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**Racial Love and Racial Hate in Postwar American Literature: From
Lorraine Hansberry to LeRoi Jones.**

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This Thesis is dedicated to my Husband and My Children with all my Love

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ABSTRACT

This research has explored the theme of racial love and hatred with specific reference to three major Black American authors (Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones/Baraka) of the Black American Renaissance of the 1950s and the 1960s. It sets out with the assumption that these authors are deeply impacted by the Western Renaissance of the 1500s and 1600s in their deployment of the Socratic/Platonic dialogue and Ovidian aesthetics in their treatment of love and hatred across the racial board and in the context of the racial tensions of the period. Taking our bearings from historicist, dialogic, and psychopoetic theory developed by such literary theorists as Bloom and Bakhtin, this research has arrived at five major findings. One, the three authors of the Black American Renaissance deploy Platonism and Ovidianism in the same manner as their white counterparts of the Western Renaissance. Two, these authors' family romances is a double family romance since they hold relations with both white and Black authors. Three, notwithstanding to black aesthetics, their works show a highly linguistic, cultural and aesthetic hybridity borrowing as much from the Black tradition as from the white tradition. Four, their stand towards the white tradition of love literature is sometimes that of stylization as is the case with Baldwin and Hansberry and at other times of overt polemics and parody as is the case of Jones/Baraka. With respect to the relation that the three authors hold among themselves it is marked by a highly divisive "clash over the referents" of racial love and hatred making Baldwin and Hansberry as predominantly Platonic and Jones as predominantly Ovidian in their erotic visions of the black and white "races". The fifth and last finding relates to the fact that in spite of claims to the contrary, even such militants for a distinct black aesthetics as Jones/Baraka, the Black American artists of the Black American Renaissance remain heavily indebted to the Western literary and philosophical tradition for the methodology and the literary and philosophical tools they deploy in their works. It is in this sense, that this research follows in the lead of Ralph Ellison's claim that Black American literature is "double-voiced" and that its major authors have both white ancestors and black literary relatives.

RESUME

Cette recherche a exploré le thème de l'amour et de la haine raciale avec une référence spécifique à trois grands auteurs américains noirs (Hansberry, Baldwin et Jones / Baraka) de la Renaissance noire américaine des années 1950 et 1960. Elle s'inspire de l'hypothèse que ces auteurs sont profondément influencés par la Renaissance occidentale des années 1500 et 1600 dans leur déploiement du dialogue socratique / platonicien et de l'esthétique ovidienne dans le traitement de l'amour et de la haine pendant la période enclavant les tensions raciales aux états unies d'Amérique. S'inspirant de la théorie historiciste, dialogique et psychopoétique développée par de tels théoriciens littéraires comme Bloom et Bakhtin, cette recherche est parvenue à cinq résultats majeurs. Le premier est que ces trois auteurs de la Renaissance américaine noire déploient le platonisme et l'ovidianisme de la même manière que leurs homologues blancs de la Renaissance occidentale. Le Deuxième résultat c'est que les romans familiaux de ces auteurs sont un « double » roman familial car ils entretiennent des relations avec des auteurs blancs et noirs à la fois. Troisièmement, nonobstant l'esthétique noire, leurs travaux montrent une « hybridité » linguistique, culturelle et esthétique élevée, empruntant autant à la tradition littéraire noire qu'à la tradition littéraire blanche. Le quatrième résultat concerne leur position envers la tradition des auteurs blancs traitant l'idée de l'amour qui est parfois celle de la « stylisation » comme c'est le cas de Baldwin et Hansberry et à d'autres moments, de parodie et de polémique ouvertes dans le cas de Jones / Baraka. En ce qui concerne la relation que les trois auteurs entretiennent entre eux, elle est marquée par un "conflit sur les référents", un discours hautement divisif de l'amour et de la haine raciale, ce qui fait que Baldwin et Hansberry sont majoritairement platoniques et Jones est principalement Ovidien, dans leurs visions érotiques des deux « races ». Le cinquième et dernier résultat se rapporte au fait que, malgré des allégations au contraire, même de tels militants pour une esthétique noire distincte comme Jones / Baraka, les artistes noirs de la Renaissance américaine noire restent fortement redevables à la tradition littéraire et philosophique occidentale pour la méthodologie et les outils littéraires et philosophiques qu'ils déploient dans leurs travaux. C'est dans ce sens que cette recherche suit en tête l'affirmation de Ralph Ellison selon laquelle la littérature noir américaine est « à double voix » et que ses principaux auteurs ont à la fois des ancêtres littéraire blancs et des parents littéraires noirs.

ملخص

تناولت هذه الأطروحة دراسة موضوع الحب والكره العنصري مع إشارة محددة إلى ثلاثة مؤلفين سود وهم هانسبيرري، بالدوين، وجونز/بركا الذين عرفوا أثناء النهضة الأمريكية السوداء في فترة الخمسينات والستينات. يقوم هذا البحث بالتحديد على الافتراض أن هؤلاء الكتاب متأثرون بشدة بالنهضة الغربية (١٥٠٠ م و ١٦٠٠ م) ما يتجلى في استعمالهم للحوار السقراطي و الجماليات الأدبية الأفريقيانية لمعالجة الحب و الكره عبرالوحة العرقية أثناء التوترات العنصرية آنذاك. إعتقادا على محاور النظرية التاريخية والحوارية و النفسية التي طورها منظرو الأدب أمثال باختن وبلوم، توصل هذا البحث إلى خمس نتائج رئيسية. أولها هو أن هؤلاء الكتاب المنتمون للنهضة السوداء الأمريكية اعتمدوا النموذج الأفلاطوني والأفريقياني المتبعين من طرف الكتاب البيض الذين عرفوا أثناء النهضة الأوروبية. ثانيا، أن الرابط العائلي الرومانسي لهؤلاء المؤلفين "مزدوج" لأنهم تعلقوا بكلا الكتاب البيض والسود معا. ثالثا، هو أنه بغض النظر عن إنتمائهم للجمالية الأدبية السوداء، يظهر في أعمالهم "تهجين" لغوي، ثقافي، وجمالي أدبي والسبب في ذلك يعود إلى تأثرهم العميق واقتراضهم من أدب الكتاب البيض و السود معا. رابع نتيجة تعني موقف هؤلاء الأدباء تجاه الأدب الغربي المهتم بدراسة الحب والذي يندرج ضمن ما أسماه باختن "بالأسلبة" التي تميز الخطاب المزدوج الصوتية. بينما كل من بالدوين و هانسبيرري استعملوا الأسلبة في أعمالهم، جونز اعتمد على كل من الباروديا (المحاكاة الساخرة) و الجدال العلني لدراسة نفس الموضوع. في ما يخص العلاقات التي تربط الكتاب الثلاثة المنتقون في هذه الرسالة فهم في "صدام حول الإحالات" المتعلقة بالحب والكراهية العرقيين. هذا الصراع الشديد الإنقسام جعل من هانسبيرري و بالدوين في الغالب أفلاطونيين و من جونز كاتب أفريقياني بطبعه خصوصا في نظرتهم الشهوانية التي تجمع بين العرق الأسود و الأبيض. خامس وآخر نتيجة توصل إليها هذا البحث فتتعلق بحقيقة أنه على الرغم من الإدعاءات بعكس ذلك، فحتى المناضلون والمنادون بانحياز الأدب الأسود والجمالية الأدبية السوداء مثل جونز/بركا مدينون بشدة للنهضة والفلسفة الغربية بمنهجها ووسائلها الفلسفية و الأدبية المعتمدة في أعمالهم. ومن هذا المنطلق، يأتي هذا البحث في أعقاب إدعاء رالف إليسن بأن الأدب الأمريكي الأسود مزدوج الصوتية وأن مؤلفيه الرئيسيين لديهم أسلاف بيض وأقارب أدبيين سود.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>To Be Young Gifted and Black: Lorraine Hansberry in her own words</i>	-----	TBY
<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	-----	A Raisin
<i>The Sign in Sidney Brustein Window</i>	-----	The Sign
<i>The Dinking Gourd</i>	-----	The Gourd
<i>The Fire Next Time</i>	-----	FNT
<i>Blues for Mister Charlie</i>	-----	Blues
<i>The Amen Corner</i>	-----	The Amen
<i>The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones / Amiri Baraka</i>	-----	AUTO
<i>The System of Dante's Hell</i>	-----	SDH
Home: Social Essays	-----	HOM
National Association for the advancement of coloured People	-----	NAACP
Congress of Racial Equality	-----	CORE
Universal Negro Improvement Association	-----	UNIA

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General Introduction

Lorraine Hansberry (1930-1965), James Baldwin (1987-1924), and LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) (1930-2014) are the most outstanding authors in the African American literary tradition. What marks their non-fictional and fictional work is the quest for identity, a probing into the self, the investigation of subjectivity within the context of the African American family and community, and their relation with mainstream white society. The subjective and identity concerns are expressed in both their fictional and non-fictional works whose hallmarks are love and hate within the context of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and the 1960s.

The choice of these specific writers is motivated by the importance of their texts and the context of the racial struggle in which they made their public pronouncements. This quest for identity through their fiction and non-fiction was conducted during the Black Renaissance of the fifties and the sixties. This period was characterized by the rise of the Black Nationalist movement after the failure of Martin Luther King Jr.'s integrationist policy. Further, in this period of history, the novel that was considered as a Bourgeois genre started to wane leaving place to essay and drama writing. It is important to note that the Black or the African American Renaissance is not monolithic in terms of its relation to Africa and the West. Therefore, the key cultural figures who made the Black Renaissance possible were generally distinguished into two distinct groups: the integrationists and the separatists. Hansberry and Baldwin are representatives of the former whilst Jones / Baraka is mostly considered as a separatist. This research centres on the issues of racial love and hate in the context of the fifties and the sixties that are still pertinent either under the rule of the U.S.A black democrat President Barak Obama or during his white republican successor Donald Trump.

It will be argued in this research that though the three writers have different ideologies, they share a concern with the theme of Black identity, or Negritude, that is to say what it means to be black man and woman in close contact with the white civilization. It follows that

if one looks at this classic critical distinction between the authors of the black American Renaissance, the three authors have nothing to do together since they are categorically different in terms of ideology. Hansberry and Baldwin seek to carve a place in the Western literary tradition whereas Jones is more interested in literary Garveyism. Garvey was the Jamaican American leader of the 1920s who developed the ideology of black Americans going back to Africa and African culture to achieve real nationhood and selfhood. Our research goes against this critical consensus or literary divide and rule by making a small case of it and announcing that the three of them are indeed comparable because they remained deeply rooted in the aesthetic of the Western Renaissance notwithstanding the qualification of the African American Renaissance.

The three authors of this research, like (black) Renaissance men / women use in their works the most dominant paradigms of the Western literary tradition that are Platonism and Ovidianism. These two models were revived during the Renaissance and constituted the major classical influence on European Literature (Highet, G., 1949: 40). Racial love and hatred are the two dominating paradigms during the racial context of post-World War II America. The black authors' handling of these two models throughout their writings secures for them a place within the Western aesthetics and answers back some critics who defend the opposite view because of racial difference. Platonism as an aesthetic model is used through the artistic form of the Socratic dialogue and the Platonic love, while Ovidianism pervades the authors' writings through the theme of metamorphosis and the Ovidian love that influenced Renaissance art in general, since "fractured and fragmented bodies from Ovid's poem cast long broken shadows over European literary history" (Enterline, L., 2004: 1).

Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones have already received the attention of a huge number of critics. The bibliography attached to this research shows the extent of this critical consideration and makes us realize that so far little attention has been given to the issue of

love and hate as it is reflected in their respective essays, autobiographies and plays and the way these genres are closely linked to the thematic of subjectivity and identity. Form and content are often discussed separately. Critics such as Ben Keppel (1995:200), for instance focusses on Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*'s content that deals with the question of integration to the white society, through the black family's determination to fight back the white neighbor's rejection. However, he did not discuss the dialectical form of the play that could not be separated from its content. We will demonstrate that the play is organized as a Platonic dialogue that juxtaposes the views of the black family members to reach the truth concerning family love that has united them at the end, and saved their project of moving out of the ghetto to the white neighborhood. This play epitomizes the playwright's desire to situate her works in the Western literary tradition.

In the same way, Steven A. Carter (1991) has undertaken to discuss and interpret Hansberry's plays by relating her cultural views to her artistic goals. His work, though involving an overview of all her drama, remains descriptive and is limited to the themes of the plays as related to the problem of the blacks in post-World War II America. For instance, his analysis of Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* studied themes such as marital and generational discord, conformity versus respect for diversity, and the struggle for women's rights as linked to black experience and black perspective. Nevertheless, the issue of the dialectical relationship between the form of the play and its content escapes the attention of Carter who seems to neglect the importance of the method of the Socratic dialogue through which the characters / interlocutors, as we shall show, interact provoking each other's words. The dialogic nature of drama, as it will be discussed in our thesis, tests, and contests, displaces and creates new ideas concerning kinship and the dialectic of racial love and hate that animates the black family's experience in post-World War II America, on the one hand, and refers to the Platonic tradition of the symposium that discusses the nature of love as its main issue, on the other hand.

Other critics like Anne Cheney (1984), indulges in the description of Hansberry's literary career without giving a critical insight into the importance of the principal source she is using, that is Hansberry's semi-autobiography, *To Be Young Gifted and Black: Lorraine Hansberry in Her Own Words* (1967). This work, in spite of its related themes to the black experience in the American ghetto, is first of all a dialogue of the self held by Hansberry. It merges non-fictional and fictional works to disrupt the boundaries of the genres. In addition, and as our thesis attempt to demonstrate, he plays seek to map her own identity and subjectivity by using the Socratic method of dialectics for the uncovering of the truth in a dialogue based on memory and a story. Furthermore, the overlooked theme of metamorphosis from the innocent child into an active intellectual linking each story into another will be discussed.

Like Hansberry's, Baldwin's works have also been subject to a myriad of critics though it is his novels rather than his essays and plays that have received most of the critics' comments. Nick Aaron Ford has deeply analyzed Baldwin's four volumes of essays for the purpose of offering critical commentaries on the style, the content and the method of the most representative ones (1981: 85). He comes to the conclusion that the majority of Baldwin's essays are characterized by the use of the first person singular pronoun "I" when the narration is completely personal. But when the assertion is intended to represent white-American society he employs the plural forms of the singular personal pronouns "we" or "our" (Ibid: 90). He considers that Baldwin's essays are characterized by an extensive use of imagery to create a sense of vividness, while his personal life pervades his essays (Ibid.). Yet, Ford has overlooked the main trait of Baldwin's essay which is his quest to understand his own self in the manner of Socrates whose major adage is "Know thyself" (Plato, 370 BC: 3). Self-understanding is often obstructed by the color of his skin, stating that, "the question of color, especially in this country, operates to hide the graver *questions of the self*...the questions which one begins to ask oneself, begin, at last, to illuminate the world" (Baldwin, 1961: xiii-

iv). Thus, the dialogue that Baldwin imagines “between myself and me” (Ibid. xi), as he writes in his essays, turns around the self. He tests and contests the truth concerning his existence as a human being first, and then as an African American.

Ford’s writes that Baldwin’s *The Fire Next Time* (1963) is both challenging and powerful. Nonetheless, it lacks new actual solutions to the problem of race in America since its basic solution, *love and integration*, is “as old as the Holy Bible and as simple as the Sermon on the Mount” (1981: 101). Ford’s assessments seem to disregard Baldwin’s position as far as the Christian church is concerned. The hatred instead of love that this institution perpetuates among its members is explicitly expressed in *The Fire Next Time*, when he says: “there was no love in the church, it was a mask for hatred and self-hatred and despair” (1963: 348). Moreover, Ford appears to ignore the dialectic of love and hate Baldwin aspires to reach through his discourse of the mind talking to mind. This Platonic / philosophical conception of love transcends any consideration of race, sex and religion. The love of knowledge is considered as an ideal means to free the souls of the Americans from the prisons of their skins to make them accept to live together in peace as emancipated human beings.

Baldwin’s plays have also been criticized and evaluated by many critics among them Carlton W. Molette who affirms that Baldwin’s drama, precisely his play *The Amen Corner* (1955), is “more of a black church ritual than it is a play in the sense that modern Western culture defines a play” (1981: 184). Molette seems to confine Baldwin’s theatre within the African American oral tradition. He argues that the dominant force in the play is the African American rhythm that sweeps both the actors and the congregation (the audience) “in a way very similar to the black church ritual for the sake of purgation” (Ibid.). Moreover, he insists on the assessment of the play as a black church ritual even at the level of content explaining that love in the play “is made to come alive in the theatre via the same ritual techniques that the black church uses, as a black ritual event” (Ibid.). However, Baldwin uses the Western

theatrical tradition both at the level of form by espousing the form of the Socratic dialogue and the level of content by evoking the diverse kinds of love as approached by Plato's dialectics and as embodied by the surrogate of Socrates Diotima, Margaret Alexander in the play. Furthermore, Baldwin deploys Ovid's notions of love and metamorphoses of the self as it will be discussed in this thesis.

Among the critics who have undertaken to study Jones's works are Benston Kimberly (1976) and Warner Sollors (1978). These two critics have covered Jones's poetry, his essay, his novels as well as his plays. According to them, Jones's poetic career parallels the political changes related to the blacks' struggle for their rights in America. Jones's works, as they say, have been developed according to the socio-historical context in which he lived. For them, "Jones surrenders the shape of his own life, freeing his soul to flow into the black nation" (1976: 261). They agree on the way of fragmenting Jones's literary life, stressing two important outcomes: that his drama is that of the self, and that his main aesthetic objective merges with political desire to integrate the black community in the black struggle. However, they both seem to disregard the fact that the act of creation in literature starts from a tradition. This tradition is the Western culture, and though the content of Jones's works seems to be racially directed, the forms he has used in these works are deeply rooted in the Western literary tradition like the Socratic dialogue.

Benston's and Sollors seem to focus on Jones's racial struggle as an end in itself. They underestimate the personal dialogue of the dramatist who speaks with the self to seek the truth concerning notions of identity, racial love and hate. His self-introspection which is a necessary step for self-determination needs further attention. Thus, in this research it will be argued that his personal dialogue inscribes the works under consideration within the Greek tradition of the Socratic dialogue. More than that, we will attempt at showing its Ovidian tendencies at the level of themes, characters and plot.

This research starts from the critical assumption that the form (Socratic dialogue) and content (racial love and hate) of the works under study are in a dialectical relationship each reflecting the other. Bakhtin defends the idea that any genre that lives in the present remembers its past and its beginnings since the genre is representative of the creative memory in the process of any literary development (Bakhtin, 1984: 106-6). Just as the content, the form of the artistic work is in a constant dialogue with its roots. So, the choice of autobiography, essay and drama genres by Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones is also dialectical in matter of content: which is subjectivity / identity, a dialogue about racial love and hate. The essay as Hoagland has fully documented is “a mind talking to mind” (Hoagland 1976: 25). It is essentially dialogic in its drive, and self-introspection is an essential part of this dialogue. The autobiography as Jones writes, is also a dialogue with the self (2000:24).The dialogic dimension of drama does not need to be stated here. Therefore, two chapters will be devoted to the analysis of Hansberry’s, Baldwin’s and Jones’s fictional and nonfictional works to demonstrate that like their white counterparts, our three authors have a predilection for the Socratic dialogue, and display evidences of an Ovidian mindset within their creative process.

The dialectic of racial love and hate in their works is closely related to their family romances because their subjectivity has been shaped first within the black family and then in their community. Thus, two chapters will be devoted to the study of their family romances one dealing with their fictional writings, the other one with their lives and times. Their existence was a constant wrestling for the sake of self-affirmation, contesting the stereotypes and the racist pressures in the white American society. We shall argue that the three authors’ love of white partners in their attempts to affirm themselves and be recognized in the American racial system is a way of subverting the master-slave dialectic. Their struggle for recognition does not only involve the master and the slave but also white woman / man and white homosexual as object of love. The three authors as this research will show are not

heterosexuals in the sense that LeRoi Jones and Baldwin are gay whereas Hansberry is lesbian. This is also another subversion of the Western family romance.

The writers under study have chosen different genres that originate in the Platonic tradition of dialogue about love to project their ideas, and understand the workings of racial love and hate within their own selves as African American writers. Thus, the third chapter of this thesis will demonstrate that they did not only use the form of the Socratic dialogue in their fictional and nonfictional works. However, in constructing their content, they borrowed Western Renaissance discourses of love and metamorphosis as inspired from Plato and Ovid. Their deployment of these Western discourses, as we shall see, differs according to their personal objectives. We shall demonstrate that their stand towards the white tradition of love literature is sometimes that of stylization and at other times of overt polemics and parody.

In their quest for black subjectivity, recognition and self-affirmation, the three authors' writings are not only inspired by the Socratic Dialogue and the two dominant models of love and hate but are consistently linked to the Hegelian dialectic of the master and the slave due to the racial context. Like their predecessors they use the dialectic of the master and the slave to carry on the struggle of the black man from bondage to freedom. Our authors as the last chapter of this thesis will display interact with both white and black literary and philosophical discourses of their predecessors. This happens within the scope of what Harold Bloom calls psycho-poetical ties between the forerunner poets and their successors. They wrestle in a poetic *agon* to secure a place in the Western literary tradition. This dialectic is clearly expressed in Jones's works who though openly rejected the Western literature found his works entangled in it. Therefore, seeking to find a model that would galvanize the black march of the *zeitgeist* towards revolutionary progress of history, Jones resorted to the Hegelian dialectic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis as is the case in his essay *Blues People* (1963), and more explicitly in his poem "Hegel" (1963). Furthermore, we shall demonstrate

that with respect to the relation the three authors hold among themselves it is marked by a highly divisive “clash over the referent” of racial love and hatred.

Our approach will be a combination of dialogism / intertextuality and psychopoetics. These two theories have been started by Mikhail Bakhtin and Harold Bloom respectively and explained in Bakhtin’s *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, and Bloom’s *The Anxiety of Influence*. These theories are important for our research because they investigate the intertextual and intratextual bonds that exist between texts and authors. Bloom took the concept of family romances from Freud and projected it to the literary romances between authors. Like him, Fanon in his *Black Skin, White Masks* used Freud’s analysis in his study of the black family and the romances between white women and black men, and between white men and black women to expand Hegel’s dialectic of the master and the slave in the case of a black man. Hansberry’s Baldwin’s and Jones’s texts are sites for their self-introspection and projected ideas. Their dialogue with other authors and texts and with the context of their writings, merging confessional discourse about the self and the discourse about the world is an attempt to understand their subjectivity and affirm their identity.

CHAPTER ONE

Historical Background, Theoretical and Methodological Framework

This research seeks to explore racial love and hate in the works of Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones who stand as the main representatives of the Black Renaissance. It will be argued that our authors have deployed European Renaissance literary paradigms in their writings to secure for themselves a room in the Western literary tradition on the one hand. On the other hand, they have used black American experience in their writings that constitute an outlet to the racial concerns of the period. This chapter will settle the historical background and the methodological framework of this research.

Harlem and Black American Renaissance

Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones appeared in the second Black Renaissance of the fifties and the sixties that was influenced by the Harlem Renaissance of the mid-twenties. The latter is an intellectual movement in art, music, literature that aims at reviving cultural heritage and finding intellectual and artistic grounds for the African Americans' racial concerns. This movement is related to the international spirit of independence led by many nations against colonialism and oppression. For instance, as a cultural and artistic movement, Harlem Renaissance was tightly related to Pan-Africanism and *négritude*. It intended at offering a new scene for the encounter of blacks from the English and French Caribbeans and Africans. In an attempt to define the Harlem Renaissance, Genviève Fabre and Michel Feith (2001) state that:

The Harlem Renaissance was a moment of hope and confidence, a proclamation of independence, and the celebration of a new spirit exemplified in the New Negro. Against the grain of enduring stereotypes, in defiance of disparagement or subservience, this rebirth and awakening seemed to herald a new age, calling for heightened race consciousness and pride, for resourcefulness and creativity. Such confidence came from an awareness of changing times, of better opportunities created by the Great War and the Great Migration that set African-Americans flowing through the United States and between continents (2001: 2).

Merging race consciousness and creativity, the black authors of the Harlem Renaissance intended voicing the racial concerns against white stereotypes by celebrating the *zeitgeist* of the “New Negro”. The Harlem Renaissance helped foster a literary tradition of timeless influence on the black American authors. Harlemites agreed about countering traditional black stereotypes. However, diverse trends and ideologies characterized this intellectual dynamism and brought into debate both the separatist and integrationist ideologies over the way of representing the black in their art. Their debate was centered on the possibility of being both black and American without forfeiting either aspect of one’s identity. Their dilemma can only be disentangled by Hegel’s dialectical methodology of thesis, antithesis and synthesis which is an appropriate tool for black thinkers. Du Bois tried this Western philosophical methodology to settle the strife between the African and the American side in the black American psyche through the concept of “double consciousness”.

Followers of cultural integration argued that Harlem Renaissance artists should convey positive and refined representations of African Americans. Such “proper” images of blacks, as Bodenner (2013) explains were crucial to countering more than a century of racist black stereotypes in American pop culture. Art, as Bodenner expands, could not be divorced from politics. Integration supporters contend that blacks must use their art to gain recognition as cultural equals. Once blacks were recognized as cultural equals, they reasoned, political and social equality would follow (Ibid: 2). The most outstanding figure of the Harlem Renaissance were Langston Hughes, Alain Locke, Zora Neale Hurston, Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, Wallace Thurman and W.E.B. Du Bois among others. Du Bois was the leader of NAACP and the promoter of “the Talented Tenth”, whose ideology influenced both Lorraine Hansberry and James Baldwin. For Du Bois, art could not be divorced from politics. He advocated “art as propaganda” and opposed “art for art’s sake” because of the socioeconomic and the racial context of the African Americans. For him, the *zeitgeist* was not for aesthetics but for political activism for civil rights. Though Harlem Renaissance integrationists frequently

invoked racial themes in their works, they believed that the struggle for the Civil Rights can be effective only through transcending “racial identity” to facilitate integration to mainstream society. In other words, black authors should stress the traits that unify rather than separate the black and the white races to weave the bonds of racial love instead of racial hatred.

During the Harlem Renaissance proponents of cultural separation or Black Nationalism were influenced by Marcus Garvey’s ideology of “back to Africa” and his movement UNIA. They wanted to be accepted as Americans with all the components of the black identity. Therefore, they rejected self-effacement as a condition to integrate the American mainstream society by repudiating cultural concessions, advocating racial pride, and celebrating their African ways. Garvey’s Black Nationalism would influence Jones’s works and the Black Arts’ Movement of the sixties in general. The Harlem Renaissance in literature, as Hutchinson explains, was never a cohesive movement but a product of overlapping social and intellectual circles, parallel developments, intersecting groups, and competing visions. However, these actors were loosely bound together by a desire for racial self-assertion and self-definition in the face of white supremacy (2007:1). Racial and cultural separatism or “cultural pluralism” of the Harlem Renaissance was explicit in the works of Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes. The former insisted on the use of the black vernacular as an essential tool to reveal the complexity and the beauty of folk heritage in the black American writings. The latter invited black writers to resist “the urge within the race to whiteness” by building “temples for tomorrow” notwithstanding white people contentment or resentment.

At the literary level, the token of continuity, between the Harlem Renaissance and its later twin the Black American Renaissance is Richard Wright’s essay entitled “Blue Print for Negro Literature” (1937) that incorporates the concept of a “Black Nation”. Wright asserts that black writers generally represented the “petty bourgeois section of an ‘oppressed

minority””, interested only in emulating and reflecting the values of the white middle class to “lift themselves into a higher social sphere”. He bitterly claimed that:

Negro writing in the past has been confined to humble novels, poems, and plays, prim and decorous ambassadors who went a begging to white America. The entered the court of white American Public Opinion dressed in knee-pants of servility, curtsying to show theta the Negro was not inferior, that he was human, and that he had a life comparable to that of other people (Wright R., in Butler-Evans, 1987: 24).

Wright was interested in the nationalist aspects (blues, spirituals, folktales) of the black life that differentiated Black culture from the dominant culture and established its oppositional character (Ibid.). As Butler-Evans expands, Wright reads his construction of Black culture as a “signifier” of repressed political consciousness, connecting folklore with political desire. This linked him with the later Black Aesthetic movement (Ibid: 25).

It is difficult to limit the time span of the Harlem Renaissance. Yet, Critics such as Fabre G., Michel F. (2001) and Hutchinson G. (2007) take the period 1918 to 1938 to reasonably encompass the Harlem Renaissance while recognizing that periodization is always artificial and approximate. Hence, Harlemites writers soon gave way to black writers of the transitional Civil Rights era known as the Second Black American Renaissance. Therefore, this African or Black American Renaissance of the 1950s and the 1960s was marked by two contending forces in the racial scene. On the one hand, those who advocated love and nonviolence as a strategy of racial struggle are best represented by Martin Luther King Jr. and on the other hand, those who stood for racial hate and advocated racial separation in different matters such as the way of dressing, eating, writing and worshiping are best represented by Elijah Muhammed and Malcolm X.

We will show that Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones wrote in the transitional period of the Black American Renaissance with marked differences in their public pronouncements as to the audiences to whom they addressed their works. There is an ideological gulf between the advertised cultural nationalism of Jones, the pioneer of the Black Arts’ Movement alongside Larry Neal and the mainstream stances of Hansberry and Baldwin. Their essays, dramas and

life writing reproduce the public fight between Martin Luther King Jr., and Malcolm X. Thus, while Hansberry and Baldwin are disciples of racial love, Jones defends cultural nationalism and promulgates hatred for the Western civilization. However, it will be argued that notwithstanding the three authors' public pronouncements in the heat of the racial struggle, they remain deeply steeped in Neoplatonism and Ovidianism, more so for Jones who advocated cultural nationalism. In other words, despite their emergence during the Black American Renaissance, the three authors are more influenced by the Western Renaissance paradigms.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Dialogism, the Socratic dialogue and metamorphosis that constitute the main theoretical concepts supporting our argumentation in this research are explained by Mikhail Bakhtin. The artistic form of the Socratic dialogue that influenced Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's works was fully documented by him in his work with reference to Dostoyevsky's writings. Bakhtin believes that the Socratic dialogue is the first scientific thinking and the first artistic-prose model for the novel that grows out of a folk-carnivalistic base. Yet, his findings can also be applied to other genres like the essay, autobiography and drama. He starts by defining the Socratic dialogue as "almost a memoir genre: it consists of reminiscences of actual conversations that Socrates had conducted, transcriptions of remembered conversations framed by a brief story" (1984: 109). The memoir genre or *apomnemoneumata* (recollections) refers to the memory of one's own contemporaneity and one's own self, a technique used in autobiographies (Ibid.). Bakhtin has clarified that as time passes, the genre of the Socratic dialogue becomes free from the limitations of memory and history. Nevertheless, it retains the Socratic method of dialogically revealing the truth and the external form of dialogue written down and framed by a dialogized story.

Bakhtin also affirms that Socratic dialogues are characterized by five significant aspects. The first basic characteristic of the genre is the Socratic notion of *the dialogic nature of truth, and the dialogic nature of the human thinking about truth*. This characteristic is important because for Bakhtin it stands against official monologism that pretends to possess a ready-made truth. It counters the naïve self-confidence of people who think that they possess certain truths since “truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction” (1984: 109).

The second two basic devices of the Socratic dialogue are *syncrisis* and *anacrisis*. Syncrisis is the juxtaposition of various points of view on a specific object. The second one, anacrisis is understood as the means used to provoke the words of an interlocutor forcing him to express thoroughly his opinion. Socrates is the master of this device (anacrisis) because he knew how to force people to speak and unveil their stubborn preconceived opinions, the better to expose their falseness or incompleteness, and to reach the truth. Syncrisis and anacrisis dialogize thought; they carry it into the open, turn it into a rejoinder, and attach it to dialogic intercourse among people (ibid).

The third characteristic of the genre is that the heroes of the Socratic dialogue are *ideologists seeking and testing truth* just like the prime speaker Socrates who incites the others (his pupils, the sophists and simple people) against their own will, to participate in the ideological event he initiated. Bakhtin explains that the dialogue unfolds with a genuine dramatic effect, like the peripetations or multiplicity of creative forces of the idea of immortality of the soul in Plato’s *Phaedo*. Thus, the *hero-ideologist* was first introduced into the history of European literature by the Socratic dialogue.

