

English Literary File

Volume 6, 2015



SPECIAL ISSUE:

Literary Research and Responding to the Critics

An Online Journal of Academic Work by the Students of USC Upstate

Edited by Celena E. Kusch

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Cells of Life

By Luke Davis, English 102

Human embryonic stem cell (HESC) research is a recent development in the field of medicine. Human embryos contain versatile stem cells that can be manipulated to become any type of cell. They are thought to have endless possibilities in the field of medicine. Scientists believe they may be able to help treat or even cure degenerative diseases that are currently incurable, such as diabetes, Parkinson's disease, congestive heart failure, and cancer. Given these benefits, stem cell research should not only remain legal but also should continue to be funded by the United States federal government.

Human embryonic stem cells are critical in the future of the treatment of degenerative diseases. According to medical definitions presented by the Mayo Clinic, stem cells are the basic cells of the human body which can divide into daughter cells, which turn into "new stem cells (self-renewal) or become specialized cells (differentiation) with a more specific function" (Mayo Clinic Staff). There are several different types of stem cells, but the most commonly researched is the embryonic stem cell. Embryonic stem cells come from a blastocyst, an embryo that is three to five days old and has about 150 cells. They are what the medical community calls pluripotent stem cells, meaning they are versatile and can multiply easily. Embryonic stem cells can be taken from aborted fetuses, but it is much more common to collect them from embryos created in in vitro fertilization clinics. Because so many embryos are made, there are almost always extra embryos left over. The people for whom the embryos were made can decide whether to destroy the extra embryos or to donate them to stem cell research. Other stem cells include adult stem cells which are found in adults' bodies in small numbers.

Adult stem cells are not versatile, as they usually cannot change into specialized cells. Scientists have recently begun to change adult stem cells into more versatile cells, called induced pluripotent stem cells, but researchers do not know if using these induced cells from adults might have harmful side effects in humans (Mayo Clinic Staff). Stem cell therapy, also known as regenerative medicine, can help to repair damaged cells or organs. While organ transplants are often a better way to help a patient, there is a limited supply of organs available. Stem cells are manipulated to become different types of cells, such as heart cells or nerve cells. When they are implanted into the damaged area, the healthy stem cells can work to repair the hurt tissue around them. Stem cell therapy to regrow bone marrow, used to treat leukemia and other blood-related diseases, is being applied today.

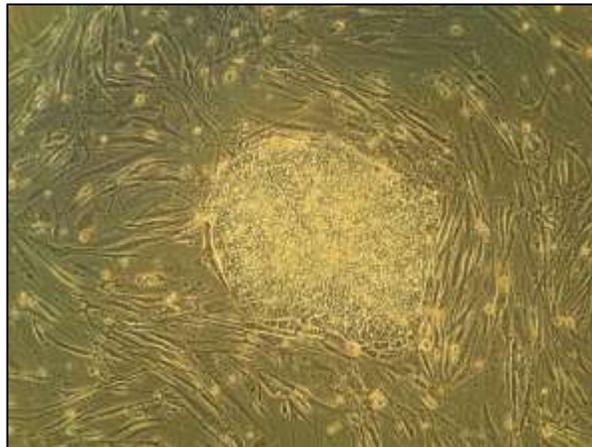


Figure 1 A colony of embryonic stem cells, from the H9 cell line (NIH code: WA09). Viewed at 10X with Carl Zeiss Axiovert scope. Image by Ryddragyn, 2006. Image available at Wikimedia Commons.

Because of its importance in the future of medicine, HESC research needs funding. The Alliance for Aging Research argues in its article "Embryonic Stem Cell Research to Save the Lives of Millions" that embryonic stem cell research, despite the moral ambiguity of using embryos, needs to be federally funded, not developed exclusively by private companies, in order to support the academic research that is necessary to unleash the full potential of embryonic stem cells. After explaining the vast benefits, the author contends that curtailing government funding for stem cell research could be devastating for its future. While the private sector would still be able to carry it out, public universities would not. The author quotes Dr. James Thomson as saying, "The best minds in this research are still in academia, not industry. . . . To exclude the best minds in the whole field would set back the effort tremendously" ("Embryonic Stem Cell"). The research would also be much less transparent if it were privately funded. If funded by the government,

the people of the United States would be able to direct the research in the path they thought to be most important, but the same would not be true with private funding (“Embryonic Stem Cell”). This article nearly perfectly embodies my viewpoint on HESC research. Clearly, HESC research has the potential to have immense health benefits for currently incurable diseases. In addition, although HESC research could progress while limited to the private sector, the most effective and transparent way to continue the research would be in public institutions of higher education and research. Federal funding would allow the most intelligent people in medicine to research applications of embryonic stem cells and then to integrate that into medical treatment.

The main concession of the Alliance for Aging Research to critics of HESC research is that it could be considered abortion because it intentionally terminates an embryo’s life. However, few embryos would be affected. The author glosses over the negative effects of HESC research, but I agree with what they are saying. Because embryonic stem cells can divide indefinitely, “a small number of fertilized eggs could produce all the stem cells researchers will ever need” (Alliance for Aging Research). The death of embryos, while unfortunate, has such great life-saving potential. In addition, stem cells are taken from embryos created outside the human body in laboratories. Stem cells extracted from a very limited supply of these embryos could potentially save or improve millions of people’s lives.

I believe it is moral to carry out HESC research because of its potential benefits in medicine. John Harris argues in “Stem Cells, Sex, and Procreation” that stem cell research is ethical. After explaining the benefits of stem cell research, he states his “principle of waste avoidance”: if good can be done with existing resources, it should be done if the resources would be wasted otherwise. In this case, he is referring to frozen embryos from infertility clinics and aborted fetuses. Often, doctors and/or donors have to decide whether to let unused frozen embryos, which were intended for in vitro fertilization, die or whether to use them for research. He believes it is unethical to waste the embryos when they have such a great life-saving potential. He also believes that once a fetus is aborted, it is immoral to let the stem cells present go to waste for the same reason. I agree that embryos left over from in vitro fertilization should be used. The frozen embryos will die eventually, so what harm is done if

they expire sooner rather than later? If their stem cells are extracted, the embryos can be put to good use, but the stem cells will simply be wasted if the embryo is never implanted in a woman’s uterus. In order to appease those against using embryos, however, the parents of the embryos should be able to choose whether to donate the extra embryos to HESC research or let them die a natural death. I believe that it should not be legal to use aborted fetuses for HESC research, however. If that were allowed, there would be a potential that people would abuse the system by conceiving a baby for the sole purpose of aborting it and extracting its stem cells. Using aborted fetuses for HESC research would compromise the importance of human life.

