Abstract

In this conceptual paper, I tried to articulate that in leisure and tourism studies “we still live in a wholly racialized world” (Morrison, 1992). Few leisure and tourism scholars cared to follow the clues to map the contours of the racial predicament of scholars of color as a way of their lives surviving in the academia. As a scholar of color, my everlasting quest has always been to feel at home without becoming “White”. The dilemmas and rejections in this journey created an omnipresent tension in my life which shaped the content of this paper. I understand that this study will certainly not set the Thames on fire but I seek to open new avenues of discussion to break this silence. While doing that, I tried to follow the philosophy of Hegel’s “master/slave dialectic: the search for self-consciousness” within the Bakhtinian (multiaccentuality of racial meaning) and Levinasian (his close equivalence between structuralist anthropology and genetics) context equipped with the wisdom of Stuart Hall, Frantz Fanon, W.E.B. Du Bois, Toni Morrison, Michel Foucault, Karl Marx, Jacques Derrida and Amartya Sen.

Keywords Scholars of color · Race · Master/slave Dialectic · Leisure and Tourism Studies · Transformation

1 Introduction

“We were lesser. Nicer, brighter, but still lesser … Guileless and without vanity, we were still in love with ourselves then. We felt comfortable in our skins, enjoyed the news that our senses released to us, admired our dirt, cultivated our scars, and could not comprehend this unworthiness” (Toni Morrison, 1994, p. 27) – The Bluest Eye
“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls”
(Rabindranath Tagore, 1912, p. 11) - *Gitanjali*.

“The emergence of an idea of ‘the West’ was central to the Enlightenment (…).
The Enlightenment was a very European affair. European society, it assumed, was the most advanced type of society on earth, European man [sic] the pinnacle of human achievement. It treated the West as the result of forces largely internal to Europe’s history and formation”
(Stuart Hall, 1992, p. 37) - *The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power*.

This conceptual paper is about racism as social injustice, precisely it discusses the neocolonial oppression in leisure and tourism studies and the place of the scholars of color within it - to examine what else might be possible for us, collectively, in the realm of leisure and tourism studies. Tommie Shelby (2014, p. 70) in his provocative essay, *Racism, Moralism, and Social Criticism* emphasized an important point,

“I am not suggesting that racism is merely an ‘epiphenomenon’ that masks the ‘real’ injustice of economic exploitation or class domination. There are serious forms of injustice that are not essentially about money, property, or labor (e.g., being unfairly denied the right to vote or the right to due process) and racial ideology has played a significant role in buttressing such injustices”.

Encouraged by Shelby’s words, in this conceptual paper, I attempted to lay the groundwork necessary to render apparent this pervasive, corrosive, and dehumanizing form of domination that infects our society. Although discussion of several aspects of race now constitutes to a huge body of literature (e.g. Bonilla-Silva 1997; Bourdieu, 2003, 1988; Feagin, 2010, 1991; Cohen, 2004; Cudd, 2006; Hesselmann, 2018; Isaac, 2004; Lipsitz, 2011; McCall, 2005), regrettably, scholars have paid little importance to the covert form of institutional racism which is found in the ordinary practices of our lives (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2009). As Lillian Smith (1994, p. 96) observed in *Killers of the Dream* that our racist attitudes simply “slip from the conscious mind deep into the muscles”. Lives of scholars of color in academia is one such prominent contemporary issue. Recently, scholars have well documented the omnipresent racism in several disciplines (e.g. Budd & Magnuson, 2010; Buggs et al., 2020; Coleman, 2005; Harper 2012; Mueller, 2018; Rodriguez, 2018; Smith, 2012; Stanley, 2007; Thapar-Björkert & Farahani, 2019; Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008). While more has been written, this issue has yet to generate any sustained interdisciplinary critical inquiry in leisure and tourism studies as it appears that to most leisure and tourism scholars, expressions of interest in challenging “White supremacy” and “decolonizing academia” are still deeply unsettling (Bandyopadhyay, 2022). I attempted to attend to this significant lacuna in leisure and tourism studies and tried to go beyond Toni Morrison’s (1994, p. 27) stirring reminder in her
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magnum opus *The Bluest Eye*, “There is really nothing more to say - except why. But since why is difficult to handle, one must take refuge in how”.

