
**REMEMBERING BARAKA'S *DUTCHMAN*: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ABSURD
DRAMATURGY ON THE RACIAL ABSURDITY**

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ABSTRACT

Dutchman belongs to Afro-American Drama. In its portraying of racial problem, *Dutchman* is different from other black American plays as it has largely moved to the abstract and symbolic form. While *Dutchman* strongly indicates segregation and a kind of open conflict with the white society, many others black literature largely focus on Black Society or family's internal conflicts. Goes along with its abstract presentation, *Dutchman* tends to represent the general and 'eternal' blacks rather than the blacks framed in social institution such as family, job, and others. Despite common accepted classification that separates ethnic literary work as strongly political and absurd theatre as metaphysical, *Dutchman*'s technique is strikingly similar to the absurd where content and form/technique blends. This study is to explore the tension in *The Dutchman* by showing its similarities and differences from both the conventional absurd play and Black literary work and to propose possible literary and social background that explain such phenomenon, which is, a racial play that takes absurdist style or as a literary act of continuing absurdist style on the racial ground. In doing so, this study uses a comparative literature approach by comparing *The Dutchman* with Eugene Ionesco's *The Lesson* and Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story*. In afro-american drama, there was a time when racial conflict was a condition that created a movement to a more abstract/ symbolic form similar to the Absurd play . It's a kind of reminder for the metaphysical dramatist, a reminder of what really matter in the real world.

Keywords: *Absurdity; Afro-American Race; Metaphysical vs Real drama*

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INTRODUCTION

Dutchman belongs to Afro-American Drama. It is still phenomenal. In its portraying of racial problem, *Dutchman* is different from other black American plays. It has largely moved to the abstract and symbolic form. Just like the absurd play, it largely constitutes an image rather than a story and a basic situation rather than a plot development. The previous Afro-American drama largely has a realistic form. Its content is also different. Where *Dutchman* strongly indicates segregation and a kind of open conflict with the white society, many others black literature largely focus on Black Society or family's internal conflicts. Goes along with its abstract presentation, *Dutchman* tends to represent the general and 'eternal' blacks rather than the blacks framed in social institution such as family, job, and others. Despite common accepted classification that separates ethnic literary work as strongly political and absurd theatre as metaphysical, *Dutchman*'s technique is strikingly similar to the absurd where content and form or technique blends.

In *Dutchman* the racial conflict is the main conflict and the main presentation. Some essays had been conducted to analyze racism in *The Dutchman* like in "Racism in the "Dutchman" by Amiri Baraka Essay" (Review) and "Symbolism and Race in Amiri Baraka's *Dutchman*" by Dr. Hoda Abdel Ghaffar Salem. Discussing about racism, the hatred or the conflict is not framed in a certain context background. The reason or background existed can be anything outside the drama, but inside the drama, there is only the essence, which is the conflict or the hatred. Lula's attitude toward the blacks is not because something told

within the play. It just happens. The black is killed by the white. The whole play can be seen as a process of intensifying the situation through the state of hate, anger, oppressed. Through the conversation, the racial conflict or oppression appear and got intensified through movements, voice's tone, the degree of mocking, and finally the lack of killing. For example, oppression firstly appears as everyday joking, with smile. Therefore, it is not even clear whether it is a kind of oppression. However, the final moment or the culmination is usually very clear and can be used to trace back the initial process.

Different from previous essays, this essay will first of all find position of *The Dutchman* in absurd drama by comparing it to two other absurd plays, *The Lesson* and *The Zoo Story*. *Dutchman* is quite similar to plays commonly accepted as Absurd Play. It is mostly similar to Eugene Ionesco's *The Lesson* and Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* (though Esslin rather reluctantly puts this play under absurd play. Albee is put under the heading 'proselytes' meaning a new follower (of the absurd)). All of them superficially are about two people meet. They Talk. At the end, one of them kills the other by using a knife. In this part, I want to argue that *Dutchman* can't be seen as less absurd than *The Zoo Story* in its blend of form and content. The similarity between *Dutchman* and *The Lesson* is relatively greater than to *The Zoo Story*.

