Dream on Monkey Mountain Study Guide

Dream on Monkey Mountain by Derek Walcott

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Introduction

Though St. Lucia native Derek Walcott is primarily recognized as a Nobel Prize-winning poet, he has also written numerous plays for the Trinidad Theater Workshop, including *Dream on Monkey Mountain*. It is Walcott's best known and most performed play. *Dream on Monkey Mountain* was first performed on August 12, 1967, at the Central Library Theatre in Toronto, Canada. After at least one production in the United States, the play made its New York City debut on March 14, 1971, at St. Mark's Playhouse. This production garnered Walcott an Obie Award. Regularly performed since its inception, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is a complex allegory which, at its heart, concerns racial identity. Makak, the central character of the play, lives alone on Monkey Mountain. He has not seen his own image in thirty years and ends up in jail after drunkenly destroying a café. Much of the play consists of his dream in which he discovers his selfworth as a black man. Critics are divided over many aspects of *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, including the effectiveness of its poetic language. Reviewing a 1970 production of the play in Los Angeles, W. I. Scobie of *National Review* wrote, "In Walcott's dense, poetic text and in the visual images onstage there is a brilliantly successful marriage of classical tradition and African mimetic-dance elements, two strains that are bound as one into the author's British colonial childhood. And in the myth of Makak, an ultimately universal figure, there is achieved some resolution of the conflict between black roots and white culture. This is a superb play."

Author Biography

Derek Walcott was born on January 23, 1930, in Castries, St. Lucia, the West Indies. He and his twin brother, Roderick, were the sons of Warwick and Alix Walcott. Warwick Walcott, a painter, poet, and civil servant, died when the twins were one year old. The boys and their elder sister were raised by their mother, a teacher who also supported her family by working as a seamstress. In this middle-class Protestant family, literature and artistry were emphasized.

Like his father, Walcott wanted to become a painter. While he painted his whole life, Walcott's primary focus became words, in English, instead of images while a teenager. Attending St. Mary's College on St. Lucia, Walcott became a poet. Before entering the university, he self-published his first book of poetry at the age of eighteen, entitled *25 Poems*. He borrowed the money to publish it from his mother, and made the money back by selling it himself.

In 1949, Walcott entered the University of the West Indies on Trinidad, from which he graduated in 1953 with a B.A. Even before graduation, Walcott began a teaching career, which he has continued to pursue on the secondary and university levels. While still a student, Walcott also began writing plays. His first was *Henri Christophe* (1951). In both his poetry and plays, Walcott often deals with the racial complexities of the West Indian islands and his own racial heritage. His two grandfathers were white, while both of his grandmothers were black and descendants of slaves.

Walcott's first successful play was *The Sea at Dauphin* (1954). This contributed in part to Walcott obtaining a Rockefeller Fellowship to study playwriting and directing in New York City from 1957 to 1958. Upon his return home to Trinidad, in 1959, Walcott founded the Trinidad Theater Workshop, which provided a forum for his plays. For the workshop, Walcott wrote his best-known play, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* (1967). Other signifi- cant titles of his include *The Joker of Seville* (1974) and *O Babylon!* (1976).

While Walcott continued to write plays, over the years he became better known for his poetry. His breakthrough collection was 1962's *In a Green Night: Poems, 1948-1960*, while another important volume was *The Castaway and Other Poems* (1965). In 1990, Walcott published his poetic masterpiece, *Omerus*, a 325-page epic poem which gives a Caribbean twist to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. In 1992, Walcott won the Nobel Prize in Literature for his poetry, one of many honors he has received over his career.

Beginning in the early 1980s, Walcott split his time between teaching literature and creative writing at Boston-area universities and in Trinidad. Though the 1990s, Walcott continued to teach and write (including 1997's collection of poetry *The Bounty* and *The Capeman: The Musical* with Paul Simon). He also reestablished his work with the Trinidad Theater Workshop after a decade-long hiatus. Married three times, Walcott has a son and two daughters.

Plot Summary

Prologue

Dream on Monkey Mountain opens in a small jail on an unnamed West Indian island. Corporal Lestrade, a mulatto official, brings in Makak, an older black man. Makak has just been arrested for being drunk and smashing a local café while claiming he was the King of Africa. Two other black prisoners already in cells, Tigre and Souris, try to undermine the corporal as he does his duty. The corporal grows frustrated and compares them to animals.

The corporal asks Makak for basic information, but the prisoner only wants to go home. Makak does reveal that he lives on Monkey Mountain and he is "Catholique," though he does not remember his real name. Next is a trial, where Tigre and Souris don judge's robes and the corporal defends Makak. The corporal presents the facts of the case to the judges. He reveals that Makak claims to have had a dream in which he was told he was a descendant of African kings. Makak was inciting people when he was arrested. Makak asks to be released because he is old. After telling them he has not looked at his reflection for thirty years, Makak relates a dream in which a white woman came to him. He claims to see her at that moment in the prison, but no one else does. Makak believes she gives him strength.

Scene One

The play shifts back to the time before Makak was arrested, though it is part of his dream. In Makak's hut on Monkey Mountain, he lies on the floor. He is found by his business partner and friend, Moustique, a small black man with a deformed foot. Moustique rouses him so they can go to the market and sell their coal. Makak does not want to go. He relates the experience he had the night before. A white woman appeared to him, singing. She knew all about him and wanted to come home with him. When they returned to his hut, she told Makak that he should not live there anymore, believing he was ugly, because he comes from a royal lineage.

Moustique grows frustrated by Makak's insistence that his experience was real. He asks where the woman is now, but Makak does not know. After Makak leaves to get the coal so they can go to the market, Moustique is shaken when he unexpectedly encounters a mother spider with an egg sack. He kills it, but both men believe this is a sign of Moustique's impending death. Moustique finds a white mask under a bench. Makak says that he has not seen it before. He orders Moustique to ready things for their journey to Africa. Moustique is now convinced Makak is crazy, but follows him down the mountain.

Scene Two

Moustique comes upon the family of a sick man. Sisters pray around him hoping to make him well. Moustique joins them in prayers, while asking them for bread. He learns that the sick man has a fever and his body will not break into a sweat. The sick man is basically given up for dead, and Basil, a local coffinmaker, lurks nearby. Moustique convinces them to let Makak help the sick man in exchange for bread.

Makak has everyone kneel around the sick one. He has a woman place a hot coal in his hand. As it sizzles, Makak prays over him. Nothing happens at first, which Moustique and Makak blame on those around the sick man. Still, the sick man's wife gives them food for their effort. Just as they are about to leave, the sick man begins to sweat and heal. After collecting gifts from those present, Moustique teases Basil and obtains his coat and hat. When Moustique and Makak finally depart, Moustique wants to exploit Makak's gift for healing for profit. Makak will only take as much as they need.

Scene Three

At a public market, people talk about Makak's healing miracles. In the meantime, the corporal and the market inspector discuss how they will keep order when Makak makes his rumored appearance. A man claiming he is Makak appears; it is, however, Moustique. Moustique plays to the crowd, asking for cash for his trip to Africa while promising to help them cure themselves. When a spider falls on his hand, he becomes upset. It is removed by Basil, who recognizes that he is not Makak but Moustique. Under duress, Moustique admits the truth and insults the crowd. They beat him for a few moments, before the corporal tells them to disperse. After they leave, Makak appears. Moustique tells him to go back to Monkey Mountain before dying.

Scene Four

At the beginning of Part Two of the play, still in Makak's dream, the action shifts back to the jail. It is the same night that Makak was arrested and the corporal is feeding the prisoners. Souris and Tigre ask him to release the old man, but he will not. Makak offers money to the corporal for his freedom. The corporal will not be bribed, and is disturbed by Makak. After the corporal leaves, Tigre convinces Souris that they might be able to escape from prison and steal Makak's money. To that end, they ask him about his dream and Africa. Tigre convinces Makak that he must kill the corporal□ like the lion he claims to be□so they can escape together. Makak reveals that he has a knife. Tigre calls the corporal in, Makak stabs him, and they escape. The corporal is not dead and goes after them.

Scene Five

In the forest, Makak directs Souris and Tigre to rest while he makes a fire. Tigre is impatient, wanting to eat but also anxious to get to Monkey Mountain. Souris is afraid, wondering if there really is any money. As Makak lays out his plans, Souris begins to believe in his words. Tigre grows frightened and impatient. Makak makes him his general. While cooking food Souris has obtained, he and Tigre discuss how they are convinced that Makak is totally crazy.

When they hear someone coming, the three men hide in the bushes. The corporal appears, following their trail and talking in incomprehensible terms. Basil comes out of the bushes and tells the corporal he must repent. Tigre and Souris emerge from the bushes. Tigre encourages the corporal to confess his sins as well. Under pressure, the corporal admits his love of Africa and asks for Makak's forgiveness. Makak appears and declares that the corporal is one of them. Tigre and Souris want to take physical revenge on the corporal, but Makak will not let them. When Tigre wants to shoot the corporal, Souris intervenes for he is now firmly on Makak's side. Makak tries to convince Tigre to join them, but Tigre remains ready to kill. The corporal ends up driving a spear through Tigre with the help of Basil, killing him. Those who remain move on.

Scene Six

Makak is now a royal figure, perhaps in Africa, still followed by the corporal and Souris. Basil reads a list of the accused□figures from history and contemporary society□whom he mentions are all white. Basil lists many letters from those wanting their favor, including the Ku Klux Klan, and an apology from South Africa. None present are appeased. Moustique, now a prisoner, is brought in. Moustique asks Makak for mercy, pointing out that these men might betray him as well. He is taken away. The apparition of the white woman is brought in. The corporal insists Makak must kill her. Makak wants to do this alone, and after much prodding, the others finally leave. Declaring his freedom, he kills her.

Epilogue

The play returns to reality and the jail. It is the next morning. Makak reveals his true identity, Felix Hobain, and does not remember exactly why he is there. Some of his dream returns to his consciousness. The corporal sets the old man free. Just as he is about to leave, Moustique comes, hoping to free his friend. They go home to Monkey Mountain.

Prologue Part 1

Prologue Part 1 Summary

A drum sits in the middle of the stage. A dancer comes and sits astride the drum. A Figure in formal clothes and stylized makeup comes and stands behind the dancer. As the offstage chorus sings a lament, the Figure and dancer move in time to the music, separate and move towards two cages, one on either side of the stage. As the lament continues, the Figure turns a suspended disc representing the moon so that its other side, the sun, is facing the audience. At the same time, light illuminates the cages and the black men inside, Tigre and Souris.

The chorus sings a song about a mother whose son is in jail. As they sing, the Corporal, a man of mixed race, brings in Makak, an old black man wearing a loincloth. As Tigre and Souris join in the singing, the Corporal puts Makak into a third cage. The sound of the chorus fades away, and Souris stops singing. Tigre continues as Souris asks the Corporal who the old man is. The Corporal jokes about Makak being the king of Africa and then takes inventory of Makak's things, going through his bag and pulling out, among other things, a bottle of rum and a white mask with long black hair. Tigre and Souris beg for a drink, but the Corporal bullies them into silence, calling them animals. He tells a version of the Biblical story of creation, how God created all the apes and some of them became men but others of them got left behind and became "niggers."

As Tigre sings softly, the Corporal begins to interrogate Makak. Makak responds by saying he wants to go home. When the Corporal asks where home is, Makak responds in French, but the Corporal angrily insists he speak English. Makak then says he lives on Monkey Mountain. After asking a few more questions, the Corporal comments that Roman law allowed Jesus to be given a drink of vinegar before he died and gives each of the men a drink of rum. Tigre and Souris tease the Corporal about knowing so much law, and the Corporal goes out, only to return a moment later in attorney's robes and carrying towels that he tosses at Souris and Tigre, who wear them as costumes suggesting judge's robes.

Prologue Part 1 Analysis

This play comes from a cultural tradition in which dance, music and visual narrative play an integral part in the process of storytelling and in which storytelling isn't necessarily going to be realistic. As an example, the Figure transforms the setting from night to day by turning around a symbol, a convention that continues throughout the play. This type of storytelling utilizes formal symbolism. The chorus sings about a mother with a jailed son, and this introduces the thematic suggestion that all black people are in jail. Finally, the symbolism of the formally dressed Figure is revealed later in the play to represent transformation. His presence in the Prologue indicates another thematic suggestion, that the story we're about to be told is one of transformation.

There are several references to the Bible in this scene. The first is relatively direct, the Corporal's reference to Jesus being allowed a drink of vinegar. The second is initially a little more obscure, but it is more specifically defined later in the dialogue. The Bible tells that there were two thieves nailed to crosses on either side of Christ's cross. Tigre and Souris represent those two thieves, a symbol that, in combination with the Corporal's comment, suggests that Makak is a symbol of Christ and his story will have parallels to Christ's story. When the Corporal jokes that Makak is king of Africa, this evokes the Romans mocking reference to Jesus as "king of the Jews" when he was crucified. The rest of the play reveals what these parallels are in terms of both metaphor and narrative, and therefore continually reinforces the symbolic connection between Makak and Christ. This relates to the aforementioned theme of transformation, since the story of Christ is, among many other things, the story of man transformed into God.

A third reference appears in the ironic comment made by the Corporal about the Biblical story of Creation, in which he suggests that the black men caged before us somehow missed out on God's gifts and remained animals. In the play, the characters are not only treated like animals, but they are also given the names of animals. Tigre is French for tiger, and Souris is French for mouse. A character that appears later is named Moustique, French for mosquito. Most importantly, as he himself explains later, Makak is a homonym for "macaque," a species of monkey. This identification of black men with animals under the control of a man of mixed race suggests strongly that the play's themes are connected to issues of racism.

Juxtapose this premise with the idea that Makak is a Christ figure and the theme of transformation, and we see even at this early stage in the play that this story is an allegory, a story that is an involved metaphor, representing something else. This play is an allegory for the way Christ transformed, and continues to lead, people's lives of sin into lives of spiritual freedom and grace.

Prologue Part 2

Prologue Part 2 Summary

As the chorus sings a song commenting on the behavior of monkeys, the Corporal, Tigre and Souris pretend to put Makak on trial. The Corporal charges that Makak created a disturbance in a public bar and that he spoke obscenely about a dream he had in which he was spoken to by a spirit. In addition, Makak is charged with urging other people in the bar to join him in rebellion and becoming violent when he was laughed at. Makak asks again to be sent home, saying that spirits truly do talk to him and as a result he's become mad. He explains that God appeared to him on Monkey Mountain in the form of a singing woman, and he calls himself God's warrior. Tigre and Souris laugh, but the Corporal allows Makak to plead his case.

Makak's cage disappears as he speaks a poetic monologue rich with nature imagery about his vision of a woman appearing to him like the moon walking along the road. As he speaks, a woman appears and then leaves in exactly the way he describes. He points her out, but neither the Corporal nor the other prisoners see her. Makak falls to his knees and, as drums play loudly in the background, prays for guidance and strength. In another long speech, he narrates his spiritual ecstasy following the encounter, talking about falling to the ground and having two men find him and carry him up the mountain. Tigre and Souris help Makak stand and walk, and the Corporal indicates that he may continue his story. The scene changes.

Prologue Part 2 Analysis

This section contains another Biblical parallel. Makak sees what he believes to be God in the same way as Moses encountered God, on a mountain. Combined with Makak's reference to himself as God's warrior, this suggests that Makak believes himself to be on a quest to free his people in the same way that Moses was on a quest to free the Hebrews. The nature of Makak's God, however, is somewhat different from the Hebrew God as defined in the Old Testament. Moses encountered God in a burning bush speaking with the voice of a man, while Makak's encounter was with a woman bathed in white light and singing with the voice of nature. Meanwhile, the way that the three cages disappear as Makak tells his story suggests that in encountering God he was actually encountering freedom. These two elements reinforce the idea that Makak is a prophet and leader. Note that while the Corporal is disparaging when he compares black man to animals, in Makak's story, nature is revered as an aspect of God.

With the transition into the next scene, the story moves into the past, and we see what happens to Makak after his vision and what brings him to the point of being drunk and disorderly in the bar. This is another example of the theatrically heightened and formalistic nature of the storytelling.

Scene 1

Scene 1 Summary

Makak is alone on the ground, and the white mask is nearby. His friend Moustique comes to find him, saying it's market day and they have to get their coal down to town to be sold. As Moustique lights a fire and makes coffee, Makak says that he thinks he's going mad and asks Moustique how long they've known each other. Moustique tells him four years, reminds him of how they met, and tells Makak that he was the only person who believed that a "nigger" like him with a broken foot could actually be someone. Makak then tells Moustique of his encounter with the woman, using exactly the same language as he used with the Corporal, but with one difference. At the end of the story, Makak says that the woman called out to him by his real name, which he never uses, and told him to not be afraid and to come to her. Moustique tries to interrupt, but Makak continues, saying how he and the woman spent the night together. Moustique asks whether the woman was white, but Makak doesn't seem to hear. He says that the woman told him he shouldn't live life hidden up on Monkey Mountain because he thinks he's ugly, but should instead go down into the world because he comes from a family of lions and kings.

Moustique gets to his feet, saying it's time to get to work and that Makak just had a vivid dream. Makak protests that it's not a dream, but Moustique reminds him of another, similar dream he once had. He says that they're both outcasts because they're physically handicapped, Makak by his ugliness and Moustique by a deformed foot. As Makak goes out to get their coal, Moustique comments to himself on the misery that black people have to live with and starts looking for a sack to put the coffee things in. He reaches under a bench and is bitten by a spider. He screams in fear, and Makak runs back to see what's wrong. Moustique kills the spider. He then asks Makak whether it's a bad sign. When Makak says it was an ill omen, Moustique says he's not going to accept it, adding that no spider is going to kill him. He accuses Makak of believing in signs, of living like an animal and of believing everything he sees.