James Delaney wrote “Embryo Loss in Natural Procreation and Stem Cell Research: How the Two Are Different” in direct response to Harris’ “Stem Cells, Sex, and Procreation,” focusing on the Catholic perspective. He explains that in vitro fertilization is unacceptable under the Catholic belief because it intentionally sacrifices or destroys some embryos so that another may live. Because it is immoral to destroy an embryo, such as through abortion, it is therefore immoral to destroy embryos by extracting their stem cells. For Delaney, it follows that HESC research, despite its potential benefits to medicine, is unethical solely because it sacrifices an embryo. While I understand that it is not ideal to sacrifice an embryo, I believe that the benefits of HESC research greatly outweigh the negatives. Very few embryos are needed in order to sustain HESC research, so one single embryo could eventually save or improve millions of lives. Is it fair to say that the life of one three-day old embryo created in a laboratory, not in a human uterus, is more important than the lives of millions? If even two people could be helped with one embryo, it would be worth the unfortunate cost that extracting stem cells causes.

Although there are great potential benefits that could arise from HESC research, some believe it is unethical. Dr. J.C. Wilke argues in “I’m Pro-Life and Oppose Embryonic Stem-Cell Research” that HESC research is immoral. He begins by explaining his opinion on the difference between experimenting on human tissue and human beings themselves. He says that it is ethical to carry out research on human tissue, but it is unethical to do the same on human beings. Wilke reasons that an embryo is a human being: human life begins when a sperm and an egg unite, which he says forms a fertilized egg. They

become a blastocyst within a week, when they consist of several hundred cells. He elaborates on his opinion that an embryo is human: "At the first cell stage, you were everything you are today. You were already male or female. You were alive, not dead. You were certainly human as you had 46 human chromosomes." An embryo, Wilke claims, is a human no matter what form it takes. For Wilke, when a frozen embryo is used for stem-cell research instead of being allowed to develop and die a natural death, it is "cut open" by a researcher, "thereby killing" the embryo in order to extract stem cells. I understand that Wilke is concerned with respecting the human body, but I do not believe his viewpoint properly achieves that goal. Although a blastocyst is a human genetically, the blastocysts involved in the HESC research debate have no potential to be a human being unless they are successfully implanted into a woman's body where they could develop into the specialized cells that make up the human body. If the embryos are not used for HESC research, they will die a natural death in a laboratory. It follows that the blastocyst would never live out life as a human being or anything close to it, as it has not grown any semblance of organs.

Is the quality of life of a blastocyst just as important, or, as Wilke contends, more important than the quality of life of an ailing patient? A person with diabetes, Parkinson's disease, or congestive heart failure presently has no hope of being cured. The stem cells from just a handful of blastocysts could eventually cure every person who has nearly any degenerative disease such as those. Because of that, I believe it would actually be immoral to let the opportunity HESC research offers to cure degenerative diseases go to waste.

The United States government should continue funding human embryonic stem cell research because of its life-saving potential. HESC research has nearly unlimited potential in curing degenerative diseases including cancer, diabetes, Parkinson's disease, and congestive heart failure. Although it requires the sacrifice of a limited number of human embryos, it could save the lives of millions of people in the future. Without federal funding, HESC research would not be able to continue efficiently or transparently. Could the United States really feel proud if we let those with degenerative diseases die needlessly? Human embryonic stem-cell research could be the next great breakthrough in the field of medicine, so we need to support it however possible.

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“‘The drops which fell from Shakespear’s pen’: Hamlet in Contemporary Fiction”

By Danielle Sorrells, English 300

In his article “‘The drops which fell from Shakespear’s Pen’: *Hamlet* in Contemporary Fiction,” Patrick Gill finds William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* to be an ever-evolving text, constantly serving a purpose for contemporary writers and readers as they explore its characters and experiences in regards to their own. Citing three different authors and their works related to *Hamlet*, Gill offers insight into the multiple iterations, adaptations, and meanings of Shakespeare’s play, concluding that this plurality is a thing of tradition that should be respected, if not rejoiced.

Gill refers to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* as a “pre-text,” which is to say one text that precedes and leads to another (259). There are two distinct groups to which Gill is alluding in this classification of Shakespeare’s play: those who fundamentally agree with Shakespearean values and those who fundamentally disagree. He develops this thought further by exploring authors like John Updike, author of the novel *Gertrude and Claudius* (2001), who challenge Shakespeare through shifts in perspective in their retellings of and literary responses to *Hamlet*. He explains that this shift in perspective changes the subjectivity of *Hamlet*, thus altering the reader’s sympathy for one character (in Updike’s case Hamlet) to another (for Updike, Gertrude). In making his point, Gill asserts that for this group of readers and writers, Shakespeare is no longer the point of centrality in any understanding of literary and/or cultural values. Instead Shakespeare is looked to as a precursor of thought. The themes explored in his plays influence the themes explored in the next generation’s work (and so on and so forth). This augmentation of *Hamlet* is what Gill is referring to when he finds the play to be an ever-evolving work of literature.

The other group Gill alludes to—the ones who agree with Shakespearean values—are represented by Graham Swift in *Ever After* (1993) and Ian McEwan in *Amsterdam* (1998). Gill explores their works and their relationship to *Hamlet*, concluding that their agreement is not a product of naïveté (i.e.

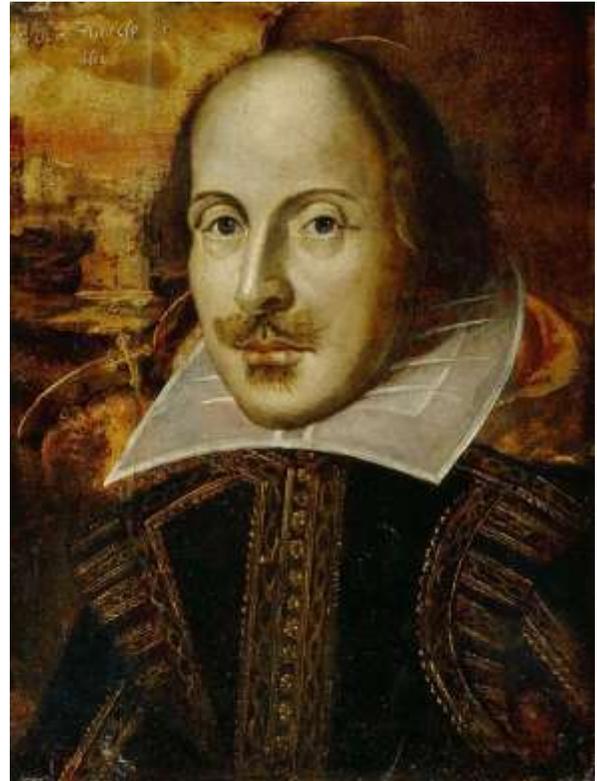


Figure 2 The Flower portrait of William Shakespeare, oil on canvas, c. 1820-1840, Royal Shakespeare Company. Image available at [Wikimedia Commons](#).

they do not agree with Shakespeare because they cannot form thoughts outside of his), but rather of a self-serving purpose. It serves their purpose and their novels’ purposes to agree with Shakespeare, his ideals, his blueprint. There is but one subjective perspective and through this perspective, the reader can experience the characters’ complex actions.

