

**Tribhuvan University**

**Racism and Its Resistance in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko***

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation on Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* shows discrimination in terms of racism on the one hand and on the other hand the resistance of the blacks in response to racism. Trefry, Byam, Bannister and the narrator discriminate and dominate the blacks on the basis of their colour, race and physicality. The whites consider themselves superior; that is why they exploit and dominate the blacks. On the contrary, the protagonist of the novel, a black character, Oroonoko, as well as his beloved, Imoinda, resist against racism by planning to kill the white men and by shooting an arrow to Byam respectively. The most glaring example of the ideology is the whites' labeling of the blacks as dogs. An armed activity on the part of the blacks registers their resistance of the whites' racist attitude towards them.

## Contents

	Page No.
Acknowledgments	
Abstract	
Introduction: Life and Works of Aphra Behn	1-7
Racism and Its Resistance	8-25
Racism and Its Resistance in <i>Oroonoko</i>	26-40
Conclusion	41-43
Works Cited	44-45

## **Introduction: Life and Works of Aphra Behn**

Aphra Behn, perhaps the first professional English woman author, was born Aphra Johnson near Canterbury, England in 1640. She was the daughter of an innkeeper and as a child she was taken to Surinam, West Indies. While there, she met an enslaved Negro prince Oroonoko who was the basis for a novel she wrote later. She returned to England between 1658 and 1663 and married a merchant named Behn but was widowed after three years of marriage. She died on April 16, 1689 and was buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey where her stone still rests today at poets' corner-not an inconsiderable honor for a woman playwright in the late seventeenth-century.

In the meantime, she had entered court circles and was employed as a spy at Antwerp for King Charles II in the war against the Dutch (1665-1667). She provided political and naval information to the English government but was paid very little or not at all and on her return to England was imprisoned briefly for debt.

Aphra Behn, who had been a loyal supporter of James, was by this time ill. Her own descriptions of her lame hands and the lampoonists' cruel verses mocking her "limbs distortured" suggest she suffered severely from rheumatoid arthritis in her last years but kept writing in despite of the pain.

She had at some time previously acquired schooling in languages and in literature and soon turned to writing poetry, novels, and plays to earn a living. She wrote *The Forced Marriage* (1670), *The Rover* (1678), *The Feigned Courtizans* (1678) and *The City Heiress* (1682). Her plays were very successful and were performed under royal patronage by the Duke's Theatre Company. In 1688, she published the novel, *Oroonoko, or The History of the Royal Slave*. This novel

introduces the idea of a noble savage which was later developed further by Jean Jacques Rousseau and it may be the first English philosophical novel. The tragicomedy *The Young King* was produced in the autumn of 1679, *The Revenge* in 1680, followed by *The Second Part of The Rover* in early 1681, *The False Count* in November and *The Roundheads* in December, 1681. *The City Heiress* was produced in the spring of 1682. While Behn's plays were generally popular with their audiences, she encountered criticism from contemporaries and later readers alike for the rampant sexual content. Alexander Pope, for instance, wrote of Behn: "The stage how loosely Astræa treads who fairly puts all characters to bed" (5). *Like Father, Like Son* of 1682 was a flop of such magnitude it did not warrant publication and the manuscript no longer survives. Behn was arrested for a libelous prologue, but was soon released. At this point, the Duke's Company merged with the King's Company to form the United Company and playwriting no longer offered a profitable avenue of employ for Aphra Behn, who turned to other forms of writing. Soon after, she finished her first book of poetry which appeared as *Poems Upon Several Occasions* in 1684. 1684 also saw the publication of *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister*, a *Roman à clef* loosely based on a contemporary affair and a pioneer on the field of the epistolary novel. Both works were enormously popular and went through several contemporary printings. *Love Letters* even had two sequels: *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister, Second Part* (1685) and *The Amours of Philander and Silvia* (1687).

Aphra Behn's short novel *Oroonoko* (1688), one of the first realistic prose narratives in English literature, contains a number of elements that are new: the chatty narrative style; the narrative authority who is recognizably female and a plot which takes place in the New World, a slave uprising in the British colony of Surinam. It



should hardly be surprising that this accumulation of "novel" elements results in ideological contradictions in the work itself, contradictions that reflect the inconsistency produced by changing social structures in the seventeenth century. Particularly interesting in this respect is the relationship between the two members of disadvantaged groups: the hero of the story, the black male slave, and the white mistress who is his narrator. While this narrator is sympathetic to the plight of her hero, the novel cannot avoid participating in the discourse of racism. *Oroonoko* is an example of racism in the sense of intrinsic social inequality rather than an individual racist document; in fact, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries *Oroonoko* was considered an anti-slavery novel: "The novella had been recognized as a seminal work in the tradition of antislavery writings from the time of its publication down to our own period."

Despite the narrator's critical treatment of slavery, *Oroonoko* is an exemplary text for a study of racism at the beginning of novelistic discourse; it cannot easily be dismissed as merely the work of a racist individual and as such can be examined for more far-reaching effects of race within culture. The goal of the proposed paper will not be to prove whether Behn was racist or not; as numerous articles have already done on both sides but to examine the way in which the complex relationship of race and gender informs this early prose narrative as well as the criticism surrounding it.

A number of the contradictions of *Oroonoko* are connected to the elements that make it a transitional work in the development of the novel: the combination of the courtly world of the romance (personified ironically in a black slave) and the new world of the contemporary reader and the narrator. These elements cannot be separated from race. *Oroonoko* is the story of the royal slave from the point of view of

the middle class colonial mistress: the black male protagonist can only speak through the white female narrator. This situation points out the simplistic nature of the women; colonized metaphor which Laura Donaldson criticizes:

...the woman=colonized, man=colonizer metaphor lacks any awareness of gender--or colonialism for that matter--as a contested field, whose identity points are often contradictory. Historical colonialism demonstrates the political as well as theoretical necessity of abandoning the idea of women's (and men's) gender identity as fixed and coherent. Instead ... it makes it impossible to ignore the contradictory social positioning of white, middle-class women as both colonized patriarchal objects and colonizing race-privileged subjects.

(6)

However, Donaldson points out the novel as an exposition of colonized woman and colonizer man, beside this, it is a great metaphor to introduce slavery in a proper manner. *Oroonoko* deals with colonized patriarchal objects and colonizing race-privileged subjects. Another critic Ernest A. Baker opines:

It was the truth and power with which she recounted what she had herself witnessed in Surinam that has singled out for permanence the best of her novels, the story of the royal slave, Oroonoko. We need not give ear to the whispers of a liaison with the heroic black. A very different emotion inspires the tale, the same feeling of outraged humanity that in after days inflamed Mrs. Stowe. *Oroonoko* is the first emancipation novel. It is also the first glorification of the Natural Man. Mrs. Behn was, in a manner, the precursor of Bernardin de Saint-

Pierre; and in her attempts to depict the splendour of tropical scenery she foreshadows, though feebly,...(7-21)

The novel *Oroonoko* is not only the introduction of slave and slavery but also the depiction of Surinam plantation, emancipation, managers of plantation, behaviour of managers and their humanity and concept towards slave. The credit of glorification has also gone to Behn for her heroic deed. Another critic Ernest Bernbaum exposes:

Historians of the novel assign to Mrs. Behn's *Oroonoko* a place of distinct importance in the development of realism. They concede that those parts of the narrative which recount the adventures of *Oroonoko* in Coramantien are full of romance, but maintain that his subsequent slavery in Surinam, his reunion with his bride Imoinda, his insurrection, and his violent death, are on the whole delineated with fidelity to fact. "Imagination," says Professor Canby, "colored the heroic life of the slave as well as the romantic intrigue of the negro prince," but only, it seems, in a few negligible [...]. (419-34)

Seventeenth century novella *Oroonoko* is also a distinct importance in the development of realism; it contains variety of romance, intrigue of the Negro prince, heroic live of the slaves and dedication of Imoinda. Elaine Hobby, about *Oroonoko* and Aphra Behn adheres:

Aphra Behn's stories map out a world of female possibilities and limits: a bleak world, since the options open to her heroines is shown to be few indeed. It is rescued from despair only by the sparkling courage and daring of her women protagonists, who with great determination negotiate their way through a universe where men have

all the power. Her most well-known story, *Oroonoko*, sits uneasily in my account of female romance in other respects but it nonetheless exhibits some central features of the genre. The tale's two main protagonists are startlingly beautiful and they maintain an undying love despite opposition from a tyrannical parent. (85-101)

Behn's *Oroonoko* explores the female possibilities in writing and it supports the whole dominant females who are under suppression and domination. Undying love and startling beauty are the major concerns of *Oroonoko*. Despite the provocation of slavery, romance and beauty are estimated to generate the dedication of love in human being. Another critic Katharine M. Rogers adds:

In 1913 Ernest Bernbaum gleefully exposed borrowings and inaccuracies in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* so as to show that Behn could not have been an eyewitness to the events, as her first-person narrator claimed. In accordance with the general tendency of male-dominated criticism at the time to sneer at pioneering women writers, he presented this as evidence of personal untruthfulness in the author. In reaction, Behn's two recent feminist biographers, Maureen Duffy (1977) and Angeline Goreau (1980), have accepted the tale as reliable autobiography. (1-15)

Though, Behn has narrated the whole story in first person narrator but some of the incidences like her date of birth, marriage and services show that little or bigger Behn has exaggerated the explanation of Surinam plantation. Most of the records about Behn are not survived so she could not have been an eyewitness to the events.

The research has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents a brief introduction, the hypothesis and the literature review. The second chapter deals with the discussion of theoretical tool that shall be applied to the text. The major theoretical tool is racism (concept of master and slave) and its resistance. Through this tool we can see the exploitation and discrimination of blacks and resistance for it. Finally, the last chapter concludes the research on the basis of the textual analysis. The main quest of the research is to show how the protagonist Oroonoko is dominated by whites and his resistance against such domination and discrimination.

This novel has been observed from several angles by different critics and reviewer in terms of racism, Marxism, feminism, anti-colonialism, post colonial perspectives and so on. However the current research is based on the issue of racism and its resistance which can be seen through the eyes of the racism and the concept of othering to analyze the racial discrimination caused by whites' racist ideology on the one hand and the resistance of blacks to emancipate themselves from such discrimination on the other hand.

## **Racism and Its Resistance**

Racism always emerges from race, a concept used with ethnicity and culture. Race, in particular, is the classification of human beings into distinguishable groups that are based on physical characteristics i.e. skin color, hair texture, eye shape etc. Ethnicity is the classification of individuals who share the common ancestry comprised of costumes and traditions that are passed from generation to generation, religion, dress and nationality whereas culture on the other hand is a broader category that extends beyond race and ethnicity to include any group of people who share common lifestyles which are passed on to members of the particular group, e.g. socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and geographical location.

Racism is largely controlled by heritage, attributes and the differences between the races innate traits rather than social factors. This contemporary form of racism links itself to discourses such as patriotism, nationalism, Xenophobia and gender differences. This is an attempt to produce old racist wine in a new scientific bottle. Still each "historical circumstance" is shaping a distinct form of racism. "Racist ideologies and practice have distinct meanings bounded by historical circumstances and determined in struggle" (Gilroy, 20-23). Racism is misbehaviour of a group of people on the basis of race, colour and religion. It is a blinker hatred, envy, or prejudice. Racial discrimination is often based on the discrimination of colour where the word discrimination denotes the denial of equality based on personal characteristics such as race and colour. Discrimination is based on prejudice and stereotype where stereotype refers to forming an instant fixed idea of group, usually based on false or incomplete information and prejudice refers to prejudge based on ideas that are formed without any knowledge about others. Gretchen Gerzina defines

racism as, "an active or passive response to the specious belief that generally traits are lined to social characteristics" (126).

Racism is founded on the belief in one's racial superiority over other. It encompasses the beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and practices that define people on racial classification. It involves a generalized lack of knowledge or experience as it applies to negative beliefs and attitudes. It uses the inflexible assumptions that differences are biologically determined and therefore inherently unchangeable. It doesn't take place in a vacuum, but rather is enacted and reinforced through social, cultural and institutional practices that endorse the hierarchal power of one group over other.

Racism is a belief system or a set of implicit assumption about the superiority of one race or ethnic group other than that of one's own. Racism can be defined as discrimination made by a group of people on the basis of race color and religion where discrimination is the product of prejudice and stereotypical mode of thoughts or assumption mainly based on color and race. It involves the superiority of one group, ethnicity or its cultural practices over the other group because the entitled inferior group lacks the set of criteria as prescribed by the privileged group. In course of social dealings racism exists both in conscious and unconscious level. But, to the core, its effect is much disastrous damaging both victims and the perpetrators if it is practiced in an unhealthy manner. In fact, it is a false notion associated with the generic traits to the social characteristics. Therefore, Gerzina has rightly said, "Racism at individual level involves a misguided personal belief that an entire racial group is deficient or superior because of a set of moral, intellectual, or a cultural traits that are thought to be indicated by the group's biological origin" (126).

Racism can be both overt and covert. Overt racism is what most people are familiar with. Since it is easily detectable and takes the form direct behavior or verbal racially discriminatory acts. Covert racism is more subtle, yet occurs more often than overt racism and is more easily hidden, denied or discounted. Racism has basically three forms: individual racism, institutional racism and cultural racism. If a white colored American brutally kills or exploits a Negro that is a vent individual racism, and if an employer decides not to admit a Negro employee because s/he believes that the employee might drive away business but tell the person that there are no more openings available is an example of covert individual racism. If a country, club that has clearly written rules which includes any non-white members, it is an example of overt institutional racism, and if an academic curriculum that only emphasizes European American history and does accept the history of black ethnic/cultural groups, it is an example of covert institutional racism. Likewise, the mass killings of Blacks and enslavement of Afro-Americans is overt cultural racism. And the unrealistic and stereotypical portrayal of ethnic minorities on the media is an example of covert cultural racism. Racism can manifest in various places.

Furthermore, racism can be of various kinds. Some of the kinds of racism discussed are: academic racism, scientific racism and racism as an official government policy. Academic racism refers to the tradition of prejudicial study of human societies and cultures, languages and peoples in circles of academia. With regard to African people its basis was formed during slavery and colonialism to remove any form of noble claim from the victims of these systems, thus reducing them and justifying their position as "natural" and a continuation of their historical "worthlessness." Legendary quotes come from some of Europe's most respected



scholars such as Darwin, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant. David Hume said, "I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual, eminent either in art or speculation. No ingenious manufacture among them, no arts, no sciences" (qtd. in Mullar 74).