In term of forms that is the intensification through the growing voice-tone and movement rapidity that reveals the growing power between the two people, *Dutchman* is similar to *The Lesson*. It is also seen that language plays very important role in both two plays. In *Dutchman*, Lula

initially forces Clay to use her concept. She dictates what to say for Clay. In *The Lesson* too, the professor forces the pupil to use his concept. It is the inability of the pupil to understand the professor's concept that raises the professor's power.

During the course of the play she (the pupil) progressively loses the lively rhythm of her movement of her carriage, she becomes withdrawn. From gay and smiling, she becomes progressively sad and morose; from very lively at the beginning, she becomes more and more fatigued and somnolent. Toward the end of the play her face...express a nervous depression (Ionesco, p. 45)

Having lack knowledge of what may happen, the Professor grows more confident on himself. He becomes more aggressive and dominating.

During the course of the play his timidity will disappear progressively, imperceptibly... From a manner that is inoffensive at the start, the Professor becomes more and more sure of himself, more and more aggressive, dominating, until he is able to do as he pleases with the Pupil, who has become, in his hands, a pitiful creature. (Ionesco, p. 46)

In *Dutchman*, Lula and Clay's conversation is initially soft, a normal conversation between two strangers meeting on the train. At the end both of them scream. Lula is hysterical and Clay is in exploding anger. In *The Lesson*, this too prevails:

Of course the voice of thee professor must change too, ... from thin and reedy to stronger and stronger, until at the end...extremely powerful, ringing, sonorous, while the Pupil's voice changes from the very clear and ringing tones ... until almost inaudible (Ionesco, p. 46)

In term of 'content', that is the purpose or intention of the speaker and the idea within the conversation in which one is provoking the other's anger through mocking and showing irritating attitude, *Dutchman* is similar to *The Zoo Story*. It might indicate that American absurd are largely on form while the content or dialogue is still realist. It touches social problem, such as the inability of Jerry to make a social contact. Not a metaphysical problem as often found in European tradition

Lula: (mocking him, in wild dance).
Christ. God. Get up and scream at these people.... Clay, Clay, you get to break out. Don't sit there dying the way they want you to die. Get up. (Baraka, p. 965)

Jerry: (slapping Peter on each "fight")
You fight, you miserable bastard; fight for that bench; fight for your parakeets: fight for your cats, fight for your wife; fight for your manhood (Albee, p. 1410)

The ending of *The Zoo Story* in which Jerry kills himself through the knife on Peter's hand and then thanks Peter for helping him, his confession that he was actually afraid of being left by peter, his confession that he plans this happening, his asks for peter to leave that place before people comes, his great painful effort to wipe out Peter's fingerprints from the knife despite the closing death, his last words that remain peter about his parakeets, cats make the play melodramatic. It is this melodramatic ending that makes Zoo story less absurd (Esslin, pp. 225-6). This is confirmed by Hayman (p. 12) who says that Zoo story is a moral play. Another critic (Zimbaro) even says that the self-sacrifice is typically Christian (Hayman, p. 12). It is also worth noting that *The Zoo*

Story's problem (social alienation) is a typical problem in the era of lost generation such as in Hemingway and others.

Albee (his general works, not only *The Zoo Story*) is considered as absurdist by Esslin (ibid), -despite the realism of the dialogue, and the subject matter (social alienation), because his work attacks the very foundation of American Optimism. If this is the case, then the attack from *Dutchman* is greater. For the American optimism of the melting pot and of the assimilation is simply destroyed. Clay says that when the white has accepted the blacks, blacks will murder them. For black artist, killing white people is a kind of art. It cures their neurotic, composing art is no longer needed. Baraka himself on his essay 'revolutionary theatre' mentions that this is a theatre of assault. This Revolutionary Theatre will be called the destruction of America. The political content in *Dutchman* is not a strange thing in the tradition of the absurd. Ionesco's other plays such as *The Lesson* and *Rhinoceros* are highly political. *Rhinoceros*, in its sub-title, is described by Ionesco as 'an anti-Nazi play'. In *The Lesson*, the maid (the servant but more powerful than him) gives him a Nazi swastika to protect the professor because the professor is afraid after killing the pupil.

