

## **The Transformative, Dialectical Anti-Colonial Discourse in Lillian Horace's *Angie Brown***

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### **ABSTRACT**

Drawing on postcolonial theory and adopting the perspective of critical race theory, this article argues that Lillian Horace's posthumously published novel *Angie Brown* (1949) depicts a transformative, dialectical anti-colonial discourse. This stems from the fact that Horace's people in this novel undergo an internal colonial experience. In addition, the novel strikingly demonstrates and resembles various aspects of anti-colonialism. To challenge internal colonialization, the novel presents two aspects of anti-colonial agency: negation and affirmation. Negation is used to destabilize the colonial racist subjectivity, and affirmation is employed to construct an alternative postcolonial subjectivity. In all of its breadth, Horace's transformative discourse is rendered through three phases: economic empowerment and independence, educational fulfilment and progress, and political participation and representation. My contention is that Horace's challenge to racism is part of a larger umbrella of challenging colonialism and imperialism. Moreover, I am driving at dialogic intersectionality of African American liberating thought and anti-colonial discourse, as demonstrated by Horace's novel. As I am concerned throughout with analysing the institutionalized and systematized racist ideology implemented by white racist people to subjugate black Americans, I also scrutinize Horace's anti-colonial and anti-slavery discourse.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

African American fiction writers have played a very significant role in the history

of black Americans' struggle towards liberty. They wrote for liberating their people, for gaining their rights, and for maintaining the black dignity. In early twentieth-century America, black writers and thinkers had to face white supremacy which always portrayed black Americans as inferior and Other. One of their missions was to write back to dismantle the racist stereotypical images of black people and to represent their true identity. Accordingly, writing became a medium of struggle to challenge the discourse of power. One of the relatively neglected black American authors, who defied racism and segregation in her writings, is Lillian B. Horace (1880-1965). Strikingly, as a brilliant black American female writer, Horace has not received much concern from researchers as she deserves. Neglecting her utopian piece *Angie Brown* is something to be taken into consideration, as this novel was written during a very significant period and its author lived in a racially stratified society.

The importance of Lillian Horace in African American literary studies lies in the fact that she was the earliest black female novelist from Texas. Her novel *Five Generations Hence* (1916) is "the earliest novel on record by a black woman from Texas" and her second novel *Angie Brown* is regarded "the earliest utopian novel by a black woman before 1950" (Kossie-Chernyshev, 2013a, p. 1). In fact, because of excluding her from the African American literary canon, not much has been written about her and her works. The only secondary literature available on her novels

thus far is Karen Kossie-Chernyshev's edited book *Recovering Five Generations Hence: The Life and Writing of Lillian Jones Horace* (2013). Most of the articles in this book focus on rediscovering Horace as a Southwestern female author and on canonizing her works.

In "To Leave or Not to Leave: The Boomerang Migration," Kossie-Chernyshev (2013b) examined Horace's life and works from the perspective of her migration pattern, which Kossie-Chernyshev called "Boomerang migration." Kossie-Chernyshev shed light on Horace's early education, her migration to the North, and her return to Texas to help her people. Therefore, to some extent, this study addresses Horace and her works as migration narratives. The strength of Lillian Horace as a black female individual, which reflected on her female protagonists, is addressed by Boswell (2013) in "The Double Burden: A Historical Perspective on Gender and Race Consciousness in the Writings of Lillian B. Jones Horace." Boswell (2013) highlighted the drastic effects of racism on African American people. She argued that telling other people about their sufferings was a major catalyst behind writing her novels. *Angie Brown* demonstrates a successful story of an African American woman without the help of institutions. However, the institutionalization of racism in the novel is not given attention. The study does not dig deep into analyzing the counter-discourse which the novel presents.

One of the relevant studies on Horace's *Angie Brown* is Bryan M. Jack's

“Confronting the Other Side: Everyday Resistance in Lillian B. Horace’s *Angie Brown*.” In this essay, Jack (2013) argued that African American resistance went beyond organized movements to include domestic workers. He analyzed the novel as an example of indirect resistance, using “migration, stereotypes, their intellectual, persuasion, and friendship to challenge the daily indignities of a system designed to control African Americans economically, politically, and socially” (Jack, 2013). In fact, the dialectical, transformative discourse which is embedded in *Angie Brown* is neglected by Jack’s article.

