

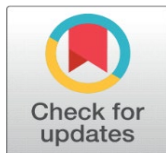
NECROPOLITICAL PARALYSIS: COLONIAL DEATH-WORLDS AND CONSTRAINED AGENCY IN LES BLANCS

Meenakshi J Sahu ¹✉, Dr. Ranjit Kumar Pati ²✉, Dr. Sudarsan Sahoo ³✉

¹ Gandhi Institute of Engineering and Technology University, Gunupur, Odisha, India

² Gandhi Institute of Engineering and Technology University, Gunupur, Odisha, India

³ Parala Maharaja Engineering College, Berhampur, Odisha, India



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Corresponding Author

Meenakshi J Sahu,
beheralakshmi95@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Les Blancs (1970) by Lorraine Hansberry offers a compelling exploration of the violent structures underlying colonial power and their impact on indigenous life and subjectivity. Through the lens of Achille Mbembe's theory of necropolitics, this study examines how the play reconfigures colonialism as a regime governed not merely by authority or ideology, but by the systematic management of life and death. The analysis focuses on key elements such as missionary intervention, racial dehumanization, militarized authority, and colonial education to reveal how these forces operate as interconnected mechanisms that sustain a necropolitical order. Central to this reading is the construction of the colonial space as a "death-world," where indigenous populations are subjected to conditions of extreme precarity and reduced to states of living death. The play's portrayal of racial hierarchies and linguistic violence highlights the ways in which colonial discourse legitimizes disposability and normalizes brutality. Major Rice emerges as the embodiment of sovereign violence, through whom colonial authority is enacted via the regulation of life and death. By foregrounding the psychological and existential dimensions of colonial domination, this study also examines the central character, Tshembe Matoseh, whose internal conflict reflects a condition that may be understood as necropolitical paralysis, wherein agency is constrained within a system that renders all choices ethically and materially compromised. Ultimately, this paper argues that Les Blancs not only critiques colonial violence but also exposes the structural logic through which power operates by producing and sustaining conditions of death.

Keywords: Necropolitics, Necropolitical Paralysis, Colonial Death-Worlds, Colonial Sovereignty, Les Blancs



1. INTRODUCTION

Colonial discourse has persistently masked imperial expansion as a civilizing mission, foregrounding progress, religion, and governance while systematically concealing the violence that sustains it. (Fanon 35). Literary texts engaging with colonial histories, however, often disrupt this narrative by foregrounding the lived realities of domination, dispossession, and systemic brutality. Les Blancs emerges as a significant intervention in this regard. The play offers a complex portrayal of colonial Africa, shaped not only by ideological conflict but also by deeply entrenched structures of racial hierarchy and violence. Departing from the view of colonialism as a static or purely political condition, the play

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reconfigures it as a dynamic system that shapes both collective existence and individual subjectivity. This, in turn, necessitates a critical framework that engages not only with visible violence but also with the underlying structures that sustain it.

To interrogate these structures, the study draws upon the concept of necropolitics developed by Achille Mbembe, which reconceptualizes sovereignty as the power to dictate who may live and who must die (Mbembe 11). Unlike frameworks that emphasize the regulation and optimization of life, such as those proposed by Michel Foucault, necropolitics foregrounds the centrality of death in the operation of modern power. It highlights how certain populations are rendered expendable and subjected to conditions of extreme precarity, often existing in spaces where violence is normalized and life is continuously exposed to the threat of death (Mbembe 40). This perspective proves particularly relevant for examining colonial contexts, where authority frequently operates through racialized hierarchies, coercion, and the systematic devaluation of indigenous life.

Scholarship on *Les Blancs* has expanded significantly in recent years, reflecting a growing recognition of the play's political, aesthetic, and philosophical complexity. Much of the existing research situates the play within Hansberry's broader intellectual and dramatic project, foregrounding her engagement with anti-colonial thought, racial identity, and ideological conflict. For instance, G. Randle-Bent (2025) re-examines *Les Blancs* through the lens of utopian realism, arguing that the play negotiates the tension between radical political imagination and material constraints, thereby extending Hansberry's broader critique of social injustice. Similarly, D. Peterson (2025) situates the play within the context of anti-colonial drama on the Broadway stage, highlighting Hansberry's engagement with African liberation movements and the controversial reception of her work as politically radical. These studies collectively emphasize the play's ideological depth and its contribution to anti-colonial discourse.