Makak responds by saying that he has to accept the signs and orders given to him by the woman and that he has to do what she says. As Moustique continues to get ready to leave, he tells Makak that the woman wants him to sell coal. He finds the white mask with black hair and puts it on, pretending to be the woman. Makak says he never saw the mask before and then tells Moustique to "saddle his horse," saying he's got to make a journey to the end of the world. Makak mockingly comments on how the horse is actually a jackass and that Makak should use the coffeepot as a helmet and a bamboo stick as a sword. When Moustique asks where Makak intends to go, Makak shouts that he's going to Africa. He calls Moustique an insect and demands that he get out of his way. Finally, Makak pushes him down. Moustique falls to the ground, weeping. Makak insists that he's not mad and reminds Moustique how he promised to do anything for him. He says that it's better to die fighting than hidden in the forest. He helps Moustique

to his feet, and the two of them go out. As they go, Moustique sings a comic song about how silly it is to see two jackasses riding another jackass.

Scene 1 Analysis

In the second and perhaps more important half of Makak's story about his encounter with God/the woman, we learn more about the nature of his quest. On a personal level, he's on a journey to reclaim, perhaps even discover, his sense of self worth. He takes Moustique with him because Moustique clearly needs to go on a similar journey, since they've both isolated themselves because of physical handicaps. The difference is that Moustique doesn't believe in the journey and refuses to take it seriously. As a result, he gets himself into trouble, as we'll see later in the story.

On another, more symbolic level, because Makak and Moustique are black and because of Moustique's comment about the misery suffered by black people, we understand a deeper meaning. Their personal journey towards reclaiming their identity represents the journey of black people towards freedom and independence, away from being viewed and treated as animals and towards being perceived as human beings. There are Biblical parallels to this aspect of the story as well, since this journey has echoes of the journey taken by Moses and the Hebrews to freedom from slavery as well as the journey taken by Christ and his followers, then and now, towards freedom of the spirit. The irony, of course, is that Makak and Moustique's journey is inspired by a white woman, or at least a woman in a white mask.

There are also echoes in this scene of *Don Quixote*, a classic Spanish novel in which an elderly man imagines himself to be on a mission from God and takes with him on his quest a faithful ally and friend. Specific similarities include Makak's madness and determination, similar to Quixote's, and Moustique's reluctance and devotion, which are similar to qualities found in Quixote's friend Sancho Panza. Also, Moustique's comments about the jackass, bamboo stick and coffeepot awaken echoes of the makeshift armor that Quixote constructs for himself. The implication of this parallel, since Quixote was completely deluded and his quest hopeless, is that Makak's quest is also futile. The resemblance, therefore, foreshadows the end of the play in which Makak is forced to return to Monkey Mountain without having accomplished his task. The reasons for his return, however, are different from Quixote's, as we shall see.

Another element of foreshadowing occurs in Makak's passing mention that he has a name other than the one he's using. This foreshadows the ending of the play, in which he discovers that his most important identity is his core, true identity as a human being. It also suggests that the identity Makak takes on later in the action is no more his real identity than calling himself Makak. The mask also functions as a symbol of false identity. Meanwhile, since the spider functions in this play as a symbol of death, its presence foreshadows the death of both of Makak's assumed identities at the end of the play.

Act 1 Scene 2

Act 1 Scene 2 Summary

A group of women robed in white runs onstage, dancing and singing. They're followed by men carrying a man on a stretcher and the formally dressed Figure from the Prologue, now given the name Basil. Moustique appears and greets one of the Peasants carrying the stretcher. The Peasant asks Moustique to pray with him, and they both kneel. As the women continue to sing and dance, the Man and Moustique pray and discuss the situation. As they mutter fragments of the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary, their conversation reveals that the man on the stretcher is dying from a snake bite and needs to sweat in order to break his poison-triggered fever. We also learn that Basil is a carpenter and cabinet-maker, and the implication is that he is also a coffin maker.

A Second Peasant joins Moustique and the First Peasant, and the First Peasant tells the Second Peasant that Moustique has asked for food. The Second Peasant says they have only enough to feed themselves. Moustique says he's traveling with a man who knows the power of herbs and faith and will try to help the man on the stretcher in exchange for food. As the First Peasant asks the sick man's wife if she's willing, Makak appears. The Wife gives her consent, and Moustique introduces Makak, who tells the women and the Peasants to kneel and pray. He then kneels by the sick man and prays for him to sweat and break free of his illness. The man doesn't appear to be responding, and Moustique becomes angry. Makak moves away, depressed, saying that the Peasants are too tired to believe anything and that they are their own worst enemies. The Wife brings him food, thanking him. A woman cries out that the man on the stretcher has started to sweat, meaning that his fever is broken and that he's no longer in danger of dying. The Peasants dance for joy, and Moustique shouts out that the white men were helpless in the face of the illness but Makak wasn't. Makak watches, dazed as the Peasants offer him of food, money and even shoes.

The Peasants take the sick man out, but Basil lingers. Moustique playfully takes Basil's hat, and then as he counts the money left by the Peasants asks for Basil's coat as well, saying that he's not afraid of him. Basil says there will always be need for him to do his job. Moustique comments that if Basil were a spider he might be worried, but Basil reminds him to look around. Moustique sees that he's at a crossroads, which he then takes to be a symbol of a spider. As Basil leaves, however, Moustique laughs, saying he's till alive.

Makak comes to Moustique and asks whether he saw the power that he (Makak) apparently has. Moustique responds by saying he sees opportunity and roads paved with silver. Makak protests that he's not going to use his gift for profit, but Moustique reminds him that nothing is free and that someday everybody makes money from their gifts. Makak kneels to pray, and Moustique tells him to pray for the world to change and for the day when poverty is gone. Moustique then holds up the mask and tells Makak to face reality, saying that vision alone will not get them to Africa. Finally, he says that

Makak has to see things his way or the partnership will end right there. Makak gets to his feet and agrees to go with Moustique. Moustique leads them to the market.

Act 1 Scene 2 Analysis

There are two key elements of symbolism in this scene. The first is the healing of the black man on the stretcher, another example of the way that elements of the Bible are incorporated into the action. Because Makak's "miracle" resembles Christ's miracles of healing, this symbol reinforces the idea that Makak's journey towards freedom is an allegory for Christ's journey towards reunion with God and transformation. The miracle also represents Makak's mission to heal and free his people from their spiritual sickness.

The second symbol in this scene is the spider, which reappears in the form of the crossroads at which the encounter takes place. Its purpose here is to serve as a reminder of the presence of death, which is also a secondary purpose of the character of Basil. His primary purpose, as a symbol of transformation, is clearly revealed later. Because death is a transformation, Basil can symbolize both. Moustique's response is to literally laugh in death's face and continue to count his money, which represents the way in which humanity in general becomes distracted by earthly concerns and focused on earthly gain at the cost of awareness of the big picture.

Act 1 Scene 3

Act 1 Scene 3 Summary

This scene begins with a brief return to the mock trial. The Corporal, as prosecutor, begins the story of what happened when Makak got arrested. The action shifts to the market, where a family discusses Makak's miracles, both the one we just saw and ones he's only rumored to have performed. They also discuss how he's passing through town on his way to the sea. Basil is present, lingering in the background.

The Corporal appears, carrying a pistol. He's accompanied by the Market Inspector, Caiphas Pamphilion, who busies himself making sure all the traders in the market are abiding by the rules. They discuss the Corporal's reasons for carrying the pistol, which he says is necessary in order to protect the people. He merely suggests that a melon is a pawpaw, and the melon seller agrees, indicating his power. The Corporal goes on to offer his interpretation of the rumors about Makak, saying that he believes Makak to be merely a peasant who got tired of being poor and who has set himself up as a healer in order to make money.

As the Corporal and the Inspector pass, the vendors sing and dance in praise of Makak. A Boy runs on, saying he saw Makak by the river. The people in the market become excited. They become even more excited when Moustique, dressed in Basil's hat and coat but pretending to be Makak, runs on, shouting about "his" power. The Corporal and Inspector introduce themselves and try to get him to control himself, but Moustique makes jokes and comments that their attempts to get respect make them seem white.

As the crowd laughs, Moustique encourages the crowd to laugh even more and be happy because "Makak" has come. As a woman brings water to him, Moustique tells the story of how he left Monkey Mountain and discovered the ability to heal, saying that centuries of pressure have finally allowed him to see the light, light that he shall take to Africa. He sprinkles the crowd with water, saying that because the water is of the land in the same way that the people are of the land, he is giving the people power to cure themselves. He begins to take a drink but stops and becomes frightened when he suddenly sees a spider in the bowl.

The Corporal is immediately suspicious. Basil realizes that Moustique is not Makak and denounces him to the crowd. The Corporal challenges him, but Moustique shouts back saying that Moustique and Makak are the same "nigger." He goes on to say that even if he were a prophet the people would all still be the same, changing faiths, always hoping, but still "covered with dirt." He angrily accuses the crowd of not knowing what they really want. The crowd erupts into violence, beating Moustique to the ground. The Corporal allows the beating for a while and then breaks up the crowd and orders them all to go home. As the crowd disperses, Basil reclaims his hat and then withdraws. Meanwhile, the Inspector asks the Corporal why he let the beating continue. The

Corporal says he didn't want to get killed and offers to buy the Inspector a drink. As they go out, the Inspector comments on the harmlessness of spiders.

Makak comes on, sees Moustique and takes him in his arms. Moustique advises Makak to return home or else he will die in the same way. Makak tries to convince Moustique he isn't going to die, but Moustique continues to urge Makak to go back to Monkey Mountain. Makak insists he has to go on. As Moustique dies, Makak urges him to say what he sees. Moustique says only that he sees a black wind blowing. As Moustique dies, Makak looks deeply into his eyes, but he sees nothing else. He cries out in grief, and the chorus swirls on in grotesque masks and costumes, dancing to pounding drums and taking away Moustique's body. In the middle of it is a woman with the white face and long black hair of the mask. Makak writhes on the ground in agony as the dance climaxes, and the lights fade to black.

Act 1 Scene 3 Analysis

The action of this scene parallels the Biblical story of Christ's last days in several ways. The Inspector is given the name of Caiphas, one of the priests who arranged for Christ's arrest. Moustique's entry into the village parallels Christ's entry into Jerusalem. In the Bible, the people heralded Christ's appearance, while Moustique heralds his own appearance, but the essential impact of arrival and the celebration of it is the same.

Moustique's angrily made point that he and Makak are "the same nigger" is a valid one. In terms of what Makak is trying to accomplish, the awakening and saving of his people, it doesn't really matter who is leading the journey and who is speaking the inspiring words. The point is that they are trying to wake up a people who are unable or unwilling to wake up. This is another way in which the stories of Christ and Moses are paralleled in this play. Christ was condemned by Jews who didn't want their relatively stable way of life disrupted, even if that meant continued virtual slavery to Rome. In the same way, the people Moses was attempting to lead didn't pay much attention to him until he came down from the mountain carrying the Ten Commandments, in the same way as Makak came down from his mountain carrying with him what he saw as the Word of God.

The anger of the crowd continues the Christ parallel. In the Bible, once the public began to believe that Christ was a fraud, they called for his execution in the same way as the crowd here calls for Moustique's. Moustique's death, therefore, parallels Christ's crucifixion. The real Makak survives, though, to continue the mission of leadership. This represents both Christ's resurrection and the idea that, even though the messenger has been destroyed, the message itself will (at least theoretically) rise again. The fight for freedom must still be fought.

Another resonance with the story of Moses is in the references to Africa, which suggest that in the way Israel was "The Promised Land" to the Hebrews, Africa is the promised land for black people. Makak's focus on getting to Africa echoes Moses' determination to get his people home.

The death foreshadowed by the repeated appearances of both the spider and of Basil finally occurs with the death of Moustique. His return from the dead in the second act, however, has echoes of the Biblical resurrection and suggests again that the dream of freedom, the Dream of Monkey Mountain, never truly dies. Meanwhile, Moustique's dying reference to a black wind may provide inspiration to Makak, who perhaps sees the wind as representing the winds of change blowing for his people.

Act 2 Scene 1

Act 2 Scene 1 Summary

Back in the prison, the Corporal appears with food for the prisoners. He distributes it to Souris and Tigre, asking how Makak has been behaving. Souris and Tigre tell him that Makak has been delirious, mumbling all the time. As they ask for more food, saying that it's their right, the Corporal tells them that they have the right to what they're getting and nothing more. He adds that it's the law of the white man, and he's there to fulfill that law. He bullies Makak into begging for food, which makes Makak beg to go home. Makak says that he has money, but the Corporal says he can't be bribed. The Corporal reiterates that he is the law and that in spite of the fact that the law changes according to who has power and who is breaking the law, ultimately it is incorruptible. Tigre and Souris accuse the mixed race Corporal of being as racist as the people who employ him. They suggest that in torturing Makak he is in effect torturing his grandfather. Makak again begs to go home and then cries out to Moustique, saying that he was right, that he's seen the spider and the evil of men. The Corporal gives in, and goes out to get more food.

While the Corporal is gone, Tigre tells Souris that they need to work together to escape with Makak and get their hands on his money. Tigre then convinces Makak to attack the Corporal and gain his freedom, saying that the woman in his dream wanted him to. Makak becomes angrier and more determined, pacing his cage like an animal. Tigre goes on to suggest that killing the Corporal and escaping is the only way to prove to the woman that he is the lion she said he was. Makak reveals that he has a knife, and Tigre tells him to pretend to be faint and catch the Corporal by surprise. Tigre tells Makak to kill the Corporal when he comes near and to take his keys. Tigre then calls in the Corporal, saying that Makak is driving him crazy with his moaning. The Corporal goes to Makak's cage. Makak grabs him and stabs him and then takes his keys and frees Tigre and Souris. Makak cries out that he has become what "they" have said he is, an animal, because he has killed and tasted blood. He cries in praise of God and then tells Souris and Tigre to go with him.

As they run out, the Corporal stands, saying that he only has a flesh wound. He asks us whether we felt pity for him or horror of the prisoners. Then, he comments on how changing their situation is something slaves can only dream of. The Corporal takes down a rifle, saying that he needs to change as well and become a hunter. He states that attempting to escape, from their cells or from the prisons of their lives, is the worst crime a native can commit.

Act 2 Scene 1 Analysis

The tone of the play becomes very different in the second act. As Makak's struggles for personal freedom and the freedom of his people become more violent and less playful, the tone becomes darker, indicating how serious those struggles are.

Like the earlier scenes with Moustique, this scene illustrates how Makak's innocent and well meaning dreams can be manipulated and used. In the first act, Moustique twisted Makak's vision into something used for personal gain, and in this scene Tigre does the same thing. Both situations represent the way in which personal missions seldom remain as pure in execution as they begin in conception since, after all, human nature is human nature.

On the other hand, the action of this scene makes the point that human nature is also animal nature. This point is illustrated by the way Makak is described as pacing in his cage. Animals in zoos act this way all the time, circling and circling within the confines of their existence, becoming more and more frustrated until they become either violent or apathetic. Makak succumbs to violence and is driven even madder as a result. The consequences of his actions follow him through the rest of the act. Nevertheless, Makak's escape makes the thematic point that fighting to create change is still better than staying in the cage, endlessly circling within bars erected by hate and fear. In other words, it's better to live the dream and leave Monkey Mountain than it is to stay there and pretend the pain of the world does not exist.

Act 2 Scene 2 Part 1

Act 2 Scene 2 Part 1 Summary

Makak, Tigre and Souris arrive in the forest. Tigre and Souris are hungry and uneasy. Makak tries to convince them that if they smoke the leaves of a certain plant the peace they encounter will leave them without hunger. Souris protests that he wants real food. As Makak goes a distance away to find firewood, Souris asks Tigre whether he really thinks Makak has money. Tigre encourages him to be patient, saying that to get what they want they need to become part of Makak's madness.

As Makak comes back with branches for a fire, Tigre talks to him in poetic language about Africa and the joy they'll find when they finally get there. Souris, however, talks about how Africa means darkness to him and how he doesn't like living in darkness. He goes on to say that all his life, he's lived by the rule of obeying the white man and being afraid of him. He doesn't know any other way. He then asks Makak how they're going to get to Africa. As the chorus sings, Makak tells Souris to imagine and believe that he will see Africa and that when he does, he'll see a way to get there. Souris follows the trail blazed by Makak's imagination, imagines himself in Africa and then goes out.

Tigre becomes practical, telling Makak they'll need money to buy a boat and supplies. Makak tells him to have faith and to look into the fire and see what visions are there. Tigre says he only sees visions of black people writhing in hell. He says that he and Souris will be executed, but Makak will be set free because he's old, ugly and crazy. Makak makes Tigre a general in his army of freedom and then goes off to plan. Souris comes back with a chicken and vegetables. As he and Tigre make a stew, Makak fashions a spear. He mumbles to himself and occasionally shouts out to his army, which nobody sees but him. He calls for a crown, and Souris twists a vine into a crown shape and puts it on Makak's head. Tigre warns Souris that Makak's becoming even more insane, saying that he's just as likely to kill the two of them as anyone else. Makak sees someone coming. They douse the fire and hide.

The Corporal appears, shouting out orders to imagined companions. On the verge of insanity, he examines the tracks of the people he's following back to Monkey Mountain. He suddenly shouts out for whoever is pursuing him to come out of the shadows. Basil appears and introduces himself, saying he's a figment of the imagination. The Corporal laughs at him and starts to leave, but Basil tells him he's got one minute to repent. When the Corporal asks of what, Basil tells him that he already knows. Tigre and Souris emerge from the shadows unobserved, watching and commenting as Basil invokes imaginary animals to circle the Corporal threateningly. The Corporal insists that he doesn't know what he's guilty of, but Basil continues to count down the minute. Finally the Corporal shouts out that he loves and dreams of Africa and that here, at the foot of Monkey Mountain, he's prepared to embrace his heritage. As he continues, he strips off his clothes. He says that he's returning to the earth that gave birth to him and that he now understands Makak and begs for his forgiveness.

