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ESTRANGEMENT AND UNHOMELINESS OF A MULATTO IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *SLIGHT IN AUGUST*: A POSTCOLONIAL READING

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Abstract: Set in the legendary mythical kingdom of Yoknapatawpha County, William Faulkner's novel, *Light in August* (1932), delves into the life of Joe Christmas, an orphan who believes he is part black and is thus condemned for life. He began to have what Homi Bhabha refers to as a 'Hybrid Identity', which further develops his alienation and unhomeliness. Although Christmas is a white-skinned orphan with no background knowledge of his family, he accepts that he belongs to an African-American ancestry. Throughout his life, Christmas' hybrid identity oscillates between black and white identities. This article provides a postcolonial reading of Faulkner's *Light in August*. Even though the novel has almost two plots, the main focus of this paper is on the one that concerns the main character, Joe Christmas. The paper also draws on the works of postcolonial authors such as Homi Bhabha and Franz Fanon's perspectives. It also focuses on the suffering of the twisted identity crisis that Christmas has which culminates in revolting back to the oppressor, by scapegoating himself and murdering Joanna Burden in an act of salvation.

Keywords: William Faulkner, Postcolonial, Hybridity, Mulatto, Unhomeliness, Joe Christmas, Estrangement

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**WILLIAM FAULKNER'İN AĞUSTOS IŞIĞI ROMANINDA BİR MELEZİN
YABANCILAŞMASI VE AİDİYETSİZLİĞİ: POSTKOLONYAL BİR OKUMA**

Öz: Yoknapatawpha Köyü'nün efsanevi mitik krallığında geçen William Faulkner'in 1932 tarihli Ağustos Işığı romanı, kendisinin kısmen siyah olduğuna inanan ve böylece hayatı boyunca lanetlenen bir yetim olan Joe Christmas'ın hayatını inceler. Homi Bhabha'nın 'Melez Kimlik' olarak adlandırdığı şeye sahip olmaya başlamıştır ki bu da onun yabancılaşmasını ve aidiyetsizliğini daha da geliştirir. Christmas, ailesi hakkında hiçbir bilgisi olmayan beyaz tenli bir yetim olmasına rağmen, Afrika kökenli Amerikalı bir soya ait olduğunu kabul eder. Hayatı boyunca, Christmas'ın melez kimliği siyah ve beyaz kimlikler arasında salınır. Bu makale, Faulkner'in Ağustos Işığı romanına postkolonyal bir okuma sunmaktadır. Roman neredeyse iki konuya sahip olsa da, bu çalışmanın ana odağı ana karakter Joe Christmas'ı ilgilendiren kısımdır. Makale ayrıca Homi Bhabha ve Franz Fanon gibi postkolonyal yazarların perspektiflerinden de yararlanmaktadır. Ayrıca, Christmas'ın yaşadığı çarpıtılmış kimlik krizinin, kendini günah keçisi ilan ederek ve bir kurtuluş eylemi olarak Joanna Burden'ı öldürerek zalime karşı isyan etmesiyle sonuçlanan acılarına da odaklanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: William Faulkner, postkolonyal, melezlik, melez , yurtsuzluk, Joe Christmas, yabancılaşma.

1. Introduction

Whether America was a postcolonial country in regard to literary and cultural production was a subject of much debate. However, many critics¹ consider it as a part of the postcolonial world simply because Europeans colonized much of the continent we now call America, as Peter Hulme wrote, “the United States continued to colonize North America, completing the genocide of the native population begun by the Spanish and the British”. In this way, considering ‘postcolonial’ as a term, “[the United States] can be postcolonial and colonizing at the same time” (See Parek Paryz, 2012, p.3). After the Civil War, the United States government imposed certain laws upon the South; thus, Baker argues (2000), “it is possible to consider the post-bellum South fundamentally as a colonized region” (p.4)

For John McLeod (2020), colonialism justifies the colonizers presence and actions in the colonized nations and even gets them to accept their inferior ranking in regard to the colonizers, a process,—McLeod calls—, “colonizing the mind”. Indeed, colonialism constructs the colonized to be both submissive

1. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, & Helen Tiffin argued in their book *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) that the U.S. was the first English-speaking nation to experience a postcolonial transition since its literature emerged from a struggle with ‘imperial’ Britain. See also Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*.

and supportive of the colonialist ideology, while the culture of the colonized is scorned and regarded as inferior or 'uncivilized'. Therefore, the colonized people should be saved from their own culture and even from their own beings (McLeod). This, in part, results in the colonized juxtaposition of the sense of belonging, creating a hybrid identity and even an uncompromised self and dislocation.

