

Open the Doors and Let Us Out: Escaping the Coloniality of Racism

Fiona C. Edwards
York University
fionaedwards9@hotmail.com

Abstract

Racism is an integral part of racialized groups' experiences as Whiteness continues to foster the power and privilege it affords to White people. This has resulted in the racialization of Black bodies inflicted by racism. For Black youth, escaping the coloniality of racism may seem to be an impossible task as racism is ubiquitous, and has been deeply embedded in societal structures for hundreds of years. However, a heightened consciousness of racism provides a platform to fight against racial injustice. Instead of being locked in systems of oppression whereby Black bodies are wounded, there is a movement in the youth population to end intergenerational racist ideologies of what it means to be Black. Open the doors and let us out: Escaping the coloniality of racism empowers Black youth to embrace their Blackness, use their bodies and voices to reconstruct their racial identities and positionalities in society with pride and dignity.

Keywords: Black youth, racism, coloniality

Racism is our superior complex shadow
It follows us day and night.
In the day, it illuminates with stereotypes,
Prejudices, and racial discrimination.
At night, our superior complex shadow
Hides behind us
Until the bright lights of its Masters' sirens
Render it visible.

They know us, target us and violate our rights
Just as they did our parents and grandparents.
Every assault, insult, injury and trauma
Produces sores on our racialized bodies and minds.
The sores are too numerous to count.
We wrestle with the assault, insult, injury and trauma
But to no avail
Our bodies are covered entirely with sores.

As Black youth, we hide behind our tears
 The sores are still there.
 We hide in the crowd yet we stand out
 We cry out loud but our cries are faint
 We use our eyes to tell an emotional story
 No one cares to look at us.
 The pain inflicted by our sores worsen
 As they get reinjured
 By our superior complex shadow.

Open the doors and let us in
 The waiting room is empty
 Our sores are too painful.
 However, we are not welcomed in
 We are a threat, our bodies and race are punitive.
 They are not the shape and shade preferred
 By the hegemonic power
 That oversees our superior complex shadow.

We rid our body of its color
 Straightened our hair,
 Speak proper Eurocentric English,
 Change our name and work hard
 To make it half-way in
 But the doors remain closed.
 Every attempt to make it in
 Causes more sores on our racialized body.

The scars are visible, they are permanent,
 We can't pretend they will go away
 As they are constantly appearing and reappearing
 When we are at school, on the street and even in our own backyard.
 We will not ignore it's not real for us
 We live it every day, it is our present and future reality.
 We have to break loose from our superior complex shadow
 To create a new pathway to let ourselves out not in.

We are wounded, oppressed, marginalized and racialized.
Our bodies are sore, our minds are still conscious,
Our mouth remains the only part
Of our body that is uninjured.
We speak up but no one listens
We can't silence our voices,
We speak up against structural and racial violence
Our voices are heard as one that is uncivilized.

We turn to social media to speak out against racism
From the clicking of the mouse
Our voices are heard
In spaces they are not allowed.
Together we join voices in unity
As we stand in solidarity
To deconstruct the stereotypes and prejudices
Perpetuated by our superior complex shadow.

We refuse to fight racism with racist mentality,
Instead we preach the beauty of Blackness
That has been lost in the ideologies
Of colonialism, racialization and racism.
There is no shame in owning our Blackness
Our skin colour is permanent, not to be compared with Whiteness.
Removing the power from you to define us
We opened doors to let ourselves out---not in.