Gill goes on to assert that the novelistic platform on which so many writers stand today serves as a more introspective and liberating medium than the dramatic genre of Shakespeare’s day. The novel allows more freedom for the writer to rewrite or revise Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and offers the reader a more in depth and detailed perspective of the play. It is a genre of “open discourse where everyone can have their say” (Gill 265). This generic extension of

the play is another example of Gill's argument that *Hamlet* is an ever-evolving work of literature.

In his conclusion, Gill makes no compelling claim. He only points out that *Hamlet* is more than a canonical piece of literature. It possesses life. It gives life. The play creates its own history, one that changes the tapestry of the play itself into something much more grandiose and poignant. If we as readers and students are to learn anything from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, it is that the play has given us just as much voice as the actors themselves.

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The Psychosocial Effects of Beauty in A Streetcar Named Desire

By Paul Adams, English 428

Throughout history, civilizations across the globe have prioritized physical attractiveness and moral character as critical aspects of feminine beauty. During the Modernist period, society valued, as evident by the advertisements published in periodicals, women with youth and cleanliness in both body and spirit. These standards were especially important for those considering the prospect of marriage. As a consequence, many Modernist works focus on the extent to which female characters embody these qualities or attempt to do so. As with the case of *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), Blanche DuBois is unable to possess these indispensable characteristics in full due to her promiscuous past and cynical perspective on age, yet she nevertheless attempts to create a fantasy within the minds of others and in her own to a degree, suggesting she remains the chaste, naïve, and youthful girl she once was, maintaining herself in a state in which society would gladly accept her as an eligible bachelorette. Even as the Modernist media advertised products for helping women attain or to at least give the appearance of having these desirable qualities, selections of Modernist literature give insight into the extent to which women during this period would sacrifice themselves and their identity to acquire habitual cleanliness, health, and youth.

Many modernist periodicals include advertisements for soaps and other cleaning products with zealous claims. For example, *The American*

Magazine in 1910 contained an advertisement for a bathing regimen that effectively “removes superfluous fat and gives a slender, firm stylish figure. Merely use a little twice a week in warm water when taking a bath. No need of taking drugs or starving yourself” (Landshut 110). In building credibility, the ad mentions how the saline solution has been “patronized by royalty [and has become] famous for centuries. Endorsed by the Medical Pro-

fession. Praised by those who have used it” (Landshut 110). Regardless whether one should be persuaded by its claims, the advertisement nevertheless reveals to readers the extent to which bathing had become an important ritual in Modernist society particularly among women with the idea of purging themselves of impurities.

In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, bathing and the use of perfume are

Blanche’s central activities throughout much of the play, resulting in a borderline obsession. Just as she arrives at the home of the Kowalskis, upon meeting her sister Stella in Scene One, Blanche insists “now, then, let me look at you. But don’t you look at me, Stella, no, no, no, not till later, not till I’ve bathed and rested” (Williams 11). During the beginning of the play, the viewer is introduced to the entirety of Blanche’s predicament as she begins living with Stella and Stanley, namely adapting to working class conditions in a different culture and geographic location, satiating her alcoholism, and escaping her notoriety from working at a hotel known for its special accommodations. She is ashamed of herself.



Figure 3 Cropped screen shot of Vivien Leigh as Blanche DuBois from the trailer for the film *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951). Image available at Wikimedia Commons.

She wishes to take an initial bath after having met her sister to figuratively wash and rid herself of her past so that she may have a new start. In Scene Two, as she leaves the bathroom and seeks to attract Stanley's undivided attention, she shouts to him, "hello, Stanley! Here I am, all freshly bathed and scented, and feeling like a brand new human being" (Williams 36). Blanche finds an inexplicable sense of comfort in the bathing ritual and additionally in the scent she wears.

Perfume historically has served a dual purpose, offering its wearer and those around a pleasant aroma and, in a more pragmatic sense, masking odors. Just as the baths physically and, in Blanche's mind, symbolically cleanse her of the past, her love for perfume is representative of her desire to conceal her true identity and outlook on life under the pretense of Southern gentility and the values she had adopted as a young girl. Her use of perfume later in Scene Two demonstrates it has a power of its own, having an ability to influence even the behavior and temperament of Stanley, the embodiment of unyielding, ruthless authoritarianism.

As Stanley begins elaborating upon the tenets of the Napoleonic code as they apply to the roles of men and women in Louisiana, the stage direction calls for Blanche to spritz "herself with her atomizer; then playfully sprays him with it. He seizes the atomizer and slams it down on the dresser. She throws back her head and laughs" (Williams 41). Stanley, with his hyper-masculine temperament, decidedly rejects the perfume because of its feminine scent; he finds wearing it would additionally compromise a fundamental aspect of his character. Unlike Blanche, Stanley is sincere, genuine, and forthright, however merciless and severe he may come across to others. He rejects the effort to mask his character behind the sweet smell of cleanliness and perfume. Stanley truthfully is what Blanche calls the "survivor of the stone age! Bearing the raw meat home from the kill of the jungle" (83), yet he never deviates from the essence of his character. Blanche, however, symbolically needs the jasmine perfume because she wishes to preserve the façade of a Southern belle, an identity she can no longer sustain due to the tragic circumstances and demise of her former husband. By spraying Stanley with the perfume, she not only exercises dominance over Stanley by attempting to change his naturally sweaty, masculine stench, but she also demonstrates to Stanley that his

dissatisfaction in her wardrobe reveals his lack of taste, something she and Stella both possess as a result of their upbringing. As Blanche converses with her sister upon hearing the news of Stella's pregnancy, she realizes Stanley, unlike men of her former social circle, is "just not the type that goes for jasmine perfume, but maybe he's what we need to mix with our blood now that we've lost Belle Reve" (Williams 45). Blanche begins to understand how her heritage and the lifestyle of her childhood are incompatible with the way in which Modernist life operates, requiring one to adopt a sense of "autonomy, novelty, speed, success, and uniqueness" (Dolfsma 351) underlying any kind of façade one may present to the world. Nevertheless, she continues to showcase herself as the ideal of feminine beauty, outdated though she may be.

Another characteristic valued of women during the Modernist period was the appearance of health and vitality. *The Atlantic Monthly* of 1910 included an advertisement for a coffee additive called Postum. The ad attracted readers by elaborating upon the positive effects of abstaining from excessive eating and drinking in order to avoid the ill effects these activities may result in. It begins, "Some are fair because they happen so. Others attain the clear, rosy complexion, smooth velvety skin, bright eyes, easy, graceful poise, as a result of carefully selected food and drink that properly nourishes the body"; the ad acknowledges that whatever the cause, "a fair complexion is the outward token of health within" ("Two Classes of Fair Women" 97). In an example from another Modernist text, the narrator of *The Professor's House* (1925) by Willa Cather describes the sheer magnetism of St. Peter's daughter Rosamund as the embodiment of what the Modernists considered healthy, vibrant, and exuding with life. Standing apart from her family members, she is recognizable for having a "colouring [that] was altogether different; dusky black hair, deep dark eyes, a soft white skin with rich brunette red in her cheeks and lips. Nearly everyone considered Rosamond brilliantly beautiful" (Cather 26). Her appearance is not only a spectacle in its own right, but a representation of a modern women living life with vivacity and exuberance as manifested by her appearance. Throughout *A Streetcar Named Desire*, in contrast, Blanche must contend with her unattractive state of being as an unhealthy alcoholic while attempting to fulfill the obligation to appear to be a vivacious, social drinker.

