



Evelyn Waugh's Black Mischief as a Narrative of a Failure

Evelyn Waugh'ın Kara Şeytan Adlı Eseri: Bir Başarısızlık Hikayesi

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ÖZ

Evelyn Waugh'un *Kara Şeytan*¹ (1932) adlı romanı, 20. yüzyıl İngiliz edebiyatının hiciv romanlarından biri olarak kabul edilmiştir. *Kara Şeytan*, yazarın sömürgecilik ve genel olarak modern insan hakkındaki fikirlerini ifade ettiği yoğun hiciv ve eleştiri içermektedir. Roman, batı dünyasından uzak olan bir yerde ülke kurmak için başarısız bir girişim hakkındadır. Azania'nın Oxford mezunu imparatoru Seth, Azania'yı İngiltere'ye benzetmek isterken ülkesindeki yamyam odaklı ve yarı çıplak sakinlerini yok saymaktadır. Bu çalışma Waugh'un *Kara Şeytan* romanını Frantz Fanon'un "Ulusal Kültür Üzerine" (1959) adlı makalesi üzerinden analiz edecektir. Martinikli bir siyaset filozofu ve entelektüel olan Frantz Fanon, sömürgecilik ve sömürgecilik sonrası söylemlerde oldukça etkili olmuştur. "Ulusal Kültür Üzerine" başlıklı yazısı, ulusal kimlik ve ulusal bilinç kavramını benimseme adımlarını özetlemektedir. Bu çalışma, Waugh'un kahramanı Seth'in Fanon'un ulusal kültür oluşturma çabası çerçevesine ne derece uyduğunu irdelenecektir. Çalışma, Fanon'un çerçevesini takip etmek için bireyin harap modern evrende çağdaş insan koşullarına karşı savaşması gerektiğini de ortaya koyacaktır. Bu çalışma, Seth'in modern dünyanın koşullarına karşı koyamadığı için Fanon'un projesine devam edemeyeceği sonucuna varacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler

Evelyn Waugh, *Kara Şeytan*, sömürgecilik, Frantz Fanon

ABSTRACT

Evelyn Waugh's *Black Mischief* (1932) has been accepted as one of the satiric novels of the 20th century English literature. *Black Mischief* includes a high concentration of satire and criticism through which the writer expresses his ideas on colonialism and the modern man in general. The novel is about an unsuccessful attempt at establishing a country in the heart of the oriental world. While Seth, the Oxford-graduate emperor of Azania, tries to establish an England-like Azania, he seems to ignore the real cannibal-oriented and half-naked inhabitants of his country. This study will analyze Waugh's *Black Mischief* in terms of Frantz Fanon's essay "On National Culture" (1959). A political philosopher and an intellectual from Martinique, Frantz Fanon has become highly influential in the discourse on colonialism and post-colonialism. His writing titled "On National Culture" outlines the steps to embrace the notion of national identity and national consciousness. This study will analyze to what degree Waugh's protagonist fits into Fanon's outline of an endeavor to establish national culture. It will also put forward that in order to follow Fanon's outline, an individual should fight against the contemporary human conditions in the devastated modern universe. The study will conclude that because Seth cannot fight back the conditions of the modern world, he cannot go on with Fanon's project.

Keywords

Evelyn Waugh, *Black Mischief*, colonialism, Frantz Fanon

¹The translation of the title into Turkish is by the author.

INTRODUCTION

A prolific journalist with an eager eye to observe the depth of every situation, Evelyn Waugh was a successful writer with a great satiric hue. As a journalist, Waugh travelled to several British colonies and gathered some information for his subsequent publications, among which there is his novel with a comic twist, *Black Mischief* (1932). The novel touches upon the effects of European influence on the protagonist Seth, Azanian people's reaction to the changes that the colonial discourse initiates, and the ways through which Seth tries to project the colonizer's culture on the local routine. What has probably affected Waugh much with reference to the colonial discourse, in general, was the extent of the European influence in a colonized country, in other words, the identity crisis. Robert Garnett records in his study that Waugh was surprised to see some innovations in the oriental part of the world, the innovations that reminded Europe (1990, p. 78). Yet, of what nature was this surprise? Waugh's experiences during his travels, indeed, inspired him to work on *Black Mischief*, a novel about a failure of establishing an England-resembling country in the heart of an Africa-related continent, a territory that implies such issues like cannibalism, nakedness as a normal way of appearing outside, or absolute ignorance of the rest of the world.