Maid: (she takes out an armband with an insignia, perhaps the Nazi swastika) Wait, if you're afraid, wear this, then you won't have anything more to be afraid of. (She puts the armband around his arm). That's good politic. (Ionesco, p. 78)

Some critics, for example Styan and Small, see the absurd characteristic lays on

its illogical plot and background-less character.

"It naturally follows that if the absurdist rejects the logic of the world about him, then he will also reject the traditional dramatic technique of development. Hence, absurd plays may not build to a climax, present a discernible protagonist or antagonist, be divided into three acts, present well-rounded, full dimensional characters, or create traditional dramatic plots. Indeed, the absurd plot is usually anything but dramatic in the customary sense" (Small, p. 623).

"They are no logical plot, or characterization in any conventional sense. Their character lack the motivation found in realistic drama, and so emphasize their purposelessness. The absence of plot serves to reinforce the monotony and repetitiveness of time in human affairs" (Styan, p. 126).

In that perspectives, *Dutchman* suites well. Just like the character in *The Lesson*, the characters of *Dutchman* are without background (family or social). The conversation between Lula and Clay in *Dutchman* does not reveal who they are. As can be shown in the previous quotations, they are talking about 'now' 'their own situation at that time and talking about general and not personal/ individual quality, for example that "you are fool", "What we will do....?", "Black people is like 'that' while white people is like 'this". In *The Lesson*, they talk about the origin of a certain language (p. 61) and how to pronoun a certain sound (p. 64). For example, these quotations will how professor has become rather powerful:

Professor: And this, too, is fundamental principle, every tongue is at bottom nothing but language, which necessarily implies that it is composed of sounds, or...

- Pupil: Phonemes..
Professor: Just what I was going to say.
Don't parade your
knowledge. You' do better to
listen.
Pupil: All right, professor. Yes,
Professor. (p. 62)

The characters in both *The Lesson* and *Dutchman* are really more background-less than Peter and Jerry. If their conversations are put together, plotted story cannot be made (even with inferences). The best causal story can be made from their conversation is, more or less, refers to a changing topic conversation.

But in *The Zoo Story*, Peter and Jerry's conversations reveal much of their past times, especially Jerry. Their conversation can really be constituted to an adequate plotted story. The story can be long enough. Jerry's problems (therefore, and his being) have a background, have a past time that constitutes the problem as it is now (audience learn the background from the character's story). For example, his problem which appears 'now', that is, his insisting to have a contact/ problem/ engagement with Peter is a continuation of his inability to have a good relation with other being. So far, Jerry's relations with his room-owner and with the dog are a bad relation or unsuccessful relations. The pattern of contact/ relationship with peter is similar to that of the dog. From smooth to the harsh. Only now, having learned from his experience with the dog, he let himself be killed.

In short, In *The Lesson* and *Dutchman*, there is only now (repeated now/ recurrent now). In absurd tradition, this 'now' conventionally serves to represent the whole history. The now-ness is needed to represent

human condition/ situation that transcends cultural time/ social agreement. But In *The Zoo Story*, the characters have background. Audiences are not just dealing with 'the present moment', 'the eternal now' but also with past times. This dealing with past times/ background makes the plot possible to be recreated. The constructed plot makes the event logical/rational and therefore it reduces its absurdity.

After showing the close similarities between *Dutchman* with *The Lesson* along with *The Zoo Story*, this paper wants to show that *Dutchman* also has the general characteristic of the absurd theatre.