The fourth important element of the Socratic dialogue is *the dialogue on the threshold* generally provoked by an *extraordinary plot situation*, a moment of crisis. It is a turning point

for the self. It happens generally when a man confronts a death sentence (standing on the threshold) confesses and sums up his life and its final decisions either directly facing the real listeners of his dialogue or in front of the divine judge(s). In Plato's *Gorgias*, this dialogue is described as the greatest of all the contests (*agon*) awaiting everyone towards the end of his life. This extraordinary stance of looking one's own death directly forces the person to reveal the deepest layers of his personality and thought in a free way.

The fifth element in the genre is that the *idea is organically combined with the image of a person, its carrier*. In the Socratic dialogue the idea of Socrates, the central hero of the genre, wearing the popular mask of the bewildered fool, is combined with the image of the wise man of the most elevated sort, a combination that produces the ambivalent image of wise ignorance (1981: 24). The testing of the idea in this genre is at the same time the testing of its exponents all along the dialogue.

The Ovidian model and tendency is fully explored in Ovid's mock-epic *Metamorphoses*. It has its philosophical roots in the Greek teachings of Pythagoras's metempsychosis that influenced Plato's dialectics as it appears in his dialogue *The Phaedrus*. Further, the Socratic dialogues that "involve an individual autobiographical self-consciousness is related to the stricter forms of metamorphosis as found in mythology. At its heart lies the chronotope of 'the life course of one seeking true knowledge'" (Ibid: 130). Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is based on Greek fables rewritten to suit the temper of Augustan Rome. In these invented internal monologues, Ovid hides a clear stream of anarchy in spite of the controlled flowing surfaces of his verse (Horace, G., 1958: xix). Bakhtin starts by explaining that the themes of human metamorphosis are drawn from the treasury of pre-class world folklore, and that the folkloric image of man is intimately bound up with transformation and identity (Bakhtin, 1981: 112).

He traces back the stages of development of metamorphosis starting from the most ancient branch which is the Greek philosophy where the idea of transformation and identity plays an enormous role. Another branch, Bakhtin expands, is the cultic development of the idea of metamorphosis in ancient Eleusinian mysteries celebrating Demeter and Persephone's death-rebirth myth. Afterwards, these mysteries were influenced by the oriental cults and the original Christian trends are included in this line of development. The third branch of transformation motifs, Bakhtin contends, is present in purely popular folklore and the influence it exercised on and its reflection in literature. The most important and the last branch is the development of the idea of metamorphosis in literature proper to which the other branches, Eleusinian mystery tradition and Greek philosophy for instance contributed with their influence. Bakhtin concludes that "metamorphosis serves as the basis for a method of portraying the whole of an individual's life in its more important moments of *crisis*: for showing *how an individual becomes other than what he was*." (1981: 115; emphasis original). He includes Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the later stage of development. Yet, for him, the Ovidian idea of metamorphosis has already become the private metamorphosis of individual, isolated beings acquiring the characteristics of an external, miraculous transformation (Ibid: 114). This individual metamorphosis follows the four stages of development starting by self-confident ignorance, passing through self-critical scepticism and self-consciousness to reach ultimate knowledge.

Though a huge number of critics have discussed the works under consideration in this research, most of them have sought to detach the authors from the Greek tradition of the Socratic dialogue, and Ovidian aesthetics. They have not paid attention to the fact that Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones are interested in speaking their minds loudly in public somehow in the manner of the *soap opera box*, and this is true whether this public expression of opinion is made in the form of essay, autobiography or drama. Furthermore, this drama, as it will be developed in our thesis, also involves a family romance. The latter is the dialogue

testing and contesting the notion of love and hate within the family, the race, and then as a philosophical quest within the self. Plato's *Symposium* and *The Phaedrus* are the dialogues that discuss the notion of love as an impulse towards philosophy. Love, in this way, goes beyond the family bonds ranging from homosexual love, love as the harmony of opposites, and love as the desire for perpetual possession of the good, and ultimately as the desire for immortality through sublimation or ascent from the love of the body to the soul which is its divine origin.

Plato / Socrates believes that dialectic is the best method to understand and reach the truth, first by taking his own self as the subject of this dialectic. He tried to act according to the inscription at Delphi: "Know thyself" because as he answers his friend Phaedrus, "I must first know myself; to be curious about that which is not my concern, while I am still in ignorance of my own self, would be ridiculous" (*Phaedrus*: 3). Socrates undertakes to analyze himself, the hidden parts of his mind, which may equal Freud's unconsciousness, by asking two basic questions: "am I a monster more complicated and swollen with passion than the serpent Typho, or a creature of a gentler and simpler sort, to whom nature has given a diviner and lowlier destiny?" (Ibid). These challenging questions have been taken up by Freud's psychoanalysis, in "the mobilization of two people's minds and bodies [...] in a transferential discourse as a new kind a love story" (Kristeva, 1987: 3). This talk is the dialogue between the analyst and the analysand, a form of conversation whereby the patient can succeed in taking oneself into account to get better (Lear, 2005: 16).

The Platonic tradition considers Eros as the desire to eternally possess the good and beautiful after understanding the necessity of going beyond sexuality to reach the self. In the same way, Freud considers Eros as a fundamental force for he wants to explain the way sexuality is itself integrated into the larger project of human development (Ibid: 84). He links his analysis of love and sexuality with Plato's theory explained by Aristophanes in the

Symposium which deals not only with the origin of the sexual instinct, but also with its variations in relation to its object (Freud: 622). However, Freud seems closer to Ovid than Plato in his beliefs concerning the end of any love by a sensual satisfaction of bodily instincts as it will be argued in the analysis.

The notion of *Family Romances* as documented by Freud's essay of the same title explains that family love-hate dialectic originates in the libidinal instincts of childhood. It is a longing to find again an initial state of happiness of the self before being confronted to others (1909: 300). The jealous child (with an untiring love of asking questions) experiences the hidden polemics of love and hate towards his parents after feeling slighted by them. This is because the great attention he used to receive from them has been turned to another brother or sister. He also enters in a contest with his siblings for the love of his parents. This emotional contest against the parents, or what Freud calls the Oedipus complex, and the hidden drama with the siblings is nourished by his imagination and tested by comparing his parents to others. Family romance is the first step in the dialogue with the self because it is the recollection of the individual's first impressions concerning his life.

According to Freud, the individual's progressive passage from childhood to adulthood passes through the most painful though necessary process which is that of his liberation from the authority of his parents. This freedom is required to reach a normal state for the individual and his society. Further, this passage is necessary because the whole progress of any society depends on the opposition between successive generations. It is painful too, because of the anxieties that the loss of one's own guardians may produce. However, the result of reaching a "normal" state is not granted for everybody since some individuals fail in the process and constitute what Freud calls neurotics (1989: 298).

In this essay Freud gives great importance to the psychology of a child and his early relations with his parents. It is the first step in shaping his mind and his feelings, and

consequently, it will determine his future life. Freud divides the child's relation with his parents into two important and often opposite stages. In the first stage of childhood, the infant aspires to be like his parents whom he loves, and who are his first models. However, this momentous wish during these early years disappears with his intellectual growth. He discovers, by degrees, the category of his parents by comparing them to others he knows and thus starts to doubt and criticize the greatness he has attributed to them.

Meanwhile, intense impulses of sexual rivalry contribute to his provocations and estrangement from his parents which is in fact a kind of hatred and rejection. This hatred has its roots from early childhood, when the child feels slighted because he is not receiving the whole of his parents' love, mainly after the birth of other brothers and sisters (1989: Ibid). This resentment towards his parents, who are not reciprocating his great love, pushes him to think that he is a step-child or an adopted one. At this level, the influence of the child's sexual impulses is already apparent since a boy tends to feel more hostile impulses against his father, and desires to get free from him than towards his mother. Freud calls these love / hate feelings "the neurotic's family romances" (Ibid: 299).

The gift of the neurotic, Freud says, is in fact his imaginative creativity shown first in children's play, and the familial day-dreaming, which continues far beyond puberty. Freud thinks that this day-dreaming(s) are very important, and when analyzed they are the fulfilment of wishes and corrections of actual life. They have two aims: an erotic and an ambitious one though the former one is often concealed behind the latter. (Ibid: 222)

The second (sexual) stage of the family romance is endowed with the sexual knowledge which is absent in the first asexual one. Children become aware of the different roles played by fathers and mothers in their sexual relations. They realize that while paternity is always uncertain, maternity is most certain (Ibid). Consequently, during this sexual stage, the child's imaginative activity and his knowledge about the sexual process. This helps him in the

creation of fantasies of secret infidelity and love affairs between his mother and other men. Their motive is to get revenge to retaliate for the punishment of his earlier sexual naughtiness, what is considered as wrong (Ibid). Furthermore, a child uses his imaginative stories to steal his parents' power just in the same way as writers imagine historical intrigues, murders betrayals and so on to feel this power. The child stands as a hero or an author who builds his fantasies to fulfil his wishes of absolute love and power (kingship) over others (his family members or intimate world). In this imagined environment, he can transgress the laws of blood ties by his deliberate love-affairs with one of his sisters, if he is sexually attracted to her. Freud knows that attributing these facts to a child may seem horrifying. Yet, he explains that these works of fiction full of hostility and hatred are not really badly intended, but they are the child's disguises of his original love for his parents (Ibid: 223). He explains that the child's desire to replace his real father by a superior one is only his longing for the vanished days of his early childhood when his father was the strongest and the noblest of men and his mother was the dearest and the loveliest of women, and this overvaluation of his parents will survive in his dreams of normal adults (Ibid: 225).

Linked to family romances is the possible sexual inversion that was studied by Freud for the first time. The lesbian's tendency to love women rather than men is referred to in his article entitled "The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman" (1920). At first, he acknowledged the fact that homosexuality in women was ignored by law and neglected by psychoanalysis. He introduced the case of a beautiful and clever girl of eighteen, belonging to a family of good standing. She had aroused displeasure and concern in her parents by the devoted adoration she felt towards a certain lady in society who was about ten years older than herself. This lady was a loose woman who lived with a married woman, having intimate relations with her (Freud, 1963: 133). The mother was young and beautiful. She had a child at the same moment as her daughter's crisis. She was harsh and over-indulgent towards her. So, while her mother was still young herself, she saw in her rapidly developing daughter an

inconvenient competitor. Her father painfully thinks that she, after her attempt to suicide, was either vicious, or degenerate and mentally afflicted.

For Freud, the beloved lady, the daughter's object-love is the substitute for the mother despite the fact that she is not herself a mother. This, is because the first object-love of the girl's affection after the birth of her youngest brother is mothers. That is to say women between thirty and thirty-five, whom she had met with their children in the family circle and during summer holidays. Her beloved lady, according to Freud, combines the gratification of the homosexual tendency with that of the heterosexual one. This combination is a warning against simplifying the nature and genesis of inversion and to consider the extensive influence of bisexuality of mankind (Ibid: 143).

The outcomes of this analysis show that the girl felt great pain during the days of childhood from a complex related to the intimate part of her body that generated a kind of hatred and rebellion. She, in fact, suffered from a strongly marked masculinity complex, a spirited girl, always ready to fight. She was not at all prepared to be second to her slightly older brother. After inspecting his genital organs, she had developed a pronounced envy of the masculine genital organ. The thought derived from this envy still continued to fill her mind. She was in fact a feminist (in modern times). She felt it to be unjust that girls should not enjoy the same freedom as boys and rebelled against women in general (Ibid: 156).

Freud ends up his essay by noting that psychoanalysis cannot cure homosexuality but it helps in disclosing the psychical mechanism that determine the object-choice through tracing back the paths that lead to the instinctual basis of the disposition. Nevertheless, he confirms the fact that "a woman who has felt herself to be a man, and has loved in masculine fashion, will hardly let herself be forced into playing the part of a woman when she must pay for this transformation, which is not in every way advantageous, by renouncing all hope of motherhood (Ibid: 159).

Freud's other essay entitled "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" (1908) is an attempt to understand the nature, the origins and the process of literary creation in relation to childhood's traumas. Freud established a connection between childhood playing (fantasies) and adult's works of art (1989: 440). For him, the connector is in fact the human desire to change the existing and often unsatisfactory or unpleasant world of reality. Consequently, mental activity is directed towards inventing a situation in which unsatisfied wishes will be fulfilled. The neurotic, as explained in his essay "Family Romances", is endowed with this prolific imagination that permits him to escape his painful real life into the pleasure-seeking world of dreams to fulfil his desires. In the same way, writers reinvent the real world using their imagination, a tool used to seduce the readers, that Freud calls *poetical effect*. The aim in this research is to understand the role of the black family either in perpetuating or obstructing the dialectic of love and hate in the black child's subjectivity since childhood traumas are determining factors of future life, conduct and literary production. Thus, it is pertinent to explore the family romances as lived by Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones to reveal the dynamics of racial love-hate in their essays, autobiographies and plays.

However, Freud's family romances deal predominantly with the "bourgeois family" excluding other family models like the black one. Another variation of the black family that may destabilize the family romances as studied by Freud is the one characterized by matriarchy because of the constant absence of the black father in families pertaining to the poor working class. This matriarchal black family is as the one depicted in Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*. Therefore, it is pertinent to blend Freud's outcomes with Frantz Fanon's who studied Freud's family romances in the case of the black family. In a chapter entitled "The Negro and Psychopathology", Fanon attempted to apply Freud's conclusions to the man of colour and his views about the world. He affirms that Freud, Adler and even Jung did not think of the Negro in all their investigations (1952: 151). He believes that when the problem is a "neurosis experienced by an adult, the analyst should uncover in the new psychic

structure an analogy with certain infantile elements, a repetition, and a duplication of conflicts that owe their origins to the essence of the family constellation” (Fanon, 2008: 141). He studied the case of the Negro family because integration into the society outside the family is not a problem when the family (institution) is white. However, the Negro family suffers from disparity between its inner environment and its mainstream outer one which is white. The white family functions exactly in the same way as the white society, though in miniature. He writes that “a normal child who has grown up in a normal family will be a normal man. There is no disproportion between the life of the family and the life of the nation” (Ibid: 142). Consequently, the white individual’s passage from family life to social one is not as problematic as is the case with black individuals. As a child, the black boy had never experienced the white (stereotyped) thoughts and beliefs about him. Thus, after hearing all the racist clichés he becomes “abnormal”. Fanon explains the roots of this *abnormality* by what he calls “collective catharsis”, a channel that exists in all societies. It is an outlet through which the forces accumulated in the form of aggression can be released (Ibid: 145). He clarifies that all the psychoanalytic studies he read led him progressively to the conclusion that there is a “dialectical substitution” when moving from the psychology of the white man to that of the black man (Ibid: 151). In other words, the moral values of the white and the black man are not the same and their *drive for socialization* does not stem from the same motivations. In the case of the black man, as Fanon tells us, a psychoanalytic interpretation of both the life experience and the “Negro myth”, that are much more complicated, are required. He made it clear that the black man is a “phobogenic object” and a “stimulus to anxiety” (Ibid.).

Fanon starts his analysis by explaining that the aggression’s outlet is the purpose of games in children’s illustrated magazines and institutions and of psychodramas in group therapies. It is a kind of children’s culture designed for white families and children in white societies, neglecting the black child’s psyche. In these magazines, that are devoured by local

children, the wolf, the evil, the devil, the evil spirit, the bad man, the savage are always symbolized by Negroes or Indians. The outcomes of these readings as Fanon suggests, are disastrous on the psychology and the subjectivity of the black boy who is going to identify with and adopts the white man's attitude against himself. The black child unconsciously identifies with the hero and sympathizes with the white figure against the black one, starting the self-hatred process. In this regard, Fanon states that:

Little by little, one can observe in the young Antillean the formation and crystallization of an attitude and a way of thinking and seeing that are essentially white...the negro makes himself inferior. But the truth is that he is made inferior...the Antillean has therefore to choose between his family and European society; in other words, the individual who climbs up into society-white and civilized-tends to reject his family-black and savage-on the plane of imagination (Ibid: 146).

Consequently, once adult, his subjectivity would become paradoxical and would be caught into a psychological dilemma. He is black but hates his race and loves the white one that has conditioned him to adopt such behaviour. His consciousness helped him to recognize the unreality of these inculcated beliefs that he adopted with reference to the subjective attitude of the white man. Thus, his apprenticeship starts and reality becomes extremely resistant because the Negro is unaware of the solidly established myth about his blackness that will oppress him as soon as he encounters the white man for the first time.

Another important aspect of Fanon's study which is related to black family romances is the black's sexuality. For him, if one wants to understand the racial situation psychoanalytically, as experienced by individual consciousness, considerable importance should be given to sexual phenomena (Ibid: 160). After comparing the place of the Jew and the Negro in the white society, and how they represent a menace for the white man, he concludes that, "when it is a question of the Jew, the problem is clear: He is suspect because he wants to own the wealth or to take over the positions of power. But the Negro is fixated at the genital; or at any rate he had been fixated there." (Ibid: 165). Furthermore, he explains that it is in his corporeality that the Negro is attacked and lynched. His "mystified" sexual potency creates fear and anguish in the white man's psyche because he is convinced that,

The Negro is a beast; if it is not the length of the penis, then it is the sexual potency that impresses him. Face to face with this man who is 'different from himself,' he needs to defend himself. In other words, to personify the other. The other will become the mainstay of his preoccupations and his desires. (Ibid: 170).

In fact, this reality is shocking for both the white and the black man. As Baldwin puts it in his essay, there is a price of the ticket to pay for being black and there is also another one to pay for being white (1985: 19). This price is dictated by what Fanon calls "cultural imposition" that inculcates both the white and the black child to despise the Negro for his skin colour, the symbol of all that is frightening, dark and evil starting from childhood. This "cultural imposition" worked out the psyche of the black child to the extent of espousing white beliefs about blacks creating his personal dilemma and self-hate as she / he grew up.

Fanon studied Hegel's concept of recognition in the case of the black man. Nevertheless, his representation of the slave differs from Hegel's. He explains that the role which labour performs for the servant in the Hegelian dialectic does not apply to the historical experience of the blacks in the United States of America or in the colonial context of the French Negroes. Regarding this different situation Fanon writes what follows, "the slave here is in no way identifiable with the slave who losses himself in the object and finds in his work the source of his liberation". The Negro, Fanon argues, "wants to be like the master; therefore he is less independent than the Hegelian slave. In Hegel the slave turns away from the master and turns towards the object. Here the slave turns towards the master and abandons the object" (1952: 220-221). Furthermore, the Hegelian dialectic of recognition in the case of the black man assumes the perverted form of the quest and the conquest of the white woman. Following Fanon's argument, our three authors displace the Hegelian dialectic of the master and the slave in their relations with white partners as this study will try to show.

Before Fanon, a Harlem Renaissance black writer Langston Hughes spoke about the complex of the black pertaining to the middle-class family who suffered as the colonized by interiorizing self-hatred and great discontent with all that was related to his race. Hughes calls

the barrier of hatred that stands between the black and his race “the racial mountain”. He included it in a seminal article entitled “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (1926), written during the Harlem Renaissance, a long time before Fanon’s *Black Skin White Masks* (1952). Hughes’s article is based on the analysis of a young black poet’s expressed wish: “I want to be a poet-not a Negro poet”. Hughes interprets it as “I would like to be white”, which is a desire of running away spiritually from his race towards whiteness because he is afraid to be himself (1999: 955). According to Hughes, his answer, which is full of self-hatred, is due to the background in which he had been brought up. His family is a respectable and comfortable black middle class, one “who read white papers and magazines, the mother often says ‘don’t be like niggers’ when the children are bad. A frequent phrase from the father is, ‘look how well a white man does things’” (Ibid: 955). Thus, the child unconsciously interiorizes the word “white” as the symbol of all the virtues. It holds for the black children white beauty, white morality and white money. “The whisper ‘I want to be white’, run silently through their minds”, Hughes writes (Ibid: 955). This black child was not taught to see and to love his black race, and so grew up with the complex of hating his race and passionately loving the white race aping it in all its dimensions. These wishes would be transferred into his creative writings reproducing and reflecting Nordic styles and manners (Ibid).

Family romances are projected into the critical reading of texts by Harold Bloom. The latter, borrowing Freud’s concept, believes that the contest between the precursors who stand for the original intertextual authority and their successors is a murderous contest regulated by an Oedipus *agon* and love-hate impulses of the literary romances. For him, intertextuality is a family archive and a heroic battlefield of poetic tradition between the sublime poet / father and his successors (Bloom, 1997:11). He considers that the history of Western literature since the Renaissance is “the history of anxiety and *self-saving* caricature, of distortion, of perverse willful revisionism without which modern poetry as such could not exist” (Ibid: 30).

His theory of influence is based on six revisionary ratios. The first is *Clinamen*, a corrective movement in a poet's own poem, which implies that the precursor poem went accurately up to a certain point, but then should have swerved, precisely in the direction that the new poem moves. The second one is *Tessera* in which a poet antithetically "completes" his precursor, by reading the parent-poem as to retain its terms but to mean them in another sense, as though the precursor had failed to go far enough. The third one is *Kenosis* that acts as a mechanism of defense against repetition compulsions, and in which the later poet, seems to humble himself as though he were ceasing to be a poet. The fourth is *Daemonization* that Bloom borrows from Neoplatonism. It is a movement towards a personalized Counter-Sublime, in reaction to the precursor's Sublime. The fifth is called *Askesis*, or a movement of self-purgation which intends the attainment of a state of solitude. The sixth one is *Apophrades*, or the return of the dead. Bloom takes the word from the Athenian dismal or unlucky days upon which the dead returned to reinhabit the houses in which they had lived. The later poet, in his own final phase, already burdened by an imaginative solitude, holds his own poem so open again to the precursor's work flooded by apprenticeship, before his strength began to assert itself in the revisionary ratios.

These revisionary ratios are intended to explain the romantic and the dialectic between loving and hating ties belated writers have with their precursors. This research attempt at analyzing the way Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones experience this dialogue with both white and black writers. It will be demonstrated that the three authors feel indebted to the Western literary tradition in which they are taught to become writers, but at the same time they are rejected by this same tradition because of their African origins. In their dialogue with the self, they project their ideas about racial experience as they have lived it themselves. Both their fictional and nonfictional works are sites for the discussion of racial and universal issues and are also public forums for the dialectic of love and hate that nourishes the debate within the self and with the other.

Alongside Bloom's psychopoetic theory used in this research we have also borrowed the notion of "dialogism" as coined by Bakhtin which is a point of departure for Kristeva's intertextuality. Thus, basing her concept on Bakhtin's dialogism Kristeva writes in *The Bounded Text* (1980) that intertextuality emphasizes the importance of prior texts since authors do not create from their original minds but borrow from preceding texts. She insists on the fact that the autonomy of texts is a misleading idea, and that work has meaning only because it is related to other previous ones. She states that, "a text is a permutation of texts, and intertextuality is the space of a given text in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize (counteract) one another" (Kristeva, 1980:36). Before her, Bakhtin asserts that the idea does not live in one person's individual consciousness, if it remains there only, it degenerates and dies. He adds that the idea begins to live and develop when it enters into a dialogic relationship with other ideas (Bakhtin, 1984: 88). Thus, ideas and texts collide creating discursive arenas for the battles of authors as explained in Bakhtin's types of discourses. These discourses, as he says, are divided into three types: direct discourse, objectified discourse (that of a represented person), and the double-voiced discourse which is relevant to our analysis. The latter kind includes stylization (coexistence of discourses without collision), Parody (battle between two voices), and hidden polemics in which a polemical blow is struck at the other's discourse on the same theme (Ibid: 199).

As Bakhtin explains, stylization happens when the author's thought penetrates someone else's discourse and does not collide with it but follows in the same direction making it a conventional one (1984: 193). While overt polemic is directed at another's discourse, which it refutes, as if it addresses its own referential object, in the hidden polemic, discourse is directed towards an ordinary referential object, naming it, portraying it and expressing it. It is indirectly striking a blow at the other's discourse, clashing with it, as it were, within the object itself. As a result, Bakhtin says that hidden polemic is double-voiced since the other person's discourse begins to influence authorial discourse from within (Ibid: 196).

Some critics, like Margaret A. Rose (1993) affirm that Bakhtin might have read and shared some of Freud's views about parody. This is because Freud defines it as "the bringing low of something exalted in another way by destroying the unity that exists between people's characters, speeches and actions as we know them, by replacing the exalted figure of their utterances by low ones" (Rose, M., A., 1993: 174-5). This definition is close to Bakhtin's who clarifies that parody introduces into someone else's discourse a semantic intention that is directly opposed to the original one. He goes on to say that, the second voice, once having made its home in the other's discourse, clashes hostilely with its primordial host and forces him to serve directly opposing aims. Thus, the discourse he carries on becomes an arena of battle between two voices. Bakhtin also refers to parody's targets that are other person's style as a style, another's socially typical or individually characterological manner of seeing, thinking, and speaking, superficial verbal forms, or the very deepest principles governing another's discourse (Ibid: 193-4).

Overall, following these theories, the main argument of this research turns around the issue of influence in the nonfictional and the fictional works of Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones / Baraka, three key cultural figures of the African American Renaissance. In spite of their belonging to the African American tradition, their works show a highly linguistic, cultural and aesthetic hybridity. The three authors borrow their erotic / love discourses from Plato and Ovid and other white and black predecessors despite Jones's / Baraka's literary proclamation that rejects the Western literary models. Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones borrow their style from white literary ancestors while holding a hidden or open polemical relationship with their black relatives.

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PART ONE

The Dialectics of Racial Love and Hatred in Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's Selected Non-fictional Works

In this part of our research we will try to show that Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's non-fictional works are Socratic dialogues. Their works that contain autobiographies, semi-autobiography and essays constitute dialogues with the self. They are "a mind to mind" dialectics in quest for the truth concerning their subjectivity as related to racial experience in America. It is also linked to their status as African American authors who claim their share in the Western literary tradition, defending their contribution to the black aesthetics. More precisely, in the first chapter, we will attempt to demonstrate that Hansberry's *To Be Young Gifted and Black: Lorraine Hansberry in Her Own Words* (1969), and her other essays, Baldwin's collection of essays *The Fire Next Time* (1963), and Jones's *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones / Amiri Baraka* (1984) are steeped in the Platonic and Ovidian models of the European Renaissance.

The second chapter deals with the themes of metamorphosis and love in the nonfictional works of the three writers. These contents, as we shall argue, are inspired by Plato's dialogues of love on the one hand and by Ovid's notions of love, metamorphoses and aestheticism on the other hand. Our three writers' deployment of Renaissance Platonism and Ovidianism demonstrate, in the first place, their belonging to the Western literary tradition. However, the analysis will attempt to show that the manner of using these two paradigms differs according to their individual intentions.

The third chapter of this part is an analysis of the racial love-hate dialectics as expressed in Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's non-fictional works. This dialectic is developed in order to understand their subjectivity and quest for identity as African American authors in post-World War II America. To comprehend it, we will explore the dialogue of love and hate

within the black family according to Freud's essay "Family Romances", and Fanon's theory as explained in his book *Black Skin White Masks*.

CHAPTER TWO

Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's Selected Nonfictional Works as Socratic Dialogues

Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's nonfictional selected works are Socratic dialogues that are written in memoir type and conversations. The characteristics of the Platonic dialogues are predominant in Hansberry's semi-autobiography entitled *To be Young*, in Baldwin's essays *The Fire Next Time* and in Jones's *Autobiography of LeRoi Jones / Amiri Baraka*, his collection of essays *Home: Social Essays*.

The Socratic dialogue, as Bakhtin defines it, is a serio-comical genre that has its basis in the folk-carnivalistic tradition. It is the first artistic prose-model in the development of Western literature (1981: 24). The most important aspects of these dialogues are: 1) the dialogic nature of truth and human thought about truth, 2) Syncrisis and anacrisis, 3) the dialogue's heroes are ideologists seeking and testing truth, 4) the dialogue on the threshold, and 5) the idea discussed in the dialogue is organically combined with its carrier.

Hansberry's Nonfiction as a Socratic Dialogue

Hansberry's semi-autobiography is a multi-styled literary form that combines personal reflections, autobiographical notes, poems, drawings, letters, and extract from her plays. We will try to concentrate our investigation on her personal reflections and autobiographical notes and letters. According to Bakhtin, autobiographies, like the essays are serious genres that date back to Greek times. They are divided into two types: Platonic and rhetorical ones. The latter forms are based on "encomium", the civic funeral and memorial speech that had replaced the ancient lament "tremos". These forms, Bakhtin says are completely determined by events related to civic and political acts, or real human beings giving a public account of themselves laying bare their real-life chronotope in public square where the individual is visible and entirely public (Bakhtin, 1981: 131).

As for the Platonic types they find expression in Plato's *Apology* and *The Phaedo* that involve an individual's self-consciousness. Bakhtin argues that at their heart lie the chronotope of the life course of one seeking true knowledge. The life of the truth's seeker is divided into phases passing from self-confident ignorance, through self-critical skepticism, to self-knowledge and ultimately to authentic knowing. This Platonic scheme shows a moment of crisis and rebirth in the seeker's path which is clearly revealed when contrasted with an analogous scheme: the course of the soul's ascent towards a perception of the forms (*The Symposium* and *The Phaedrus*), reinforcing kinship with conversion stories (Bakhtin, 1981: 130-32).

Hansberry's semi-autobiography appears as borrowing from both the Platonic and the rhetorical type since these traits are easily depicted in her work that uses the form of a Socratic dialogue and that of a rhetorical speech at the same time. She participates in public life through her working as a journalist in *Freedom* magazine writing articles, making street corner speeches in Harlem, and talks to her people about everything in the street or the public squares (TBY, 1969: 77).

In his essay "*Sweet Lorraine*" that opens the semi-autobiographical book entitled *To Be Young* (1969), Baldwin explains that Hansberry is his best friend. They used to share, debate and discuss many matters related to their sexual and racial alienation in a climate where being black, gay or lesbian is really problematic and even threatening (1969: ix). She is a black woman playwright, and what is special about her is that she had been the youngest American dramatist, the fifth woman, and the only Negro to win the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for the best play of the year (1959). Her play has since been produced and published in some thirty countries; her film adaptation of the play was nominated by the New York Film Critics for Best Motion Picture and Screenplay, and received the Cannes Film Festival Award (TBY, 1969).

The dialogic nature of both truth and the human thinking about truth has been raised at the beginning of Hansberry's essay "Chicago: Southside Summers". In her inner dialogue / quarrel with the self about the amount of truth she should expose she writes what follows:

For some time now – I think since I was a child- I have been possessed of the desire to put down the stuff of my life. That is a commonplace impulse, apparently among persons of massive self-interest; sooner or later we all do it. And I am quite certain there is one quarrel: *how much of the truth to tell? How much, how much, how much!* It is brutal, in sober uncompromising moments, to reflect on the comedy of concern we all enact when it comes to our precious images! (TBY: 17; emphasis added).

Hansberry provokes truth to resolve the contradiction between the content of her private life / and the public form of the work she intends to write. As a truth-seeker for identity and subjectivity, her dialogue with her self-consciousness unfolds in matters related to her race, class and gender in a post-World War II American climate characterized by the black struggle for their Civil Rights. She turns the act of writing autobiographical essays into writing a comedy played by the writer when it concerns self-image. Then, what comes later is that she decides to follow a chronology of events starting from her birth. As she puts it, "I shall set down in these pages what shall seem to me to be the truth of my life and essences...which are to be found first of all, on the South Side of Chicago, where I was born..." (Ibid: 17). However, she accompanies the written text with her authentic birth certificate for matters of truth.

Hansberry declares in the same autobiography that her favourite game is *Truth or Consequences* of the Radio and Television shows of her childhood (TBY, 1969:35). Her quest for truth and its consequences has been of paramount importance in her writings. The process of the dialogic thinking about the truth starts with concepts directly related to race. Hansberry mentions her parents' inherited discourse she calls "vague absolutes", or truth(s) concerning their way of being black in America that she summarizes in the following passage:

That we were better than no one but infinitely superior to everyone; that we were the products of the proudest and most mistreated of the races of man; that there was nothing enormously difficult about life; that one *succeeded* as a matter of course. Life was not a struggle - it was something one *did*. One won an argument...the only sinful people in the world were dull

people. And above all, there were two things which were never to be betrayed the family and race” (Ibid; emphasis original).

This discourse is full of paradoxes and recalls the Socratic ambivalent self-praise in which Socrates affirm, “I am wise than everyone, because I know that I know nothing” (Cf. Bakhtin, 1981: 24). The Hansberrys are better than no one, yet they are superior to everyone a statement which is dialogic and provokes thinking about the situation of this middle class family as an exception. Unlike the majority of blacks in America, they are wealthy and seem to live the perfect American dream. Her father Carl Hansberry “was typical of a generation of Negroes who believed that ‘the American Way’ could successfully be made to work to democratize the United States” (Ibid: 20). Yet, Hansberry questions this way of thinking and loudly projects her ideas when she write in a bitter and an ironic mode that this truth is false, an illusion that killed her father after seeing that all his sacrificial efforts, “the Negroes of Chicago were as ghetto-locked as ever” (Ibid. 21).

