

The Colonizer and the Colonized **Albert Memmi**

Albert Memmi (Arabic: *ألبيرت ميمي*; born December 15, 1920 in Tunis) is a Tunisian Jewish writer and essayist who migrated to France.

Born in colonial Tunisia, he spoke Arabic as his mother tongue. He was educated in French primary schools, and continued on to the Carnot high school in Tunis, the University of Algiers where he studied philosophy, and finally the Sorbonne in Paris. Albert Memmi found himself at the crossroads of three cultures, and based his work on the difficulty of finding a balance between the East and the West.

Parallel with his literary work, he pursued a career as a teacher; first as a teacher at the Carnot high school in Tunis (1953) and later in France where he remained after Tunisian independence at the Practical School of Higher Studies, at HEC and at the University of Nanterre (1970).

Although he supported the independence movement in Tunisia, he was not able to find a place in the new Muslim state.

He published his well-regarded first novel, "La statue de sel" (translated as "The Pillar of Salt") in 1953 with a preface by Albert Camus. His other novels include "Agar" (translated as "Strangers"), "Le Scorpion" ("The Scorpion"), and "Le Desert" ("The Desert").

His best-known nonfiction work is "The Colonizer and the Colonized", about the interdependent relationship of the two groups. It was published in 1957, a time when many national liberation movements were active. Jean-Paul Sartre wrote the preface. The work is often read in conjunction with Frantz Fanon's "Les damnés de la Terre" ("The Wretched of the Earth") and "Peau noire, masques blancs" ("Black Skin, White Masks") and Aimé Césaire's "Discourse on Colonialism."

Introduction by Jean-Paul Sartre (Paris, 1957)

There are neither good nor bad colonists: there are colonialists. Among these, some reject their objective reality. Borne along by the colonialist apparatus, they do every day in reality what they condemn in fantasy, for all their actions contribute to the maintenance of oppression. They will change nothing and will serve no one, but will succeed only in finding moral comfort in malaise. (xxv-xxvi)

When a people has no choice but how it will die; when a people has received from its oppressors only the gift of despair, what does it have to lose? A people's misfortune will become its courage; it will make, of its endless rejection by colonialism, the absolute rejection of colonization. (xxix)

Part One: Portrait of the Colonizer

A. Does the colonial exist?

1. The laws establishing the colonizer's exorbitant rights and the obligations of the colonized are conceived by the colonizer. As for orders which barely veil discrimination, or apportionment after competitive examinations and in hiring, the colonizer is necessarily in on the secret of their application, for he is in charge of them. If the colonizer preferred to be blind and deaf to the operation of the whole machinery, it would suffice for him to reap the benefits; he is then the beneficiary of the entire enterprise. (8)
2. A foreigner, having come to a land by the accidents of history, the colonizer has succeeded not merely in creating a place for himself but also in taking away that of the inhabitant, granting himself astounding privileges to the detriment of those rightfully entitled to them. And this not by virtue of local laws, which in a certain way legitimize this inequality by tradition, but by upsetting the established rules and substituting his own. He thus appears doubly unjust. He is a privileged being and an illegitimately privileged one; that is, a usurper. (9)
3. The colonizer knows also that the most favored colonized will never be anything but colonized people, in other words, that certain rights will forever be refused them, and that certain advantages are reserved strictly for the colonizer. (9)
4. [The fiction:] A colonial is a European living in a colony but having no privileges, whose living conditions are not higher than those of a colonized person of equivalent economic and social status. By temperament or ethical conviction, a colonial is a benevolent European who does not have the colonizer's attitude toward the colonized. [The fiction exposed:] All right! Let us say right away, despite the apparently drastic nature of the statement: a colonial so defined does not exist, for all Europeans in the colonies are privileged. (10)
5. If a small colonizer defends the colonial system so vigorously, it is because he benefits from it to some extent. His gullibility lies in the fact that to protect his very limited interests, the small colonizer protects other infinitely more important ones, of which he is, incidentally, the victim. But, though dupe and victim, the small colonizer also gets his share. (11)
6. The recently assimilated [people, such as Jews] place themselves in a considerably superior position to the average colonizer. They push a colonial mentality to excess, display proud disdain for the colonized and continually show off their borrowed rank, which often belies a vulgar brutality and avidity. Still too impressed by their privileges, they savor them and defend them with fear and harshness; and when colonization is imperiled, they provide it with its most dynamic defenders, its shock troops, and sometimes its instigators. (16)
7. The representatives of the authorities, cadres, police officers, etc., recruited from among the colonized form a category of the colonized which attempts to escape from its political and social condition. But in so doing, by choosing to place themselves in the colonizer's service to protect the colonizer's interest exclusively, they end up by adopting the colonizer's ideology, even with regard to their own values and their own lives. (16)
8. The colonial does not exist, because it is not up to the European in the colonies to remain a colonial, even if they had so intended. Whether the European expressly wishes it or not, he is received as a privileged person by the institutions, customs and people. From the time he lands or is born, he finds himself in a factual position which is common to all Europeans living in a colony, a position which turns him into a colonizer. (17)
9. But it is not really at this level that the fundamental ethical problem of the colonizer exists; the problem of involvement of his freedom and thus of his responsibility. He could not, of course, have sought a colonial experience, but as soon as the venture is begun, it is not up to him to refuse its conditions. If he was born in the colonies of parents who are colonizers themselves, or if, at the time of his decision, he really was not aware of the true meaning of colonization, he could find himself subject to those conditions, independent of any previous choice. (18)

10. The fundamental questions are directed to the colonizer on another level. Once he has discovered the import of colonization and is conscious of his own position (that of the colonized and their necessary relationship), is he going to accept these things? Will he agree to be a privileged person, and to underscore the distress of the colonized? Will he be a usurper and affirm the oppression and injustice to the true inhabitant of the colony? Will he accept being a colonizer under the growing habit of privilege and illegitimacy, under the constant gaze of the usurped? Will he adjust to this position and his inevitable self-censure?