Review of Related Theories

In principle, the discipline of Comparative Literature is a method in the study of literature which conveys two ways; firstly, it refers to the knowledge of more than one national language and literature, meaning the knowledge and application of other disciplines in and for the study of literature, and secondly comparative literature refers to an ideology of inclusion of the other, be that a marginal literature in its several meanings of marginality, a genre, and various text types. The term 'Comparative Literature' is difficult to define for it evolves not one but two or even more than two literatures in comparison at the same time. It becomes still more difficult task when the comparatist has to take into consideration the multi-dimensional aspects of comparative literature such as-linguistic, cultural, religious, economic, social and historical factors of different societies.

Like other critical approaches of a particular literature, Comparative Literature deals with a literary product. What makes it

different is that in comparative study two or more than two literatures are being analyzed side by side. In this way, the subject matter becomes vaster and its perspective becomes wider. Boundaries of comparative literature have to be extended to encompass the entirety of human life and experiences in one's embrace. Bijay Kumar Dass defines Comparative Literature as a simple way to compare the two literatures. Comparative literature analyses the similarities and dissimilarities and parallels between two literatures (Dass, p. 1). Comparative method is used as an attempt to understand human literary behavior by examining two or more texts. The writer sorts, analyzes, compares the literary works in various contexts to create meanings, convey their emotions, feelings, and ideas towards the writer as a reader.

DISCUSSION

Concrete act or Movement over Abstract Speech

In the absurd theatre, what is done transcends what is said. The more separated they are, the more perceivable the emptiness/ meaningless/ the untrue-ness of what is said. In Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (p. 60) the character says that they will move but they remain unmoved. Another character says that tomorrow Godot will come but until the play ends, he hasn't come.

In *Dutchman*, finally the Negro threatens the white lady. He is assuring that he and the other black men can kill her. According to him, the black art/ high art is actually a kind of sublimation of the instinct/ the longing for killing the white (p. 966). But right after that 'speech' he is the one who is killed by the white lady. In contrast to what he has said,

the audiences see that the white woman stabs the knife on his body. She does it without ever mentioning her intention or explaining why she should kill. Contrary to what the Negro has said, the opposition is not between the only white lady with the black society or in other words 'They will murder you' (p. 967), it is the victim who is alone, while the lady is helped by many people in that train. They are in her order. They just do her order, as seen from their actions, but never talk with Lula.

Those happenings show that the words are different from the thing or the event which is being talked. Through those happenings, the audience is forced to learn that to believe in the spoken words of the character means to be lied by the play itself. Because character's words conceal what really happens on the stage, their physical movements are much more important. (Esslin, p. 9).

Having No Clear Solution

Another result of the structure that has no line of successive development falls upon the conflict or problem solution in the play. The most problems seemingly appeared in the beginning of the play are usually left abandoned at the final moment or the end of the play. Rather than having no clear solution, from the final moment (the end) audience will learn that actually the play can also be said as having no problem at all since the very beginning. In Ionesco's *The Bald Primadona*, the characters merely sit and talk nonsense. The pseudo-problem appears in the beginning of the play is actually a kind of tool for making the audience engages in the play (instead of going home before the play ends). In *Waiting for Godot*; the waited never

comes. In *The Chairs* the long waited universal message is never spoken. In *End Game*, the character's attempt to leave their place is unsuccessful. At the end, they still there. In Ionesco's *The Lesson*, The student never learns. She is still ignorant to the concept of subtraction.

In *Dutchman*, the Negro never goes along with the white lady (to the party or to one of their own apartment) to do something sensual as their conversations initially indicate such invitation. The initial pseudo-problem is whether they ever met each other or not, who the lady really is (because the lady seems to have known the black boys by guessing his name, his home, etc). But then as the Young Negro indicates a kind of acceptance to the lady's invitation, the conversation jump to the racial matter. The black boy gets angry. Then the Lady kills him.

Those happenings in the play and the happenings in the reality are much alike; the end of the problems sought by men and those characters are still hidden. Racial problem too, haven't had any solution yet.