It is one of the Blanche's greatest concerns that she should exhibit in public poor restraint with regard to alcohol consumption because it is an activity that notoriously leads to physical and psychological distress and irresponsibility, markers of poor health habits and a lack of femininity that could diminish her chances with potential romantic partners, like Stanley's old-fashioned friend, Mitch. Regardless, after meeting with her sister, Blanche "rushes to the closet and removes the bottle; she is shaking all over and panting for breath as she tries to laugh. The bottle nearly slips from her grasp" (Williams 11). Given the involuntary movement of her hands and the clumsiness she exhibits during this scene, the play reveals early on her obsession with a probable addiction to alcohol. Even as she reassures Stella that "your sister hasn't turned into a drunkard, she's just all shaken up and hot and tired and dirty" (12), her very acknowledgement of the label she uses reveals to the audience and to Stella that she truly is in denial of her negative health habits. Even as she indulges herself secretly in the absence of guests, she must carry on each day with as healthy an image as possible, an image she creates through bathing, perfume, and low levels of light.

As Mitch rings the door and waits for Blanche during their last significant encounter in Scene Nine, Blanche, having had "on the table beside [the] chair, a bottle of liquor and a glass" (139), is startled and "rushes about frantically, hiding the bottle in a closet, crouching at the mirror and dabbing her face with cologne and powder" (139). Just as the cologne may be used to cover the stench of the alcohol she consumed, the powder additionally serves to cover and mask her unwholesome appearance for that specific moment in time with Mitch. Even as Mitch's attitude towards Blanche has changed from one of admiration to one of disdain for her constant lies about her true identity and past associations with other men, Blanche insists on continuing the façade of an innocuous Southern belle with little knowledge of the world. Just as Mitch admits he was to end his courtship with her, Blanche remembers, "oh, yes—liquor! We've had so much excitement around here this evening that I am boxed out of my mind! . . . Here's something, Southern Comfort! What is that, I wonder" (142). Although she has been drinking the same liquor prior to Mitch's visit, she hides it as a result of being consciously aware of the social implications of a single woman of marrying age drinking alone. This would suggest that as a woman

engaging in this activity, she thoroughly enjoys the act of drinking itself, suggesting she could possibly be drinking in excess, which, the advertisements warn, "is often the cause of various aches and ills" ("Two Classes of Women" 97). Additionally, it violates the gender norms ascribed to by a significant number of Americans, particularly males, of this time period, and, more importantly, compromises the integrity of the character she has sustained in front of Mitch up until this point as a healthy lady of high social standing and traditional values.

These traditional values—although false—further set Blanche at odds with the modernist emphasis on women's youthful health. For the cosmetics industry during the Modernist period in the United States, one of more popular products advertised and sold due to popular demand by women of all ethnicities was skin creams aimed at leaving its user with a youthful appearance. *The Crisis*, as a publication with African-American culture as its foundation, often would include advertisements for these products such as those made by Kashmir Productions. The company claims that its "preparations produce new skin as well as whiten, soften and cleanse the skin. Wrinkles, blackheads, and liver spots disappear immediately. The complexion takes on the charm of color and youth" ("The Kashmir Girl" 44). While Kashmir Preparations mentions that their products produce a whitening effect, its emphasis is primarily on how the user may conceal her signs of aging while simultaneously developing a more radiant, youthful glow to the skin. In comparison, a later issue of *The Crisis* includes an advertisement by Yvonne Laboratories stressing the benefits women will experience from the habitual use of their exclusive and easy-to-use "Lemon Massage Cream [that] will work wonders with your skin. A wonderful bleaching cream for sunburns. Keeps the skin smooth, firm and youthful looking. Clears up muddy and sallow skins. Removes lines and wrinkles. Guaranteed harmless" ("A Beautiful Complexion" 142). Women of the Modernist period were hyperaware of the value society placed on youth and its preservation as women make the transition into middle age.

While Blanche makes it a priority to practice good hygiene and at minimum maintain the appearance of health, no other concern dominates her being and essence more than her obsession with youth. Just as *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891)

accounts a man's selling of his soul for the gift of forever being young, Blanche will do anything in her power, because her youth is evanescent, to give the illusion of possessing it in abundance through crafty, convoluted ways of manipulating light and darkness. For example, as Mitch spends time with Blanche throughout the course of the play, he begins to recognize she only spends time with him during the night and in scenarios where "it's always some place that's not lighted much" (Williams 144). Blanche favors the darkness as a crutch to conceal her age, but given her approach to the use of bathing, perfume, and makeup, her affinity for darkness mirrors her life of secrecy. While Blanche remains preoccupied with her negative attitude towards aging, Mitch, on the contrary, explains, "I don't mind you being older than what I thought. But all the rest of it—Christ! ...Oh, I knew you weren't sixteen any more. But I was a fool enough to believe you was straight" (145). In this moment, Blanche realizes that youth, in Mitch's eyes, is less of a priority in his desire to begin a serious relationship with her than is her integrity that she seems to boast of so confidently, but so falsely. Because of his newly acquired knowledge of her scandalous past at the Tarantula Arms, he finds Blanche "not clean enough to bring in the house with my mother" (150). Even if Blanche were to regain her youth, her lack of morals with regard to chastity and subsequent succession of boldfaced lies on the topic would discourage any man of this period who would otherwise pursue her for marriage. Trust and honesty, Blanche begins to learn, are vital in any relationship, whether it is between family members, close friends, or significant others. Her cleansing rituals have not managed to preserve her innocence and youth.

Though Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire* is delusional and devotes her life and the choices she makes to a self-constructed fantasy, her character is consistent with and adherent to the tenets of Modernism, though in unexpected ways. Many works during this time period would focus on a "loss of the real" (Dolfsma 352) and a perspective of how "the world outside is contrasted with the representation that the individual has of it in his own mind" (353). During her most honest moment of the play in Scene Nine, however, Blanche confesses, "I don't want realism. I want magic! Yes, yes, magic! I try to give that to people. I misrepresent things to them. I don't tell truth, I tell what ought to be truth. And if that is sinful, then let me be damned

for it" (Williams 145). Despite her desire to achieve the modern feminine ideal, Blanche proves to be maladjusted for the modern world. While Stella was able to see a future outside of Belle Reve and as a consequence is able to live a meaningful life with an intrepid, masculine, and dedicated, if brutal, husband, Blanche, because of her inability to recognize the decline of her family's prominence in Mississippi and the finality of her husband's death, finds it continually challenging to adapt to the rapidly changing world she finds herself in. With her upper class background and demeanor juxtaposed with her uncanny ability to survive by whatever means necessary, she is simultaneously an anachronism and an example of a modern, independent minded woman that lives life according to her own philosophy.

