CONQUEST OF SLAVERY IN PAUL AUSTER’S GHOSTS

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ABSTRACT

The archive of mankind is saturated with discrimination. It takes dissimilate forms and shapes and modern society is also incorporated. It is an upright of cultural history and it has an effect on many social, cultural and economic happenings that we see today. All types of discrimination embroil the supremacy of a certain mankind over another mankind. Main issue behind this is that many people shamble the conception of prejudice and stereotypes. People should understand that prejudice and stereotype cause discrimination. In consequence, racism is one of the manifestations of discrimination. The expression of racism also indicates a blind and unreasonable hatred. There is nothing wrong to take pride in our own race, but many people associate with racist groups, one necessary to strengthen their efforts to find put down other ethnic groups. People should not be ignorant and should not bring personal issues which lead to racial discrimination.

KEY WORDS: Discrimination, race, slavery

1. INTRODUCTION

Many writers had pen, keeping racial discrimination as a predominant theme in their writings. One such writer is Paul Auster, an American writer and film director. Auster read the books passionately and developed interest in writing. He is well known for his distinct themes. Some of his highly praised works are The New York Trilogy (1987), Moon Palace (1989), The Music of Chance (1990), The Book of Illusions (2002), The Brooklyn Follies (2005), Sunset Park (2010), 4321 (2017).

He is one among writer in contemporary literature and his works have been translated over thirty languages. He is called as one of America’s most spectacularly inventive writers. He has won many awards and he has been hailed as one of the most successful and multi-talented writer in the field of literature.

The New York Trilogy is a series of three detective novels: City of Glass (1985), Ghosts (1986) and The Locked Room (1986). The stories are not independent of one another. In this the novel Ghosts is chosen, though the novel does not have racial discrimination as a dominant theme but racism can be determined.
This paper entitled “Conquest of slavery in Paul Auster’s *Ghost*” deals with racial discrimination. The story is about a character named White who hires a man named Blue, the protagonist detective to spy on another character named Black. Blue is an eminent private detective and has been doing this job for many years. White explains to Blue that he wants to spy on Black for an indeterminate period of time and he is ready to offer him a large amount of money. Blue accepts the job without asking many questions. White pays for Blue to live in an apartment overlooking Black’s apartment and gives him five hundred dollar cash in advance. The case begins on February 3, 1947. He packs his things and goes to the apartment in Brooklyn Heights. The rooms were completely furnished.

In the beginning, Blue seems to do his job with relative comfort as he starts Black’s daily routine which consists of reading, writing and very rarely going out for a meal. He writes reports of his daily activities and sends to White. Blue realizes that he is not a constant vigilance were he tells to himself “for if Black must be watched, then it would follow that he must be watched every hour of everyday” (141).

In due course of time, Blue takes an intermission from his routine writing report to White, leaving his room on occasion because he feels so close to Black. Blue knows what Black will do even when he is not being watched. One of Blue’s escapades:

Blue goes to the small grassy yard... studying the bronze statue of Henry Ward Beecher. Two slaves are holding on to Beecher’s legs, as though begging him to help them, to make them free at last, and in the brick wall behind there is a porcelain relief of Abraham Lincoln. Blue cannot but feel inspired by these images, and ... his head fills with noble thoughts of the dignity of man. (189)

This passage clearly depicts that Blue sees racism. The statue represents Beecher as the white hero of the abolitionist movement. Beecher statue doesn’t delineate him as an abolitionist, but also as a racist and opportunist whose resistance to slavery was not occurring by a belief in the social and important equality for blacks and whites.

However, Beecher focuses on white slaves, given his own social Darwinian view of racial difference. He opposed slavery and asserted the Africans inferiority to the white and afforded that the best way to fight against slavery was to ameliorate the attitude and humanity. He states “if you wish to work for the enfranchisement of the African, seek to make him a better man ... an obedient servant and an honest, true, Christian man. These virtues are God’s step-stones to liberty ... Truth, honour, fidelity, manhood” (194).

Furthermore, Beecher teaches the former slaves on the white community, suggesting that African tendency is to lack the qualities, making him to enslave easier. He continues the conception that the African is close to the animal than the European and moreover the slaves must be instructed to be human in order to be completely worthy of liberty.