*Light in August*² (that is *LA*), tells the story of Joe Christmas, a baby born and thrown near an orphanage on Christmas Day, of which he was named after. One day at the orphanage, he was called a "nigger bastard" after having seen the dietitian have an affair. He started to believe that he had mixed African blood. He was adopted later, but then deserted his foster parents as he grew up. He ended up in Jefferson at the house of Joanna Burden, with whom he lived until he eventually murdered her. Notably, *Light in August*, writes Baker (2000), might be taken after a story of a black man from Oxford, Mississippi, Nelse Patton, who was executed for having murdered a white woman by slicing her throat with a razor.

The white man bears significant responsibility for Joanna's death due to his inability to treat blacks – particularly mulattoes— with basic humanity, exposes his moral decay. In the novel, Faulkner brings out various paradoxes of the Southern American society. Primarily, the novel has two plots, one about Joe Christmas and the other about Lena Grove. Accordingly, the paper delves into the one that concerns Joe Christmas, as stated earlier. Faulkner depicts Joe Christmas' struggle with his twisted identity, which eventually culminated in the murder of Joanna Burden. Christmas was hunted down for her murder; he was shot dead and even castrated.

This paper tackles Faulkner's novel using a postcolonial reading of the character of Joe Christmas. In this regard, America is postcolonial in the sense that blacks were brought from their lands in Africa and, in a way, colonized in a different land to serve white Europeans in America. Even worse than colonization was the peculiar institution they were put into that they could not even fight back to liberate themselves and their offspring. Most of the previous

2. Faulkner first wrote *Light in August* with the title "The Dark House", which was abandoned and given as a draft to his other novel, *Absalom, Absalom!* The latter was also changed into its present title.

literature on the novel explores themes of race, identity, and mixed blood, the significance of this study stems from its postcolonial focus on alienation and unhomeliness of the protagonist.

2-William Faulkner: A Biographical Overview

William Faulkner was born William Cuthbert Falkner on September 25, 1897, in New Albany, Mississippi. He was named after his great-grandfather, William Clark Falkner³ (1825-1889) known as Old Colonel and served as a soldier, author, banker, and a railroad developer (Anderson, 2007). Faulkner stayed for most of his life in Oxford, Mississippi, in Lafayette County where he is said to have turned it into the fictional mythical Yoknapatawpha County. He was capable of recollecting stories about the Old South and providing salient accounts of the Confederate veterans (Brooks, 1985)

Faulkner, the sole owner and appropriator of Yoknapatawpha County, as was signed in the map of the mythical kingdom in his *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), received some good reviews on his previous work, *The Sound and the Fury*. The English novelist, Arnold Bennett praised him as, “the coming man” who has “an inexhaustible invention, powerful imagination, a wondrous gift of characterization, [and] a finished skill in dialogue” (See Millgate, 1987, p.6).

The area that makes the land of Yoknapatawpha County was peopled for centuries by the Chickasaw people before the United States government issued the Mississippi Territory in 1798. The region was a strip of land along the lower borders of Mississippi and Alabama while the rest of the area was annexed six years later (Gorra, 2020). Yoknapatawpha first emerged in Faulkner’s *Sartoris* (1929) and extended to many of his major novels, with Jefferson as its main seat. The county’s population varies from plantation owners to poor “white trash” whom even slaves disrespected (Brooks, 1985). Mapping out the land of Yoknapatawpha County, Faulkner knew well that he discovered his own “little postage stamp of native soil” (Kerr, 1969). According to the maps provided in *Absalom, Absalom!* (that is *AA*) and *The Portable*

3. William Faulkner was born William Cuthbert Falkner on September 25, 1897. After being rejected to join the American Air Force, he went to New York and joined the Canadian branch of the Royal Air Force as a cadet. He used the name *Faulkner* adding a “u” to the spelling and the name was kept from then on. See Hamblin (2016), (24-25)

Faulkner, Yoknapatawpha County is located in the north of Mississippi with an area of 2400 square miles, and a population of 6298 whites and 9313 blacks.

3. Joe Christmas Hybrid Identity Crisis

The study of postcolonial literature is essential to the theme of place and displacement. Here, the identity crisis emerges with features of self and place, whereby the self might get dislocated gradually (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002). The bottom line for postcolonialism is not to be completely assimilated in the other, but to have a fusion of identities. For example, in the case of Joe Christmas, being neither black nor white is what disorders him the most. The alienation of his hybrid identity accompanied him from the orphanage to the time he came to Jefferson. He tried to escape marginalization and seek protection under his bewildering character. He is constantly aware of his mixed blood and acts with it accordingly. He treats blacks as a whites, and whites as a blacks.