Unfortunately, still today, talking about race in leisure and tourism studies is like breaking a taboo or as Derrida (1984) would say, “under erasure”. Hence, there remains only a handful of studies that discuss race in leisure studies (e.g. Anderson et al., 2021; Floyd 1998; Floyd & Stodolska, 2019; Fletcher et al., 2017; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2009; Mowatt, 2020, 2019; Mowatt et al., 2016; Outley et al., 2021; Pinckney et al., 2018; Ratna, 2018, 2011; Roberts, 2021; Spracklen, 2013; Torabian & Miller, 2016; Watson, 2022; Watson & Ratna, 2011; Watson & Scraton, 2001). Ditto is the case in tourism (e.g. Bandyopadhyay et al., 2022; Benjamin & Dillette, 2021; Chambers, 2020, 2018; Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Chow-White, 2006; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2022; Hylton & Long, 2016; Jamerson, 2016; Singh, 2021). There are only a few laudable endeavours of scholars to critique tourism as an imperialistic practice (e.g. Bandyopadhyay, 2011; Brown & Hall 2008; Nash, 1977; Palmer, 1994; Sturma, 1999). Only recently (e.g. Bandyopadhyay, 2019; Bandyopadhyay & Patil, 2017), scholars have critically explored the racialized politics of tourism from the perspective of the “White savior complex” and argued that white supremacy continues to play an important role in tourism today. They claimed that colonial logics and discourses have shifted over time, from the erstwhile “civilizing mission” to the subsequent mandate for development to contemporary depoliticized social causes such as volunteer tourism to save and help the people in the global South – the main purpose of this third discourse is to resurrect imperial/colonial nostalgia. Hence, even in the twenty-first century, tourists visiting the global South still aspire to be living like a king or a queen for a day (Gottlieb, 1982) and make tourism a form of imperialism (Nash, 1977). The politics of representation play a paramount role in this as a mélange of traditionally stereotyped clichés are transferred from one generation to another so that global South-bound contemporary white tourists are primed to expect the worst of these peoples and their culture. As a result, contemporary white tourists, by integrating these expectations with their own experiences, continue to perpetuate this malicious cycle of white superiority. Indeed, “the conquest continues” (Chomsky, 1993).

Notwithstanding the praiseworthy efforts of leisure and tourism scholars to explore the issue of race, what is surprisingly missing is scholarship related to the unfortunate inner lives of scholars of color in leisure and tourism studies who arrive with grand plans and soon find themselves to be merely surviving. Very few leisure and tourism scholars have ever pondered how the “White man’s and woman’s burden” affects the scholars of color differently in the academic world of contact zones. The impacts are a matter of curiosity and gossip but unfortunately very few leisure and tourism scholars cared to follow the clues to map the contours of the racial predicament of scholars of color as a way of their lives surviving in the academia. Ironically, it is perhaps more troubling to witness the extraordinarily persistent “Whiteness” of leisure and tourism scholars who predominantly influence the field of study. And, for the Others, as Hall (1996, p. 7) reminded us, “to be racialized is to be denied entry into the mainstream of power and privilege”.

It is important to challenge the ever-existing Euro-Amero-centric benchmarks that judge the “Other” and call for a paradigm shift to emphasize that the “subaltern
can speak!” (Spivak, 1988). But this is easier to “think” than to “do” in leisure and tourism studies. Perhaps, because as bell hooks (2004, p. 25) asked, “… how can we organize to challenge and change a system that cannot be named?” As a result, leisure and tourism scholars seem to shy away from more theoretical and normative discussions of what should be done to change the patterns of inequality, alienation, and anger as discussions of race is generally filled with intense and powerful emotions (Bell, 2003). In this study, I asked few pertinent questions for future scholars to ponder which will enable a critical dialogue in leisure and tourism studies. When will our attraction with the “white supremacy” come to an end, if at all? How do we want to redefine our identity in the post-Covid-19 world? This has devastating consequences as it created and continues to create leisure and tourism scholars with “Black Skin, White Masks” (Fanon, 1952). As Du Bois (1903) in his seminal The Souls of Black Folk lamented, “It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity”. In a similar vein, Foucault (1988a) in Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason opined, “People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do, but what they don’t know is what they do does”. But how can we change this? First, “we must understand how race works, developing tools to analyze this well-founded fiction responsible for so many cleavages and inequalities in our world today” (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2009, p. 335).