In addition to its political dimensions, scholars have also examined *Les Blancs* through the lens of linguistic and cultural identity. F. Asadi Amjad, M. Hanif, and T. Rezaei (2021) employ Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s concepts of "signifying" and "double-voicedness" to explore how Hansberry constructs layered meanings within the play. Their analysis foregrounds the role of language in articulating African identity and resistance, demonstrating how rhetorical strategies contribute to the play's richness and complexity. Similarly, A. M. Abdulrazaq (2020) focuses on the crisis of Black identity under the illusion of democratic ideals, arguing that the play exposes the contradictions of racial politics and the persistence of systemic oppression. These approaches highlight the importance of discourse, identity formation, and ideological struggle in understanding Hansberry's dramatic vision.

More broadly, studies such as A. Raymos (2020) extend the scope of analysis by situating Hansberry's work within her radical activism beyond the theatrical stage, emphasizing her commitment to social justice and political transformation. This line of scholarship underscores the interconnectedness of Hansberry's artistic and political engagements, reinforcing the view of *Les Blancs* as a text deeply embedded in the historical realities of colonialism and racial inequality. While these studies provide valuable insights into the political, linguistic, and ideological dimensions of *Les Blancs*, they largely remain confined to frameworks that emphasize identity, discourse, and anti-colonial resistance. Although these perspectives illuminate important aspects of the play, they do not fully account for the ways in which colonial power operates at a more fundamental level through the regulation of life and death. In particular, there is a relative absence of analyses that engage with Necropolitics as a critical framework for understanding the structural logic of violence within the play.

Recent theoretical developments, particularly those advanced by Achille Mbembe, have shifted attention toward the role of death in the exercise of modern sovereignty, highlighting how certain populations are subjected to conditions of extreme precarity and rendered effectively disposable. However, despite the growing prominence of necropolitics in postcolonial and political theory, its application to Hansberry's *Les Blancs* remains limited. Existing scholarship has yet to systematically examine how the play constructs what Mbembe terms "death-worlds," or how its characters navigate forms of existence shaped by the constant proximity to death.

This gap is significant because it points to an underexplored dimension of Hansberry's work—namely, the ways in which colonialism functions not only as a system of ideological domination but as a necropolitical order that structures existence through the logic of death. By foregrounding missionary intervention, racial dehumanization, militarized authority, and epistemic control as interconnected mechanisms of necropolitical power, this study seeks to extend existing scholarship beyond its current focus on identity and resistance. It argues that *Les Blancs* offers a profound critique of colonial sovereignty by revealing how agency itself is constrained within conditions where life is continuously exposed to the possibility of death.

In doing so, this paper positions itself at the intersection of postcolonial literary studies and contemporary political theory, contributing a novel perspective that reorients the analysis of *Les Blancs* toward the centrality of death in shaping colonial and subjectivized existence. This paper argues that *Les Blancs* dramatizes colonialism as a necropolitical system in which sovereignty is exercised through the orchestration of death, producing conditions that constrain agency and generate what may be termed “necropolitical paralysis,” wherein subjects are compelled to act within structures that render all choices ethically and materially compromised. Through an analysis of missionary intervention, racial dehumanization, militarized authority, and epistemic control, the study demonstrates how the play constructs a colonial environment that functions as a “death-world,” where existence itself is shaped by proximity to death. Furthermore, it examines how the character of Tshembe embodies the complexities of subjectivity under such conditions, revealing how resistance emerges not as a purely ideological choice but as a response shaped by the structural pressures of necropolitical power. By situating Hansberry’s play within this framework, the paper offers a nuanced understanding of colonial violence that foregrounds the centrality of death in shaping political and social life.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study seeks to address a central question: How does colonial power operate through the logic of death, and how are indigenous identities rendered precarious within the necropolitical landscape of *Les Blancs*? To explore this, the study adopts the theoretical framework of Achille Mbembe’s concept of necropolitics. This framework enables an examination of how sovereignty is exercised through the regulation of life and death, and how colonial structures produce conditions in which certain populations are rendered expendable. While various approaches exist within postcolonial and political theory, including those of Michel Foucault on biopolitics and Frantz Fanon on colonial violence, Mbembe’s formulation is particularly relevant for its emphasis on death as a central mechanism of power.