Degrading the (Spoken) Word

As the absurdist believe in the incapability of language in representing something, they make the audience understand that the spoken words of the character are just some sounds which refer to nothing, just like music. To strengthen the impression that words or language has a negative side, the theatre of the absurd associates words to some sounds worse than music. According to Styan (1988, p. 126). "The dialogue is commonly no more than a series of inconsequential clichés which reduce those who speak them to talking

machines." The example can be found in *The Bald Soprano*, in the middle of the dialogue, the four characters scream to each other: "such caca, such caca, such caca, such caca," "B, c, d, e, f, g, I, m, n, p, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, z!" "From sage to stooge, from stage to serge!" " [imitating a train] Choo, Choo, Choo, Choo", (Ionesco, 1958, pp. 40-1). In *The Chairs*, the words of the old woman turn to echo and barking; 'Old Man: little children, I implore you. // Old Woman [echoing]: Plore....Plore....// Old Man: Your servant, your slave, your dog, arf, arf, your dog. // Old Woman: [barking loudly like a dog]; Arf....arf....arf (Ionesco, pp. 148-149).

In *Dutchman*, some conversation/statements serve to have a self-referential meaning. Lula said, 'I lie all the time. The content of the words is largely (not all, it is impossible) reduced to its function, as an act. Also in another part she says, 'I lie a lot It helps me control the world' (p. 961). Some words/ statements reveal her conversational nonsense tendency, "Red trains cough Jewish underwear for keeps! Expanding smells of silence. Gravy snot whistling like a sea birds (p. 965)

In Theatre of the Absurd, language is used as any other elements in performing the play, such as costume, light, sound effect or properties. According to Esslin (p. 297) this fact adds something new to the theatre by putting the language of a scene in contrast to the action, by reducing it to meaningless pattern, or by abandoning discursive logic for the poetic logic of association or assonance, the theatre of the absurd has opened a new dimension of the stage. *Dutchman* (the whole play) is not really on this level, but *Dutchman* has that characteristic.

A Presentation of Basic Situation

Instead of communicating event in the developing line of movement, either chronologically or causally. Absurd play presents a basic and static situation of mankind. These situations appear from the beginning until the end: In *Waiting for Godot*: the act of endless and hopeless waiting. In Ionesco's *The Lesson*, the inability of the student to grasp the concept (the lesson) dictated by the professor. In *The Zoo Story*, conflicting Conversation in the park indicates the act of searching engagement and the act avoiding engagement with other.

In *Dutchman*, the basic and static situation is the situation of the black being dominated / oppressed by the white lady (Lula). From the very beginning, in their conversation, it is revealed that the answer from the black boy is dictated and framed/ shaped by the woman's thought. Even the anger of the black boy is a reaction toward the lady's humiliating mocks. At the end the audience learns that such situation is cyclic situation/ repeated situation. It means that the lady has prepared everything, she does it on purpose. The ending, which is the killing action, signifies the total suppression: the black defeated to die.

Dynamic Development in poetic sense

The constant situation doesn't mean that the play lacks of dynamic movement. Constant situation means there is a basic situation to be communicated. To build the basic or main situation, the period of time should be filled with many activities indeed. The situation in absurd play and the atmosphere in poetry are really alike. Indeed, Esslin asserts that abandoning plotted events,

absurd play is three-dimensional poetry projected on the stage (Esslin, p. 192). Each line of poetry doesn't have to be chronologically or causally linked, but together they compose certain situation or feeling.

In *The Chairs*; the movement of the character grows from slow movement to the rapid one, then becomes slow again in order to give an impression that on the stage are coming some growing number of invisible people. The number of the guests who come that the room also increases, from individuals (one by one) to several groups. The time-distance (the pause) between each arrival is also getting shorter. In *The Zoo Story*, Jerry's action toward peter is getting intensified, from merely talking, touching, and then fighting. In *The Lesson*, the condition of the professor and the students' are reversed. The student is getting weaker, the professor is getting stronger. This is not merely my interpretation but this process is indicated clearly in the stage direction (Ionesco, pp. 77-78)