Hence, this conceptual study is about paranoia and ruthlessness of power and explored how to deal with the complex and shifting racial/racist landscape of contemporary leisure and tourism studies, and with how to engage across these complexities and transformations. Precisely, taking into consideration my experiences of nearly two decades in the US and UK as a scholar of color related to racism, in this conceptual study I tried to probe into the ideological factors behind the discrimination in leisure and tourism studies to pave the way for more serious consideration and empowerment of scholars of color. As such, I tried to use my experiences and feelings to track how I see the organic connections and dissonances between the three worlds – before (while growing up as a colonized man in India imitating the British), after (while pursuing doctoral studies in the US to become an academic) and eventually as an academic in the US and UK in leisure and tourism studies. In this reflexive journey, I was amazed to observe how my feelings constantly displaced, repeated and upset one another. I realized, looking back, that there was never a single moment in this trajectory which was not provoked by my racial positioning – though in the US and UK, the contours were perpetually unpredictable, but the intervening significance of the fact was persistent. My skin color was incontestably an issue. I understand that this study will certainly not set the Thames on fire but I seek to open new avenues of discussion to break this silence to improve understanding so that the policies, practices, and ideas that disseminate racial inequality can be acknowledged and dismantled. While doing that, I try to follow the philosophy of Hegel’s “master/slave dialectic: the search for self-consciousness” within the Bakhtinian (multiaccentuality of racial meaning) and Levinsonian (his close equivalence between structuralist anthropology and genetics) context, and go beyond, equipped with the wisdom of Stuart Hall, Frantz Fanon, W.E.B. Du Bois, Toni Morrison, Michel Foucault, Karl
Marx, Jacques Derrida and Amartya Sen. As Lawrie Balfour (2011, p. 415) movingly pointed out, “For the greatest legacy of the questions posed in Du Bois’s work and by the figure of Du Bois himself is to remind us just how intricate and complex ‘our tasks of emancipation’ remain”. It is important to note here, in this conceptual paper, I narrate my disjointed self but in no way seek to salve feelings of inferiority. Nor does my arguments try to act as propaganda against “White academics” but instead disparages the ideology of “White logic” (Zuberi & Bonilla-Silva, 2008) which “essentially renders Whiteness meritocratic and other colors deficient” (Fine et al., 1997, p. 64).

My experiences narrated in this paper are fairly typical of the experiences of many scholars of color who prefer to remain silent. This acceptance of destiny by scholars of color is suggestive of a form of “symbolic domination” (Bourdieu, 1977). However, I think, if we do not challenge these inequities then we are disseminating the ideology of White logic. As Szasz (1973, p. 20) reminded us, “In the animal kingdom, the rule is, eat or be eaten, in the human kingdom, define or be defined”.

2 Theoretical Foundation - Critical Race Theory, Whiteness and Social Justice

The theoretical background of this study is derived from the Harvard Economist and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen’s fifty years of seminal work on “social justice”. One of the principal differences between Sen and the leading contemporary theorists of justice is that they have been concerned primarily with identifying what perfectly just social arrangements might be rather than clarifying how different realizations of justice might be compared and evaluated. The cornerstone of Sen’s argument is his insistence on the role of public reason in establishing what can make societies less unjust. Sen (2009, p. 127), in his The Idea of Justice, powerfully asks,

“The basic idea of human rights, which people are supposed to have simply because they are human, is seen by many critics as entirely without any kind of a reasoned foundation. The questions that are recurrently asked are: do these rights exist? Where do they come from?”.

“In the little world in which children have their existence”, says Pip in Charles Dickens’s Great Expectations, “there is nothing so finely perceived and finely felt, as injustice”. In a similar vein, Sen (2009, p. 9) argues that “strong perception of manifest injustice applies to adults as well and what moves us is not the realization that the world falls short of being completely just but that there are clearly remediable injustices around us which we want to eliminate”. It is in this context, this conceptual study argues that though ‘racism’ is a dirty word, significant inequalities persist in leisure and tourism studies today, which “we want to eliminate” - borrowing Sen’s words.

Commenting on the perpetual injustice to the topic of “race”, Mills (2014, p. 35) lamented that the prominent scholars in philosophy, while discussing John Rawls’ (1971, p. 27) ideal theory,
“have either no discussions at all of race, racism, and affirmative action, or at best a sentence or a paragraph or two. Nor do they indicate that this might be a problem, or comment anywhere on the absurdity of the most famous twentieth-century theorist of justice of a former White settler state having nothing useful to say about race—the central injustice on which that state rests. So, the simple fact that racial justice has not been central to the discussions of justice in American political philosophy over the last forty years is itself a clear-cut testimony to its ‘Whiteness.’ Nevertheless, it can obviously be replied that this lacuna, embarrassing as it may be (though it doesn’t seem to be), is still only a contingent one, unrelated to the apparatus”.