The second absolute truth in this family register is not to betray the race and the family, and for while the father shows sympathy to his race he has sacrificed his family in the process. Hansberry’s father the black successful businessman, has always felt guilty for his opulence in front of the misery of his race. Thus, he has engaged a struggle against the state of Chicago for equal housing, in a well-known case *Hansberry vs Lee* by spending his money in the courts of justice and exposing his family to the great danger of resisting the white neighborhood’s hostilities, intended to clean their surroundings away of black people’s presence. His efforts were in vain, and his failure and despair caused his exile and ultimate death. To show compassion for his race, he schooled his children in the ghetto. The rationality of the father’s decision is questioned by the daughter who contests his decisions after witnessing their disastrous consequences. She suffered from being a “rich” hated outsider among the poor kids of the ghetto who used to “beat her up” physically, while mentally she was unable “to add, subtract or multiply with ease ” (Ibid: 36). This situation created a kind of a double consciousness, a self in constant conversation.

Hansberry has often been exposed to the political dialogues that dealt with the issues related to the black race. These dialogues that have been animated by her father and great black figures like W.E.B. Dubois, Langston Hughes among others at home often nourished her political consciousness. Furthermore, she supplemented these talks by extensive readings in her father's rich library among which Dubois's *The Souls of Black Folks* (1930). This book is the classic that rejects Booker T. Washington's theory that blacks should serve whites by learning trade rather than history or philosophy (Cf. Cheney; 1984: 6-10). She is black, her grandparents were slaves in the Southern plantations and the dialogic nature of truth concerning her race and origins is important in standing against the official monologism and stereotypes surrounding her race in America. In her dialogic inner discourse, she exposes all the discourses about her origins. She tries to find the most correct one among the talks she hears, the writings she reads and her own feeling of self-hatred that resulted from her involvement with the children of the ghetto.

At Wisconsin University, Hansberry, like a platonic lover, moves from many subjects of study varying from archeology, literature, philosophy and design trying to find her true vocation. Nevertheless, Wisconsin turned out to be an academic disappointment from the start when she understood that white universities could not afford dormitory places for black students. So, she set for a new form of knowledge outside the academy. The knowledge that would change her naïve self-confidence by testing the truth received from the individuals. She tried out a new quest among her people, collectively searching for truth in the process of their dialogic interaction. This collectivity was to be found in New York within the staff of *Freedom* magazine, having Paul Robson as publisher, and attracted brilliant minds like W.E.B Dubois, Alice Childress and Charles White among others (Cheney, 1984).

As a truth seeker, Hansberry has exchanged letters with friends and readers of her works. This exchange constitutes a battlefield for her dialogic interaction with her

consciousness and the rejoinders of other addressees concerning racial and political issues of her time. Her semi-autobiography is permeated by these letters that inform about her personal ideas. The letter as a form of dialogue, Bakhtin includes it in the variety of *Ich-Erzählung* (I-narrative), featured by what he calls “hidden dialogicality” (Bakhtin, 1984:197). He writes that it permits broad discursive possibilities, characterized by an acute awareness of the interlocutor, the addressee to whom it is directed, and that like a response in a dialogue, the letter is addressed to a specific person, by taking into consideration the other’s possible reply. (Ibid: 205-6).

Hansberry’s responses and self-utterances are pervaded by an intense sensitivity towards the anticipated words of the others about her and their reactions to her words. In a letter addressed to the editor of the *New York Times* (April 23rd, 1964), she contested the ready-made racial truth of the black people who attacked her father (the bourgeois black businessman). He was assaulted for his way of fighting white supremacy in America through the court of justice, by joining forces with the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People) attorneys against the Restrictive Covenants in Chicago’s ghettos. These restrictive covenants are the laws agreed among land owners and that prohibit the purchase, the lease or occupation of their premises by black people in Chicago. The victory of her father was inscribed in the American lawbooks, but practically, blacks still lived locked in their ghettos. She writes in the same letter that “my memories of this ‘correct’ way of fighting white supremacy in America include being spat at, cursed and pummeled in the daily trek to and from school” (TBY: 21; emphasis added). Even so, despite her celebration of her father’s struggle she still questions the pacific way of the struggle that killed her disappointed father in his exile, and to whom the satisfied friends allude to, whenever they want to deride the more drastic means of struggle. She also anticipated the radicals’ reply to her words by explaining that all means should be used if necessary. She expanded her views about the issue as follows:

That is the reality that I am faced with when I now read some Negroes my own age and younger say that we must lie down in the street, tie up traffic, do whatever we can—take the hills with guns if necessary- and fight back. Fatuous people remark these days on our ‘bitterness’. Why of course we are bitter? (Ibid.)

The last question that Hansberry’s dialogic thinking about truth raises is “why of course we are bitter?” The question is not directly answered but the reader (s) is invited to think about the multiple propositions inherent in Langston Hughes’s poem, which in its turn, starts with a new question: “what happens to a dream deferred?” (Ibid.), debating a racial content that has provoked the merging of fiction and nonfiction together. This process of thinking about truth raises questions instead of proposing ready-made answers because, as Bakhtin says, truth is born between people collectively in the process of their dialogic interaction (Cf. Bakhtin, 1984: 109).

Syncrisis and anacrisis are two basic devices of the Socratic dialogue that are embodied in Hansberry’s nonfictional writings. Syncrisis is the juxtaposition of different points of view on a specific object, while anacrisis is the means used to provoke the words of an interlocutor forcing him to express his personal opinions. According to Bakhtin, syncrisis and anacrisis, having their origin in the notion of the dialogic nature of truth, dialogize thought; they carry it to the open, turn it into a rejoinder, and attach it to dialogic intercourse among people (1984: 111).

Hansberry has used these elements in her dialogues concerning her plays and her political views to seek truth about her identity as a black woman in post-World War II America. As a black middle class American woman becoming herself, she came through a dialogic battle that opposed her inner self and the different consciousness(s) she acquired all along her young life. These different facets of her personality were developed either through her intellectual quest or during the dialogues with other black and white intellectuals that provoke, contest and create new thoughts.

Hansberry's anacrisis appears in her forcing the people of her race to unveil their deep preconceived thoughts concerning the black middle class people like her. Her own points of view concerning her race, which are often contradictory, create a continual questioning. She is from the middle class, but she is discontented because having integrated the people of the ghetto helped her to understand and justify their hatred for her black bourgeois status of a renegade. As she tells us, "swathed in white she was sent to school where the children of the ghetto had promptly set upon her with fist and inkwell, and ever since she had been antagonistic to the symbols of affluence" (TBY: 37).

In her essay entitled "The Scars of the Ghetto", she speaks of the educational system in the ghetto and the bad conditions in which black children are supposed to learn. She writes, "I am, for instance, the product of a Jim Crow grade school system. One result of that fact is that to this day I cannot count properly" (1965: 2), adding that the building in which the children are locked has nothing to do with the well-furnished school intended for white children. As she says, "equipment, books, actual building space are all cut back on when it comes to the ghetto child... After all, that's why the building was built, that's why the ghetto itself was and is maintained, not to give education but to withhold as much as possible" (1964: 2). She contests the idea that the white authorities work to save the children of the ghetto. Instead she denounces their hypocrisy and their diabolic objective of keeping them ignorant and locked in the ghetto, "cheated out of one's birthrights", a truth that justifies "black hatefulness of the oppressive system under which they live" (Ibid: 3).

Another issue that comes to her mind concerns her race and the "myth" stipulating that the black struggle is as recent as the fifties. She asserts that "an old, old struggle" (Ibid). She juxtaposes this recent struggle for Civil Rights with that of her ancestors who were forced to come from Africa to America, and reduced to slaves in the American Southern plantations where they "daily did battle by sabotage, work stoppage, acts of violence against those who

enslaved [them], and of course, most telling of all, by running away by the thousands from slavery” (Ibid). She lives in the North but she has ancestors from the South who suffered from slavery. Slavery is a legacy of her family since her grandmother had lived it. She writes with heavy irony that her grandmother “was born in slavery and had memories of it and they didn’t sound anything like *Gone with the Wind...*” (TBY: 25).

Anacrisis appears in Hansberry’s attempts to force white authorities to say the truth about what she calls “Civil Rights Game” (1965: 4). She uses words to provoke and force them to say their own words and opinions. Typical of this verbal provocation is the following quotation:

As we all know, there is something which we might call the ‘civil rights game’ going on in this country, and it is being played right now in Washington. It is a game in which individuals, and indeed whole classes of individuals, who are in every way imaginable committed to the perpetuation of the oppression of Negroes, pretend for a whole variety of fashionable reasons that they are not. (Ibid.).

These words are intended to unlock the game of the players and their co-players who under the mask of the Civil Rights leaders act against any improvement in the status of the black people, and who instead “debate with one another on the best methods of stalling Negro demands for equality while appearing to be labouring on behalf of Negro equality” (Ibid.). Hansberry contests the efforts of these deceiving leaders by provoking words such as “game-players, organization, parochialism, illusion...” (Ibid.). She affirms that the best thing is to reveal the truth about the players’ true sentiments concerning the black race. This turns into a possibility only if blacks stand together and oppose this oppression as one man. To concretize this pressure, Hansberry argues that black people need to be led by “a new and presently developing young Negro leadership”, infused with “most advanced ideas abroad in the world, a leadership which will have had exposure to the great ideas and movements of our time” (Ibid.).

Hansberry's syncrisis and anacrisis of her essay permit her to share a certain truth with her people about the most adequate means of struggle for their rights. For her, the struggle should start by being honest and telling the truth as regards the real objectives of the black leaders who pretend to work and represent their brothers when in fact they work for their personal interests. She even makes a significant reference to the evolutionary ideas of the liberation movements outside America, in the African countries for instance, and obliges her people to awake from their illusions to the twentieth century historical reality.

The third element of the Socratic dialogue stipulates that its heroes, like Socrates, are ideologists (lovers of discourse, *Phaedo*: 2) seeking and testing truth. Throughout her writings, Hansberry seeks truth by inciting her readers to participate in the ideological events she initiates in her public speeches. She exposes her system of beliefs which is often related to the racial and political issues of the day. In one of her interviews she explains that the material and even the ideology she used in her drama is acquired through the process of conversation with true people. She adds that her "characters give back something to her, they argue with her, make her angry and ask her to prove the point that their lives and ideas are true" (TBY: 185).

The principal objective of her writings is to participate, to be with others to share with them her quest for truth. she writes, "I am audacious enough to think of myself as an artist, that there is both joy and illumination and communion between people to be achieved through dissection of personality...I want to reach a little closer to the world, which is to say people" (Ibid: 4). She refuses to accept religion as something that can help her people to advance in their life. She believes that it is the human mind and reason that can exalt human beings. So, to the question, "don't you believe in a kind of increase in moral and philosophical strength by the use of reason?" she answers, "Oh, yes. Yes. I don't think a time will ever come when we will dismiss the human spirit. I don't think there is any contradiction: we don't need

mysticism to exalt man. Man exalts himself by his achievements...and his power to rationalize, his power to reason!”(Ibid: 186). This statement recalls Socrates in Plato’s *Euthyphro* who is accused of corrupting young men by inventing new gods that defy mysticism through reason. Socrates explains to Euthyphro that a young man called Meletus “brings a wonderful accusation against me, which at first hearing excites surprise: he says that I am a poet or maker of gods, and that I invent new gods and deny the existence of old ones” (*Euthyphro*: 1). Hansberry clearly affirms that the religion of her ancestors is not able to bring out change into their miserable situation but it is only a kind “of crutches” that are no longer needed when one can walk alone. She argues that even religion is the fruit of “the inventiveness of the human mind and spirit: whenever life doesn’t seem to give an answer, we create one, and it gives us strength” (TBY: 185). Her major idea about the human mind is based on a complete reliance on rationalism explaining that “nothing new has happened since rationalism burst forth with the Renaissance and the subsequent development in rational thoughts” (Ibid). She believes that reverting back to mysticism happens only when the mind is confronted with a new situation, something not yet comprehensible and known for him.

As an ideologist, Hansberry addresses her interlocutor with much assurance whatever his / her rank, social or political status. In a White House meeting with the Attorney General of the United States Robert Kennedy, Hansberry boldly criticized his “impatience” with the CORE (Congress of Racial Equality)’s violent struggle for their rights. She says,

[B]ecause while there might be in that room some of the celebrated figures of whom we all know... the qualitative change in the struggle for Negro freedom was that we are not, at any of us, remotely interested in the all-insulting concept of the ‘exceptional Negro’. We are not remotely interested in any tea party at the White House. What we *are* interested in is in making perfectly clear that between the Negro intelligentsia, the Negro middle class, and the Negro this –and-that-we are *one* people and that as far as we are concerned, we are represented by the Negroes in the street of Birmingham!... (Ibid; emphasis original).

Hansberry’s “juncture of feeling free” (Ibid.), that pushed her to stand and go beyond the confined frame of a black intellectual raises her to the status of a hero- ideologist who draws the other interlocutors into dialogue turning them into ideologist against their will (Bakhtin,

1984: 111). She intends, as explained in her intervention, to contest the preconceived opinion that whites have about the “exceptional Negro”, and seeks to reestablish truth concerning the unity of the black people and their determination to struggle that should encompass not only blacks of all social categories but even white Americans.

The fourth element of the Socratic dialogue that is inherent in the writings of Hansberry is what Bakhtin calls “the dialogue on the threshold”. It is the summing up and confession of a man directly determined by the situation of impending death for instance. This moment of crisis creates an extraordinary situation, forcing a person to reveal the deepest layers of his personality and thought (1984, Ibid). Four major critical events affected Hansberry’s life by helping her to free herself from the confines of the black middle class standards to voice her own opinions.

The first event is linked to an incident in her early life. It is narrated in her semi-autobiography under the title of “White Fur in the Middle of the Depression”. Hansberry’s mother obliged her to go to kindergarten in the ghetto of Chicago wearing a white fur that was her Christmas present. As a child, Hansberry disliked it because it made her resemble one of “the enormous stupid rabbits in her silly coloring books, she hated...and several tears, fat and lush, rose at once and spilled down her cheeks” (TBY: 37). Hansberry’s tragedy did not stop at that stage because her mother obliged her to go to school wearing this fur when ghetto children scarcely found something to eat. These latter, “had promptly set upon her with fist and inkwell, the kids beat me up” (Ibid: 36-7). As a result of this childhood episode, Hansberry started to loath her rich origins stating that, “ever since then she had been antagonistic to the symbols of affluence, and I think it was from that moment I became –a rebel...” (Ibid). Her opinion concerning rich black people started to be formulated and her friends had been chosen with intense fascination from among her assailants (Ibid).

The second critical moment relates to a racist incident when their house had been attacked by a white mob to push them to depart from an all-white “hellishly hostile neighborhood”. Her father fought in the court of New York to win the possibility for blacks to have houses in places kept for whites only. It happened when she was eight years old. One of the missiles thrown by the howling mobs almost took her life (TBY: 20-1). This incident is important for her since it will be developed in her play *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959). Hansberry understood the racial situation of her people and constituted an opinion about the reality of the American racist system at an early age.

The third event, which is a turning point for the self, is related to her decision to stop her studies at the University of Wisconsin in 1948 to start working for *Freedom* magazine after settling in New York. This experience raised and matured Hansberry’s political consciousness by involving her with the plights of the New Yorkers, Southern blacks, Kenyans, Ghanaians, and American Soldiers in the Korean Conflict (1950-53) (Cheney, A., 1986: 14). She wrote many articles dealing with Africa, women, social issues of New York, and several reviews. This turned her into a target to Joseph McCarthy’s investigation of American artists and political activists (Ibid: 16). After three years as a member in *Freedom* magazine, Hansberry married Robert Nemiroff and devoted her time to writing plays. She knew great fame with her play *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) that permitted her to speak publicly and freely about her political concerns. Indeed it is a critical moment because of her political commitment that exposed her to dangerous situations. Moreover, she is no longer protected by her own family’s affluence since she had to work as a journalist to survive.

The fourth moment of crisis that confronted Hansberry with death is her duodenum cancer diagnosed on May 24th, 1963. It is the illness that condemned her to death at the age of thirty one. She died in 1965. But before, and standing on the threshold, between death and life, having nothing to lose, Hansberry felt free to express her opinions. Like Socrates who

awaits his death sentence in Plato's dialogue *Apology*, and discusses freely the circumstance, defending himself against the charge of corrupting Athenian youths through his discussions. In the same manner, Hansberry started to confess her deepest thoughts in front of her interlocutors, like the direct confrontation she had with the Attorney General of the U.S.A John Kennedy.

Her speech entitled "A Challenge to Artists" (1963) is a contest to both the artists and the American government's policy. She affirms that the role of an artist is not confined to the creative arena but includes political concerns as well. She starts her address by making a parallel between art / poetics and real politics in a "moment of truth" as she calls her intervention. It is simple to pour opinions in plays, assigning one's own philosophy to a created character, but can the artist perform the character's role in real life?. She starts by asking the question of "where are our artists in the contemporary struggle?" She answers by saying that, "well, I am afraid that they are primarily where the ruling powers have always wished the artist to be and to stay: in their studios. They are consumed, in the main, with what they consider to be larger issues –such as 'the meaning of life' et-cetera" (Hansberry, 1963, in Smith R. Sharon L. J., 2000: 988). According to Hansberry, the cause of the artists' detachment is the years of McCarthyism, and the climate of fear in all its forms that mutilated and pushed young individuals of her generation, "to be silent, to be ignorant, to be without unsanctioned opinions, to be compliant and, above all else, obedient to all the ideas which are in fact the dregs of an age" (Ibid: 989).

Her dialogue levels an attack against the American government for being preoccupied with foreign wars against the Cubans for instance, while the country is torn apart by struggles for the Civil Rights mainly in the Southern states. She ends up her address by emphasizing on the fact that artists should speak, write and paint to denounce the government's attempt to silence them because otherwise, "the artists are indulging in a luxurious complicity- and no

other thing” (Ibid: 991). She boldly refuses war of any kind, anywhere. She thinks that it is imperative to remove from the American fabric the institutions or agencies designed to silence the artists.

The fifth element in the Socratic dialogue that can be depicted in Hansberry’s writings concerns the nature of the idea. To quote Bakhtin, it is organically combined with the image of its carrier, and the testing of the idea means the testing of its exponent at the same time. As a public icon, Hansberry represents the idea of a black middle class woman who succeeded to secure a place upon the American stage by winning an award for her play *A Raisin in the Sun*. For white people, she is an exceptional black woman, “a particular American writer” (Ibid: 988), or a “White Negro” to use Norman Mailer’s expression. However, this image creates a kind of ambivalence that usually characterizes white liberals. Like them she had gained the whites’ sympathy and at the same time defends black interests. She is from a rich black middle class, yet she affirms being close to the people in the ghettos. This situation recalls Socrates’s who wears both the popular mask of the bewildered fool and that of the wise man of the elevated sort. This combination produces the ambivalence of wise-ignorance (Bakhtin, 1981: 24).

Hansberry affirms that though she is from a black upper middle class, she is closely related to the children of the ghetto. She knows the life of the Negro working class (TBY: 37) on which her play *A Raisin in the Sun* is based. However, her ideas are tested and contested by the leaders of the Black Arts Movement of the sixties like LeRoi Jones. He attacked her theatre considering it as an integrationist one born from the values of the assimilationist black middle class (Cf. Benston, K., 1976). Furthermore, another trial of her assumptions is made by another black intellectual Harold Cruse who harshly treated her in a chapter entitled “Lorraine Hansberry”, included in his book *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (1967). Cruse writes that, “what was embarrassing about Miss Hansberry’s subsequent radical role... was

the assumption that she knew all about the Negro working class, of which she was not even remotely a member” (1967: 269). He assaults her literary tendencies, writing that, “she was in fact better conditioned to carry the leftwing literary trend to its ultimate conclusions-the ‘integrationizing’ of the Negro literary image to resemble the ethos of middle-class conformity” (Ibid).

Despite the amount of truth of this harsh trial, Hansberry made a great effort to give a voice to the black working class on the American stage. She uses her class and status as a passport to penetrate the closed doors for the black artist. It is her opportunity to speak her subjectivity as a black female writer in post-World War II. She herself recognizes the difficulty of her task as a black speaking voice due to her class belonging. Nonetheless, she has used her fame to pass her messages of racial activism through the media of the time. Hansberry envisioned *A Raisin* as the first step in the process that would test the seemingly fixed boundaries of the American political discourse in the post-World War II. But many critics read it as the contrary of what she expected. They did not anticipate the fact that her play would appear as being consistent with the conformist political atmosphere of the period (Keppel, B., 1995: 213).

Overall, Hansberry’s nonfiction shows a predilection for the Socratic dialogue. Throughout the above exploration of her writings we have attempted to demonstrate the predominance of the characteristics of the Socratic dialogue in the way she puts forward her opinions; her ideas concerning her evolution as a black intellectual woman during a critical period of the Civil Rights Movement. Experiencing the political and aesthetic change during the sixties or what is called the Black Renaissance shaped her personality and ability to think debate and analyze. Her use of the Socratic dialogue is an important step in the process of constructing and understanding the self of the black writer.

Baldwin's Essays as Socratic Dialogues

Hansberry's question "why of course we are bitter" is already asked in the letter Baldwin writes to his nephew. Like her, he uses letters to project his hidden dialogicality in his collection of essays entitled *The Fire Next Time* (1963) that sound as a Socratic dialogue. The first basic characteristic of this type of dialogues, that is the dialogic nature of truth and the human process of thinking about it, is clearly embodied in his essays. The first one is called "*My Dungeon Shook* originally published as "*A Letter to my Nephew on the One-Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation*" (1962). The second one is entitled "*Down at the Cross*" originally published as "*The Letter from a Region in My Mind*" (1962). They are both collected in *The Fire Next Time* (1963).

Many critics like Paul Woolridge (2007), and Ned Stuckey-French (2011) discussed the difficulty of strict classification of essays since unlike novels, poems or plays, which more or less have their own generic boundaries, the essay is a mixed or middle genre. Graham Good has singled out four corresponding subgenres of the essays as activity stating that the most useful classification is based on content. He distinguished four principal types: the travel essay, the moral essay, the critical essay and the autobiographical essay (Cf. Woolridge, 2007:2). The last kind may contain Baldwin's essays. Yet his essays are not confined to his life since he speaks his mind in relation to the context he lived in, which may touch to the critical and the moral as well.

The two letters / essays are dialogues that discuss the racial tensions in Baldwin's mind. In his dialogic process of thinking about the truth he invents invisible interlocutors, a principal one who is his nephew James and the white people who seem to contradict his truth in the debate intended to project his ideas loudly. Baldwin has written the letter five times, "I have begun this letter five times and torn it five times", he says (FNT: 331), as a result of his dialogic process that keeps changing. He intends to subvert the white men's regimes of truth

they want to place in the black mind. He affirms to his nephew James that he knows the reality of such discourse and its hidden objectives. The first truth he teaches his nephew is “you can only be destroyed by believing that you really are what the white world calls a *nigger*. I tell you this because I love you” (Ibid.). As a fourteen years old black boy, the day of this anniversary, the nephew is now able to understand the truth of being a black man in America. To restate Baldwin’s words, it means that he is condemned and supposed to live and perish in a ghetto just because he is black. Thus, his whole life is traced as he writes in the essay:

The limits of your ambitions were, thus, expected to be set forever. You were born into a society which spelled out with brutal clarity, and in as many ways as possible, that you were a worthless human being. You were not expected to aspire to excellence: you were expected to make peace with mediocrity. Wherever you have turned, James in your short time on this earth, you have been told where you could go and what you could do (and how you could do it) and how you could live and whom you could marry (FNT: 335).

Baldwin anticipates the answer of the white men (the innocents) whom he has imagined refuting his words and labelling him with great bitterness, hearing their chorus in his mind crying, “No! This is not true! How bitter you are! [...]You exaggerate” (Ibid. 334-5), eavesdropping the words the others say about him. Baldwin seeks truth by counterpoising the official discourse about blacks and deflating the stereotypes of his nephew and his generation about themselves.

Another addressed invisible interlocutor by Baldwin is the white people against whom he speaks for the sake of refuting their ready-made truth about blacks. This received idea becomes part of their own identity. They are considered as a kind of wise-ignorant people, who refuse to see the reality out of fear of change. However, they believe in such truth because it is convenient for them and they don’t want to change anything for the black people. They are afraid to lose their superiority because of their inhumanity. Paradoxically, Baldwin shows compassion for the white people whom he asserts “have no hope”, and “still trapped in a history which they do not understand, and until they understand it, they cannot be released

from it” (Ibid. 336). The black man has always been a fixed idea in the white mind. He is defined in a ready-made truth by the whites’ naïve self-confidence of possessing the *truth* that the black is inferior to the white. Thus, any attempt to destroy this truth will shake the bases of their identity as whites in America.

Like a Delphic oracle, Baldwin echoes the prophecy inscribed and read by Socrates, “to know thyself”. This time it is addressed to his nephew. He urges him to “take no one’s word for anything, including mine-but trust your experience. *Know whence you came*. If you know whence you came, there is no limit to where you can go” (Ibid. 335; emphasis added). Beforehand, Baldwin starts his dialogue by showing to his interlocutors that he knows them particularly. The family of the black boy James has been reviewed from the grandfather to the father to reach “the storm that rages about [his] youthful head” (Ibid). He prepares the ground for the “terrible truth” that lie behind the two words “*acceptance and integration*”. As said by Baldwin, “it is that you must accept them. And I mean that very seriously. You must accept them and accept them with love” (Ibid.). This request is Platonic in a sense that it needs great wisdom to control one’s own feelings. It also reflects his Platonic maturity as a political orator. Nevertheless, it sounds almost utopian for laymen because this position requires virtue and courage from black people to accept and to love the whites who debased them all their life. After all, it echoes the Christian religious love that calls for loving and accepting the enemy because he is a brother. Baldwin ends his letter with his personal definition of integration, “and if the word integration means anything, this is what it means: that we, with love, shall force our brothers to see themselves as they are, to cease from fleeing from reality and begin to change it. For this is your home my friend, do not be driven out of it” (Ibid. 336).

Syncrisis and anacrisis are also reflected in Baldwin’s writings. His “Down at the Cross: A Letter from a Region in my Mind” raises important issues such as racial love and hate, slavery and freedom, religion and revolution, as lived by the Americans in general and by the

blacks in particular. As a truth-seeker, and a thought-provoker, Baldwin has been described by critics like Nick Aaron Ford as the writer whose “major thrust is not to impart abstract or concrete knowledge, but to provoke human thought and announce eternal truths intended to elevate the consciousness of the reader from animal passion to spiritual or philosophical contemplation” (qtd. in O’Daniel, 1977: 85). As an essayist, Baldwin, Hughes argues, is “thought provoking, tantalizing, irritating, abusing and amusing” (qtd. in Kinnamon, 1974: 9). These evaluations are a testimony of Baldwin’s use of the Platonic dialogues’ basic elements of syncrisis and anacrisis to provoke, test and contest truth as related to love, hate and racial issues, and to discuss the importance of religion (Islam / Christianity) in quest of the black American self.

His second letter is set as a dialogue with imaginary interlocutors with whom he argues and discusses the above mentioned issues. Bakhtin explains that in a letter characterized by its hidden dialogicality, the second speaker of the imagined dialogue is present invisibly. His words are not here, but deep traces left by these words have a determining influence on all the present and visible words of the first speaker. Further, he clarifies that it is a conversation, although only one person is speaking, for each present uttered word responds and reacts with its every fiber to the invisible speaker, points to something outside itself, beyond its own limits, to the unspoken words of another person (Bakhtin, 1984: 197). Baldwin provokes thoughts, argues with the American institutions starting with the white church. Contrary to the terror and fear that becomes synonymous of the word ‘religion’, the young Baldwin, out of ignorance and naivety, used to assign ‘safety’ to it. Therefore, and to save himself from the dangers and the sins of Harlem and from his tormented rapidly metamorphosing self, he escapes into the church, seeking comfort, and above all, truth about himself. In this respect he writes: “I had no idea what my voice or what my mind or my body was likely to do next. [This] caused me to consider myself one of the most deprived people on earth” (FNT: 338).

Thus, the contradictory views Baldwin juxtaposes start with his experience in the church, his “gimmick”. His escape to the church is the only possibility to flee evil and hatred in quest of love as a path to safety and redemption. As a truth seeker he attempts to find answers to the questions that had tormented his mind since childhood like, “if God loved all His children, why were we, the blacks, cast down so far? Why?” (Ibid: 344). There is no clear answer to his cogitation and though Baldwin finds his career in the church “exciting”, he realizes that he could not remain in the church “merely as another worshiper”, after discovering that “there was no love in the church. It was a mask for hatred and self-hatred and despair. The transfiguring power of the Holy Ghost ended when the service ended, and salvation stopped at the church door” (Ibid: 348-9).

Another opposing opinion that comes as a dialectical interface to Christianity that Baldwin dissects in his essay is Islam as seen by the Nation of Islam led by Elijah Muhammed. As a transition, he ironically opposes the two Gods by saying that, “God had come a long way from the desert- but then so had Allah, though in a very different direction”. He adds that, “God, going north, and raising in the wings of power, had become white, and Allah, out of power, and on the dark side of Heaven, had become, for all practical purposes, anyway- black” (Ibid: 352). He confronts the Black Muslims’ doctrine and myths that are like the white ones, but working for the political and economic power of black people as separate from whites, meaning simply racism in reverse.

Baldwin’s banquet with Elijah Muhammad, as he describes it, starts as a dream, the house inspires a peacefulness that comes “from ones’ early childhood”. Yet, he feels a great fear supplied by an inner tension between love and power, between pain and rage in front of a royal presence who expects something that Baldwin cannot give (Ibid: 358). The setting of the dialogue between the honorable Elijah and Baldwin recalls Plato’s *Symposium* in which serious matters are discussed around a well-furnished table set for an important occasion. Yet,

unlike Plato's *Symposium* that celebrates Agathon's awards of a best dramatist, Elijah desires to celebrate Baldwin's television speech in which he appears to him as "not yet brainwashed", and as Baldwin says "I was trying to become myself" (Ibid: 360). Like a sophist, Elijah confronts Baldwin in a speech "which was to ricochet his questions and comments". His speech is immediately followed by a chorus that arouse from the table saying, "yes, that's right" (Ibid.).

The content of his speech opposes the white men whom he calls "white devils". According to Baldwin, Elijah is "single-minded" and his discourse had been already heard before. Elijah forces Baldwin to express his point of view concerning the white people and the nature of the relationship he entertains with them. Yet, the latter stays silent and tries to analyze his elder's words. Baldwin felt a kind of sympathy for the fervour Elijah and his disciples have concerning the American Negro's rights in America and concerning the acquisition of land to construct an economic and a political power. However, at the end of his encounter with the Nation of Islam's proponents, Baldwin forces Elijah's young disciple who drove him to the white territory to unveil their stubborn preconceived opinions in order to expose their falseness. He explains to him, in the same manner Socrates explains to Gorgias in Plato's dialogue, of the same name, that sophists and orators should teach their students to consider the moral consequences of their acts. For Baldwin, the Nation of Islam and its leader Elijah Mohammed have the task of teaching his disciples to think about their responsibilities in acting according to his mysticism.

The third characteristic of the Socratic dialogue, directly related to syncrisis and anacrisis, is the fact that the (heroes) speakers are ideologists forcing people to participate in debates seeking the truth about a chosen issue. Socrates, according to Bakhtin, is the prime ideologist, but everyone he converses with is an ideologist as well involved in the ideological action of seeking and testing truth (1984: 111). In fact, Baldwin, like Socrates, involves

himself and others in such debates. Baldwin is a preacher who excelled in manipulating rhetoric at a very young age, and his address to his imagined nephew in “A Letter to my Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation” proves his force of argumentation using political and emotional opinions. For instance he discusses the following statement: “people find it difficult to act on what they know” (FNT: 336). Like a hero-ideologist he explains using both reason and love that the black nephew has first to understand the dialogue in the minds of the white men, who for many years, believed that black men “for innumerable reasons are inferior to white men” (Ibid). Baldwin goes further saying that many white men know the truth, but it is difficult for them to act according to that truth because it will engage them in a dangerous path which is “the loss of [their] identity”. He involves his nephew in an imaginative role related to Platonic truth and illusion of truth, echoing the myth of the cave in Plato’s *Republic*. This myth is reported by Socrates to Plato’s brother Glaucon. It narrates the manner a group of people are imprisoned in a cave looking at the shadows reflected in the wall by a fire behind their backs. These shadows are their sole knowledge and reality. Yet, one of them escapes from the cave, ascends into the world outside. He perceives the true forms in the sunlight and feels blinded by it. When he returns back to inform the other prisoners about this real world, he could not see in the light of the cave because he becomes accustomed to sunlight. As a result, they mutinied because they did not want to know other realities and to be blinded like their friend. They preferred staying in their previous comfortable ignorance. The captives, according to Plato, would infer from the returning man’s blindness that the journey out of the den wounded him and that they should not undertake a similar journey. Socrates concludes that the den-dwellers, if they were able, would therefore reach out and kill anyone who attempted to drag them out of the cave (Plato, Buchanan, S., 1948: 546-51).