Racism is based on the tendency towards adhering to and preferring the values and personal beliefs of one's own group. Racism springs from the term race but the use of race for the biological, psychological, sociological and economic differences among the human characteristics are taken into considerations that these qualities of one group make it either inferior or superiors to each other. European supremacy over the globe for the last few centuries has given conducive milieu to purport that 'the white-skinned being are superior to the black-skinned or the brown skinned individuals. These facets are brought into practices that Negroes are inherently to set up a system of social economic and political beliefs for whites at the expense of blacks. So, the twentieth century racism faces the use of sciences to justify the whites' superiority to blacks. It is based on tendency toward categorizing information and using generalized assumptions which often lead to stereotypes and negative biases, and judging the values and standards of minority group cultures by the values and standards of the majority group culture and labeling the former inferior.

The concept of negro race as inferior and European/American civilization or white as superior is based on the belief that negroes or blacks lack certain qualities, such as, "lack of good social organization and social actions, lack of fellow feeling, lack of originality of thought and lack of artistic qualities specially deficient on the side of mechanical arts" (Reinch, 1-9), and in general showing the tendency toward

higher development. These characteristics are made on the basis for justifying slavery and slave trade. Paul S. Reich, in his *Negro Race and European Civilization*, justifies for blacks “low social organizations, a consequent lack of efficient social action, form the most striking characteristics of Negro race” (1-9).

The physical slavery with the use of forces helps to develop psychological domination upon black’s mentality. Science is there to support the existing superiority for its function at the level of mind and soul. George Ellis writes about the psychological implication for justifying racism as, “we accept psychology as the science of phenomena and function of mind and soul. Race is used as the mere convenience of the family”(11). It is peculiar sensation, the double consciousness, the sense of always looking at measuring one’s soul by the tape of world that looks an amused contempt and pity. Katie Otis cites Du Bois in his work *Beyond Black and White: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in US South and Southwest* as, "one ever feels his double-ness -an American, a black, two souls, two thoughts, and two unreconciled strivings. Two warring ideas in the dark body, whose dogged strength keep it from being torn as under” (5).

The sociological fact is that larger numbers of members of certain groups have advantages that members of other groups don't have. Those who have smoother access to these resources find it easier to succeed in variety of adult endeavours. These resources include things like personal connections, property ownership, economic resources and educational opportunities.

The concept of colored or race concept has worked with the production of natural inferiority of blacks to whites physically, intellectually, religiously, socially, morally. So, the whites take the advantages of superiority economically, politically,

and socially. For the whites, the justification works as the relation with human and less human. George Ellis in his work *Passages to Freedom: The Politics of Racial Reconciliation in South Africa* as, "The Negro is less human because he has an oval skull, snout-like jaws, swollen lips, broad flat nose, short crimp hair, cleft legs, highly elongated heels, and flat feet" (11). A Negro is no more naturally inferior for he is the product of the complex and subtle forces of his milieu.

Neither the ancient civilization nor the middle world civilization regarded and recognized human individual in the name of race. They distinguished themselves from other in terms of appearance, customs and language, and asceticism, but not in the form of color. In Victorian era, some racists made racial differences in terms of biological, intellectual and moral quality. But, Bible does not make any difference on the basis of skin color. In 19th century, racism is made scientific issue and could be proven with biological and scientific means. Between First and Second World War, it became a political issue. Racism in twentieth century has become more political. The extension of colonial racism to political racism is either used to keep up the political authority, for the genetic differences between blacks and whites is replete with scientific propaganda. William H. Tucker writes:

The question of genetic differences between races has arisen not out of purely scientific curiosity or the desire to find some scientific truth or to raise some scientific problem, to solve some scientific problem but only because of the belief, explicit or unstated that the answer has political consequences. (382)

The life of black during the slavery is characterized by extreme pain and misery. Separation of family member from one another was a common phenomenon.

The slave holder held the total power as a result the victim was helpless. Physical torture and mental agony was day to day experience in the lives of black slave.

Masters use to take pleasure by whipping a slave. Achille Mbeme cites Douglass who, in his work *Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass, an American Slave*, explains:

I have often been awakened at the dawn of the day by the most heart rendering shrieks of an own aunt of mine, whom he used to tie up to a joist and whip upon her naked back till she was literally covered with blood. [. . .] He would whip her to make scream and whip her to make her hush, and not until overcome by fatigues would he cease to swing the blood-dotted cow skin. (15)

It was the condition of black slave in south where oppression, exploitation, and severe punishment were common. Later, they moved to North as industrial labor freedom material success. Everywhere black suffered from the loss of identity and social recognition and thus they were dehumanized. As a laborer they felt sense of alienation and frustration with their contemporary existence. They couldn't get equal level of opportunity, freedom and wages as the white laborer. The practice of racism was severe even in the north. Entrance into the public places, vesting rights and equal level of wages were not available to the blacks. Discrimination was everywhere in social, political and economic level of life. As a result blacks were forced to lead a miserable life. They spent their lives in the ghettos and poverty became their common lot.

During the presidential years of Abraham Lincoln, blacks were declared free from slavery and equal levels of opportunities were pronounced to them. The slave trade disappeared during the first half of the 19th century but master-slave

relationship between whites and blacks was replaced by “other forms of unfree labor such as indentures, share cropping, debt bondage” (Bulmer and Solomos, 10). Thus again slavery was continued in the form of unfree laborer. Blacks were still made dependant and subordinate to their masters or the owners for whom they worked.

Researchers in the University of Chicago (Marianne Bertrand) and Harvard University (Sendhi Mullainathan) found in 2003 study that there was widespread discrimination in workplace against job applicant whose names were perceived as "sounding black". These applicants were fifty percent less likely than candidates perceived as having "white sounding names" to receive call backs for interviews, no matter their level of previous experience. The researchers view these results as strong evidence of unconscious biases rooted in the United States' long history of discrimination. This is an example of structural racism, because it shows a widespread established belief system. Another example is apartheid in South Africa, and the system of Jim Crow laws in the United States of America.

Kant discussed the rank of races in this quote, "The Yellow Indians do have a meager talent. The Negroes are far below them, and at the lowest point are a part of the American people" (qtd. in Mullar 75). In the nineteenth century the German philosopher Hegel simply declared, "Africa is not historical part of the world" (qtd in Mullar 77). This openly racist view, that Africa has no history, was repeated by Hugh Trevor professor of History at Oxford University, as late as 1963.

Scientist racism refers to the use of science or the veneer of science to justify and support racial beliefs. The use of science to justify racist beliefs goes back at least to the early 18th century, though it gains most of its influence in the mid 19th century. Works like Arthus Gobineau's "An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races"

(1853-1855) attempted to frame racism within the terms of biological difference among human beings, and with the rise of theories of evolution after the work of Charles Darwin became well known. L.B.S. Leakey in "The Progress and Evolution of Man in Africa, 1961 states: "Indeed, I would be inclined to suggest that however great may be the physical differences between such races as the Europeans and the Negro, the mental and psychological differences are greater still" (qtd. in Mullar 80).

Social scientists argue that racism is the belief that differences between the races exists, be they biological, social, psychological, or in the realm of soul. It is often argued that racism is using this belief to promote the belief that one's particular use is superior to other. Historically, people of African descent in the United States have experienced a stigmatization based on the presumption that blacks are naturally of the inferior race. All negative attributes have been associated with the African-Americans. The interplay of race, stigma and disease has been reflected in professional writings and in popular images throughout the twentieth century.