Reflection:

- ◆ Who is the colonial—how is that identity defined? How does that identity differ from a colonialist?
- ◆ What is the distinction between a colonialist and a colonizer? (Also, see C.1 and C.2 below.)
- ◆ Are the actual interests of the colonialist and the colonizer identical?
- ◆ Where do recently assimilated people fit into colonial scheme? What are their group interests?
- ◆ What are the ethical questions that arise for the colonizer? Why do you suppose such questions arise?
- ◆ To what contemporary social identities do Memmi's social groups correspond? In the US context, who occupies the role of colonizer, who colonized, who immigrant? What group interests distinguish the structural position of these social groups? Do they share or have differing structural interests?
- ◆ Where might the structural role of the colonizer, colonized, and immigrant converge—around what national or international interests? Or what particular alignment of racial/ethnic groups might compose the colonizer group? Around what issues might they merge or diverge?

B. The colonizer who refuses

1. If every "colonial" immediately assumes the role of colonizer, every colonizer does not necessarily become a colonialist. [A colonialist gives total support to the colonial enterprise. A colonial, distinct from a colonialist, is one who comes from the mother country; he/she may or not have come to act in support of, and accordance with, the interests of the mother country. But after arrival, whatever the original intentions, he/she becomes caught up in the colonial situation. Some colonials attempt to refuse the role of colonialist.] The facts of colonial life are not simply ideas, but the general effect of actual conditions. To refuse means either withdrawing physically from those conditions or remaining to fight and change them. (19)

2. It is not easy to escape mentally from a concrete situation, to refuse its ideology while continuing to live with its actual relationships. From now on, he lives his life under the sign of a contradiction which looms at every step, depriving him of all coherence and all tranquility. (20)

3. What he is actually renouncing is part of himself, and what he slowly becomes as soon as he accepts a life in a colony. He participates in and benefits from those privileges which he half-heartedly denounces. Does he receive less favorable treatment than his fellow citizens? Doesn't he enjoy the same facilities for travel? How could he help figuring, unconsciously, that he can afford a car, a refrigerator, perhaps a house? How can he go about freeing himself of this halo of prestige which crowns him and at which he would like to take offense? (20)

4. The leftist colonizer cannot help remaining confused about the meaning of the immediate battle. For him, being on the left means not only accepting and assisting the national liberation of the [colonized] peoples, but also includes political democracy and freedom, economic democracy and justice, rejection of racist xenophobia and universality, material and spiritual progress. (34)

5. If the leftist colonizer rejects colonization refusing his role as colonizer, it is the name of this ideal. But now he discovers that there is no connection between the liberation of the colonized and the application of a left-wing program. And that, in fact, he is perhaps aiding the birth of a social order in which there is no room for a leftist as such, at least in the near future. (34)

6. In order truly to become a part of the colonial struggle, even all his good will is not sufficient; there must still be the possibility of adoption by the colonized. However, he suspects that he will have no place in the future nation. This will be the last discovery, the most staggering one for the left-wing colonizer, the one which he often makes on the eve of the liberation, though it was really predictable from the very beginning. (38)

7. It is necessary to keep in mind an essential feature of the nature of colonial life; the colonial situation is based on the relationship between one group of people and another. The leftist colonizer is part of the oppressing group and will be forced to share its destiny, as he shared its good fortune. (38)

8. Colonial relations do not stem from individual good will or actions; they exist before his arrival or his birth, and whether he accepts or rejects them matters little. It is they, on the contrary which, like any institution, determine *a priori* his place and that of the colonized and, in the final analysis, their true relationship. (38-39)

Reflection:

- ◆ How is it that every colonial assumes the role of a colonizer but not every colonizer assumes the role of the colonial?
- ◆ What does it mean to get caught up in the colonial situation?
- ◆ What are the options for those who seek to refuse the colonialist or colonizer position? How does one nevertheless become complicit in the situation?
- ◆ How is the US racial system analogous to the colonial situation? Identify all of the ways that the colonial situation informs what it means to be caught up in the US racial system.
- ◆ How might the issue of white privilege be understood from the context of the colonial situation? Can white privilege be refused? Are the options for refusal the same as those within the colonial situation? Are the choices as clear-cut or as obvious? How does context constrain the options and choices?
- ◆ What does it mean to accept being a citizen of the United States—what expectations go along with this belonging in respect to systemic racism, the racial hierarchy, and white privilege?
- ◆ What is the identity and dilemma of the leftist colonizer?
- ◆ Is it truly possible for the leftist colonizer to reject her or his role or complicity in the colonial enterprise? What are the considerations and contradictions?
- ◆ How is the leftist colonizer analogous to the liberal (in particular the white liberal)?
- ◆ What is the basis of colonial relationships? What is the basis of relationships of whites and people of color within the racial formation of the US?

C. The colonizer who accepts

1. A colonialist is, after all, only a colonizer who agrees to be a colonizer. By making his position explicit, he seeks to legitimize colonization. This is a more logical attitude, materially more coherent than the tormented dance of the colonizer who refuses and continues to live in a colony. (45)

2. The colonizer who accepts his role tries in vain to adjust his life to his ideology. The colonizer, who refuses, tries in vain to adjust his ideology to his life, thereby unifying and justifying his conduct. On the whole, to be a colonialist is the natural vocation of a colonizer. (45)

3. The material condition of a privileged person/usurper is identical for the one who inherits it at birth and the one who enjoys it from the time he lands. A realization of what he is, and of what he will become, necessarily ensues, in varying degrees, if that condition [i.e., living in a colony] is accepted. (46)

4. It is also clear that every colonizer must adapt himself to his true situation and the human relationships resulting from it. By having chosen to ratify the colonial system, the colonialist has not really overcome the actual difficulties. The colonial situation thrusts economic, political, and affective facts

upon every colonizer, against which he may rebel but which he can never abandon. These facts form the very essence of the colonial system, and soon the colonialist realizes his own ambiguity. (51)