In line with rediscovering Lillian Horace and her works, I present this article to unravel Horace’s vision in *Angie Brown* by scrutinizing its transformative, dialectical discourse in facing white supremacy. I argue that Horace’s vision was ahead of her time and this discourse is better understood from the postcolonial perspective. This stems from my argument that the black experience in America represents an internal colonial experience. Given the fact that Horace touched on crucial contemporary issues, especially in her diaries, such as the African American identity, World War II, the political representation of African Americans, and the persecution of the Jews, this article expands the boundaries of the discussion outside the Southern canon to colonial and anti-colonial spheres.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The racist discourse of othering black Americans has been long established

in America, adopting the same colonial stereotypical discourse of Self versus Other. Self versus Other dialects is one of the fundamental ideas of postcolonial studies, and it characterizes the basis of epistemological enquires in many fields that dissect power relations. In *Orientalism*, Said (2003) built on Michel Foucault’s discourse on knowledge and power. Said declared that the imperial powers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries used a great deal of their colonial instruments to have full supremacy over the colonized nations in Asia and African. This supremacy was maintained through time by establishing a colonial discourse, forming the image of the Other, the colonized nations, in contrast with the Self, the imperial European powers. The purpose of this discourse “is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types . . . in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 70). It was the same discourse that brought Africans as slaves to America and, later, robbed them of their liberty and rights. It is based on “the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” (Said, 2003, p. 7).

Constructing the image of the Other has been one of the colonial agencies that reinforced discrimination against black Americans. The counter ideology of resistance included, in addition to militant movements, an anti-colonial black literary discourse that resisted othering black Americans. Within this theoretical framework, this research paper intends

to analyze Horace's *Angie Brown* and its transformative, dialectical counter-discourse. *Angie Brown* raises the question of how the colonial system of agency can be effectively destabilized. On the other hand, it raises the question of what constructive trajectories can be established as a positive postcolonial agency without falling into the same colonial fallacy. The study shows how the novel subverts the white discourse of supremacy, replacing it with a more positive transformative one.

I am driving at a dialogic intersectionality of African American liberating thought and anti-colonial discourse. Despite the reservations that some critics hold against mixing African American criticism with postcolonial theory, I align my argument with that of Said's:

We must be able to think through and interpret together experiences that are discrepant, each with its particular agenda and pace of development, its own internal formations, its internal coherence and system of external relationships, all of them co-existing and interacting with others. (Said, 1994, p. 32).

Baraka's assertion "In America, black is a Country ... America is as much a black country as a white one" (Baraka, 2009, p. 104) implicitly confirms that what black Americans have been facing is characterized as internal colonization. In *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, Loomba (2005) reiterated, "'Colonialism' is not just something that happens from outside a country or a people, not just something that operates with the

collusion of forces inside, but a version of it can be duplicated from within" (p. 32). That is to say, black Americans' experience of slavery has been transformed into another phase which can be described as internal colonization.

Understanding black Americans' experience in terms of internal colonization calls for international solidarity with other oppressed minorities. Such connections could expand the boundaries of black identity and Blackness. At the first Congress of Black Artists and Writers held in 1956, Aimé Césaire (2010) expressed this pan-universal notion of solidarity in his speech 'Culture and Colonization:'

Even an independent country such as Haiti is in fact in many respects a semi-colonial country. And our American brothers themselves are, by force of racial discrimination, artificially placed at the heart of a great modern nation in a situation is comprehensible only in reference to a colonialism. (Césaire, 2010, p. 127).

In her foreword to *Black Cultural Traffic*, Tricia Rose (2005) emphasized the power of African American thought in bringing about new venues for exploring power relations in the age of globalization and neo-imperialism:

Always a key player in the world of racialized cultural exchange in the modern world, black cultures are playing an increasingly visible and complex role in this latest stage of globalization, a stage fueled primarily

by the export of cultural products as Trojan horses of neo-imperialism. (Rose, 2005, p. vii-viii).