Because neither side of her identity fits the culture in which she finds herself with Stanley and Stella, the community eventually expels her at the play's conclusion. This is due to the fact that "socio-cultural values denote strong underlying convictions many people in a group or in society hold, consciously as well as unconsciously, most of which would be considered of an ethical or philosophical nature" (Dolfsma 355). Throughout the play, Blanche verbally taunts or talks negatively about Stanley with Stella, calling him names in mockery of his Polish heritage, working class background, table manners, and authoritarian personality. Because Blanche speaks of Stanley as an inferior with bestial tendencies, she is unwilling to "offer a way of communicating messages to the relevant 'audience' and enable individuals to make and maintain social relations" (356). Blanche fully understands modern society's highest regard for youth, cleanliness, and health in women of marrying age, but what she fails to realize is that the retaining or procuring of these qualities should not compromise her sense of honor, community belonging, and adherence to moral principles.

The soap she uses and the perfume she wears cleanse and mask her body, yet neither can wash away nor conceal her past with other men as she continues to insist on her purity to Mitch. While Mitch is initially attracted to Blanche and clarifies his disregard for her age, her pathological lying makes him view her as entirely immoral and unfit for becoming a proper wife. The Modernists respected and prized truly clean, youthful, and healthy women not only as an ideal of feminine

beauty but also as evidence for a woman with an inherent value system.

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The Pitfalls of Postmodernist Criticism: Identifying the Gaps in Analysis of Contemporaneous Literature

By Kristian Wilson, English 430

When discussing postmodernism, critics Fredric Jameson and Linda Hutcheon agree on very little. Jameson laments the lack of originality and individualism in post-World War II literature, while Hutcheon celebrates postmodernism's capacity to develop new stories by bending history to serve its narratives. The first of two things these two disparate critics agree upon is that no one may easily define postmodernism itself. In his 1983 essay, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," Jameson claims that "[t]he concept of postmodernism is not widely accepted or even understood today" (1). Hutcheon, in her 1988 book *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, declares, "Of all the terms bandied about in current cultural theory, postmodernism must be the most over and under-defined" (3). In their attempts to pin down the postmodern period, both authors skirt around offering a true definition and instead provide readers with a framing lens through which they may view postmodern works. This approach is very much akin to—and just as frustrating as—US Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's non-definition of hardcore pornography: "I know it when I see it" (*Jacobellis*). The lack of concrete classifications for postmodernism from Jameson and Hutcheon requires scholars to piece together the positions of these critics from their respective essays.

Jameson asserts that postmodernism only emerged after the highly original and individual voices of modernism were claimed. The development of modernism into postmodernism was not spontaneous, but was brought about as "the age of cor-

porate capitalism" destroyed individualism by way of mass-culture and –consumerism (4). Therefore, according to Jameson, postmodernist writers must engage in pastiche—"blank parody, parody that has lost its sense of humor"—of modernist styles in order to assume any façades of originality (3). Hutcheon declares postmodernism a paradox, something that is only easily defined by what it is not, through "negativized rhetoric"—which she also refers to as "the rhetoric of rupture"—using terms such as "discontinuity, decentering, and so on" (3, 20). The paradoxical nature of postmodernism lends itself to the genre Hutcheon calls "historiographic metafiction" (5). This genre consists of purely self-insistent fiction, which is to say that its stories exist independently of any actual reality and yet, paradoxically, draw heavily upon the personalities and events of the past in service to their narratives. Thus, we see the second point on which Jameson

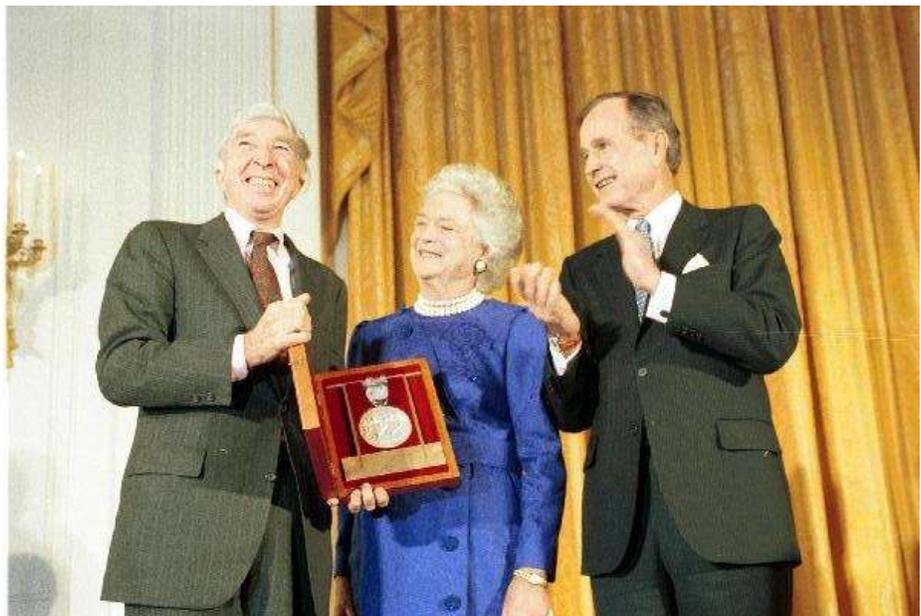


Figure 4 John Updike with First Lady Barbara Bush and President George H. W. Bush at awards ceremony for the Medal of Arts at the White House, 17 Nov. 1989. Photo Credit: George Bush Presidential Library. Image available at Wikimedia Commons.

and Hutcheon concur: that postmodernism uses the past to suit its own purposes, whether pastiche or historiographic metafiction. But where does this definition leave those works of fiction that are grounded in reality and do not delve into the past for content?

Most, being so far removed from the Lost Generation, certainly could not be considered modernist, and with so many works of contemporaneous literature—that is, set in the same era in which it is written, without the use of the nostalgic and historiographic tropes identified by Jameson and Hutcheon—spread out over seventy years of postmodernism, addressing them as a new period is out of the question. Scholars have only one answer, then: to admit that current postmodern thought has left large cracks through which works of literature written in and about their present times, without utilizing or revising history, have fallen. In order for society and academia to fully understand—and possibly move past—postmodernism these gaps must be acknowledged and analyzed. John Updike's short story, "Separating," is a prime example of this unaddressed postmodern genre.

Published in 1975, Updike's piece is the story of a couple who have finally decided to tell their children about their impending divorce. Its characters, being upper class and—presumably—white, would fit well in modernist literature; Richard Maple fits perfectly into the niche of Aristotelian hero: he is from the upper echelon of society, influential, with character flaws which are not too remote to destroy readers' sympathy. However, "Separating" bears enough postmodernist attributes to place it firmly within that period. The story is rife with materialism to the extent that it drives the narrative.