In a similar vein, Fanon wrote two major books – originally published in French and later translated into English— *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). In one of the chapters in his first book, Fanon described how he was discriminated against in France because of his skin color, and referred to as “*Sale nègre*” or “*tiens un nègre*” meaning “Dirty nigger” and “Look, a nigro!” Fanon further wrote how he was led to perceive himself in a train, so estranged that he was dislocated even from his self and his being. He wrote:

In the train I was not given one but two, three places ... It was not that I was finding febrile coordinates in the world. I existed triply” He continued, “on that day, completely dislocated, unable to be ... [with] the white man, who unmercifully imprisoned me ... All I wanted was to be a man among other men. (*Black Skin, White Masks*, 1986:112)

Fanon underwent such inferiority which the French practiced on him because whatever the negro did or no matter how hard he tried, it just could not yield a good result, for the negro cannot equal the white since the latter, writes Fanon, “barred me from all participation” (p.114). Likewise, Christmas was imprisoned in his own mind because he could not advance to be white nor

black and could not act in either way due to the Southern white society, which imposed its ideology of having to be pure white, or else one is estranged and therefore marginalized.

Like many of Faulkner's characters, Joe Christmas believed himself to be of mixed blood which estranged him all along the rest of his life. He feels what Homi Bhabha (1992) calls 'unhomeliness'. Bhabha characterizes the term as the unsettling division between private and public spheres resulting in a sense of alienation even within one's own home. In this way, Christmas neither belongs to the whites nor does he belong to the blacks. He is torn asunder by the unbearable miscegenation that dislocated him from his own community. He could not be classified purely white nor purely black. In other words, the society classified him, for the wrong reasons, white to the blacks, and black to the whites (Bleikasten, 1987).

His feeling of displacement was extremely unpleasant. The latter is an admixture of two cultures from two poles, African and Western, as he found it difficult to reconcile them. Therefore, Joe Christmas, to borrow Bhabha's words (1996), "deploy[s] the partial culture from which [he] emerge[d] to construct visions of community" (p.58). He wanted hard to expel such a culture as he lied in bed beside a white woman, "trying to breathe into himself the dark odor, the dark and inscrutable thinking and being of negroes, with each suspiration trying to expel from himself the white blood and the white thinking and being." (*LA*, p.178). In the same regard, Bleikasten (1987) described the inner self of Joe Christmas, "he would never stop loathing himself, consumed both by the white racist's hatred of the 'nigger' and the black man's hatred of his white oppressor." (p.83)

The "unhomely" as a word, "captures something of the estranging sense of relocation of the home and the world in an unhallowed place", for being 'unhomely' does not mean 'homeless' (*The World and the Home*, 1992, p.141). Bhabha further illustrated that it means one does not feel at home even when he lives in one since he/she feels alienated from within. Joe Christmas was both homeless and unhomely. He was homeless simply because he did not have a home and was abandoned in an orphanage. As he grew up, he looked around for places to stay at till he eventually reached Joanna Burden and stayed with her, murdered her, and ran away. He was unhomely because no

matter how hard he tried, he could not fit into the Jefferson society, which had strict codes of social constructions that had to be followed, or else one remains “unhomely” and dislocated. In fact, Joe Christmas could not integrate into the Jefferson community in the South.

Watkins (1994) noted that the central theme of *Light in August* is “the placelessness of persons who have, either through their own efforts or because of some twist of fate, become located in the margins of society,” and therefore, Faulkner shows the extent to which a person “is simultaneously a part of, yet outside, of society.” (p.11) The critic concluded that Joe Christmas was both in danger and dangerous to the Southern society; consequently, he exposes them to blood “contamination”. Since he was neither black nor white, Faulkner explained, “That was what made the folks so mad.” (*LA*, p.276). Watkins further illustrated that Christmas was the characterization of “being simultaneously both white and black and yet ... [n]either black nor white he is in fact out of place in the bipolar racial world of the American South, and he is not alone.” (p.12) Therefore, his danger lays in the fact that he is a living proof of black and white put in one soul which specifically should not exist in the racist Southern community.

William Faulkner called him a “stranger” in the second chapter, and he saliently described his displacement from Jefferson: “there was something definitely rootless about him, as though no town nor city was his, no walls, no square of earth his home” (*LA*, p.31). He did not seem white sometimes because his name gave him away, as the foreman stated, “Did you ever hear of a white man named Christmas?” (*LA*, p.33). The *foreign-ness* (my emphasis), racial distinction, and rootlessness of Joe Christmas are a danger to the Jefferson community, and it corrupts “all the semiotic codes of society” (See Levinson, p.300). It was clear that he did not belong to Jefferson, nor did he belong anywhere else. Christmas was so displaced and dislocated, and he knew he had no place in the community.