Act 2 Scene 2 Part 1 Analysis

The dramatic action of this scene, in which Makak's dream is shown to affect his "followers" in varying ways, illustrates the two sides of any journey towards freedom, hope and fear. Both Tigre and Souris, at opposite times, experience hope for freedom and joy at the possibility, but they also experience the fear associated with challenging the way things have always been. This means fear of punishment for being rebellious, as represented by Tigre's visions in the fire, and also fear that once they arrive at their goal life will not be as much improved as they'd hoped, as represented by Souris' doubt.

The experience of the Corporal, meanwhile, illustrates the true purpose of being a follower on such a journey. By losing his grip on reality and by peeling away layers of the society and culture he has adopted, represented by his clothes, he connects with his inner nature. This is Makak's ultimate goal, and the goal of any cultural or spiritual leader in the tradition of Christ or Moses - to allow people the freedom to fully and truly live according to the deepest personal, individual, spiritual truths. The Corporal's transformation, therefore, represents the transforming power of that dream. Tigre's practical questions about the journey to Africa open up the question whether Makak's intended journey is literal or metaphorical. Is Africa a symbol for a journey into the animal heart of mankind?

The character of Basil in this scene is even less of a literal human character than he has been previously. He describes himself in this scene as an agent or catalyst for transformation, which is a variation on his symbolic nature as a representation of death, the most significant transformation that a human being undergoes.

The setting of this scene at night and in a forest awakens echoes of yet another Biblical reference, to Christ's time in the Garden of Gethsemane the night of his arrest. At the same time, the image of Makak as a Christ figure is reinforced by the way in which he's crowned by Souris, albeit with vines instead of thorns. On another level, the pseudo armor he wears and pseudo weapons he holds refer to the similarly delusional weaponry carried by Don Quixote.

Act 2 Scene 2 Part 2

Act 2 Scene 2 Part 2 Summary

Makak emerges from the shadows, welcoming the Corporal back to the life given him at birth. Tigre comes out and taunts the Corporal, saying that now he knows what it's like to be a "nigger," naked and vulnerable and humiliated, an animal. Makak tries to get Tigre to stop, but Tigre says he's had enough of playing Makak's game and picks up the Corporal's gun. He tells Souris to tie the Corporal up. He says that they're going up the mountain to find Makak's money, but Souris refuses, saying that he believes in Makak and in the Corporal's repentance. He won't participate in violence. Tigre says he wants Makak's money, and Makak says that he's lost and can't remember the way back to the Mountain. He tries to convince Tigre that he can't achieve freedom just by gaining money and speaks in poetic language of how ultimately they're all the same, black shadows in the mind of white men, "tired of looking up to heaven." He says that Death is the ultimate darkness for all of them and that Tigre can go ahead and shoot him. He refers to Basil, saying, "the Carpenter is waiting." Souris pleads with Makak to continue with the mission, but Makak says he won't.

The Corporal picks up Makak's spear and faces Tigre. Makak imagines the tribes of humanity fighting amongst themselves, and the chorus appears, singing and dancing in the way he describes. Tigre and the Corporal circle each other with weapons at the ready. Souris shouts for Makak to stop them, but Makak is too wrapped up in his vision. Basil calls out to Tigre. Tigre turns, and the Corporal spears him. Makak stands over Tigre's body and, again in poetic language, describes how one tribe will eventually triumph over the other. The Corporal tells him to hurry. They have to continue their journey towards freedom for themselves and freedom for their people. He tells Souris to hide Tigre's body, saying that history is in motion and the only way to move is forward.

As Souris and Makak go out, the Corporal delivers a long poetic speech in which he describes himself as the force necessary to bring Makak's vision into reality. He refers to Basil, and then when he sees that Basil is gone, he shouts out that it's time for the people to rise, for Makak to be enthroned, for singing and dancing and celebrations in his name and statues in his image to appear. Action in this scene flows directly into the next scene.

Act 2 Scene 2 Part 2 Analysis

The confrontation between the Corporal and Tigre symbolizes the eternal confrontation between the status quo and the energy of change and transformation. Tigre, in spite of being black, represents society in general, white western society in particular and specifically the way that that society has defined money as power. The newly reborn Corporal, however, again represents the power inherent in living personal truth and the way that personal truth is often forced to exist in confrontation with the desire for power.

One question that arises in this scene is why Makak says he's lost his way. This may be nothing more than a tactic to calm Tigre down in the hopes of avoiding violence and resuming their journey peacefully. Another possibility is that he actually has become lost, both physically and spiritually. Remember that in the beginning, he referred to himself as having another name and another identity, both of which are revealed in the play's climactic scene that follows. Makak's belief in himself as a leader may be another way he attempts to escape his nature, his ugly black man-ness. The reader can interpret this moment as a realization that he's become lost and confused in this hallucinatory identity. A third possibility is that from the beginning the money was a lie, a tactic he employed to get out of jail. His excuse that he's lost becomes a way to avoid revealing that truth and being shot. A fourth possibility is that he truly has become mad and doesn't know what the truth is anymore.

A clue to what exactly is happening for Makak emerges almost in passing, when he refers to Basil as the "Carpenter." Christ was referred to frequently as a carpenter, and combined with Basil's previously discussed function as a catalyst for transformation, this suggests that he and not Makak is the true representative of God. If this is true, then just as Moustique masquerades as Makak, Makak is masquerading in Basil's true part. This constant flux of identity reinforces the constantly shifting, dream-like nature of this reality. This possibility also implies that everything about Makak and his journey is wishful thinking to the point of delusion, and not a real quest at all. In other words, he wants to see himself as a messenger from God, and he has deluded himself into believing it's true. There is evidence for this theory in the following scene, which contains the climax of the play, the point at which Makak literally and figuratively destroys his inspiration.

Act 2 Scene 3

Act 2 Scene 3 Summary

The statues and celebrations invoked by the Corporal at the end of the previous scene appear. As the Chorus sings and dances in his praise, Makak is placed upon his throne. The Corporal, richly robed, steps forward. As Makak says quietly that he's only a shadow, the Corporal gives a long poetic speech about how there are prisoners to be tried and how tribal law overrules Roman law. He calls for Basil to list the accused and read the charges against them. Basil reads a list of people from across time and cultures, including Al Jolson, Abraham Lincoln, Mandrake the Magician, Shakespeare and Florence Nightingale, saying their crime was to be white. The Chorus shouts that the accused should be hanged. Basil then moves from the past to the present, listing a series of communications, letters and apologies trying to create amends between black people and white people. As each item is read, either Makak, the Chorus or the Corporal rejects it. Basil throws his list away.

The Corporal then calls forth other prisoners, and Moustique is brought in. The Corporal accuses him of betraying Makak's dream. Moustique pleads to be heard by Makak, but the Corporal insists that he isn't worthy to be heard. Moustique persists, calling on Makak to remember the purity of the vision with which he started on the journey and to renounce violence. Makak says he will be different from other people who've had the dream and become corrupted, but Moustique tells him that's what every man says. He tells Makak he's gone mad because of his hatred and that he's more of an ape now than ever. The Chorus calls for Moustique to be taken away. Moustique is removed, and then Makak's vision, the Woman in White, is brought out.

Makak cries out to her and asks why she chose him. As the Woman remains silent, the Corporal says that if Makak kills her he will finally sleep in peace. As Makak begs for guidance from the woman, Souris brings a sword. The Corporal orders the Chorus to leave, and everyone disperses. Makak asks whether the others can see her now, and they all say they can and urge him to hurry. Makak delivers a long speech in which he remembers himself many years ago, how he looked at himself in the surface of the water in a rain barrel, saw his face and renamed himself Makak after the monkey (macaque). He talks about how he realized in that moment how meaningless his life was. The world would continue long after he died, and he felt a huge loneliness where, he says, blessing and power once were. The Corporal then tells him that the woman is nothing but an image of his longing, saying that he must destroy her, otherwise his glory will be itself destroyed by the humility she represents. In more poetic language, he describes all the influences she has had on his life and again urges him to kill her. Souris, the Corporal and Basil withdraw as Makak prepares to kill the Woman. He takes off his robe and says he's now free. Then, he chops off the Woman's head.

Act 2 Scene 3 Analysis

The blending of this scene with the previous one, using the appearances of the idols and the music, illustrates again the theatrical nature of the storytelling. This scene reinforces the idea that the whole thing is a dream - not just Makak's, but ours as well. This idea is discussed further in the analysis of the Epilogue.

On one level, this climactic scene resembles the trial scene in the Bible, at which the mob calls out for Christ's execution. This resemblance exists in spite of the fact that at first white people and then Moustique are placed on trial. The movement of the scene towards its final confrontation between Makak and his dream suggests that it is in fact Makak who's being tried. The Corporal's challenge to Makak supports this idea, suggesting that Makak must either accept the power offered to him by the people, and therefore be what they need him to be, or accept the humility and simplicity of life and self-truth as represented by the death of the woman. This echoes the questioning of Christ by Pontius Pilate.

Underlying all of this is the theory that Makak's role as a leader is a delusion. This theory is further supported by the execution of the Woman. Up until this point, he has perceived her as an inspiration, a guide on his journey towards personal freedom and the leadership of his people. In the context of this scene and of what follows in the Epilogue, we understand that she in fact embodies his desire to escape from himself. This means that by destroying her, he exposes himself to the truth. The Epilogue tells us what that truth is, a truth foreshadowed by the long speech in which Makak remembers his vision of himself in the rain barrel. This is, as we shall see, a truer vision of who he is and what his life is meant to be than the one offered by the Woman.

Epilogue

Epilogue Summary

The cages return. Inside them again are Tigre, Souris and Makak, who in his sleep repeats the name "Felix Hobain," As Tigre sings the jailhouse song sung at the beginning of the play, the Corporal appears, back in his original uniform. He asks Tigre and Souris how Makak has behaved, and they tell him he's been delirious all night, as though he's been dreaming. The Corporal wakes Makak. He asks Makak who he is and where he lives. Makak confirms that he lives on Monkey Mountain. He says that his name is Felix Hobain and that he's referred to as Makak because of the way he looks. When he asks why he's in jail, the Corporal explains that he was drunk and disorderly in the market. He disrupted the vendors and insulted the inspector. The Corporal says, however, that because it's a first offence Makak will be allowed to return home.

The Corporal holds up the white mask with black hair, asking why Makak carries it with him and saying that everybody has one. Tigre makes a crude comment about how Makak dreams of white women. Souris comments excitedly that the sun is rising, and the Corporal tells them to calm themselves and to stop turning the place into a zoo. He lets Makak out of the cage and offers him the mask. When Makak refuses, the Corporal tells him to go home. Makak asks for Moustique, who then comes in looking for Makak. Moustique says that he went up to the mountain to look for Makak earlier but couldn't find him. Then he says that they've got work to do. He apologizes to the Corporal, saying that sometimes men just can't take any more, don't know why they live and don't know why they suffer. He then says that Makak is a good man and belongs at home.

Tigre shouts angrily for his food, and Souris bids farewell, saying, "Walk with God." Makak speaks in poetic language of returning home, being back with nature and living where he's always lived. He says let other prophets come and go, let them be mocked and betrayed, but he is going home, to the beginning of his world. As he and Moustique leave, the Chorus quietly sings a song about going home to "the father's kingdom."

Epilogue Analysis

In this scene, the personal truth at the center of Makak's dream/journey is revealed. We learn his true identity. We learn from Moustique that he is like every other man who once rebels against what society has forced him to be, and we learn that in spite of everything he still feels a call to be one with his home. At the same time, the Corporal's comment on how everybody has a mask suggests that everybody has a false dream from which they must free themselves. In other words, we learn that as a result of having his dream, by going on his journey towards power and by destroying the Woman who inspired that journey, Makak has actually discovered a profound truth. He must embrace his identity as himself, as the ugly old man of Monkey Mountain, before he can be anything or anyone else. The Woman has led him to the truth after all. He just took

an indirect path to get there. As previously suggested, the story we have been watching is indeed an allegory for Christ's ultimate journey towards reunion with his truest self, his reunion with God through death. Makak has also been reunited with God, or at least God in the way he understands and experiences him, in nature, on Monkey Mountain.

All this talk of delusion and allegory is not to suggest that the thematic points raised by the play/dream are invalid. On the contrary, the struggle for freedom fought by black people as individuals and as a culture is both necessary and ongoing. The play's main thematic point, however, is that humanity's struggle must begin with a sense of individual identity, and that individuals struggling for freedom must be secure within that sense of self before taking on a larger fight.

At this point, we ask ourselves where reality starts and where it ends. One clue may be found in the play's structure, which suggests that only the Prologue and Epilogue are real and that everything in between is Makak's dream. Another possibility, since dream-like things such as the disappearance of the cages happen even in the Prologue, is that there is no clear dividing line at all between dream and reality and that the whole thing is in fact someone else's dream, the playwright's or perhaps even ours. This theory is supported by the opening moments of the Prologue, which indicate without words that what we're about to watch is both a reflection and manifestation of something other than strict, conscious, linear reality.

Bibliography

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Characters

Basil

Basil is a black man (or perhaps apparition) who appears when death is imminent for someone in the scene. Wearing a dark coat and hat, he is described by some as a cabinetmaker. Basil also plays a constant role in Makak's journey after he reaches Monkey Mountain. He compels Corporal Lestrade to confess his sins, resulting in Lestrade's personal epiphany. When the scene shifts to Africa, Basil reads the list of the accused.

Felix Hobain

See Makak

Josephus

Josephus is the sick man who is healed by Makak. He suffers from a fever without sweat until Makak saves his life.

Corporal Lestrade

Corporal Lestrade runs the jail and is responsible for the arrest of Makak. Lestrade is a mulatto, and at the beginning of the play identifies himself with the white authority figures. He follows the rule of the law to the letter and is contemptuous of the three black men. At the beginning of Makak's dream, Lestrade remains like this. In the scene in which Moustique impersonates Makak in the marketplace, Lestrade emphasizes his beliefs on law and law enforcement to Market Inspector Pamphilion. Though Lestrade is stabbed by Makak during the prison escape initiated by Tigre, he later joins Makak's journey after finding the three on Monkey Mountain. Lestrade stabs and kills Tigre when he tries to kill them. Lestrade plays an even bigger role when the three are in Africa. It is he who insists that Makak kill the apparition that started him on this journey. At the end of the play, when the setting is again in reality, Lestrade is somewhat kinder than he was at the beginning of the play and lets Makak go free.

Makak

Makak is the central character in the play, the one who has the dream on Monkey Mountain. Makak is an older man, sixty to sixty-five, of African descent. He works as a coal cutter/burner, in a partnership with Moustique. Makak believes that he is ugly and repulsive, which is why he lives alone in a hut on Monkey Mountain. At the beginning of the play, Makak is thrown in jail for destroying a local café while drunk. He spends the

night in jail, which is where he has the dream that forms the bulk of *Dream on Monkey Mountain*.

Makak believes that an apparition, a white woman, appeared to him and told him that he is descended from African kings. He is to go back to Africa to reclaim his heritage. In the dream, Makak begins this journey. He finds that he has healing powers when he cures a sick man's fever. Though Moustique wants to exploit this gift for commercial purposes, Makak is only concerned with the larger goal. After ending up in jail and escaping with the help of fellow prisoners, Makak adds followers to his cause and by scene three is a king, passing judgment on others. Makak's dream ends when he kills the apparition that led him there in the first place. By the end of the play, the setting returns to reality and Makak is released from jail. Through his dream, Makak has gained a better sense of himself as he returns home to Monkey Mountain.

Moustique

Moustique is Makak's partner in business and sidekick in the play. He is a small black man with a pronounced physical deformity in his twisted foot. Makak rescued Moustique from the gutter about four years earlier. Moustique feels Makak is the only one who believes in him. Moustique sells the coal that Makak burns. The pair recently purchased a donkey, Berthilia, together for this business. In Makak's dream, Moustique plays a complicated role and dies twice. Moustique does not believe Makak's apparition was real, and only reluctantly goes on the journey. When Moustique comes upon the sick man and his family, he convinces them to let Makak try to heal the ill one in exchange for bread. It works, and Moustique immediately wants to exploit Makak's gift for commercial purposes. Moustique goes so far as to imitate Makak in the marketplace to make money. But he is caught in the deception and is killed, though Makak tries to save him. Later, when Makak is a king, Moustique is one of the prisoners brought before him. Moustique tries to tell Makak that he should not trust his new followers, but Makak does not believe him. Moustique is killed again. At the end of the play, when reality returns, Moustique shows up at the jail and begs for Makak's freedom, though Makak has already been released. The pair return to Monkey Mountain, their bond seemingly stronger.

Market Inspector Caiphas J. Pamphilion

Pamphilion is a law officer who is under the wing of Corporal Lestrade during Makak's dream. Pamphilion listens to Lestrade's theories and says very little.

Souris

Souris is one of the men in jail when Makak is brought there. He is a man of African descent who has been arrested as a thief. Souris and Tigre seem to be partners of some sort. In reality, Souris agrees with Tigre about Makak's insanity. But in Makak's dream, Souris is more concerned with getting his fair share of food from the Corporal

than with Makak. Souris goes along with Tigre's plan and joins Makak and Tigre's jailbreak. Souris changes sides when the three are on Monkey Mountain together. Though Tigre wants Souris to help him find Makak's money, Souris believes in Makak's vision. Souris does not stand with Tigre when he pulls the gun, much to Tigre's chagrin. Souris follows Makak to Africa. At the end of the play, when reality returns, Souris is still kind to the old man, telling him to "go with God."

Tigre

Tigre is one of the men in jail when Makak is brought there. Like his apparent partner Souris, he is a man of African descent who has been arrested as a thief. Tigre is rather vulgar and, in Makak's dream, convinces Souris that they should take advantage of the old man. Makak tries to pay off the Corporal so that he will be set free, but the Corporal accuses him of bribery. Tigre wants to steal any money Makak has hidden on Monkey Mountain, and to that end convinces Makak that the three should escape together. Makak listens to him, and after leaving the prison the three make their way to Monkey Mountain. Though Makak makes him a general, Tigre is really only concerned with obtaining Makak's money. When the Corporal appears on the mountain and ends up joining them, Tigre pulls a gun on the rest. He is later killed by the Corporal, in part because of his short-sighted greed. Tigre does not understand the journey Makak and the others are on. At the end of the play, when the setting returns to reality, Tigre is in jail, only concerned with himself again.