Baldwin uses this myth by taking his example from the universe, like Socrates. He tells his nephew, “imagine how you would feel if you woke up one morning to find the sun shining

and all the stars aflame”. Then he answers, “You would be frightened because it is out of the order of nature. Any profound upheaval in the universe is terrifying because it profoundly attacks one’s sense of one’s own reality” (Ibid).

After that, he applied this Platonic idea to the white men who used to see the black man as a fixed star, and if he moves out of his place, Baldwin says, “heaven and earth are shaken to their foundations...they are losing their grasp of reality” (Ibid). It follows from Baldwin’s examples that the blacks are the cave-dwellers while the whites are those who are showing them only the realities they want them to know. Thus, any change, and in this case any rebellion from the blacks to alter their reality would shake the whites regimes of truth and threaten their power over the blacks.

However, after testing this idea, Baldwin, the ideologist, contests the white men’s desire to imprison the black man within the confines of their selfish definitions. Baldwin incites the black man to accept his lost brothers with love. His Platonic love seems hard to accept by the young James. But it is the only solution for integration into the white society, according to Baldwin, whose aim is to substitute racial hatred by racial love for the sake of coexistence. As a Platonic ideologist, Baldwin exerts an emotional influence on his nephew James because he knows that the latter is full of hatred against the white man. Thus, at the end he elevates him into a hero pedestal to encourage the feelings of love through relating him to Greek and Roman tradition of strength and heroism, “you come from a line of great poets, some of the greatest poets since Homer” (Ibid: 336), he reminds him.

Baldwin is also a hero-ideologist in the second letter “Down at the Cross: A Letter from a Region in my Mind”. He keeps carrying his Platonic ideology based on love. He tests and contests the two important religions, Christianity and Black Islam in their pretention to resolve the racial conflict in America. He himself experienced the life in the church and discovered that it is a mask for hatred and self-hatred. Thus, he left it bitterly disappointed.

Then, he inquires about the Nation of Islam's mysticism as proffered by Elijah Muhamad. As Baldwin's interlocutor, he exposes his ideology of creating a separate black community having an autonomous political and economic system, as Elijah Mohamed puts it,

No people in history had ever been respected who had not owned their land...for everyone else has, *is* a nation, with a specific location and a flag-even, these days, the Jew. It is only 'the so-called American Negro' who remains trapped, disinherited, and despised, in a nation that has kept him in bondage for nearly four hundred years and is still unable to recognize him as a human being. And the Black Muslims, along with many people who are not Muslims, no longer wish for a recognition so grudging and (should it ever be achieved) so tardy (Ibid: 364).

As a hero-ideologist Elijah argues in front of his community and Baldwin that the white man is a devil reversing all white racist stereotypes that encourage racism in reverse. He exhorts hatred against the white men, arguing that, "a Negro just cannot believe that the white people are treating him as they do; he does not know what he has done to merit it" (Ibid: 362). His authority and success to attract a great number of followers comes from his knowledge of the psychology of the black oppressed, using the reality of their lives in the streets as an evidence for his argumentation that Baldwin could scarcely answer or counter-attack. Baldwin affirms that, "I certainly had no evidence to give them that would outweigh Elijah's authority", and concerning land owning he adds, "it cannot be denied that this point of view is abundantly justified by American Negro history" (Ibid: 364). Yet, he still thinks that Elijah's plan for blacks in America is "a fantasy", an impossible dream. Elijah's participation in the dialogue-essay permitted Baldwin to make his ideas known, and explained for the reader, and raised him to the status of a hero-ideologist like Baldwin himself.

The fourth characteristics of the Socratic dialogue that is also depicted in Baldwin's essays is the dialogue on the threshold which characterizes the important moment of crises that the speaker undergoes, and that represent a turning point in his life. Baldwin has undergone two major upheavals that created change in his beliefs and philosophy. The first one is when he escapes the dangers of Harlem streets into the church to become a brilliant preacher. This event is crucial because the church saved him, being as he calls it "a gimmick",

an escape since, as he writes, “in my situation during those years, at least—who reaches this point realizes, at once, profoundly, because he wants to live, that he stands in great peril and must find, with speed, a thing, “a gimmick’ to lift him out, to start him on his way” (Ibid: 341).

Baldwin’s arrival to the church started as an opportunity for reconciliation with his father and with other people, black or white in general. Being a preacher, just like his father, means preaching Christian love and brotherhood against racial hatred and oppression. However, his distinction in using the religious sermons did not succeed to settle the Oedipus strife with his father who became even bitterer and angrier towards his son. Further, the love he preached for the congregation started to appear as a fantasy, after discovering the hypocrisy and the racist tendencies of the church members who use Christian love as a “mask for hatred and self-hatred”. This truth would cogitate in his mind and entailed on the second moment of crisis, another dialogue on the threshold that would change his life again.

The second turning point is Baldwin’s doubt on the credibility of Christian love and his ultimate exit from the church. His uncertainty has been nurtured by his readings of Fyodor Dostoevsky and his Jewish friends who laughed at the Christian leaflets he brought with him to school. He describes this moment in what follows:

I date it- the slow crumbling of my faith, the pulverization of my fortress—from the time, about a year after I had begun to preach, when I began to read again...and I began fatally, with Dostoevsky...I was in a high school that was predominantly Jewish. This meant that I was surrounded by people who were, by definition, beyond any hope of salvation, who laughed at the tracts and leaflets I brought to school, and who pointed out that the Gospels had been written long after the death of Christ...I was forced reluctantly to realize that the Bible itself had been written by men, and translated by men out of languages I could not read (Ibid: 346)

Baldwin left the church and his family as well because of the battle he had with his father who refused to receive his son’s Jewish friend believing that “he is not saved” (Ibid: 347). This was the immediate reason. Nonetheless, Baldwin always wanted his freedom from family constraints to explore the world outside and its new horizons. He started by investigating the other religion Black Muslims adopted after being, like him, bitterly

disappointed by Christianity, the white man's religion. However, he has not been introduced into Islam, but into the Black Muslims' doctrine which he judged, as explained above, as being "a fantasy" turning the white men's racism in reverse.

Rejecting Christianity and black Islam, Baldwin turns from secular religion to Neoplatonism. This transition gives him freedom of speech, a liberty of testing and contesting his old identities and constructing organic bounds between his new ideas and the image of his personality that carries these ideas. This adjustment in Baldwin's personality is the fifth characteristic of the Socratic dialogue. In this respect, Bakhtin states that the testing of the idea is the testing of the person who represents it (1984:112). Plato represents the embryonic image of his ideas and dialogues, and is referred to whenever his comments are used since at that time there was no real dialogic contact between people and ideas in historical reality, instead they come together in dialogues (Ibid). However, Baldwin's ideas cannot refer exclusively to him because his philosophy has been influenced by his readings (dead voices like Plato's). Thus, he entertains a "dialogue of the dead" as predicted by Plato in his dialogue *Apology* (Ibid.).

At the end of his essay, which is a typical threshold dialogue of the self, Baldwin adopts Platonic views of death and love adjusting them to the American nation of the late fifties and sixties. In a moment of emergency and as a response to the growing hatred and the failure of the discourse of Martin Luther King Jr's religious homilies of Christian love, Baldwin uses his political sermon addressing black and white urging them to believe on the existence of death and the ability of love to cure their sick hearts through dissecting the roots of their troubled souls. He writes,

Perhaps the whole root of our trouble, is that we will sacrifice all the beauty of our lives, will imprison ourselves in totems, taboos, crosses, blood sacrifices, steeples, mosques, races, armies, flags, nations, in order to deny the fact of death, which is the only fact we have. It seems to me that one ought to rejoice in the fact of death- ought to decide, indeed, to earn one's death by confronting with passion the conundrum of life. One is responsible to life: it is the small beacon in that terrifying darkness from which we come and to which we shall return (FNT, 1963: 373).

Baldwin echoes Plato's ideas about death in his dialogue *Phaedo* in which he passionately sublimates death into a new birth in the other world. Plato's *Phaedo* is a dialogue that argues for the immortality of the soul, presenting Socrates' amazingly optimistic attitude of a seemingly inspired man as he prepares to die. For him, his soul will be released at last from the body and the fears of death that lurks in the recesses of self-consciousness (Tredennick, H., 1954: 95-6). Baldwin's use of Plato's idea is pertinent to the racial context because of the ultimate equality made possible after death. People become equal abandoning their bodies, and in this case the black color that differentiates the two races, emphasizing that, "white Americans do not believe in death, and this is why the darkness of my skin so intimidates them" (Ibid.).

Then, he moves to speak about the responsibility of these men to trust and to celebrate what is constant, that is birth, struggle, death and love and mainly to be able and willing to change. He ends his essay by informing conscious Americans, "relatively conscious whites and the relatively conscious black", about the dangers of not trying, like lovers, to end the racial nightmare that would destroy America. Baldwin's ideas of love, death and change are inspired by the Platonic philosophy. They are written in a form of a Socratic dialogue by answering all its generic traits as argued in this chapter. Both form and language make Baldwin's speech complex for laymen, in a context that requires simple words to calm the spirits. However, he makes it clear that the second letter comes from a region of his mind and addresses the responsible conscious people who can soothe the critical situation of racial pressures.

Overall, Baldwin's discussed essays are Socratic dialogues espousing the five characteristics of the genre as explained by Bakhtin. His critical mind has been exposed through the dialogue with the self and the power of rhetoric acquired from his stay in the pulpit and his intensive and miscellaneous readings of European literature starting "fatally" as

he says, from Fyodor Dostoevsky's novels. Furthermore, his metamorphosis from a black boy into a priest, then a writer, helped him understand the roots of his troubled subjectivity by putting into words his thoughts as experienced in his life and the racial circumstances to which he had been exposed from his young age to maturity. Coming anywhere "near either a pulpit or a soapbox" (FNT: 352), Baldwin tends to tune out the moment with his dialogues and words as sharpened by the sermonizing religious tradition, poetic aestheticism and his sensitivity. His essays are Socratic dialogues that provoke a metamorphosis of the mind in its Platonic ascent to reach ultimate knowledge.

Jones's Nonfiction as a Socratic Dialogue

Just like Hansberry and Baldwin, Jones has espoused the Socratic notion of the dialogic nature of both truth and the dialogic thinking about it while writing his autobiography. Bakhtin affirms that discourse in such writings pertains to the subcategory of the active type called polemically colored autobiography and confessions. He explains that this discourse expose a diverse relationship with another's discourse since it senses its own listener, reader, critic, and reflects in itself their anticipated objections, evaluations and points of view (Cf. Bakhtin, 1984: 196-7). In fact, Jones's introduction to his Autobiography entitled *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones by Amiri Baraka* (1984), constitutes Jones's internal polemic intended to project the self of the author in a battle with the discourse that comes from without. He justifies his desire to write his autobiography by saying the following:

Why these 'Memoirs'? Because it seems my life plagues a few people. They want to 'know' how I got wherever they perceive I am. Why I would where I leave where they 'thought' I was in the first place. But was I ever there, where they think? And where were they? But it is, has been a path. From the beginning. And these findings are meant as darkness-altering mechanisms, small lights for seeing what a person will do and maybe why. But even so (just to put a little doo doo in the contest), who knows if this is the real staff, the *lowdown*. Perhaps I am distorting for my own reasons hiding various things. Who can say? The lies official will put out about me (even the unofficial officials) will be bad enough to make these memoirs of mine at least a relief. At last that's what I say (AUTO: xxviii).

Jones's speech is an inner dialogue in which he imagines, anticipates others' thoughts and answers them. He himself defined the black man's predicament as "Hell in the head"

(SDH: 156). His thoughts are set in a dialogue, a “contest” as he describes it above, to understand his black subjectivity. As a truth-seeker, he announces right at the beginning that his autobiography is a “path”, and his “findings” are just “darkness-alerting mechanisms and small lights” about which he is not completely convinced. Paradoxically, he questions them: “perhaps I am distorting, hiding... who knows if this is the real stuff”. This hesitation as far as the “findings” are concerned is intended to push over the dialogic process of thinking about truth since concluding means the end of any thinking.

The dialogue that Jones entertains with his refracted selves starts by affirming that the crucial questions the individual seeks to answer throughout the project of writing his own autobiography are “Who I was”, “who I would become”, and “what [his] being and doing has caused” (AUTO: xii). Nevertheless, it becomes complicated for him because the questions he tries to answer in his dialogue with the self are inevitably tempered by what others say about his personal and political metamorphosis as a black writer and artist in postwar America. Thus, the most important question that has always tracked him was about his former life in the Village and his marriage with a Jewish white woman Hettie Cohen. He describes this period as full of “all the mad speculations and rumors and total lies”. He stresses the fact that all “bosses”, editors prefer to expose the life of LeRoi Jones rather than that of Amiri Baraka (Ibid).

The first truth that Jones attempts to examine is the way people reject his constant changing positions from a Bohemian to a black cultural nationalist and then to a Marxist. These changes are seen as a lack of commitment and reliability of his own philosophy, hearing them as he writes saying, “See, I told you that dude would jump back White again” (AUTO: xi). Jones counters the naïve self-confidence of black and white people who think that they possess certain truths about his personality aiming at framing his struggle as an intellectual in the black cultural nationalism without paying attention to his multidimensional

battle against imperialism, the black bourgeoisie, racism and all forms of oppression. As he puts it:

I was always anti-imperialist in essence; the works, the previous organizations shows that. And I was not always a Black cultural nationalist. The book makes that obvious. But the fact that I had been so much a part of the liberal 'integrated' Village scene, including marriage to a White woman, and a kind of growing recognition as a writer, &c., I guess created a whirlpool of tempest and shock among the people I had known in those islands of abstract intoxication, when I finally 'changed up' and decided to 'book' (AUTO: xiii).

He accepts the great struggle and adventure of being LeRoi Jones and the quest of becoming Amiri Baraka in a dialogic interrelationship with all the voices rising inside him. At each station of his life, he critically investigates truth through thoughtful dialogues he projects in his writings. He calls the essays he wrote at the end of the fifties and during the sixties "a spiritual quest". The one that reflects the period of great change and excitement intended "to analyze and understand his life. He recognizes that his essays are "a conscious attempt to home in on both where I was coming from (literally) and where I was trying to get back to, spiritually and finally, on the very real side" (HOME: 15).

Another truth is that Jones has never denied the fact of being "wrong" in some decisions concerning his political choices. As a truth seeker, he is subject to many intellectual and social influences he meets in his surroundings and throughout his extensive readings. His process of searching for truth is turned out to be dialogic through accepting and rejecting, adhering to and contradicting some of his beliefs. As he asserts it himself, he incessantly questions his standpoints: "one aggravating problem with these early essays is that I 've long since changed my view on some topics" (Ibid: 16). For instance, Jones like his generation, affirms his love and respect to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Yet, when the latter answered their desperate call to find a solution to white violence against them by saying, "if any blood be shed let it be ours!", they have started to doubt. In this respect Jones writes, "with this came, the open dialectic of the Afro-American national movement, splitting one into two because

Malcolm X had begun to appear, and he said, ‘be peaceful, be courteous, respect everyone, but if someone puts his hands on you, send him to the cemetery’” (Ibid.).

The second characteristic of the Socratic dialogue that is present in Jones’s nonfiction is what Bakhtin calls syncrisis and anacrisis. Syncrisis, which is the juxtaposition of different points of view can be related to the dialogic process of looking for truth as explained above. Jones changes from a standpoint into another according to his personal experiences and the political mood of the moment. Before starting the first chapter of his autobiography, he writes that, “These could be called *Essays on the Stages of My Life*. To essay is also to attempt! So these are attempts to sum up that life before having lived it all. Attempts to ‘make sense’ where it has been difficult to see any sense” (Ibid: xxvii). Jones’s autobiography is a collection of thoughtful and reflexive essays on each stage of his life. He writes about many things, mainly his subjectivity, his self. In doing so, he echoes Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592), the great French Renaissance thinker, who took himself as the great object of study, proclaiming that, “I have never seen a greater monster or miracle than myself” (1877: 6).

Syncrisis in this great essay juxtaposes Jones’s different opinions as he becomes politically and intellectually mature. The most important and controversial section of his life is the when he lived among white Bohemia, described in “The Village”, and “The Black Art” chapters. After ending his air forces career because he has been accused of being “a communist” for his suspicious readings (“Error Farce” chapter), Jones has undertaken a quest of a literary nature in The Village. He started to be initiated by Steve Korret to the Eastern thought called Zen that had been popularized by the Beat Generation Circle (AUTO: 185). At the same time, that is starting from 1957, Jones had been fascinated by white European literature, absorbing their styles and way of thinking, describing his learning as “fragmented” and “having the weight of the white than the brown or black” (Ibid: 189).

Another opinion that Jones has started to analyze is his situation as far as his race is concerned. He realizes as he writes in his autobiography that when he wanted to run away from “the totalitarian whiteness” of the Air Force Army, he dived into “books to get involved in a deeper, more profound, more rational version of the same thing” (Ibid: 190). Furthermore, his marriage with the Jewish white woman “Nellie”, as he named her in the autobiography, intensified his confusion, and signed his integration to the most underlying theme of the circle, that is, “the white / black man romantic connection” that “still causes a few heads to turn, even in the Village” (Ibid.).

He thinks that marrying a white woman, like the majority of black intellectuals would erase the boundaries of colour between himself and the whiteness he wanted to integrate. This reality has been discussed by Fanon (1959), who hears the black (intellectual) says in distress: “who but a white woman can do this for me? By loving me she proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man. I am a white man. Her love takes me onto the noble road that leads to total realization. . . . I marry white culture, white beauty, white whiteness” (Fanon, 2008: 63). This step in Jones’s life creates tensions in his self because of the others’ gaze at them.

Anacrisis is also present in Jones’s dialogue with his white wife Nellie in his autobiography, using appropriate words to provoke her deeper thoughts concerning mixed marriages. For instance, though she loves Jones with whom she shares work and life, she insists on not having children with him because they would suffer. Jones disagreed with her, protested, and was hurt because of her inflexible idea that any issue of an integrated situation was negative. He understood that this preconceived idea unveils her racism. What makes matters worse is that she provoked miscarriage when she knew that she was pregnant with Jones’ first child.

After being pregnant for the second time Nellie accepted Jones's marriage proposal that goes against the principles of the Villages' Bohemian life. This is highly incompatible with U.S. social traditions. The outcome of Jones's romantic connection with a white woman finally contradicts the purposes of Jones's escape to the Village. He himself comments on this paradox writing, "I didn't come over to the village for no regular middle-class shit, yet here I was in it. And what was so crushing, yet pulsing on the subtlest of emotional wires, was that I had a *responsibility*, I was expected to do something" (Ibid: 217; emphasis original).

The third characteristic of the Socratic dialogue is that the speakers, like Socrates, are hero-ideologists seeking and testing truth by urging others, often against their own will, to participate in the ideological event they have initiated. Jones went to the Village for the sake of seeking and testing truth about himself and his race as well. As related to syncretism and anacrisis, Jones often provokes dialogues in the bohemian circles in order to know the way these people think, look at him and his race in general. He writes, "I'd come into the Village looking, trying to 'check', being open to all flags" (Ibid: 229). He investigated the numerous literary and intellectual circles like the Beats, the San Francisco school, the older San Francisco Renaissance group, the New York school and the Black Mountain School. Nevertheless, he could not find a model that completely contained his "wide-open perspective" to poetry because, as he explains, he had a cultural history that come as a result at once of a special context (being African American) and having a raw material for a particular aesthetic (Ibid: 229). This particularity added significance and beauty to his work. As an editor of a magazine called *Zazen*, Jones's ideology at first was to accept the works of poets from different groups. However, the truth is that he is the only black writer of the white group, and as a result he asked such questions as: "but what had happened to the blacks? What had happened to me? How is that there's only the one colored guy?" (Ibid: 231).

As an ideologist he seeks truth through self-criticism at each stage of his career. He affirmed during his stay in the Village, in 1959, when the Civil Rights Movement reached its highest point that he was against Martin Luther King Jr's nonviolent policy. The truth is that he was still confused and as he writes, "I knew I rejected King Jr's tactics. I would not get beat in my head. I would fight, but what was I doing?" (Ibid: 237). Despite the fact that he was against King's policy, he didn't pretend that he was better or doing interesting things for his race. On the contrary, he wrote a poem: "A Poem Some People Will have to Understand", in which he appears as despising himself, "What industry do I practice? A slick / colored boy, 12 miles from his / home. I practice no industry. / I am no longer a credit / to my race. I read a little, / scratch against silence slow spring afternoons" (Ibid). This dialogue with the self raised other questions in Jones's mind that pushed him to a radical change in his political and aesthetic ideas, as it will be demonstrated in the following chapters of our analysis.

The fourth characteristic of the Socratic dialogue used by Jones in his autobiography is the dialogue on the threshold provoked by a moment of crisis. This determining moment is Jones's trip to Cuba. This chapter entitled "The Black Arts: Politics, Search for a New Life" is significant since it turned his life upside down. Jones has started writing after his trip to Cuba which he evokes as follows "[t]he Cuban trip was a turning point in my life. Langston Hughes, Jimmy Baldwin and John Killens were supposed to go, but didn't" (Ibid: 243). The importance of this voyage for Jones is shown in his essay "Cuba Libre" and in his autobiography.

In Cuba, he came to know revolutionary poets and activists who were really interested in the political and the social events of the world not only in their countries like Jones's limited vision. As an American poet, he writes, "I thought my function was simply to talk about everything as if I knew...it had never entered my mind that I might really like to find out once what was actually happening someplace else in the world" (Home: 285). Jones

discovered the truth about the lies of the U.S. government and the way their system worked to adjust the minds of intellectuals in order to avoid any kind of revolution. He wandered among the Cuban masses. He met the common people whom Americans called “rotten commies”, the intellectuals, the politicians and the poets. He has saw the growing movement of the people who wanted change and progress for their country under the leadership of Fidel Castro, the chief of the Cuban Revolution, whom he described as “an amazing speaker, knowing probably instinctively all the laws of dynamics and elocution” (Home: 155).

However, what marked him deeply are the comments of contemporary poets such as Jaime Shelley who told him that the poet who writes his poems secluded from other parts of the world is “a bourgeois individualist” (AUTO: 244). Jones reminisces about his painful meeting with Jaime s follows, “the poet Jaime, almost left me in tears, stomping his foot on the floor, screaming: ‘you want to cultivate your soul? In that ugliness you live in, you want to cultivate your soul, well, we’ve got millions of starving people to feed, and that moves me enough to make poems out of’”(Home:147). Jones saw people his own age involved in revolution acting with their strength to change things. After this trip, he felt changed and at the same time liberated. Thus, being at the threshold his mind has been freed from the American psychological confinement in which he used to live in the Village. He writes:

I carried so much back with me that I was never the same again. The dynamics of the revolution had touched me...Seeing youth not just turning on and dropping out, not just hiply cynical or cynically hip, but using their strength and energy to change the real world-that was too much. The growing kernel of social consciousness I had was mightily fertilized by the visit...when I returned I was shaken more deeply than even I realized. The argument with my old port comrades increased and intensified. It was not enough just to write, to feel, to think, one must act! One could act (AUTO: 246).

Jones’s discovery liberated his speech. As a result, he wrote a brilliant article “Cuba Libre” about the voyage and the Cuban revolution that won an award. Furthermore, this turning point in his life liberated his consciousness and strengthened him to create with a group of his comrades an artistic and political revolution called The Black Arts Movement.

The organic relationship between the image of the speaker and the ideas he proffers which is the fifth feature of the Socratic dialogue is predominant in Jones's essays and autobiography. The testing of the idea is at the same time the testing of its exponents all along the dialogue as Bakhtin explains (1981: 4). The voyage to Cuba has completely changed Jones's vision of art and politics. A new resolution to act permeated his work. First, he participated in an organization called Free Play for Cuba Committee under Richard Gibson. This signed his commitment to political activism. As a second move, he stopped his magazine *Zazen*, and started a newsletter called *The Fleeting Bear* which was more political than *Zazen*. The ninth issue of this newsletter in which is includes an excerpt from William S. Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*, and Jones's dramatic section of his *Dante* called "The Eighth Ditch" which caused the FBI and the police to arrest him with the charge of sending obscene materials through the mail. He was convicted, but the case was dismissed after a trial in which Jones defended himself by reading the most obscene passage from Joyces's *Ulysses* and the Roman poet Catullus aloud to the Jury (AUTO: 253).

His revolutionary ideas have been tested and contested by his friends for their newness because they contradict his older ones. He started to befriend black people rather than white, to prepare his coming political organization and his words as he explains, started to catch the imagination of the young people of his generation, "the harbinger of things to come" (Ibid: 250). However, there is a striking difference between these new ideas and the way he lives in the Village. He is against his "sinister American cynicism, world-weary arrogance of theoretical know-it-all-ism" (Ibid: 245), while living with a white woman surrounded by white artists and their Bohemian life. Jones summarizes his state saying, "what was so wild was that some of us were talking about how we didn't want white people on the committee but we were all hooked up to white women and the downtown Village society. Such were the contradiction of that period of political organization" (Ibid: 250). Thus, like Socrates's ambivalent image of wise ignorance, Jones represents the ambivalent image of a person

having a black skin but wearing a white mask. He paradoxically undertakes the task of defending his blackness, while being married to a white woman and living among white people.

Such are the characteristics of the Socratic dialogue as depicted in Jones's autobiography which is a dialogue of the self. As a mind talking to mind, it dialogically reveals the truth. The external form of a dialogue that exposes the personal stories of the author interacts with his mind in an attempt to understand his subjectivity. The Socratic dimensions of Jones's autobiography cannot hide the Ovidian aspects of his writings. These aspects are shown, as it will be argued, in the coming chapter through the metamorphosis in Jones's life, political and artistic development.

Throughout this chapter we have attempted to demonstrate that Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's nonfictions are steeped in the European tradition of the Socratic dialogue that reemerged during the Renaissance. In their autobiographies and essays, the three authors entertain a dialogue with the self following Plato's artistic and philosophical forms of dialogue to seek the truth concerning their subjectivity as related to the racial experience of the post-World War II America.

In the coming chapter, we shall argue that besides the deployment of the Socratic dialogue as a form to their nonfictional works, our three writers have discussed in their contents the theme of love and metamorphosis according to Renaissance Platonism and Ovidianism. Indeed, we shall contend that in the manner of Plato and Ovid, the three writers have used metamorphosis to chart the different stages of their life. Their nonfictions are sites of discussion, a mind talking to mind dialogues about the different selves. We shall try to analyze the way and understand the purpose of relating their talks to the European philosophy of love as expressed in Plato's the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, and Ovid's *Art of Love* and aestheticism in general.

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CHAPTER THREE

Racial Love-Hate Dialectic: Metamorphosis, Platonic and Ovidian Love in Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's Selected Nonfictional Works

In this chapter we shall investigate the theme of love and metamorphosis as related to Plato and Ovid with reference to Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's nonfictional works. The purpose of this study is to show that in addition to the use of the Socratic dialogue as a form for their works, our three writers also deploy Platonic and Ovidian philosophical content to discuss the theme of love and hatred. In what follows it will be argued that the three writers, though black, use Platonism and Ovidianism in the same manner as their white counterparts of the Western Renaissance. They have written their works in post-World War II America, a period known as the Black Renaissance.

Platonic and Ovidian Love and Metamorphosis

Freud has attempted to explain human subjectivity and psychological troubles by relating his diagnosis to the sexual life of individuals. However, he affirms that at the beginning of his research "he was not aware that in deriving hysteria from sexuality, [he] was going back to the very beginnings of medicine, following up a thought of Plato's" (1989: 14). Still, in hysteria tradition, Plato, succeeding Hippocrates asserted in his dialogue the *Timaeus* that woman's womb is a living creature desiring union, which if it remains unfruitful (*akarpos*), beyond its proper season, travels around the body blocking passages obstructing breathing, and causing disease (King, Helen; 1998: 222). Thus, before Freud's propagation of psychoanalysis, human subjectivity mainly love has also been discussed by Plato and the Roman Ovid among other Western thinkers and philosophers who wanted to dissect the mysteries of this human feeling. During the Renaissance, these works were revived and translated by European scholars like the Italian Marsilio Ficino. These translations influenced the majority of the artistic works of the period. Plato's two dialogues the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* have treated the theme of love using dialectics in an *ascent* to beauty and

knowledge. In the case of the Roman Ovid, love is explained as a sensual *descent* to reach senses' gratification as shown in his works *Art of Love* and *Metamorphoses*.

Platonic love is often associated with the desire of absolute knowledge to reach divinity. It is a conception of love that goes beyond the physical gratifications as an ultimate goal, without excluding it as a possible element among these ones, since the object of love must have the beauty of mental promise (Price A.W., 1989: 17). Love has been thoroughly discussed in Plato's two dialogues the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*. It is also mentioned in his other works like *The Republic*. Plato's the *Symposium*, is the dialogue in which many male speakers discussed the definition of love ranging from earthly love in the Dionysian spirit as held by Aristophanes and Alcibiades, to the divine one that comes after a great knowledge, accumulated in a life characterized by toiling and a perpetual search for the truth. It is a quest that attempts to answer the question of "what, whom, one desires", and that quietly determines "the choices one makes, and thereby affects one's chances of leading a worthwhile and happy life" (*Symposium*: 51).

Plato's the *Symposium*, which "is particularly a dramatic form" (Howatson, 2008: vii), is at the basis a drinking party made to honour the victory of Agathon in the contest of the best tragedy, celebrated each year for the god Dionysos. The dialogue includes seven speakers: Phaedrus, Pausanias, Eryximachus, Aristophanes, Agathon, Socrates (Diotima), and Alcibiades. Each one delivers a speech about the subject of love (eros) in an attempt to juxtapose his own discourse with other's speech to subvert it. However, at the same time, they have participated in a discussion that ends up with Socrates' definition of love, in a dialectic that clearly renders the nature of the Socratic dialogues as explained in the first chapter of this research.

In The *Phaedrus*, Plato dialectically exposes two important themes; love and rhetoric in three speeches. The first speech is a thesis against love by Lysias and supported by Socrates.

It is principally attributed to Lysias and read by Phaedrus his friend. It exposes the importance of gratifying the non-lover rather than the lover in a homoerotic relation. This speech is concerned with sexual desire and with love triangles of possession and desire. This triangle includes the lover, the beloved and the rival. The latter's sole preoccupation is the satisfaction of his sexual needs without being in love with the same beloved.. The lover, Lysias argues, "admits that he is sick rather than in his right mind, he knows he is deranged, but is incapable of self-control...he is easily upset and thinks that everything is designed to do him harm" (Plato, 2002: 8-9). Furthermore, he explains that being in love incites the lover to praise even things said by his beloved when they do not conform to morality. This is because his judgement is impaired by his desire and he is enslaved by immediate pleasure (Ibid). However, the non-lover is ruled by self-control rather than by his desires.

The second speech is made by Socrates and is a parody to Lysias's style. It is the antithesis, or what Socrates calls a "Palinode" of the first one. Unlike the first speech, it defends the good side of love. Socrates tries to keep the same content but using a better form. He has started by attacking Lysias's topic as being absurd because for him "no one would fail to support the claim that one should gratify the non-lover rather than a lover" (Ibid: 14). Thus, he started his speech by defining love, its powers, and state whether it is beneficial or harmful. He states that:

Love is a kind of desire, and we also know that even non-lovers desire the beauty in people and things. So how shall we tell a lover from a non-lover? We must next bear in mind that in each of us there are two ruling and guiding forces whose lead we follow: one our innate desire for pleasures and the other is an acquired mode of thought, which aim for what is best. These forces in us sometimes work together, but sometimes conflict, and at different times one or the other of them is in command (Ibid: 17).