5. Accepting the reality of being a colonizer means agreeing to be a non-legitimate privileged person, that is, a usurper. To be sure, a usurper claims his place and, if need be, will defend it by every means at his disposal. This amounts to saying that at the very time of his triumph, he admits that what triumphs in him is an image which he condemns. (52)

6. In other words, to possess victory completely he needs to absolve himself of it and the conditions under which it was attained. This explains his strenuous insistence, strange for a victor, on apparently futile matters. He endeavors to falsify history, he rewrites laws, he would extinguish memories – anything to succeed in transforming his usurpation into legitimacy. (52)

7. How? How can usurpation try to pass for legitimacy? One attempt can be made by demonstrating the usurper's eminent merits, so eminent that they deserve such compensation. Another is to harp on the usurper's de-merits, so deep that they cannot help leading to misfortune. His disquiet and resulting thirst for justification require the usurper to extol himself to the skies and to drive the usurper below the ground at the same time. In effect, these two attempts at legitimacy are actually inseparable. (52-53)

8. Moreover, the more the usurper is downtrodden, the more the usurper triumphs and, thereafter, confirms his guilt and establishes his self-condemnation. Thus, the momentum of this mechanism for defense propels itself and worsens as it continues to move. (53)

9. This self-defeating process pushes the usurper to go one step further; to wish the disappearance of the usurper, whose very existence causes him to take the role of usurper, and whose heavier and heavier oppression makes him more and more an oppressor. (53)

10. With all his power he must disown the colonized while their existence is indispensable to his own. Having chosen to maintain the colonial system, he must contribute more vigor to its defense than would have been needed to dissolve it completely. Having become aware of the unjust relationship which ties him to the colonized, he must continually attempt to absolve himself. (54)

11. He will persist in degrading them, using the darkest colors to depict them. If need be, he will act to devalue them, annihilate them. But he can never escape from this circle. (54)

12. He cannot help but approve discrimination and the codification of injustice, he will be delighted at police tortures and, if the necessity arises, will become convinced of the necessity of massacres. Everything will lead him to these beliefs: his new interests, his professional relations, his family ties and bonds of friendship formed in the colony. The mechanism is practically constant. The colonial situation manufactures colonialists, just as it manufactures the colonized. (55-56)

13. The eulogizing of oneself and one's fellows, the repeated, even earnest, affirmation of the excellence of one's ways and institutions, one's cultural and technical superiority do not erase the fundamental condemnation which every colonialist carries in his heart. (56)

14. Every colonial nation carries the seeds of fascist temptation in its bosom. What is fascism, if not a regime of oppression for the benefit of a few? The entire administrative and political machinery of a colony has no other goal. The human relationships have arisen from the severest exploitation, founded on inequality and contempt, guaranteed by police authoritarianism. There is no doubt in the minds of those who have lived through it that colonialism is one variety of fascism. (62-63)

15. Almost always, the colonialist also devotes himself to a systematic devaluation of the colonized. He is fed up with his subject, who tortures his conscience and his life. He tries to dismiss him from his mind, to imagine the colony without the colonized. ... But the colonialist realizes that without the colonized, the colony would no longer have any meaning. This intolerable contradiction fills him with a rage, a loathing, always ready to be loosed on the colonized, the innocent yet inevitable reason for his drama. (66-67)

16. This rejection of the colony and the colonized seriously affects the life and behavior of the colonized. But it also produces a disastrous effect upon the colonialist's conduct. Having thus described the colony, conceding no merits to the colonial community, recognizing neither its traditions, nor its laws, nor its ways, he cannot acknowledge belonging to it himself. (68)

17. The colonialist does not plan his future in terms of the colony, for he is there only temporarily and invests only what will bear fruit in his time. The true reason, the principal reason for most deficiencies is that the colonialist never planned to transform the colony into the image of his homeland, nor to remake the colonized in his own image! He cannot allow such an equation – it would destroy the principle of his privileges. (69)
18. This equality is impossible because of the [alleged] nature of the colonized. In other words, and this is the characteristic which completes this portrait, the colonialist resorts to racism. It is significant that racism is part of colonialism throughout the world; and it is no coincidence. Racism sums up and symbolizes the fundamental relation which unites colonialist and colonized. (69-70)
19. His racism is as usual to his daily survival as is any other prerequisite for existence. ... A mixture of behaviors and reflexes acquired and practiced since very early childhood, established and measured by education, colonial racism is so spontaneously incorporated in even the most trivial acts and words, that it seems to constitute one of the fundamental patterns of colonialist personality. (70)
20. Colonial racism is built from three major ideological components: one, the gulf between the culture of the colonialist and the colonized; two, the exploitation of these differences for the benefit of the colonialist; three, the use of these supposed differences as standards of absolute fact. (71)
21. The colonialist stresses those things which keep him separate, rather than emphasizing that which might contribute to the foundation of a joint community. In those differences, the colonized is always degraded and the colonialist finds justification for rejecting his subjects. (71)
22. What is actually a sociological point becomes labeled as being biological or, preferably, metaphysical. It is attached to the colonized's basic nature. (71)
23. Going back to the original purpose of all colonial policy, there are two illustrations which reveal its failure to fulfill its promised goals. Contrary to general belief, the colonialist never seriously promoted the religious conversion of the colonized. ... To be sure, the church has greatly assisted the colonialist; backing his ventures, helping his conscience, contributing to the acceptance of colonization – even by the colonized. But this profitable alliance was only an accident for the church. When colonialism proved to be a deadly damaging scheme, the church washed its hands of it everywhere. (72)
24. Conversely, while the colonialist rewarded the church for its assistance by granting it substantial privileges – land, subsidies and an adequate place for its role in the colony – he never wished it to succeed in its goal – that is, the conversion of all the colonized. If he had really favored conversion, he would have allowed the church to fulfill its dream. Particularly at the beginning of colonization, he enjoyed complete freedom of action, unlimited power to oppress and widespread international support. (72-73)
25. But the colonialist could not favor an undertaking that would have contributed to the disappearance of colonial relationships. Conversion of the colonized to the colonizer's religion would have been a step toward assimilation. That is one of the reasons why colonial missions failed. (73)
26. The second illustration is that there is as little social salvation as there is religious conversion for the colonized. Just as the colonized would not be saved from his condition by religious assimilation, he would not be permitted to rise above his social status to join the colonizer group. (73)
27. The fact is that all oppression is directed at a human group as a whole and, *a priori*, all individual members of that group are anonymously victimized by it. (73)
28. The racist accusation directed at the colonized cannot be anything but collective, and every one of the colonized must be held guilty without exception. ... Within the framework of colonization, nothing can be ever, save the colonizer. He [the colonized] can never move into the privileged clan; even if he should earn more money than they, if he should win all the titles, if he should enormously increase his power. (73-74)
29. The almost absolutely airtight colonial groupings must also be mentioned. All the efforts of the colonialist are directed toward maintaining this social immobility, and racism is the surest weapon for this aim. In effect, change becomes impossible, and any revolt would be absurd. (74)
30. Racism appears then, not as an incidental detail, but as a consubstantial part of colonialism. It is the highest expression of the colonial system and one of the most significant features of the colonial-