Themes

Identity/Search for Self

At the heart of *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is a search for and acceptance of one's identity. When Makak is questioned at the beginning of the play, he cannot tell Corporal Lestrade his real name or much about himself. To the question "What is your race?" Makak replies, "I am tired." Makak tells the corporal, Tigre, and Souris that he has not even seen his reflection in thirty years. During his night in jail, Makak has a dream, inspired by an apparition who came to him the night before. The white woman who appeared to him told him that he was a king of Africa and must go there. In his dream, Makak goes on this journey of self-discovery. He heals a sick man thought to be on his deathbed, and his reputation grows. Though Makak is jailed in his dream, he stabs his jailer, the corporal, and leaves with fellow inmates. The corporal and one of the escapees, Souris, join Makak's journey. When Makak wakes up in reality the next day, he knows his name and has a better sense of himself. He has more hope for his future.

Several of the minor characters have identity issues as well. They include the corporal, a mulatto who, at the beginning of the play, only identifies with the white, ruling side of his heritage. He speaks in disparaging tones to the black inmates. In Makak's dream, the corporal starts out the same way, but has a revelation of his own. He embraces "tribal law" over "Roman law" and falls in with Makak's journey. At the end of the play, when reality returns, the corporal still is disparaging towards the men of color, but also lets Makak go free.

Death and Rebirth

Throughout *Dream on Monkey Mountain* , there is also a complicated undercurrent of death and, in some cases, rebirth. The first significant event of Makak's journey is his healing of Josephus, a man suffering from a fever and near death. Though Makak initially believes that he has failed to heal the man, Josephus begins to sweat and lives. It is not the first time that Makak has saved someone. He befriended Moustique when he was a drunk in the gutter and made him his business partner. During the play, Moustique dies twice. The first time, he is caught impersonating the now-famous healer Makak in the marketplace and is killed by angry onlookers. He is alive again when Makak is a king in Africa. Moustique appears before Makak as a prisoner, and tries to tell Makak that the men around him will betray him. Makak allows him to be killed a second time. Yet at the end of the play, in reality, Moustique comes to get Makak out of jail. Though Makak is already free, Moustique escorts his newly reborn friend home. Earlier in the play, the corporal is assumed dead after Makak stabs him to get out of prison, but he lives and ends up joining Makak's journey in the woods on Monkey Mountain. In each of these instances, death had a physical symbol with the character of Basil. Each time death is imminent, Basil is present. The ideas of death and rebirth are linked to Makak and the others' search for identity. To understand who they are, they

must directly face death in some form and emerge all the stronger. Those who do, survive.

Race and Racism

Another theme in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* directly linked to the search for identity is race and racism. Makak's identity crisis is related to his status as a man of African descent. Makak means monkey, and the old man believes he is not worth looking at. This belief is reinforced by the racist attitudes expressed by Corporal Lestrade, a mulatto himself. Lestrade equates his black male inmates with animals in a zoo. Lestrade identifies only with the white, authoritative side of his heritage. It is only in Makak's dream that Lestrade embraces the African side of his background and joins Makak's journey. At the end of the play, Makak has come to terms with his race because of his dream, but Lestrade has not.

Style

Setting

Dream on Monkey Mountain is an allegory set on an unspecified island in the West Indies at an unspecified time, assumed to be contemporary with the time the play was written. The play's action takes place in several locations, both real and imagined. The most real place is the jail run by Corporal Lestrade, where the play begins and ends. In Makak's dream, the action goes from his hut on Monkey Mountain to a country road where Makak heals the sick man and then to the public marketplace before returning to the jail cell. After Makak, Tigre, and Souris escape, they spend time in the forest before going to a most unreal setting of apotheosis, where Makak is king. All of these settings underscore Makak's journey from a real existence that is harsh, through self-awareness, and back to a reality that he feels better about and in which he functions as a better person.

Symbolism

Dream on Monkey Mountain is replete with complex symbolism, from characters' names to entire subplots. Emphasizing how much of the text is Makak's dream, many words and actions have multiple symbolic meanings. For example, each of the four main characters of African descent□Makak, Moustique, Souris, and Tigre□are the names of animals. They are monkey, mosquito, rat, and tiger, respectively. These names reveal something of each character's personality and perception of themselves, but also play off the corporal's racist remarks about running a zoo. Lestrade's name reflects his dual background, black and white. He literally straddles these cultures. Characters are also symbolic in and of themselves. The prime example is Basil, whose appearance symbolizes a forthcoming death for another character. Nearly everything that happens in Makak's dream has symbolic meaning. When Makak heals Josephus, the man with a fever, it symbolizes the beginning of his awareness of his worth as a human being. When he is a king in Africa, Makak has to kill the white woman who appeared to him as an apparition. She began his journey, and what she symbolizes must be killed to end it.

Language and Dialogue

Walcott uses language and dialogue to underscore diversity in *Dream on Monkey Mountain*. The West Indian island on which the play is set has several kinds of cultures with different languages. The characters of African descent speak English for the most part, but it is often dialect with some local "patois" words and phrases, spoken by Makak especially, as well as Souris, Moustique, and Tigre. Even their names fall under this category. When the corporal is in his authoritative mode, he speaks in a clipped, proper English, throwing in the occasional Latin phrase. During his epiphany in the forest, the corporal's language changes for the moment and becomes more like the other

characters. Though the corporal returns to the authoritative tone, the language he then uses is in praise of Makak and that part of the corporal's heritage, instead of against it. Much of the corporal's dialogue is a satiric take on the language of British colonialism. Language de- fines who characters are and serves as a marker for how they change.

Historical Context

In 1967 as today, Trinidad was a culturally diverse island in the West Indies, with a heritage that includes slavery, colonizers, and island natives. There were many racial and ethnic groups: African, East Indian, and white, with Spanish, British, and French influences. Though English was the official language, many were spoken on the island including Creole, Hindi, Urdu, and Spanish. Each culture had its own religion as well. Catholicism, Protestantism, Hindu, and Muslim faiths were practiced on Trinidad. The groups often thought of them selves as distinct, which created problems, social and otherwise, especially during the formation of political parties and unions.

Trinidad (unified with Tobago since colonial days in the nineteenth century) had attained independent commonwealth status in 1962. The country was administered by Great Britain as part of its Commonwealth of Nations, which meant Tobago was ruled by a governor-general appointed by that country's leaders. A locally elected bicameral legislature was controlled by the People's National Movement (PNM), which had been in power since 1956. PNM held a monopoly on power as the first to form a party-based cabinet government.

In 1967, Trinidad's economy was not particularly strong on any front. Two years previously, legislation had been passed that limited the right to strike, making it harder to form nationwide unions. The government tried to stabilize the situation, but high unemployment reigned. This situation created social unrest that would come to a head in 1970 when curfews were imposed. Many black Trinidadians believed there was racial discrimination in employment.

Influenced by and linked to the militant Black Power movement in the United States, demonstrations on the grass-roots level, especially among the young, were presented in an effort to affect change. The demonstrators were critical of the government and accused it of corruption. One particularly radical group was the National Joint Action Congress, related to the University of the West Indies. The Congress believed that white and colored businessmen, both local and foreign, owned most of the nation's businesses. It wanted to form a government that would control the whole economy, all of the land, and the sugar industry. This government would not be a democracy, but would take power by force.

Another part of the economy that was problematic, though on the rise, was farming. Agriculture was supported by the government's five-year development plan, in place from 1962 to 1967. Trinidad supported farming initiatives so the country would not have to import as much food. A signifi- cant amount of funding went to the State Lands Programme, which rented government lands at low prices to small farmers. This action did improve the situation in the short term, but did nothing to address the difference between rural and urban areas. While there were many roads, in rural areas they were often single-laned dirt trails, which limited access to these areas.

Trinidad's future would be bright in the short term for another reason. Oil deposits had been discovered in the early twentieth century, and onshore oil drilling had been practiced ever since. By the mid-1960s, oil drilling occurred both on and off shore. Because of the worldwide oil crisis in the 1970s, Trinidad oil businesses□which included refining and distributing□would boom. Though life in Trinidad improved greatly as social programs were created with the government's new funds, the boom drained people away from agriculture. The boom was also short-lived. By the 1980s, Trinidad's economy was slumping again.

Literary Heritage

Like many countries in the West Indies, Trinidad has a long tradition of folklore with identifiable stock characters. Some of these legends have their roots in animist traditions from West Africa and were brought over by those enslaved. Patois folklore was derived primarily from the slaves of French speakers and has a variety of characters. They include the Soucouyant (evil old hag), Papa Bois (the father of the woods), and Mamadlo, the mother of the water whose form is a snake with human features. Jumbies are anything that could be construed as a bogey-man. Some stories focus on La Diablesse, a female devil in disguise who attracts men and lures them into the forest where they come to harm. Anase tales feature a universal trickster who lives by his wits, though is also greedy and selfish. He is not usually admired because of these characteristics, though stories involving him often try to explain why things are the way they are.

Critical Overview

Since its earliest performances, critics have been divided over *Dream on Monkey Mountain*. While most found much to praise, especially its poetic nature, some believed it to be bogged down by that very poetry. The complex play also compelled critics to offer their own widely divergent interpretations. Critics of the original New York production in 1971 exemplify this diversity.

Edith Oliver of *The New Yorker* saw the play as pure, successful poetry. She wrote, "*Dream on Monkey Mountain* is a poem in dramatic form or a drama in poetry, and poetry is rare in the modern theatre. Every line of it plays; there are no verbal decorations. A word, too, must be said for the absolute trust that Mr. Walcott engenders in his audience, convincing us there is a sound psychological basis for every action and emotion."

The *New York Times*' Clive Barnes shared Oliver's high opinion. Barnes claimed that this "beautiful bewildering play by a poet" is a "richly flavored phantasmagoria." Even when interpreting Walcott's intentions, Barnes came back to the poetic aspects of *Dream on Monkey Mountain*. He wrote, "I think that what Mr. Walcott is counseling is a twentieth-century black identity rather than an attempt to impose a reversal to a preslave black identity. But much of the play's interest is in its spectacle and poetry."

Another *New York Times* critic, Clayton Riley, generally concurred with Barnes, though he believed the play to be too wordy. Riley argued, "The play is rich and complex; the author's use of fable interwoven with a stark elaboration of historical evidence of oppression illuminates his work, lends it an arresting weight and texture. Walcott's characters are drawn with bold, sometimes extravagant strokes and, prodded by the author, they have an inclination to talk a bit too much." Riley's interpretation also differed from Barnes'. Riley believed that "the thesis, as proposed in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* , is that the West cannot□nor should it□ exist forever, given its deplorable record of racist exploitation and butchery throughout the world."

Barnes and Riley's colleague at the *New York Times*, Walter Kerr, thought the poetic tendencies of the play were problematic. He wrote, "It would be easy to misread [the play], in spite of Michael A. Schultz's admirably composed production. . .because the author has a strong bent towards poetic digression. He is long over some scenes that the thread of essential meaning is lost altogether; forward movement is clogged by a waterfall of words."

After the initial productions, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* continued to be presented throughout the world, including regional productions in the United States. Critics' issues with the play remained the same. In 1979, Joseph McLellan of the *Washington Post* reviewed a local production. He found it "a kind of play often written by poets. . .It is too long, loosely organized and specialized in interest for commercial success in this country, but striking in its use of language, fresh and original in its ideas and symbolism." McLellan's interpretation focused on the dream aspect of the title. He

wrote, "In a colonial society, one way to compensate for lack of power is to dream. But dreams are also a source of power and a shaping force in its use, if enough people share the dream. This is the central statement of *Dream on Monkey Mountain*."

Fifteen years later, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* continued to be produced regionally in the United States. Of a Boston production at Playwright's Theatre, Kevin Kelly of *The Boston Globe* wrote, "Deliberately paradoxical, complex to the point of confusion, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is so intellectually commanding□and emotionally loaded□that you're constantly being challenged." In the same review, Kelly compared the play to the Bible and Walcott to Shakespeare. Like most critics, he saw Walcott's poetic touch. He wrote, "Derek Walcott's *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is a great piece of work, a mesmerizing, multilayered riff that plays like a black version of the Bible with hardly any specific reference to Christian literature, but, rather, in its myth-making reach, allusive reference to all literature. It's a dense, demanding play, clearly the work of a poet posing inside the proscenium (the same posture applies to Shakespeare)."

Criticism

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Critical Essay #1

In this essay, Petrusso compares Makak's journey of self-discovery with that of the one he imagines for Corporal Lestrade in Dream on Monkey Mountain*.*

Most critics agree that Derek Walcott's *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is an intricate play, full of complicated, sometimes contradictory images and metaphors. Because of the text's richness, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* has attracted numerous interpretations of its many aspects. At the center of numerous critics' reading of the play is Makak and the dream voyage he goes on that leads to his selfacceptance. Some have compared Makak to Christ, while others have focused on his name□which means monkey□and how the play chronicles his emotional evolution to manhood.

From the beginning of *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, it is obvious that Makak is suffering. The old man of African descent has been put in jail for drunken and disorderly conduct after demolishing a local café. When questioned, Makak can only give the name he gave himself to the authorities: Makak or monkey. He has forgotten his real name, symbolic of his nonacceptance of himself. Makak also tells them that he has not seen his own image in over thirty years. In part one, scene one, as his dream begins, the play goes back to the beginning of the day that led to Makak's jailing.

As he relates to his only friend and business partner, Moustique, Makak was visited by a white woman, an apparition, in the light of a full moon. She told him that he was a descendant of African kings and lions, and advised him to live among men. Makak decides to journey to Africa. Moustique accompanies him despite his belief that Makak is crazy. Along the way, Makak learns that he has the power to heal the sick and lead other men. Souris and Corporal Lestrade join his cause.

When Makak makes it to Africa in part two, scene three, he is a tribal king who passes judgment on others and decides their fate. At the end of his dream, Makak must kill the white apparition to free himself from what she represents, that is, the oppression of his soul by white colonials. After he beheads her, he awakens to reality in his cell. Makak now accepts himself and his place in society. He remembers his name and who he is. With Moustique, Makak returns to Monkey Mountain a different man.

Thus Makak's dream is dense and complex. One particularly interesting aspect is how he incorporates Corporal Lestrade into it. Like Makak, Lestrade is a conflicted character. He is a mulatto, who at the beginning of *Dream on Monkey Mountain* identifies only with the white, English, authoritative side of his heritage. This is underscored by his job in both Makak's dream and reality. He is the jailer, the man who explains the ropes to the market inspector in part one, scene three. In the prologue, which is still reality, Lestrade expresses racist opinions about the black men he has jailed. Playing on Makak's appearance and a comment by prisoner Souris (calling Makak "some mountain gorilla"), Lestrade states, "Now if you apes will behave like gentlemen, who knows what could happen?" Yet Lestrade is half "ape" himself.

Lestrade plays a prominent role in Makak's dream. Indeed, if we take the dream as solely a product of Makak's imagination, his way of work ing out his problems, he imagines that Lestrade goes on his own journey of self-discovery as well. It begins after Makak has a revelation of his own. He breaks a man's fever and saves his life. Wanting to cash in Makak's gift for profit, his friend Moustique impersonates him in a public marketplace. It is here, in part one, scene three, that the dream Lestrade is introduced.

The dream Lestrade is working with Market Inspector Caiphas J. Pamphilion. Lestrade carries a pistol while accompanying the inspector as he distributes certificates among the vendors. Lestrade tells the Inspector that he has to carry the pistol "to protect people from themselves." Yet he also identifies with the mostly black people present, calling them "my people." He says, "I would like to see them challenge the law, to show me they alive. But they paralyze with darkness. . .They cannot do nothing, because they born slaves and they born tired." Clearly, Makak imagines Lestrade in a kinder light than Lestrade presented himself at the beginning of the play.

Despite such sentiments, Lestrade remains primarily the white-leaning authority figure. He uses racist language similar to that used in the prologue. By part two, scene three, Makak is in Lestrade's jail. Lestrade arrested him when he endangered his friend, the market inspector. Though Lestrade still regards himself as "an instrument of the law" with "white man work to do," he also believes, "In some places the law does not allow you to be black, not even black, but tinged with black." The law is everything to Lestrade; it gives him his identity and his power.

To continue on his own journey, Makak must get out of jail. To that end, he tries to bribe Lestrade. When that does not work, he allows the other prisoners, Tigre and Souris, to talk him into escaping. Makak stabs Lestrade and they escape, leaving the Corporal for dead. Though Makak feels guilty about it, he still takes the opportunity that presents itself. Lestrade, however, does not die. He lives, claiming that he wants them to run ahead so he has an excuse to kill them. Lestrade knows that they are "attempting to escape from the prison of their lives." He will hunt the lion.

In the forest, both Makak and Lestrade undergo further transformations. Makak seems more insane, yet more confident of his journey and his growing self-worth. He makes Tigre his general. As Makak, Souris and Tigre grow closer, Lestrade appears in the forest. The trio hides as Lestrade starts speaking in the same kind of crazy, illogical thoughts as Makak. Lestrade has his own epiphany at this point. Basil, the symbol of death throughout *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, appears and demands that Lestrade confess his sins on the implied threat of death. The other characters present do not see Basil, just like no one else saw Makak's white apparition.

Confessing to Basil, Lestrade comes to terms with his blackness. He tells Basil, "Too late have I loved thee, Africa of my mind, *sero te amavi,* to cite Saint Augustine who they saw was black. I jeered thee because I hated half of myself, my eclipse. . .Now I see as new light. I sing the glories of Makak!" After this unbosoming, Makak sees that Lestrade has been transformed, though it takes Lestrade some time. The healer convinces Lestrade to join them, though Tigre immediately resents the Corporal's

presence and Souris's loyalty to the old man. Lestrade stabs and kills Tigre with a spear. Though Lestrade and Makak's journeys now follow the same path, some things do not change.