Within this framework, the study focuses on key conceptual tools derived from necropolitics, namely sovereignty, death-worlds, and the condition of “living in injury.” Sovereignty, understood as the power to dictate who may live and who must die, provides the basis for analysing the operations of colonial authority in the play. The notion of death-worlds enables an exploration of the colonial space as an environment where violence is normalized and life is continuously exposed to the threat of death. Additionally, the idea of living in injury allows for an examination of how colonial subjects exist in states of prolonged precarity, neither fully alive in a political sense nor entirely free from the structures of domination. These conceptual tools prompt a set of guiding analytical questions: How is colonial space constructed as a death-world within the play? In what ways are indigenous characters positioned within a hierarchy of life and death? How do language, action, and characterization reflect the normalization of violence and disposability? Furthermore, how do these conditions shape the possibilities and limitations of resistance?

By employing these tools, the study seeks to uncover the structural and ideological dimensions of colonial power as represented in the play. Particular attention is given to the ways in which missionary discourse, racial dehumanization, militarized authority, and colonial education function as interconnected mechanisms that sustain necropolitical control. These elements are not treated as isolated themes but as integral components of a system that governs existence through the logic of death. Through this approach, the analysis aims to demonstrate how *Les Blancs* moves beyond a conventional portrayal of colonial conflict to reveal a deeper structure in which power operates through the production of precarious life and the constant proximity to death.

3. ANALYSIS

Building on the framework of Achille Mbembe’s necropolitics, *Les Blancs* may be read as a dramatization of colonial power structured through the regulation of death. The play constructs a landscape in which violence is not incidental but constitutive, producing conditions that render indigenous life precarious and expendable. This section examines how such a necropolitical order is established and sustained through interconnected mechanisms, articulated through racial othering, spiritual intervention, coercive force, and the silencing of native ways of knowing. In doing so, it demonstrates how these forces collectively generate a condition of what may be termed necropolitical paralysis, wherein agency itself is shaped and constrained by the pervasive presence of death.

The necropolitical order in *Les Blancs* is established from the very outset through its spatial configuration, where the colonial environment is not merely a backdrop but a constitutive force shaping the conditions of existence. Set in the fictional African locale of Zatembe, the play opens within a colonial mission hospital rather than an indigenous space,

immediately foregrounding the dominance of colonial structures over native life. This opening is significant, as it displaces the indigenous presence from the center of its own land and situates colonial authority as the primary frame through which reality is perceived. The absence of a native-centered spatial introduction suggests that colonial power does not simply occupy territory but actively redefines it, restructuring both visibility and belonging.

The mission hospital, ostensibly a site of care and humanitarian intervention, functions instead as an extension of colonial authority. Its presence symbolizes the imposition of foreign systems of knowledge, governance, and control, masking domination under the guise of benevolence. Within the framework of Achille Mbembe's necropolitics, such spaces are integral to the production of "death-worlds," where populations are subjected to conditions that render their lives precarious and expendable. The hospital does not merely heal; it disciplines, regulates, and ultimately reinforces a hierarchy in which indigenous life is subordinated to colonial power. This dual function reflects the broader logic of necropolitical governance, wherein life is sustained only within the limits defined by sovereign authority.

Moreover, the spatial organization of the play reflects a deeper structure of exclusion and marginalization. The dominance of colonial infrastructure overshadows indigenous environments, effectively erasing them from the narrative foreground. This spatial imbalance mirrors the hierarchical ordering of life itself, where the colonized are relegated to the margins, both physically and symbolically. Their existence is framed not in terms of autonomy but in relation to the colonial system that governs them, reinforcing their status as subjects whose lives are continuously exposed to the threat of violence.

This condition is further intensified by the atmosphere of tension and instability that permeates the colonial setting. Violence, whether explicit or implied, is not an isolated occurrence but a persistent presence that defines the contours of daily life. The colonial space thus operates as a zone where the boundaries between life and death are constantly blurred, aligning with Mbembe's conception of environments in which individuals exist in a state of "living death." Within such a framework, survival itself becomes contingent, dependent on the shifting dynamics of power and control.

In this context, the setting of *Les Blancs* can be understood as a spatial manifestation of necropolitical power, where the regulation of territory is inseparable from the regulation of life. The opening scene's focus on the mission hospital signals that colonialism operates not only through overt violence but also through the reconfiguration of space in ways that normalize domination and render indigenous life precarious. This spatial logic lays the foundation for the broader dynamics of the play, establishing a world in which power is exercised through the continuous exposure of certain populations to death.