In *Dutchman*, Lula's provocation or her mocking toward the black boy increases in its content. Her physical movement is also increase, from merely asking a question, touching, grabbing, dancing, then finally killing. The Negro's attitude moves from passively accepting and saying the dictated answer from Lula, to an exploding answer of hatred to her. This situation goes in accordance with the increasing number of the people in that coach/ train and the development of their attitude. First other people are none inside that coach (only Lula and the Negro). Then several people come. Those people are initially indifferent to both Lula and the Black boy. Then, they pay

attention to them, from merely seeing them, laughing at them, even there is one who also engages to Lula's singing and dancing. Finally, they help Lula getting rid the stabbed black boy off the train. Note that the room/ the coach/ is also getting more widely depicted (in the scene two). The depicted space grows from merely around Lula and the Negro's seat to the several seats around them.

The form goes along with the content. The growing perspective of the spaces, the growing number of the people, the growing attitude/ interest of the people toward them correspond to the growing aggressiveness of Lula. All of those growing situations signify the powerlessness of the black boy despite his final anger. This is because even in his anger, he is in fact under the power of Lula. He is surrounded by Lula's people, and furthermore, he is just part of the Lula's routine.

So far, the discussion is about how *The Dutchman* becomes a racial play that uses symbolic presentation very similar to that of absurd play. Next discussion is about Psycho-historical background that makes such phenomenon necessarily prevail.

The Necessity for Presenting Racist Oppression with Absurd Dramaturgy

When the absurd Theatre came, its aim is to unveil the illusion. Human believes in the logic and understandable reality. This belief finally forces human to always rationalize everything. The world or reality is reduced to the rational/ human understanding. Therefore, they live not in reality but in their hope, their concept. This attitude helps to create (transcendental, emotional, and rational) fear, pain, and

fatigue every time they have to confront reality beyond their expectation/concept. Absurd theatre wants to make the audience familiar once more with situation they always want to forget, avoid, repressed, etc. The Absurd theatre wants the audience to embrace what is actually part of them. Therefore, the play does not argue or teach about a certain situation, it directly presents the situation. A situation people are no longer aware. In the case of absurd play, it is human absurdity (of course different plays create different situation, example relentless waiting in *Waiting for Godot*, the futility of longing the ungraspable universal message in *The Chairs*). In the case of *Dutchman*, it is the racial oppression, people are no longer quite aware of the disintegration between black society and white society.

The image of Integration and Its Possible Economical Background

It is worth noting that the many numbers of drama which portrays racial conflict is just a part of the big internal problems are not necessarily reflects the real situation. One among many problems for the black dramatist is to consider the potential audience. Who will watch the play? Black man or white man? Barnett (p. 1313) quoting Johnson, writes, "the black writer's audience "is always both white and black America". Considering this situation, it is more acceptable to write the themes that does not reduce the audience. If a Black play is considered successful, meaning being performed many times, the consideration is the number of the audience who comes. Another consideration is who will pay the production. Klaus (p. 957) and (Hill, p. 122) gives an example that reveals the government help/encouragement in black play production

through The Federal Theatre project around 30s. Hughes, Ward, Wilson, Fisher, Browne, and others are some dramatists that are sponsored by Federal Theater. It is logical that integrationist / pro-assimilation attitude more promoted. It is probable that Baraka's dissociation with the integrationist is part of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960's, a time when the accepted values are questioned.

Confronting the Already Accepted idea of Peaceful' Integration

The idea of living in peaceful harmony without racial conflicts is a good one. But it can become domineering illusion. The idea of assimilation and harmonious relation has been highly valued or promoted so that people is possibly lured and then they forget or unconsciously repressed the very fact of their Racial conflict. In the beginning of this paper, it has been shown that many of black dramas try to make smooth the racial conflict or segregation attitude by showing them as merely a part (probably a small part) of internal conflicts. Racial oppression is probably really small problem for those dramatists. But this already small image of racial oppression in the Afro-American Dramas is likely to be smaller, lessened by other dominant idea, for example Christian idea of loving each other and accepting the suffering. To mention an example, Martin Luther's speech (p. 81), says he has a dream to reveal its engagement in Christianity by using allusion from Isaiah. His peaceful ideas are certainly neither to distrusts all white people nor to have non-violent creativity. In *Fences*, Rose who can accept and forgive the hard life and the injustice, and who also promotes an alternative idea that her husband (Troy) possibly does not play in major league

because he is too old and not because he is black, is aligned to the church.