Indeed, Lestrade now seems the leader in giving Makak his African crown. Lestrade pushes the old man forward, following him but acting as his primary advisor and support with the help of Souris. While Makak is unsure where to go, Lestrade remains fundamentally concerned with the rule of law. In part two, scene three, Makak finally reaches Africa and is a tribal king. Lestrade, however, really runs the show. As Makak's right-hand man, he gives the orders for the prisoners to be presented, asks the gathered tribes their opinions on the tribute offers, and keeps Makak making decisions.

The crowning moment of their joint path to enlightenment is when the apparition appears before Makak as a prisoner asking for forgiveness. The Corporal tells him what he must do□behead her□but Makak has a hard time accepting this. Lestrade uses manipulative imagery to get him to finish the deed. His language reflects his acceptance of his dual racial heritage, but also shows how his interpretation of the law is most important of all. Lestrade tells Makak, "She is the mirror of the moon that this ape look into and find himself unbearable. She is all that is pure, all that he cannot reach. . .I too have longed for her." Makak can only be free of what she represents when he kills her, but he insists on doing it alone. Only then, away from Lestrade's eyes, can Makak symbolically complete his journey. Lestrade has already gone as far as he will go.

At the end of *Dream on Monkey Mountain* , the scene shifts back to reality. Makak knows his real name and is freed by a somewhat kinder, gentler Lestrade. He tells Makak, and later Moustique, that they put the old man in jail because of his behavior but only intended to keep him overnight. When Lestrade frees Makak he tells him, "Believe me, old man. . .it have no salvation for them, and no hope for us," and "our life is a prison." Makak accepts himself for all that has gone on in his head. Lestrade is different, too, though he could not possibly know Makak's dream for him. To Makak, Lestrade will always be the law, but he imagines that the Lestrades of the world will realize their worth as well.

Source: Annette Petrusso, in an essay for *Literature of Developing Nations for Students*, Gale, 2000.

Critical Essay #2

In this essay on Walcott's Dream on Monkey Mountain*, author Patrick Hogan examines the themes of colonization, poverty, and the search for social and personal identity in a world where racial subjugation is absolute and blackness absolutely devalued.*

Establishing both a social and a personal identity which are not determined by the oppressor has been a recurrent theme of subaltern writers, from postcolonials, to women, to racial and ethnic minorities. Whether spoken of in terms of "decolonizing the mind," "ecriture feminine," or the "black aesthetic," it has been a central task of literary artists from dominated groups. A number of writers have chosen to look at this issue from the other side, examining the ways in which oppressive ideologies undermine personal identity and even lead to madness. This approach has been particularly common in feminist critiques of patriarchy. Some of the more obvious instances from the post-colonial canon would include Antoinette in Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea,* the narrator in Atwood's *Surfacing,* Elizabeth in Head's *A Question of Power*, Anna in Lessing's *The Golden Notebook,* Nyasha in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions,* and the title character in Kincaid's *Annie John.*

Derek Walcott's *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is a particularly complex and interesting example of this genre. Yet it has received relatively little critical attention. This is surprising not only because of Walcott's stature, but because the play presents an important variation on a common theme. Postcolonization literature treating the disintegration of personal identity in the face of oppression has tended to focus on women. Even the male authors who have addressed this issue have often dealt with female insanity (see, for example, Phillips's *The Final Passage*). One result of this is that the disintegrating effects of colonialism and racism have been less fully explored in postcolonization literature than one would expect. While a number of writers besides Walcott have dealt with racial or colonial issues along with patriarchy□Head has done this particularly effectively□the feminist concerns of their works, and the feminist focus of much of the criticism on these works, has tended to limit the literary study of racism and psychopathology. This is particularly unfortunate, because the topic is clearly and necessarily central to the postcolonial situation. Indeed, a number of writers have explored it in theoretical work, most obviously Frantz Fanon in "The Negro and Psychopathology," Chapter Six of *Black Skin, White Masks.* Walcott is one of the few anglophone postcolonial writers to have taken up the problem of racism, identity, and madness, developing and extending Fanon's observations through a literary medium.

In the following pages, then, I should like to consider not only what is going on in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* , but what insight this play can provide into the problems of colonialism and identity In other words, in thinking about the play, I also hope to use the play to think about the world, about the problems which Walcott tries to represent and work through. Before going on to the play, however, it is important to consider some of the more general principles of social and personal identity as they relate both to madness and to the postcolonial condition.

Critical Essay #3

Following Lacan and others, we may understand personal identity not as some direct and immediate sense of self, but rather as a "constitution" of the self, a sort of synthetic self-conception. When I think of an object□my car, for example□I think not of some particular isolated detail, but of a complex of elements and relations: its color, its shape, how it runs, when it was last serviced, etc. As some cognitive scientists would put it, I "access" a "schema" of my car. When I think about another person, a friend perhaps, I do much the same thing; I access a schema which includes not only his/her appearance, but also typical and particular behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, preferences, etc. When I think about myself, I do the same thing. I access a schema of myself. This too includes a representation of my appearance, my attitudes, my behaviours, etc. What is perhaps most important to note about this selfschema is that it is in large part not the product of introspection, but rather of external attribution. In other words, to a considerable degree, I have been told what I am. My self-schema is formed by the statements and attitudes of others to a far greater extent than we are usually aware. As Lacan put it, our self-image is "more constituting than constituted" (my translation), more a construction of us than a construction by us.

As a simple example, consider body weight. I cannot know by introspection or even observation if I am overweight or underweight or neither. This is, in effect, something I am told, directly or indirectly. And, as research on eating disorders has demonstrated, the advertising and entertainment industries lead many women (and some men) to form a false (and debilitating) conception of themselves as overweight. As Naomi Wolf recently pointed out, a 1984 study indicated that 75% of young women believe that they are overweight, while only 25% are medically overweight; indeed "45 percent of the underweight women thought they were too fat." This is a particularly interesting case, because it illustrates the degree to which even one's perceptual selfconstitution, one's conception of one's own appearance, is shaped by attribution, by being told what one is like.People with eating disorders tend, in effect, to see themselves as overweight. Even when looking in a mirror, we do not simply see what we actually look like. Rather, we see what we are told we look like.

The ascriptive character of self-understanding is particularly clear in the case of evaluative terms□ such as "overweight," as well as "beautiful," "ugly," and so on. The person who is told he/she is beautiful, treated as beautiful, and so on, will see beauty when he/she looks in a mirror. The same holds for ugliness. Less obvious, but equally true, is the fact that when we look in the mirror we see ourselves in terms of attributed descriptive categories. A white person does, most often, have light skin. But it is due to an attribution of race that he/she sees him/herself as white. A black person does, most often, have dark skin. But it is due to an attribution of race that he/she sees him/herself as black.

More exactly, our self-constitution or self-conception or "ego" (as we might call it, following one usage of Lacan) is organized by a hierarchy of physical, mental, and other properties. We believe a range of things about ourselves, but some of these things are

more important than others. For example, it is much more central to my self-conception that I am a teacher than that I own many pairs of shorts. The higher we go in this hierarchy, the more important the property is to our sense of our own identity. At the highest levels of this self-schema are the properties which were attributed to us in childhood, the first properties and relations which formed the basis of our later self-conception. These fundamental attributes are themselves determined by a social hierarchy. Specifically, they are the attributes which function to structure the society into which one is born, especially those attributes which structure a society hierarchically. In every society, sex is one of these properties, for it defines a crucial principle of social stratification. Thus being male or female is universally a central property of personal identity. Race, ethnicity, religion, economic class are common and powerful elements of personal identity in societies hierarchically structured by these categories as well.

Clearly, then, the basis of personal identity is nothing other than social identity: being male or female, white or black (or coloured or Indian), European or African (or Asian), Christian or Yoruba (or Ibo or Hindu or Jewish), etc., defines our personal identity as social identity. Whatever one may think of it□whether one finds it a fact to celebrate or to deplore□each of us begins his/her self-constitution on the basis of a series of social categories which are the result of attribution, not experience, and which locate us in one or more social hierarchies. Equally clearly, such a location is problematic, especially for those who have been placed in a socially devalued position. Their basic principles of identity□often undeniable principles concerning the colour of their skin or the nature of their reproductive organs□are not only devalued in themselves, but linked with a series of other devalued attributions which are either putatively absent from the dominant group or are more variable and temporary. For example, in a certain racist aesthetic, which has only recently begun to lose its dominance, black skin is considered to be ugly in and of itself. Individual white people, in this view, may be ugly or may be beautiful; even an ugly white person has some hope of improving his/her looks. But black is ugly by necessity; to be black is necessarily to be ugly. As a result of this sort of constitution, racist, sexist, and other oppressive structures may define a subaltern personal identity which is pervaded by self-denigration and self-hatred.

In considering the social constitution of personal identity, we may distinguish both conceptual and perceptual components of particular relevance to the present study. Specifically, since race (as well as sex) is a socially visible property□in a way that, for example, religion or economic class need not be□ we would expect that perceptual self-constitution would be of particular importance in connection with the constitution of a racial subaltern identity. In addition, at the conceptual level, we would expect a close connection between racial identity and social history. Since racist stratification typically justifies claims of racial inferiority by reference to putative cultural inferiority□that is, these two social hierarchies are typically identified□one's relation to one's forebears and to ancestral traditions becomes as definitive and as denigrated as one's face and mind.

Lacan outlines a similar structure of perceptual and cultural/familial factors in identity when he isolates the mirror image and the Name-of/fromthe- Father as the two crucial moments in the constitution of the ego. We need not follow Lacanian psychoanalysis in its details to see the particular relevance, to colonial and postcolonial identity, of the

mirror image and the ancestral name (whether patronymic, as Lacan assumes, or not), the ways in which these may serve as pivots of subaltern selfconstitution. Indeed, in many ways, Lacan's emphasis on naming fits colonial societies, such as those of West Africa or South India, better than it fits European societies. Take, for example, traditional Yoruba culture, to which Walcott frequently alludes as a major force in Afro-Caribbean identity. As Roland Hallgren points out, the name given to a Yoruba child fixed not only sex, but a range of other social relations: "occupation, family traditions, which deity was worshipped," etc. Indeed, Lacan is in a sense recapitulating Yoruba beliefs in his system, for the traditional Yoruba view is that "the name has a psychological effect on the behaviour and character of the bearer." The name thus becomes a particularly important node of social and personal identity. As we shall see, both the name and the image figure importantly in Walcott's exploration of colonial and postcolonial identity.

Critical Essay #4

As we have already indicated, *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is a play which explores the ways in which racism defines an unlivable identity for oppressed people, an identity which pushes toward madness. At various points, Walcott makes this theme explicit. For example, he draws the epigraph for Part One from Sartre's prologue to *The Wretched of the Earth*: as a result of "always being insulted," the self becomes "dissociated, and the patient heads for madness." Or, as the coloured Corporal Lestrade puts it later, in dialogue with the sinister Basil: "My mind, my mind. What's happened to my mind?," he asks; "It was never yours, Lestrade," Basil replies. His mind, we may infer, was never his own because it was always defined by the attributed categories of racism, because his identity was always and necessarily a matter of what he was told he was.

Walcott devotes much of the play to exploring the absolute valorization of whiteness, and the absolute devaluation of blackness, in colonial racist ideology. For example, Moustique explains: "when I was a little boy, living in darkness, I was so afraid. . .God was like a big white man, a big white man I was afraid of." But Walcott is less concerned with the details of racist ideology than with the effects of this ideology on black people. When all value is associated with whiteness, blacks almost necessarily seek to repudiate their blackness□which is impossible. As Lestrade puts it early in the play: "is this rage for whiteness that does drive niggers mad."

In connection with this, Walcott explicitly de- fines the issue of subaltern identity in terms of the sort of perceptual and ethnic self-constitutions which we have been discussing. The play centers around a character who foregoes his legal name for the derogatory and implicitly racial epithet "Makak," or "Monkey." When arrested for disorderly conduct, he actually forgets his legal name. The delirium from which he suffers is clearly connected with this inability to link himself to family or culture. He has, in effect, been formed by an ideology which strips him of the individual and human identity implicit in the name and which seeks to structure his personal identity around a racial typology according to which black is to white as monkey is to human. Lestrade summarizes Makak's condition: "this is a being without a mind, a will, a name, a tribe of its own." Lestrade is adopting a colonial and racist perspective, but he nonetheless articulates Makak's complete alienation from any culture which might provide a positive alternative to colonial, racist ideology.

Unsurprisingly, Makak also repudiates any visual self-representation, any image which will remind him of his blackness. Shortly after explaining that he lives "without child, without wife," hence without links to a family and to the culture which such a family might imply, Makak explains that he has also lived without an image of himself: "Is thirty years now I have look in no mirror." The reflection only brings him face to face with his own blackness, thus the impossibility of value in a colonial situation. Indeed, he even takes care not to glimpse himself in water: "Not a pool of cold water, when I must drink, / I stir my hands first, to break up my image" (the fragmentation of the reflection foreshadows Makak's related fragmentation in madness). When Makak looks at himself, he sees what a white racist sees. He is, in effect, a metaphor for those legions of

colonized subjects who, in Walcott's words, "looked at life with black skins and blue eyes" ("What the Twilight Says"), suffering the "contradiction of being white in mind and black in body" (or, more accurately, white in self-perception and black in body). His identity, his understanding of the world, his evaluation of himself and of others, all have been determined by white perceptions, white ideas□ which is to say, by ascriptions which serve to support racial hierarchies.

Late in the play, Makak comes to consider the situation of blacks in a society structured by white racism. In a moment of despair, he says: "we are black, ourselves shadows in the firelight of the white man's mind." Here, Walcott is alluding to Plato's allegory of the cave, in part to develop the points we have just been considering. One meaning of this line is that, in a world dominated by whites, blacks have no more free volition, no more power, than shadows. It also suggests that the selves or egos of blacks are reduced to shadows by the white racist's perception of them. Whites are like the men in Plato's cave who confuse shadows with reality. The white understanding of blacks is as distant from black reality as the understanding of a shadow is from the understanding of a man or woman. But Makak does not say, "We are black, appearing to whites like shadows in the firelight of their minds." Rather, he says that "we are. . . ourselves shadows," implying that blacks have accepted and internalized the racism which reduces them to shadows. In this sense, Walcott presents blacks as prisoners in the cave. And the shadows they see on the wall are not images of others, but of themselves,the only images they have of themselves

Of course there is more to Makak than a disvalued and disrupted constitution, a disintegrating ego formed from shadows deep in the mines of racist ideology. Makak experiences himself and other blacks as human, and whites as a force of natural or supernatural evil. Indeed, this is what brings about his delirium, for he can neither resolve this contradiction nor live with it. In his hallucinations, Makak becomes a saviour of his people, the man who will revive their culture, return them to the time before colonial degradation, lead them out of the cave where they see only shadows, and bring them into the light where they will see the truth. He links himself to his ancestry, proclaiming himself "the direct descendant of African kings." And he will save his race in part because he is "a healer of leprosy"; he can cure the disease that turns its victim white with decay and causes him/her to disintegrate bit by bit. The people he seeks to lead have, like Makak, lost their identity□their names, their link with a tradition. He addresses them: "I see you all as trees,/like a twisted forest,/like trees without names,/a forest with no roots!"

Elsewhere, Walcott speaks about "racial despair," by which he seems to mean the sense of complete human denigration which drives Makak mad. He links this to the sense of being "rootless," of having no connection with a tradition which gives one personal value□even of having no home, of being a stranger in a home owned by someone else, by whites. After Makak is arrested, Lestrade mockingly asks him, "Where is your home? Africa?" The implication is that he has no home, no homeland.

Makak replies, "Sur Morne Macaque," which he translates as "on Monkey Mountain," but which means something more like "on despondent Makak"□he lives, in a sense, on

racial despair. In his delusions, Makak's first project is to return to Africa, to find his home, his "roots." Later, he tells his followers, "We will see Africa"; he explains that they will be transported, suddenly, when they open their eyes after making a wish, just as if they "have eaten a magic root." Africa is, in effect, that magic root which he wishes will fix him deep in the soil of a homeland. But this project is always uncertain. Unlike Souris, when Makak looked at God, he saw not "a big white man," but "blackness." A good thing? It is hard to say. As Lestrade asks: "What did the prisoner [i.e., Makak] imply? That God was neither white nor black but nothing? That God was not white but black, that he had lost his faith? Or..or. . .what." The alternatives are significant, but none is satisfactory. As to the last option, even those who do not believe in God are likely to admit that a despairing loss of faith is not a good thing. And if Makak has lost his faith, it is almost certainly not a positive development□an achievement of human community, for example, a turning away from the promises of an afterlife to a social affirmation of this life. It is, rather, a sign of racial despair. On the other hand, suppose Makak has decided that God is black. Certainly, this is better for Makak, and for other people of African descent. But one thing that Souris makes clear is that the first problem with thinking of God as white is that it racializes divinity, and thus value. To make God black is to repeat this racialization, if in an inverted form.

Asserting God's racial blackness is part of what I refer to in the title as "reactionary nativism." By "reactionary nativism," I mean the general inversion of colonial and racist hierarchies such that members of the oppressed group affirm their racial and cultural authority in precisely the manner of the colonizers. This is a reactionary tendency in that it is a reaction to the physical and mental brutality of the oppressors, which it denies but does not overcome. As I am using the term, the relation between reactionary nativism and colonial racism is analogous to the relation between conscious and unconscious impulses in "reaction formation." Suppose, for example, that I have strongly aggressive impulses toward someone, which disturb me so much that I repress them. As part of my defense against these impulses, I may develop a "reaction formation" and come to behave toward this person with excessive affection and care. Though my outward behavior and conscious attitude are solicitous and loving, they are both in fact determined by my defense against aggression and hatred. Reactionary nativism is similar in that it is an affirmation of one's racial and cultural superiority which is based upon and guided by an underlying denigration of one's race and culture. In other words, it is a sort of reaction formation against colonial racism.