Socrates explains that these two forces can have the lead in a person and when the person is led rationally by thought to what is best it is called self-control and when desire is in command, and irrationally dragging the person towards pleasures it is called excess (Ibid.). He concludes his first speech by encouraging the view that Love, or eros, is a form of

madness in which the innate desire for beauty overwhelms one's sense of morality and control, a madness that destroys both the soul and body of the boy and will bring him no benefits, addressing the boys by saying, "lovers love a young man like yourself as wolves love lambs" (Ibid: 22).

Socrates felt, by the sign of his divine daemon, that he offended the god of love and out of fear of retaliation. Thus, he declared that the speeches, his and Lysias's, are stupid and irrelevant for their criticism of a lover by gratifying the non-lover. Thus, he made his palinode (parody). He affirmed that "false was the tale, that you should gratify a non-lover rather than a lover" (Ibid: 25). Then, he started another speech to praise love's madness as being divine since it is linked to the art of foretelling the future. Like any prophecy destined to help people, Socrates explains that love, which is madness, is given by the gods to help achieve the greatest happiness and to comprehend it. One should understand the truth about the nature of the soul which is "ever-moving, thus immortal" (Ibid: 27). After that, he moved to describe the character of the soul using the image of the chariot. It is his analogy of the tripartite organic whole made up of a charioteer, and his team of two horses. One of them is thoroughly noble and good and the other is its opposite, which makes driving disagreeable and difficult. This part of the speech is a kind of a synthesis of the two opposing sides of love.

Socrates argues that the supreme good for the soul is to grow wings and fly through the heavens with the gods. However, it happens only if the soul is strong and controls its horses. In this case, it gazes true ideas as beauty and self-knowledge beyond the heavens. The souls of men, however, Plato argues, are all hybrid and the bad horse will eventually fall back down to earth. He continues saying that when the soul sees a beautiful boy on earth, it is reminded of the vision of beauty that it saw beyond the heavens. The subsequent longing is eros. However, it is only the soul that can control such yearning which will be granted the philosopher's reward, an early return to heaven after three thousand years instead of ten

thousand years, as Socrates states, “it is only the mind of a philosopher that deserve to grow wings, because it uses memory to remain always as close as possible to those things proximity to which gives a god his divine qualities (Ibid.).

After the myth of the chariot, Socrates transitions to the subject of rhetoric, the third speech of the *Phaedrus*. He explains its damaging effects on the individuals if the rhetorician does not know the truth about the souls of his audiences and his discourse’s theme in order to speak accordingly. He asks Phaedrus: “suppose a rhetorician carefully studied the opinions of the masses and succeeds in persuading them to act badly instead of well, what kind of crop do you think rhetoric would later harvest from the seeds it set about sowing? Phaedrus answers: “A rather poor one” (Ibid: 47). Thus, for Plato, true rhetoric involves dialectic that can only be acquired by philosophizing systematically about the nature of life and of the soul. It means that the true art of speaking is reserved for philosophers. Socrates ends up his speech by criticizing the technology of writing essentially because it is not like dialogue that can discern between audiences and respond to questions or criticism. Instead, writing is destructive to memory. Love and memory are critically connected. For Plato, love is the human reaction to the half-remembered form of beauty. So, the lover and his beloved have to remember the god of love in order to find each other and start their love affair. Thus, love stimulates recollection which is the precondition of knowledge, the precondition in its turn of the right control of words.

Throughout the *Phaedrus*, Plato has combined myth (fiction) and logos (account) to prove that love is a divine madness that makes the soul of the philosopher ascend from evil and bad things, if it is accompanied by self-control and inner knowledge to wisdom and real beauty. The use of myths (muthos) in Plato’s dialogues is not paradoxical since for the Greeks these traditional stories are true and unveil the origins of the world and human beings (Plato,

1978: 130). Furthermore, to support his theses, Plato often refers to poets and dramatists who influenced him like Homer, Pindar Aristophanes, Pythagorean and Orphic sources (Ibid.).

More often than Plato, Ovid has used myths in his treatment of the concept of love. However, his manner differs from Plato's to the extent of being named as being counter-Platonic during the Renaissance (Cf. Kermode, 1973). In the first verses of *The Art of Love* (*Ars Amatoria*), Ovid compares himself to Tiphys the steersman (the one who guides the horses) of the "Argo", (the name of the ship that transported Jason and the Argonauts to Thessaly to bring the Golden Fleece). He also compares himself to Automedon, the driver of Achilles' chariot driven by two horses. This recalls Plato's analogy used in the *Phaedrus*. To describe the soul as a tripartite whole, Ovid uses Plato's myth of the chariot and writes in Book I, the part he entitles "His Task" the following verses:

Should anyone have here not know the art of love,
Read this, and learn by reading how to love.
By art the boat's set gliding, with oar and sail,
By art the chariot swift: Love is ruled by art.
Automedon was skilled with Achilles's chariot reins,
Tiphys in Thessaly was steersman of the Argo,
Venus appointed me as guide to gentle love:
I will be known as love's Tiphys and Automedon
It is true love's wild, and one who often flouts me
But he's a child of tender years fit to be ruled (Ovid, 2001:5).

In these verses, after being appointed by Venus the goddess of love, Ovid sets himself as a teacher of love. He is well-equipped to instruct the young people who want to be introduced to the art of love.

However, and unlike the Platonic love that is based on the ladder of love to reach ultimate knowledge and beauty, the Ovidian one is intended to gratify the lover's physical desires by winning the heart of the boy or the girl he likes. This result necessitates artistry /

knowledge from the lover. Thus, his teachings urge the lover to read books, of philosophy and poetry to instruct his mind as well as taking care of his / her physical beauty and cleanness, following the Ovidian traditions of seduction. Furthermore, he encourages the lover to the command of “Know Yourself” as inscribed by the Delphic oracle that Socrates attempts to reach through his dialectics. Ovid explains in his poem that,

While I was writing this, the god Apollo appeared

.....

‘Professor of Wanton Love’, he said to me

‘Go lead your disciples to my temple,

Command to everyone to “Know Yourself”

He alone will be wise, who’s well-known to himself

And carries out each work that suits his powers’ (Ibid: 52).

Nevertheless, and as called by the god Apollo, the Ovidian love is “wanton love” which means vicious and malevolent compared to the one Plato’s the *Symposium* has treated in his intellectual banquets of philosophy. Thus, instead of celebrating the Platonic love of the *Symposium*, Ovid pays tribute to physical love Plato exposes in his dialogue the *Phaedrus*. His long poem *The Art of Love* can be read as a banquet of the senses exposing the tricks of sight, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting as they should be performed by the lover who wants to seduce a person, his or her prey. However, and as argued by Sharrock Allison, Ovid’s love poetry is informed by a contrast that shows that in poetry as in life motives and actions are complex. She points at the outrageous paradox going to the heart of conflict between love as a conscious, rational choice (insincere) and as an irrational, overwhelming emotion (sincere) that emerges from the first line of *The Art of Love*: “Pick one to whom you could say: ‘you alone please me’” (Ovid, 2001: 6).

Frank Kermode, who has been influenced by George Chapman's "Ovid's Banquet of Sense", has commented on the concept in his essay entitled "The Banquet of Sense" which he describes as:

[A] theme in Renaissance art and literature: one of those patterns, literary and iconographical, that recur more frequently than it is supposed; which import into the context in which they are found meanings that the modern eye can miss; and which can alter and deepen what seems to be the obvious significance of even familiar passages (Kermode, F., 1973: 68).

Thus, the banquet of sense is a literary model that suggests more than what it describes in reality. During the Renaissance, Ovid seems to have become a sort of counter-Plato; and the formal opposition between the two, Kermode explains, could be expressed very economically in the contrast between the Banquet of Sense and the Banquet of Heavenly Love derived from the *Symposium* (Ibid: 74). Moreover, Ovidian love that tends to gratify the body is among the kinds of love discussed in Plato's the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*, more precisely in Pausanias's speech who divided love into heavenly love which is "free from wantonness" and common love, "that inferior people experience, having regard only for the act itself" (Plato, 2008: 11-2). The last kind is commonly known to be Ovidian during the Renaissance.

Being influenced by their precursor Plato and his dialogues concerning love, both Freud and Ovid have attempted to explain human subjectivity using psychoanalysis and Elegiac poetry respectively. Their views are pertinent in exploring the subjectivity inherent in Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's nonfictional writings to demonstrate that though they are African Americans they have been shaped by the love discourses of the Western literary tradition. They are lovers and their discourses are dialogues with the self concerning their subjectivity. Their racial love-hate feelings are constructed in an atmosphere of racial struggle and the obligation of these authors to represent race on the one hand, and to voice their subjectivity's paradoxes on the other hand.

Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's nonfictional are also characterized by their use of the Ovidian love and metamorphosis. The Roman poet Publius Ovidius Naso used these two

elements, mutable characters, cruel gods, libertine love, wit and rhetoric in his literary works. These latter are based on rewriting the Greek and Roman Mythology and philosophy to understand and express his subjectivity. The truth conveyed through his writings, that are often clear and defying, obliged the emperor Augustus to exile him to the barbarous settlement called Tomis in the Black Sea for he was irreverent towards the state and its ruler and differed from Horace and Virgil who sung propaganda for the Roman state (Horace, G., 1958: xx).

Emperor Augustus suspected Ovid's poetry of immorality, implicating Ovid in his granddaughter Julia's misconduct and adultery. However, and to reiterate Horace's saying, the pertinent evidence against Ovid was his *Art of Love*, which Augustus read as inciting wives to be unfaithful to their husbands. The difficulty that faced Ovid was that no poet worthy of the name can retract a poem or a book of poems. He may retract political or even religious affiliations, verbal or written statements made in prose, but not a work of art. This is because a work of art involves an act of imagination, the very identity by which a poet lives, and is of higher authority than conscious will (Ibid: xxi).

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a literary work that influenced the majority of Renaissance writers namely William Shakespeare and George Chapman. Thus, it seems more pertinent to study this theme in fictional works rather than nonfiction such as essays or autobiographies. However, myth, as defined by Quinones is a cover letter whose purpose is to disclose inner reserves and energies not immediately apparent in the literal account of the story itself; it contains in order to release; it formalizes in order to set loose (1991: 18). In our case, metamorphosis as a theme entails, as Bakhtin explains, the changes of identity of the writer throughout a career. these changes are inherent in the Platonic autobiographies, "involving an individual's self-consciousness related to the stricter forms of metamorphosis as found in

mythology and at its heart lies the chronotope of the life course of one seeking true knowledge” (1981: 130).

Metamorphosis in Hansberry’s, Baldwin’s and Jones’s Nonfiction

Metamorphosis in Hansberry’s, Baldwin’s and Jones’ nonfiction appears as a sheath for their political and artistic maturity. Furthermore, it seems in accordance with the Socratic dialogue’s trait of the dialogue at the threshold in which the speaker undergoes a determining situation in life that incites him / her to change his / her ideas and opinions, denying the previous state of mind. It is the moment of crisis and rebirth. The three authors’ life, like that of any truth seeker, is broken down into well-marked epochs and steps. They pass from self-confident ignorance to self-critical scepticism, to self-knowledge and ultimately to authentic knowing (Bakhtin, 1981: 130).

Indeed, Hansberry’s semi-autobiography reads as her own metamorphoses. It merges personal notes; extracts from her plays and essays, letters and even paintings following her own evolution from childhood to adulthood. It is a kind of an unfinished work that attempts at recapitulating the most important turning points of her life. This work has been started by her and completed by her husband and literary director Robert Nemiroff after her death at a very young age.

In the self-confident ignorance epoch, Hansberry describes her childhood in Chicago. She was sheltered by her upper middle-class family’s secured atmosphere. She was too young to feel involved with her father’s problems for instance. They were only preoccupied by the way they dress and the trips they set off together to flee the foggy climate of Chicago (TBY: 18). However, this recklessness would not last longer since her mind started to rework the political discourses held by her father with his black intellectual friends, as explained before.

The change from self-confident ignorance into self-critical scepticism occurred when her parents obliged her to study in the ghetto's school despite their opulence and possibility to provide her with adequate education in the white quarters of the town. In the ghetto, Hansberry started to notice the difference between her way of living and that of the poor children. They scarcely found something to eat mainly during the days of the Great Depression when her mother sent her to school wearing fur. The striking difference between herself and the children of the ghetto created in her an emotional conflict. She had to learn how to cope with the children's violence and their rejection to integrate their group. She was obliged to act like them at school and to be herself at home. This split in her identity caused her self-criticism and casts doubts on this strange situation. She writes that:

The world is divided in half as it is lived by me. There are those who think me the liveliest of types: a chattering, guitar-playing, slow-drag dancing, guzzling figure of renaissance well-being. And still, there are others, those latter-day images of the children of my youth who found me curious then-and still do. A serious odd-talking kid who could neither jump double dutch nor understand their games, but who-classically envied them. And their customs. And the things that, somehow, gave them joy: quarters, fights, and their fascination to come into the carpeted quiet of our apartment. They understandably, never understood (or believed) my envy-and they never will (TBY: 39).

Hansberry's questions originated from the social class difference with her peers. Though she is as black as the children of the ghetto, for them she is a black bourgeois girl. "These little grown-ups" as she calls them amazed her and incited her to criticize her own status and her own parents mainly during the high school period when she desired to be a journalist (TBY: 42). The spirit of investigation started to develop with her extensive readings and seeking the truth about her origins. She became familiar with white authors like Shakespeare, Sean O'Casey (the writer of *Juno and the Paycock*) and black ones such as W.E.B DuBois and Langston Hughes.

Hansberry's scepticism metamorphoses into political knowledge after integrating *Freedom* magazine in 1951 which was an important step for her because she believed that this paper, "which in its time of history ought to be the journal of Negro liberation" (Ibid: 77). She

stopped going to school and started working. She decided to be autonomous and free to struggle for her race, and to start writing seriously. In this period as well, Hansberry changed both politically and physically. In the letter she wrote to her friend Edythe, she explains that her decisions to change everything in her life affected her physical appearance, “I am considerably slimmer than you remember me, have stopped whacking my hair off and it’s at some strange length, some of the blemishes have disappeared off my face and I think I smile less, but perhaps with more sincerity when I do” (Ibid). Politically speaking, Hansberry has become active, either in the magazine, writing her articles, or outside. In this regards, she writes: “I think I am a little different. Attend meetings almost every night, sing in a chorus, usher at rallies, make street corner speeches in Harlem, sometimes make it up to the country on Sundays, go for long walks in Harlem and talk to my people about everything on the streets...” (Ibid.).

Hansberry’s political and physical metamorphosis is related to the knowledge acquired through her extensive truth-seeking about her race, colonialism and post-World War II social issues and struggles in America. For instance, the fact of stopping whacking her hair off, i.e., cutting it, comes from her political consciousness, and her acceptance of her difference as an African American woman who refused conformity to the Marilyn Monroe codes of beauty, propagated by the American mainstream culture of the fifties. Her act is culturally defying since among assimilationist gestures of African American woman is cutting hair short so as to be easy to handle, to make it straight like white women’s hair. They also bleach their skins as well. Her ultimate knowledge comes to its apotheosis with the teachings of her master Louis E. Burnham, the black editor of Freedom magazine. She followed his directives and took him for an intellectual model. In her evocation of Burnham, she writes that:

The things he taught me were great things: that all racism was rotten, white or black, that everything is political; that people tend to be indescribably beautiful and uproariously funny. He also taught me that they have enemies who are grotesque and that freedom lies in the recognition of all that and other things (Ibid: 79).

Hansberry's career as a journalist supplemented her intellectual background because she was appointed to write articles of diverse themes ranging from book reviews, political articles, articles about Africa (race and colonialism), about women and so on. However, she decided to stop writing for *Freedom* magazine after her marriage to Robert Nemiroff in 1953, and dedicated all her time to writing plays. Throughout her intellectual changes, she speaks to herself and the others trying to convey her dialogue of the self according to her racial experiences.

Just as with Hansberry's nonfiction, Baldwin's essays are permeated by the Ovidian attribute of metamorphosis. The change in his personality which is related to his intellectual awareness as he dialogizes his thoughts through writing and speaking with the self shows different Baldwin (s) as he moves from one state (identity) into another. As explained in the dialogue on the threshold that characterizes the Socratic dialogue, Baldwin's metamorphosis starts in the church over religious matters. Baldwin's metamorphosis is "individual", to use Bakhtin's words, who refers the metamorphosis as a vehicle for conceptualizing and portraying individual fate (1983: 114). Baldwin escapes to the church without having other choices of redemption from the sins of Harlem's streets. He passes, as one seeking true knowledge, from self-confident ignorance through self-critical scepticism, to self-knowledge and ultimately to authentic knowing.

Baldwin starts his second letter by saying, "I underwent, during the summer that I became fourteen, a prolonged religious crisis" (FNT, 1963: 337), which according to him, is called religious because it is related to the discovery of God, his saints and angels, and his blazing Hell. However, with an almost sarcastic tone, he announces that he believes that this God is the only one and that He existed only within the walls of the church, and that He is synonymous with safety (Ibid.). What incited him to think so philosophically about spiritual matters, and exactly in this moment of his life (fourteen years old) is the great fear created by

the metamorphosis in his body first, and then in the bodies of his peers in the streets. This metamorphosis made out of him a prey for “the whores and pimps and racketeers on the avenue who became a personal menace” (Ibid.). Furthermore, this physical metamorphosis as he explains goes deeper into the subjectivity of the persons to give them a kind of presence and difference. In this respect, he tells us that:

The incredible metamorphosis, of which the most bewildering aspect was not their budding breasts or their rounding behinds but something deeper and more subtle, in their eyes, their heat, their odor, and the inflection of voices. Like the strangers in the avenue, they became, in the twinkling of an eye, unutterably different and fantastically *present*. Owing to the way I had been raised, the abrupt discomfort that all this aroused in me and the fact that I had no idea what my voice or my mind was likely to do next caused me to consider myself one of the most deprived people on earth (Ibid: 338; emphasis original).

Metamorphosis plays on Baldwin’s body and mind. It pushes him to inquire about the roots of his fears changing in the process from self-confident ignorance to a truth-seeker who finds himself by the force of things in the church, to become a preacher rather than a criminal in the streets.

Once in the church, Baldwin feels himself secured from the apparent dangers of the streets that produced him. Yet, he undergoes a strange experience that resembles a trance. He describes it as being both religious and pagan at once. Unable to stand the double personality of a teen who feels himself a guilty sinner and that of a perfect young priest, Baldwin falls down as an epileptic on the floor of the church. After this experience, he becomes conscious that his dialogue with Jesus the Christ is imaginative and unilateral. His yelling up to heaven will never be answered, and that he could not be saved and washed by Him.

Doubt and self-critical scepticism has been settled in the mind and the spirit of Baldwin. He starts to see that the principles governing the rites and customs of the churches, white or black, are the same: “blindness, loneliness and terror” (Ibid: 345). Nonetheless, he does not want to stay in the church just like another worshiper for the fear of being bored. So, he explains that, “out of a deep, adolescent cunning I do not pretend to understand...I became a preacher” (ibid.). His metamorphosis has equipped him with cunning to survive the

difficulties and mainly the pressures from his father and the people of the streets. By this Christian apotheosis, he gained authority that pushed him to work hard to secure a privileged place among the members of the church and his community.

Knowing how the illusion worked in the church, like Apuleius after being metamorphosed into an ass, hearing secret conversations (no one would pay attention to the presence of an ass) in Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*, Baldwin started to see, to hear and to understand the saints' secrets and hypocrisy. He acquired self-knowledge, and comes to realize that if he continues in this game he will lose respect for himself. He becomes critical of the men of religion, and even of the Christ. This position recalls Ovid's treatment of the Roman gods, as reported by Knox: "the Olympians in the *Metamorphoses* are an unsavory lot, lustful, duplicitous, vengeful, petty, and, in short, having no redeeming features whatsoever" (Knox, Peter E. 2009: 51). Ovid, as Knox says, could no longer encourage his readers to imitate these lowlifes nor could he seriously endorse rape and betrayal. Baldwin could not follow in the same path as the other members of the church who see it as a lucrative business for their personal profits. About this experience he tells us that:

I had been in the pulpit too long and I had seen many monstrous things. I don't refer merely to the glaring fact that the minister eventually acquires houses and Cadillacs while the faithful continue to scrub the floor and drop their dimes and quarters and dollars into the plate. I really mean that there is no love in the church. It was a mask for hatred and self-hatred and despair. The transfiguring power of the Holy Ghost ended when the service ended, and salvation stopped at the church door (Ibid: 348).

Baldwin decides to leave the church in which there is no love in quest for ultimate knowledge, or Neoplatonism which is the universal religion. Baldwin thinks that true love can only be grasped through a true quest for knowledge in order to answer his Socratic question stated in what follows: "but what was the point, the purpose of my salvation if it did not permit me to behave with love toward others, no matter how they behave toward him?" (Ibid: 349). Then, and in order to emphasize his reference to the Platonic philosophy, he comments on the world that people idealize. According to Plato's Theory of Form as

deployed in the *Symposium* there is a progression from one physical beauty to all physical beauties to the contemplation of true knowledge and wisdom. Baldwin refers to this Platonic equality in human beauties notwithstanding the difference in skin colour.

Baldwin's critical mind has been exposed through the dialogue with the self and the power of rhetoric acquired from his stay in the pulpit and his intensive and miscellaneous readings of European literature starting from Fyodor Dostoevsky's novels. Furthermore, his metamorphosis from a black boy into a priest, then a writer, helped him to understand the roots of his troubled subjectivity. He puts into words his thoughts as experienced in his life and the racial circumstances he was exposed to from his young age to maturity. Coming anywhere "near either a pulpit or a soapbox" (FNT: 352), Baldwin tends to tune out the moment with his dialogues and words as sharpened by the sermonizing religious tradition, poetic aestheticism and his sensitivity. His essays are Socratic dialogues and Ovidian in their tendency to use the theme of individual metamorphoses that starts from the body, provoking that metamorphosis of the mind in its Platonic ascent to reach ultimate knowledge.

Like Hansberry and Baldwin, Jones's critical mind permeates his autobiography and his essays. His writings deploy the Platonic type of autobiographical writings informed by metamorphosis. His personal self-consciousness is broken down into precise and well-marked epochs. In his quest knowledge, Jones passes from self-confident ignorance, self-critical scepticism to reach authentic knowing. This path is clearly exposed in the course of the soul's ascent towards a perception of forms as explained in Plato's *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus* (Cf. Bakhtin, 1983: 131). Among the three authors of this analysis, Jones is the most exposed to the theme of metamorphosis as used by Ovid, Frantz Kafka, Charles Baudelaire and the French symbolists and surrealists in general. The theme of metamorphosis as related to Ovidian fables is going to be explored in details while dealing with his drama in the second part of this thesis.

Metamorphosis, Bakhtin says, serves as the basis for a method of portraying the whole of an individual's life in its moments of crisis to show the becoming / transformation of this individual into someone different from what he was before (1981: 115). Jones's autobiography clearly delimits these moments. He himself recognizes the change in his own personality as being the results of the paradoxes he confronts each time he passes into another stage, another person. As an illustration of this metamorphosis, Jones uses the metaphor of a snake sloughing off his dead skin:

We're like snakes with billions of skins falling off like the blinks of an eye. And each skin a sensitivity that makes a certain specific identity. Though generally we're who we are, we are even who we were, though we learn different things, some of us go different places. Some of us don't go anywhere. We can be screamed [sic] at, locked up, beaten, almost killed. We can read books or look at plays and films. We can be talked to a long time by people who shape us in some ways. In a school, an outfit, a bar *-some place*. Mostly factories -cold in winter, hot in summer. And *we do change*. Sometimes we grow. On the real side (AUTO: 10-11; emphasis original).

Jones refers to a reptile, a snake, a symbol much used in Greek and Roman mythology. His comparison echoes Ovid's metaphor in Book IX of *Metamorphoses*, in which he narrates Hercules' transformation. The latter lost his mortal flesh to be metamorphosed into a god, "like a snake, when it sheds its skin: along with the skin the years fall away and the snake is young again and revels in its new and glistening body" (Horace, 1958: 248). Yet, in Jones's case, the different selves are related to his personal stories, and as he explains it is the way a person moves from mis/perception to rational knowledge to changing one's own practices (AUTO: 23).

He starts with his childhood (perceptual level) in the chapter entitled "Young" which traces his self-confident ignorance that characterizes the days of any infant. What is special about this growth of consciousness is that it is narrated from an adult's point of view, "recalling his impressions, an overview without overviewer except [Jones] myself" (AUTO: 10). Jones was surrounded by his family and the permanent presence of a loving grandmother. It was at school that he noticed the racial differences. He started to become aware of them

through the people who are foreign to his family. An Italian friend of his once attacked him for being black because they did not have the same hair.

Childhood, Jones says, is “a mist in which a you is moving to become another you”, stressing the fact that the child can feel, cry, scream, taste but without understanding really what is going on. By writing about a child’s subjectivity, Jones’s purpose is to chart this change to constant mutability in the face of the changing world within the self, to better answer the repeated questions all over his work; “who am I? And how did I get to be what I am?” (AUTO: 37).

His self-critical scepticism period starts as he grows up “as a brown child” in a community charted according to skin color. This community includes black, Asiatic and white people. This range of ethnic groups is marked by social class and status. As explained by Jones, “there was a fundamental horizontal quality of an oppressed nationality – yet we were not all completely at the same level of being bent. Some of us did have more money” (Auto: 54). White people are placed at the highest rank. It means that all the other ethnic groups aspire to reach this level. Then, in the second place come the Asiatic people who are close to the whites and refer to the bourgeois middle class, “the yellow, the artificial, the well-to-do, the middle class really, described by a term like petty bourgeoisie” (Ibid.). These people, Jones tells us, strive to become white through assimilation. The browns, the category of people to which Jones pertains suffers an in-between position between the blacks and the yellow and even the whites. They are tested by all the rest of the other people for this suspicious position that teaches them, to “lust after abstract white life abstractly” (Ibid: 56). The black people are the last in this social ladder, and as Jones says, they are “the damned, the left behind, the left out, the disregarded, the abandoned, the drunk and disorderly...the heirs of the harshest of life as I could see” (Ibid: 54). These differences create hatred and self-hatred between the people of the same race because they all strive to climb the social ladder.

Jones's doubts concerning his rank in society and the reasons that create pressures among his people have started when he began his life at Howard University and after integrating the Air Forces school. He flunked out of the university because he was not working seriously. He understood the reality of the connections between the black-yellow-brown connections, and the truth is that whatever efforts made by these people it is readying them to better serve the white category. For him, Howard was a continuation of the old black brown yellow white phenomenon, though with a slight change of consciousness. As he puts it: "but now I was more conscious of what was going on. More conscious, yet not enough and still with no means of full articulation" (AUTO: 99). His experience in the air force is an important step for self-knowledge. By searching an escape from his previous failure he learnt how to distinguish between the imagined state of "the yellow middle class fakery" that he became while in Howard, and the reality of "nobody" he has become in the Air Force. He becomes aware about racism and abuse of authority even in the army base, in which white people are "the ones in power, in authority, or that wanted to act like they were" (Ibid: 141). His dream of flying becomes a sort of nightmare. He has been accused of being a communist for his extensive readings.

Jones turned to an intellectual career after discovering poetry and literary classics. His desire to learn was awakened by the discoveries he made in the books he used to read to pass time in the Air Force base. Thus, his intellectual and philosophical quest for ultimate knowledge started. He declares that, "I was trying to become an intellectual. I was becoming haughtier, and more silent. More critical in a more general way...I had given myself, in my quest for intellectualism, a steady diet of European thoughts, though altered somewhat by the Eastern Buddhist reading" (Ibid: 174-5).

Jones's metamorphosis from a self-confident ignorant into an intellectual looking for ultimate knowledge traces the different selves that he assumed as time passed. However, he

thinks that he needed a spiritual master or a guide in his intellectual quest to warn him against the dangers of being shaped by the books he read. He was much influenced by a culture that did not represent him but instead worked to fabricate for him a self that is far from his African American origins. In this regards he writes, “yet my reading was, in the main, white people. So that my ascent toward some ideal intellectual pose was at the same time a trip toward a white-out I couldn’t even understand. I was learning and at the same time unlearning. The fasteners to black life unloosed” (Ibid: 174).

This intellectual quest leads him to the Village where he discovered the Bohemian life and the literary circles like the Beat thanks to whom he extended his knowledge concerning poetry and aesthetics in general. Furthermore, he started a career as an editor of two magazines *Zazen* and the *Fleeting Bear*. However, it is after the voyage to Cuba in 1959 that his vision became more political and revolutionary in an attempt to reestablish the ties with his African American origins and the struggle for his race. It is after this voyage that he took part in the movement called the Black Arts Movement.

In *Blues People* (1963), Jones refers to the metamorphosis of the slave and the evolution of black American thought in the Blues music implicitly developing Hegel’s dialectics. Juxtaposing thesis, antithesis and synthesis as methodological tools helped Jones to explain the ambivalent role played by the Western thoughts in shaping the African American character as manifested in his music. This music was the Blues played by the first slaves and that developed later on into American Jazz. Jones starts his argumentations by the following thesis and antithesis, “the Negro as slave is one thing. The Negro as American is quite another. But the *path* the slave took to ‘citizenship’ is what I want to look at. And I make my analogy through the slave’s citizen’s music” (1963: ix; emphasis original).

The transmutations of the African slave into an American citizen were subjected to social and anthropological scrutiny and were most graphic in his music. As Jones explains,

colonial America, “the country of the new *post-Renaissance* man” for the African slave is the complete antithesis of the African’s version of human existence. In this respect he writes, “when a man who sees a world one way becomes the slave of a man who interprets it in an exactly opposite way, the result is, to my mind the, *worst* possible kind of slavery” (Ibid: 4; emphasis original). Being forced to embark into slavery, the Africans became not only physical and environmental alien but “products of a completely alien philosophical system” (Ibid: 7). The Africans, “the nonliterate peoples or the primitive” formed the antithesis of the Western man and his highly industrialized civilization. The Negro as non-American was obliged to live in a *stepculture* that endeavoured to erase all traces of African heritage from his mind to create a new race or the “American Negro”.

The African slave metamorphoses from self-confident ignorance to self-critical scepticism. In the beginning of his bondage, he was a property in the hands of the Western man. He was a foreign captive brought to a country, a culture, “a society that was and is in terms of philosophical correlatives the complete antithesis of his own version of man’s life” (Ibid: xiii), as Jones writes. He was obliged to obey the masters of the land and act according to their cultural references. Under slavery, the African became self-critical and sceptic about his status of a slave. He realized that he was losing his African identity. The white master forbade him to sing African songs or worship African gods because he was afraid of an eventual revolt to run away. Thus he sang and danced merging African rhythms and European langue to dissimulate his origins. Some of them even used songs as codes to run away like the “Drinking Gourd” that secretly refers to the big diaper that shows the North for runaway slaves.

This man who is the direct descendent of the African slave is different because he is the product of slavery in a foreign soil. Furthermore, the American-born slaves knew about Africa only through the stories, tales, riddles and songs of their older relatives, and were

usually separated from their African parents, as Jones argues. (Ibid: 12). As a result, the process of an imposed *acculturation* started for these people after being exposed to Western culture and attitudes according to the white master's desires.

The metamorphosis of the African slave into an American slave had been intensified after some generations passed in America. The new generations of slaves were completely alienated from Africa and the African culture. However, and as Jones says, there remained some cultural elements that were not completely submerged by Euro-American concepts. He writes that “music, religion, dance, religion, do not have *artifacts* as their end products, so they were saved. These nonmaterial aspects of African's culture were almost impossible to eradicate. And these are the most apparent legacies of the African past, even to the contemporary black American.” (Ibid: 16; emphasis original). It follows that the survival and resistance of these cultural elements permits the slave's self-knowledge. He became conscious about his own importance for the white master. This would push him to ask for recognition, to be like the master for whom he works. Moreover, the coexistence of the African and the American traits in the psyche of the African American person is the synthesis that Jones would have reached throughout his analysis. This would be evident, if, as Ralph Ellison explains, he had not attempted to politicize his study by relating it to the Civil Rights struggle. Jones has attempted to separate the blues from the white mainstream of America. As Ellison puts it, Jones endeavors to impose an ideology upon this cultural complexity. But his version of the blues, Ellison contends, lacks a sense of the excitement and surprise of men living in the world-of enslaved and politically weak men successfully imposing their values upon a powerful society through song and dance (Ellison, R. 1964: 5). In fact, though blues was the music that represents the slaves' identity and cultural heritage, it succeeded to impose itself in the American cultural scene. In the same way, the African American authentic knowing of himself as being a part of the American nation pushed him to struggle for his Civil Rights.