In *The Identity Question in Black Drama and Its Existential Manifestations*, Al-Jarrah (2017) addressed the idea of appropriating Blackness and the African American experience by non-African American writers outside the United States. Al-Jarrah pointed out that appropriating Blackness by other groups around the world created a universal collective Black representation and identity.

That said, I argue that Horace's protagonist, Angie, struggles against internal colonization which is characterized as structural, political, and economic inequalities between different races or ethnic groups in the same country. To challenge internal colonialization, the novel presents two aspects of anti-colonial agency: negation and affirmation. Negation is used to destabilize the colonial racist subjectivity, and affirmation is employed to construct an alternative postcolonial subjectivity. In all of its breadth, Horace's transformative discourse is rendered through three phases: economic empowerment and independence, educational fulfilment and progress, and political participation and representation. These three phases represent the sequence of the discussion and the major subsections of this article.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **The Colonial Ideology of Separation vs. Angie's Desire to Be**

The colonial ideology of separation is

presented from the beginning of the novel. As the novel unfolds, we see that the town is divided into two parts: The Flat, "a river bottom area to which the colored people of Sandsworth were restricted," (Horace, 2008, p. 6) and the Other Side of the whites. This has become an essential part of the epistemic articulation of imperial discourse and the expropriation of the Other through history. Young (1995) argued, "the construction of knowledges which all operate through forms of expropriation and incorporation of the other mimics at a conceptual level the geographical and economic absorption of the non-European world by the West" (p. 3).

The first chapter of the novel serves as a panorama of the segregational atmosphere. The Other Side is placed in the centre whereas The Flat is totally marginalized. The line that separates the two divisions—the eastern and the western sides of the town—signifies a state of segregation and discrimination: "This was a sandy elevation which nature long since in arranging the topography of that section had made a geographical division of the east and west sides of the town, and man, later, made it a social and economic one as well" (Horace, 2008, p. 6). The imperial binary of the civilized, the Other Side, as opposed to the primitive, The Flat, is established through this line of land. This line not only separates the two groups and prevents assimilation and coexistence, it also restricts the mobility of black Americans and embodies the power relations. It confines them in underdeveloped areas. Massey and Denton (1993) argued, "White prejudice and discrimination restrict

the residential mobility of black and confine them to areas with poor schools, low home values, inferior services, high crime, and low educational aspiration” (p. 150).

More importantly, this line serves as the identity signifier and works line by line with the ontological ideology of power and subjugation. In *Orientalism*, Said (2003) pointed out that imperial powers divided the world adopting the Darwinian hypothesis of the biological inequality of races, which divided people into “advanced and backward, or European-Aryan and Oriental-African” (p. 206). This geographical line is to be recognized within the colonial, ideological framework as it is necessary for white people to distance themselves from their slaves. Angie observes this segregational line at Mr. Parker’s house where she works as a maid: “Mrs. Parker, it seemed to Angie, made extra and unnecessary effort to keep the line sharply drawn between the servants and the family.” (Horace, 2008, p. 33).

The focus on connecting the external appearance with internal prejudice is part of the colonial discourse that is well established in the colonized nations. When Angie arrives at the hospital with her sick child, she does not notice that there is a special entrance for Negroes. Angie, accompanied by her black friend, Belle, is about to enter the southern entrance of the hospital when they are stopped by the white guard, giving them a gesture to take the rear entrance. The guard’s unwillingness to speak to them, along with his inferiorizing gaze, explains the situation: “With rising resentment this

person had gazed with bewildered eyes at the approach of ‘those people’ to the front entrance” (Horace, 2008, p. 1). The guard’s inferiorizing look gives Angie a sense of being servile. Angie’s being is determined from the outside; she is made an Other by the white gaze. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre (1943/1956) explained that “the Other objectifies me and steals my being through his look, which confers meaning upon me from the outside.” (p. 364). The emphasis on signs and gestures throughout the novel is a discourse that instills agency in the racist ideology of silencing the Other. The guard does not consider Angie and Belle as human beings capable of resistance and understanding. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon (1961/1963) evinced, “The black man has no ontological understanding and resistance in the eyes of the white man” (p. 83). As silence is broken: “‘Can’t you read that sign?’ He pointed. ‘Go around to the rear’” (p. 1), Horace makes what is invisible visible. Silence in the novel is countered by an active interpretation of racist encoding. In her book *Feminism and Theatre*, Case (1988) pointed out, “Cultural encoding is the imprint of ideology upon the sign—the set of values, beliefs and ways of seeing that control the connotations of the sign in the culture at large” (p. 116).