The Maples have just installed a new tennis court on their property, and it stands unfinished, a testament to Richard and Joan's failed marriage and flagrant wasting of money. Other various luxuries are casually referenced throughout the text, such as sabbaticals in Europe, camps, "lobster and champagne" dinners, and rock concerts (Updike 2269). Doubling down on this rampant consumerism, the children are frequently described as inanimate objects or concepts:

Joan reminds Richard that "[t]hey're not just some corporate obstacle to [his] freedom," and John exclaims, "We're just little things you had" (2269, 2271). Later, Joan describes telling Dickie about the divorce as "do[ing]" him, to which

Richard responds with an even more dehumanizing, "I'll do it" (2273). Although there is frequent insistence on the children's having separate identities, that the characters need to insist in the first place is telling: the concept of their individualism "is merely a philosophical and cultural mystification which sought to persuade [them] that they possessed unique personal identit[ies]" (Jameson 4). There is no evidence anywhere in the text that would lead readers to believe it takes place outside of the mid-1970s.

Judith's "stories of bomb scares" during her study abroad in England fit nicely with the United Kingdom's political landscape during this period (Updike 2270). According to the *Canterbury Times* article, "University of Kent Expert Professor Feargal Cochrane: Canterbury's Bomb Scare and Northern Ireland," that was exactly when "the Provisional IRA [Irish Republic Army] exported their bombing campaign to Britain," and "in the peak year of violence, 1972, the death rate [in Northern Ireland] was an average of 1.3 per day." Jameson argues that postmodernism cannot accept its own present. He writes, "the very style of nostalgia films [is] invading and colonizing even those movies today which have contemporary settings: as though we have become incapable of achieving aesthetic representations of our own current experience" (6). It is important to note that while Jameson is only questioning the ability of postmodern culture to live wholly in the present in the above passage, he does not back down from this argument. Therefore, it is acceptable to classify this as a concrete statement from the critic on the nature of postmodernism. The contemporariness of stories like Updike's "Separating" begs the question: is the past truly necessary in postmodern fiction? To insist that postmodern fiction draw from the past is to give in, primarily, to Jameson's pessimistic outlook on its nature. If postmodernists are "condemned to live in a perpetual present for which there is no conceivable future," then theorists cannot even so much as create a new period for contemporaneous fiction within the postmodern period, as creating something new would push analysis past the postmodern and over "the horizon" that Jameson argues will never be reached (7). Contemporaneous literature was inarguably more popular in pre-World War II periods, thus making its presence in the postmodern that of a somewhat problematic outlier for which theorists have yet to account.

It is important, then, to identify why contemporaneous fiction has not been as popular since the modernist era, and why Jameson and Hutcheon believe that postmodern fiction relies on historical play. Luckily, these questions inevitably have the same answer. The early decades of the postmodern period were full of significant changes that altered the American sociopolitical landscape. With the economy booming after World War II, and the G.I. Bill allowing returned veterans the chance to finish their educations or start businesses, America began making slow progress toward an inclusive policy of diversity, allowing the stories and experiences of non-Whites, non-Christians, non-heterosexuals, and non-males mainstream circulation. For the first time, minority writers were able to share their stories without a limited audience, and they had many tales to tell; they played catch up with centuries of literature focused outside their spectrums of experience, making sure to retell history as they had seen it. The emergent postmodern movement dove into nostalgia and historiographic metafiction in order to offer up vibrant novels and poetry that were truer than history. Thus, the postmodern face Jameson and Hutcheon saw and critiqued dripped heavily with such historical play and allowed contemporaneous fiction to slip past quietly, and unnoticed. The gaps left by currently accepted postmodern academic theories are not difficult to identify, but they will not be as easy to close.

Such an action, as previously stated, will require scholars to admit that postmodernists are capable of embracing the present as it is, without utilizing the historical play that Jameson and Hutcheon argue defines their work. In order to accept contemporaneous literature, such as “Separating,” as postmodern, scholarship must recognize the paradox of denying it as such: if

postmodernism describes more than literature, art, and film—if it describes culture—then those who live in it have, by necessity, been shaped by it. Writers, then, who have lived and worked over the last seven decades, must be considered postmodern; just as they shape their works, the period, in turn, shapes them. The simplest solution to the problem of the definitional gap is to cover the gaps broadly, with an explanation or definition such as the above, so that contemporaneous literature is held in as full regard as its nostalgic and historiographic cohorts. Admittedly, this argument does nothing to solve the problem of finding the next period in American literature. However, if it will allow postmodern authors to accept the present, then perhaps it will also aid them in sallying forth into the future.

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Out of Many, One People: The Anomaly That Is the Jamaican Identity

By Spencer Woodstock, English 490

This capstone project is dedicated to defining the Jamaican identity, its development, and how its characteristics differ from other cultures. English is certainly a Jamaican's first language in the sense that we grow up reading it and writing it. But, in essence, we speak patois. We acknowledge people in it, converse using this "slang" with friends, acquaintances, and even teachers. It is our language. People refer to it as several different things, and those ignorant of the facts, understandably call it *Jamaican*. Patois is a Jamaican creole dialect that has formed over generations of multiple cultures intermingling on the island of Jamaica, speaking different pidgins, and ultimately creating our Jamaican identity. In essence the very hybridity of patois is an excellent corollary to Jamaican identity because the interactions of different cultures, as well as the collection of languages being used throughout the island's history have helped mold the unique characteristics seen emanating from Jamaica and its people today. To truly grasp the intricate multiplicity of

Senghor of Senegal, essentially refers to one's quality of "blackness," the shared cultural strength and beauty of people of African descent throughout the African diaspora. Jamaican identity undoubtedly has remnants of Negritude. However, I want to take the question of Jamaican identity beyond a single origin and argue that it is more like a patois, a hybrid entity. The Jamaican identity that is intricately and blatantly prevalent in Orlando Patterson's *The Children of Sisyphus* (1965) is a beautifully arrogant combination of combative perspectives and conflicting notions that relentlessly pull at the strings of the heart and the mind simultaneously. Our identity is a manifestation of cultural syncretism that ultimately grew out of a need for self-preservation without remaining stuck in a primitive era. The repression of other cultures swallowing our own whole during the times of slavery and western



Figure 5 Map and Flag of Jamaica by Darwinek, CC BY-SA 3.0. Image available at Wikimedia Commons.

the development of patois and Jamaican identity, one must understand patois as well as the complexity of the Jamaican culture.

If you paid attention in history class, like I did, then you already know that the ancestors of most Jamaicans, were Africans, who were brought over via the slave trade. This is why scholars often apply concepts of Negritude to Jamaica. Negritude refers to the qualities that resonate within descendents of Africa, and their ideological movement in the rejection of colonial powers and the racism that came with it. This literary term, coined by francophone black Caribbean intellectuals, Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon of Martinique, and their African counterparts such as Léopold Sédar

colonization manifests the tenacity of our cultural identity. We will not become a part of a previously existing movement inflicted upon us; rather we take the elements of that movement that are deemed beneficial and mold them into a part of our growing identity.