Thus reactionary nativism is a rejection of colonial racist ideology which presupposes the acceptance of that ideology. Put differently, reactionary nativism is the obverse of mimeticism□ mimeticism being the formation of one's identity in terms of the concepts and values ascribed to one by one's oppressors. Mimeticism is what leads to racial despair, to the sense that one has no value, as well as to the imitation of white culture, devotion to white law and rule, white ideas and language (i.e., ideas and language which are categorized by whites as superior and as their own□even when those ideas had their origin outside of Europe). Mimeticism creates both Makak's madness and Lestrade's pathetic and cruel conformity. It is also what creates reactionary nativism. Anti-colonial and postcolonial theorists from Frantz Fanon to Ashis Nandy have noted the close connection between a desire to become European and a subsequent

repudiation of all things European. As Walcott puts it, "Once we have lost our wish to be white we develop a longing to become black, and those two may be different, but are still careers."

Critical Essay #5

To a great extent, the plot of *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is organized by reference to mimeticism and reactionary nativism. It in effect maps the development of the latter out of the former. More exactly, Walcott implicitly isolates three stages of development in the social and personal identity of his characters. Moreover, in each stage he implicitly distinguishes what we might call "popular" and "anti-popular" versions, which is to say, versions which arise out of or in solidarity with the people (or some sub-group of the people) and versions which arise out of an individualist or careerist alignment with the foreign oppressors. (As shall become clear, the "popular" versions do not necessarily contribute to the well-being of the people; the fact that they are "of the people" does not imply that they operate in the objective interests of the people.) In exemplifying these alternatives, Walcott presents us with a valuable, if tacit, anatomy of subaltern identity.

Specifically, Walcott begins with mimeticism divided into the figures of racial despair and mimetic collaborationism. The former□exemplified in Makak□is what I am calling the "popular" tendency, for those who suffer racial despair identify themselves with the people. Though they see themselves and the people through "blue eyes," they do not set out to distance themselves from the people. In contrast, the collaborationist tendency□exemplified in Lestrade□is marked by an insistence on difference. Lestrade is proud of being part white and he repeatedly refers to blacks in brutally racist terms: "Animals, beasts, savages, cannibals, niggers."

Makak's mimeticism manifests itself in many ways. Most obviously, his "name" alludes not only to the racist identification of blacks with apes, but also to the adage "Monkey see, monkey do." Indeed, at one point, Lestrade□representing white power and authority□has Makak imitate him in a series of meaningless actions. He concludes: "Everything I say this monkey does do, / I don't know what to say this monkey won't do. / I sit down, monkey sit down too, / I don't know what to say this monkey won't do." But the most significant image of Makak's mimeticism is probably the mask. When arrested, Makak is carrying a white mask. This is the mask of mimicry, the mask which imitates white people. Makak is, of course, not unique in wearing such a mask. It is a mask that all blacks learn to wear as children. When Moustique finds the mask in Makak's hovel, he calls it "cheap stupidness black children putting on." Later, Moustique confronts a crowd seeking release from oppression, and makes the connection explicit: "you all want me, as if this hand hold magic, to stretch it and like a flash of lightning to make you all white." Of course, he cannot. All he can do is train them in mimicry. "All I have is this," he says, pulling out the mask, and explaining: "black faces, white masks!"

Mimeticism manifests itself not only in relation to authority and divinity, but also in relation to desire. Within a racist society, the dominant racial group assumes official authority for all evaluation, and enforces that authority. In the cases we have been discussing, the mimic seeks the respect of his/ her oppressor. But there are other cases in which imitation aims at love. And just as respect is definitive only if it comes from a white person, so too is love absolute only if it comes from a white person□ a white woman, in this case. Thus, for Makak and for others whose identity has been formed by

racism, the white woman becomes, a sort of alternative to racial despair. To be loved by a white woman□that would mean one has value. In *Dream on Monkey Mountain,* the white woman is represented by the moon. Thus, Tigre imagines Makak "masturbating in the moonlight," which is to say, fantasizing the carnal love of a white woman. And later, in a moment of despair, Makak explains that "I can [never] reach that moon; and that is why I am lost." Connecting the desired white woman with the mother□a connection which will become important later on□Souris explains what "they teach me since I small": "To be black like coal, and to dream of milk," milk being the whiteness he can never achieve, but also the white woman and the white mother he can never have.

When Makak begins to go mad, he hallucinates the visit of a white woman who loves him. This love inspires him, seemingly returns his identity. First, he explains, "she call out my name, my real name," thereby restoring to him his culture, the sense of ethnic and racial connection he had lost. In addition, her love gives him pride in this heritage: "She say that I come from the family of lions and kings." And, yet, this new ethnic valorization is not unproblematic. Makak is still linked with nature, not humanity; as a lion, he is "king of the jungle." More importantly, in making him a lion, this imaginary white woman makes him white. Later in the play, Walcott sets up three parallels: milk and coal, day and night, lion and monkey. The primary signifi- cance of "lion" in this sequence is as a signal of whiteness. Through the imagined love of the white woman, Makak has to some extent gained access to values which need not constrain his identity to that which is worthless. But even so, those values are defined precisely by their whiteness. Indeed, the substitution of "lion" for "Makak" is colonial in another way. Etymologically, "lion" derives from Greek and Hebrew roots, making it firmly Judeo-European, "Makak," in contrast, derives from Fiot, a Bantu language; indeed, "Makak" avoids the French/English, Portuguese, and Latin spellings ("macaque," "macaco," and "macaca"), employing instead the standard transcription of the Fiot (see, for example, the entry for "macaque" in *The American Heritage Dictionary*). Thus, while the value placed on Makak by the white woman does give him a sense of worth, it is worth which in virtually every way derives from colonial valorization of whiteness and European culture. This is why Moustique identifies her with the white mask. The values she allows Makak to celebrate are ultimately mimetic, however anti-mimetic they may appear.

Nonetheless, Makak does move out of mimeticism per se into a form of reactionary nativism□a transition adumbrated at the beginning of the play through the identification of "the round moon" (representative of whiteness and, particularly, the white woman) with "the white disc of an African drum" (representative of a rediscovered African tradition). Specifically, Walcott represents two stages of reactionary nativism. The first, which tends to precede national independence, is what I will call "Romantic Nativism," in its popular form, and "Opportunistic Nativism" in its anti-popular or individualist form.

Romantic nativism is a celebratory idealization of (what one perceives to be) the culture and history of the subordinated group. Walcott is harshly critical of this view. Elsewhere, he calls it "a schizophrenic daydream of an Eden that existed before. . .exile" ("What the Twilight Says"). Unsurprisingly, Makak accepts the colonial view of black Africans as living in a natural state, at one with the jungle. His romantic nativism tends to be a romantic naturalism related to his new self-image as the (white) lion, king of the jungle.

Specifically, Makak urges Souris to find himself "at home" as "One of the forest creatures" and makes himself, in the words of Souris, "Half-man, half-forest." Along similar lines, when Lestrade is converted to nativism and affirms his race rather than rejecting it, he is suddenly naked in the jungle. Makak then identifies him and all his African forebears with nature, asking: "Don't you hear your own voice in the gibberish of the leaves? Look now how the trees have opened their arms. And in the hoarseness of the rivers, don't you hear the advice of all our ancestors?"

In connection with this turn from law to nature, from the court to the jungle, from civil authority to natural authority, the object of love shifts from the nubile white woman and inaccessible moon to Mother Earth or Mother Africa, black with fertile soil, the true home, always there, always waiting. In this context, love becomes a return to the patient, everloving mother or motherland, one's origin and destiny. Though only humoring Makak, Tigre presents this theme when he exclaims, "Ah, Africa! Ah, blessed Africa! Whose earth is a starved mother waiting for the kiss of her prodigal." And as he approaches his conversion, Lestrade cries out to "Mother Africa, Mother Earth"; as he removes his clothes in preparation for his rebirth as African, he announces, "I return to this earth, my mother."

In contrast with this naive view, opportunistic nativism is the cynical manipulation of the people's hopes and desires through an insincere celebration of non-European values and customs□a celebration aimed merely at one's own advancement. The obvious example of this is Moustique's fraudulent preaching and impersonation of Makak, after Makak has achieved success as a political and religious leader. Walcott criticizes such demagoguery. But at the same time he allows Moustique alone to recognize the close connection between romantic nativism and mimeticism (in the passage already quoted concerning the Fanonian "black faces, white masks"). Moustique's cynicism is not entirely misplaced.

Indeed, the kernel of truth in Moustique's cynicism is made evident when there is a sudden change in the situation. Independence has been achieved. But instead of the expected peace and harmony, Africans are fighting against Africans. There is violence and brutality everywhere. Makak is at the head of an unstable state with many enemies. This is the third moment of post-colonization identity, and it too has a communal and an individual version. I will refer to these as Sectarian Nativism and Neo- Colonial Nativism. Neo-colonial nativism here is in effect a version of the mimetic collaborationism of the first moment. The primary difference is that it is not overtly mimetic. Neo-colonial nativists celebrate indigenous traditions in order to advance their own interests as junior partners of the former colonies. They frequently do so by supporting sectarian nativism, the affirmation of small-group identities within the former colony. Sectarian nativism involves the affirmation of narrow linguistic, religious, ethnic, or other identities□for example, Hindu vs. Muslim in India or Yoruba vs. Ibo in Nigeria. This is clearly the same sort of affirmation as initially created the broader sense of identity in romantic nativism, where an identification with Africa relied on a specific repudiation of Europe. In other words, sectarian nativism continues the identification of all value with one particular culture, but narrows that identification (e.g., from "Africa" to "Yoruba"). Indeed, it narrows the identification in a way which can be extremely brutal. Finally, it maintains

the mimetic basis of romantic nativism. Value is still understood as white value□even though both sectarian and neo-colonial nativists may violently reject all whiteness (the former sincerely, the latter cynically).

Makak describes the situation after independence, as sectarian nativism spreads: "The tribes! The tribes will wrangle among themselves, spitting, writhing, hissing, like snakes in a pit. . .devouring their own entrails like a hyena." He also explains that this is the direct outcome of the racist ideology of colonialism and the mimeticism of the colonized. They devour "their own entrails" because they are "eaten with self-hatred." "The tribes! The tribes!," he laments, "One by one they will be broken." But Makak too succumbs to sectarianism. The people who "rejected" his "dream" "must be taught, even tortured, killed." The reign of terror begins: "Their skulls will hang from my palaces. I will break up their tribes."

Unsurprisingly, Lestrade, formerly the mimetic collaborationist, is now the neo-colonial nativist. He names himself: "Hatchet-man, opportunist, executioner." He initiates the sectarian violence by killing Tigre, and encourages the reign of terror, telling Makak: "those who do not bend to our will, to your will, must die." His work is to manipulate the nationalist leader (Makak) and the people in his own interests, and implicitly in the interests of the former colonizers Now when he says, "I have the black man work to do," we can hear, echoing just below the surface, his earlier statement: "I got the white man work to do"; the repetition is not accidental. He establishes his cynical strategies: "Wow, let splendour, barbarism, majesty, noise, slogans, parades, drown out that truth. Plaster the walls with pictures of the leader." But even in this, they all remain mere shadows in the fire of the white man's mind. Speaking of Makak, he says: "He's a shadow now." The pomp and circumstance only thicken the shadows, but do not make them real. Referring to Makak's coronation, he calls out, "magnify our shadows, moon, if only for a moment.

Perhaps most interestingly, Lestrade deploys the rhetoric of nativism in order to support westernization. He urges, "Onward, onward. Progress" and, in keeping with his idea of progress, faces Makak toward the moon in order to "go forward," clearly connecting "forward" movement and progress with the ideal of whiteness. Makak has a brief vision of what this means: the breaking of the tribes, the replacing of tradition by commerce, "the gold and silver scales of the sun and the moon. . .that is named progress." But his response to this is mistaken, a deepening of reactionary nativism which continues to accept colonial racist ideology even as it denounces whiteness more vehemently and completely. When praises are sung in the new kingdom, they are pervaded with the images of whiteness. Makak is lauded as he "Whose plate is the moon at its full,/ Whose sword is the moon in its crescent." His peace is "gentler than cotton; his "voice is the dove," his "eye is the cloud," and his "hands are washed continually in milk." And yet, as emperor, Makak proclaims whiteness to be guilt. He presents a list of names, explaining: "Their crime. . .is, that they are. . .white." He continues, explaining the new official history which parallels and inverts the offi- cial histories written by whites: "a drop of milk is enough to condemn them, to banish them from the archives of the bo-leaf and the papyrus, from the waxen tablet and the tribal stone." Again, the nature of this rejection is clear. It is a reaction formation; its vehemence is directly proportionate to the force of the mimeticism which it simultaneously represses and manifests.

In this context, the object of desire again becomes the white woman. But here, in a reaction formation, she is reconstrued as the object of hate and violence. Before his execution, Moustique accuses Makak: "Once you loved the moon, now a night will come when, because it white, from your deep hatred you will want it destroyed." In reply, Makak asserts his blackness, his rejection of whiteness: "My hatred is deep, black, quiet as velvet." But Moustique, as always, recognizes the mimeticism just below the surface: "you are more of an ape now, a puppet" and he sings "I don't know what to say this monkey won't do," recalling the earlier scene with Lesnade and implicitly indicating Lestrade's manipulative and collaborationist role in the new society. Subsequently, Lestrade does drive Makak to kill the white woman—indeed, not merely to kill her, but to brutalize her: "Nun, virgin, Venus, you must violate, humiliate, destroy her." Like all successful propagandists, Lestrade mixes truth with lies. He is right that this idealization of whiteness "is the mirror of the moon that this ape look into and find himself unbearable"; it is "white light that paralysed [Makak's] mind" and Makak must free himself from whiteness, "as fatal as leprosy," if he is ever to achieve "peace." But this repudiation of an idea is too easily mixed up with the repudiation of people—in this case, a woman, then all women. It turns too easily to misogyny—a frequent component of reactionary nativism, and yet another hierarchization which mirrors or repeats the stratification of colonial racism. Lestrade tells Makak that he must strive "to discover the beautiful depth of [his] blackness," but such a project remains squarely within the racist problematic of colonialism: all self-understanding and value are based on race. Moreover, the supposed purity and "blackness" of this project is denied by the sectarian brutality of the regime and by its imagery of whiteness. Indeed, when Makak beheads the white woman, he does so with "the curved sword," which was described at the beginning of the scene as "the moon in its crescent" (though it is at the same time reminiscent of Islam; perhaps Walcott is also criticizing the reactionary violence which Islam has been used to justify).

And yet, for Walcott, this reactionary, sectarian, misogynist brutality seems not to be entirely negative. When beheading the white woman, Makak announces, "Now, O God, now I am free." Immediately thereafter, he recalls his name. It is now dawn—with all the symbolism this implies. Suddenly, he is part of no organized religion, but "I believe in my God"—he has found an alternative to both religious despair and religious mimeticism. Most importantly, when Lestrade offers him the white mask, Makak refuses it. He leaves, perhaps for the first time since childhood, without the mask. In his final monologue, he claims that he has now found "roots" and a "home" and the chorus sings that he returns to his "father's kingdom," which, one is left to assume, he finds by accepting himself, his image, his name, rejecting the white mask.

I am not the only critic to be uncomfortable with this ending. Jan R. Uhrbach tries to solve the problem of the execution by maintaining that the decapitated woman "is not the same figure who spoke to [Makak] in his dream," but is instead "Lestrade's vision." In this view, the execution is more like an attack on Lestrade than on any woman. Uhrbach's argument rests on her claim that the white woman is identified with the moon only late in the play. However, she is identified with the moon in the same sentence in which she is introduced: "I behold this woman. . . / Like the moon." On the other hand, even if she were not immediately identified with the moon, Uhrbach's conjecture seems

unsupported and implausible. In the only lengthy recent treatment of the play, Samad also addresses the execution, maintaining that the white woman represents "the polarized and static romanticized vision of his ancestral past," a polarized vision ended by the execution. But, as we have seen, the brutality of the execution, its association with Lestrade and sectarian nativism, and the imagery surrounding the act, all indicate that it is necessarily part of such a polarization.

Perhaps Walcott is following Fanon here in linking violence with catharsis. Fanon wrote: "violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair" and "is closely involved in the liquidation of regionalism and tribalism." It is what prevents demagoguery, for "When the people have taken violent part in the national liberation they will allow no one to set themselves up as 'liberators.'" People are "Illuminated by violence." Indeed, "Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violence organized and educated by its leaders, makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths and gives the key to them." Unfortunately, this does not really solve the problem. Admittedly, revolutionary violence is often unavoidable. And we should not fall into the trap of condemning the small violence of the revolutionaries while ignoring the massive violence of the oppressors. Yet, Fanon seems to be just wrong here. The history of revolutions hardly indicates that violence ends mimeticism or demagoguery, that it leads to social harmony or justice. Violent revolution brings the most violent leaders to the fore, habituates everyone to conceiving of problems and solutions in terms of force, power, weapons, terror. At best, violence is an unfortunate necessity. But it will almost invariably function to perpetuate itself. Moreover, it will tend to operate through and thus support the sort of stratified thinking, and thus identity, promulgated by colonial racism.

Elsewhere, Fanon presents a different solution to the problem of colonial identity: "the individual should tend to take on the universality inherent in the human condition." More exactly,

> As I begin to recognize that the Negro is the symbol of sin, I catch myself hating the Negro. But then I recognize that I am a Negro. There are two ways out of this conflict. Either I ask others to pay no attention to my skin, or else I want them to be aware of it. I try then to find value for what is bad□since I have unthinkingly conceded that the black man is the color of evil. In order to terminate this neurotic situation, in which I am compelled to choose an unhealthy, conflictual solution, fed on fantasies, hostile, inhuman in short, I have only one solution: to rise above this absurd drama that others have staged round me, to reject the two terms that are equally unacceptable, and, through one human being, to reach out for the universal.