ist. Not only does it establish a fundamental discrimination between colonizer and colonized, a *sine qua non* of colonial life, but it also lays the foundation for the immutability of this life. (74)

31. There is one final distortion. The servitude of the colonized seemed scandalous to the colonizer and forces him to explain it away under the pain of ending the scandal and threatening his own existence. Thanks to a double reconstruction of the colonized and himself, the colonizer is able both to justify and reassure himself. (75)

32. Custodian of the values of civilization and history, he accomplishes a mission; he has the immense merit of bringing light to the colonized's ignominious darkness. The fact that this role brings him privileges and respect is only justice; colonization is legitimate in every sense and with all its consequences. (75)

33. Furthermore, since servitude is part of the nature of the colonized, and domination part of the colonizer's own, there will be no dénouement. To the delights of rewarded virtue he adds the necessity of natural laws. Colonization is eternal, and he can look to his future without worries of any kind. ... The colonized can be only grateful to him for softening what is coming to him. (75-76)

34. Having founded this new moral order where he is by definition master and innocent, the colonialist would at last have given himself absolution. It is still essential that this order not be questioned by others, and especially not by the colonized. (76)

Reflection:

- ◆ What does it mean to say that the “colonialist” is the natural vocation of a “colonizer”?
- ◆ Is the natural vocation of US citizen to be a racist? Again, what does it mean to be a US citizen? Is it a monolithic identity or a multiple identity? What values, beliefs, assumptions, worldview constitutes the proper position, terrain or providence of a “US citizen”? Is it a contested terrain, a contested identity? Where do we see that terrain being contested—over what issues? (Who or what is an American? Ideally, what does he/she look like? What is her/his politics? Who does the defining and deciding?)
- ◆ What is the relationship between the colonialist and the colonized? In what ways does the colonialist define him/herself against that of the colonized? For what purpose? Out of what necessity?
- ◆ In what ways have the interests of the colonialists converged with the interests of the Christian Church? Where have they diverged? Where are their respective interests both contradictory and duplicitous?
- ◆ Why have the colonialist interests and the interests of Christian Church converged around racism? As regards to racial hegemony, do Christian Church interests overlap with colonialist class interests? What is the attraction of racism in the Christian Church? Is there a similar attraction to racism by Judaism or Islam? Where are the lines of convergence? What common or differing but complementary interests does the colonial project have with religion?
- ◆ Within the framework of colonization, why must nothing ever save the colonized?
- ◆ What would save the colonized? Not being colonized? Being free agents, self-determining, in control of their own land? Could that ever be possible with the context of the colonial situation?
- ◆ If the colonized can never be saved within the colonial situation, what does this mean for People of Color within the United States? (One thinks of Derrick Bell's thesis in *Faces at the Bottom of the Well—The Permanence of Racism*, “Divining a Racial Realism Theory,” pp. 90-108. In ASDIC Manual.)
- ◆ What does it mean to say that racism is a substantial part of colonialism, not an accidental detail?
- ◆ What are characteristics the colonialist ascribes to him/herself to justify the colonial situation?
- ◆ What of the self-attributions and characteristics that the colonialist ascribes to him/herself mirror that of the attributions that US whites ascribe to themselves? What work does racial “other” and White self-attributes and characteristics do in the upholding systemic racism? (See also D.1, D.2 and D.3 below.)

- ◆ What of the negative attributions and characteristics that Whites ascribe to People of Color do People of Color accept and internalize as self-defining? What are examples of this?
- ◆ What are some historical examples of Whites justifying military action, domination, control, claiming and taking of resources (land and labor) under notions of white superiority and imposing institutions and laws to regulate and subjugate Peoples of Color in the US?
- ◆ How have Peoples of Color responded to such impositions of Whites?
- ◆ Is there a history of resistance to US White colonial oppression? What do we know of that history? Are our children taught that history? Ought they be taught that history? Is there effective blocking of the teaching of resistance movements of People of Color in the US?
- ◆ What moral order can the colonized, oppressed people call upon to support resistance to colonialism and racism?