Negritude is undoubtedly evident within the Jamaican identity. However, Negritude is acutely Afro-centric and tries to eradicate the essence and evidence of other cultures that have previously dominated by way of colonization. The sense of innate pride is a major characteristic of Negritude, and this carries on within Caribbean culture. Saint Lucian author Derek Walcott advocates Caribbean Negritude and its individuality by trying to depict

something new as opposed to exposing some sort of conflict between previous colonizers and people of African descent. Walcott was castigated for not purely being against western influences and staying true to Negritude, like contemporary Caribbean islanders. To summarize his belief on the issue, Walcott bravely states, "There is too much emphasis on the African culture in the Caribbean, and there should be much more respect paid to the Indian and Chinese cultures in terms of color and origin. We should mix the African philosophy and culture with the Indian. It is the mixture of cultures that is the essence of the Caribbean" (Cabrera).

This blended concoction of cultures and struggle for Jamaica's own sense of identity is evident in *The Children of Sisyphus* first published in 1965. This is mainly the story of a poverty stricken prostitute, Dinah, who lives in the Dungle, a trash riddled ghetto in depths of Kingston, Jamaica. She momentarily settles there with a man whom she reluctantly loves despite the fact that he has forced her to sell her body as a means of providing income for them and their young son. She leaves this "uncivilized" lifestyle with a middle class man in search of a more stable state of being where she doesn't have to scrap with her peers for uncontaminated food and a warm place to sleep.

One way that the conflict between colonial and African cultural influence plays out in the novel is in terms of religion. Patterson conveys his perception of the lives of the urban destitutes by exploring two routes of survival in Pentecostalism and Rastafarianism. The author of "Vision in Orlando Patterson's *The Children of Sisyphus*" Julia Udofia, elaborates on this by stating that "Rastafarianism is a messianic/millenarian cult based on selective religious beliefs that are of Afro-Christian fusion" (80-81). Rastafarians derive their beliefs from Marcus Garvey's prediction of black redemption through the crowned Ethiopian ruler in Africa, Haile Selassie I or Rastafari. They also rely heavily on Garvey's belief that all blacks in the diaspora should regroup back in Africa. Their theory and religion advocates an absolute belief in Haile Selassie I as the embodiment of the living cult. As Udofia explains, "The adherents also believe in peace and love to all men, especially, black men and disapprove of hate, jealousy, envy and deceit. However, Rastas generally have a public image of violence, criminality and other anti-social acts. They constitute a separatist group and are often also characterized as lazy, dirty and lawless people who

use religion to mask their aversion to work and bad habits" (81).

Within Patterson's novel, Dinah's perspective leads us down a different path, yet just as stubborn a conviction. Also belonging to the impoverished base of this societal pecking order, Dinah expresses her state of ambition. It drives her. She thrives on it, and thus uses her self-motivation and discernment as a catalyst to move out of the Dungle in search for a more privileged lifestyle, one that she believes she deserves, despite what society has told her. This attitude undoubtedly represents the undying search for something better, something more, and it certainly symbolizes the segment of the Jamaican identity that invokes a sense of middle-class conformity, yet struggles with futile attempts to repress its roots. Though a part of our identity wants to be preserved, the tempting appeal of something more is hard to resist as the consequences are blurred, and the rewards appear more blatantly in our perspective. In our identity's progress we concluded that we would strive for knowledge with the hope and intent of not forgetting our past. As Patterson intricately weaves biblical references throughout the text, he subtly alludes to the image of Eve and the forbidden fruit, putting a politically anti-imperialist spin on the religious allusion. The representation of forbidden knowledge coupled with the colonial era resonates through the innate subservience of the contemporary black person in the novel, despite blatantly seeking independence and equality. This is apparent when Dinah takes up a job in an upper-class household for, the narrator states, "She not only hated Mrs. Watkins, she was afraid of her. And because she was afraid of her, she had to obey her. It was incredible, this paradox that perplexed her soul" (130).

The focal point of my argument, regarding the Negritude movement, opposes exclusively embodying Afro-centric dispositions. This is due to the fact that the foundation and catalytic premise behind the Negritude crusade is essentially based on eradicating the effects that the colonizers' rule had on a culture, and then completely reverting back to pre-colonial ideals. Via the Rastafarian religion, Patterson expresses evidence of this utter rejection of every utmost conceptual idea, be it cultural or industrial, which was carried over from the west. In the novel he refers to a civil disagreement between two men of the Rastafarian faith, Brother Emmanuel and Brother Brisco. The former represents the more tenable opinion that, though the "white-man" is

wicked and deceitful, every belief and notion they had could not be “wrong” or incorrect. Brother Brisco swiftly disagrees, saying “Ahh, me god-brother, yu mek de oppressors dem still foolin’ yu...when I use to go to school, teacher use to tell me de same lies dat yu repeatin’ now” (Patterson 82). He elaborates on this by exclaiming that the people of the west only retain and represent a basic level of knowledge, and with that they cannot be deemed superior to the people of African descent. Expanding even more on his belief, he insinuates that the black people (mainly those of his Rastafarian faith) have a higher, more rewarding, and ultimately more valuable form of spiritual knowledge. He says in patois, “De white man is full up of certain kind of knowledge. What yu call trash knowledge. (H)’im know how to mek moto-car an’ plane an’ skyscraper. ‘Im know how fe mek big gun an’ big bomb so dat ‘im can blowup ‘imself. But dat is jus’ de knowledge of de t’ings of de earth. Ras tell I dat them is there only there ‘cause them appear to be there...when my flesh dead an’ gone, same time them (things) dead an’ gone too” (83). Despite Brother Brisco being fairly convincing, Emmanuel retorts rationally, saying, “Of a truth, me Brother, but yu cant say dat de white man don’t teach truth sometime; remember Brother Solomon say dat if dem never did ‘ave sense dem wouldn’t be as successful as dem is in certain t’ings” (Patterson 83). The theories and images illustrated within their argument are analogous to the ongoing conflict of interests within the Jamaican identity. Patterson offers a literary depiction of the constant battle between the innate urge to regress back to purely Afro-Centric rituals and ideals, and the desire to expand spiritually and physically through a form of cultural gentrification.

Exemplifying this moral sense of Jamaican identity is our nation’s motto, “Out of Many, One People.” This motto depicts that though several cultures are evident in our country and that we have different ethnicities flowing through our veins, collectively, we are one. We are not Africans, though we might have their skin. We are not Englishmen, though we might speak their language. We are Jamaican. Though a complex compilation of different cultures, languages, ethnicities, and ways of life, as the motto states, we are “one people.” Some critics, like Rastafarians, argue that we Jamaicans should mainly pay homage to our African roots through the foreign identity in Negritude. This should not be the case. Though we are of African

descent, we have our own identity. The Jamaican character is built upon innate desire and ambition to strive for excellence without conforming to the nations that previously colonized us or remaining content with an ancient conception of the culture of the African motherland. This identity searches without merely accepting what is given because for far too many centuries our people have been oppressed and brainwashed: therefore, in a steadfast and somewhat stubborn manner, we now seek the answer ourselves.