Importantly, this environment also produces what may be described as a condition of necropolitical paralysis, wherein the very structure of space constrains the possibilities of action. When existence is shaped by a system that governs both life and death, agency becomes limited, and the ability to act independently of these conditions is severely restricted. The colonial space in *Les Blancs*, therefore, does not merely contain the characters but actively shapes their experiences, decisions, and conflicts, reinforcing the central argument that colonialism operates as a necropolitical order.

The necropolitical order is further sustained through linguistic practices that classify and dehumanize indigenous subjects. Racialized language operates as a mechanism through which colonial authority defines the boundaries of humanity, determining whose lives are recognized and whose are rendered expendable. This process becomes particularly evident in the figure of Tshembe Matoseh, the central character, whose return to Zatembe after five years, from Europe situates him at the intersection of colonial and indigenous worlds, and whose encounter with Major Rice within the mission hospital reveals how language functions as an instrument of power. When Major Rice sees Tshembe in the hospital, he questions to Dekoven:

RICE: Who's the kaffir?

MADAME: We do not have "kaffirs" here, Major Rice. We have friends who are Africans.

RICE: Your papers...

MADAME: Major Rice, Tshembe was born here —as you well know! Why should he have to carry those ridiculous papers? (Hansberry, 68-69)

This exchange encapsulates the operation of necropolitical power through language. Major Rice's use of the term "kaffir" functions not merely as an insult but as an act of classification that reduces Tshembe to a racialized category devoid of individuality and political recognition. Despite Tshembe's education and transnational mobility, his identity is immediately collapsed into a term that situates him outside the boundaries of full humanity. Within the framework of

Achille Mbembe's necropolitics, such classification is central to the exercise of sovereignty, as it establishes the conditions under which certain lives can be regulated, controlled, and exposed to violence.

The demand for "papers" further reinforces this structure of control, revealing how colonial authority governs not only bodies but also movement, identity, and belonging through bureaucratic mechanisms. The requirement of documentation suggests that existence itself must be validated within colonial terms, thereby stripping the subject of autonomy. Even Tshembe, who returns from Europe, is not exempt from this system; his mobility and education are overridden by racial classification, demonstrating the inescapability of colonial power.

More significantly, this moment exposes a deeper contradiction within colonial rule: that indigenous subjects, even within their own land, are compelled to produce documentation to justify their presence. The demand for papers thus reconfigures belonging as conditional rather than inherent, transforming the native into a subject who must constantly prove legitimacy within a space that is originally his own. This bureaucratic control not only regulates movement but also redefines identity, positioning the colonized as perpetually suspect and administratively governed. In this sense, the demand for papers becomes another mechanism through which necropolitical paralysis is enforced, as the subject's very existence is subjected to external validation.

The necropolitical order established through spatial control and linguistic dehumanization in *Les Blancs* finds its most explicit expression in the figure of Major Rice, who embodies the direct enforcement of colonial sovereignty. As a representative of colonial authority, Rice does not merely administer the land but actively regulates life and death through militarized control. His constant presence with armed guards and his patrol of the colonial space signal a regime in which violence is not exceptional but routine, forming the basis of governance. Rice's authority is most clearly articulated through his imposition of curfews and his insistence on documentation, which function as mechanisms of surveillance and control over indigenous populations. The requirement that natives produce papers to justify their presence within their own land reveals a system in which belonging is no longer inherent but conditional, subject to colonial validation. The absence of such documentation is not treated as a minor infraction but as a punishable offense that may result in death, thereby exposing the lethal logic underlying colonial administration.

Within the framework of Achille Mbembe's necropolitics, Rice's actions exemplify the exercise of sovereignty as the power to dictate who may live and who must die. His treatment of the indigenous population is marked by a complete disregard for their humanity, reducing them to bodies that can be monitored, controlled, and eliminated. Violence, in this context, is not merely a reaction to resistance but a foundational principle through which authority is maintained.

The coercive authority exercised by Major Rice is reinforced through a discourse of justification that frames colonial domination as both necessary and rightful. His explanation to Marta and Charlie reveals how violence is rationalized not as excess but as obligation:

RICE: I have become a military man only because the times demanded. This is my country, you see. I came here when I was a boy. I worked hard. I married here. I have two lovely daughters... This is our home. Men like myself had the ambition, the energy, and the ability to come here and make this country into something. They had it for centuries and did nothing with it... It is our home, the right to bring up our children with culture and grace... to watch the sun go down over our beautiful hills. (70-71)

This speech reveals the ideological foundation that sustains necropolitical power. Rice's insistence that he has "become a military man only because the times demanded" reframes violence as a reluctant necessity, thereby obscuring its structural role within colonial rule. By presenting himself as compelled rather than complicit, he transforms coercion into duty, aligning personal identity with the demands of empire.

