. His habit of drinking alcohol too much can be considered of a certain importance. In the first place, it makes open to violence. Secondly, the result of his violence may become ambiguous: "Walker

is not denigrating revolution by this comment but he is acknowledging that a better world may not result.” As Walker further explains that creating a better world would be “up to individuals on that side, just as it was supposed to be up to individuals on this side” (p. 74).

The humming drums of the African slave, the voices of children and the mothers’ screams, together with the whip of the master are all part of Baraka’s audio-visual effects the promotes the theme of slavery and at the same time gives a sense of realism in the play. Brown argues that the succession of audio-visual forms is integral to the pattern of ritual upon which Baraka bases his historical pageant. The sights and sounds of the slave ship remain throughout, but they alternate from time to time with other forms which depict successive stages of the slave holder, the nonviolent civil right movement, and the Black Nationalist movement (Brown, 19).

During the 1960s, the American whites put down the American blacks because they considered them unfriendly, risky and dangerous. More than that, any American woman considered the African-Americans as so hostile criminals that they might rape and even kill her at any time. The white people regarded the blacks as a symbol of evil. Also, White Americans in specific regarded themselves the masters of the Orient and the Occident and superior to all different races “The U.S. the burgeoning representative and leader of the Occident.” (Sultan18).

Hence, the dramatic effect of *The Slave* has created in the public a contradictory aspect to that kind of culture. For the time being, Baraka believes that the belief that the blacks are bad people or second class citizens is no longer existent, for they have gained their dignity and rights. This kind of belief is mainly to create a general atmosphere throughout the play. In their book *The Empire Writes Back* Bill Ashcroft and his companions state clearly that the equation of the colonial power has been reversed and time is due for the colonizers to write back and express their heritage and rituals. The play is mainly based upon the “binary opposition” which refers to the contradicted terms like the colonizer/ colonized occident/orient, and the self /other. The self -assertion of the colonizer is achieved in relation to the colonized other. They treated the other inferiorly to distinguish their privileged self. In return, the other is effaced in the story and serves the colonizers without any objection.

Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* also emphasized the oppositional relation between the dominant culture and the other. He states that colonial conditions should be eliminated in which nations are related to one another: “it is only when we understand that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in this contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation” (37). All the colonial concepts mentioned above are embodied deeply in the play as Baraka invested his literary gift to write and re-present his historical background. It can

be suggested therefore that social rejection and marginality on the part of the American blacks form the most significant themes, which have been the first and foremost target Baraka dealing with. Those themes have been regarded as a landmark of humiliating and dehumanizing the blacks, which may become significant motivations to violate the ethical standards of society. Thus, Baraka manages to portray the effects of disparagement and the social rejection of the American blacks whose ancestors were brought to America and sold as commodities “The Black man must make an effort to “whiten” himself. To the white, the Black man is not a man; he is a new kind of man that bears no resemblance to himself.” (Abd Al-Ameer 345). Therefore, it can be inferred that *The Slave* is an important reflections of the African’s psyche in the white society.

Conclusion

As a matter of fact, the environment in which Baraka lives has its impact on the literature which he tries to produce. He lives in an environment in which the whites prevail and oppress the black race to which he belongs. His drama *The Slave* is based on which he has witnessed. It exposes the racial discrimination practiced against the blacks who have been humiliated and deprived of their human rights whatsoever. Being colonized by powers beyond their control, the blacks have undergone a bitter expedition when they were captured by the whites as captives and servants employed by the whites.

The play is an attempt to raise the blacks' voice against the fact that they have been treated in a bad manner. It exposes the circumstances a white ex-wife and black husband suffer which culminate in the termination of her and her white husband. To add to this catastrophe, Jones fails to have his daughters because they died due to the collapse of the house. Moreover, the divorce between Jones and Grace and the killing of the latter and her white husband happen as a result of the racial discrimination.

Since the blacks could not physically express their revolution to get their rights, Baraka finds it necessary to expose the cause of the blacks throughout writing dramas which can be considered a scream against the whites' bad treatment on all levels of life. It is throughout literature and music the blacks can expose their African American culture to not only to the whites but also to the entire world, so that the latter will learn about their distinct identity as human beings with a distinct character.

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