Part Two: Portrait of the Colonized

D. Mythical portrait of the colonized

1. Nothing could better justify the colonizer's privileged position than his industry, and nothing could better justify the colonized's destitution than his indolence [justifying ideology]. The mythical portrait of the colonized therefore includes an unbelievable laziness, and that of the colonizer, a virtuous taste for action. At the same time the colonizer suggests that employing the colonized is not very profitable, thereby authorizing his unreasonable wages. (79)
2. Whenever the colonizer states, in his language, that the colonized is a weakling, he suggests thereby that this deficiency requires protection. From this comes the concept of a protectorate. It is in the colonized's own interest that he be excluded from management functions, and that those heavy responsibilities be reserved for the colonizer. (81-82)
3. Whenever the colonizer adds, in order not to fall prey to anxiety, that the colonized is a wicked, backward person with evil, thievish, somewhat sadistic instincts, he thus justifies his police and his legitimate severity. After all, he must defend himself against the dangerous foolish acts of the irresponsible, and at the same time – what meritorious concern! – protect him against himself! (82)
4. At the basis of the entire construction, one finally finds a common motive; the colonizer's economic and basic needs, which he substitutes for logic, and which shape and explain each of the traits he assigns to the colonized (83)
5. Finally, the colonizer denies the colonized the most precious right granted to most men: liberty. Living conditions imposed on the colonized by colonization make no provision for it; indeed, they ignore it. The colonized has no way out of his state of woe – neither a legal outlet (naturalization) nor a religious outlet (conversion). The colonized is not free to choose between being colonized or not being colonized. (85-86)
6. Constantly confronted with this [negative] image of himself [created and propagated by the colonizer], set forth and imposed on all institutions and in every human contact, how could the colonized help reacting to his portrait [the negative portrait created by colonizer]? It cannot leave him indifferent and remain a veneer that, like an insult, blows with the wind. (87)
7. He [the colonized] ends up recognizing it as one would a detested nickname that has become a familiar description. The accusation disturbs him and worries him even more because he admires and fears his powerful accuser. "Is he not partially right?" he mutters. "Are we not all a little guilty after all? Lazy, because we have so many idlers? Timid, because we let ourselves be oppressed." Willfully created and spread by the colonizer, this mythical and degrading portrait ends up being accepted and lived with to a certain extent by the colonized. (87)
8. It is common knowledge that the ideology of a governing class is adopted in large measure by the governed classes. Now, every ideology of combat includes as an integral part of itself a conception of the adversary. (88)
9. In colonial relationships, the pattern remains the same. The characterization and role of the colonized occupies a choice place in colonialist ideology; a characterization which is neither true to life, or in itself incoherent, but necessary and inseparable within that ideology. It is one to which the colonized gives his troubled and partial, but undeniable, assent. (88)
10. However, this adherence [of the colonized to colonization] is the result of colonization and not its cause. It arises after and not before colonial occupation. In order for the colonizer to be the complete master, it is not enough for him to be so in actual fact, but he must also believe in its legitimacy. In order for that legitimacy to be complete, it is not enough for the colonized to be a slave, he must also accept this role. (88-89)
- II. Just as the colonizer is tempted to accept his part, the colonized is forced to accept being colonized. (89)

Reflection:

- ◆ Why would the colonizer be concerned about falling prey to anxiety? What would the source of that anxiety be?
- ◆ In the context of colonialism what are the sources of anxiety for the colonized?
- ◆ What does it mean for one's sense of self that the colonized is not free to choose between being colonized and not being colonized? What is this suggestive of in power dynamics and capacity to resist being colonized?
- ◆ What injury does colonization do to the colonized? What does it do to arrest healthy social and psychological development? What damage does it do to the colonizer's humanity or capacity for self actualization?
- ◆ What institutions must now be controlled by the colonized to prevent the continuing impact of colonization?
- ◆ In what ways, and why, does the colonized often come to identify with colonizer, even where the colonizer despises the colonized? What is this about?
- ◆ What do you understand *ideology* to mean? How does the colonizer use ideology as a weapon against the colonized? What are the specific components of colonizer or racist ideology used currently against People of Color?
- ◆ What are the components of counter-ideologies and ideologies of resistance used by various Peoples of Color in the US?
- ◆ What are the instruments colonizers use to legitimize their authority and control over the colonized?
- ◆ May some of the instruments used by the colonizer to legitimize oppression be used by the oppressed to subvert the rule of the colonizer? If so what instruments? Used in what ways?
- ◆ How do we bring the above consideration into conversation with Audre Lorde's statement that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house"? What are we to learn here? What tools are "enslaving tools," whose only use is to create greater enslavement? What are tools that the master and oppressed may have equal access to that can be used by the oppressed to liberate? Perhaps, "critical thinking" tool would be one example of the latter. What are others?

E. Situations of the colonized

1. This conduct [by the colonizer of actively behaving in accordance with his myth of the colonized], which is common to colonizers as a group, becomes what can be called a social institution. In other words, the actions of the colonizer in keeping with the myths about the colonized defines and establishes concrete situations which close in on the colonized, weigh on him until they bend his conduct and leave their marks on his face. (90)
2. The ideological aggression which tends to dehumanize and then deceive the colonized finally corresponds to concrete situations which lead to the same result. To be deceived to some extent already, to endorse the myth and then adapt to it, is to be acted upon by it. That myth is furthermore supported by a very solid organization; a government and a judicial system fed and renewed by the colonizer's historic, economic and cultural needs. (91)
3. Just as the colonized cannot escape the colonialist hoax, he could not avoid those situations which create real inadequacy. (91)
4. Not considering himself a citizen, the colonized likewise loses all hope of seeing his son achieve citizenship. Before long, renouncing citizenship himself, he no longer includes it in his plans, eliminates it from his paternal ambitions, and allows no place for it in his teachings. (97)
5. Nothing therefore suggests to the young colonized the self-assurance or pride of his citizenship. He will expect nothing more from it and will not be prepared to assume its responsibilities. (Obviously, there is likewise nothing in his school education, in which references to the community and nation are always in terms of the colonizing nation.) This educational void, a result of social inadequa-

cy, thus perpetuates that same inadequacy, damaging one of the essential dimensions of the colonized individual. (97)