The complexity of Joe Christmas' character stems from the fact that he did not even know how to fit or satisfy himself, for he knew he was neither black nor white. Thus, he probably hated both. Faulkner commented on him, “Sometimes he would remember how he had once tricked or teased white men into calling him a negro in order to fight them, to beat them or be beaten,”

whilst ironically, in the north, “he fought the negro who called him white” (*LA*, p.178). The uncertainty of his race caused him to experience identity disorder with both blacks and whites.

The crisis of Joe Christmas, according to Bleikasten, is that he does not even know for sure that he is black. He argues, “he probably is not even a mulatto. There is no factual evidence for his mixed blood.” (p.83). Similarly, Faulkner noted:

I think that was his tragedy—he didn’t know what he was, and so he was nothing ... that he didn’t know what he was and there was no possible way in life for him to find out. Which to me is the most tragic condition a man could find himself in—not knowing what he is and to know that he will never know. (*Faulkner in the University*, p.72)

According to Robert Rudnicki (1999), Joe Christmas is “the most bewildered fugito” of William Faulkner (p.5); likewise, Williamson (1995) regards him as “the ultimate in displaced persons”(p.423). To this end, Joe’s alienation stems from his ignorance of his parents, his origins, and his race which are very important ingredients in the composition of one’s identity in the South, and hence Jefferson, Mississippi in Yoknapatawpha County. Similarly, Thomas Sutpen in *Absalom, Absalom!* was rejected at first by Rosa Coldfield and the Jefferson community because his origins were unknown. Respectability of the Coldfields in Jefferson was demonstrated: “our father knew who his father was in Tennessee and who his grandfather had been in Virginia, and our neighbours and the people we lived among knew that we knew and we knew they knew we knew” (*AA*, p.11). Sutpen married Rosa’s sister, Ellen Coldfield, in order to get a name, a title, and respectability which he lacked but was available in the Coldfields, as Grmusa & Oklopcic (2022) concluded, “one’s behaviour and reputation became the criteria for race identification for not only African Americans but also progressive white Southerners” (p.43). But Joe Christmas was denied access to a status in the Jefferson society as he was abandoned at the orphanage by his biological parents. We can see this from the dialogue at the orphanage with an adult ‘nigger’ whom Christmas asked:

‘How come you are a nigger?’ and the nigger said, ‘who told you I am a nigger, you little white trash bastard?’ and he [Christmas] says, ‘I ain’t a nigger,’ and the nigger says, ‘You are worse than that. You don’t even know what you are. And more than that, you won’t never know. You’ll live and you’ll die and you won’t never know’ (*LA*, pp. 383-384)

Joe Christmas's estrangement is illustrated by the counter hospitality shown to Lena Grove despite her strangeness and pregnancy in the community of Jefferson. Anderson (2007) argued, "the community's response to her contrasts starkly with their response to Joe, bringing into vivid relief his alienation." (p.71). His only proof was that he heard it from someone in the orphanage that his father was part black, and he took it for granted. Even more tragic was his inability to validate the information because there is no one to neither confirm nor deny the hypothesis.

4. Other Alien People in the Jefferson Community

Joe Christmas was not the only stranger in Jefferson. Joanna Burden was also a stranger despite the fact that she was born in the house and lived in the community ever since. She was regarded as a, "stranger, a foreigner whose people moved in from the North during Reconstruction. A Yankee, a lover of negroes, about whom in the town there is still talk of queer relations with negroes in the town and out of it" (*LA*, p.46). There might be particular traits and characteristics of being a Southerner in Jefferson, otherwise, an outsider who settles there might not fit in the community. To begin with, one needs a respectful name. So hard it is for both males and females, but it is even harder for females since men could always marry a woman with a good name from a respectful family, like Thomas Sutpen did with Ellen Coldfield in *Absalom, Absalom!*. Another condition would be to be known in Jefferson, that is, one could be traced back through his/her ancestors to belong to the Jefferson society.

Joanna Burden did not have any of that. Being a woman, miss Burden was a spinster, and on top of that, she even claims equality of blacks and whites. Byron Bunch described her to Lena Grove: "She is a Yankee... folks [in Jefferson] say she claims that niggers are the same as white folks. That's why folks don't never go out there. Except one" (*LA*, p. 53). This is more than enough reason for the people of Jefferson to estrange her and stay away from her, except the people—usually blacks or mulattos—who visit her. These are strangers themselves like Joe Christmas and Lucas Burch. The latter disguises as Joe Brown. Even her parents and grandparents who settled in Jefferson could not un-do the fact that they were Yankees, and the idea is reinforced by

Joanna herself as she “Visits them [negroes] when they are sick like they was white” (LA, p.53). This fair treatment of blacks is what made the people of Jefferson avoid visiting her or having anything to do with her.