It is generally believed that race is essentially a social and historical construction. It has no real basis in science. It became common to consider some races more evolved than others. These points of view were very common within the scientific community at the time even Darwin, who was an active abolitionist and considered all humans to be of the same species against the trend of polygenism at the time believed that there were biological differences in the mental capacities of different races. Ideologies such as social Darwinism and eugenics used and reinforced many of these views.

There was also scientist who argues against biological reinforcement of racism, even if they believed that biological races did exist. In the sciences of

anthropology and biology, though, these were minority positions until the mid 20th century. During the rise of Nazism in Germany, many scientists in western nations worked to debunk the racial theory on which the regime rested its claims of superiority. The rise of Nazism in 1930s and its consequent Aryan science gave impetus to Nazi scientific racism. The scientists who approached racism couldn't analyze it objectively. The fear of Nazi led most scientists who were hesitant to join the political frontier in the intellectual battle, to discredit racism. To fight racism was almost equal to the subject to fight Nazism. England failed to reach a consensus to condemn racism, and American never reached to formulate an official position. In America a group of distinguished genetics asserted the principle of opposing Nazi racial theories. Since then, many of the scientific studies which some claim support racist claims have since been debunked by scientists with specifically anti-racist agendas, such as Stephen J. Gould. However, Gould himself has been accused by a number of scientists of misrepresenting the positions of those he engages, being politically motivated in his attacks, and being selective in his use of materials to those ends.

The status of the concept of biological race remains very controversial within science, though politically no mainstream scientists admit to using scientific data to justify racist beliefs. Some scientists, such as Arthus Jenson and Richard Lynn, have argued that the threat of being labeled as a "scientific racist" has made the scientific study of race and a racial difference politically taboo and has stifled true scientific discourse. These changes have surfaced most often during the study of intelligence, IQ and the concept in psychometrics termed general intelligence factor. Many

scientists, though, believe that there is no evidence for typological notions of biological race, nor scientific justifications for racist beliefs.

Most members of society believe that scientists have objective overview and intelligence, they often do not realize just how human scientists are. Ashley Montague pointed that "All but a few persons take it completely for granted that scientists have established the 'facts' about 'race' and that they long ago recognized and classified the 'races' of mankind. Scientists do little to discourage this view, and indeed many of them are quite as divided as most laymen are concerning the subject" (100). Charles Leslie takes the example of Joseph Birdsell a new Darwinist who writes 'A race is an interbreeding population whose gene pool is different from all other populations' (26) but in support to Ashley Montague he redefined 'The use of the term race has been discontinued because it is scientifically indefinable and carries social implications that are harmful and disruptive' (26). The society has already believed blacks to be inferiors and scientists attempt to strengthen, while they themselves know the secret. According to Ashley Montague, "for more than a century anthropologists have been directing their attention principally towards the task of establishing criteria by means of which 'races' of mankind might be defined a diverting parlour game in which by arbitrarily selecting the criteria one could nearly always make the 'race' come exact as one though they should". (66)

The emergence of new-racism has been possible due to a few recent political and social transformations-liberal hegemony, post-modern multiculturalism-forming their background. New-racism could be defined as racism without race, a racism whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountable ability of cultural differences, a racism which, at first, does not postulate the superiority of



certain groups or people in relation to others but only the harmfulness of abolishing frontiers, the incompatibility of life-styles and traditions.

Institutional racism or structural racism discrimination is racial discrimination by governments, corporations, or other large organizations with the power to influence the lives of many individuals. Social institutions, like government social service agencies, are created to serve all the people. But they can often become the areas in which racial prejudice is embedded both in formal behaviour patterns and also informal institutional policies. This means that these institutions do not serve oppress the very people they were created to help.

Institutional racism can also be implicit, informal, unintentional and relatively unnoticed by the people perpetuating it. Institutional and systematic forms of racism are exponentially more damaging than individual racism. Examples of racism in American domestic policy include slavery and discrimination against Native Americans.

In apartheid (the system of unlawful discrimination formerly practiced in South Africa) the legal system enforced racial inequality. The laws of the nation not only permitted, but actually required, differential treatment of persons based on their racial identity. This racism was purposefully and explicitly woven into the fabric of the nation's institutions. The full force of government authority supported racism.

In Britain and America a committee was established to study the racial factor in cultural development in 1934. But its work began only after two years. It postulated for the recognition that 'racial distinctions have emerged from the sphere of intellectual inquiry and have been made the practical basis of discrimination'

The visibility of the racial question turned anthropology into a popular topic and coupled a belief in objectively and rationally.

After the declaration of emancipation, blacks moved to north for better opportunities and freedom but they felt alienated and isolated in new urban life. Again in north they faced the problem of identity, sense of dispossession and fragmentation. So, in order to gain new identity they started to internalize white norms because it was the only alternative available to them but it caused the split in black self.

Scientists have tried to locate different comparisons between races, such as skull size and shape for intelligent part of the brain and longer arm for indicating a resemblance to lower primates, such as apes. If society is racist, the scientist will also be racist, and they will provide evidence of their racist view because it reinforces the society's belief. Racism results into the classification of human. Scientific justification of racism has become the demand of motion to include in the mind of the people as science is an authority of anthropology as a scientific discipline and further the authority of science can be utilized for the legitimization of slavery.

The study and practice of race is not the present phenomenon. It was also prevalent in the writing of the classical Greek and ancient Hebrew societies. They distinguished themselves with 'others' on the basis of appearances, customs, traditions, language, attitude, religion, physical surrounding or location. During the 5th century B.C. the Greek writer Hypocrites tried to establish the superiority of the people of his own race arguing that "barren soils of Greece had forced the Greeks to become tougher and more independent" (Appiah 275). Likewise, in the Hellenic world, the black "Ethiopians" and blonde "Scythians" were regarded inferior to the Greeks. But, in the writing of Pre-Socratic sophists and Homer racial characteristics was defined on

the basis of an individual quality of a person instead of colour. The treatment given to the blacks in the past or in the present is based on preconceived prejudice.

The discovery of New World i.e. America by Christopher Columbus brought lots of changes in the perception of the people of the new land. "This accident of the history of the preconception of human differences produced the race concept as it is now generally held (Scott, 289). Thus, the race took a new perception out of the artificial circumstances as created by colonization. During the Elizabethan period, Negro was defined as "black, ugly, cruel, sexual, rampant and barely human" (Salgado xiii). Likewise, during the Victorian era many racialists were of the opinion that human beings can be divided into several "races" on the basis of biological, moral and intellectual characteristics. Appiah states his notion of the racialists like this:

We could divide human beings into smaller number of groups, called 'races', in such a way that all the member of these races shared certain fundamental, biologically heritable, moral and intellectual characteristics with each other that they did not share with members of any other race". (276)

During the eighteenth and nineteenth century lots of social, economic, intellectual and political change took place in the global scenario. The term "race" was used to define the people on the basis of their physical characteristics. The study of racial doctrines and ideologies took new mode during post-enlightenment period and reached its high point during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and it was defined according to the idea that "races embodied a package of fixed physical and mental traits" (Bulmer and Solomos 8).