6. Not being master of its destiny, not being its own legislator, not controlling its organization, colonized society can no longer adapt its institutions to its grievous needs. But it is those needs which practically shape the organizational face of every normal society. (98)

7. Doesn't it [the community] grant him few rights and prohibit him from participating in all national life? Actually, he no longer desperately needs them. His correct place, always reserved in the soft warmth of clan reunions, satisfies him. He would be afraid to leave it. (100)

8. His universe is that of the vanquished. But what other way out is there? (100)

9. The young man is ready to assume his role of the colonized adult – that is, to accept being an oppressed creature. (100)

10. As long as he tolerates colonization, the only possible alternatives for the colonized are assimilation or petrification. Assimilation being refused him, as we shall see, nothing is left for him but to live isolated from his age. He is driven back to colonization and, to a certain extent, lives with that situation. Planning and building his future are forbidden. He must therefore limit himself to the present, and even that present is cut off and abstract. (102)

11. Let us ask the colonized himself: who are his folk heroes? his great popular leaders? his sages? At most, he may be able to give us a few names, in complete disorder, and fewer and fewer as one goes down the generations. The colonized seems condemned to lose his memory. (102-03)

12. Now the colonized's institutions are dead or petrified. He scarcely believes in those who continue to show signs of life and daily confirms their ineffectiveness. He often becomes ashamed of these institutions, as of a ridiculous and over-aged monument. (103)

13. All effectiveness and social dynamics, on the other hand, seem monopolized by the colonizer's institutions. If the colonized needs help, it is to them that he applies. If he does something wrong, it is by colonizer that he is punished. (103)

14. By what else is the heritage of a people handed down? By the education which it gives to its children, and by language, that wonderful reservoir constantly enriched with new experiences. Traditions and acquirements, habits and conquests, deeds and acts of previous generations are thus bequeathed and recorded in history. (104)

15. However, the very great majority of colonized children are in the streets. And he who has the wonderful good luck to be accepted in a school will not be saved nationally. The memory which is assigned him is certainly not that of his people. The history which is taught him is not his own. (104-105)

16. The books talk to him of a world which in no way reminds him of his own. (105)

17. His teachers do not follow the same pattern as his father; they are not his wonderful and redeeming successors like every other teacher in the world. They are something else. There is no communication either from child to teacher or (admittedly all too often) from teacher to child, and the child notices this perfectly well. (105)

18. If communication finally takes place, it is not without its dangers. The teacher and school represent a world which is too different from his family environment. In both cases, far from preparing the adolescent to find himself completely, school creates a permanent duality in him. (106)

19. If only the mother tongue was allowed some influence on current social life, or was used across the counters of government offices, or directed the postal service; but this is not the case. The entire bureaucracy, the entire court system, all industry hears and uses the colonizer's language. Likewise, highway markings, railroad station signs, street signs and receipts make the colonized feel like a foreigner in his own country. (106-07)

20. The difference between native language and cultural language is not peculiar to the colonized, but colonial bilingualism cannot be compared to just any linguistic dualism. ... Here, the two worlds symbolized and conveyed by the two tongues are in conflict; they are those of the colonizer and the colonized. (107)

21. Furthermore, the colonized's mother tongue, that which is sustained by his feelings, emotions and dreams, that in which his tenderness and wonder are expressed, thus that which holds the greatest

emotional impact, is precisely the one which is the least valued. It has no stature in the country or in the concert of peoples. (107)

22. In the linguistic conflict within the colonized, the mother tongue is that which is crushed. He himself sets about discarding this infirm language, hiding it from the sight of strangers. In short, colonial bilingualism is neither a purely bilingual situation in which an indigenous tongue coexists with a purist's language (both belonging to the same world of feeling), nor a simple polyglot richness benefiting from an extra but relatively neuter alphabet; it is a linguistic drama. ... His linguistic ambiguity is the symbol and one of the major causes of his cultural ambiguity. (107-08)

23. And the most urgent claim of a group about to revive is certainly the liberation and restoration of its language. ... Only that language would allow the colonized to resume contact with his interrupted flow of time and to find again his lost continuity and that of his history. (110)

24. We have no idea what the colonized would have been without colonization, but we certainly see what has happened as a result of it. To subdue and exploit, the colonizer pushed the colonized out of the historical and social, cultural and technical current. (114)

Reflection:

- ◆ What is the situation of the colonized in the face of the myth-driven conduct of the colonizer? How do these myths about the colonized shape the internal reality (self-understanding) of the colonized?
- ◆ What are particular myths you buy-into about your ethnic group, about particular ethnic groups of color, that you take to be particularly harmful?
- ◆ Where are these myths found? How are they generated and passed on?
- ◆ Name the ways that particular destructive ideology and myths find support in very solid social organization and arrangements, in a government and a judicial system that are fed and renewed by the colonizer's historic, economic and cultural needs.
- ◆ How do such ideology and myths contribute to the status quo of white supremacy (normative, systemic racism)?
- ◆ What particular inadequacies do the myths create in the colonized?
- ◆ What evidence suggests that certain groupings among the colonized do not see themselves as citizens? What issues might result from this for themselves or their ethnic community?
- ◆ What kind of belonging is needed for those who feel and, in fact, are disenfranchised? What is being done in mentoring, youth programming around cultural activities, adult coping skills, values re-education, re-creation of cultural memory?
- ◆ In what ways are we as colonized not the master of our destiny, not acting as our own legislator, not controlling organizations central to our well-being? Give examples of this.
- ◆ Where are examples of "ethnic enclaves" where colonized people have some significant control of the destiny of the members of the ethnic enclave community? What resources under the control of the community leaders make that community viable?
- ◆ Where may colonized people create or support effective, dynamic social institutions to meet particular needs?
- ◆ What particular social institutions must be attended to (created or supported) at this moment to meet what particular social needs?
- ◆ What are we willing to do to support the cultural transmission of language, traditions and acquirments, habits and historical knowledge of resistance, deeds and acts of previous generations, bequeathed to us and recorded in history?
- ◆ Are we able as a collective (we here in this conversation) or we through some other particular collectivity able to contribute to cultural regeneration, cultural revival? Do we see cultural regeneration as needed by the colonized? If we do, why is cultural regeneration a core survival issue for the colonized?