In fact, Angie’s body is enmeshed in white institutions and, therefore, her identity is contextualized within a racist environment. It is the racist discourse that assigns meaning to her body in the same way as it assigns meaning to the guard’s inferiorizing gaze. “Negro Entrance,” the

sign written on one of the City-County Hospital, is a very clear indication of the deeply institutionalized racist, colonial policy and it is decoded by the white nurse on duty. When Angie and Belle are asked to pay the five-dollar fee, Belle claims that it is “a free place,” but the white nurse scorns them, “We have no blood we can use for Negroes” because “it is against the law to use white folks’ blood for Negroes” (Horace, 2008, pp. 3-4).

On various occasions in the novel, Angie is dehumanized and treated as an inferior Other. Inside white institutions, black Americans are treated as objects not as subjects. In *Sartre and Colonialism*, Fatouros (1965) discussed Sartre’s argument of systematizing the colonial policy and enslavement, “The basic attitude involved here is the same as in the case of slavery . . . Perceiving other persons as objects rather than subjects, or, in Kantian terms, as means and not ends, is a common way of mankind” (Fatouros, 1965, p. 707). This situation imbues Angie with a sense of marginality and estrangement. Her experience echoes Fanon’s (1967) description in *Black Skin, White Masks*, “I came into the world imbued with a will to find a meaning in things. and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects” (Fanon, 1967, p. 82). Angie feels the burden of her responsibility toward herself, her race, and her people, emulating Fanon’s experience of being an object of the white child’s gaze on the train: “It was no longer a question of aware of my body in the third person but in a triple person . . . I was responsible at the same time for my

body, for my race, for my ancestors” (Fanon, 1967, p. 84). Therefore, Angie must depend on her own potentials to find her path in life and to confirm her identity.

Angie takes it upon herself to challenge whiteness and its racist ideology. Throughout this journey, she is supported by other black women. She becomes an activist searching for economic independence, investing in education and politics. This articulates Angie’s progressive transformative anti-colonial trajectory. The purpose of this trajectory is to re-establish an authoritative black presence on American national scene. Sartre explicates the existential manifestations that result from the confrontation between the self and the Other. In this confrontation, the self is faced with difference and negation as being different from others, which leads to its estrangement. However, the desire to unite with the Other expresses the desire to transcend difference (Sartre, 1943/1956). The Other is necessary for the subjectivity-formation process; the Other makes me aware of my *being* as it appears to the Other (Sartre, 1943/1956). Establishing her subjectivity is thus the catalyst for Angie’s transformative actions.

The dialectical anti-colonial discourse is presented clearly at the outset of the novel. When Angie refers to white people, she uses the term Other. This term is always associated with slaves, the colonized, and with black people. It characterizes the relationship between European (Us) and non-European cultures (Other). It is a power relationship based on domination and hegemony (Said, 2003). We can markedly observe Angie’s

resistance against internal colonization, as she refuses to be an Other. Angie inverts the terms in order to be subverted. Horace uses this term to dismantle the hierarchy of the colonial discourse which is built on the stereotypical binary oppositions. By using the term Other to refer to white people, Angie asserts her identity as the self, resisting her alienation and refusing the stereotypical images that whites ascribe to black Americans. It is very clear as Nellie and Angie discuss such negative images, “Negroes just weren’t supposed to think, to feel, to react, only to respond when called, and immediately. Angie was learning that it took a lot of intelligence to fill that order” (Horace, 2008, p. 54).