Here, Fanon advocates the universalism also found in such writers as Bessie Head and Rabindranath Tagore, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Samir Amin. Though unfashionable amongst academics (except, of course, those in linguistics), it is perhaps the one option which need not presuppose and repeat the structure of colonial racism.

But that is the topic of another essay, for universalism is not a solution which Walcott considers in *Dream on Monkey Mountain*. In 1967, when the play was first produced, perhaps the consequences of revolutionary violence were not so obvious. Perhaps the resolution, the discovery of name and roots, the rejection of mimeticism through the humiliation and murder of the white woman, would not have seemed so mistaken, so brutal, so close to misogyny. In any event, whatever one's view of its problematic ending, Walcott's play presents us with a powerful literary analysis of the constitution of colonial identity, its varieties and development (or dialectic). And the anatomy we have sought to abstract from his work should be of value not only in understanding other literature, but, one might hope, in conceptualizing and responding to the far more important issues of social and personal identity in the real world□the issues toward which, after all, Walcott sought to draw our attention and inspire our action.

Source: Patrick Colm Hogan, "Mimeticism, Reactionary Nativism, and the Possibility of Postcolonial Identity in Derek Walcott's *Dream on Monkey Mountain*," in *Research in African Literatures,* Vol. 25, No. 2, Summer, 1994, p. 103.

Critical Essay #6

In this review of Walcott's Dream on Monkey Mountain*, Robert J. Willis describes the two major themes of this satirical play as racial inferiority and the "thwarted potential of a human spirit." He describes the protagonist, Makak, as a mythic and microcosmic representation of the lives of West Indians and of the legacy of racial subjugation and poverty they have endured.*

Derek Walcott, a Third World poet and dramatist, born in the Castries, St. Lucia, began writing poetic dramas in 1948 with his first play, *Henri Christophe*, a play about the Haitian Revolution. Walcott has written 15 plays, which have been produced and published, and 10 volumes of poetry, seven of which must be called major collections. His own life as a "divided child"□he is the son of parents of mixed European and African descent□embodies one of the prime tensions of the West Indian experience.

Walcott's arch hero, Makak, in *Dream on Monkey Mountain* is taken from the author's early years in St. Lucia where Walcott recalls a childhood memory of an old, undisciplined woodcutter, who reflects regional history. Two of the major themes of the play are racial inferiority (Makak's French Patois name implies an apelike figure) and the thwarted potential of an independent spirit, "living on his own ground, off its elemental resources." Walcott's drama illuminates the tragic struggle of Makak, his hopes, his fears, and his temporary freedom, which is itself a dream. Makak is a microcosm of all poor West Indians who suffer; he is offered a seeming identity only to return to his mountain hermitlike life, with dreams defeated again. The play, however, leaves the audience with a hopeful vision: Makak must and will descend again from his mountain isolation to face reality, regardless of the cost.

Walcott, in his introduction to *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, credits the theater as an outlet to show the legacy of racial oppression and subjugation of the West Indian natives. "[B]eing poor, we already had the theatre of our lives which we share with the agony of actors of all time."

Dream on Monkey Mountain is a mythic drama, a ritualized play of the West Indies, combining fantasy, obeah, music, dance, and poetry to expose the deeper, unconscious sources of identity and the nature of freedom. The cast includes seven black men, one white woman dancer-singer, a male chorus, drummers, and music. The play was first presented by the Trinidad Theatre Workshop in Toronto in 1967. Other productions were presented in the Eugene O'Neill Memorial Theatre in Connecticut; the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles; and in New York, where the play won the Obie Award for the best foreign play in 1970-71. In the 1971 production at St. Mark's Theatre, the White Goddess appeared singing in a huge cutout of the moon. When Makak's hallucination is over, the moon sinks into the sea. Edith Oliver, in her review of the play, tells how the setting, choreography, costumes, and lighting enhance the mood of the play. In this play, characters exchange roles, assume aspects of the protagonist's dominant personality traits, and serve as symbols; one who is twice killed returns alive again in the epilogue.

The play, ripe with satire, is structured around a series of interrelated themes within dream sequences echoing Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. In these dream episodes, the protagonist, Makak, discovers his true self, neither God nor beast, only a man, an old black man who eventually learns his name and identity.

Walcott generously credits Brecht, Oriental artists, and Robert Graves's *The White Goddess*, who appears in Makak's dream as the white apparition representing inauthentic and limited African identity, for his inspiration. The play is also rich in puns, metaphors, and verbal play of fast-paced Calypsonian rhetoric. Unlike Brecht's productions, Walcott's plays demand a different kind of disciplined actor, dancer, and singer more like those who perform in Kabuki theater. All of these elements, including dream sequences and the introduction of the White Goddess, merge in *Dream on Monkey Mountain*.

Walcott's protagonist, Makak (monkey), who is an extension of Walcott's hero in his drama *Henri Christophe*, is a coal-burner who represents not only the blacks' righteous rebellion against the white master but also the heretical step of rejecting the equally oppressive role imposed by black racists. In a note on the production, Walcott, somewhat reminiscent of Strindberg, allows the producer freedom to amplify: "The play is a dream, one that exists as much in the given minds of its principal characters as in that of its writer." Walcott also suggests Sartre's prologue to *The Wretched of the Earth* as another source of his theme: "Thus in certain psychoses the hallucinated person, tired of always being insulted by a demon, one fine day starts hearing the voice of an angel who pays him compliments."

In the Prologue, Makak has been jailed for being drunk and disorderly. He shares his cell with two fellow prisoners, Tigre and Souris, who merge with his hallucination and share his quixotic experiences, as does Makak's jailer, Lestrade. The names of the characters suggest fable: Lestrade, neither black nor white, is a straddler. *Makak* means *monkey*, taken from the name of the mountain where he lives. His two companions are the tiger and the mouse. Corporal Lestrade, like Charles Fuller's Sergeant Waters in *A Soldier's Play*, ridicules backward blacks. He attempts to prove that Makak is an old ape who must be told how to act and what to do: "Animals, beasts, savages, cannibals, niggers, stop turning this place into a stinking zoo."

When Lestrade interrogates Makak about his race, Makak replies, "Tired," a one-word declaration of long-standing prejudice. Then Makak relates his dreams, claiming "All I have is my dreams and they don't trouble your soul." The prisoner goes on to tell about his vision of the White Goddess on Monkey Mountain who calls out his "real" name and not the one he uses.

In Scene One, Makak is on Monkey Mountain with his friend, Moustique, whom he tells about his dream and the lady, the root of his problem, in his vision. Makak declares that the lady, after talking all night, commands him to regain his African birthright. He has been living all of his life, without a wife or children, on Monkey Mountain, working at his charcoal pit. Moustique does not believe his story but, like Sancho Panza, decides to accompany his "king" on his misadventures. The two men mirror the play's black

consciousness in that both lack any positive identity, underscored by Moustique: "You black, ugly, poor, so worse than nothing. You like me, small, ugly with a foot like an 'S.'" Obviously, Makak had one identity throughout his life□subhuman. His hallucinations slowly give him dignity and eventually his God-given identity of a man. The two travelers set out to prove Makak's birthright in a series of misadventures. The episodes are laced with satire and humor: "Saddle my horse, if you love me, Moustique, and cut a sharp bamboo for me. . . . Makak will walk like he used to in Africa, when his name was Lion!" Reluctantly, Moustique agrees to follow his master, but adds, "Is the stupidest thing I ever see." To the music of flute and drum, they sally forth down the mountain to glory.

On their first encounter, Makak is instrumental in restoring a dying man to life. Corporal Lestrade, informed about the local "savior" appears in wig and gown, deriding the crowd's delusions: "It's the cripples who believe in miracles. It's the slaves who believe in freedom." Moustique is quick to seize the opportunity for gain, like many other trickster heroes of West Indian folklore who convert faith and trust into a profitable enterprise. Caught impersonating his master, Moustique is beaten to death by a crowd of villagers who discover his attempt to be the miracle-working Makak.

In what appears to be reality, Makak is back in his cell with Souris and Tigre, enduring Lestrade's pointedly contradictory defense of white justice. In an attempt to sublimate his own problem of racial identity, Lestrade□once again echoing Fuller's Sergeant Waters□screams: "This ain't Africa. This is not another easy-going nigger you talking to, but an officer!" Angered, Tigre plans an escape for him- self, Souris, and Makak, who pretends madness to bring Lestrade to his cell where he stabs him. After they leave the jail, the corporal rises and explains to the audience that the act is only what they dream of□their dream of revenge. As Lestrade begins his hunt for the fugitives, he warns: "Attempting to escape from the prison of their lives. That's the most dangerous crime. It brings about revolution." Going through the forest on their way to Monkey Mountain (Africa), the fugitives become hungry. Makak dries ganja to smoke and tells Souris and Tigre that they will not need food when they smoke the plant. As the chorus chants, "I am going home to Africa," Makak announces "The mind can bring the dead to life. It can make a man a king. It can make him a beast."

Lestrade, searching for the escaped prisoners, meets Basil, another apparition, a coffin maker and spirit of death, who admonishes the corporal and demands he repent his sins. Lestrade does not know if he is in the real world or in a dream himself. Coming upon Makak and the others, who see Lestrade apparently talking to himself, the officer, thinking of his sins, "goes native" and becomes the most fanatic convert to Makak's back-to-Africa movement. At this point, Makak himself is caught up in the frenzy for power and revenge. Makak promises to make Tigre a general when they arrive in Africa. Meanwhile, Makak is crowned king by his three followers. Souris is also converted totally to Makak's dream. Throughout the play all of the major characters, at one time or another, question their racial identity, their place in life. Makak wavers between reality and illusion. Another dream-death takes place when Lestrade drives a spear through Tigre, who, like Moustique, seeks only monetary gain from his newfound position of power.

In a quick change of scene, they are transported to Africa, and Makak sets up court and judgment is passed on the history of racial oppression. Lestrade insists on death for all the accused, including Makak's White Goddess. In one of the wittiest and most entertaining scenes in the play, Basil, who reappears in Africa, reads a list of the offenders, including Aristotle, Shakespeare, The Phantom, Mandrake the Magician, and Al Jolson.

The revolutionists then consider the enemies' fate. Basil asks if the Pope is to be spared. A unanimous negation is the tribe's response. The same reaction is rendered at the names of the President of the United States, the Republic of South Africa, and the Ku Klux Klan. Also in this dream sequence, congratulatory letters arrive from several golf and country clubs. A gilt-edged doctorate from Mississippi University arrives, along with the Nobel Peace Prize, an autograph of Pushkin, the Stalin Peace Prize, an offer from the United Nations, a sliver of bone from the thigh of Lumumba, and an offer from Hollywood. The scene then shifts from satire to "tragedy." With the beheading of the White Goddess, Makak gains his total freedom□by killing his "problem": "She is the white light that paralysed your mind, that led you into this confusion. It is you who created her, so kill her! Kill her!" Moustique is also executed (his second death) for having betrayed the original dream. In this court, there is no room for personal relationships; there is only racial retribution.

The Epilogue makes it clear that the play's action has been real only in Makak's mind. He has cut through illusion to discover his essential self. Makak, the "Being" without an identity, without manhood, now has rejoined the world, taking on his ancestral name. His name is his identity; Makak, as the world has considered him, is a new man, equal to all other men and women. When he wakes in his jail cell, he recollects that his legal name is Felix Hoban. Moustique comes to take him from the jail and discovers Makak to be a new man. Together they set out for Monkey Mountain. Makak's last words are a prayer for the future: "Makak lives where he has always lived, in the dreams of his people! Other men will come, other prophets will come, and they will be stoned, and mocked, and betrayed. But now this old hermit is going home, back to the beginning of this world."

Walcott dismisses revenge as uncreative. Makak, after experiencing his dream, realizes he is a man, a man living off his own land and its native resources. He has found his own roots, which are just as sacred to him as the white man's roots are to the white man. It is his self-imposed image that Makak has learned to dismiss, not by seeking revenge on the oppressors such as Lestrade but by seeking in himself a positive image. His racial identity has been made up of a complex historical legacy, but this should not deter him from creating a new vision of renewal with dignity and purpose. This theme is reiterated throughout Walcott's work.

Makak has thus gone through the whole cycle from woodcutter to king to woodcutter again, but his experiences will keep alive the dreams of the people of the Caribbean, a dream of freedom that must be maintained in the colonized world. The play reawakens the anger at the legacy of bondage in the minds of the oppressed, but it also, in glorifying and idealizing Africa, displays the power of the theater in everyday life. The

awakening of the colonized consciousness is seen in the acting out of the hallucinations of this old charcoal maker who refuses to accept the forced identity of a subhuman.

As the play ends and the house lights go on, the audience may doubt the fantasy of the play, for outside of the world of the theater, humans are still irrational. They still consult the astrologer; they still cross their fingers and knock on wood; and they are still, in a sense, religious. Then, as the house lights again dim, the actors renew their cult of nakedness. Life begins again every night when the house lights go out. Rehearsals are also life. They have accepted the twilight. Walcott teaches us that in the theater all the races are one race. He believes that there is no such thing as black or white literature. He notes that the reception of this play in New York (the critics viewed the play as part of the "Get Whitey Syndrome") would not be acceptable to a West Indian audience. What Makak recognizes after he awakes from his nightmare-dream is the lesson he learned from the horror of the blacks' actions in Africa tribes slaughtering each other that human cruelty is raceless. Makak has come to realize that the first step in getting rid of his fear of everything white is his need for freedom and identity. The world can and must dispossess prejudice at all levels. Makak has given us a new meaning of life.

Source: Robert J. Willis, "*Dream on Monkey Mountain*: Fantasy as Self-Perception," in *Staging the Impossible: The Fantastic Mode in Modern Drama,* Ed. Patrick D. Murphy, Greenwood Press, 1992, pp. 150-55.

Critical Essay #7

In the following essay on Walcott's Dream on Monkey Mountain*, author Robert Elliot Fox examines the use of metaphor and meaning in a play he and Walcott have described as "a dream," and discusses the social implications that the dreams, spirit-talks, and fantasies of the novel's protagonist carry.*

In Derek Walcott's own words, "The play is a dream, one that exists as much in the given minds of its principal characters as in that of its writer, and as such, it is illogical, derivative, and contradictory. Its source is metaphor . . ." This statement is crucial to any profound understanding of the work, and my purpose in this essay shall be to examine the nature and function of dreams in the play in an effort to elucidate one essential level of meaning in Walcott's *magnum opus.*

Critical Essay #8

In the world of the work—that is, within the context of the play itself—we are presented with a dream and a dream-within-a-dream. But in the context of the work within the world—that is, beyond the text or enactment of the drama—we are also confronted with a dream: Walcott's creative vision which informs the play, and which is itself a part of a larger dream in the mind of mankind, an edenic dream of elemental freedom. Beginning on a "realistic" level in the play we move rapidly into the realm of *poetic* reality, spiraling evermore inward toward an essential core of meaning before ascending once more to the "logic" of the waking world. But this essential core of meaning, discoverable by the individual through an internal voyage, exists beyond the individual—or any individual work of art—in a collective consciousness which Art as a spiritual endeavour has always striven to articulate. So, at the play's conclusion, when we are told that "Makak lives where he has always lived, in the dream of his people," the world within the work and the work within the world merge at the crossroads of the imagination. Makak comes from, and he returns to, the world of myth.

One of the perennial motifs of myth is that of the seeker, the defier of odds and gods, and his redemptive quest; and one of myth's lessons to mankind lies in the articulation of the rhythms of recurrence, the repetitive nature of experience. Walcott grasped these concepts early. He "recalls the familiar scene in his childhood when the story teller would sit by the fire to narrate stories involving a 'hero whose quest is never done', and explains how it became necessary for him to appropriate the image of that hero in his plays." And his brother, Roderick Walcott, has noted that "The legends of Papa Diablo, Mama Glos, lajables, and the sukuya can remain if only we tell them over and over again."

Imagination solidified itself in the ambiguous person of an actual individual whom Walcott vividly remembers. "My Makak comes from my own childhood. I can see him for what he is now, a brawling, ruddy drunk who would come down the street on a Saturday when he got paid and let out an immense roar that would terrify all the children . . . When we heard him coming we all bolted, because he was like a baboon . . . This was a degraded man, but he had some elemental force in him that is still terrifying; in another society he would have been a warrior."

These images from Walcott's past, folkloric and literal, are fused in the character of Felix Hobain, whose metaphoric identity is Makak, the monkey-man, the lion and king. Makak, one of the lowliest of the low, is the one in whom the dream is invested. The dream that transforms Makak is, in a very real sense, Walcott's own dream, his artist's vision which espies the potential for greatness in "a degraded man," which recognizes the raw power behind seeming impotence.

These dead, these derelicts, that alphabet of the emaciated,
they were the stars of my mythology.

Makak then becomes representative of the downtrodden and impoverished blacks who long to be redeemed, and of the transformation that brings about, or at least prefaces, such redemption.

Critical Essay #9

Speaking specifically of the anguish of the West Indian, Walcott says, "we have not wholly sunk into our own landscapes," thus defining an inherent rootlessness. It is a concern that numerous writers share, but Walcott, like Wilson Harris, attempts the absorption into the indigenous landscape along with a corresponding exploration of a mind□ or dreamscape: "a country for the journey of the soul" as Walcott calls it. Both of these geographies□ the literal and the imaginative□are recreated and fused through *language*.