Waugh was interested in witnessing historical events. Therefore, he liked travelling. Travelling also allowed Waugh to experience the things he was not able to experience in Europe. As William Myers states, Waugh was excited to see the things that implied "racial dominance" of the Europeans over the oriental people (1991, p. 25). Waugh's attitude towards the blacks is not completely positive. As Richard Jones states, "[s]omeone ought to . . . explain how this man who had such contempt for Blacks and always wrote of them as figures of contempt or fun should have spent so much time traveling in their territory" (1978, p. 514). However, Waugh did not accept the superiority of Western civilization over the orient world. It can be seen in the characterization of Basil in *Black Mischief* and the society to which he belongs in London. Jacqueline McDonnell mentions the war of 1914-18 as the facilitator through which it became evident that "Western civilization was not as inevitably superior as the Victorian empire-builders had supposed" (1988, p. 61). Basil and his society belong to this Western civilization. McDonnell adds that Basil is shocked to realize he has eaten Prudence, but when he "returns to London, . . . he finds [it] just as barbarous as Azania" (1988, p. 62). Myers states that the English titles that Seth distributes to his people in Azania "make[] Europe look as foolish as Africa" (1991, p. 33). Another important point that should be mentioned about Waugh is that he was a Catholic and this made him an anti-Modernist person. His novel *Black Mischief* ridicules the modernization processes that Seth implements in Azania. In Katharyn Crabbe's words, Waugh disapproves of "the mindless pursuit of progress" in his novel (1988, p. 48). Waugh criticizes the non-westerners' attempts to question their nature and adapt a European lifestyle. In other words, Waugh ridicules the colonizers as much as he ridicules the blacks in his novel.

In the novel, an Oxford-graduate Seth, after becoming an emperor in his native country, Azania, tends to transform his country into a small England. The new Emperor believes that the prosperity of his country lies in the progress towards European standards, especially if Azania resembles England in all aspects. The novel pictures a historical period of a fictional African country called Azania and its Oxford-taught Emperor Seth's desire to modernize his country. Seth has ambitions of infusing some, if not all, English rules in his tiny country by breaking the traditional framework of the government system that Azania has had so far. He

allies himself with his Oxford fellow Englishman Basil Seal, who steals his mother's jewelry to buy a ticket to Azania. Bringing Basil Seal to Azania as the head of the newly established Ministry of Modernization, having a Tank as war equipment, or distributing some of the English nobility titles to Azanians show Seth's praising of England's government and military system. Eventually, these largely so-called progressive changes that preoccupy Seth's mind lead him towards his end as an Emperor and a human being. This study will analyze Waugh's *Black Mischief* in terms of Frantz Fanon's essay "On National Culture" (1959) that was published in his book *The Wretched of the Earth*. The study will conclude that Waugh's protagonist's failure to go through Fanon's process of re-establishing a national consciousness is deeply related to his inability to accommodate himself in a modern world marked by alienation, loneliness, and isolation.

Frantz Fanon was born in Martinique in 1925 to a wealthy Creole family that tried to stick to French culture. Later on, however, Fanon was greatly influenced by some political figures that led Fanon to re-think his racial positioning in his country. While he was studying medicine and specializing in psychiatry in France, he became immersed in the idea of being a black man in a white man's world. This interest in the experience of a black man led Fanon write his work *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Later on, Fanon's first encounter with the issue of "alienation in a colonial discourse [in Algeria made him be] convinced that the colonial system was at the root of his patients' mental disorders" (Silverman, 2009, p. 78). From this point on, Fanon started to fight against colonialism and before his early death, he produced several important writings concerning the issues of racial discrimination.