- ◆ What are those parts of the cultural traditions of colonized people they are ashamed of and tend to hide? How is “stereotype threat” operative here?
- ◆ The most urgent claim of a group about to revive is certainly the liberation and restoration of its language. This has much significance for certain groupings of colonized people (e.g., Indigenous Peoples, Latinos, Hmong) but not particularly for African Americans. For African Americans and other groups for whom language revival may not be possible, what might be the equivalent cultural feature (drumming, dance, dress) needing to be revived? —A feature that would contribute to reconnection to the past, be emotionally impactful, contribute to a positive construction of self-identity and to belonging and esteem for the person’s cultural, ancestral roots.

F. The two answers of the colonized

1. If one chooses to understand the colonial system, he must admit that it is unstable and its equilibrium constantly threatened. One can be reconciled to every situation, and the colonized can wait a long time to live. But, regardless of how soon or how violently the colonized rejects his situation, he will one day begin to overthrow his unlivable existence with the whole force of his oppressed personality. (120)
2. The first attempt of the colonized is to change his condition by changing his skin. There is a tempting model very close at hand – the colonizer. The latter suffers from none of his deficiencies, has all rights, enjoys every possession and benefits from every prestige. He is, moreover, the other part of the comparison, the one that crushes the colonized and keeps him in servitude. The first ambition of the colonized is to become equal to that splendid model and to resemble him to the point of disappearing in him. (120)
3. By this step, which actually presupposes admiration for the colonizer, one can infer approval of colonization. But by obvious logic, at the very moment when the colonized best adjusts himself to his fate, he rejects himself with most tenacity. That is to say that he rejects, in another way, the colonial situation. (121)
4. Rejection of self and love of another are common to all candidates for assimilation. Moreover, the two components of this attempt at liberation are closely tied. Love of the colonizer is subtended by a complex of feelings ranging from shame to self-hate. (121)
5. The colonized does not seek merely to enrich himself with the colonizer’s virtues. In the name of what he hopes to become, he sets his mind on impoverishing himself, tearing himself away from his true self. The crushing of the colonized is included among the colonizer’s values. As soon as the colonized adopts those values, he similarly adopts his own condemnation. (121)
6. Just as many people avoid showing off their poor relations, the colonized in the throes of assimilation hides his past, his traditions, in fact all his origins which have become ignominious. (122)
7. The candidate for assimilation almost always comes to tire of the exorbitant price which he just pay and which he never finishes owing. He discovers with alarm the full meaning of his attempt. It is a dramatic moment when he realizes that he has assumed all the accusations and condemnations of the colonizer, that he is becoming accustomed to looking at his own people through the eyes of their procurer. (123)
8. Must he, all his life, be ashamed of what is most real in him, of the only things not borrowed? ... Must his liberation be accomplished through systematic self-denial? ... In order to be assimilated, it is not enough to leave one’s group, but one must enter another; now he meets with the colonizer’s rejection. (123-24)
9. A man straddling two cultures is rarely well seated, and the colonized does not always find the right pose. Everything is mobilized so that the colonized cannot cross the doorstep, so that he understands and admits that this path is dead and assimilation is impossible. ... It is the colonized who is the first to desire assimilation, and it is the colonizer who refuses it to him. (124-25)
10. The colonial condition cannot be changed except by doing away with the colonial relationship. ... It is useless to hope to act upon one or the other [portraits] without affecting that relationship, and

therefore, colonization. To say that the colonizer could or should accept assimilation and, hence, the colonized's emancipation, means to topple the colonial relationship. (126)

11. Under contemporary conditions of colonization, assimilation and colonization are contradictory. (127)

12. Revolt is the only way out of the colonial situation, and the colonized realizes it sooner or later. His condition is absolute and cries for an absolute solution; a break and not a compromise. (127)

13. The colonial situation, by its own internal inevitability, brings on revolt. For the colonial condition cannot be adjusted to; like an iron collar, it can only be broken. (128)

14. Assimilation being abandoned, the colonized's liberation must be carried out through a recovery of self and of autonomous dignity. Attempts at imitating the colonizer required self-denial; the colonizer's rejection is the indispensable prelude to self-discovery. That accusing and annihilating image must be shaken off; oppression must be attacked boldly since it is impossible to go around it. After having been rejected for so long by the colonizer, the day has come when it is the colonized who must refuse the colonizer. (128)

15. At the height of his revolt, the colonized still bears the traces and lessons of prolonged cohabitation (just as the smile or movements of a wife, even during divorce proceedings, remind one strangely of those of her husband). The colonized fights in the name of the very values of the colonizer, uses his techniques of thought and his methods of combat. It must be added that this is the only action that the colonizer understands. (129)

16. In recovering his autonomous and separate destiny, he immediately goes back to his own tongue. ... To this self-rediscovery movement of an entire people must be returned the most appropriate tool; that which finds the shortest path to its soul, because it comes directly from it. (134)

17. He will go so far as to prohibit any additional conveniences of the colonizer's tongue; he will replace it as often and as soon as he can. ... The important thing now is to rebuild his people, whatever be their authentic nature; to reform their unity, communicate with it and to feel that they belong. (135)

18. The negative element [of the colonized, as taught to him by the colonizer] has become an essential part of his revival and struggle, and will be proclaimed and glorified to the hilt. Not only does he accept his wrinkles and his wounds, but he will consider them praiseworthy. Gaining self-assurance, offering himself to the world just as he is. (138)