More significantly, Rice's repeated assertion that the land is "our home" constitutes a discursive act of appropriation that redefines ownership and belonging. His narrative of labor, family, and settlement constructs a moral claim to territory that displaces indigenous presence, rendering the colonized invisible within their own land. The statement that Africans "had it for centuries and did nothing with it" further legitimizes this dispossession by framing colonial intervention as productive and civilizing, thereby converting occupation into entitlement.

This rhetoric reveals the fundamental logic of colonial control, wherein the colonizer not only occupies land but reclaims it as inherently his own, erasing prior histories of indigenous ownership. The transformation of native land into colonial "home" signifies a shift from presence to possession, where belonging is no longer determined by origin but by power. In this process, the colonized are not merely displaced physically but symbolically removed from the very space that defines their identity, becoming subjects who must exist within a territory that has been redefined against them.

Through a necropolitical lens, this appropriation of land is inseparable from the regulation of life and death, as control over territory enables the sovereign to determine whose lives are protected and whose are rendered expendable. The aestheticization of colonial life functions to mask the violence that underpins this order, presenting a vision of harmony that is sustained by the exclusion and subjugation of indigenous populations. The tranquility Rice describes is therefore not neutral but predicated on a system that determines whose lives are protected and whose are exposed to death.

This justification also reinforces a condition of necropolitical paralysis, as it situates colonial violence within a framework that appears rational, inevitable, and even desirable. By embedding domination within narratives of home, family, and culture, the colonial subject not only enforces power but believes in its legitimacy, making resistance more complex and ethically fraught. Rice's speech thus reveals that necropolitical sovereignty operates not only through force but through the production of narratives that render such force both necessary and justified.

The reach of colonial power extends further into the intimate and bodily domain, where domination is exercised through control over reproduction. The play gestures toward sexual violence within the colonial order, particularly in the relationship between Major Rice and Aquah, which results in the birth of Eric, Tshembe's biracial half-brother. This is starkly revealed when DeKoven discloses the truth to Charlie and Tshembe:

DEKOVEN: Yes... It was Abioseh's wife. She died in childbirth: the Kwi say from shame. But, Morris, it wasn't the Reverend... It was George Rice. (116)

The revelation exposes how colonial authority operates not only through territorial control but through the violation and appropriation of the colonized body, collapsing the boundary between political domination and intimate life.

Such violence produces a deeply unsettling contradiction. The colonizer generates life through the colonized body while simultaneously refusing to grant that life full recognition or legitimacy. Eric's existence thus becomes emblematic of a system that creates connection but denies belonging, situating him within a liminal space between inclusion and exclusion. Situated within necropolitical theory, this condition reflects a broader structure in which certain forms of life are not fully acknowledged as politically or socially valid, rendering them vulnerable and expendable.

In this sense, the act of sexual domination is not merely an individual transgression but a manifestation of colonial sovereignty, extending power over both land and life. It demonstrates that necropolitical control operates not only through the capacity to kill but also through the authority to shape, produce, and devalue life itself. The colonized body becomes a site upon which power is inscribed, reinforcing a hierarchy in which even the creation of life is governed by structures of domination.

The operation of colonial power is further consolidated through a discourse that normalizes hierarchy rather than overtly asserting it. This is evident in Major Rice's claim:

RICE: I do not hate the African, I simply know the proper relationship. I am devoted to the blacks who work for me and whom I have helped to civilize. There are no more loyal people. (103)

Rather than expressing hostility, Rice articulates a framework of ordered relations that positions domination as both rational and necessary. The notion of a "proper relationship" shifts the focus from violence to structure, suggesting that inequality is not imposed but inherent. In doing so, it reframes power as organization, where roles are predetermined and deviation appears as disorder rather than resistance.

The emphasis on "civilizing" further embeds this hierarchy within a narrative of progress, where authority is justified through claims of improvement rather than coercion. By attributing value to "loyalty," Rice defines the worth of the colonized in terms of compliance, thereby transforming subordination into a measure of virtue. This formulation does not require explicit force; it sustains itself by producing a system in which domination appears natural and even beneficial. From a necropolitical perspective informed by Achille Mbembe, such discourse is crucial because it stabilizes power at the level of perception. It ensures that the differential valuation of life is not experienced as violence alone but as order, thereby enabling the continuation of a system in which control over life and death is exercised without constant justification.