It is through language, in fact, that Walcott envisions the salvation of "the New World Negro." "What would deliver him from servitude was the forging of a language that went beyond mimicry, a dialect which had the force of revelation as it invented names for things, one which finally settled on its own mode of inflection, and which began to create an oral culture of chants, jokes, folk-songs and fables. . . ." The poet in his primal role as maker is the one who can forge this recreative language that will provide a vehicle for the liberation of consciousness from its colonized state. But it is obvious here that the way forward is the way back: to roots. "For imagination and body to move with original instinct, we must begin again from the bush. That return journey, with all its horror of rediscovery, means the annihilation of what is known . . . On such journeys the mind will discover what it chooses. . . ." But a choice made via the annihilation of the known can only be instinctual, unconscious, intuitive; it will not be *rational.*

The true arena of the drama, then, is that of the mind, of imagination. Its vehicle is dream, which enables Walcott to dispense with normal logic, linearity, literalness, and emphasize instead myth, recurrence, ambiguity. When the cages rise out of sight during Makak's deposition□his first recital of his dream□we have a graphic representation of the liberating power of the imagination. This is Walcott's strategy throughout: to demonstrate the disparities between a consciousness that is creative and metaphoric, and one that is straightforward and imprisoning. Makak, for instance, is said to be in a state of "incomprehensible intoxication." He may literally be drunk, or this could be merely a pejorative characterization of his dream and madness by someone who remains untouched by them. Especially the dream is described as "vile," "obscene" and "ambitious." The charges of being "uppity" and sexually depraved are those traditionally levelled at blacks by racists, and Corporal Lestrade has absorbed this mentality, or rather, he has been possessed by it.

"Incomprehensible intoxication" might be one label a modern, scientific mind would apply to the trance states of mystics, seers and shamans. When Makak declares, "Spirits does talk to me," a "rational" person would perhaps dismiss this as hallucination, but a "primitive" individual would know that Makak is in touch with the traditional world, which encompasses a nonmaterial reality. Makak is a visionary, and the visionary stance is fraught with peril. He is able to exorcise a dying man's sickness when "priest," "white doctor," and "bush medicine" fail, and he tries to do the same with his people, only to be rejected by them because they are incapable of belief. Makak is struggling with a pejorative limitation on his psyche and being which his dream helps him

transcend. Failure to "dissolve in his dream" means that one remains imprisoned. Moustique, for example, masters the rhetoric of salvation but he lacks vision; he has not experienced the power of the dream but merely wishes to exploit it. Hence Basil says of him, when unmasking him in the marketplace, "The tongue is on fire, but the eyes are dead."

In his recital of his dream, Makak describes himself as walking through white mist to the charcoal pit on the mountain. He is ascending the slope of consciousness, journeying through whiteness to blackness, through vagueness toward a solid identity. "Make the web of the spider heavy with diamonds/ And when my hand brush it, let the chain break"□that is, the chain of slavery, both psychological and actual. The spider's web represents the entanglements of history, racism, colonialism; the diamonds are the oppressed. In his role as saviour, Makak is able to shatter this evil beauty with an almost casual gesture. The dream transcends time, telescopes spiritual and physical evolution, so that Makak moves, in the infinite space of a poetic moment, from ape to God:

I have live all my life / Like a wild beast in hiding . . . .
/ And this old man walking, ugly as sin, / In a
confusion of vapour, / Till I feel I was God self,
walking through cloud.

Again, in the healing scene, Makak stands with a burning coal in his palm, chanting a formula for salvation, striving to save the sick man from an actual death and his people from the living death of degradation and despair. "Faith! Faith! / Believe in yourselves." The energy released by the burning charcoal symbolizes the spiritual energy released by Makak's positive confirmation of his blackness. "You are living coals," he tells them, "/ you are trees under pressure, / you are brilliant diamonds . . ." The decomposed matter from primeval vegetation was transformed into coal, and diamonds are the result of coal under enormous pressure, over great periods of geological time. Burning coal brings light; diamonds reflect and refract light. Hence Moustique's echo, in the marketplace, of Makak's metaphor: "One billion trillion years of pressure bringing light, and is for that I say, Africa shall make light." Here, of course, Moustique is speaking better than he knows. The "revelation of my experience" that he talks of is that of his people, the broader dimensions of which Makak's dream calls back from a darkness of oppression, forgetfulness and ignorance.

The dream which redeems, the imaginative reversal that transforms a poor charcoal burner into royalty, has its roots in historical fact. In his book *The Loss of El Dorado*, V.S. Naipaul relates how the black slaves in Trinidad at the beginning of the nineteenth century created kingdoms of the night, with their own kings, queens and courtiers, elaborate uniforms, and other regal paraphenalia. During the day the blacks laboured and endured the cruelty and contempt of their masters; but beneath the moon these same slaves were for a time themselves metamorphosed into masters, issuing commands and miming splendours, while their white owners became the objects of mockery and fantasies of revenge. One of these nocturnal regiments, led by a King Sampson, was known as the Macacque regiment. In light of the condemnations meted

out during the apotheosis scene in *Dream*, it is signifi- cant to note as well from Naipaul's account that "the role of the Grand Judge, who punished at night as the overseer punished by day, was important."

This nighttime pageantry was redemptive drama, an elaborate masquerade which enabled the oppressed to vivify their ancestral memories while at the same time reversing, if only momentarily, the bitter realities of the present. Naipaul remarks, "Negro insurrection, which seemed so sudden in its beginnings and so casual in its betrayals, was usually only an aspect of Negro fantasy; but an adequate leader could make it real." It never came to this. In 1805, the imaginary kingdoms were revealed practically voluntarily, as if the secret were too good to keep and the slave aristocracy was executed or whipped. Still, until such time as the powers of rebellion proved to be sufficiently substantive, the dream remained as a possible vehicle of escape from despair; and, while they lasted, the kingdoms of the night must have been a positive force, a means of sustaining the slave in what were otherwise intolerable circumstances. There are those who would argue and indeed the same criticism has been directed against *Dream* that the blacks would have been better off had they refrained from fantasy and resorted instead to violence. But this is itself a form of romanticism. When you have been reduced to a dehumanized state, you must first regain your dignity; when you have been relegated to physical toil, the mind must sometimes soar above the body. If you are an animal, why not be a lion? If you are a slave, why not dream of being a king (especially when you may be the descendent of kings?) Dreams may be attacked as nothing more than dreams, but in the beautiful words of Delmore Schwartz, "In dreams begin responsibilities."

Critical Essay #10

Monkey Mountain is depicted in the Prologue as "volcanic," which suggests unpredictability, slumbering violence, submerged and smouldering energies that will one day demand release. Makak's dream touches and taps these hidden energies and gives them form and substance in a way that the criminality of Tigre or Souris or the oppressive mentality of the corporal (themselves crude manifestations of the need for self-assertion, of a refusal to accept identitylessness) cannot. Makak repeatedly insists that his dream is not a dream, whereas others characterize it, not only as a dream, but a *bad* one. They are literalists, fatalistic and unimaginative, like the politicians whom Walcott describes as "generation after generation / heaped in a famine of imagination."Even though the charges that the corporal addresses against Makak clearly include incitement to rebellion, even though Makak himself declares that it is "better to die, fighting like men, than to hide in this forest," *Dream on Monkey Mountain* cannot be said to advocate revolution in the circumscribed political sense. What Walcott thinks about colonialism, racism, oppression□the "dream of milk" as he calls it □ought to be evident from the play; but Walcott is equally clear about an opposite but attendant danger, characterized by him as "Witchdoctors of the new left with imported totems." The solution is not politics. "The future of West Indian militancy lies in art."

One reason why this should be so can be adduced from the tension in the play between a fulfilling, integrative sensibility□represented by Makak and his dream□on the one hand, and divisive, reductionist tendencies□manifested in the likes of the corporal and Moustique□on the other. Plurality of experience is suggested by the number of doublings and pairings we find in the play. Makak and Moustique provide one dual, complementary partnership; Tigre and Souris present another pair who offer a similar contrast. Basil seems sometimes to be paired with the dancer, sometimes with the white apparition. The corporal is really a double in himself: he is both black and white, and shifts from one pole of being to the other partway through the play. The sun and the moon form another pair, the former representing "reality" and the latter "dream." The prevailing tendency□which the play implicitly condemns□is to emphasize *one* aspect of identity or experience at the expense of all others. The corporal tries to be white, then reverses the process and strives to be as black as possible. The pragmatic aspect of Makak, symbolized by Moustique, dies twice. The moon is slain in order to free the sun. White supremacy is established on the myth of black inferiority, then black supremacy asserts itself.

According to Walcott's stage directions, the moon reversed becomes the sun; the two are opposed but joined, Janus-like. Makak "kills" the moon so that the sun can rise and free them all from the dream in which they are locked "and treading their own darkness." Sun and moon each have their particular clarity; it is only that all things appear equal under the sun (Makak, Moustique, the corporal, the thieves are all "imprisoned"). It is the moon and its attendant world of dreams beneath which we experience vital contrasts, revealing differentiations.

In the contradictory dreamworld, these differentiations become ambiguous; distinctions between things keep shifting, altering. But characters with restrictive, "logical" mentalities keep struggling to reduce things to simple black and white, and Corporal Lestrade is perhaps the pre-eminent example of this behaviour. In his role as the upholder of the rules of Her Majesty's government, the corporal functions as Makak's prosecutor. Later, in the important apotheosis scene, where the power of shaping history now lies with Makak and his retinue, the corporal is still functioning as a prosecutor, but this time upholding the law of the tribes against the threat of whiteness. He has changed his allegiance but retains his legalistic devotion, with its logic and rationalism. (When the corporal says of Makak, "I can both accuse and defend this man," he is articulating his ability to switch sides easily, a testimony to his innate opportunism and uncertain sense of identity.) For him, the white goddess, who represents the negative aspect of his own previous possession (by "English" and all that it implies), is much more of a threat than she is to Makak, for whom she functions as muse. The corporal has reduced her to one (especially for him) damaging context: the mother of (Western) civilisation□in other words, Europe. (Eur-opë = "she of the broad face"□that is, the full moon.)

Critical Essay #11

Walcott himself characterizes the apparition as having four roles (or phases): the moon, the muse, the white goddess, a dancer. All of these manifestations coalesce into a simultaneous complex of meaning, splendidly articulated by Robert Graves in *The White Goddess*. He writes, "Her name and titles are innumerable. In ghost stories she often figures as 'The White Lady', and in ancient religions, from the British Isles to the Caucasus, as the 'White Goddess'." She is the Muse, "the Mother of All Living, the ancient power of fright and lust□the female spider or the queen-bee whose embrace is death." The Night Mare is one of her cruellest aspects. But it is she who inspires the magical language of poetic myth which "remains the language of true poetry." Hence the goddess has complementary moods of creation and destruction.

One of the further aspects of the muse is Mnemosyne, "Memory," and this is important for the play in that it is through the dream inspired by the white goddess that Makak journeys back to the roots of his heritage, to the time when he was both "lion and king." Before his inspiration, Makak could declare, like the speaker in Walcott's poem "Names": "I began with no memory. I began with no future." And when he does make a beginning, it is "where Africa began: / in the body's memory."

Since Makak is clearly posited in the play as a kind of Christ-figure, one is likely to question the simultaneous emphasis on the rather pagan white goddess, since, as Graves reminds us, the concept of such a creative anima was banned by Christian theologians nearly two thousand years ago and by Jewish theologians even earlier. But if we move outide the mainstream of orthodoxy, as artists are wont to do, there is no real contradiction or incompatibility, for the ancient Irish and British poets "saw Jesus as the latest theophany of the same suffering sacred king whom they had worshipped under various name from time immemorial." Furthermore, the Gnostics held that Jesus "was conceived in the mind of God's Holy Spirit, who was female in Hebrew"□which is enlightening in view of the fact that Makak refers to himself as "responsible only to God who once speak to me *in the form of a woman* on Monkey Mountain." Graves goes on to remark that the "male Holy Ghost is a product of Latin grammar□*spiritus* is masculine□and of early Christian distrust of female deities or quasideities." The corporal's indictment of the apparition□" She is the wife of the devil, the white witch"□contains strong echoes of this intolerance.

Makak in his role as the King of Africa and the saviour of his people is an image of the Sacred King who is the moon goddess's divine victim, who dies and is reborn in the cycle of perpetual renewal; and, as the madman, the dreamer, the visionary poet, he is also the muse's victim, for the two roles interpenetrate. But Makak refuses to die this death, slaying the white goddess instead, under the pressure of the corporal's vehement prosecution and the collective animosity of the tribes. In doing so he frees himself from the dream, but only on one level□a level on which, as Moustique correctly diagnoses, a betrayal of the true cause is taking place, blindness replacing vision, maleficent madness driving out beneficent madness. It is Moustique who dies, and, in so doing, attains wisdom; he who had himself betrayed the dream by attempting to market it is

later able to see that the dream is now being prostituted by others for political ends. And the corporal has to go to the verge of death before he experiences a necessary (but not thoroughgoing) transformation.

Makak has to kill the white goddess for several reasons: one, because he cannot forever go on depending upon his source of inspiration but has to begin to rely upon himself (just as he had earlier insisted that the people have faith in themselves as well as in an outside force); two, he has to come back from the world of visionary truth to the everyday world, in order to translate and transmit the fruits of his experience; and, three, he has to escape from the somewhat perverted role of tyrant which the corporal and others have thrust upon him, as well as from the complementary role of saviour that is so fraught with agony and peril.

When Makak divests himself of his royal robe before he beheads the apparition, he is symbolically freeing himself from the bondage of kingship as well as that of the dream and all externally-imposed definitions of selfhood. Indeed, Makak's real name, Felix ("happy") is only revealed in the epilogue, after he has finally discovered who he is. It is not quite as simple as waking up, because, paradoxically, on one level the dream continues right to the play's end. What happens is that Makak moves from his personal dream back to the realm of collective dream, where his experience becomes universalized and undifferentiated.

In an early poem by W.B. Yeats, Fergus of the Red Branch tells a druid of his desire to "Be no more a king / But learn the dreaming wisdom that is yours." Taken as an admonition, these words could apply appropriately enough to Makak, who in the apotheosis scene witnesses the clarity of his vision being distorted by the blindness of revenge, the salvational role of leadership reduced to a rallyingpoint for fanaticism. Just as he must escape from the thrall of the muse, Makak must free himself from the perversions of power. The recognition of kingliness, the possibility of triumph, are sufficient for the satisfaction of the psychic hunger for reinforcement. It is similar to the realization that it is enough to travel to Africa in one's mind; indeed, that such an imaginative journey may be ultimately preferable to an actual one. Ironically, the dream seems to reassert reality once more, though on a higher plane of recognition. Makak, after all, is no king; he is merely himself□but that self is now endowed with dignity and a certain prophetic wisdom. As long as the dream remains a dream, we can awaken from it or dream it again. The danger is when people like Corporal Lestrade try to make the dream literal. Then there is no more imagining and no more awakening; no true freedom, only another confining structure.

Source: Robert Elliot Fox, "Big Night Music: Derek Walcott's *Dream on Monkey Mountain* and the 'Splendours of Imagination,'" in *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature,* Vol.XVII, No. 1, 1982, pp. 16-27.

Topics for Further Study

Compare and contrast Makak from *Dream on Monkey Mountain* with Chantal from an earlier Walcott play, *Malcauchon; Or, the Six in Rain* (1959). Why are both alienated from society? How do they handle their differences? How has Walcott's style evolved?

Research the history of colonialism in the West Indies. Discuss how this history affects the motivations and attitudes of the characters, especially Corporal Lestrade.

Research Japan's samurai warriors. Walcott claims to have had them in mind when he wrote the character of Makak. Discuss Makak and his journey in terms of your findings.

Read psychological research related to race and the formation of personal identity. By what other means could Makak have come to terms with himself?

Compare and Contrast

1967: Trinidad and Tobago has been an independent country since 1962, though it is administered by Great Britain.

Today: Trinidad and Tobago has been an independent republic within the British Commonwealth for over twenty years.

1967: Trinidad's economy is unstable, with high unemployment, especially among the young. It soon leads to unrest, strikes, and protests on the island.

Today: Though Trinidad's economy is again unstable, unemployment and inflation are slightly lower and prone to fluctuation. There is more hope, however, because the oil boom of the 1970s proved that a solid economy was possible.

1967: The PNM (People's National Movement) is firmly in power in Trinidad, and though accused of corruption, there are few challengers.

Today: Corruption scandals and challenges by the NAR (National Alliance for Reconstruction), NDP (National Development Party), and Movement for Unity and Progress have limited the power of the PNM in national politics.

1967: The Black Power movement is prominent in the United States and gaining support in Trinidad.

Today: Though such a radical, widespread movement does not exist in the same form, many still fight against racism in both countries.

What Do I Read Next?

Heart of Darkness, a novel by Joseph Conrad published in 1902, also concerns a journey of self-discovery.

The Gulf, a collection of poems by Walcott published in 1969, also discusses an internal chasm.

Waiting for Godot, a 1954 play by Jean Paul Sartre, also features a complicated friendship.

O, Babylon! is a play by Walcott from 1976 which also concerns how cultures meet and are integrated internally.

Don Quixote, a two-volume novel by Miguel de Cervantes published in 1605 and 1615, has, at its heart, a relationship similar to that of Makak and Moustique.

Further Study

Colson, Theodore, "Derek Walcott's Plays: Outrage and Compassion," in *World Literature Written in English*, April, 1973, pp. 80-96.

This article discusses the importance of the plays included in the volume *Dream on Monkey Mountain and Other Plays* (1970).

Hamner, Robert D., "Mythological Aspects of Derek Walcott's Drama," in *Ariel*, July, 1977, pp. 35-58.

This essay looks at several of Walcott's plays, including *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, through elements of mythology.

Montengro, David, "An Interview with Derek Walcott," in *Partisan Review*, Spring, 1990, pp. 204-14.

In this interview, Walcott discusses his inspirations and life as a writer.

Olaniyan, Tejumola, "Derek Walcott: Islands of History at a Rendezvous with a Muse," in *Scars of Conquest/Masks of Resistance: The Invention of Cultural Identities in African, African-American, and Caribbean Drama*, Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 93-115.

This chapter considers *Dream on Monkey Mountain* and other writings by Walcott from several historical perspectives.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Literature of Developing Nations for Students (LDNfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, LDNfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and

undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of LDNfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of LDNfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in LDNfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by LDNfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

LDNfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Literature of Developing Nations for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the LDNfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the LDNfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Literature of Developing Nations for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Literature of Developing Nations for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from LDNfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Literature of Developing Nations for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from LDNfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Literature of Developing Nations for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

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Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Literature of Developing Nations for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

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Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Literature of Developing Nations for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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