19. He cannot cause the end of what he truly is and what he so disastrously acquired during colonization. He offers himself as a whole and agrees that he is what he is – that colonized being which he has become. (138)

20. Everything that belongs to him, everything he represents, becomes perfectly positive elements. (138)

21. The negative myth thrust on him by the colonizer is succeeded by a positive myth about himself suggested by the colonized. (139)

22. The colonized's self-assertion, born out of a protest, continues to define itself in relation to it. In the midst of revolt, the colonized continues to think, feel and live against and, therefore, in relation to the colonizer and colonization. (139)

Reflection:

- ◆ Is it true, even today, that the first ambition of the colonized is to become equal to that “splendid model” in the form of the colonizer and to resemble the colonizer to the point of disappearing into him/her? What might be examples of this? What might tend to disprove it?
- ◆ Is it evident at this moment that the colonized have now adjusted themselves to the fate of not having assimilation open to them, of being assigned to second-class citizenship? That they now reject most tenaciously that part of themselves that holds the colonizer as the “ideal” to be realized? Is this true for us now, in any sense? Again, consider Derrick Bell's thesis in *Faces at the Bottom of the Well—The Permanence of Racism*, “Divining a Racial Realism Theory,” pp. 90-108.
- ◆ In the US context, is assimilation impossible? Assimilation on what terms? At what price? Are the terms and price acceptable? Do ethnic groups of color differ on their openness to assimilation and

on their being acceptable as candidates for assimilation? What would make an ethnic group unacceptable as a candidate for assimilation?

- ◆ Is there evidence that US colonizers (white majority) truly wish for all peoples of color to be assimilated? What would this mean? On what terms for either party? Is ethnic-racial assimilation that leads to social equality and opportunity to share and distribute wealth and leads to equal and fair access to resources possible in a system based on racial hierarchy and race based access?
- ◆ Somehow it seems that we are being continually led back to Derrick Bell's thesis (see above). What are your thoughts on this?
- ◆ What do we need to be doing if what is being offered, and shall ever be offered, to the colonized is second-class citizenship?
- ◆ What does Memmi's statement here mean to you? "Assimilation being abandoned, the colonized's liberation must be carried out through a recovery of self and of autonomous dignity. ... That accusing and annihilating image of the colonizer must be shaken off; oppression must be attacked boldly since it is impossible to go around it."
- ◆ What call to action is implied? For your own sake or that of others (youth), what recovery program can you institute or support? What political issues must you do battle with or for, on behalf of recovery?
- ◆ What does this statement mean to you? "He cannot cause the end of what he truly is and what he so disastrously acquired during colonization. He offers himself as a whole and agrees that he is what he is – that colonized being which he has become. ... Not only does he accept his wrinkles and his wounds, but he will consider them praiseworthy."
- ◆ What are the facts of who you understand yourself to be as a result of the colonial situation? What is it that you can embrace? What is it that you continue to struggle with? Where, in what, do you find your wholeness?

G. Conclusion

1. It definitely appears that the colonizer is a disease of the European, from which he must be completely cured and protected. There is also a drama of the colonizer that would be absurd and unjust to underestimate. The cure involves difficult and painful treatment, extraction and reshaping of present conditions of existence. (147)
2. The leftist colonizer's role cannot long be sustained; it is unlivable. He cannot help suffering from guilt and anguish and also, eventually, bad faith. He is always on the fringe of temptation and shame, and in the final analysis, guilty. ... In short, if the colonial adventure is seriously damaging for the colonized, it cannot ... be unprofitable for the colonizer. ... They [people who devised the colonial system] only forget that the nature of the colonial relationship depends on its advantages. (148)
3. For the colonized just as for the colonizer, there is no way out other than a complete end to colonization. The refusal of the colonized cannot be anything but absolute, that is, not only revolt, but a revolution.
4. Revolt. The mere existence of the colonizer creates oppression, and only the complete liquidation of colonization permits the colonized to be freed. (150-51)
5. Revolution. We have seen that colonization materially kills the colonized. It must be added that it kills him spiritually. Colonization distorts relationships, destroys or petrifies institutions, and corrupts men, both colonizers and colonized. (151)
6. To live, the colonized needs to do away with colonization. To become a man, he must do away with the colonized being that he has become. If the European must annihilate the colonizer within himself, the colonized must rise above his colonized being. (151)
7. The liquidation of colonization is nothing but a prelude to complete liberation, to self-recovery. In order to free himself from colonization, the colonized must start with his oppression, the deficiencies of his group. In order that his liberation may be complete, he must free himself from

those inevitable conditions of his struggle. ... He must conquer himself and be free in relation to [his] nation. (152)

8. He must conquer himself and be free in relation to the religion of his group, which he can retain or reject, but he must stop existing only through it. The same applies to the past, tradition, ethnic characteristics, etc. Finally, he must cease defining himself through the categories of colonizers. (152)

Reflection:

- ◆ Memmi states, “It definitely appears that the colonizer is a disease of the European, from which he must be completely cured and protected.” How would you understand this statement if the “colonizer” were replaced by the word “racism”? How could the colonizer be cured and protected from the disease of racism? Is it a disease or something else? Is it not both personal and structural? If structural and systemic, what is required to be rid of it?
- ◆ Memmi states, “The cure involves difficult and painful treatment, extraction and reshaping of present conditions of existence.” What would this program of cure look like? What exactly would the treatment be that addresses the structural and systemic nature of the problem of colonialism and racism?
- ◆ What program of action—personal and collective—is suggested by Memmi’s assertion, “In order to free himself from colonization, the colonized must start with his oppression, the deficiencies of his group. In order that his liberation may be complete, he must free himself from those inevitable conditions of his struggle.”
- ◆ Name the features of oppression, deficiencies of colonized (a particular group), and negative conditions of struggle that have harmed the colonized which need liberation. Name the form this will take.