The transformation of the slave is also reflected in his music that moved from Blues to Jazz and as Jones write, “blues is the parent of all legitimate jazz...[it] could not exist if the African American captives had not become American captives” (Ibid: 17). Blues was sung by the Africans during their works in the fields of the white masters. Yet, later on it reached the American culture outside the plantations. This metamorphosis of the blues singer from an African captive into an African American citizen passing from self-confident ignorance to authentic knowledge of the self was not the same for all the blacks. Jones outlines this difference from the days of slavery when the white master divided them into house slaves and field slaves. In this respect, he writes that,

The house servants were extended privileges that were never enjoyed by the majority of ‘field niggers’. The ‘house niggers’ not only assimilated ‘massa’s’ [sic] ideas and attitudes at a more rapid rate, but his children were sometimes allowed to learn trades and becomes artisans and craftsmen (Ibid: 123).

The house slave, to follow Jones’s idea, who aspired to become completely white, formed the black middle class after the influence of the white middle class. The majority migrated to the North and believed that the best way to survive in America would be “to disappear” completely, dropping from their consciousness all the traces of Africa and slavery. Thus, self-knowledge of the black differs according to his personal aspirations. For Jones only black music that drew its beauty from the black man’s soul has been able to survive the call of black middle class to a complete fusion into the mainstream of America.

Platonic and Ovidian Love in Hansberry’s, Baldwin’s and Jones’s Nonfictional Works

As a black American Renaissance woman, Hansberry believes in the power of the Platonic love to settle the racial pressures during post-Second World War II America. Like a Platonic lover she considers Love and Beauty as the important reasons that should urge people to live and fight for their dreams together. In this regards, she says, “I wish to live because life has within it that which is good, that which is beautiful, and that which is love” (TBY: xiii). She aspired to live in a post-racial America where blacks and whites would live

in peace notwithstanding racial hatred. This harmonious union between *opposites* recalls Eryximachus' speech in Plato's *The Symposium*. Eryximachus presents Love as a universal cosmic force that rules all of nature. In the same manner, Hansberry's opinion of hope and love for Americans is generalized to all humans and is stated as what follows, "It is a great nation with certain beautiful and indestructible traditions and potentials which can be seized by all of us who possess imagination and love of man" (TBY: 115).

Hansberry's metamorphosis from self-confident ignorance to ultimate knowledge is an educational process in which she endeavors to combine the two notions of love and beauty. This has much to do with the Platonic love. She points to the necessity of looking at love as a ladder to reach ultimate beauty. To undertake this ascent one should recognize and become conscious of his ignorance or lack of knowledge. This step is important in the desire of knowledge. Indeed, Diotima, in Plato's *Symposium* teaches Socrates, "that which desires, desires what it lacks...there is no desire if there is no lack" (Plato, 2008: 35). This is the aim of Socrates' discussion, who forces his interlocutors to recognize their ignorance and arouse in them the desire to know. In one of her discussions, Hansberry is asked to define love. Her reply to the audience also echoes this characteristic of desiring knowledge after recognizing the lack of it. Furthermore, she believed in the power of those who love to tolerate despite their sufferings. She referred to the possibility of love between blacks and whites that seemed utopian in the sixties. She proudly declares:

Love? Ah, ask the troubadours who come from those who have loved when all reason pointed to the uselessness and the foolhardiness of love. Perhaps we shall be the teachers when it is done. Out of the depths of pain we have thought to be our sole heritage in this world. (TBY: 256; emphasis original).

Hansberry, like Diotima / Socrates in Plato's *Symposium* considers that knowledge and love are interrelated. Love, according to Diotima functions as an implement that allows the soul to climb from deceitful appearances to absolute truth. This ladder leads from the physical to the spiritual, from the particular to the universal, and from this world of continuous change

and becoming to eternal being and truth. This ascent is called education, the process of moving from unconsciousness to consciousness. Such is the notion of love that Hansberry wanted to teach the black students, telling them what follows:

We know about love! And that is why I say to *you* that, though it be a thrilling and marvelous thing to be merely young and gifted in such times, it is doubly so, doubly dynamic - to be young gifted *and black*. Look at the work that awaits you! Write about all the things that men have written about since the beginning of writing and talking- but write *to a point*. Work hard at it, *care* about it. Ibid: 257; emphasis original).

Like a Platonic lover of wisdom, she herself retired into a form of ascetism to read books of philosophy and political art. She wanted to know because she recognized that she ignored many things about the surrounding world and about herself. In the *Symposium*, Socrates maintains that love is the desire for something lacking or lost. Thus, Hansberry undertakes a philosophical quest to understand the struggle of being black in America. She clearly shares Diotima's view about the real love that causes "to be pregnant in the soul", and procreate eternal achievements like poetry, political art and the different innovations which humanity remember forever (Ibid: 46-7). Hansberry desired knowledge and procreated eternal crafts.

Hansberry's working in the *Freedom* magazine reinforced her political growth and constructed her political views. She was supervised by the editor Louis E. Burnham. who taught her that "Black people are beautiful... all racism was rotten, white or black, that everything is political; that people tend to be indescribably beautiful and uproariously funny" (TBY: 79). This flexible approach that metamorphoses every man into a god-like through reason, love and creative instinct is what Renaissance thinkers call "Neo-Platonism" (Barber, J., 1992: 9).

This man was Hansberry's Neo-Platonic mentor. She worked with him for five years and she confessed him her great love and respect for him in a whole passage. Her feelings of

complete admiration for this brilliant editor and his voice are summarized in this romantic description of him:

His voice was very deep and his language struck my senses immediately with its profound literacy, constantly punctuated by deliberate and loving poetic lapses into the beloved color of the speech of the masses of our people. He invariably made his eyes very wide when he said things in idiom and, sometimes, in the middle of a story, he just opened his mouth and howled for the joy of it. I suppose it was because of his voice, so rich, so strong, so very certain, that I never associated fragility with Louis Burnham despite his slight frame (Ibid.).

Hansberry's admiration for Burnham starts through the senses, i.e., hearing to reach into the beauty of his mind. It is the Platonic ascent from the physical to the spiritual. This ascent recalls Alcibiades's in his love to Socrates, his teacher. He is the last speaker in Plato's the *Symposium*. He eulogizes his master / lover Socrates as being a god or semi-god. For Alcibiades, Socrates affects his listeners by his wise words like Marsyas who "used to charm everyone with his pipe through the music that came through his mouth" (2008: 54).

Thus, like Alcibiades, Hansberry does not hesitate, either through love or recognition, to acknowledge her intellectual indebtedness for her mentor. As she puts it, "the thing he had for our people was something marvelous; he gave part of it to me and I shall die with it as he did" (Ibid.). Her love for him could not be altered since as she says, "it was an open and adoring love that mawkishness never touched..." (Ibid.).

Hansberry is a lover / warrior in her own way. Yet, she cannot proclaim herself to be as good and as intense as her teacher. She recognizes that he is her model. She writes that Burnham is her only confident with whom she speaks about her desires to write a novel, and that at twenty she has already become desperately cynical to retain all the lovely things of the younger age. His reaction, to her romantic myth of producing an immortal and passionate work was not that of patronizing or of mockery, instead "he gently and seriously prods [her] to consider the possibilities of the remaining time of [her] life" (TBY: 79). Hansberry did not live enough to finish her project of writing a novel. However, the period spent in journalism for Freedom magazine has constituted an important stage that prepared her for writing

literature, namely drama. In this respect, Michael Anderson writes that, “this was the incubator for Hansberry’s transition from activist to artist, from a dedicated foot soldier of the Communist Party to the internationally celebrated artist foremother of contemporary human rights movements” (2010: 89). Thus, as a Platonic lover of wisdom, she procreated what is eternal in arts and politics as explained by Diotima in Plato’s the *Symposium*, “following the ladder of love from beautiful practices to beautiful kinds of knowledge” (2008: 51).

Baldwin is another Platonic lover who climbed the ladder of philosophy to free himself from the oppression of his father and the poverty of his family. He did not have money and time like Hansberry. But he read the books he could loan from libraries in quest for the philosophical ascent of the spirit. In the same manner as Socrates who thinks that philosophy begins and ends with self-investigation, following the inscription of the Delphic Oracle, Baldwin has undertaken to “know himself” through educating his spirit. His desire to be saved from the fate awaiting Harlem’s black children pushed him to reading and working hard to succeed. Baldwin needed to know love and God, so he escapes to the church. However, he discovered to his great disappointment that love in the church is a mask for hatred and self-hatred. Consequently, he left the church and turned to Neoplatonism.

In the *Symposium*, Socrates / Diotima says that love (eros) is generated by the intercourse of Poverty (*Penia*) and Plenty (*Poros*) in the garden of Zeus. Eros, according to Diotima, establishes a dynamic in the soul, a dialectic between need and its satisfaction. This Platonic idea about love is primordial for the Neo-Platonists. For them, love carries within itself a desire, a force that thrusts it forwards. It also comprises the seeds of the gratification of that desire. Moreover, For the Neo-Platonists like Plotinus, Eros is used to describe the One or God. He says that the One is at the same time “lovable, love himself and love of himself”. Love seems to be something diffused from the One into its creations and so an essential part of it goes to the humans. (Cf. Remes, P., 2008: 159).

It is this “generous” love that Baldwin preaches in order to create a harmony between blacks and whites. His ambitious project of creating a post-racial America needs Platonic love between the Americans. His two letters in *The Fire Next Time* greatly recall Plato’s dialogue *Phaedrus* in which Socrates teaches the boy Phaedrus the nature of love and rhetoric. The dialogue is divided into three speeches. The first one is about love by Lysias, Phaedrus’s lover. The second one is by Socrates. It is an attempt to correct the awkward form of Lysias’ speech. The third one is also by Socrates. It is a palinode to his first speech on love and a discussion in rhetoric. Baldwin’s first letter to his nephew sounds like Lysias’ speech of love delivered to Phaedrus. He teaches his nephew that love is the only power able to save him, and his black brothers from destruction. He tells him what follows:

You can only be destroyed by believing that you really are what the white world called a nigger. I tell you this because I love you, and please don’t you ever forget it[...] Big James, named for me-you were a big baby, I was not- here you were: to be loved. To be loved, baby, hard, at once, and forever, to strengthen you against the loveless world. Remember that: I know how black it looks today, for you. It looked bad that day too, yes, we were trembling. We have not stopped trembling yet, but if we had not loved each other none of us would have survived and now you must survive because we love you, and for the sake of your children and your children’s children (FNT: 335).

Baldwin teaches his nephew that only love can save the black family members from despair. He himself suffered from the lack of love during his childhood because he believed, and was forced to believe that he is weak, black and ugly. Nonetheless, his young nephew is his antithesis for he is big, beautiful and loved by his family. He structures his letter according to his desire to act / to change this code of racial hate and racism of the sixties. He espouses the integrationist policy. He persuasively addresses him writing that:

Please try to be clear, dear James, through the storm which rages about your youthful head today, about the reality which lies behind the words *acceptance and integration*. There is no reason for you to try to become like white people and there is no basis whatever for their impertinent assumption that *they* must accept *you*. The really terrible thing, old buddy, is that you must accept *them*. And I mean that very seriously. You must accept them and accept them with love. (1963: 335; emphasis original)

In this quotation, Baldwin tries to develop the same thesis as Lysias in Plato’s the *Phaedrus* who proposes at the beginning of his speech that “it is better to love a non-lover

rather than a lover” (Plato, 2002: 12). Baldwin, in his turn, requests his nephew to love the white man who does not reciprocate this love. However, one cannot accept with love someone who continually harasses and oppresses him. Human nature is not that flexible and that good. Again, he assumes Plato’s idea of love’s ability to transcend normal bounds. In fact, Baldwin’s request through his “amorous” discourse is humiliating for the black people. For centuries, they have suffered from the white oppression. Furthermore, at the time of Baldwin’s discourse they were still struggling for their Civil Rights. However, through his pseudo-political preaching of love between the whites and the blacks he aims at subverting or at least decreasing the racial hatred and violence preached by Malcolm X in the Northern ghettos at that time.

Baldwin’s request to his nephew of *accepting the white man with love* is like urging the black boy to climb the Platonic ladder of love as he did himself. In the case of the black man, this ascent is only possible by his consciousness concerning the importance of educating the soul. It starts by the recognition of one’s own ignorance and lack, and then comes the desire of knowledge. Baldwin exhorts his nephew to reach perfectness and go beyond the limits of “mediocrity” traced by the white man for the black man. He tells him, “you were not expected to aspire to excellence: you were expected to make peace with mediocrity...trust your experience. If you know whence you came, there is really no limit to where you can o” (FNT: 335).

This love letter earned him many white supporters and sympathizers. Nevertheless, Elderidge Cleaver considers that Baldwin’s self-effacing love is a replication of Martin Luther King Jr’s policy of integration by expressing his religious love for his oppressors (1968: 106). He thinks that behind this hatred of the black race lies the drive of the racial death-wish as explained in his essay “Notes on a Native Son”, included in his book *Soul on Ice* (1968). Cleaver writes that:

The racial death-wish is manifested as the driving force in James Baldwin. His hatred for blacks, even as he pleads for their cause, makes him the apotheosis of the dilemma in the ethos of the black bourgeoisie who have completely rejected their African heritage, consider the loss irrevocable, and refuse to look again in this direction (Ibid: 103).

Cleaver's accusations are at the point considering the context in which he wrote this speech which is characterized by the failure of the Civil Rights Movement in bringing effective solutions to the racial tensions between blacks and whites. Baldwin's readers cannot understand his philosophical point of view and possible solution of loving the non-lover in this case the white man. The non-lover, as explained by Lysias in Plato's the *Phaedrus* is not a slave to immediate pleasure. He will look to the beneficial future results of the relationship. He will not be overcome by love. Instead he will be in control of himself; he will not let trivia arouse him to violent hostility. Socrates clearly asserts that the non-lover will forgive unintentional errors and try to stop the lover making intentional mistakes before they happen. This all goes to show that the relationship would last a long time (2002: 11). Furthermore, this relation will go beyond love affairs' ending antagonisms to reach eternal friendship. If this parallelism seems far-fetched it is because the white man is not a Platonic lover / non-lover as Baldwin wishes him to be. He cannot act as a black man's Platonic lover with all these virtues notwithstanding racial hatred and aggression of the sixties.

This interpretation substantiates Graham Russell Hodges' stipulation that Baldwin's essays are "ever-elusive and doubled writing" (Hodges, G., R., 2003: 16). He adds that "the complexity of Baldwin's rhetoric is rooted in the complexity of his narrative tapestry. his elusiveness is an effect of the hybridity of his discourse" (Ibid.) Hodges explains the hybridity of Baldwin's meditative essays by his use of double story. One is told by biographical (referential) narration and the other story is narrated through a philosophical reflection. The difference between the two stories, that seem connected at first, is that while the first is that of compassion and sympathy, the second story constitutes a narrative of contempt and anger. Hodge writes that Baldwin's text is:

[A] text without denouement, the reader must find release –transcendence– through the embrace of the double-bind. A man able to ventriloquize the feelings and the thoughts of a range of men, in common voice, Baldwin asks the reader to do the same. The reader must feel anger and compassion, hopelessness and hope all at once (Ibid: 17).

Baldwin needs love and he insists that this love should come not only from his family members, but even from his white lover. He is desperately waiting and “trembling” to hear a response to his expression, believing in a prosperous post-racial America. He knows that hatred is a common sentiment felt even between real brothers. So, transcending such a sentiment demands great inner work and courage. He explains that the white men are “innocent” because they are not aware of the pain they cause the blacks. They refuse or they cannot understand that the black is a part of their history due to the effect of the experience of slavery. He thinks that the white people are not models of how to live. He writes that, “the white man is himself in sore need of new standards, which will release him from his confusion and place him once again in fruitful communion with the depths of his own being” (1963: 332). Thus, Baldwin explains that if whites refuse to accept blacks as their equals it is because they are afraid of change.

The second letter in “The Fire Next Time” is entitled “Down at the Cross: A Letter from a Region in my Mind”, which is a palinode to the first letter. According to Plato’s the *Phaedrus*, a palinode is a kind of counter-discourse, a refutation of a previous speech (2002: 26). This letter clearly shows Baldwin’s rejection of both King Jr.’s Christian “love your enemy”, throughout his dramatic experiences in the church, as well as the love proffered by the Black Muslims of Chicago. The dialectic of racial love and hate is pertinent in this essay because Baldwin tries to show how the Christian institution is full of hatred and hypocrisy mainly towards blacks. For him, Christian love masks greed and the dirty fantasies that the religious men and women dissimulate under the disguise of holiness. In the same way, it is shown through the second part of the letter that the kind of Islam preached by Elijah Mohammad is suspicious when it comes to its capitals (money) and the real role this doctrine plays in the progress of blacks in America.

He no longer idealized Christian love and its ability to undo hatred between whites and blacks after undergoing a kind of metamorphosis in the church. He writes, “being in the pulpit is like being in theatre; I was behind the scenes and knew how the illusion was worked” (1963: 337). This means that his mature judgement permitted him to confront his spiritual seduction and carnal knowledge. Furthermore, witnessing the church members’ fake love and the worn masks to seduce the congregations while working for their personal profit disgusted him. However, he was clever enough to feign ignorance for the sake of staying more within the security offered by the church. He declares that, “it is certainly sad that the awakening of one’s senses should lead to such merciless judgement of oneself” (Ibid: 342). His mission is “to mortify his flesh” (Ibid.), to succeed in the assigned task of black priest.

Like Hansberry and Baldwin, Jones has been exposed to the Western philosophical and literary discourses of love. During his stay in the Air Force base, Jones experienced great upheavals in his life. The first one started with his Platonic / philosophical quest. His confrontation with the world of ideas was instigated by his extensive readings of literature and philosophy. He became conscious concerning the importance of being politically and philosophically educated. He wanted to understand the truth about the nature of his soul. For this, he entered a kind of isolated ascetic retreat. Thus, he read a great deal and tried as he says “to become an intellectual. I was becoming haughtier and more silent. More critical in a more general way. More specialized in my concerns. More abstract and distant” (AUTO: 174). He changed from a soldier into a scholar dreaming of climbing the ladder of philosophy like a Platonic lover. His shift from self-confident ignorance into a self-critical scepticism is explained above. This period is determining for him because he acknowledged his lack of knowledge and desired to know. Diotima in Plato’s *Symposium* describes the lover as “an eager searcher after knowledge, resourceful, lifelong lover of wisdom” (2008: 40). Jones’s eagerness to know has changed his state of mind. He questioned his present state of a soldier serving in the army after leaving school at an early age. His feeling of lack and frustration is

expressed in the following, “I felt nutty. Sometimes just stupid. Like how could I flunk out of school...I was supposed to be a kind of prodigy. (I never understood why)” (AUTO: 137).

However, Jones’s ascent from ignorance to knowledge raises his critical consciousness. So, he reminds us that the reader should be alert as far as the predominating white discourses that may be indoctrinating. He felt trapped in the Western mesh of alienating ideas from his own culture and his people. In evoking this alienation, he writes the following:

Yet my reading was in the main, white people. Europeans, Anglo Americans. So that my ascent toward some ideal intellectual pose was at the same time a trip toward a white-out I couldn’t even understand. I was learning and at the same time unlearning. The fasteners to black life unloosed. I was taking words, cramming my face with them. White people’s words profound beautiful, some even correct and important. But that is a tangle of nonself creation where you become other than you as you. Where the harnesses of the black life are loosened and you free-float, you think, in the great sunkissed intellectual waygonosphere. Imbibing, gobbling, stuffing yourself with reflections of the other (Ibid: 174).

This philosophical ascent describes the soul of the philosopher who tries to reach the ideal knowledge as expressed by Diotima in Plato’s the *Symposium*. According to her, the loving soul ascends to beautiful souls, to beautiful customs and laws, to beautiful studies and knowledge. Finally, it reaches the highest and the most beautiful knowledge of all which is the revelation of the beautiful itself. This is the form of beauty sought by the Platonic lover. Jones has written poems according to the Beat models. He created beautiful and eternal works by contemplating the beauty of the white poems. Later on, he turned to write plays after his participation in theatrical workshops with Edward Albee. His play *Dutchman* has propelled his career as a black dramatist. The Lula-Clay dialogue of the play that endorsed racial hate indicted him of exhorting racism and violence. This play would end his life in the Village and separate him from his white family and friends.

Jones calls this ascent to reach ideal “white” knowledge an “Error Farce”. His reading is transformed into brain-washing. For him, mainstream Western literature is “a death organization”. Western writers, like Hegel or Marx had not concerned themselves with black men. The beauty of Western literature is deadly for black writers, like Jones, notwithstanding

Hegel's affirmation of the contrary. He became conscious that white literature completely detached him from his black world. So, he decided to leave the Air Force base of the army to the white dream-like world of Greenwich Village. In this place, people were living an everlasting banquet of the senses. They were free to be, to wear, to eat and to do whatever they desire. He describes himself as "a no-real transitory character", like an elf or a fairy playing in the misty island of the Village. He describes this transition in his life as follows:

So this was the transition. From the cooled-out reactionary '50s, the '50s of the cold war and McCarthyism and HUAC, to the late '50s of the surging Civil Rights movement. And I myself was a transitional figure, coming out of the brown world and its black sources but already yellowed out a bit by the Capstone employment agency on the Hill. And then to add insult to injury, or maybe attempted homicide to assault, I had offered myself to the totalitarian 'whiteness' of the military. Running away from it, I dived into the books, only to get involved in a deeper, more 'profound', more rational version of the same thing. And then suddenly the unaware chump, seeking escape, runs into, strangely, a slender white woman with painted eyes, ponytail, and sandals with a copy of Strindberg under one arm (AUTO: 190).

This passage summarizes Jones's personal and intellectual change. He speaks of himself as a separate self, an in-between character, "both stupid and gullible". Being a black boy, Jones was bleached by the white school and the military trainings by being "imprisoned in an air force suit", as he says. Then, he became brainwashed by the Western literature and thoughts. To complete this process of "lactification", to use Fanon's word (2008: 33), he espoused a Jewish white woman.

After this disillusioned philosophical ascent through white literature that ostracized the black man, he experienced a descent to the senses. Frank Kermode explains the difference between Platonic lover the Ovidian one through opposing the banquet of philosophy and the banquet of senses. According to him, there is a clear and formal distinction between the two banquets of love. He writes that, "One is divine, one natural; one uplifting, one degenerate; one a banquet of the soul, which employs the senses properly, as agents of the mind ; the other a banquet of sense which can only corrupt, which is a yielding to degrading natural pleasure rather than the food of the soul" (1973: 76-77).

In the Village Jones joined an Ovidian banquet of the senses with the artists, poets and writers of his circle. Under the pretext of being free Bohemians, they led a life of ecstasy, following the pleasure principle. In this respect, Jones affirms, “[i]n the wilderness of our grouping lives there was a deadly hedonism that answered all questions. That offered all explanations. The pleasure principle, that finally was the absolute, what gave pleasure, and that alone. Our lives were designed around pleasure, ‘all is permitted’” (AUTO: 238). The gratification of the senses is the descent from the mind to the physical senses. As Jones testifies, it includes, “a rush of sparks, kicks, comings, lies, sadistic exchanges, masochism” (Ibid.). He describes these symposia as “a swarm of individuals sucking on life for instant gratification” (Ibid.). The shift into an Ovidian lover speaks of Jones’s desire to deflate the Platonic love in its confident racial reconciliation as proposed by Hansberry’s and Baldwin’s nonfictional writings. Jones, like other racial separatists, does not agree with the Neo-platonic philosophy of peaceful resolution through Platonic love. This will be documented further in the second part of our research that deals with the plays of the three writers.

Overall, the three authors entertain a dialogue with the self following Plato’s artistic and philosophical forms to seek the truth concerning their subjectivity as related to the racial love and hatred of the post-World War II America. As it is demonstrated in this chapter, they have also used the content of love as inspired by Plato and Ovid to convey their feelings. Like Platonic lovers their quest for identity is charted into different stages. They metamorphosed from the phase of self-confident ignorance of childhood to ultimate knowledge. This intellectual ascent permitted them to become conscious and to seek recognition as African American writers within the Western literary tradition. As their white counterparts, Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones used Renaissance cultural paradigms, Platonism and Ovidianism to dissect subjective issues of the black identity formation. Nevertheless, they differ in the way they deployed these paradigms. Both Hansberry and Baldwin are Platonic in their visions. They believe in the power of the Platonic love to act a compromise between

blacks and whites. On the contrary, Jones started as a Platonic lover but complete the intellectual process of consciousness by an Ovidian descent.

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CHAPTER FOUR

Racial Love-Hate Dialectics: Family Romances in Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's Selected Nonfictional Works

In this second chapter we will attempt at studying the racial love-hate dialectics as expressed in Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's nonfictional works for the sake of understanding their subjectivity and quest for identity as African American authors in post-World War II America characterized by the blacks' struggle for equal rights. To understand this dialectic, we will explore the dialogue of love and hatred within the black family according to Freud's essay "Family Romances"

To understand the nature of the love-hate dialectics, we need to explore the dynamics regulating the black writers' psychology and relation with their own family and black relatives. Kinship and family romances as related to dreams and aestheticism documented by Freud's essays: "Family Romances" and "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" are convenient in this analysis. Though psychoanalysis is a theory of subjectivity that studies human psyche in relation to purely sexual troubles, it will be used to explain race as an important factor in the construction of identity. In addition to Freud's theories, Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks*, which is partly based on Freud's approach to human subjectivity with a focus on the black-white subjectivity, will sustain our argumentation in the study of racial love and hate dialectic.

Family Romances in Hansberry's Nonfiction

In his essay "Sweet Lorraine" that opens the semi-autobiographical book entitled *To Be Young, Gifted and Black: Lorraine Hansberry in Her Own Words*, Baldwin explains that Hansberry is his best friend, and that they used to share debate and discuss many matters related to their sexual and racial alienation in a climate where being black gay or lesbian is

really problematic and even threatening (TBY: ix). Her blackness and the dialectics of racial love-hate feelings do not seem to be quite obvious themes in her essays as in her fiction. However, from the beginning, she pays more attention to her social class and family romances that are interspersed with her racial problems. She sheds light on the question of love in her black family and the way they approach this feeling. She is the granddaughter of a preacher and a light-skinned black woman from a middle-class bourgeois family. The code of racial love and hate that surrounded blackness during the late fifties and the sixties deeply marked her. Nevertheless, she maintained her hope in racial reconciliation. To understand her racial and political positions, a return to her early childhood and family romances is necessary.

Despite the fact that Hansberry assumed middle-class Bourgeois values and lived a rich life from her childhood, she envied the poverty of the children from the black working-class families with whom she attended school (Ibid: 36). She ignored the hardships of their lives. Yet, the problem for her was how to confront and integrate their black world. She was the whitened girl who should recognize the fact of her blackness to be accepted by the children of the ghetto who at first violently rejected her. She had to experience “being for others,” of which Hegel speaks, and that Fanon revised for the blacks.

Wearing the mask of the white rabbit under her white fur in the middle of Depression as already mentioned in the first chapter, Hansberry felt herself like Br'er rabbit (Brother Rabbit) of *Uncle Remus* stories in which rabbits are stereotypes for black stupidity. These comic books destined for children were written by the white journalist Joel Harris about the life of black people in the American South. These stories, as Fanon reports, are a monument to the ambivalence of the South (in Fanon, 2008: 175). He adds that Harris, the archetype of the southerner sought the Negro's love and won it (the grin of Uncle Remus). But at the same time, he was striving for the Negro's hatred (Br'er Rabbit), and he reveled in it, in “an unconscious orgy of masochism”, punishing himself for not being the black man, the

stereotype of the prodigious “giver” (Ibid.). Hansberry was obliged by her mother to wear a white disguise to amuse the middle class guests. More than that, she had to go with the same mask to school. This early traumatic incident in her life pushed her to dislike her family’s opulence and assimilationist manners. She played the image of Brother Rabbit that she hated in front of the children of the ghetto who showed aggressive attitudes towards her. She was considered as the despised foreigner to their world. This had created a masochistic attitude in her, and a desire to punish herself for being different. She was not as white as the whites that her family idealized and not as black as her peers of ghetto.

From this period of time on, she started to react against the bourgeois respectability of her family. She questioned the authority of her parents, their values and their lifestyle that were different from those of the ghetto’s children. This is evident in the comparison she made between her home and theirs, considering the huge gap between middle-class Bourgeois and working-class black families. Nonetheless, though her father ran for the Congress, as a Republican, during the Rooseveltian atmosphere of the thirties, she was obliged to join black schools. The experience of being a black rich child among black poor children traumatized her and made out of her an outsider because of her different social class.

Her state of being an outsider started from early childhood. To paraphrase Freud’s she compared her own family with others’ because of her desire to be loved. The lack of affection is felt through her will to overthrow the authority of her parents. In addition, she was the youngest of her four siblings, and seven years separated the nearest of her brothers and sisters and herself (Ibid: 18). She felt estranged from her own family. So, she started to hate her mother mainly because she thought that she was loathed, and that she was an accident instead of being a desired child as her siblings. She really thought that children who were last born and separated by an uncommon length of time from the next youngest were “a race apart” (Ibid.). Therefore, Hansberry has started to envy the simple kiss a mother gave to one of her

friends of the ghetto. She envied their poor house, their way of suffering because it is often accompanied with love which she lacked and desired most. Paradoxically, she wanted the life of her poor friend Carmen Smith.

Love in Hansberry's family was not significant because they were rich and they should preserve this lifestyle that was quiet demanding for her parents. These, were working and always absent from the house. They had everything, materially speaking, but they lacked love and human warmth. She writes that, "of love and my parents there is little to be written: their relationship to their children was utilitarian. We were fed and housed and dressed and outfitted with more cash than our associates and that was all" (Ibid: 17).

Hansberry's loneliness directed her to other occupations such as reading books, music and writing poems. She is segregated within both her family and her schoolmates outside. Subsequently, the real attention she paid to the problems of the ghetto pushed her to understand that she is in fact oppressed in the family and in the American society at large despite the fact of pertaining to the middle-class black bourgeoisie. She described her relation with the members of her family as being devoid of love. This lack of affection on the part of her siblings has deeply affected her:

The last born is an object toy which comes in the years when brothers and sisters who are seven, ten, twelve years older are old enough to appreciate it rather than poke out its eyes. They do not mind diapering you the first two years, but by the time you are five you are a pest that have to be attended to in the washroom, taken to the movies and 'set with' at night. You are not a person-you are a nuisance who is not particular fun anymore (Ibid: 18).

Family and Racial love / hate relations are really tied in the American racial context of the sixties because of the racist stereotypes and psychic pressure internalized by black people. These clichés concern their physical and cultural blackness and the ensued racial struggle for equal Civil Rights. Fanon explains that the black man is the product of his cultural situation and social environment. His confrontation with the white world creates Furthermore, being segregated in both the family and society, as in the case of Hansberry, is systematically going

to trigger a kind of violent behavior in spite of her financial security granted by her family's wealth.

Hansberry's obsessive love for her father stems from her great admiration for that man who tackled the racial problems of the Chicago's ghetto and tried to save the poor children from white oppression and forgetfulness. In her semi-autobiography the reader can deduce that their relation has Oedipus traits due to the way she describes him. She describes him as an epic hero who is not afraid of anything. The god-like stature she assigns to her father, informs of her deep respect and desire to be like him. He is the perfect model for her, despite the fact that he passed great time in working and reading. As a father, he is Hansberry's first storyteller who used to nourish her imagination during her childhood in which she felt an outsider who listened and observed carefully. During summer nights, Cheney reports that, "Drawing on his Southern heritage, Mr. Hansberry would tell stories of his childhood and muse about the distant stars until the family felt asleep" (Cheney, A., 1984: 3).

In addition, Hansberry sees her father as a distinctive man who believed in the American dream, or what she calls in her letter of April 23rd, 1964, addressed to the editor of *The New York Times*, "The American way". He set himself the challenge of succeeding in a society directed by the white power (TBY: 20). In a more intimate and loving terms she writes that:

The man that I remember was an educated soul, though I think now, looking back, that it was as much a matter of the physical bearing of my father as his command of information and of thought that left the impression upon me. I know nothing of the insurance of kings and will not use this metaphor on account of it. Suffice it to say that my father's enduring image in my mind is that of a man whom kings might have imitated and properly created their own flattering descriptions of. A man who always seems to be doing something brilliant and / or unusual to such an extent that to be doing something brilliant and / or unusual was the way I assumed fathers behaved... he carried his head in such a way that I was quiet certain that there was nothing he was afraid of (Ibid: 20).