It’s like middle school or high school. There are several enticing and convincing cliques, wanting, urging you to adapt and comply with their way of life, they feed you lies about other sects while preaching the benefits of theirs, all in a subliminal yet blatant attempt to rid you of your own identity and what makes you, you. In this proverbial school setting, Jamaicans would represent the individuals who keep in mind where they are from; yet know where they want to go. They would embody the non-conformists and praise the so-called “hipsters” who remain “different” despite the persistent pleas and attempts by those fraternal organizations.

At the same time, the Negritude or Black Nationalist impulse is understandable, but only as a temporary response to the seemingly irreparable trauma of white supremacy and colonialism. It’s essential to have this type of mentality, for it is imperative that this sense of Black Nationalism seals the cracks that appeared as a result of oppression and western colonial rule constantly jamming the air of inferiority into our “feeble” minds. However, despite the need for this, it is best that it just be a temporary act, a means to an end, rather than the end goal itself. Completely reverting back to purely Afro-centric ways is essentially reversing the problem and flipping white supremacy beliefs into black supremacist beliefs. This act would also exhibit a blatant disregard for the Chinese, Indian, and several other cultures/ethnicities that have integrated into, and ultimately influenced, our identity. For us to say that our island’s sense of identity would be benefit from exclusively Africanized ideals would be a mistake, for it is almost analogous to stating that we should strive to be just like the westerners who colonized us, or only emulate the indigenous people who first inhabited the island. The Jamaican identity is nearly a perfect equilibrium of all the cultures we have come into significant contact with, and we are in essence a multi-colored vase with the appropriate amount of “white glue” at the foundation.

Despite having a stubborn sense of pride instilled within our identity, due to the colonial regime and its consequential effects, our people of that time fought inherent obligations with futile strikes. This history of futility also shapes Jamaican identity. As Patterson depicts it, Dinah ponders in bittersweet frustration:

Work...get money...spend it...and work again for more money. Something nice about that. Sound good. Sound secure. Sound like what nice, decent people do. . . .

But blast it, though, It was this that revolted her. Work and get your pay and come back again for more and that's a good girl. There was something about this which made her sick and want to vomit in as much as it attracted her...It was such a nasty, bitchy world, but she would lick it yet. . . .

Her soul raged with humiliation and bitterness, but in the humiliation and bitterness there was the sheer pleasure of pain. (126, 134)

It is apparent that in these passages, although Dinah despises the system in which she lives, it is paradoxically enticing. This, now intrinsic anomaly stems from colonizers and their persistent attempts to "civilize" Jamaicans, as well as the people of our motherland. Their argument was essentially that they were helping these uncivilized and savage nations by bringing their definition of "civil traits" and government to Africa, and Jamaica, alluding to their inherent sense of superiority and belief that we were stray dogs to domesticate.

This claim of civilization was essentially a façade and is more analogous to one of animal domestication, i.e. house pets. The result of the extended oppression has ultimately lead to blacks suffering from self-loathing, and has had such an intoxicating effect upon their mindset, that its ramifications have lead them to be convinced that the Black race is "in fact" inferior. In some instances this belief is prevalent in black communities today. For instance, many black males today believe that white girls are more attractive than their black counterparts, and thus don't even date dark-skinned girls. This has a detrimental effect throughout contemporary society, and generations to come. Patterson alludes to this issue throughout his novel, but the most tangible example of such indoctrination is evident when a proud mother, Mary, who is also a prostitute, is overzealous about her brown-skinned bastard daughter, Rossetta, and the possibility of her

gaining a scholarship ahead of the other students in the shantytown Dungle. During the back and forth Rachael, another resident of the Dungle, exclaims, "Education no mek fo' neager people, yu know" (88). Mary sharply defends her daughter, but not herself, in her retort, "Yu see me pickney look like dem other little dry-head, black pickney dem 'bout de place. Yu no' see she 'ave backra blood in her. Is her father she get de brains from. Me black an' stupid, but her sailor father give her all de brains she need" (88). After she receives the news of her daughter's scholarship, Mary immediately promises Rachael a job as her nanny and a pension when her daughter marries a rich white man. This illustrates the proud aspirations of the contemporary black people in the island, portraying that the primary objective of her intelligent daughter shouldn't be to seek financial security as a result of her higher education, but rather that she should seek out a "rich white man" to end their impoverished struggle. This undoubtedly reveals that no matter what opportunity presents itself, the poverty-stricken people believe that the only way out is via the superior white train.

With this said, it is irrefutable that the incessant brainwashing has worked its way into the depths of black person's consciousness that one of them has the audacity to say, and believe, "Education! Is education an' too much ambition cause it. Black people mus' learn fe know dem place. Is right here we belong. Right down a' dutty-ground ya" (89). White imperialism has had such a critical effect on blacks' mental reasoning that it has put it into a fragile state of being and driven them to concede that they are subordinate to the white man, leading blacks to believe that whatever the colonizers say is factual. These instances referenced above depict an inherent sense of internal racism within the black community against their own ethnicity. They grow up in an era in which they are forced into despising themselves, hating the color of their skin, regurgitating at their "subordinate" vernacular, and scorning the mirror more than anything because their reflection was revolting. Jamaicans have battled to eradicate this self-loathing from their identity, and have succeeded for the most part, but it was driven so far into the crevasses of our very existence that it has become an irremovable stain left upon our being.

Patterson's title, *The Children of Sisyphus* is exceedingly relevant due to the basis of the Greek myth. Sisyphus was punished for his actions and was forced to repeatedly roll a massive boulder to the top

of a hill only to watch to roll back down again. This is reminiscent of the Jamaican identity, a tenacious attempt to repress white conformity. Despite the persistent attempts, literal and figurative lashes and downfalls, we prevail. In the Jamaican individuality we have an exquisite arrogance, an unwavering sense of pride after conquering subservience, as well as conformity to foreign ideals. Our personality can be evident anywhere, but not duplicated. Where you see a poster depicting a series of flags, Jamaica is there. When you go anywhere in the Caribbean and hear the dialects, Jamaica is there. No matter what country you visit, when you turn on the radio, at one point or another, some deep-rooted Jamaican tune resonates through the speakers. We are there. In the beautiful idiosyncrasies of our people's individuality, instead of muting the evidence of the paradoxical entities crying out, striving, fighting for their own place, for their own personality. We have melded them into what I know is the quintessential equilibrium of distinctive ideals, thus forming one ironically harmonious identity. Moreover, the Jamaican identity is more than the mere melting pot of cultures; it is the unflinching embodiment of a

well-refined character that repressed the abusive hands of imperialism, without neglecting the need to adopt and adapt throughout history, despite facing ominous circumstances.

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