It is in the possible forgetfulness of the very racial conflict that the image of racial oppressions needs to be shockingly presented without any euphemism. The absurdist dramaturgy that can perform a basic and constant image is really helpful. This basic image serves to make sure that the audience will not miss this point, the very situation of their life. This kind of play makes it possible to merely perform the racist oppression without any explanation. Because "Explanation is useless but the sensation remains" (Camus, p. 87). Because Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and so Clay in *Dutchman* has talked, but they die.

The play has showed that in the case of racism (or anything), word and explanation mean nothing if go along with the happening. The idea of black integration is not really important if that is just only an idea. It is even worse when that idea makes people forget reality. Lula kills the black, that is the point. Even Clay's word, which probably arouses pleasure for those who hate white become insignificant compare to his death

..And you tell this to your father . Tell him not too much preach so much rationalism and logic to these niggers. Don't make the mistake, through some irresponsible surge of Christian charity, of talking to much about western rationalism, or the great intellectual legacy of white man. ... (p. 966)

Underlining and Accommodating the State of Being Victim

By presenting the very image of victim, of course the audience still can interpret that image, but the victimization of black people will not disappear. It is what they see. And

this is also among Baraka's intention, "Our theatre will show victims so that their brothers in the audience will be better able to understand that they are the brothers of victims, and that they themselves are victims, if they are blood brothers. Clay, in *Dutchman*, Ray, in *The Toilet*, Walker in *The Slave* are all victims."

As shown in that quotations, and in the whole of his essay 'revolutionary theatre, Baraka seemingly wants to make sure that the fact of being victim is shared.

To accommodate Baraka's idea of seeing Black people merely as a victim, realism will not be really suitable for several reasons. First, Realism wants to picture human as similar as possible to the real life. And in the real life, there no such 'merely' or 'only'. In reality human identity is partly conditioned/built by many institutions such as job, family, religion, class, etc (a worker could be a victim his working hour, but he can be a victimizer at home). Second, to relate the situation on the stage to all of the audience from many different backgrounds, the background should be dropped. It is impossible to accommodate all backgrounds attached in each audience/individual. Applying some detailed background/ context to the stage will limit the stage's power to represent a wide range of reality or a wide range of individuals. Third, because realism depends so much on the spoken word of the character (to represent a large part of reality that cannot be presented on the stage), the underlined victim-quality/ the victim-ness will be obscured by several divergent images and several divergent points of view and thoughts of the characters. To concentrate on a specific image or state of affair absurdist

dramaturgy is more reliable than realism and others.

Keeping the Violence Effectual

Baraka wants to use violence or hatred as a shocking therapy for the black society. It seems like the black society hasn't come to know 'what the world is', whether it is the very reality of racial conflict or hatred spread over society. Consequently, they also do not know what the world should be. By presenting hatred, probably society will realize its existence in the real life. Only after that, the attempt to start improvement can be ignited.

Because they have been trained to hate, The Revolutionary Theatre must hate them for hating. It must crack their faces open to the mad cries of the poor. And what we show must cause the blood to rush, so that pre-revolutionary temperaments will be bathed in this blood, and it will cause their deepest souls to move, and they find themselves tensed and clenched, even ready to die, at what the soul has been taught. We will scream and cry, murder, run through the streets in agony, if it means some soul will be moved, moved to actual life understanding of what the world is, and what it ought to be. (The Revolutionary Theatre).