In Fanon's oeuvre, blackness is defined against the whiteness. In other words, as Peter Hudis states, "[t]he black 'exists,' as black, only in relation to the white: there is no pre-existing black essence that a black person can fall back upon" (2015, p. 31). It is the white person who defines the black person and grants him his being. Fanon's essay "On National Culture" stresses the importance of independence of this blackness. It discusses the ways through which the blacks should realize their unique being. Waugh's criticism of the modernization processes of Azania in his novel are closely connected to Fanon's theory of rediscovery of the local culture and identity. Instead of following the traces of his own local culture, as it is suggested in Fanon's essay, Seth strives to implement European standards, which Waugh criticizes in the novel. Waugh's protagonist goes through the process of self-destruction because of his desire to be white. He sees it as a way to elevate his social, political, and cultural status. Seth's hatred towards his locals is actually his hatred towards his nature that betrays his real identity. Seth falls prey to isolation, alienation, and failure to attain selfhood because of the infamous advancements of the modern world. As a result, he fails to go through the process of cultural awakening outlined in Fanon's essay.

Fanon's work "On National Culture", presented at the Second Congress of Black Artists and Writers in Rome in 1959, outlines a way through which a native intellectual can help to maintain his nation against the colonial discourse. Fanon starts by saying that economy plays a vital role in establishing a colonial power in an underdeveloped country (1968, p. 207). By proclaiming a country's economic poverty, the Western world reaches the poor country's depth and announces its wish to enlighten this dark place by bringing economic power. Yet, "sooner or later, colonialism sees that it is not within its powers to put into practice a project of economic and social reforms" (Fanon, 1968, p. 208). Thus, the colonizer attempts at conquering

the country with the help of its troops. At this point, according to Fanon, native intellectuals should come out and fight against the colonizer. Being educated in a colonizer's country, the native intellectual seems to assimilate the white man's culture and when he comes back to his motherland, he sees that there is a huge gap between his native culture and the cultural frame that he has acquired in the West. He desperately tries to grasp his native culture because he feels alienated from his people; yet, he can only catch the surface layer of his native culture, "he only catches hold of their outer garments" (Fanon, 1968, p. 224). He is not equipped with the cultural background of his nation because his mind has been inscribed with the data from the colonizer's world. Thus, in order to learn his native culture, he goes back to his native culture and "renew[s] contact once more with the oldest and most pre-colonial springs of life of their people" (Fanon, 1968, p. 210); he starts learning about the history of his people. "[I]t was with the greatest delight that they discovered that there is nothing to be ashamed of in the past, but rather dignity, glory, and solemnity" (Fanon, 1968, p. 210). Thus, native intellectuals realize the importance of their native culture.

National consciousness, which should be established in order to fight back the colonized, rests not only in the culture in the past but also in the present, according to Fanon: "It is not enough to try to get back to the people in that past out of which they have already emerged; rather we must join them in that fluctuating movement which they are just giving a shape to" (1968, p. 227). It is the everyday detailed struggle of the natives and their accumulation of every experience throughout the years that form or will form the native culture. In this way, a nation is re-established. Thus, the "first necessity is the re-establishment of the nation in order to give life to national culture in the strictly biological sense of the phrase" (Fanon, 1968, p. 245). A nation should be re-awakened and only then, culture is shaped by the accomplishments of that nation.

SETH'S FAILURE IN FANON'S PROCESS

In his writing, Fanon states that following three "phases" (1968, p. 222) against the colonization process is indispensable: "In the first phase, the native intellectual gives proof that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power" (1968, p. 222). This intellectual is charged with foreign attitudes; he is not one of his people anymore. Seth, a native intellectual in Waugh's novel, has an unflinching tendency to prove that he has assimilated English culture; he thinks of a "Tudor model in fumed oak" (Waugh, 2000, p. 21), believes in the power of his "Tank" to protect his town from Seyid's troops (Waugh, 2000, p. 23), or dictates an official letter of amnesty (Waugh, 2000, pp. 7-8); all of these bear a heavy stamp of English influence. Indeed, when a native man assimilates the white man's culture, it serves well to the needs of the colonizer, as Nilay Erdem Ayyıldız states (2015, p. 37). In this case, Seth subconsciously works to strengthen the colonizer's place in Azania by weakening the role of the native culture in the territory. However, the main question here is this: To what extent has Seth assimilated the English culture?