Lena Grove who travelled to Jefferson looking for the father of her unborn babe, Lucas Burch, is an outsider. She also, Watkins remarked, “exists on the edge and margin of the social structure. However, the primary source of her luminal status is different from Christmas’s because she is unambiguously white.” (p.14) Thus, she is easily assimilated into the Jefferson community. Despite her violation of the marriage code, “everybody takes her in and treats her with kindness.” Bleikasten (p.82)

Faulkner uses these people as outsiders to the Southern society set during the 1920s and 1930s. Those who do not stick to the code of conduct and social constructions of the Southern society are usually alienated and eliminated from the community. People like Lena Grove, unmarried with her unborn baby, Joe Christmas, the miscegenated, Joanna Burden, the Yankee lady who helps ‘negroes’, Lucas Burch, who came to Jefferson to work, all failed to assimilate into the conventional Southern society.

5. Unreconcilable Bloodlines:

Inescapable Racial Divide in the Southern Mindset

Once the South was vanquished after the Civil War and blacks were freed from slavery, the South got more and more segregated against blacks. Not only was the feeling of superiority embedded in the mindset of people, but the idea of white supremacy was based on the exclusion of blacks, as Harris (1993) pointed out, “The right to exclude was the central principle, too, of whiteness as identity, for mainly whiteness has been characterized, not by an inherent unifying characteristic, but by the exclusion of others deemed to be ‘not white’” (p.1736). The Southern society was based on the supremacy of “whiteness”, and even pure whiteness so as to establish the privileges enjoyed by the white Southerner and mainly by the Southern aristocrats. The slaves were freed but Jim Crow law⁴ of segregation lingered in the South. The Southern slavery, as mentioned in *Absalom, Absalom!* by Rosa Coldfield, was a

4. Despite the fact that slavery was in the South, the segregation laws of Jim Crow emerged in the North and then were used in the South.

“Southern curse” which was one of the major reasons of the decline of the South as she told Quentin Compson, it is “why God let us lose the War”(AA, p.6)

Joanna's father too in *Light in August* realized the curse and told his daughter, “Remember this. Your grandfather and brother are lying there, murdered not by one white man but by the curse which God put on a whole race...A race doomed and cursed to be forever and ever a part of the white race's doom and curse for its sins” (LA, p.252). The curse eventually falls upon Joanna by Joe Christmas who murdered her fulfilling the prophecy of her father, “None can escape it...Not even you. Least of all you.” (LA, p.253). Joe Christmas ended up executed by a mob led by Percy Grimm, and then castrated for her murder. A murder that was, in fact, almost self-defence. However, his actual crime was miscegenation, since he was damned neither to escape it nor to ever confirm it. The same idea was delivered to Charles Bon's brother, Henry Sutpen in *Absalom, Absalom!* “So, it's the miscegenation, not the incest, which you cant bear” (AA, p.285). Faulkner showed that miscegenation was even worse than incest, as Henry Sutpen knew that Charles Bon was his brother, and allowed his marriage to his sister, Judith, but once he learned his mixed blood, he decided to murder him.

In this regard, Baker (2000), wrote of Christmas' death to be an embodiment of “racism, miscegenation and violence—all a part of the curse of the South; hence, he must die”(p.92). The castration on the part of Percy Grimm was too much a shock even to the angry mob as Grimm spoke to dead Christmas, “Now you'll let white women alone, even in hell”(LA, p.464). The miscegenation engendered in Christmas was so hated by the Southern society and, to an extreme extension, by Percy Grimm, was now handled if not during Christmas' life, it was even after he was dead; castrated to ‘forever and [n]ever’ produce again from white women even in hell, and being set an example to his likes not to think of it.

The irony of the South is that what they once considered an outsider, a slave, or rather an enemy, was not only present in the white house, but also part of it, inside of it. Kenneth Burke wrote, that the white race is centered on “a sense of fundamental kinship with the enemy, as one needs him, is indebted to him, is not merely outside him as an observer but contains him within, being

consubstantial with him.”(see Sunquist, 2008, p.90)

In the South, the mixed blood people, and the likes of Joe Christmas were probably more hated than blacks themselves. While blacks are clearly distinguished and can be separated and segregated, the mulattoes could be mistaken for whites or blacks together. Watkins (1994) argues that the problem with Joe Christmas was that he was both black and white simultaneously, and that should be put separate in a racist community. Faulkner wrote of him that “He never acted like either a nigger or a white man. That was it. That was what made the folks so mad.”(*LA*, p.331). Likewise, argues Franz Fanon, “The Negro is a human being...But on certain points the white man remained intractable. Under no conditions did he wish any intimacy between the races”(See *Black Skin, White Masks*, p.120). Hence, it is already decided that there is no need to try and justify, or even make things right, in the words of Fanon, because it is simply, “Too late. Everything is anticipated, thought out, demonstrated, made the most of. My trembling hands take hold of nothing: the vein has been mined out. Too late” why so? Because “There will always be a world—a white world— between you and us.”(*Black Skin, White Masks*, p.121). This is what Edward Said referred to in his well known book, *Orientalism* (1978) that the West decides and fabricates the Other, and condemns him for what this Other is not.