Admiring her father and comparing him to a king is an exaggerated hyperbole that informs of her great love for him. She has felt great pain when he was attacked by the blacks who

consider him as a “sell out”, an “Uncle Tom” because he was rich and from the black middle-class.

Her admiration for her father’s physical beauty, moral strength, and his intellectual faculties pushed her to become a good disciple through listening to his dialogues about politics and racial problems with interesting people as Langston Hughes and W.E.B. DuBois. Her special character and her isolation from her family members and her friends become disturbing during puberty. Her physical weight started to represent a great barrier between herself and others. Cheney speaks about her extreme shyness when she became corpulent during her studies in Englewood High School. She writes, “no longer that adorable child dressed in white fur, she had become an overweight adolescent, her sister Mamie was kind enough not to point out that she expanded three dress sizes” (Cheney: 5). Her physical appearance greatly differs from her sister Mamie and her mother, who were model type beauties. They were feminine and graceful *à la Marline Monroe*. The importance that her female family members assigned to the appearances and their desire to be like white models bored her. So, she often felt “lonely, clumsy-an outsider” (Ibid: 6). Therefore, she preferred the company of books of history and philosophy.

Her hatred for her siblings is understated through the way she described her family situation and the kind of relations she had with them. Her older sister Mamie was the authentic copy of her beautiful mother, aping the middle class values and manners, while her brothers Carl Hansberry Jr., and Perry were following in their father’s path, trying to run the family business to perpetuate their bourgeois lifestyle. She desperately writes, “we were not a loving people: we were passionate in our hostilities and affinities, but the caress embarrassed us” (TBY: 18).

Furthermore, her hatred for her beautiful mother and sister had been intensified after the most painful and traumatizing event of her life, the death of her beloved father of a cerebral

hemorrhage, when she was only fifteen years old. The loss of the father at that critical age equals the loss of security and credibility in the model ideals in which this man believed like the American dream, and the possibility for the black man to succeed through hard work and perseverance. Hansberry's world had been shattered by this unexpected death that embarked her into a tunnel of fear and questioning about everything. Freud speaks about the loss of a cherished person in his essay "Morning and Melancholia", explaining that the result is the destruction of the ego when the dead is an object-love, and the manifestations are self-regression and low self-esteem. He states that:

In mourning we found that the inhibition and loss of interest are fully accounted for by the work of mourning in which the ego is absorbed. The patient represents his ego to us as worthless, incapable of any achievement and morally despicable; he reproaches himself, vilifies himself and expects to be cast out and punished (1989: 584).

In fact, her dramatic family romance that ends with the death of her father, deeply affected her whole life. She lost interest in her previous loved occupations such as painting and writing, she became physically frail and thin, refusing nourishment, feeling herself isolated more than before and desperately missing her father (TBY: 9). She openly expressed her hatred to her mother in an unpublished memoir, writing that, "she [her mother] is vain and intensely feminine person...that...the Southland alone can thrust upon the world...she is the product of robust semi-feudal backwardness" (in Cheney, 1984: 9). Thus, hating her mother and existing under the shadow of her beautiful and feminine sister Mamie, Hansberry felt oppressed and retired from the other members of the family to her books and drawings again. She further hated and accused the American system for killing her father affirming later on that, "the cost in emotional turmoil, time and money lead to my father's early death as a permanently embittered exiled in a foreign country when he saw that after such sacrificial efforts the Negroes of Chicago were as ghetto-locked as ever" (TBY: 21).

Her melancholia pushed her to find a substitute for the father figure in many brilliant intellectual black men starting by Carl Hansberry's brother Leo who was a historian of Africa,

taught at Howard University and frequently visited the Hansberrys. Leo Hansberry had been often accompanied by African students studying with him in the United States, from whom she learnt a lot about Africa, racism and its connection to colonialism in an international dimension. It is he who “made Lorraine wonder about these men Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta. What did Africa mean to a young woman in Chicago? Years later, she would not be surprised when the university of Nigeria named a college after her uncle” (Cheney, 1984: 9). Her acquaintance with African students has inspired her to create the Nigerian character called Asagai in her play *A Raisin in the Sun*. This African character’s cherished ideas are Africa’s independence from Western colonialism and the African progress through education.

Her love for her uncle Leo motivated her to spend years of her young life in studying Africa, its geography, its politics and the issues of colonialism. This knowledge culminated in her commitment alongside W.E.B. DuBois and Paul Robson to *Freedom* magazine. She took DuBois’s lectures at The Jefferson School, the Communist Party’s adult educational center. In March 1952, Hansberry and several others opened the Frederick Douglass School in Harlem. Later on, she began to teach a course in “The Literature of the American Negro People” at The Jefferson School. There, she was claimed as being DuBois’s “favourite pupil” and that he was “exceedingly fond and proud of her” (Smith, Judith E, Jones G., E., 2004: 295).

Hansberry’s experience in *Freedom* magazine played an important role in promoting her career and rising her political awareness and maturity. Before integrating the staff of the magazine, while she was in Wisconsin University, she showed a great interest in politics. Her choice was a challenge and a shift from the family tradition of studying at Howard University. Unlike her siblings, she entered a white university that refused her a room in the dormitory because she is black. Yet, she rented with girls from different parts of the world, shared a room with Edythe, who is going to be her best friend and with whom “she enjoyed discussions late into the night, their room bluing with smoke, filling with talk of politics,

fascism, the meaning of life, God, Boys” (Cheney, 1984: 10). The insecurity and anxiety caused by her father’s death were intensified by the racial segregation she endured in the university. Entering the white world as a student made her understand that she was refused recognition from the Other / white society. After accepting the impossibility of self-consciousness in isolation, Hansberry accepted the necessity of existence of an Other as prerequisite for being as Fanon explains revising Hegel’s section in *Phenomenology of mind* on “Lordship and Bondage”: recognition, reciprocity and struggle (in Gendzier, I. L., 1974: 23). Her discreet self experienced both desire of racial recognition. She desires and asks to be considered as a white person. Fanon contends that “desire is the first milestone on the road that leads to the dignity of the spirit” (1952: 218). However, her desire was blocked by the simultaneous resistance of the Other (the white society) to this expression and retained it in the fixed pattern of “an immobilized dialectic” (Ibid.). As a result, this frozen dialectic shifted into an open conflict that conveyed Hansberry’s will to struggle and her will to live. She clearly expresses it, writing “I want to live for generation” (TBY: xii).

Hansberry’s will to live was confirmed by her will to struggle. During her Wisconsin period, she became conscious that those who were reluctant to recognize her opposed her. Her consciousness concerning the desire to live and struggle to be recognized was characterized by her attraction to two shaping means of pacific fighting. The first one is her participation in a political party and the second one is her unexpected love for theatre and the growing consciousness of what it could accomplish in society. Hansberry sided with Henry Wallace of the Progressive Party because “he strongly opposes U.S Cold War policies and supported racial equality” (in Lieberman R., 2009: 33). Nevertheless, her middle class bourgeois mother was against her political activism. She wanted her daughter to preserve her middle class reputation and feminine image. In a letter addressed to her friend, Hansberry writes:

My family has forbidden my attending, so much, as one more Wallace meeting-I am quite sick about it. They are afraid little Lorraine will call up one night from the police station and ask for her Pajamas or tied to a post with a [hammer and sickle] branded on my forehead by local

‘patriots’... I am sincerely interested in what I have been doing and because I felt that I was doing something (in Anderson, 2010: 93-4).

She desired to struggle for her “independent self-consciousness” (Fanon, 1952: 218) far from her family’s middle class respectability. Her concern about the oppressed all over the world increased. Her awareness of the oppression within her racial self, Joseph McCarthy’s repression against intellectuals, taxing them of being communist under the veil of the Red Scare menace, pushed her to reconsider her political views and believed in the ideas of the Communist Party (the Left), as a political choice. About her political tendency, Lieberman writes that,

Hansberry was unsure about the Communists at first because of their reputation for taking over organizations, her doubts had been dispelled by 1948 because they do not advocate war of any nature Just as many people had turned to the Communist movement in the 1930s because of its aggressive activity on behalf of labor and economic rights and against racism, Hansberry joined because of the Communists’ peace activism (2009: 32).

At the university, Hansberry confessed that she escaped to the theatre to ‘flunk’ her boring classes of ‘physical geography’ for instance (TBY: 49). In her semi-autobiography, she narrated her experience about the first play that greatly influenced her. It is entitled *Juno and the Paycock* by Sean O’Casey (TBY: 65). Her intimate familiarity with the drama started during her adolescence when riding to the theatre to see Howard Richardson’s folk musical *Dark of the Moon*, and as she tells us “she marveled at the majesty of Othello, the Noble Moor, who ‘loved not wisely but too much’, enchanted by Ariel’s songs in *The Tempest* and suffered with the enslaved Caliban, prisoner in the brave new world” (Cheney, 1984: 6). This identification with the oppressed and her questioning of the Western civilization’s and imperialism’s power would be the core of her coming engagements. She became much more conscious after discovering the world of drama and theatrical representation.

Her struggle became tangible after joining the peculiar activist family of *Freedom* magazine, contributing with more than twenty articles during her five-year association with its members. Moreover, *Freedom*’s writers unmasked the political upheavals in Africa, Joseph

McCarthy's intimidation of artists, actors and writers, and the Jim Crow Laws (Cheney, 1984: 14). Smith Judith E. and Jones Gareth E. explain that the staff of *Freedom* magazine,

[R]epresented an unusually talented and experienced group of intellectuals and activists committed to challenging assumptions of white supremacy and publicizing protests against segregationist practices throughout the country. They constituted a stimulating intellectual, political, and cultural milieu in which Hansberry could find an 'education of a different kind' and kindred spirits interested in stepping 'deliberately against the beat' (2004: 293).

Hansberry's racial love-hate feelings motivated her to question the origins of her blood and the constituents of her own body and identity. She understands that she is a strange mixture of the Vikings and the Africans. In the part of her semi-autobiography entitled "Wisconsin: Of Vikings and Congo Drums", Hansberry has drawn a map of her blood's origins tracing them back to Scandinavians, whose lore had once captivated her. As it is made clear, "she had been obsessed with images of tall grunting blonde folk in fur capes and horns and belted leggings moving through dark forests grunting Beowulf and building funny churches with turned up edges and having sex in hay lofts..." (TBY: 50). She explains this obsession by referring to her reading about the Vikings and her hybridized ancestry.

However, and to follow Fanon's analysis in "The Woman of Colour and the White man", this obsession has its roots in the days of childhood. According to him, the black woman is brought up with the racial complex of inferiority instilled in her consciousness by her family. Hansberry's bourgeois family's aspiration to be whitened and assimilated into mainstream American society influenced her. Fanon's Mayotte Capécia was obsessed by whiteness. Instead of recognizing her blackness, she proceeded to turn it into an accident when she learnt that her grandmother was white. It follows that Hansberry in a way, was proud of having European ancestors. As Fanon says, it is because the Negress feels inferior that she aspires to win admittance into the white world (1952: 60). This entrance is only possible through kinship or marriage.

Unlike Mayotte who strived to bleach her blackness by what Fanon calls “the process of lactification”, Hansberry speaks with great romanticism about the African dimension of the African Americans. She considers it as the greatest part of her identity. Love for the African part goes back to her childhood when “she spent hours of her younger years poring over maps of the African continent, postulating and fantasizing: Ibo, Mandingo, Yoruba, Hausa, Ashanti, Dahomean” (Ibid.). She inherited her racial pride from her father who taught her and her siblings that: “we [the Hansberrys] were better than no one but infinitely superior to everyone, that we were the products of the proudest and most mistreated of the races of man” (Ibid: 17).

Furthermore, personal tremor and violence were part of the family’s collective memory. It is retold through the story of one uncle, a prominent physician, on a hunting trip with his three brothers, taken off a train and lynched by a white mob in the Elaine, Arkansas riot of October 1919 (Smith J. E., Jones, G.E., 2004: 288). In her revulsion at lynching and segregation and their traumatic effects on the blacks, she deplored the way these cruel practices took place in America, the land of freedom. As she writes, lynching was “publicized” and spoken “with warmth and love, in my very face- bloody lands of hatreds” (TBY: 80).

Hansberry’s conflicting racial love-hate feelings is a logical outcome of being black in America. Racial hate is the part nurtured by the white stereotypes against blackness. It is interiorized by black people due to their living in a racial context wherein white supremacy works against the progress of the black race. Hate as Fanon writes is not inborn. It has to be constantly cultivated to be brought into being, in conflict with more or less recognized guilt complexes. For him, hate demands existence, and he who hates has to show his hate in appropriate actions and behavior (1952: 53). This is applicable for the Americans who, as Fanon expands, have substituted discrimination for lynching, each to his own side of the street (Ibid.).

Racial love comes from the black people's will to liberate their race from oppression by not imprisoning themselves in racial hatred and self-hate. They try instead to understand their own subjectivity in an inner dialogue that rescinds the whites' stereotypes. Alienated blacks tend to think that they are guilty of being black, and that they have to bear all the resulting consequences of this existential fact. However, this situation creates resentment and hatred against the white people who are racist. In compensation they develop racial love as a legitimate defense mechanism against the terror of the white racism.

W.E.B. DuBois, a friend of the Hansberrys and one of the teachers of Hansberry, speaks about this ambivalence or what he calls the concept of "twoness" in *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903). This book holds a place of pride in the Hansberrys' Library and Lorraine fully assimilated and analyzed it. The concept of "double consciousness" as explained by DuBois pertinently renders the ambivalence of the racial love-hatred as felt by the black people. He explains that,

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,--an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (2014: 3).

Hansberry was too much affected by DuBois's *The Souls of Black Folks* which fixed the moment in history when the African American began to reject the idea of the world belonging to the white man only and started to think of himself as a force in the organization of society (Cheney, 1984: 44). DuBois's views are revived by Hansberry herself in her autobiography recognizing the two halves of the black consciousness, yet with a 'peculiar' love for the African part about which she is very proud:

She was Kikuyu and Masai, ancient cousins of hers had made the exquisite forged sculpture at Benin, while surely even more ancient relatives set upon the throne at Abu Simbel watching over the Nile. One thing was certain: she was at once, texture, blood, follicles of hair, nerve ends, all with the sound of a mighty Congo drums. She had never heard African music that had not set her mad with the romance of her people, never. At the first rich basso boom, her heart rose in her bosom, her teeth set, her eyes widened, and Africans claimed her (TBY: 50-1).

This preference for her African part is uttered by her female character Beneatha in her play *A Raisin in the Sun*. Beneatha answers back her assimilationist black bourgeois fiancé George Murchison. “your heritage is nothing but a bunch of raggedy-assed spirituals and some grass huts!” (Hansberry, 1987: 81), the latter says in his reference to the African origins of black people. Deeply hurt, Beneatha scathingly responds: “[y]ou are standing there in your splendid ignorance talking about people who were the first to smelt iron on the face of the earth! The Ashanti were performing surgical operations when the English were still tattooing themselves with blue dragons!” (Ibid: 81).

Hansberry’s antiracist struggle and her fervent discourse of racial love and pride about her African origins find their best expression in her espousal of a Jewish white man, called Robert Nemiroff. This interracial marriage was the first one in both the Hansberrys and the Nemiroffs. However, the parents consented because, to paraphrase Cheney, they come from two outcast subcultures, that is black and Jewish, and they are both rich and at least cultured and at ease economically speaking (1984: 20). Still, suffering from the family romances, and trying to find surrogate father(s), Hansberry was not enthusiastic concerning the idea of marriage. She was active and busy in her work and writings. Nonetheless, her mother’s pressure over the fact of being a lady from the middle class family, living alone in New York, and having female roommates would compromise her reputation. For her mother, her daughter needed a husband to shelter her. Hansberry’s mother urged her to break with political activism, and to start thinking about creating her own family. She advises her, “Well, any middle-class lady shouldn’t be in New York so long, because you know it is time for you to think about getting married...just girls setting in an apartment isn’t safe, and it will subject you to ridicule and all that stuff” (Ibid: 20).

Indeed Hansberry’s mother is the prototype of Hughes’ black middle class bourgeois woman who aspires to whiten her family by aping white manners. She is the “old

subconscious” that keeps whispering “white is best” that runs in the minds of the black people. For the Hansberrys like the blacks from the middle class, Hughes writes, the word white comes to be unconsciously a symbol of all virtues. It holds for the children beauty, morality, and money. Seeing her daughter marrying a rich and white man was the apotheosis of Hansberry’s mother’s desire to whiten the race. Indeed, their marriage, as Cheney reports was sumptuous (Ibid: 21) and great personalities were present to celebrate this interracial marriage between a white Jew and a Christian black woman.

Unlike her mother who succumbed to the desire of “lactification” through whitening the blackness of her race, Hansberry struggled against assimilation. She wanted to experience the long journey of consciousness to know itself with all her identity’s components. Her union with a Jewish husband is special in that they are from two despised and oppressed minorities in the Western world. Both the Jew and the black suffer from being modelled by the Other as Fanon explains following in Sartre’s study of the Jew. Gendzier explains that the social character of the Jew and the false conditions of his life are two of the qualities that seem identical with the conditions which Fanon repeatedly turned over in his mind as characteristic of the situation of the black Frenchman (1974: 32). Thus, Fanon understood that the fear of the anti-Semite is no different than the fear of the racist, and both types, often concealed in the same man, succeeded to create conditions in which the Jew and the black were not free to live as they chose.

Hansberry and Nemiroff shared many similarities like their love for literature, writing, music, and their urgent desire to change the world for the black and the Jew through peaceful struggle. They married in 1953 and settled in Greenwich Village. After *Freedom* magazine’s bankruptcy, Hansberry started to work in many places to support her husband’s financial needs to finish his studies. Later on, they embarked in the world of music, and their song “Cindy, Oh, Cindy” that earned them \$100.000, freed her to write all the time (Ibid: 23).

Hansberry's marriage with Nemiroff seems a perfect match. However, the romantic image of two lovers is a mask that hides disillusionment and despair. Hansberry refused to be a mother with children at her charge. As Cheney declares, "Lorraine the artist triumphed over Lorraine the Mother" (Ibid: 24). Yet, the real reason behind this disillusionment is that Hansberry was a closeted lesbian. Her memoirs and unpublished works mention her homosexuality. Being from a prominent Chicago family, an eminent journalist, feminist, a fervent fighter against imperialism everywhere, and an activist in the black Civil Rights Movement during the Cold War pushed her to dissimulate her lesbianism to preserve her family's, her husband's and her own reputation and public image.

Her lesbianism was publicly revealed after her death in 1965, and it was until 1976 that Barbara Grier, former editor of the lesbian periodical *The Ladder*, publicly identified Hansberry as the author of two public letters sent to the periodical (in Lipari, L., 2007: 220). Literary critics overlooked this peculiarity in Hansberry's character. Only a few of them considered the importance of this secret struggle led by her and this veiled side of her subjectivity. Lipari's article entitled "The Rhetoric of Intersectionality: Lorraine Hansberry's 1957 Letters to the Ladder" (2007) is among the works devoted to Hansberry's homosexual struggle. In it, Lipari writes that Hansberry's "queer rhetorical persona easily evade identification". She adds that, "while she is widely regarded as a signifier for racial justice, for close to fifty years, she was not constructed as a queer signifier until her death in 1965" (Ibid: 220). The cause of this secrecy and "invisibility" is that Hansberry started to become an important public figure after the success of her play *A Raisin in the Sun*, and news of her lesbianism would wane her shining moment on the American scene. However, Lipari considers her anonymous letter, signed only using initials "L.H.N", and her decision to stay closeted through her short life as a kind of "straight masking" or a "rhetorical tactic of resistance" on the part of Hansberry. This is because "for certain individuals, passing constitutes the public expression of homosexual double consciousness, a measured and

strategic form of straight masking employed to resist, and not merely survive, homophobic oppression” (Ibid: 221).

Like Iphis, the Ovidian heroine in book IX of *Metamorphoses*, she could not find words to her “unnatural love” for women rather than men. Thus, like Ovid’s silenced heroine, Hansberry has always hidden this “different” sexual side of her own personality. Yet, whether this secrecy is a literary trope or a great fear of scandal, or both, the reality is that she dated female lovers and sent two letters to *The Ladder* to show her sympathy and devotion to this circle. This magazine had been created by the Daughter of Bilitis, a secret group of lesbians. In 1955, they began conducting meetings in San Francisco, and a year later, they started publishing a monthly magazine called *The Ladder*. It was an important source of lesbian political mobilization in the late 1950s. In the 1960s, *The Ladder* embraced viewpoints that would be labeled “lesbian-feminist” during the 1970s. The Daughters of Bilitis was the only major homophile organization devoted to lesbians (Loftin G.M. 2012: 20). The same source explores in more depth the homophile group for male homosexuals represented by the magazine *One*, to whom Hansberry has also written anonymous letters signed “L.H” or “L.H.N.” (Ibid: 21).

Hansberry’s family romance is constructed throughout her ambivalent emotional experiences that go back to the period of childhood and puberty. It is caused by her situation of an outcast everywhere, “a race apart” as she explained. She exposes some similarity with Freud’s homosexual woman treated in his essay “A Case of Homosexuality in a Woman” mentioned above. Like her, she felt the lack of love and seclusion from the days of childhood. As Freud writes, when someone’s need for love is not entirely satisfied by reality, s/he is bound to approach every new person s/he meets with libidinal anticipation (Freud, 1989: 387). Consequently, Hansberry started to befriend the children of the ghetto aiming to take part of their daily lives despite their resentment against her family’s affluence and class

difference. Though she was young, she understood that these children of the ghetto were strong and deep, different from herself who was protected like a weak bird. She aspired to take part in these children's life and be as strong and as responsible as they were through imitation. As she writes in the quotation below, they were models for her:

Children, who above all had their own door keys: gleaming yellow metal, hung proudly, in her eyes on a string around the neck! Throughout her childhood she had tried various props in fiercely jealous emulation: her skate key, stray keys found in the street, any number of things, but make-believe wasn't the same... They laughed and they got to go to the movies alone on Saturday afternoons without adults (TBY: 38).

Hansberry envied the language they used to support their authority and their independence. For her, "they knew all the secret things that grown-ups did and the secret words to describe them" (Ibid.). This secret world in which the children of the ghetto used to create their own dreams and games remained mysterious in the eyes of Hansberry. She observed them with jealousy and self-hate, because her middle class bringing prevented her from pertaining to that group. Her parents sent her to the ghetto school, instead of a white school, in order to mix but turned out to be detrimental to her process of growth. She suffered segregation and hatred from her young peers because she was socially different and became again a stranger, an outcast even at school. This intensified her hatred for her parents and their social status.

Overall, Hansberry lived traumatizing experiences before being accepted in the world of the ghetto children. She was "spited off", violently repulsed by them. As she dreadfully writes, she was often "thrown to the sidewalk, where the pebbly texture of the concrete cut into the elbow and the knees, but above all the sheer terror of it all-of the fact of violence..." (Ibid.). In addition to aggression and hatred by the children of the ghetto, this segregated school of Southside Chicago had a disastrous effect on her cognitive faculties. This is because she affirms later, "I cannot count properly. I do not add, subtract, or multiply with ease... or even make simple change in a grocery store. To be imprisoned in the ghetto is to be forgotten- or deliberately cheated of one's birthright-at best." (Ibid: 36). Hansberry's struggle to be loved and accepted by the children of the ghetto who despised her affected her sexual identity.

The most important person whom she admired most was a girl called Carmen Smith. That one was far from being the pet of her family. Instead, she “did more things and laughed harder when they laughed” (TBY: 38). Carmen was among the most miserable children of the ghetto and was Hansberry’s assailants who violently attacked her. Despite their violent reception, she admired and respected these children’s unity and their ability and readiness to fight whatever the circumstances. Ultimately, she managed to integrate to them and acquire this desire to fight against any kind of injustice.

Robert Nemiroff’s adaptation of Hansberry’s personal writings in *To be Young, Gifted and Black* do not contain clear and direct mark of her lesbian or bisexual trait. There is an important interactional written material included in the semi-autobiography. It is constituted of a number of selected letters written by Hansberry herself and addressed to her family, friends, to the persons she closely knew or to readers / spectators of her play *A Raisin in the Sun*. She answered their feedbacks, comments and questions. These letters are not complete because of Nemiroff’s editing decisions. They are dialogic, and they constitute a site in which she expressed her multiple struggles and her aspirations. Their most important feature is their direct talk with the authorities and the American political system taking the task of negotiating the rights of the oppressed: women, blacks, Jews, communists and many others.

Just like Ovid’s *Heroides*, which is a collection of love letters of women lovers abandoned by their male beloveds (except for Sappho who addresses both male and female beloved), Hansberry’s letters can be read as a form of lament abridged by Nemiroff. However, Hansberry’s letters show that she self-consciously fashions herself as an alert and active African American woman author who undertakes to take an important role in multiple modern wars against injustices that characterized the post-World War II America like racism, McCarthyism and more subtly the battle against American sexism and heterosexual rejection of homosexuals and lesbians.

The letter Hansberry addressed to a person called Edythe Cohen is not really a signifier of passionate love though it expressed her nostalgia and loneliness. The addressee / Edythe was Hansberry's roommate when she was in Langdon Manor, Wisconsin, with whom she used to share her views about literature and politics, "I thought of you, and now I am at my typewriter writing you...I wonder about you-I didn't just pick out a name. I want to hear from you (tell me something to read once again)" (TBY: 80-2). Either deliberately or unintentionally, the letter is published in fragmentary form with interruptions and missing passages. In it, she spoke about her loneliness despite having multiple activities besides her work in *Freedom* magazine. In addition to her social and political activism, she explained to Edythe that she was different as if another fragment of her personality was born, discovered and strangely appeared to confront her, "I have learned to love clothes in a new way...life in a new way. I think I am a little different" (TBY: 77).

The letter fluctuates between her old and new self. It oscillates between anxieties of the innovative and her desire to return back to past evenings passed with her roommate, discussing with less commitment the political issues of the day. Her personal change is closely related to the binarity of racial love and hate as she understood that her family was no longer responsible for the suffering of their people. She became conscious that the real agent who is blameworthy was the American white government and its policy of keeping the blacks in the ghetto to preserve their racial white superiority. She ended up her letter with an expression of outrage, "I am tired of poverty and lynching..." (TBY: 82), she complains.

Hansberry's bisexuality is unveiled in secret letters she addressed to the lesbian journal *The Ladder* in 1957. In 2014, the museum of Brooklyn opened archives concerning Lorraine Hansberry. Her letters were exposed to the public in the Herstory Gallery, by Elisabeth E. Sackler, the creator of the Center for Feminist Art. This news is posted and easily accessed to and it is now possible to read and analyze fragments of the two letters. In the epistolary

addressed to *The Ladder* (1957), the lesbian journal, Hansberry expressed her enthusiasm and joy because such an intellectual outlet existed for homosexual women like her:

I'm glad as heck that you exist. You are obviously serious people and I feel that women, without wishing to foster any strict separatist notions, homo or hetero, indeed have a need for their own publications and organizations. Our problems, our experiences as women are profoundly unique as compared to the other half of the human race. Women, like other oppressed groups of one kind or another, have particularly had to pay a price for the intellectual impoverishment that the second class status imposed on us for centuries created and sustained. Thus, I feel that *The Ladder* is a fine, elementary step in a rewarding direction (in Outhistory.org).

In addition to her enthusiasm, Hansberry affirms her support for the lesbian feminist group called The Daughters of Bilitis. Without fostering any form of separatism, she refers to “the intellectual impoverishment of women” as a weapon used by the first class status (heterosexual men) to subjugate women by conditioning them to their second class status. She had never publicly confessed her bisexuality because she wanted to preserve her public image, and she is involved in the Civil Rights Movement that would take it as a weakness to include a lesbian or a homosexual among their ranks.

Hansberry has been the pioneer in coining the concept of intersectionality because she lived the same racism within her own family and community. She belonged to the rich black middle-class but she studied in the ghetto. She was a black communist that openly supported Robson and DuBois during McCarthy’s blacklisting but she was also a feminist and a closeted bisexual in a homophobic heterosexual patriarchal society. The intersection of these racial, social and cultural injustices fashioned her multidimensional struggle.

Her personal struggle was ignited by a complex sexual identity directly related to racial love and hate. This identity was at the intersection of social construction and a psychodynamic process supplemented racist discourses and by her family romances that were characterized by what Judith Butler calls “Gender Trouble” (1990: xxvii). Butler’s book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) offer a formulation of the problem of normative sexuality that recalls earlier Hansberry’s views. Butler says that normative sexuality fortifies normative gender ((1990: xi). Further, she explains that the first

formulation of “gender trouble” is that one is a woman to the extent that one functions as one within the dominant heterosexual frame. So, to call the frame into question is perhaps to lose something of one’s sense of place in gender (Ibid.). Like Butler, Hansberry wanted to speak for all the persons who were considered as sexually “non-normative”. Both of them opposed those regimes of truth that stipulated that certain kinds of gendered expressions were found to be false or derivative, and others, true and original. Butler’s aim joins Hansberry’s in her desire to open up the field of possibilities that ought to be realized without delegitimizing minority gendered and sexual practices, and to think them before coming into any kinds of conclusions.

Hansberry’s gender trouble could not be resolved because at that time, during the sixties, “non-normative” genders could not be expressed freely. This would exclude her from her own community. As a female black activist and a playwright, Hansberry espoused a public role that settled certain limits for her. She was obliged to appear in conformity with post-Second World War II discourses about sexuality and race propagated by the government, the law, medical institutions, the church, and most importantly the mass media. These discourses played a role in legitimizing some regimes of truth concerning women, blacks and homosexuals, and caused the destruction of the deviant or the simply different ones that did not fit in the traditional gender and racial roles. Postwar American influential discourses that shaped the identity of the generation of Hansberry and her peers were fabricated by social forces that imposed conformity to the main stream American society represented by the white middle-class. In this respect, Benshoff writes that, “conformity to a white, middle-class, heterosexual, jingoistic American norm became a national obsession, as well as a survival mechanism, especially for those deemed different in any way” (Benshoff, M., 2005: 86).

Hansberry attempted to deflate these regimes of truth concerning black people in her struggles within the black Civil Rights Movement. In another fragment of her anonymous

letter to *The Ladder*, she attacked the philosophy of the moral superstructure that refused to recognize the equality of men and women that condemned their homosexuality. She expresses the urgency to change the regime of truth by saying:

It is time that 'half the human race' had something to say about the nature of its existence. Otherwise, without revised basic thinking-the woman intellectual is likely to find herself trying to draw conclusions-moral conclusions-based on acceptance of a social moral superstructure which has never admitted to the equality of women and is therefore immoral itself. As per marriage, as per sexual practices, as per the rearing of children, etc. in this kind of work there may be women to emerge who will be able to formulate a new and possible concept that homosexual persecution and condemnation has at its roots not only social ignorance, but a philosophically active anti-feminist dogma. But that is a kernel of a speculative embryonic idea improperly introduced here (in Carter, S., 1991: 7).

Her desire to displace social structures by new revolutionary feminist thoughts was inflamed after her readings of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. According to Higashida, what Hansberry finds in Beauvoir's book is an "existentialist feminism [that] is integral to rearticulating the meanings of and relationships between sexual, racial, and national liberation" (Higashida, C., 2011: 60).

Hansberry's racial and sexual struggle vacillates between the self and the group / black people. Far from excluding one of them, these issues overlap and are interrelated. Fanon has explored the issues relating race and sexuality in the formation of a cultural identity in his chapter "The Negro and Psychopathology". He exposes the sexual stereotypes formed around the sexuality of the Negro. He is endowed with great sexual potency and fertility. This sexual prejudice created what he called "Negro-phobogenesis" in the white men and women. Their sexual anxiety is immediately ignited at the sight of the black people. In this regard, Fanon writes that, "the Negrophobic woman is in fact nothing but a putative sexual partner—the Negrophobic man is a repressed homosexual" (2008: 121). Racial hatred, Fanon explains is situated

On the genital level [for] when a white man hates black men, is he not yielding to a feeling of impotence or of sexual inferiority? Since his ideal is an infinite virility, is there not a phenomenon of diminution in relation to the Negro, who is viewed as a penis symbol? Is the lynching of the Negro not a sexual revenge? We know how much of sexuality there is in all cruelties, tortures, beatings. One has only to reread a few pages of the Marquis de Sade to be

easily convinced of the fact. Is the Negro's superiority real? Everyone knows that it is not (Ibid: 122-3).