Negation signifies difference and, in turn, difference signifies otherness. Otherness connotes inequality and indigeneity. It is the kind of negativity which is necessary to overcome Angie’s ontological lack. This lack is to be overcome within social constructions instigated by Angie’s desire to affirm her being. Sartre (1943/1956) affirmed that “fundamentally, man is the desire to be” (p. 565). The desire to be entails the negation of the stereotypical images of black Americans, “Such stereotypes, which denied the recognition of individuality and social aspiration, were the counterparts of ‘invisible Negro’ syndrome” (Everett, 1999, p. 230). To establish this new order and to challenge that antithetical dialectic, Angie sets off her mission throughout the events of the novel to define herself and to assert her identity as the self and as part of the larger American self. She follows an anti-racist

and anti-colonial strategy. Firstly, we see her accompanied by her black friend looking for economic empowerment and independence, second, they pursue academic success, and, third, they tackle the problem of representation through politics.

### **Economic Empowerment**

The first phase of defying systematization of racism is Angie’s quest to achieve economic empowerment and independence. Angie’s mission is twofold: first, to lay bare the ideology of power and racism within white institutions and, second, to demonstrate counter strategies that help black Americans in general and black American women in particular to understand their situation. The shock that Angie experiences makes her recognize her situation as an oppressed, disfranchised Other: “She moved like one with a purpose. ‘Yes, I’ll face ‘em cause I know I’m right.’” (Horace, 2008, p. 9). Here is a moment of disalienation and encounter with otherness. She sits alone and contemplates her cause, “The memory of her little son who had died; it was a memory of an old lost life. It was of home” (Horace, 2008, p. 11). The racist situation and the low economic status of Angie are linked with Angie’s social condition as a black woman, as “the effective disalienation of the black man entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities” (Fanon, 1967, p. 4). Therefore, after her son’s funeral, Angie significantly replies to the minister’s question of what she needs by confirming that she needs “some class” (Horace, 2008, p. 16).



This adds another burden to Angie's struggle in the subjectivity-formation process due to the multiple identifications she embodies as a person of color and as a woman. It is so significant to see the loss of Angie's son linked with the image of her home, her mother, and her husband. She starts recalling memories from her past when she lied to her mother that she was pregnant for the sake of marrying Jim. She remembers how she was deserted by her mother and her husband: "'Why honey, you oughter done that. What they goin' to think o' me?'" Jim replied (Horace, 2008, p. 14). Her husband is not concerned with what her family will think of her, but he is solely concerned with what they will think of him. This articulates a double project for the black woman: against male chauvinism and against racism.

Angie becomes a representative of the postcolonial woman. Young (1995) argued that the postcolonial feminist concern is

with those that affect whole communities. For this reason, it places greater emphasis on social and political campaigns for material, cultural, and legal rights; equal treatment in the law, education, and the workplace; the environment; and the differences between the values that feminists outside the west may encounter and those that they may wish to stand by. (Young, 1995, p. 115)

Horace dissects the typology of the black society to pave the way for the emergence of Angie as a female pioneer and to criticize

middle-class blacks. In Chapter Five, we are introduced to the Blue Bonnet group, who exemplifies the men of The Flat as a social group. We see them engaged with a wide range of conversations, but "no subject was too deep, too" (Horace, 2008, p. 17). There is a multidimensional discourse behind this social centre. Some of these black Americans are engaged with investment and industry and unconcerned with their people's turmoil, such as Lance, the owner of the Blue Bonnet store, and Bill Chester, the owner of the pool hall. Horace introduces Lance while "His attention seemed drawn toward a smart Ford car he saw rolling along in the dust of the unpaved street, rather than to the queries" (Horace, 2008, p. 17). He does not interfere in the problems that his people have been facing, "For business reasons, if for no other, Lance apparently remained neutral on most subjects" (Horace, 2008, p. 20). People of The Flat criticize Lance's carelessness toward his own folks: "If Lance was sticking to his people the way the Other Side store-folks are sticking to theirs, we would have plenty sugar and white flour, too" (Horace, 2008, p. 22).