6. The Fear of the Mulatto to Write Back

Part of the discrimination and hatred against the blacks is the fear of the power to be given to the black man. The latter who was brought from Africa and enslaved, freed, and segregated. As Faulkner claimed by the end of *Absalom, Absalom!* in the words of the Canadian Shreve McCannon to his college roommate Quentin Compson for anticipating the future of race in the Western world:

I think that in time the Jim Bonds [blacks and mulattoes] are going to conquer the Western hemisphere. Of course it won't quite be in our time... and so in a few thousand years, I who regard you will also have sprung from the loins of African kings (*Absalom, Absalom!*, p.302).

This implies their fear of the reverse of power from the white man to the black man or the man of colors. Likewise, Franz Fanon described the whites' fear of the man of colors in that the whites have “paranoid fantasy of

primordial dispossession" in regard to the black man (see Bhabha, 1996, p.15). In the same way, Friday (2000) argues that Joe Christmas, "reflects cultural fears rooted in a 'one-drop,' pseudo-biological conception of race... the notion of invisible 'blackness' or the 'white nigger' is most certainly a product of white anxiety and contemporary race theories prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s" (p.45).

The whites' fear of equality with blacks, added up to their feeling of supremacy as a race, made them detest blacks but what they detest most was the mulattoes because they resemble whites, and could corrupt the myth of white supremacy. Miscegenation, therefore is the problem of the South, to use Glicksperg's words, "Miscegenation,[is] the crime of crimes in the South"(1949, p.154). It was not possible for the two races to reconcile and live together in the South provided that the South was a conservative society which sticks to its old traditions and mores, let alone the fact that blacks were once slaves.

Faulkner used the first part of *Absalom, Absalom!* to indicate the need of writing back about the South to the North of the United States. In fact, Rosa Coldfield did tell Quentin about the metropole's ideology of making people leave the South and therefore Jefferson, "The Northern people have already seen to it that there is little left in the South for a young man." Then, she recommended that he, Quentin, or most likely Faulkner, writes back, "So you maybe enter the literary profession as so many Southern gentlemen and gentlewomen too are doing now and maybe some day you will remember this and write about it." (AA, p.5).

Unlike many postcolonial authors who usually write back their prison memoirs even though they do not always suffer in prison, Faulkner, according to Baker(2000), presented his own version of it because he:

[E]xplores the influence the past has on the present and proposes that only through an acceptance of our personal culpability, as well as our willingness to suffer for it, will we find peace. Postcolonial writers universalize their personal suffering but Faulkner personalizes the universal. In either case, suffering is a necessary step toward eventual salvation. (p.85)

As stated earlier Christmas passes for a white, so he first wears the white mask and then reveals his black one. This happened with two white ladies he

had relationships with. He appeared as a white to the white waitress, Bobbie, then one night he told her about his mixed blood; he approached Joanna Burden again as white, lived with her and then told her about his part African black. After having heard his story of miscegenation, they both started alienating him and treating him as inferior. He deserted Bobbie, and murdered Joanna Burden.

The act of murder on the part of Christmas is a form of retaliation and salvation that the oppressed uses against the oppressor, for "the curse of the black race is God's curse." However, the white race's curse "is the black man" (*LA*, p.253). Christmas was ready to sacrifice himself by murdering Joanna and accept his fateful execution, for he knew that he was going to be hunted down and killed but he still did it. He told Joanna before he cut her throat that she was old, and sterile.

Conclusion

To sum up, man should have hope to cope with any problems whether from the outside or from within. Faulkner wrote in Japan, "Man is stronger and tougher and more enduring than even his mistakes and blundering" (See Baker, 2000, p.2). The act of suffering and seeking salvation by committing a crime is what Joe Christmas did with Joanna Burden, the woman he loved. He suffered considerably and then came to the conclusion that he needed to murder her. Joseph W. Reed wrote of *Light in August* that a character's individual freedom is essentially decided by his capacity or failure in compromising his past (Baker, 2000). Joe Christmas' death is supposed to get rid of the contamination and the pollution he stained the South with. However, by being murdered and even castrated, Joe Christmas moved from the victimizer to the victim. As if he could not avenge himself from the southern white society, so he avenged himself by killing Joanna Burden though she was a Northerner, and she was white. As soon as she realized he was part black, she made him feel inferior more than ever before that his manhood was in jeopardy, for he felt she was the man and he was the woman. He killed her in self-defense not because she was going to kill him too, but because she wanted to execute his soul and everything he stood for in three decades.