Seth's assimilation of the European culture and standards seems weak and fragile. For example Seth's ideas about the military doctrines that he wants to implement in Azania can be discussed as an example of his inadequate knowledge of the colonizer's world. In contrast to his grandfather Amurath, who established the Empire of Azania and had a strong army as a "safeguard against European intrusion" (Waugh, 2000, p. 13), Seth blindly thinks that "tanks

and aeroplanes" (Waugh, 2000, p. 17) can protect his country. He does not know anything about the European military system except having tanks and airplanes. Ironically, he is ignorant of the fact that one of his battles is won with the help of "lies and the long spear", as his General Connolly states (Waugh, 2000, p. 40), not with a tank. Seth's knowledge about the English culture remains at a base and dilettante level and thwarts Seth from successful completion of his aim to establish an English-like country. Seth's logic of governing a country in a European style depends only on his incomplete experience of a European lifestyle; he thinks that what he has experienced in Europe is enough to implement in and protect his country against enemies. When he hears that his troops seem to be defeated by Seyid's army, he proclaims:

Defeat is impossible. I have been to Europe. I know. We have the Tank. This is not a war of Seth against Seyid but of Progress against Barbarism. And Progress must prevail. I have seen the great tattoo of Aldershot, the Paris Exhibition, the Oxford Union. I have read modern books – Shaw, Arlen, Priestley. . . . I am the New Age. I am the future (Waugh, 2000, pp. 16-17).

Seth's entire argument with reference to the techniques of winning a battle depends exclusively on his pragmatic being in Europe, nothing more. While the war in his country is totally about physical power and usurpation of authority, Seth sees it as an absolute abstract struggle against barbarity. Therefore, he blindly believes in his victory; he is the enlightenment that promises absolute victory.

It seems that the link between Seth's assimilation of European culture and Fanon's definition of the first phase is quite weak. While Fanon's intellectual native harbors precise assimilation patterns, Seth appears to fail in proving that he is equipped with all the necessary components of the superior culture. Seth, indeed, is a phantom of Englishness. He is not English, but he wants to behave like the English. In other words, he imitates them. As Homi Bhabha states, a colonized man "*is almost the same, but not quite*"² (2004, p. 122). In fact, Seth is a hybrid character; he mimics the colonizer and, at the same time, he challenges him. Seth shows the limitations of the colonizer. As Marwan M. Kraidy states, Bhabha "celebrates . . . [hybridity] as a symptom of resistance by the colonized, as the contamination of imperial ideology, aesthetics, and identity by natives striking back at colonial domination" (2005, p. 58). However, although Seth strikes back at colonial power by showing its limitations, he is not strong enough to proceed to recapture his cultural wealth in terms of Fanon's process.

Fanon defines the second phase of national reawakening as the native's awakening: "native is disturbed; he decides to remember what he is" (Fanon, 1968, p. 222). Yet, the native has already lost an important part of his connection to his roots. He will try to reconnect through what is left in him from his native past. In Fanon's words, this native has only "exterior relations with his people" (1968, p. 222), which can be applied to Seth in Waugh's novel. Physically, he is one of them. Yet, mentally, he is quite remote. According to Fanon, the native intellectual who experienced European culture "is terrified by the void, the degradation, and the savagery he sees" in his native country (1968, p. 220). When he realizes that his native country seems savage to him, he starts to understand that European culture harms him. As a result, he starts

² All the emphases throughout this work are as in the original. This statement is in italic in the original.

to "seek his culture elsewhere, anywhere at all" (Fanon, 1968, p. 220); he starts to go back to his native culture. What does Seth do when he sees his native people's behavior and their lifestyles? He becomes desperately disappointed with the behavior of his officers: "'Insupportable barbarians,' he thought. 'I am sure that the English lords do not behave in that way before their King. Even my loyalist officers are ruffians and buffoons'" (Waugh, 2000, p. 115). Seth's critical frame is absolutely European; he sees everyone and everything through the lens of his acquired white man's culture. He is an emperor of an African tribe that is deeply rooted in the soil of African conventions while he is uprooted from that soil. He tries to step on the European ground, and to be like the people from the West. However, he fails:

His rejection of African culture combined with an imperfect assimilation of European ideas and practices has so suspended him between the two societies that he cannot function effectively in either. Having lost contact with his natural heritage and having become too advanced for the needs of his people, Seth is torn between despising the native Azanians for their savagery and trying to enlighten them (Beaty, 1992, p. 69).