### 2.1 Intellectual History of Racism

White supremacy has been an ongoing racial project for almost 500 years (Mills, 2014, 1997). According to Wilson (1999, p. 14), racism is “an ideology of racial domination” in which the presumed biological or cultural superiority of the whites is emphasized to justify the inferior treatment of the Others. From a sociological perspective, Clair & Denis (2015, p. 857) clarified, “Through the process of racialization, perceived patterns of physical difference – such as skin color or eye shape – are used to differentiate groups of people, thereby constituting them as ‘races’; racialization becomes racism when it involves the hierarchical and socially consequential valuation of racial groups”. And from a psychological perspective, Salter et al (2017, p. 150) explained, “The term racism is often used synonymously with prejudice (biased feelings or affect), stereotyping (biased thoughts and beliefs, flawed generalizations), discrimination (differential treatment or the absence of equal treatment), and bigotry (intolerance or hatred). This practice implicitly conceptualizes racism as a set of basic social-psychological processes underlying the psychologies of individuals (i.e., stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination) merely applied to the context of race”.

In the late nineteenth century, although sociology emerged as a social scientific discipline, few scholars studied racism. W.E.B. Du Bois was the only exception who analyzed the political economic roots of racism and its perverse impacts on western institutions and psyches. During this time, racism pervaded society. Beginning in the 1920s, the scientific validity of race came under closer scrutiny and sociologists at the Chicago School began to view racism as a distinct social problem worthy of study. The 1950 and 1960 s saw theories arose to explain why racism, racial discrimination and racial inequality persisted (Bobo, 2011). In the 1980 and 1990 s, various theories of new racisms emerged suggesting that racism itself has transformed into more covert forms.

Contemporary theorists suggest that new forms of racism that are expressed not in avowed racist attitudes but rather in contextually specific moral and symbolic principles that stereotype subordinated racial groups as underserving and thereby justify existing racial inequalities (Kinder & Sears, 1981). For example, surveys repeatedly show that many whites support racial equality in principle but resist policies to implement it (e.g. affirmative action and reparations) which caters to a “political agenda” (van den Berghe, 2001, p. 12,721). Another explanation for insistent racial inequality
is “implicit bias” which is an unconsciously triggered belief in the inferiority of, or negative attitude toward, a group and can impact expectations and actions unconscious negative beliefs and feelings about racial groups may not appear on a survey but may be revealed in everyday interpersonal interactions at work, at school, or on the street (Clair & Denis, 2015). As Stuart Hall (2000b, p. 149) argued, “Black is not a question of pigmentation… [It] is a historical category, a political category, a cultural category”. As such, “black” needs to be understood in a particular time and space, as changing and contested, and as constructed and situational rather than taken for granted – as “without guarantees” (Hall, 1992). The story is similar with the case of scholars of color in leisure and tourism studies.

### 2.2 Racism as a Social Process

Discourse from anthropology, history and sociology characterizes the concept “race” as having a modern history. According to the Booker Prize winning author Arundhati Roy (2001, p. 81), “[r]ace was created mainly by Anglo-Europeans, especially English, societies in the 16th and 19th centuries”. In spite of several centuries of use as a concept representing a natural phenomenon, sociological studies on race critique the notion as lacking scientific clarity and specificity. Rather than emerging from a scientific perspective, the notion of race is informed by historical, social, cultural, and political values. Thus, we find that the concept of race is based on socially constructed, but socially, and certainly scientifically, outmoded beliefs about the inherent superiority of the whites (they are rational and brilliant, thus have a bright future) and inferiority of Others (they not only lack intelligence, rigor and relevance but are also considered inhuman or nonhuman so they cannot enjoy human rights, civil rights, labor rights, etc.) based on racial distinctions (Garbe, 2013; Grosfoguel, 2007; Hesselmann, 2018). British political theorist Lord Bhikhu Parekh (1994) explained this contradiction between superior and inferior people extensively in his article, Superior People: The Narrowness of Liberalism from Mill to Rawls. Bonilla-Silva’s (2010, 1997) conception of “racialized social systems” is significant in this context which highlights how political, economic, and social provisions are structured by white racial hierarchy (set of frames, styles, and scripts that are used to explain and justify the racial status quo without sounding racist) and supported by “colorblind racism”. This ideology can be traced back to sixteenth century slavery and imperialism, as Feagin (2010) argued, while studying the societal norms and “white racial frames”. Discussion of the social construction of “Whiteness” cannot be complete unless we acknowledge the social and political significance of race in America. Hacker (1993) in his groundbreaking study, Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal explained that whiteness is a “condition like a virus of the psyche”, which makes whites react to blacks as superiors to inferiors. Moreover, as Hacker emphasized, whiteness perceives blackness as a “stain like a drop of ink in water”. He further claimed that whiteness is a delusional state of mind that was used to justify slavery and that endures to this day to validate white privilege. Hacker (1993, p. 4) rued,
“America is inherently a ‘white’ country: in character, in structure, in culture. Needless to say, black Americans create lives of their own. Yet as a people, they face boundaries and constrictions set by the white majority America’s version of apartheid, while lacking overt legal sanction, comes closest to the system even now… reformed in the land of its invention”.