Idea of indoctrination i.e. blacks are inferior and the discrimination or the feeling of superiority over "the other" on the basis of colour and shape of skin, eye, hair, lips etc are the dominant tendency of racism. Racism, after all, begins at personal level. This individual racism takes the form of institutional racism which ultimately culminates into the cultural racism. Actually, discrimination at personal level forms at the collective level. It provides stamp of legality. At social level it becomes mind set but when it becomes system or institutionalized it is very much difficult to change.

Racial characteristics, at present, are taken as defining features of certain group of peoples. But such mode of definition lacks any scientific ground for its justification. Such stereotypical pattern of behavior lacks any transcendental racial features. Both in the past and present lacks are discrimination and declared as an inferior race on the basis of colour. Ever since the pre-Christian era to the present the very black colour is associated with ugliness, despair, evil and death whereas the whiteness is associated with beauty, goodness, virtue and innocence. The racist whites try their best to dehumanize Negro by labeling them as a link between monkey and men i.e. white people and their approval goes something like the notion of New Testament that "we are the chosen people look at the colour of our skins. The others are black or yellow: That is because of their sins" (Facon 30). Thus, they try to justify racism in the name of religion by saying that Jesus Christ is white in colour therefore whites are naturally superior in society and nearer to the God. This concept of black as an inferior being foregrounded to the unjust and bigotries attitude and behaviour that led to the blacks as scripturally ordained status of perpetual servitude.

Even in the field of producing literary work of art the capabilities of the black skinned people are denied apart from the social activities in general. The great

enlightenment philosopher also expressed their approval in this regard. "Even in the enlightenments, which emphasized the universality of the reason, philosophers such as Voltaire in France, David Hume in Scotland and Immanuel Kant in Germany, like Jefferson in the New World, denied literary capacity to people of African descent " (Appiah, 261).

The term "resistance" often conjures notions of enslaved peoples in the barricades taking up arms against their masters in rebellious acts of violence. In the contemporary imagination, it is comforting to think that the enslaved frequently exacted some measure of revenge against the unspeakable horrors that they suffered.

Resistance is the action taken by individuals and groups when they perceive that a change that is occurring as a threat to them. Resistance may take many forms, including active or passive, overt or covert, individual or organized, aggressive or timid. Enslaved Africans-Americans resisted racism in a variety of active and passive ways. "Day-to-day resistance" is the most common form of opposition to slavery. Breaking tools, feigning illness, staging slowdowns, and committing acts of arson and sabotage--all are forms of resistance and expression of slaves' alienation from their masters.

Running away is another form of resistance. Most slaves run away relatively short distances and are not trying to permanently escape from slavery. Instead, they are temporarily withholding their labour as a form of economic bargaining and negotiation. Resistance involved a constant process of negotiation as slaves bargained over the pack of work, the amount of free time they would enjoy, monetary rewards, access to garden plots and the freedom to practice burials, marriages and religious

ceremonies free from white oversight. But some fugitives try to permanently escape slavery.

Slave resistance began in British North America almost as soon as the first slaves arrived in the Chesapeake in the early seventeenth century. Slave resistance is not only the resistance for slavery but it also denotes the resistance for racist ideology of the whites who dominates black slaves as inferior, uncivilized, barbaric and inhuman not because they are so but because they are different in colour, physicality, ethnicity and race. One of the critics John W. Blassingame explores resistance as:

Blacks naturally resisted their enslavement because slavery was fundamentally unnatural. Forms varied, but the common denominator in all acts of resistance was an attempt to claim some measure of freedom against an institution that defined people fundamentally as property. (141)

Perhaps the most common forms of resistance were those that took place in the work environment. After all, slavery was ultimately about coerced labor, and the enslaved struggled daily to define the terms of their work. Over the years, customary rights emerged in most fields of production. These customs dictated work routines, distribution of rations, general rules of comportment, and so on. If slave masters increased workloads, provided meager rations, or punished too severely, slaves registered their displeasure by slowing work, feigning illness, breaking tools or sabotaging production.

After an argument, silence may mean acceptance or the continuation of resistance by other means. Passive resistance a method of nonviolent protest against laws or policies in order to force a change or secure concessions; it is also known as

nonviolent resistance and is the main tactic of civil disobedience. Passive resistance typically involves such activities as mass demonstrations, refusal to obey or carry out a law or to pay taxes, the occupation of buildings or the blockade of roads, labor strikes, economic boycotts, and similar activities. According to Mark Twain:

Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear. The quality of not yielding to force or external pressure; that power of a body which acts in opposition to the impulse or pressure of another or which prevents the effect of another power; as, the resistance of the air to a body passing through it; the resistance of a target to projectiles.

The history of liberty is a history of resistance. (131)

Resistance is an outcome of racism, when the limit of domination, discrimination and exploitation cross the boundary then the seeds of resistance begin to germinate. Resistance shows the struggle of two opposite polarities like white and blacks furthermore it exposes the result of complexities of blacks. The blend of blacks against white is an important key of resistance though the final stage of resistance is fear and death.

## **Racism and Its Resistance in *Oroonoko***

Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* tones about the racial discrimination between two opposite polarities, the blacks and the white. During the development of colonial era, blacks were treated as inhuman and there was no right of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. By opposing the pervasive trends, this novel is set in the background of seventeenth century. The antagonistic forces go side by side though it is said that the novel ends with racial discrimination which is not full justifiable. The portrayal of the major characters such as Oroonoko and Imoinda disclose the reality of racial discrimination which is under the question in this research and that can't be the ultimate solution to keep the nation race free.

Knowledge determines the quality of human being but sometime knowledge confiscates the rights and emancipation of people who are illiterate and honest. Throughout the prideness of knowledge whites discriminate the black that's why black must obey the rule and regulations made by white. Whites have an assumption that they belong to scientific era and are the one and only to govern the world. Whites have a concept of gain knowledge to rule other. This can be seen in following lines:

He reflecting on the last Words, or Oroonoko to the Captain, and beholding the Richness of his Vest, no sooner came to the Captain, and the Boat, but he fix'd his Eyes on him; and finding something so extraordinary in his Face, his Shape and Mien, a Greatness of Look, and Haughtiness in his Air, and finding he spoke English, had a great mind to be enquiring into his Quality and Fortune; which, though Oroonoko endeavour'd to hide, by only confessing he was above the Rank of common slaves [...]. (154)



Though, all humans are equal by birth but Trefry unconsciously accepts that Oroonoko is physically fit and extraordinary than him. But he is not ready to accept this fact only because he can't raise himself from Eurocentric monolithism. Whatever be the physical, mental and spiritual plight of white he/she considers himself/herself superior by birth. This kind of ideology of a white upon black is well depicted in the above paragraph. The outlook of Oroonoko seems strange and extra which is different than whites. His richness of vest, fixed eyes, extraordinary face, shape and mind fascinates Trefry, the white but as soon as he is aware of his race and biased mentality which is brought from his ancestors makes him feel superior than the slave that's why at the end of the paragraph he assumes his superiority where lies the racial discrimination of white upon the black.