In other words, Seth cannot reach the English, but he does not want to stoop down to become one of his people too. So, he is nowhere. That is why Fanon's second phase is not accomplished and, as a result, Seth cannot go on with the third phase. Yet, if Seth had been successful in Fanon's second phase, would he have gathered support from his people?

The answer to the question above is affirmative. Notwithstanding Seth's insistence on the European modernization process of his country, there are signs that the natives are reluctant to follow this process. The granting of dukedoms on some of the members of the Azanian government does not thwart them from the behavior that they normally display. For example, this is how the Duchess of Ukaka receives her invitation to dinner: "She lifted her dress, so as not to soil it, and wiped her hands on her knickers" (Waugh, 2000, p. 134). Ironically, birth control pageant, which Seth organizes to enlighten his people, just encourages local people to go on with increasing the number of their population: "See: on left hand: poor man: not much to eat: but his wife she very good, work hard in field: man he good too: eleven children: one very mad, very holy. And in the middle: Emperor's juju. Make you like that good man with eleven children" (Waugh, 2000, p. 147). People practice cannibalism, eat the stewed Europeans during their feasts, and even invite other Europeans to share their best "meat" (Waugh, 2000, p. 226). These are the cultural practices of Azanians that specify their nature, their identities that Europeans cannot eradicate. These practices, in fact, constitute Azanians' strengths against the colonized. Cannibalism can also be metaphorically regarded as Europeans' suppressed individuality, which they have to conceal because of their urge to impose civilisation.

While Seth drives to the Imperial Institute of Hygiene, his Citroen "raised the dust of the main street" (Waugh, 2000, p. 118). Such paradoxical occurrences make it clear that Azania's emperor's aspirations are futile. Eventually, the most European native in Azania, Seth, perishes in the hands of his native people in the most savage manner: "Thus Seth, who had renounced the barbarism of his country, is buried as a savage by a civilized man presiding over the barbaric rituals" (Beaty, 1992, p. 82). These "barbaric" rituals include the burning of the dead man, Seth. The concept of fire, which can be closely attributed to the people associated with

nature, has always been a crucial element for humanity (Çetiner, 2020, p. 525). That is why fire takes its main role in the funeral rituals of the people living in a place strongly associated with nature and, consequently, quite remote from the commonly accepted white man's concept of civilization. Moreover, fire, as a symbol of knowledge and illumination in the West, can be thought of as a torch that leads a human being from one world into the other. It shows the cyclical movement of life, life that is strongly associated with nature. Thus, these natives would have become a great weapon in the hands of an intellectual Seth if he would dream of re-establishing his native country and national consciousness.

Azania resists straight roads; it baffles rationalization and progress with irrepressible crookedness and spontaneity. The fiasco of Seth's railway departure for Debra Dowa, the native troops eating their government-issue boots, the never-finished road to the British legation – all assert Azania's cultural integrity, its unreflecting adherence to its traditional non-European character (Garnett, 1990, p. 81).

Azanian geographical location, its territorial characteristics, and native people's profound immersion in their local lifestyle resist the westernization of the country. "Seth carries the modernization to ludicrous lengths and yet Azania remains barbarous underneath the veneer of modernity" (Clement, 1994, p. 73). Azania is barbarous from the point of view of the Europeans while it should be argued that the term barbarous means non-European. Azania is barbarous if looked at from the point of view of the Europeans. Yet, it has its own system of existence that it has led hitherto. As Kübra Baysal correctly underlines, native people are not a group of human beings who are, all of a sudden, thrown in the middle of nowhere randomly; they do have and follow their own specific rules in their environment (2013, p. 2), on which the Europeans wreak havoc.