In the realist tradition, the theatre fails because they want to be similar to reality. In trying to present reality, realism can only present external appearance. States of mind such as hatred can hardly be presented merely through outward resemblance. Esslin shows how external portrayal of a conflict such as in fighting and duel are no longer effectual. He underlines the changing perception on society in accepting realist

portrayal as a result of technological development in the media of art.

In The Elizabethan and Shakespearean era, the fights, the duels were regarded by the audience as a high point of the acting. Actors have special technique of using blade and performing bleeding fight. These skills were popular that English actors were touring the whole of the continent and making a lot of money –from audiences who didn't understand a word they were saying –simply because of this kind of spectacle. In an age of photographic mass media this doesn't work anymore (p. 160).

He further explains that it is because the audience has known too well that the actor are taking care not to hurt each other. The fights on the theatre have become embarrassing. Therefore, to preserve the same effect (felt as real) the presentation should be on the symbolic level. The growing intensification that can be found in *Dutchman* and other absurd plays serves to increase the psychological state of mind, whatever it is, it depends on the playwright's construction, of hate or irrationality that explodes at the final moment. For transplanting a dense of feeling in an abstract form (because it want to be transplanted in the various mind of the audience), Absurdist technique is probably the proper choice. Historically, modern drama largely moves into this style. *Dutchman* and absurd theatre continuing such movement within their particular/ specific environment.

CONCLUSION

Absurd drama attacks abstract or 'unreal' enemy such as God, logic, language and literary convention while racial/ ethnical play commonly shows its own ethnicity or

attacks the enemy of its ethnic, their oppressor. Absurd play rarely shows strong anger toward its enemy because the enemy is so powerful and therefore the only chance to win is to disregard the enemy in a tragicomically manner. The ethnic/Afro-American's 'enemy', however strong it is, is considered as an earthly creature/ less than God/ metaphysical system therefore more optimism can be found and anger is common for showing its power. However, in the era of metaphysical decline, where gods or other metaphysical system are no longer a big enemy (god turned out to be language), the absurd also loses its power because there is nothing high to degrade anymore, there is nothing great to be disregard anymore. Racial oppression and another recurring cultural disease become the greatest matter/ enemy.

Dutchman really exists between Black American Drama and the Absurd. In its form, the growing intensification to create an image of hatred and oppression is strikingly similar to the Absurd play. In its content, the support for segregation and open conflict exceeds the common Black American drama that focuses on the internal conflicts in Black society. In doing so, *Dutchman's* presentation turns to symbolism. The numbers of the passenger, their attention, the degree of mocking and hatred in the characters' conversation, their physical contact/ movements are getting more and more intensive. The intensification continues growing until it produces (has result in) the act of killing the black man.

In that killing process, the *Dutchman* revealed to be similar to *Ihe Lesson* and *The Zoo Story*. *Dutchman* is similar to *The Lesson* in its growing intensification that includes the changing in power relation

between two people. In comparing *Dutchman* to *The Zoo Story* and *The Lesson*, the characters in *The Zoo Story* have more background and the story is more plotted. The problem in *The Zoo Story* and *Dutchman* is more realistic than the problem in *The Lesson*. The problem in *Dutchman* is racial oppression and the problem in *The Zoo Story* is social alienation. The problem in both plays directly appears from their conversation. The problem in *The Lesson* is more symbolic, for example. The inability of the pupil to follow the professor's concept due to her toothache may represent the supremacy of flesh over thought.

In comparing *The Zoo Story*, *The Lesson*, and *Dutchman*, there is an impression that American Absurdist (if any, because Albee himself is less absurd) still touches the daily ground, they cling to their social or racial perspective (and not metaphysical). While the European Absurdist uses superficially unreal characters such as: animal-like men (Pozo and Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*), half-body person (Nag and Nell in *End Game*), man turned to rhinoceros in *Rhinoceros*, a lady with three noses in *Jack or the submission*, or a corpse growing to a gigantic posture in *Amedee* (Esslin, p. 205), American Absurd play's characters are still a complete and physically realistic human beings.

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