There are many strategies of whites to superiorize their race, among them culture, religion, language and art are most influential. The influence of language and religion over black can be shown as:

I ought to tell you, that the Christians never buy any Slaves but they give 'em some Name of their own, their native ones being likely very barbarous, and hard to pronounce; so that Mr. Trefry gave Oroonoko that of Caesar, which Name will live in that Country as long as that (scarce more) glorious one of the great Roman; for 'tis most evident, he wanted no part of the Personal Courage of that Caesar, and acted things as memorable, had they been done in some part of the World replenish'd with people. (175)

In the above paragraph the narrator depicts that the whites are not ready to accept blacks' own identity. Though the original name of the prince is Oroonoko but as soon

as he becomes enslaved Trefry renames him as Caesar. Trefry pretends that the word Oroonoko is difficult to pronounce so he renames as Caesar. He does so not because he really feels it difficult to pronounce rather being a master (white) he is not ready to accept the language of blacks. He thinks if he addresses Oroonoko as it is he is imitating the language of blacks: the inferior one that's why to show his own language superior, comfortable and easier he renames Oroonoko where lies the seed of racial discrimination.

Culturally whites dominate Blacks while doing so whatever they do is considered as superior and civilized but what others do is merely taken as barbaric, inferior and uncivilized. The ethnic values of blacks are undermined in the eyes of biased whites. The cultural biasness, discrimination, and inferiorization are seen as:

They were all Naked, and we were Dress'd so as is most comode for the hot Countries, very Glittering and Rich; so that we appear'd extremely fine; my own Hair was cut short, and I had a Taffaty Cap, with Black Feathers, on my Head; my Brothe was in a Stuff Sute, with Silver Loops and Buttons, and abundance of Green Ribon; this was all infinitely surprising to them, and because we saw them stand still, we approache'd em, we took Heart and advanc'd; came up to 'em, and offere'd 'em our Hands which they took, and looked on us round about, calling still for more Company. (169-170)

Culturally whites try to show their superiority through their dress too. Whatever they wear is considered as comfortable, convenient and civilized in comparison with blacks. The dress of white is considered fit according to the climate whereas the nakedness of black is inferiorized by the same token. She expresses the fascination of

blacks towards whites' dress which is nothing more than inferiorizing blacks' culture.

The white narrator exposes her discriminatory behaviour about the dress through the above lines.

As we know racism has a various faces like social, cultural, ethnic and verbal; whites' always show their superiority in little things like dressing, eating, speaking and so on. People always do their best to save their life from different diseases and natural disaster. They use the suitable things to prevent themselves from unnatural diseases and other. It is not concerned whether blacks use the same thing like white or not. In the following paragraph we can notify the scenario of black people who are using divine power to get relief from pain. As shown in the following paragraph:

He is bred to all the little Arts and cunning they are capable of; to all the Legerdemain Tricks, and Slight of Hand, whereby he imposes upon the Rabble; and is both a Doctor in Physics and Divinity. And by these afflicted part little serpents, or odd Flies, or Worms, or any Strange thing; and though they have besides undoubted good Remedies, for almost all their Diseases, they cure the Patient more by Fancy than by Medicines; and make themselves Fear'd, Loved and Reverence. (172)

Whites always think one and only solution to get relief from pain is to use modern medicine. They believe in Christianity and say God can do everything for us, despite this mature slogan they tease the blacks who believe on divine power and make the assumption that they are ignorant and they can't do well in their whole life. They live and die with ignorance. Similarly in the above paragraph an infant boy is seriously ill and the witchdoctor is trying his best to make him fine and sooner the boy can get relief from the pain. But whites' have an idea of using medicine, hate black ideology

of curing the people. They think that people can't cure by fancy; they need a medicine to make them well.

Either in the name of religion or in the name of civilization the whites do not only treat blacks as uncivilized, barbaric as well as sinner rather blacks are tortured and punished inhumanely as soon as they start to escape from white euro-centric boundaries of domination, discrimination and exploitation. An example of severely tortured and whipped, blacks' pathetic condition can be shown as:

But they were no sooner arriv'd at the Place, where all the Slaves receive their Punishments of Whipping, but they laid Hands on Caesar and Tuscan, faint with heat and toyl; and, surprising them, Bound them to two several Stakes, and Whip them in most deplorable and inhumane Manner, rending the very Flesh from their Bones, especially Caesar, who was not perceiv'd to make any Mone or to alter his Face, only to roul his Eyes on the Faithless Governor [...]. (180)

As soon as escaped blacks are made captive, the white governor who represents white discrimination as a whole towards black, at the same time governs them by considering blacks as inhuman. From the very same token, we can conclude that the relationship between whites/blacks is hierarchical where the whites are attributed with all positive qualities such as human, civilized, educated on the contrary blacks are leveled as inhuman, uncivilized and uneducated. Due to this hierarchical psyche which is an embodiment of racial discrimination, wave path to punish blacks inhumanly. In the above paragraph the white master (Byam) gives the torture like whip, iron stick and puts the peeper dust on their wounds.

Punishment is to mean to demonstrate the totalizing effects of whites' supremacy terrorizing those who remained slaved. Such effect is tried to show in the following paragraph:

When they thought they were sufficiently Reveng'd on him, then unty'd him, almost Fainting, with loss of Blood, from a thousand Wounds all over his body; from which they had rent his Cloaths, and led him Bleeding and Naked as he was; and loaded him all over with Irons, and then rubbed his Wounds, to compleat their Cruelty, with Indian Peeper, which had like to have made him raving Mad; and, in this Condition, made him so fast to the Ground that he cou'd not stir; if his Pains and Wounds wou'd have given him leave. (180-81)

The highest peak of whites' cruelty over blacks based on racial discrimination has been shown in the above paragraph. Throughout the course of novel, no white is neither enslaved nor punished brutally. The brutality, cruelty and inhuman acts are only directed towards blacks by whites. Oroonoko, the former black prince, and the present captive of Byam is tortured both physically and psychologically. The white master Byam makes thousand wounds all over Oroonoko's body and let his blood flow in the ground. He further rents Oroonoko's clothes, loads him all over with iron and rub his wound with Indian peeper. It is all because of the biased racial tendency of whites towards black. If it was not so a human cannot be so inhuman in response to another member of the same kind.

Politically racism distinguishes the people in different race, culture, ethnicity and physicality. Racism creates the hierarchy between two typical culture either it is black or yellow. Racism creates superiority, domination, exploitation and

discrimination of one race over the other. It can be in physical, psychological as well as social level. From these dichotomy two kinds of psychology is developed in two groups. The dominator assumes itself superior, beneficial and advance psychologically whereas the other group considered itself as inferior, disadvantage and under-developed. The psychological hopelessness of the dominant caused by racial discrimination is expressed in the following paragraph:

It was thus, for sometime we diverted him; but now Imoinda began to shew she was with Child, and did nothing but Sigh and Weep for the Captivity of her Lord, her Self, and the Infant yet Unborn; and believ'd, if it were so hard to gain the Liberty of Two, 'twou'd be more difficult to get that for Three, Her Griefs were so many Darts in the great Heart of Caesar, and taking his Opportunity one Sunday when all the Whites were overtaken in Drink [...]. (174)

Due to the racial discriminatory attitude blacks are enslaved by hook and crook to fulfill the politics of whites. Though blacks are also human being as the whites are but racism doesn't let any white to internalize the very fact that's why blacks are attached with slavery, on the contrary whites as master. Being slaved the coloured doesn't have any realization of their life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. In the above paragraph the female protagonist Imoinda expresses her hopelessness of being free from slavery and racism. Being a coloured female as well as pregnant, expresses the affect of racial discrimination through her tears.