The Flat serves as a marketplace for the Other Side to sell their goods. We see how Horace describes them carrying their guns when they come to The Flat as if they were going to a battlefield: "With guns shining from their holsters, and swear words rippling from their tongues, policemen sometimes came to get accused offenders, sometimes to round-up 'vags' for the cotton fields" (Horace, 2008, p. 23). The Flat becomes 'a career' for The Other Side, to

give homage to Said's quote of Benjamin Disraeli's *Tancred* in his *Orientalism*. The colonial ideology of this scary scene is "to keep these people 'in their places,'" as Horace evinces (Horace, 2008, p. 23).

Part of the racist ideology of keeping blacks in their places is restricting black women's jobs to housemaids. In "Double Jeopardy," Beal (1970) explained this ideology, "the black woman likewise was manipulated by the system, economically exploited and physically assaulted. She could often find work in the white man's kitchen, however, and sometimes became the sole breadwinner of the family" (Beal, 1970, pp. 109-110). The job Angie gains marks the beginning of her quest and strategy to move from being a property to the phase of being an owner of property, challenging the stereotypical image of the black American woman. Angie gets ten dollars a week, giving her a kind of freedom and independence, as she tells Belle, "I'm going to give you something so---o-o nice. You'll be glad some day that you were good to me" (Horace, 2008, p. 29). As a traditional black female character, Belle's perspective of empowerment and independence differs from Angie's revolutionary vision. Belle advises Angie to marry Mr. Chester, or "Folk'll say you must be playing 'round with the Other Side" (Horace, 2008, p. 30). But Angie's vision is beyond this patriarchal discourse: "I would die before I'd let Mr. Chester or any other man buy what I freely gave and was then betrayed." (Horace, 2008, p. 30).

To dismantle the stereotypes of both blacks and whites, which perpetuate the colonial binary opposition that determines the power relationship between blacks and whites, Horace provides us with exceptional white characters. Angie works at Mr. Parker's house where she befriends Gloria and her younger sister, Stelle. She discovers that Mr. Parker's family are not what she used to think of them. She explains to Belle, "I didn't know white folks could be so nice to you. But the biggest surprise to me is to find out that white folks have troubles." (Horace, 2008, p. 32).

Horace's transformative, constructive vision builds a reciprocal dialectical discourse of Other represented by the relationship between Angie, Gloria, and Stelle. This reciprocal othering makes the 'dividing line' between blacks and whites shrink. To some extent, Gloria and Stelle share a similar story as Angie's. They are abandoned by their husbands, and they seek independence, not only by challenging their family's class system, but also by challenging their mother's racist tendencies. This friendship enables Gloria and Stelle to progress psychologically and racially. Being depressed, Gloria attempts suicide but saved by Angie. The three ladies become friends due to their shared unhappiness. They become completely aware that "their troubles are tied to their investment in an antiquated race and class system that no longer serves them in post-Reconstruction, post-World War I America." (Watson, 2013, p. 228). This friendship gives Gloria

and Stelle the opportunity to see their miseries through Angie and enables them to search for new alternatives. Watson (2013) argued, “it is Angie’s resilience after being abandoned by her husband and during the death of her child that offers Gloria a different way to think about womanhood, and eventually African Americans” (Watson, 2013, p. 203). After Horace establishes the idea of economic empowerment of women, she adds another dimension to the transformative, constructive discourse of anti-colonial and anti-racist ideology, which is education.

### Education

In colonized nations, as illiteracy is used as an ideology to impose hegemony, education becomes an arena of struggle toward liberation and social uplift. Education is used to articulate the power relations in the colonized areas. In his speech, “Culture and Colonization,” Césaire (2010) highlights this colonial practice, “With regard to intellectual functions there is no colonial country that is not characterized by illiteracy and the low level of public education” (p. 135). Decolonizing education helped those revolutionaries fight against colonial ideologies as a tool for racial uplift.

In America “not more than 139 years ago it was illegal for Blacks of any age to be taught to read” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 132). Due to the systematization of colonial ideology, education in *The Flat* stops at the seventh grade. We see that Horace’s women embody the idea of progress. They begin to have a sense of individuality and independence.