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Extended Abstract

Purpose

The main aim of this article is to conduct a rigorous postcolonial analysis of one of William Faulkner's greatest novels, *Light in August* 1932 addressing a special focus on the protagonist, Joe Christmas, struggle. Even though Faulkner is often placed within the Gothic or High Modernist traditions, this research aims to locate his work within the postcolonial theory as to examine how racial categories function as oppressive colonial constructs.

The study seeks to investigate the 'hybridity' of Joe Christmas, an orphan who came to be defined by the suspicion of African-American ancestry. The paper shows that Faulkner's mythical kingdom, the Yoknapatawpha County, serves as a small colony. In this setting, the separation of white and black people is upheld by social rules and violence, which the paper looks at closely through the psychological and social effects of the supposed miscegenation. In addition, the research intends to demonstrate that Christmas's tragic ending is an escapable outcome of the 'hybrid identity' which challenges the rigid social constructions of the American South.

Method

The study adopts a qualitative and theoretical framework grounded in Postcolonial Criticism so as to analyze Faulkner's *Light in August*. Conducting a rigorous close reading of the novel, the research employs the conceptual frameworks of Homi K. Bhabha and Frantz Fanon to explore the complexities of hybridity and displacement.

The methodology utilizes in particular Bhabha's theory of Hybridity and Unhomeliness to dig deeper into Christmas's lack and need of a 'home' and his state of continuous psychological instability. It also uses Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* to examine the colonization of the mind from within, leading to an internalized inferiority despite Joe Christmas' white appearance. Still, to support the analysis, the research draws on an intertextual comparison of Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* whenever the researcher felt the need to further highlight 'miscegenation' and the racial 'other' within Faulkner's literary world.

Findings:

The analysis reveals that Joe Christmas is a victim of his own hybrid identities or as Bhabha calls it 'Third Space', an in-betweenness where the components of identity are fluid. The findings show that Christmas's identity crisis stems from him being black and white and simultaneously neither. This kind of hybridity left him with a strong sense of 'unhomeliness'. It also reveals an internal oppression. Implementing Fanon's works, the paper has internalized the colonial gaze of the Jefferson community. He then suffers from a twisted shift in identity leading to misbehavior. He sometimes acts as black and at other times acts as white. But this often backfires since blacks find him white and whites find him black. Finally, the study uses violence as a way out. The murder of Joanna Burden is regarded not just as a crime but also as an act of rebellion against the oppressor, embodied in the character of Miss Burden. Seeking salvation through murdering her, Christmas scapegoats himself in the hope of achieving a fixed identity of a black man.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper contributes to Faulkner's scholarship by bridging the gap between American

Southern studies and global postcolonial discourse, arguing that the 'Southern problem' is a colonial one entrenched in questions of identity, mimicry, and 'in-betweeness.'

Amaç:

Bu makalenin temel amacı, William Faulkner'in en önemli romanlarından biri olan Ağustos Işığı (1932) üzerine, başkahraman Joe Christmas'ın mücadelesine özel bir odaklanarak titiz bir postkolonyal analiz gerçekleştirmektir. Faulkner sıklıkla Gotik veya Yüksek Modernist gelenekler içinde konumlandırılrsa da, bu araştırma onun eserini postkolonyal teori çerçevesine yerleştirerek ırksal kategorilerin nasıl baskıcı sömürgeci kurgular olarak işlediğini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, Afro-Amerikan soyundan geldiği şüphesiyle tanımlanan bir yetim olan Joe Christmas'ın "melezliğini" (hybridity) araştırmayı hedeflemektedir. Makale, Faulkner'in mitolojik krallığı olan Yoknapatawpha County'nin küçük bir sömürge görevi gördüğünü ortaya koymaktadır. Bu ortamda, beyaz ve siyah insanların ayrımı toplumsal kurallar ve şiddetle sürdürülmektedir; çalışma bu durumu, varsayılan ırk karışımının (miscegenation) psikolojik ve sosyal etkileri üzerinden yakından incelemektedir. Ayrıca araştırma, Christmas'ın trajik sonunun, Amerikan Güneyi'nin katı toplumsal kurgularına meydan okuyan "melez kimliğin" kaçınılmaz bir sonucu olduğunu göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Yöntem:

Çalışma, Faulkner'in Ağustos Işığı romanını analiz etmek amacıyla Postkolonyal Eleştiriye dayalı nitel ve teorik bir çerçeve benimsemektedir. Romanın titiz bir yakından okumasını gerçekleştiren araştırma, melezlik ve yerinden edilme karmaşıklıklarını keşfetmek için Homi K. Bhabha ve Frantz Fanon'un kavramsal çerçevelerini kullanmaktadır.