The life of blacks during the slavery is characterized by extreme pain and misery. Separation of family member from one another was a common phenomenon. The slave holder held the total power as a result the victim was helpless. Physical

torture and mental agony was day to day experience in the lives of black slave which is shown in this manner:

He told 'em it was not for Days, Months, or Years, but for Eternity;  
there was no end to be of their Misfortunes: They suffer'd not like Men  
who might find a Glory, and Fortitude in Oppression; but like Dogs  
that lov'd the Whip and Bell, and fawn'd the more they were beater:  
That they had lost the Divine Quality of Men, and were become  
insensible Asses, fit only to bear; nay worse [...] (175)

In the trap of slavery blacks are treated like animal. Though they are human due to the severe physical and mental torture as well as punishment they hardly hope to be human in the days to come. Their hopelessness as well as helplessness is shaped by the experience of suffering, pain, anxiety and miseries. The protagonist Caesar (Oroonoko) expresses the helpless and hopeless condition of blacks as the one hand and the exploitation, suffering and pain caused by racism on the other hand. As he says their suffering and misery are not for days, months or years but for eternity. He further assumes that there is no end of misfortunes. The suffering and discrimination they experience as black is not similar with any human pain and anxiety rather it is very close to brutal inhuman punishment. Whites never let them realize their humanness rather treat them as animal. Blacks are made inhabited to love whip and bell as an animal rather than human beings. Such discrimination of blacks experiences are expressed very clearly in the above paragraph.

A human treats another human as if the other is not only human but as if he is non-living things. To consider as thing is to undermine the existence of the other. One doesn't find any importance and meaning of other as soon as he/she considers

himself/herself as superior powerful and all intelligent. Keeping the very same mentality the whites treat the people of other races very cruelly the whites inhumanely either they are black or yellow. The suppression, domination and discrimination are the root cause of racism. The cruelest punishment given to blacks is shown as:

[...] the Executioner came, and first cut off his Members, and threw them into the Fire; after that, with an ill-favoured Knife, they cut his Ears, and his Nose, and burn'd them; he still Smoak'd on, as if nothing had touch'd him; then they hacked off one of his Arms, and still he bore up, and held his Pipe; but at the cutting off the other Arm, his Head sunk, and his Pipe drop'd; and he gave up the Ghost. (188)

In white plantation the life and death of black is more pathetic as well as terrific than the life and death of any animal. Animals were treated more kindly than any black. Considering black as sinner in the world and vice-versa, the white treats them severely. Oroonoko who is a black character goes terrible psychological as well as physical pain and anxiety during his execution. The executioner cut off his members, ears, nose, arms and threw them into the fire and after another till Oroonoko gives up his life. Such pathetic and inhuman behavior to blacks is shown in the above paragraph. It is done not because he was a criminal but because he was black.

Struggle is noticed throughout human history either it is political, economical, social or racial. When there are chances of equal opportunity for the people of different socio-economical, religious as well as racial group there must not be any struggle whereas in the case of inequality, discrimination and exploitation struggle is the only weapon to ensure the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness of the marginalized group. Resistance is a tool to achieve equality in all level of



discrimination and marginalization. In the case of racism the seed of struggle is germinate through resistance. The blacks, who are marginalized, dominated as well as tortured by the politics of racism revolt against inequalities and prejudices imposed upon them by whites through resistance. Racism is a system of belief of whites superiority while resisting it the blacks dismantle as well as cross the boundary of euro-centric politics of discrimination either by physical attack or by psychological torture, disobedience etc.

The history of liberty is a history of resistance based on this quotation the female protagonist Imoinda attacks Byam, the white master to ensure her liberty by freeing herself from slavery as well as pain, anxiety and torture caused by racism. An ample example of physical resistance of black towards the white master who exploit them physically as well as psychologically in particular and resistance against the whole resist view in general can be expressed as such:

Heroic Imoinda; who grown big as she was, did nevertheless press near the Lord, having a Bow and a Quiver full of full of poyson'd Arrows, which she manag'd with such dexterity, that she wounded several, and shot the Governor into the Shoulder; of which Wound he had like to have Dy'd, but that an Indian Woman, his Mistress, suck'd the Wound, and cleans'd it from the Venom. (178-79)

Byam is not only the deputy governor of the slave but he is the symbol of whites' cruelty, discrimination and tortured upon blacks. The blacks who have realized the need of their independency, no matter how brave and powerful the governor is she shoots an arrow in his shoulder without any sign of fear and hesitation. The arrow is

the symbol of black resistance towards white discriminatory, policy and politics of racism.

In the name of civilizing mission the whites try to exploit blacks very cunningly. Whites consider themselves as master of everything whereas blacks are considering as an ignorant. The political ideology of white to justify its race as superior and the other as inferior is challenged by Oroonoko while addressing Byam. The resistant for racial discrimination can be shown as:

But, Caesar wou'd hear of no Composition; though Byam urg'd, If he persu'd, and went on in his Design, he wou'd inevitably Perish, either by great Snakes, wild Beasts, or Hunger; and he ought to have regard to his Wife, whose Condition required ease, and not the fatigues of tedious Travel; where she cou'd not be secur'd from being devoured.

But Caesar told him, there was no Faith in the White Men, or the Gods they Ador'd; who instructed 'em in Principles so false that honest Men cou'd not live amongst 'em [...]. (179)

While resisting the resist ideology of the whites the protagonist of the novel Caesar shows his disbelief upon white man. It implies the meaning that the resist concept of white as superior master and the civilized is not based on faith rather vice-versa. He further attacks the tool of resist propaganda: Christianity as well. While refusing the propose of Byam, Oroonoko challenges him does not only by disobeying and disapproving his purpose rather levels white as well as their God as false. It is the resistant of a black character against the tricky and conspiracy of white to enslaved them again and again.

Likewise Oroonoko merely a slave in the eyes of biased white even collects his courage and strength to kill the supposed powerful and the mighty governor of Surinam plantation. His determination to kill Bannister in other world if he fails to do so in this world is the sign of his resistance to challenge as well as dismantle the resist ideology of whites which can be illustrated as:

[...], He told him, he sou'd Dye like a Dog, as she was. Caesar repli'd, never Dare to kill me like Dog, It's not so simple as you think now. Me too seems so Weak, and Merciful in your eyes only because I am your captive. I am colored. But remember I was the Prince. If I fail to destroy you in this World; Wait me to end your Life in the Second world. (188)

As soon as the Bannister threatens to kill Oroonoko as a dog the former black prince reintroduces his identity with Bannister to threaten him. To challenge the master from the place of slave is really noteworthy. It is an act of resistant against whites' domination, exploitation and torture upon blacks. In response to the labeling of dog for Oroonoko he courageously informs the governor that he was the black prince. To identify himself as prince in opposition to the level of dog is to challenge the knowledge of master which implicitly resists whites' hegemony of being superior, civilized and master.

Oroonoko, a black slave, plans to kill the white master who represents white racism. Being awaking himself about the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness of blacks Oroonoko sets plan to dismantle the hierarchy created by racism. The very plan of Oroonoko to cross all the boundaries created by racism and determination to kill whites is an ample example of resistance which can be shown as:

He remain'd in this deploring Condition for two Days, and never rose from the Ground where he had made his sad Sacrifice; at last, rousing from her side, and accusing himself with loving too long, now Imoinda was dead; and that the Deaths of those barbarous Enemies were deferr'd too long, he resolv'd now to finish the great Work; [...] (185)

When injustice, prejudice, discrimination and exploitation are hard to bear one makes resistance in different ways. The protagonist Oroonoko killed her pregnant beloved two days ago it is not the symbol of cowardness rather than bravery and resistance. Being very determined to end whites' exploitation over black and make their dream to control, consume and commodify blacks' body and labour he murders his own wife and unborn child. After the murder he is very determined to kill those whites who made his life tragic. The feeling of revenge expressed by Oroonoko in the above paragraph is the strongest sign of resistance towards white racism.