For example, Betty’s mother’s vision shocks those people around her and even draws much attention from the Other Side as she sends her daughter, Betty, to complete her education. Later on, Betty becomes the principal of the school in the town. Betty becomes a determined American female character, working according to her will rather than under the necessity of limitations. She has “an air of independence, individuality . . . she would be herself in spite of her locale or the people on either side of Sand Hill” (Horace, 2008, p. 42).

In their ontological struggle to establish their subjectivity, Horace’s women must strive to control the means of economic and cultural productions. It is very indicative to see Angie and Betty as friends. Betty is determined to improve her status in life. Ironically, people of *The Flat* start warning Betty’s fiancé, Lance, against her wishful thoughts as an educated girl: “She had ideas of her own and this, older men told him, was dangerous” (Horace, 2008, pp. 45-46). At the end, Lance abandons her and marries Sadie Blake. This kind of black people sees progressive black women as a threat against their manhood and masculinity. Frances M. Beal characterizes this notion: “Those who are exerting their ‘manhood’ by telling black women to step back into a domestic, submissive role are assuming a counter-revolutionary position” (Beal, 1970, p. 113).

The control of education was always used to maintain the white supremacy over black Americans in order to show that blacks are ignorant and idiots. In “*Confronting Institutionalized Racism*,” Camara Jones

(2002) argued, “Institutionalized racism manifests itself both in material conditions and in access to power . . . examples include differential access to quality education, sound housing, gainful employment, appropriate medical facilities, and a clean environment” (Jones, 2002, p. 10). As a result of Belle’s efforts to defy this institutionalized racism, we see that education starts to improve in terms of facilities and innovations in teaching methods.

### Authorship and Representation

Part of Angie’s transformative discourse is the interest in authorship and representation. It stems from her belief that black Americans should represent themselves not to be represented by the Other Side. In *Racism: From Slavery to Advanced Capitalism*, Garter A. Wilson (1996) explained the systematized phenomena of defaming black Americans, which “are transmitted through television, newspapers, movies, and literature. They function to reinforce racial oppression” (pp. 28-29). Therefore, Betty decides to write a book that exposes the inner life of black Americans who live in The Flat: “I would have my audience know that Negroes are just people—no better, no worse than other people” (Horace, 2008, p. 69). Angie reconstructs the cultural politics of education to enable her marginalized people to be the authors of their own lives. This proves Angie’s belief in education as a necessity to be a social reformative agent. Within this perspective, authorship can be seen as a fundamental part of

regaining the black voice, which is part of the empowerment process.

Horace’s emphasis on the need for black Americans to publish on their own is akin to anti-colonial discourse. Writing about black Americans would inspire writing about other oppressed and colonized people as Betty tells Angie after being busy searching for a vision, “I would have to study other groups in other localities, under other circumstances, these I know; it is about them I shall write” (Horace, 2008, p. 152). As a result, the final stage of achieving the strategic fulfillment of anti-colonial discourse is the investment in self-representation both in authorship and in politics.

The true representation of black Americans is strongly related to the idea of belonging; to be part of the American self. Belonging is not a matter of citizenship; it is a philosophy of life. In the conversation between Angie and Betty, Horace deconstructs the white superiority as citizens, using her anti-racist discourse. Betty quoted an educated black Negro addressing white people:

I belong here. So carefully was my past obliterated by those who hate me for what they did to me, I have no memories of a land other than this to cherish. I’m of a new race, a race born to America. I come up with the new land. I fed its people; clothed them. I cut down forests, I built roads and railways, I provided the leisure that gave them culture... I am an American. (Horace, 2008, p. 152)

Horace emphasizes that in the colonial paradigm, history is seen as successive power structures. These power structures are used to ostracize black Americans. The quotation mentioned above presents the clash between the universal concept of rights and the colonial one, which was presented by Foucault in his theory of power. The black history in America is built on specific colonial circumstances which subjugate black Americans. The educated Negro that Betty quotes strives to dismantle this colonial claim and replace it with a more universal concept of belonging.