The cumulative effects of spatial domination, linguistic dehumanization, and sovereign violence converge most powerfully in the figure of Tshembe Matoseh, whose subjectivity is shaped by the very structures that govern life and death within the colonial order. Positioned between worlds as a returnee from Europe, Tshembe occupies a liminal space that grants him critical awareness yet offers no corresponding autonomy. His perspective allows him to recognize the

mechanisms of colonial power, but this recognition does not translate into freedom; instead, it intensifies his entanglement within a system that restricts meaningful action.

At the outset, Tshembe expresses a desire to remain detached from the escalating violence, insisting that he has renounced participation in armed struggle. This refusal suggests an ethical inclination toward non-violence and a reluctance to engage in the cycles of brutality that define colonial conflict. However, such a position proves increasingly untenable within the conditions imposed by colonial rule. The environment in which Tshembe exists does not permit neutrality, as the structures of power continuously demand alignment, whether through compliance or resistance. His initial stance thus reflects not a stable moral position but an attempt to evade a system that ultimately forecloses such evasion.

Engaging Achille Mbembe's framework of necropolitics, Tshembe's experience may be understood as a condition of necropolitical paralysis, wherein the omnipresence of death constrains both action and thought. This condition is most explicitly articulated in his moment of self-conflict, where he admits:

TSHEMBE: I think so. I thought so. I no longer know. I am one man, madam. Whether I go or stay, I cannot break open the prison doors for Kumalo. I cannot bring Peter back. I cannot. I am lying, madam, to myself and to you. I know what I must do... (126)

This statement reveals not indecision but the collapse of stable choice under the pressure of a system that leaves no viable alternatives. Tshembe's oscillation between certainty and uncertainty reflects the impossibility of occupying a neutral position within the colonial order. His recognition that he "must" act signals not freedom but compulsion, as the conditions of necropolitical power force a decision that is already structured by violence. The repetition of "I cannot" underscores the limits of individual agency, while the final admission—"I know what I must do"—marks the moment where necessity overrides deliberation.

Importantly, Tshembe's trajectory resists interpretation within simple binaries such as violence versus nonviolence or resistance versus submission. The play does not present his eventual engagement in violence as a triumphant assertion of agency but as the outcome of a system that renders all alternatives equally constrained. The colonial order structures the field of action in such a way that even resistance becomes entangled within the logic it seeks to oppose. Tshembe's movement toward armed struggle thus emerges not from ideological certainty alone but from the recognition that the conditions of his existence leave no space for disengagement.

The final scene, in which Tshembe takes up arms and participates in violence, represents not a resolution of his paralysis but its culmination. His actions are shaped by the same necropolitical structures that produced his earlier hesitation, demonstrating that agency within such a system is always mediated by the presence of power. Even his confrontation with figures aligned against his community underscores the tragic dimensions of this condition, where violence becomes both unavoidable and self-consuming.

In this way, Tshembe embodies the central tension of the play: the impossibility of remaining untouched by a system that governs through the differential valuation of life. His experience reveals that colonial domination operates not only through external coercion but through the internal structuring of perception, decision, and action. The concept of necropolitical paralysis thus captures the essence of his predicament, illustrating how the proximity to death shapes not only existence but the very conditions under which political agency can be exercised.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has examined *Les Blancs* through the lens of Achille Mbembe's necropolitics to reveal how colonial power operates through a complex interplay of spatial control, racial classification, militarized enforcement, and ideological justification. Rather than depicting colonialism solely as a political or economic system, the play exposes it as a structure that organizes existence through differential valuations of life, where certain populations are systematically rendered vulnerable and expendable.

By tracing the progression from territorial domination to linguistic dehumanization and sovereign violence, this paper has demonstrated how colonial authority extends into both the external and internal dimensions of experience. The figure of Major Rice exemplifies the mechanisms through which power is enacted and normalized, while Tshembe's trajectory illuminates the constraints imposed on subjectivity within such a system. His movement from refusal to action underscores the limits of moral autonomy in a context where all choices are shaped by the pervasive presence of death.

Ultimately, *Les Blancs* offers a profound critique of colonial modernity by revealing that power does not merely suppress life but actively structures the conditions under which life is lived and valued. In doing so, the play invites a reconsideration of political agency, not as an expression of free will, but as a response negotiated within the boundaries imposed by systems of domination.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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