SETH AS A REPRESENTATION OF MODERN MEN

Waugh's contemporaries witnessed the decline of any stable truth and belief, failure of communication between human beings, and loneliness of individuals as the consequences of the developments of the modern era. The expression of such experiences in literature paved the way for the modernist wave of writers among whom it is possible to see Evelyn Waugh with his *Black Mischief* as the epitome of the negative effects of modern life. Both Seth and Basil Seal, two main characters of the novel, are examples of modern men. Both are isolated from their environment, lack communication, and try to find meaning in their lives. Waugh satirizes the rapid development of the modern world where human beings are torn from their traditions and cultures, their families, and their roots. Waugh is a fighter against modernism and its negative effects upon human beings, as Myers correctly underlines (1991, p. 23) and as it is seen in the novel. Seth's position in the novel is the depiction of the decay of the world that is in the whirl of modernity.

Besides its colonial discourse, Waugh's *Black Mischief* is a novel about a man that is lost in the modern world. Seth, Azanian emperor, is a man without an identity. He is from a colonial country, Azania, but he was educated at Oxford, the effects of which he cannot completely abandon. Seth admires his position as a graduate from Oxford and tries to bring an English environment to his country. However, the Azanian emperor is an empty human being. He neither possesses the full knowledge of his own culture nor does he understand the needs of

his people. As Crabbe underlines, Seth is isolated from his environment because he does not understand what is needed from him for his environment; his ideals and the realities around him are incompatible (1988, p. 51). Seth says:

My people are a worthless people. I give orders; there is none to obey me. I am like a great musician without an instrument. A wrecked car broadside across the line of my procession ... a royal train without an engine ... goats on the platform ... I can do nothing with these people (Waugh, 2000, p. 101).

Apparently, Seth is caught in a web of misunderstanding, or worse, lack of communication. What is more, he is not competent in the culture of the English whom he admires. He cannot see the disadvantages of modernization in Europe, although he lived there for a long time. In order to show these destructive forces of modern life in Europe, Waugh portrays Basil Seal and his close environment. For example, there is a lack of communication between Basil and his mother:

‘What I came to say is that I’m just off to Azania.’

‘No, no, dear boy. You are to lunch with Jo at The Travellers’.’

‘And I shall need some money.’

‘It’s all decided.’

‘You see I’m fed up with London and English politics. I want to get away ...’ said Basil, scratching in his pipe with a delicate pair of gold manicure scissors from the dressing-table.

‘Basil dear, *not* with the scissors.’ (Waugh, 2000, p. 85)

Seth’s idealization of the English culture makes him blind to such instances from Europeans’ lives. He sees only one side of people, culture, nation, families, or government, that is, its bright side. Seth is even unaware of the fact that Basil, who is a symbol of Europe and Western culture for him (Waugh, 2000, p. 113) can steal his mother’s jewelry in order to have money to leave London (Waugh, 2000, p. 88). Basil’s act of stealing symbolizes a Westerner’s ability to get everything he wants through illegal ways and with the help of material things, which Seth is unable to notice. According to what Fanon states in his essay, at this stage, one should return to his native culture in order to be able to grasp the importance of being native. However, Seth fails in this process.

Seth blindly believes in the progress and the positive effects of development that he witnessed in England. For example, he proposes to have the Montessori methods of education to educate the cannibal tribe Wanda who actually ate his father Seyid (Waugh, 2000, p. 43). Seth refuses to see that Wanda people’s life style is cannibalism and that it is not something that can be removed in one day. As it was stated earlier, cannibalism can stand for the Europeans’ hidden desires that would reveal their remoteness from civilization. Thus, Seth sees only the best parts in these people. Moreover, for him, the European education system can even eradicate this kind of barbarism – cannibalism. In fact, Seth seems to have lost his common sense because all his aspirations are almost impossible to realize: “Sandwiched between the two seeming irreconcilables, Seth seems to have lost his identity altogether and suffers from a loss of

communication" (Clement, 1994, p. 74). Seth is unable to approach his people, even the closest ones. His best servant, Ali, tries to abandon him at the beginning of the novel because he does not trust his emperor's strength in the civil war. The other people serving him also try to find a way of escaping the country because everybody thinks that Seth's army is going to lose the civil war. All that Seth is able to say is: "Seyid's troops will not march into the town. You forget that I have the Tank" (Waugh, 2000, p. 23). Seth's blind belief in European advances leaves him alone.