Whatever its scientific validity, race is a social fact in which the social and political significance of “Whiteness” plays a critical role. Classical scholars have remarked about race as a social fact. Thus, according to Durkheim ([1895] 1938, p. 13), the concepts, race and whiteness, are social facts.

“A social fact is every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an external constraint; or again, every way of acting which is general throughout a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations”.

3 Statement of Positionality

“… one simply cannot and will never be able to fully recuperate one’s own processes of thought or creativity self-reflexively… I cannot become identical with myself”.

(Stuart Hall, 2017) – Through the Prism of an Intellectual Life.

I, the author of this study is a native of India. Being the only son in an upper middle-class Indian family, life was a rosy picture to me. I was sent to an elite English Convent School in India, where my teachers in their white robes were Anglo-Saxons. Being a Hindu by birth, I used to sing, “Jesus is my Lord” every morning in my school prayers. I was meticulously groomed in school to behave like an English boy in my mannerisms. My academic life has been a roller-coaster ride. After my schooling and undergraduate degree in India, I went to pursue my MBA degree in Europe. Then, I undertook my Doctoral studies in Leisure Studies and Socio-cultural Anthropology at a renowned university in the US. It was during this time, in the process of my metamorphosis, that I discovered myself anew. I began my academic life teaching at a Russell Group member university in the UK for a year followed by a decade long career at a public university in California. My wanderlust then took me to a public university in Thailand and finally am enjoying my sojourn at a private university in Viet Nam. During these 20 years of my life abroad, as a student and academic, I got the chance to travel globally (to 60 countries) which had impacted my research tremendously.

I serve as a reviewer for several leading Tourism journals and also important journals in Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Politics, Religious Studies, Ethnic & Racial Studies, History and Geography. I believe, as a mid-career scholar with 20 years of experience in leisure and tourism studies allows me to provide a deeper sense on the
topic of this paper. Furthermore, my dual roles as both author and reviewer add to the etic and emic perspectives. Finally, it is important to recognize the dynamics of power relations - I am from the global South and educated in India, Europe and the US and taught in the UK, US, Thailand and Vietnam.

As mentioned above, growing up in India mimicking the British, I found myself in a conflicting situation after arriving in the west. The crisis of my identity occurred, which was manifested in the indecision over what to accept from western practices and what to abandon of Indian practices – it became a crusade! As Salman Rushdie (1983, p. 81) clarified:

“What does it mean to be an ‘Indian’ outside India? How can culture be preserved without becoming ossified? How should we discuss the need for change within ourselves and our community… what are the consequences, both spiritual and practical, of refusing to make concessions to Western ideas and practices? What are the consequences of embracing those ideas and the practices and turning away from ones that came with us?”.

I remember often reacting with disproportionate rage to my colleagues in the UK and US, who said they did not understand why I kept banging on about being colored since I was from an upper middle-class family, had been educated at an elite English Convent School and studied abroad in Europe and the US and taught in the UK and US. As if to say, what had I to complain about? Since these colleagues in the UK and US had unconsciously no doubt identified the central contradiction of my life, I felt, perhaps unfairly, that those who did not understand that was not likely to get much else about me right. It is this history which lay behind my decision to set about writing this conceptual paper.