Metodoloji, özellikle Christmas'ın bir "ev" eksikliği ve ihtiyacını, ayrıca sürekli psikolojik istikrarsızlık durumunu derinlemesine incelemek için Bhabha'nın Melezlik ve Evsizlik (Unhomeliness) teorisinden yararlanmaktadır. Ayrıca, Joe Christmas'ın beyaz görünümüne rağmen içselleştirilmiş bir aşağılık duygusuna yol açan zihnin içeriden sömürgeleştirilmesini incelemek için Fanon'un "Siyah Deri, Beyaz Maskeler" eserini kullanmaktadır. Analizi desteklemek amacıyla araştırma, Faulkner'in edebi dünyasındaki "ırk karışımı" ve ırksal "öteki" kavramlarını daha fazla vurgulamak gerektiğinde Faulkner'in Abşalom, Abşalom! eseriyle metinlerarası bir karşılaştırma yapmaktadır.

Bulgular:

Analiz, Joe Christmas'ın kendi melez kimliklerinin veya Bhabha'nın ifadesiyle kimlik bileşenlerinin akışkan olduğu bir "aradalık" durumu olan "Üçüncü Alan"ın (Third Space) kurbanı olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bulgular, Christmas'ın kimlik krizinin aynı anda hem siyah hem beyaz olmasından ve eş zamanlı olarak her ikisi de olmamasından kaynaklandığını göstermektedir. Bu tür bir melezlik, onda yoğun bir "evsizlik" duygusuna neden olmuştur.

Ayrıca çalışma, içsel bir baskıyı da açığa çıkarmaktadır. Fanon'un çalışmalarını uygulayan araştırma, Christmas'ın Jefferson topluluğunun sömürgeci bakışını içselleştirdiğini saptamaktadır. Bu durum, kimliğinde çarpık bir kaymaya ve hatalı davranışlara yol açmaktadır. Kahraman bazen siyah gibi, bazen de beyaz gibi davranmaktadır; ancak bu durum genellikle ters tepmektedir, çünkü siyahlar onu beyaz, beyazlar ise siyah olarak görmektedir. Son olarak

çalışma, şiddeti bir çıkış yolu olarak ele almaktadır. Joanna Burden'ın öldürülmesi sadece bir suç değil, aynı zamanda Bayan Burden karakterinde somutlaşan ezen kişiye karşı bir isyan eylemi olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Christmas, onu öldürerek kurtuluş ararken, sabit bir siyah adam kimliğine ulaşma umuduyla kendisini kurban etmektedir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma:

Bu makale, Amerikan Güneyi çalışmaları ile küresel postkolonyal söylem arasındaki boşluğu doldurarak Faulkner çalışmalarına katkıda bulunmakta; "Güney sorununun" kimlik, taklit (mimicry) ve "aradalık" meselelerine kök salmış sömürgeci bir sorun olduğunu savunmaktadır.

Etik Komite Onayı: Bu araştırma içinkurumdan (tarih-sayı no) etik izin alınmıştır. (veya) Bu araştırma için etik kurul izni gerekmemektedir.

Hakem Değerlendirmesi: Dış bağımsız.

Yazar Katkıları: Yazarlar; bu makalenin araştırılması, yazarlığı ve yayımlanması için eşit düzeyde katkı sağlamışlardır. (veya) Yazarlar; bu makalenin araştırılması, yazarlığı ve yayımlanması için 1. Yazar %..., 2. %... ve 3. Yazar %...oranında katkı sağlamışlardır. (veya) Bu makalenin araştırılması, yazarlığı ve yayımlanması tek yazar tarafından yürütülmüştür.

Çıkar Çatışması: Yazar(lar); bu makalenin araştırılması, yazarlığı ve yayımlanmasına ilişkin herhangi bir potansiyel çıkar çatışması beyan etmemiştir.

Finansal Destek: Yazar(lar); bu makalenin araştırılması, yazarlığı ve yayımlanması için herhangi bir finansal destek almamıştır. (veya) Yazar(lar); bu makalenin araştırılması, yazarlığı ve yayımlanması için ...Fonu (Proje No...) tarafından desteklenmiştir.

Yapay Zekâ Kullanımı Bildirimi: Yazar (lar); bu makalenin araştırılması, yazarlığı ve yayımlanması için herhangi bir yapay zekâ aracından faydalanmamıştır. (veya) Yazar (lar), bu makalenin araştırılması, yazarlığı ve yayımlanması için...yapay zekâ araç/araçlarından faydalanmıştır.

Sözcük Sayısı: Makaledeki sözcük sayısı 9000'i geçmemelidir.

Teşekkür:...