Oroonoko who is aware of the right of blacks convinces all the blacks and set their path of freedom by escaping from the plantation but they were captured again. As soon as they were captured Oroonoko's mind and heart is full of revenge. The revenge with whites is a kind of resistance against racial discrimination. He wants to kill not only the Byam but all the whites who are responsible for the pain, suffering and anxiety of all blacks. Such radical view of Oroonoko can be shown as:

These were his Thoughts, and his silent Arguments with his Heart, as he told us afterwards; so that now resolving not only to kill Byam, but all those he thought had inrag'd him; pleasing his great Heart with the fancy'd Slaughter he shou'd make over the whole Face of the

Plantation. He first resolv'd on a Deed, that when we had heard his  
Reasons, we thought it Brave and Just: [...] (184)

Oroonoko who is fed up with the plight of black slaves including himself wants to end all their pain, suffering and anxiety caused by racism to ensure free, independent and livable life of blacks he argues with himself to kill not only the Byam but all those whites' who are the agent of racism. Oroonoko expresses his feeling of revenge with white which shows his resistance towards slavery and racism such feelings were exposed in the above paragraph.

The feeling of resistance arises uncontrollably from Oroonoko. He doesn't value even his life while taking revenge with whites. He wills to take risk in his life to destroy all the biased resist ideology as well as ideolizer who has turn their life into death. In other word the racism made blacks unable to feel whether they are alive or dead. Oroonoko expresses determine feelings of revenge and resistance as such:

So that Caesar did not all doubt; if he once recover'd Strength, but he  
shou'd find an opportunity of being Reveng'd on him. Though, after  
such a Revenge, he cou'd not hope of Live; for if he escap'd the Fury of  
the English Mobile, who perhaps wou'd have been glad of the  
occasion to have kill'd him, he was resolv'd not to survive his  
Whipping; yet he had, some tender Hours, a repenting softness, which  
he called his fits of Coward; wherein he struggled with Love for the  
Victory of his Heart. (183)

Oroonoko who aims to emancipate blacks from resist exploitation and domination on the one hand and on the other hand wants to take revenge with the whites who are the only and ultimate cause of their lifelessness situation. The protagonist of the novel

Oroonoko is ready to end his life on the path of freedom and independence. He never minds to die but never ready to bear all those discrimination resulted by racism. To determine oneself to die while struggling as well as constant promise to kill whites in an apt example of resistance, this has been shown in the above paragraph.

Finally we can conclude that Oroonoko who is black prince comes to slavery by betraying and he resists against white exploitation through the death of his beloved Imoinda and himself. He with his unimaginary power and good will requests the whole blacks like Tuscan and other to join the plan to escape from harsh and dreadful life. Oroonoko who knows and feels the intention of cruel whites' Byam and Trefry begins to make a plan to kill and destroy the plantation. He does his best to escape from slavery but unfortunately he has to face the death

## Conclusion

Struggle of two binary oppositions: racial discrimination and resistance are the key theme of Behn's *Oroonoko*. The action and will of the white character to dominate and discriminate black as well as blacks' disobedience and attempt of revenge shows the struggle for racial discrimination and resistance for it respectively.

Racism is a belief of a set of implicit assumption about the superiority of one race or ethnic group other than that of one's own. Because the entitled inferior group lacks the set of criteria as prescribed by the privileged group. In course of social dealings racism exists both in conscious and unconscious level. But, to the core, its effect is much disastrous damaging both victims and the victimizers if it is practiced in an unhealthy manner. Racism is largely controlled by heritage, attributes and the difference between to innate traits rather than social factors. The word discrimination denotes the denial of equality based on personal characteristics such as race and colour. The concept of Negro race as inferior and European/American as superior or civilized is based on the belief that blacks lack certain qualities such as lack of good social organization, lack of fellow feelings, level of originality of thoughts etc.

Throughout the course of novel white characters such as Byam, Trefry and Bannister always try to exploit, torture, discriminate and inferiorize the black characters such as Oroonoko and Imoinda. The racist ideology which has carved whites psychic full of discriminatory believes never let them to treat blacks as human beings as their equal. Racism helps whites to consider themselves superior by birth. On the contrary blacks are considered as inferior uncivilized, barbaric and inhuman by the same token. Though Trefry unconsciously fascinated by the physic of Oroonoko, the black slave but as soon as he becomes conscious about his own race:

white, he never accepts the fact that Oroonoko is physically fit than himself. It is nothing more than the impact of racism. Likewise, whites consider their language, culture superior in comparison to blacks not because they belong to the master class. Such discrimination of white tries to show their language and culture superior, comfortable and fit. The manager of Surinam Plantation Trefry, the white changes the name of Oroonoko as Caesar not because it is difficult to pronounce but being a white he is not ready to accept the language of black which shows the racist discrimination in regard of language. Similarly, the white narrator consider their dresses as fit and comfortable but the dresses of black as unfit and uncomfortable only because she wants to impose the superiority of her dress over the black. In the similar case the ethnic believes of witch doctor of blacks is leveled as unscientific and useless despite the fact that the patient is getting relief from pain. White also treat blacks inhumanely, they are chained like animals, gets whip and the cruelty of whites even cuts part of blacks because white considers blacks the inferior and animal. All these show the discrimination, injustice and exploitation made by whites upon blacks not based on any scientific as well as reasonable reason rather based on racism.

Resistance is an outcome of racism, when the limits of domination, discrimination and exploitation cross the boundary then the seed of resistance begins to germinate. Resistance shows the struggle of two opposite polarities like white and black. Furthermore, it exposes the result of complexities of blacks. The courage to struggle against white is a important key of resistance, though the final stage of resistance is fear and death.

When discrimination, domination and torture and injustice reach its peak resistance is the only way to discriminate such ideology. Blacks who are suppressed



and oppressed by racist ideology resist it. The protagonist of the novel Oroonoko levels Christianity as false. By doing so he resists the ideology of the master who exploits blacks in disguise of civilization and redemption mission. Similarly he levels Trefry as dog. To level the white master as such is to resist against racial discrimination. Likewise, Imoinda a black character shoots an arrow to the white master Byam when he comes in the path of her emancipatory mission to hurt Byam is also a resistance against biased racial ideology. Byam, the one who is more responsible for the physical and psychological torture, exploitation and pain as challenged by Imoinda's act on the one hand and on the other hand it is the challenge to the whole racist ideology because he is the powerful symbol of racism. To attack Byam is equals to attack the racism hence it is an act of resistance for such biased ideology of racism.

Hence, Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* is not only deals with racism: the discrimination, exploitation, injustice and dehumanization of blacks by white in terms of their race, ethnicity, colour, physicality and culture but such biased attitude as well as ideology of whites are challenged and resisted by blacks. So we can conclude that Behn's *Oroonoko* deals not only with racism rather it would be just to level it as racism and its resistance.

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