In an effort to free myself from the baggage of a colonized man from the metropole (in India), I never had any aspiration to be British or American nor have I ever become such. I have always used my original surname and discarded the one given by the British (as they could not pronounce certain long Indian surnames, they renamed those). This reminds of Stuart Hall’s (2017, p. 14) poignant description, “Being English, it seemed to me, was not a repository of potential identification – rather it was just an unwelcome twist of historical fate. It had no traction on my actual life”. This is quite similar to what Edward Said described in his memoir about his struggles with his name – his fraught relationship with this unknowable, awkward persona - “Edward”, the other inside him who caused him much grief (Kennedy, 2000). In the last few years, I always wanted to write this conceptual paper and hoped that it might constitute an insight into the contradictory transition points in my old story – the long, mimicked and never-concluded route out of colonial subaltern hood. Politics has always been a passion, since those undergraduate college days in Calcutta in India (the city had the world’s longest ruling communist government – continuously for 34 years) when Marx, Lenin, Ho Chih Minh and Che Guevara were my idols – “rebellion”, “social justice” were cult words then (and still continues to be) - I dreamt of changing the world, for good. Now it is time to reminisce – how, like all students in our school, I also believed that one day, I must study and live in the UK or US. My feelings were same in college and thought that I could escape the lanes of my
memories in India, by leaping onto the UK or US – another future, a new dream. All that running, when there was no way to escape. I feel trapped. “How are we to live in the world?” asks Salman Rushdie. Wish I knew!

4 Suffering in Life – the Common Fate of Scholars of Color

“Rise, people, rise up now, break the chains of caste
Throw off the corpse of slavery, smash the obstacles, Rise people –
We may be Maratha, Mahar, Brahman, Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Humanity is all one, all are brothers”.

(Joshi, 1986, p. 97).

The protest song mentioned above is of the oppressed group Dalit (untouchables) in India. This song reminds of Gayatri Spivak’s (1987) notion of “strategic essentialism” which can allow for appeals to humanism in the political interest of oppressed groups – in this context, I, the author of this paper, my relationship between power and powerlessness and the endless conflict I am engaged in, where I now turn to.

Nobel Laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore (2009, p. 87) opined, “Whenever the people in the west ask us for clarifications, they do that with a superior air. It is a sign of laziness and impotency to accept conditions imposed upon us by others who have other ideals than ours”. Similarly, while studying and teaching leisure and tourism studies at universities in the US and UK, whenever I introduced the topic of race with my colleagues, I was mocked. Below mentioned are some anecdotes during my tenure as a young lecturer at a British university.

“Why do you care so much about race? It doesn’t exist. If it did, then we wouldn’t have hired you in the UK. You are teaching at a Russell Group British university being an Indian and you should be very proud of that fact. Rather than feeling that you are being discriminated, you should be happy that this experience will define your life always.”

“Your accent is so funny. You went to a British School in India, right? That’s why you are so British… your mannerisms are almost there… you just need to keep trying… Indians are smart and very good in mimicking.”

As a young faculty member, I started my career in the academia at a prestigious British university, where apart from some great experiences, I also learned my limitations for being a man of color. Every now and then, I was reminded of what was appropriate and what was not. I was overwhelmed by the emotional weight of my British mannerisms which I had to mimic all the time to please my colleagues. I was always under scrutiny. How true Stuart Hall’s (1992a, p. 17) acute observation was, “We’d all undertaken the journey to our many illusions. Embarrassingly, I found myself in tears, often”. Me too. I myself dreamt of this journey and there I were… embarked on a journey where “difference” meant everything, it could not be evaded. Standing at the crisis between an India where I did not know how to belong and an England
which I realized I did not belong. From my colleagues’ disappointments with the smell of bananas and rotten tomatoes every day at my office to sophisticated Britons asking their dogs to poo in front of my house to being denied of several deserved privileges; not to mention the omnipresent mockery which became an integral part of my life. Hacker (1993, p. 29), while arguing the value of whiteness, reiterated that it “sets a floor on how far people of that complexion can fall. No matter how degraded their lives, white people are still allowed to believe that they possess the blood, the genes, the patrimony of superiority. No matter what happens, they can never become black”. To support his argument, Hacker explained the reason why there is no word in English that overwhelms for whites that “nigger” does for blacks. “White trash? No, that won’t do it. Honky? That won’t do it”, Hacker justified. This reminds of Mill’s (2014) poignant remark that the colonialism that is still with us is energized through signs, metaphors and nasty jokes. In a white dominant environment, I felt helpless, and obviously Fanon’s (1952, p. 111) reflection was the only solace:

“So, they were countering my irrationality with rationality, my rationality with the ‘true rationality.’ I couldn’t hope to win. I tested my heredity. I did a complete checkup of my sickness. I wanted to be typically black – that was out of the question. I wanted to be white – that was a joke. And when I tried to claim my negritude intellectually as a concept, they snatched it away from me”.