Seth's people sense the reality and judge the situation in a realistic way which is contrary to Seth's idealistic attitude: "Seth's loneliness and isolation are functions of psychological and physical realities. Much of his sense of exile comes from his inability to make his adopted code of European modernism fit his circumstances" (Crabbe, 1988, p. 50). He cannot understand the difference between his country and the European countries. In fact, it is because he does not have a healthy point of view; he has distorted illusions. He thinks he can drag all the Western developments to his tribal people and change the realities into a positive experience. Even Basil, an Englishman, does not believe in the strength of his own country's developments and is afraid of its employment in Azania. What Basil thinks about Seth's progress is something between comedy and tragedy: "'Heaven knows what will happen if he ever discovers psycho-analysis,' remarked Basil, gloomily foreseeing a Boulevard Kraft-Ebing, an Avenue Oedipus and a pageant of coprophagists" (Waugh, 2000, p. 142). Basil knows about Seth's unhealthy obsession with European culture and is afraid of its consequences.

In his writing, Frantz Fanon mentions the consequences for the natives who are not capable of grasping the reality of their native land, its national consciousness: "If it is not accomplished there will be serious psycho-affective injuries and the result will be individuals without an anchor, without a horizon, colorless, stateless, rootless – a race of angels" (Fanon, 1968, p. 218). These injuries are the natives' being in between two cultures, not completely belonging to any of them. This is quite typical of Seth. This is the point where Fanon's doctrine and Seth's characterization converge. Waugh portrays the emptiness of Western civilization through Seth's portrait. Basil is another character who is crushed under the heavy burden of the modern world. Trapped in the busy and corrupted world of elite London society, Basil tries to escape. His journey to Azania is his quest for the meaning of life. Basil goes to Azania to find meaning in life, states Clement, and to understand himself (1994, p. 71). Basil, though quite loyal to Seth, fails to follow strictly pure moral values in life. His tendency to stealing things from people – firstly from his mother and then from his cabin companion on a ship (Waugh, 2000, p. 93) – put him into a category of morally deficient characters. Basil, as well as Seth, displays a set of characteristics that mark a lost modern man in a world full of harsh unexpected twists and violence. And this Basil with all his weaknesses is what Seth adores, though Seth is unaware of his deficiencies: "Basil still stood for him as the personification of all that glittering, intangible Western culture to which he aspired" (Waugh, 2000, p. 113). Ironically, Seth sees Basil in this way, and, accordingly, it can be argued that while Basil symbolizes England, Seth symbolizes the orient. Both Seth and Basil look for a kind of support and ideal in each other. Seth sees Basil as his ideal, which he wants to reach; and, in turn, Basil sees Seth as a kind of a sanctuary, where he can escape from the entire hasty world. Hilal Kaya states in her study that Europeans were interested in Oriental places in order to escape from the "political chaos in Europe" (2019, p. 99). Similar to these Europeans, Basil uses Azania as a

place where he can escape from his suffocating world. Yet, the thing that makes the reader uneasy about these aspirations is the blindness of these characters towards each other. And it is precisely what Waugh wants to stress in his novel – human beings' inability to understand each other or to listen to each other's desires, hidden messages, or obvious characteristics. What he offers is being more attentive to our primal instincts, drives, home culture, and genuine feelings.

To sum up, with a variety of messages both to the colonizers and the colonized, *Black Mischief* questions the ability of a modern man to withstand such crucial issues like colonization and resistance to colonial discourse. Seth is lost somewhere between the first and the second stages of Fanon's process towards the fight against colonization process. Seth's failure in re-establishing his native country, according to what Waugh depicts in the novel, is less because of his European standards than because of his inability to overcome the modernity-loaded circumstances of the world. Seth-like characters depict the fragmentation of the universal values, be they national or colonial. *Black Mischief*, in other words, transcends the (post)colonial discourse and takes it to a deeper level, to the loss of a human being in the modern world. Fanon's project outlined in his essay is a way to cleanse oneself from the effects of the colonizer. It can also be seen as a way to overcome the problems of the modern world. Thus, it is possible to say that colonial discourse and the infamous conditions of the modern world are interrelated. Seth, in Waugh's novel, fails to accommodate himself in the modern world, and consequently, fails to go back to his native culture.

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