In fact, the systematized segregation in America was wide enough to include black American soldiers. Those soldiers faced racial discrimination on multiple levels. They were not full-fledged soldiers in terms of getting promoted and accessing facilities and recreation means to the extent that German prisoners were treated more respectfully than black American soldiers (Gibson & Huntley, 2005, pp. 141-145). Horace discusses this issue when Mr. Wreedy ignores the achievements of black American soldiers who participated in the Second World War: ““You did well and we’re proud of you, but don’t forget you’ve come back to the life you left. There’s no change here”” (Horace, 2008, p. 156). Jack Starks, a journalist in *The Item*, is expelled from the town because he expressed his opinion and criticized Mr. Wreedy’s speech that undermines black soldiers’ efforts. Indeed, Mr. Wreedy’s speech embodies the systematized colonial ideology of enslavement of white institutions.

In politics, white people use another ideology to systematize their internal colonialization of blacks. They use some black bosses as their agents to keep black people subjugated. In the novel, we see them paying Mr. Fuddles, a black boss, a high salary. He has a fine car and some apartments “for keeping those people from turning out and breaking up his and old Benjamine’s machine” (Horace, 2008, p. 192). Angie becomes an activist, supporting her people’s welfare and their cause. She is successful in convincing black people to vote freely for Roosevelt to ““use our vote to put into office persons who would have interest in what we need”” (Horace, 2008, p. 192). Participating in breaking the solid system of segregation against black Americans represents a new victory for Angie in politics. Earlier, Black Americans were forced to vote with their white masters. A planter in Claiborne County, Mississippi, says, “I have five or six Negroes on a plantation that I venture to say will vote side by side with me always because . . . they are dependent on me for every morsel they eat” (Hahn, 2003, p. 229). To systematize Angie’s role in politics, after Roosevelt wins the presidential election, she starts joining welfare jobs as she “was given the job of juvenile officer” (Horace, 2008, p. 199). As a result of Angie’s and Belle’s efforts, “Streets and sanitation had been improved . . . in addition to supervised skating rink being operated; negotiations were begun for the purchase of two square blocks of the sum area which was to be landscaped, beautiful, and used as a park” (Horace, 2008, p. 201).

As opposed to white separatists who tend to reinforce the segregation policy, Horace is able to systematize and institutionalize the call for the freedom of black Americans in a positive way. In *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism*, Moses (1978) argued, "Separatists often strove to build black institutions that were imitations of white institutions. They were contemptuous of African institutions and they tended to think of the Afro-American masses as degraded" (p. 23). Angie opens a motel for colored people. The vision leaves a hope that coexistence could be possible between black Americans and white Americans as the letters, written on the motel's sign, indicating the motel as being for colored people, become smaller and smaller: "People passing the place a few weeks after Christmas read the freshly painted sign: Angie and Aaron's Modern Motel. In tiny letters underneath, For Colored" (Horace, 2008, p. 247), rejecting a dichotomous notion of the American race and rejecting perpetuating the antithetical binary opposition. Angie's recognition of her identity as an Other marks the basis for her quest for equality and social progression. However, by the end of the novel, Horace confirms that this social transformation must be achieved through integration and harmony. That is, difference must be eventually dismantled in order to pave the way for progression and reconciliation of the larger identity (American).

## CONCLUSION

Through her novel, Horace successfully defies the colonial racist discourse of power employed by systematized and institutionalized whiteness. Angie employs two aspects of postcolonial agency: 'negation' and 'affirmation' through her ontological struggle to confirm her subjectivity. Through the subjectivity-formation process, Angie adopts an anti-colonial transformative trajectory undertaken through three phases: the phase of economic empowerment and independence, the phase of educational enlightenment, and the phase of representation both in authorship and in politics. These three phases are the cornerstones of the social transformative progress for black Americans in the novel. Angie refuses to be Other and rejects falling into the fallacy of perpetuating the colonial, racist discourse of Self/Other dichotomy. Denying this imperial dogma becomes a catalyst for Angie's anti-colonial quest in the novel. This is culminated at the end of the novel as we see the inscription on Angie's motel becomes tiny, giving hope for eliminating the letters completely by the quest of other black Americans.

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