Fanon wrote this more than sixty years ago and it is still so relevant. This proves that Orientalism, even forty years after Said (1979) wrote his book, is still the same as it ever was. I thought my life in the academia would be different in the US, hence I returned to the land of opportunities and this time to California – “the land of the free”. Soon I realized that my journey to an illusion was a fraught transition – I thought I was going forward however was confronted by the return of the suppressed. Quite similar to the UK, majority of my colleagues in the US were in denial of the fact that racism existed in leisure and tourism studies. Below are some excerpts.

“Come on, ‘racism’ is an obsolete word. This is California! We are the most progressive among all Americans… we love everyone! By the way, how do I pronounce your surname, why do you use this bloody surname and not what the British have given you – that sounds simple and sophisticated as well”. “We teach in a beautiful discipline – ‘leisure and tourism’. People from so many countries study in our department. We are truly a melting pot, like America. We are like various flowers in one garden. No racism, no discrimination, united we stand”.

Every time, a colleague of mine said something like the above, were supported by others unanimously, leaving me, the only man with a brown, dark (or whatever) skin, alone - with no chance to debate. Indeed, “no dialectic was warranted or required” from me (Said, 1979). The camaraderie of my white British and American colleagues and their prophesy about leisure and tourism studies reminded me of Benedict Anderson’s (1991, p. 7) remarkable work Imagined Communities, “regardless of the actual
inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation [here, leisure and tourism studies] is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (emphasis mine). This is exactly what DiAngelo (2018, p. 27) articulated in her thought-provoking, *White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*,

“White supremacy is everywhere. Messages of pre-eminent white value and Black insignificance are raining down on us 24/7, and there are no umbrellas My psychosocial development was inculcated in this water and internalized white superiority is seeping out of my pores”.

The above romantic statements made little sense as in the American university (in California – “the land of the free”) where I was working then, three white students there were charged by authorities with hate crimes in the tormenting of a black roommate that allegedly went on for months before anyone intervened – the white students calling the black student “3/5” in a reference to the way the infamous Three-Fifths Compromise and when the black student objected, the white students called him “Fraction” (Jaschik, 2013). Ironically, the Olympic Black Power Statue of Tommie Smith and John Carlos with their famous gesture still stands mute in the university campus as a testimony to racial discrimination. Both in the UK and US, according to my colleagues, race was something that did not exist anymore, which supports Ladson-Billings (2012) opinion that the whites avoid the existence of race in daily lives. And this has been happening well over a century, as Yale historian Mercer (2017, p. 2) pointed out, the “troubling ambiguities in the concept of race that have vexed eminent thinkers”. In a similar vein, Stuart Hall (2017) in his lecture at Harvard, “Race – The Sliding Signifier” explained why the concept of race stubbornly persists despite every explanation showing its realities to be socio-historical and not biological. We are shattered and destroyed by the racializing White gaze, as so movingly portrayed by Fanon, “Look, a Negro!… Mama, see the Negro. I’m frightened”. I still remember an incident during my first visit to the UK for my job interview when I requested a British lady to take my photo with the university in the background. She obliged but her little boy screamed, “Don’t take the photo of the savage!” So, my experiences in the UK and US made me relate to Fanon’s (1952, p. 37) intense observation,

“… fixed, woven out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories… sealed into that crushing objecthood… the movements, the attitudes, the glances of the other fixed me there, in the sense in which a chemical solution is fixed by a dye… now, the fragments have been put back together again by another self… a slave, not of the ‘idea’ that others have of me but of my own appearance”.

This fixing of me in the White mask as a result of my look is what Fanon (1952) articulately calls the process of *epidermalization*. More interestingly, whenever I attempted to introduce a radical thought, I was indirectly or sometimes directly, reminded of my origin that is originally from where I belong, emphasizing the brutal reality – how did I dare to eschew inherited truths? Hall (1992b) vociferously showed how old hierarchies of human identity in Western culture were forcefully broken apart when oppressed groups introduced new meanings to the representation of dif-
ference. Appiah (1986) in his radical, *The Uncompleted Argument*, commented on the scholars in the academy who have been too reluctant to share the “repudiation of race as a term of difference”.