Beecher’s opportunism and racism are the viewpoint for Blue, who does not see the sculpture’s irony carried in historical references. African Americans were suppressed and dependent position throughout American history are placed in that some position in a statue that commemorate their freedom.

In another episode, where Blue takes a trip to Ebbetts Field to watch Jackie Robinson playing his first year with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Blue cheers set fixed rooted for Robinson, compelled both by the blackness of the man’s face and by his skill. Furthermore, “Blue muses on the nature of the crowd of which half ... no doubt wish Robinson dead” (180). Blue mentally celebrates the conquest of slavery and racism in one occurrence, White America’s continuing racism becomes obvious in the other.
Toni Morrison’s *Black Matters* categorizes in which white canon law cannot be understood without the source of history and unconscious internalization of racial difference that gives meaning to terms like “autonomy, newness, difference, authority and absolute power” (262). If the new white man was in search of these ascribed in eighteenth and nineteenth century America, he would have precisely stated them in opposition to the raw, half—savage world that the Africans presence imaginatively provided. Thus Toni Morrison maintains that even the texts have no clear black presence in pronouncing and defining free white man. Morrison clearly refers to the early development of national literature and her assert becomes more difficult to declare in relation to contemporary culture in which the difference between black and white, still having the power to establish personal identity. Toni Morrison’s works are true for contemporary literature as they are for American Renaissance and how race unconsciously appear the postmodern. Likewise, Auster’s self conscious play with colours and their changeable meaning leads to the construction of race. Racial splitting remains in the texts unconsciously.

The heavy handed use of black/white colour imagery throughout the novel is haunted by the reality of race relations in the United States, even as the central plot of detection seems to have little to do with these issues. Blue mentally abandon his own slavery, which attempts to deconstruct colour and race divisions that sustain social oppression. When we look to the racial dynamics of the text, it is clear that on one part, the text seems to insist that racial and other end it is after all a part of the white self. However, the racial remains exotic, unknowable and indecipherable.

Racial classification is clearly seen in two events that reflect Blue’s eagerness. In these events, colours take place of words more than functioning as signifiers. The first takes place at the ballpark, immediately preceding to Blue’s first comments upon Robinson’s blackness. Here Blue notes “sharp clarity of the colours around him: the green grass, the brown dirt, the white ball, the blue sky” (150). Another incident were Blue discuss about the objects in his room, “Each things is distinct from every other thing, wholly separate and defined” (189).

Later Blue catalogues things that are blue, white and black “everything in this world has its own color” (217) and widely includes the names:

There are bluebirds and blue jays and blue herons. There are cornflowers and periwinkles. There is noon over New York. There are blueberries, huckleberries, and the Pacific Ocean. There are blue devils and blue ribbons and blue bloods. There is a voice singing the blues. There is my father’s police uniform. There are... There are my eyes and my name. He ... moves on to white. There are seagulls ... and terns and storks and cockatoos. There are the walls of the room and the sheets on my bed. There are lilies of the valley, carnations, and the petals of daisies. There is the flag of peace and Chinese death. There is mother’s milk and semen. [...] There is night over New York... There are Chicago Black Sox. There are blackberries and crows, blackouts and black marks, Black Tuesday and the Black Death. There is blackmail. There is my hair. There is the ink that comes out of a pen. There is a world a blind man sees. (217-18)

As Winthrop Jordon detailed in his book *White Over Black*, colours like black and white are carried with cultural meaning. Long before ay colonial or racial encounter, “White and Black connoted purity and filthiness, virginity and sin , virtue and baseness, beauty and ugliness, beneficence and evil, God and the devil” (7).
Blue and Black seem to independently continue their mutual identities in a sealed environment, Beecher’s uncertain sculpture depicting him freeing the slaves reminds the reader of how imprisonment, domination and even emancipation in the country are so clearly and always its the matter of race. Similarly, Jackie Robinson, a seeming irrelevant bit of “local colour” (163) in the novel reminds us how the use of colours and characters named for them, necessary refer to racial identity.

2. REFERENCES