Brunsma et al., (2012, p. 727) building on the ideas of Fanon (1966), claimed that, “theoretically and epistemologically, racism has not only colonized the lands, histories, cultures, bodies, and cognitions of non-whites but importantly, it has colonized the histories, cultures, bodies, and cognitions of whites as well”. This has had crushing significances, as DuBois (1903) indicated, “not only for non-Whites’ lived experience and self-determination but also for Whites’ ability to see beyond the veil of race”. As a result, we see the perpetuation of neo-colonial mentality (“tutelage”). Baldwin (1965, p. 7) decades ago discoursed:

“People who imagine that history flatters them (as it does, indeed, since they wrote it) are impaled on their history like a butterfly on a pin and become.

incapable of seeing or changing themselves or the world. This is the place in which it seems to me, most white Americans find themselves. Impaled. They are dimly, or vividly, aware that the history they have fed themselves is mainly a lie, but they do not know how to release themselves from it, and they suffer enormously from the resulting personal incoherence”.

5 Conclusion

“It is the racist who creates his inferior” (Fanon, 1952, p. 69).

In this conceptual paper, I have tried to articulate that in leisure and tourism studies “we still live in a wholly racialized world” (Morrison, 1992) where “privileged whites are supposed to [and in reality] protect and perpetuate not only white myths but also raciology itself” (Gilroy, 2002). Narrating my experiences as an academic in this “white world”, in this paper, I have expressed how my everlasting quest has always been to feel at home without becoming like the white culture. The dilemmas and rejections in this journey created an omnipresent tension in my life which shaped the content of this paper. My feelings can be best described through the poignant words of Toni Morrison (1994, p. 17), “A little black girl yearns for the blue eyes of a little white girl, and the horror at the heart of her yearning is exceeded only by the evil of fulfillment”.

William Shakespeare (1603, I, iv) in his play *Measure for Measure* cautions us, “Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt”. So, this conceptual paper is an attempt to consider reversing the gaze not for turning the tables rather give importance to scholars of color. It is important to note here, quoting Moisi (2009, p. 56), if “humiliation is impotence, hope is confidence” and I have benefited tremendously from all the humiliation in my academic life which gave fruition to this study. I suggest that leisure and tourism scholarship
must continue to work within the creative space between a utopian idealism and the pragmatic requirements of politics at every level. As Spivak (1987) states:

“[I]f we engage ourselves not only in the end of exploitation of our own community, but for the distant and impossible but necessary horizon of the end of exploitation, then we will not be confined within fantasmic and divisive cultural boundaries”.

Precisely, to what extent should the postcolonial leisure and tourism studies agenda be aligned with the kind of anti-representationalism characteristic of much post-structuralist and postmodernist thought? As Nicholas Dirks (1992, p.12) asks us:

“What does it mean that Edward Said, or Ranajit Guha and the Subaltern Studies collective of Indian historians, take the very same texts by Gramsci, Foucault, or Williams as fundamental that are recited elsewhere in the academy We ignore at our peril the manifestations of the postcolonial predicament in provincial universities in Asia and Africa where these theorists would all signify elitist forms of exclusion, new Western forms of domination”.

Let us believe in the transformation of leisure and tourism studies, where “the concept of race will come to be widely viewed as incoherent and empirically unsound” (Appiah, 1986, p. 57). From Marx, Sartre, Fanon, CLR James to Du Bois – all advocated “Freedom for All” based on mutual respect. Quite similar to these radical thinkers’ humanist and universalist perspectives, let’s imagine a world where, as philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1963, p. 27) so eloquently put it, “All that one knows could be otherwise. All that one sees could be otherwise?” Indeed, let us imagine a new world of leisure and tourism studies, post-Covid-19, where all kinds of racism will disappear. Perhaps, “disappear” is too strong a word, so Stuart Hall’s (2017) perceptive vision can help us to understand today’s crisis of liberal democracy in leisure and tourism studies and provide us the much-needed hope:

“A different, postcolonial understanding of multiculturalism that both acknowledged and celebrated the hybrid and mongrelized nature of cultures that slavery and colonialism had both produced and displaced. Colonial history ensured that it was no longer possible to conceive of specific communities or traditions whose boundaries and identities were settled and fixed”.

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