Hansberry approved Fanon's views about the image of the black sexuality in the minds of white people. However, her reflections go beyond Fanon's simplistic definitions of black women's sexual identity if compared with the privileged place he provided for black men. For him, women of color like Capécia, pretexted acting as "saviours of the race" through their desires of miscegenation for social upward mobility. Hansberry crossed the color line and considered the case of the homosexual and the lesbian. She asserted through her unpublished letters and her plays her desire to participate in both the black and the homosexual Civil Rights Movements in America. Being herself a closeted married lesbian, she advocated the right for racial and gender differences and for different sexual orientation. She understood this conflict between the male homosexuals who wanted their political rights through what they call the Homosexual Bill of Rights and the lesbians who refused public and political recognition. They rejected "legislating sentiments". Hansberry judged this lesbians' reaction politically awkward and immature. In her unpublished letter to *One* magazine, she explained that women's political and social immaturity is fostered by the authorities which use "a double standard for social valuation" to create a split between male and female homosexuals. This kind of valuation is rooted in the social contempt for women. In the same letter she writes:

Everywhere the homosexual man is, in one way or another, seen as tantamount to the criminal for his deviation; and the woman homosexual as naughty, neurotic, adventurous, titillatingly wicked or rebellious for hers. Nobody, especially ever wants to put her in jail about it; they more want to read about it or hear it described so that they can cluck their tongues and roll their eyes. The fact is that women are not held as responsible for themselves as men are because they are not held as definitively human. There is nothing fine in it, indeed, a reprehensible situation (in Carter, S., 1991: 6).

Hansberry went further in her analysis of this social schism because according to her this situation confounded all the members of the American society. She warned the male homosexuals against envying women's position in society because this favored place is "a

mistaken notion”. She adds that “they are, as yet, unaware that the pedestal is really an iron-shoe” (Ibid: 7).

In an article entitled “The Double Life of Lorraine Hansberry” (1999), published in *Out* magazine, Harris Elise delivers the real thoughts of Hansberry concerning her bisexuality and the great paradox she lived in her personal life. Her lover, Dorothy Secules speaks of their intimate relationship with great regrets accusing Robert Nemiroff of separating them. His argument is that Hansberry should concentrate on her literary work rather than on her lesbian romances. She explains that the marital life of Bobby (Nemiroff) and Hansberry is just a kind of artistic association surrounded by their friendship. She writes that, “Bobby was very supportive in her work. He was the person. It was almost so much so. I could see that it was her need of his advice, support, nurture and also criticism... but it didn’t free her to be totally herself” (in Harris, 1991: 174). In 1964, Hansberry obtained her divorce from Nemiroff, yet they kept their working relationship. So, as Harris writes, while Nemiroff had Hansberry the writer, Dorothy Secules had the woman. After Hansberry’s death, “he [Nemiroff] had her [Hansberry] all to himself in a certain way because he had all her material”, as Harris concludes (Ibid.).

Overall, it is pertinent to say that Hansberry’s *To Be Young, Gifted and Black: Lorraine Hansberry in Her Own Words* represents the multiple identities that she assumed in the different contexts in which she writes. Her writings are a lover’s dialogues with the self in an attempt to understand her subjectivity by speaking her mind to herself and her readers. She is a Platonic lover who started by educating herself in history and philosophy to understand her situation as a black American woman with all the paradoxes of love-hate feelings that her race and class contained.

At the same time, she is an Ovidian lover, who attempted to explore her ambivalent desire as depicted through her intimate letters. She has understood that voicing her bisexuality

in the resentful American context of the fifties and the sixties towards all that is different would destroy her public image. For this reason, she had undertaken secret, yet dangerous liaisons with female lovers under the mask of a married woman. She led a double life, a public one which is in accordance with her audience, and an underground one that permitted her freedom in all its dimensions.

Despite the fact that her love-hate feelings go beyond the confines of family and racial romances to reach national ones, her childhood family romances have a great influence on the formation of her future political and social reactions. She felt hatred for her own family because they have confined her in the ghetto as a support for their race despite their financial security. At the same time, she was discontented with her social ease because of her belonging to a rich black middle-class family. Her discontent with her family's opulence is related to the fact that their ultimate and obsessive desire is to be like the white middle-class people. Assimilation into the white culture, erasing all that is related to African heritage is their ultimate goal. This uncomfortable situation and her desire to act made out of her a romantic hero who tries to understand her subjectivity. Her love for the oppressed pushed her to speak their desire and right to live in dignity. Her writings are dialogues that are personal and public since she tries to understand her own subjectivity within the larger context of racial and sexual identity, having a Platonic vision about love and tolerance between the classes, the races and the sexes.

Family Romances in Baldwin's Nonfiction

As a Platonic lover, Baldwin writes essays that are Socratic dialogues in form that discuss love, hate and race. The issue of love as constructed in his nonfictional writings can be read as Freudian family romances sharing the traits of Ovidian love stories. Throughout his two letters included in *The Fire Next Time*, Baldwin discusses racial tensions in the black psyche, as related to white Americans and attempts to dictate for his brothers a panacea to

heal racial hatred through racial love and acceptance. Furthermore, he has focused on the relations of blacks with each other and tries to extricate the family romances that bond them together instead of centring on poverty and racism that tend to separate them.

Baldwin's self-hatred was engendered by childhood traumas transferred by the parents, mainly by the figure of the father to his children. This hidden family drama transferred to the readers through Baldwin's amorous discourse revealed fragments of his own subjectivity to show the importance of family and racial love. Baldwin's first letter "My Dungeon Shook" is addressed to his nephew called James, his namesake. The occasion of this letter is clearly stated, and it is significant. It was written for the one hundred anniversary of the historical *Emancipation Proclamation* signed by Abraham Lincoln that "freed" the slaves in 1862. The present moment of the letter is 1962, but it projects Baldwin back to his childhood. It is significant because his racial ancestors were slaves. Being a descendent of an ex-slave does not make a difference since the blacks are still enslaved in the modern setting of their oppression which is the Northern ghettos or what E. Franklin Frazier calls "the cities of destruction" (Baldwin, FNT, 1963: 331).

Through James, and the process of recollection, Baldwin remembers his family; his father, his brothers who resemble each other. They are black like their father. However, Baldwin draws a definite borderline between the generation of the father and that of his children including the 'James' to whom this letter is addressed. The difference is that Baldwin's father; (his step-father) migrated from the South to the North to be free and to find a better life. However, he was destroyed and disillusioned after his arrival because the problem according to Baldwin lies in gullibility about what white people said about him: "he had a terrible life; he was defeated long before he died because at the bottom of his heart he really believed what white people said about him. This is one of the reasons why he became so holly" (Ibid: 331), as Baldwin writes.

Baldwin's father suffered a lot from white racism which he considered as the curse of blackness. He never trusted any white person. He hated all that is related to the white world except the Bible since he was a preacher. He repressed this hatred and often tried to transfer it to his children, through his silent love and his obsessive attempt to protect them. He became mad towards the end of his life after being depicted as suffering from paranoia, suspecting everyone of willing to poison him. Consequently, he spent his last days of his life in a hospital (Baldwin, 1985, 130).

The father's transfer of his hatred of white people to his children is not a safe game for the receptive children. He was a fervent and a harsh preacher determined to mold them according to his own personality. The paradox in his personality was going to make out of his children schizophrenic persons. On the one hand, he believed and preached the words of the Christian God that invited to love all God's children. On the other hand, he incited them to hate the whites. Baldwin's father is described as a reserved person with his family and extremely scared in his face-to-face with the congregation. So, dialogue with his own family and kinsmen was often interrupted if not inexistent. Baldwin couldn't say anything about him till after his death in 1943. The day of the funeral was Baldwin's nineteenth birthday. Confessions about the dead father appeared in his essay "Note of a Native Son" (1955). In it he tried to explain and understand the causes of his father's bitterness and hatred of the whites. He writes that "he could be chilling in the pulpit and indescribably cruel in his personal life and he was certainly the bitterest man I have ever met; yet it must be said that there was something else in him, buried in him, which lent him his tremendous power and, even a rather crushing charm" (1955: 128). This ambivalent testimony informs of the father's disturbed nature as being afraid and courageous at the same time. However, the side which affected Baldwin as an imposed son of this black father is his brutal silence and his inability to establish any contact with his children or the others. His blackness, Baldwin explains, is at the basis of his personal pride,

[H]ad also been the cause of much humiliation and it had fixed bleak boundaries to his life...In my mind's eye I could see him, sitting at the window, locked up in his terrors; hating and fearing every living soul including his children who betrayed him, too, by reaching toward the world which had despised him...He treated almost everybody in our block with a most uncharitably asperity and neither they nor, of course, their children were slow to reciprocate (Ibid: 130).

Baldwin suffered from two forms of hatred. His father's hate directed towards the whites and often transferred to him through the father's discourse and the hatred directed at him as a child conceived in sin. Baldwin was unable to forgive his mother the fact of dissimulating the name of his real father, and considered himself an eternal lost soul in quest of the lost father. This feeling is intensified by his step-father's hatred and the latter's preferences for his own sons mainly the eldest one, called David. Recalling his childhood memories in his essay called "The Devils Finds Work" (1976), Baldwin explained the pressures of his step-father and his hatred for him and his mother who had to pay a price for providing a father and a family for her son. In the same article, he writes:

My father said, during all the years I lived with him, that I was the ugliest boy he had never seen, and I had absolutely no reason to doubt him. But it was not my father's hatred of my frog-eyes which hurt me, this hatred proving, in time, to be rather resounding than real: I have my mother's eyes. When my father called me ugly, he was not attacking me so much as he was attacking my mother. (No doubt, he was also attacking my real, and unknown father.) And I loved my mother. I knew that she loved me, and I sensed that she was paying an enormous price for me. (1985: 559)

Clearly, that the familial drama of hatred between the son and the father is internalized and transformed into self-hatred and an inferiority complex. Baldwin consciously affirms that his father's judgment, about his extreme ugliness and his frog-eyes, is bound to have "a terrifying effect on [his] life" (Ibid: 560). The hidden figure of this drama is the mother (the source of love) since the avenging hatred that engulfs Baldwin pushes him to feel guilty for his own mother's suffering. He is in fact a burden. So, from this lack of parental (father's) love, the actual loss of his real father, the fear to lose his mother's love stem a desire to atone and succeed and make his mother proud of him in front of his cruel step-father.

This abnormal familial climate is a congenial ground for all kinds of neuroses that a child develops at an early age. Consequently, Baldwin suffered from what Freud calls family

romances, the primordial mother-child-father relationship, or the Oedipus complex. Freud explains that in the early stage of development, the child looks at his parents as the best models for him. He loves them and feels that he has the totality of their love. He aspires to imitate them, to be as big and as beautiful as them. However, his knowledge of other parents and the arrival of new siblings threaten this love, and the child starts to feel that he has been slighted by them. His own affection is not fully reciprocated. The child, as Freud explains,

[F]inds a vent in the idea, often consciously recollected later from early childhood, of being a step-child or an adopted child. People who have not developed neuroses very frequently remember such occasions, on which usually as a result of something they have read-they interpreted and responded to their parent's hostile behavior in this fashion. (1989: 298)

Consequently, the boy as Freud expounds, is far more inclined to feel hostile impulses towards his father than towards his mother and an intense desire to free himself from him than from her. In the case of Baldwin, the idea of a step-child is not a fruit of his day-dreaming and imagination but he is actually one. His real life as a child was transformed into that of a mother and a father of substitution to his numerous brothers and sisters. This is due to the fact that his mother is always at work in white people's houses, or in hospitals giving birth to her children while his father is working all day long to preserve them from starvation.

Furthermore, he does not need at all to imagine that his father is his rival in the love of his mother because Baldwin believes and considers him as his own competitor in everything, even in reading the Bible and preaching. Living a black variant of family romances, Baldwin is a conscious black modern Oedipus who is not going to curb his eyes to punish himself but instead "he will forge this infirmity" (1985: 560), as he calls it, into a weapon. Yet, the frog, as in the fairy tale, needs a kiss, needs love in order to be changed into a charming prince.

Freud explains that in the sexual stage of the family romances, the child comes to know the difference in the parts played by fathers and mothers in their sexual relations. He discovers that paternity is always uncertain while maternity is most certain. This knowledge pushes him to attribute to his mother fictitious love-affairs and tends to imagine erotic

situations and relations pushed by his desire to bring his mother (who is the subject of the most intense sexual curiosity) into a situation of secret infidelity. However, he loves her and declares that his father should be “stricken blind if he was unable to see that my mother was absolutely beyond any question the most beautiful woman in the world” (1985: 560).

Was it really what Baldwin thought about black beauty at that period of his life? He reports that while he was playing in the street, he saw an old drunk black woman stumbling up the sidewalk. He ran to his mother climbing the stairs and pushed her to come in front of the window to look outside, crying “You see? You see? She’s uglier than you Mama! She’s uglier than me!” (1985: 550). His father’s judgment about his ugliness obsessed him, and his euphoria after seeing someone uglier than him delivered him from his frustration for a moment. Comparing himself and his parents to other persons and finding different realities made him question and suspect the words of the father, and look for other truth(s) outside the family house.

Throughout his childhood, Baldwin learnt to despise himself. The fact that he himself was considered as an extremely ugly black boy would have a great influence on his subjectivity and homosexuality in adulthood. In his essay entitled “Here Be Dragon” (1985), Baldwin dares at last to speak overtly about his homosexuality linking it to his father’s treatment of him during his childhood: “I was certainly unhappy and pathologically shy. My father kept me in short pants longer than he should have, and I have been told, and I believed, that I was ugly. This meant that the idea of myself as a sexual possibility, or a target, as a creature capable of desire had never entered my mind”. He adds that he had been saved by the love of a Harlem racketeer, a man of thirty-eight who fell in love with him when he turned sixteen (Ibid: 681). Baldwin’s homosexuality and his family love-hate triangle will incessantly lie beneath his works.

While his father considered him to be “ugly”, everyone in his surrounding considered him to be “strange” (Ibid: 560). Consequently, Baldwin thought that he should find a way to tame and transform this strangeness and blackness into a positive force. His critical mind acquired a great force during his childhood. This force was his prolific imagination, his free ticket to travel beyond the real, towards the island of wish-fulfilment. The creative process of the writer that Freud calls day-dreaming in Family Romances is:

One of the essential characteristics of neurotic and also of all comparatively highly gifted people. This activity emerges first in children’s play, and then, starting roughly from the period before puberty, takes over the topic of family relations. A characteristic example of this peculiar imaginative activity is to be seen in the familiar day-dreaming which persist far beyond puberty. If these day-dreams are carefully examined, they are found to serve as the fulfilment of wishes and as a correction of actual life. They have two principle aims, an erotic and an ambitious one – though an erotic aim is usually concealed behind the latter too (1989: 299).

Reinforced by his love for reading all the books available in the neighboring libraries and watching the movies in the cinemas approximating their ghetto, Baldwin’s imagination matured throughout his childhood. His imagination shifted from family romances that were confined to the boundaries of the familial unit to the racial romances that started by the process of thinking to find an answer to his existential question of “what it means to be a black or a Negro in America” (Baldwin, 1959: 17). This personal transformation created a spiritual and sexual crisis that followed his passage from childhood to puberty. This passage was marked by Baldwin’s encounter and serious involvement with the church.

His dramatic family romance with his step-father and the hatred he felt towards him pushed Baldwin to show him that he could be a better preacher. In fact, Baldwin fled his family house and the streets of Harlem full of sins and crimes, to find a shelter in the church. He started the letter with the “religious crisis” (1963: 337) and the religious ritual he underwent at the age of fourteen. The summer was hot and so was that experience that was going to mark him forever. “I then discovered God, his saints and angels and his blazing hell” (Ibid.), he reminiscences. Though there is practically no separation between traumatic events, memory and fantasy as proved by psychoanalysis, Baldwin reenacted this traumatic

experience in this essay to explain the reasons why the doors of the church were opened to him while others of his generation “fled to other states and cities-that is, to other ghettos. Some went on wine or whisky or the needle and are still on it. And others like me, fled into the church” (Ibid: 339).

Baldwin’s fear of his interior demons and the outside world of Harlem oriented him to the church. He clearly stated that he was sexually harassed and menaced by the pimps, the whores and the racketeers of his avenue. Again, and at this sensitive period of time his father’s hatred intervened repeating to him that his future was determined and he was well disposed to become as the criminals of the street (Ibid: 338). Self-hatred and loss of confidence in himself made him to question his ability to resist temptation, and loathe all the sexual experiences he had either with girls or boys describing them as “grim, guilty, tormented experiences which were at once as chill and joyless as the Russian steppes and hotter, by far, than all the fires of Hell” (Ibid: 339). Freud would describe this bisexual malaise by relating it to the Oedipus complex and the internalized fear of the father or the mother who forbids the child’s sinful habits like masturbation. In fact, an throughout his childhood, Baldwin had been a subject to this situation because of the severe, religious father who directed his life in its tiniest and intimate desires.

Religion is a very important component in the life of African Americans. In fact, Baldwin succeeded, to his father’s pride or disappointment, to be the best in the church by acquiring popularity as an excellent orator due to his readings and his great insight. In the pulpit of the Fireside Pentecostal Assembly, as Campbell reports, he learned that he had authority as a speaker and could do things with a crowd. He knew the Bible so well that he coloured his phrases with Old Testament rhetoric and poetry, with full conviction. (1991: 10).

His traumatizing conversion at the age of fourteen is also narrated in his novel *Go Tell it on the Mountain* (1952), in which the truth has been exposed about this experience. He made

it clear that it was imposed on him by everybody as a kind of fate he could not escape: “everyone has always said that John would be a preacher when he grew up, just like his father. It had been said so often that John without ever thinking about it had come to believe it himself.” (1952: 9). It was thought that he could not do nothing else than being dedicated to the church. It was as if his self-hate as ‘a black and ugly boy’ instilled in him by his father needed to be washed off in the holy water of the church, and his black skin bleached and beautified by the lamb’s blood. Baldwin had to find a solution, or what he called in his essay “a gimmick” to escape the surrounding hatred and violence in the American context of the fifties. Fanon considers Christian religion among the white masks for the black skins who deeply desire to flee their flesh and their *status quo*. This mask which is also worn by Baldwin informs of his self-hatred and aspiration to live a new family romance among the father(s) and the mother(s) of the church in quest of love and freedom.

The ultimate separation with his step-father David Baldwin happened when he invited a Jewish friend to the house, a transgression that the father preacher could not tolerate and violently opposed by beating the young Baldwin. On this fateful occasion, he writes

[m]y father slammed me across the face with his great palm, and in that moment everything flooded back-all the hatred and all the fear, and the depth of a merciless resolve to kill my father rather than allow my father to kill me- I knew that all those sermons and tears and all that repentance and rejoicing had changed nothing (Ibid: 347).

After this traumatic incident, Baldwin walked out of the house and the battle between the father and the son, to the latter’s relief, gained momentum.

Still considered, the father-son relationship has also a component of admiration. This ambivalent feeling is shown in Baldwin’s attempt to find relief in the object-love the two rivals were struggling for. That is the mother and the Bible or the church which works as a substitution for that mother. Baldwin is not only afraid of his father but also of the God of his father. So, the displacement of the family romance to the church originates from Baldwin’s desire to be like the Christ his father and himself admire.

Baldwin did not tell the whole truth about his real feelings because he exposed them in public arena and these are related to political issues that highly sensitive to the black and white generation he directly addresses. His non-fictional writings speak of his subjectivity putting together the individual and the racial problems.

Through his escape to the church Baldwin sought another family because he was afraid. His terror of an impending punishment is inherited from his father and his enslaved ancestors. This fear is imposed on them by the white men and his cultural system not only because of their colour but because of the whites' political and economic power. The fear of his black father comes from the fear of the white man. In "The Fire Next Time", Baldwin writes:

White people hold the power, which means that they are superior to blacks (intrinsically, that is: God decreed it so), and the world has innumerable ways of making this difference known and felt and feared. Long before the Negro child perceives this difference and even longer before he understands it, he began to react to it, he has begun to be controlled by it. Every efforts made by the child's elders to prepare him for a fate from which they cannot protect him causes him secretly, in terror, to begin to await, without knowing that he is doing so, his mysterious and inexorable punishment. He must be 'good' not only in order to please his parents and not only to avoid being punished by them; behind their authority stands another nameless and impersonal, infinitely harder to please, and bottomlessly cruel. And this filters into the child's consciousness through his parents' tone of voice as he is being exhorted, punished or loved; in the sudden, uncontrollable note of fear heard in his mother's or his father's voice when he has strayed beyond some particular boundary (1963: 342).

Baldwin's fear and the analysis given to these feelings stem from his own childhood's experience in his own family which is already contaminated by the fear of the white man even before actually meeting him outside the house. Black fathers and mothers are themselves scared children of the white man. So, it becomes impossible to expect that their own black children will be brought up fearless of this "nameless cruel authority". Consequently, fear, ambivalence of racial love and hatred, and the desire to be free from bondage are felt towards the black and the much harsher white father.

In fact, Baldwin had chosen to join a white church rather than the church of his father. He was introduced to a white woman pastor by his Jewish friend. Ironically, the first sentence uttered by this woman to welcome Baldwin was "whose little boy are you?" (1963: 343), and

it was exactly the same expression that racketeers and pimps of the street used to address Baldwin, in order to make him “hang out” with them. However, the frightened Baldwin answered in a refined way telling her: “Why, yours” (Ibid.). A new church, a new father and a new mother, another family had was for “the young brother Baldwin”, who wanted to preach the word of God and at the same time silence and resist his inner demons and mortify his temptations.

This new integration reinforced his guilt and fear which exploded during one night before the altar when Baldwin fell to the ground. He narrates this experience in a way that gave it a mythical dimension, as a kind of vision, or a trance, a metamorphosis that was going to change Baldwin forever. “It was the strangest sensation I have ever had in my life –up to that time or since. I had not known that it was going to happen or that it could happen” (Ibid: 344), he write. What is strange about this kind of rituals, according to Baldwin, is that it happened while he was thinking about the plot of a play he had in mind (probably *The Amen Corner*), merging the autobiographical referential text with the fictional plot. He passed a whole night on the floor before the altar and in the morning the pastor told him that he was saved.

After this ritual, Baldwin was still tormented and he could not understand why he should fight against himself, against his sexual impulses and all that he loved in order to be reconciled with the church and God. Was he obliged to dissociate Christian love from Ovidian love and desire, was he bound to kill one side of himself, the carnal / erotic one for the sake of animating the spiritual one. If he should trust the principle of chastity and purity he should not think about erotic questions as his peers, the wrecked ones of the street, to reach holiness. Otherwise, he would dislike himself. This self-hate would push him to dislike everything and everyone because these religious limits would forever control his vision of the world and build a barrier between him and other. So, like the colour of his skin religious

restrictions would ultimately push him to loathe himself and his race. The only thing Baldwin felt after this experience was great pain. “All I really remember”, he writes was “the pain, the unspeakable pain”. Detailing this harrowing experience he adds that, “it was as though I were yelling up to Heaven and Heaven would not hear me. And if Heaven would not hear me, if love could not descend from Heaven to wash me, to make me clean-then utter disaster was my portion” (Ibid. 344). He started to know more about himself and the real subjectivity of the white man of the church. This is what he says with a touch of irony:

I could not ask myself why human relief had to be achieved in a fashion at once so pagan and so desperate... the principle governing the rites and customs of the churches in which I grew up did not differ from the principles governing the rites and customs of other churches, white. The principles were Blindness, Loneliness, and Terror, the first principle necessary and actively cultivated in order to deny the two others. I would love to believe that the principles were Faith, Hope and Charity, but this is clearly not so for most Christian world (Ibid: 345).

As a consequence of this knowledge, Baldwin decided to quit the white church rehearsing his release from his black father. This double victory on the figure of the father is recounted as follows, “I have immobilized my father and his white father later on, by remaining in the pulpit for three years as the most loved young minister whose voice as others testified succeeded to “rock” the church (Ibid.).

After the Christian church and the white God, Baldwin turns to the criticism of Islamic religion as preached by the Nation of Islam. The honorable Elijah Muhammad the leader of the Nation of Islam attracted many blacks to his movement. Baldwin explained that he did not have exact information about this personality except some fragments of speeches he happened to hear in a disconnected way. Yet, he attempted an explanation for this popularity. The white Christian church alienated people by maintaining them in misery and teaching them to turn the other cheek. Islam was taken as a replacement religion because it is thought that it would restore black dignity. “The Fire Next Time” includes a passage about this inverted black philosophy espoused by the black masses in the Nation of Islam:

God is black. All black men belong to Islam; they have been chosen. And Islam should rule the world. The dream, the sentiment is old, only the color is new. And it is this dream, this sweet

possibility that thousands of black men and women in this country now carry away with them after the Muslim minister has spoken, through the dark, noisome ghetto streets, into the hovels where so many have perished. The white God has not delivered them, perhaps the black God will (357).

The dream and the utopian land described by Elijah Muhammad seduce and nourish the black minds already disillusioned by white oppression. Elijah's racial dream of a mythical black supremacy is an escape, a return to the days of childhood and nostalgia to family romances that permit to the child to feel secured and protected. To use Freud's psychoanalysis it is the predominance of the pleasure principle, the realization of the pleasures without taking into account the mental norms of the ego that regulates human pleasures as the predominant social regulations. All instincts tend towards the restoration of an earlier state of things (Freud, 1989: 612). As such, there is a wish from the Nation of Islam's mysticism, a return to a past when the white man did not exist and the black man lived in peace (Baldwin, 1963: 361).

Inventing a black God and a black myth about black supremacy as opposed to the white one is racism in reverse. However, Baldwin understands it as the residue of white violent racist oppression that goes back to the days of Elijah's childhood, under the Southern Jim Crow laws. Before meeting Elijah Muhammad, who witnessed the assassination of his father by the Ku Klux Klan, Baldwin thought he would see a ferocious black man exactly as American media have described him. Nevertheless, he was struck by his kindness and soft manners with the members of his family and his party. He surprisingly writes that:

The central quality in Elijah's face is pain and his smile is a witness to it-pain so old and deep and black that it becomes personal and particularly when he smiles. One wonders what he would sound like if he could sing. He turned to me, with that smile, and said something like 'I've got a lot of to say to you, but we'll wait until we sit down'. And I laughed. He made me think of my father and me as we might have been if we had been friends (Ibid: 360).

Racial hatred that blacks suffer from seems metamorphosed into racial love and pride in the version of the Islam Elijah Muhammad preaches. According to this doctrine, whites are devils and it is the black people who are the elite nation of the world.

Notwithstanding the pleasure moment, the outcome of this visit was a great disillusionment because Baldwin expected more talk of brotherly love and reconciliations between whites and blacks as he himself always wished for the American nation. It is clear from their conversation that Elijah wanted to convert him to Islam after seeing a television show in which Baldwin agreed with Malcolm X's argumentation. The answer to the question "and what are you now?" (1963: 363), asked by Elijah Muhammad to Baldwin is: "I? Now? Nothing. I am a writer doing things alone, I don't think about it a great deal" (Ibid.).

Baldwin chose to defend himself by taking a neutral position as far as Islam and Christianity were concerned to show to Elijah that he did not want to join the Nation of Islam. However, the Muslims' leader was convinced that Baldwin was going to join them one day or another. He was black, and he had not a more appropriated racial group the Nation of Islam. He insisted despite the fact that Baldwin informed him of having both black and white friends. He was a writer and he was not really trying to take any party since the notion of art for him had a universal dimension.

Baldwin's rejected the white Christian God and the Black God of the Nation of Islam because of his disillusionment concerning their notions of love that tend to separate rather than unite people. The Platonic love he desired them to spread among people did not make exceptions but respect all the differences. Thus, his palinode of unsaying the thesis of loving the non-lover is metamorphosed into loving all the people in the world regardless of their color and religion. So, unlike Plato who changes his speech to praise the gods because he is afraid of their anger, Baldwin despised these gods and challenged their authority because he thought they were human creations and that the sacred texts are written by man.

Baldwin's refusal of the two offered gods reinforced his subversion of the Western family romances as explained by Freud's psychoanalysis. His Oedipus complex was not resolved during his adulthood. Like Hansberry, he was a disavowed homosexual but his

“gender trouble” was not as secretly kept as her. His homoerotic novel *Giovanni’s Room* (1956) was partly based on his love story with the Swiss Lucien Happersberger. After the publication of this novel, Baldwin had received the most biting attack from Richard Wright and Eldridge Cleaver. So, while the former rejected Baldwin for indulging in a “shameful weeping”, the latter accuses him of self-hatred and denial of blackness. In *Soul on Ice*, Cleaver suggests that the driving force in Baldwin is “the death-wish” and that the black homosexual who takes a white lover enacts self-hatred against his own blackness (1968: 103).

According to James Campbell, Baldwin fell in love with Lucien in Paris in 1949-50. Lucien, Campbell says, was a bisexual who instinctively disregarded the lines of gender by loving both men and women (1991: 61). Though Lucien aspired for a relationship without constraints, Baldwin was “very romantic” and had a dream of settling down with his lover. Yet, after the pregnancy of his girl-friend, as recounted by Campbell, Lucien married her and had a son who was baptized Luc-James, twinning the names of the two male lovers. Nonetheless, Baldwin bitterly suffered from this separation (Ibid.).

Baldwin’s homosexuality situated him in trouble because of the social and the historical context in which he attempted to speak his sexual difference. The persistence of homophobia in post-World War II America restricted gender roles to preserve the heterosexual matrix or to borrow Judith Butler’s expression “the compulsory order of sex, gender and desire” (1991:9) under control in the American society. For this, Baldwin couldn’t affirm his homosexuality. Furthermore, he was a member in the Civil Rights Movement and any discourse from him defending homosexuals would discredit his struggle in his black community.

Family Romances in Jones’s Nonfiction

Racial love and hate are two important instances in the life of the writer LeRoi Jones. His death made his friends and readers look back with sympathy rather than anger to the life and to the political and artistic achievements of this multidimensional black American poet,

essayist, playwright, music critic and novelist. The analysis of LeRoi Jones's Family Romances is based on his autobiography: *The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones by Amiri Baraka*. The responsibility of the written material in this document is blurred by the doubled names of the title. The autobiography written by Amiri Baraka about LeRoi Jones raises suspicions. The reader may think that the writer is concerned with a part of the life of this subject / narrator before changing his name into Amiri Baraka after his conversion to Islam. It is also a kind of a mask used, "in the African-American literary tradition [in which] masking involves hiding—from whites—one's knowledge or one's true identity, usually by adopting a stereotyped guise" (Rodriguez, B., 1999: 5), as explained by Rodriguez. This trope is used by African American writers, mainly slaves to conceal their real identity in the slave narratives. The authors write anonymously to protect themselves and other persons who helped them to escape from slavery to freedom like Frederick Douglass's and Harriet Jacob's Narratives.

However, Jones's autobiography is a quest into the self with all the contradictions of the family life and of the post-World War II American social / racial context that shaped his personality. So, his autobiography is a complex component of aesthetics and politics as experienced by the writer. After the publication of this autobiography, Jones received violent reactions from many persons. He writes that "the megatons of flying bullshit that flew back at me in return was [sic] more than I expected" (Ibid: xii). These reactions were due to the change of positions Jones underwent through investigating his inner self.

Generally, writing about the self from the first-person narrator had always been the most trusted mode because it erases the distance between the author and the narrator of the autobiography since "among all written texts, it is those in the first person that tell us most about the image of the self (Heehs, P., 2013: 6). There are guiding expressions that can direct the reader towards the writer's authentic experiences like important event of childhood, his dreams and day-dreams. They inform of his life with his parents and the family romances that

forged his sentiments within himself and for others. These feelings influence the other stages of his growing up to reach adulthood. Residues of racist stereotypes that the white Americans use to stigmatize the black identity are present in Jones's autobiographical writings. Moreover, the neuroses created as a result of the conflict between racial love and hate in the black self determine the future, social and political attitudes of the black writers. To analyze Jones's family romances, the first chapter of his autobiography entitled: "Young" is pertinent, since through the narration of his childhood the reader may understand the personality of the writer.

Racial love and hate were the two forces that fueled Jones's life and writings and the conflict of these two forces in his personality pushed him to change from one life to another. This conflict started from his childhood which he considers "like a mist in so many ways. A mist in which a you is moving to become another you" (AUTO: 23). This mist is intensified in adulthood when his private obsessions often counterpart his public image. His relation with his father, mother and other members of his family are discussed in this part of his autobiography.

The black American boy's self-hate started from the days of his childhood, in the house of his parents, who were supposed to protect him. Nonetheless, they were themselves unsecure because of the surrounding social environment and the white discriminating laws against black families because of their racial difference and the historical heritage of slavery. The black family, mainly the middle class one strived to imitate the white standards of life hating themselves and loving all that was white to be accepted. Thus, the black child had to respect not only his parent's authority, but the white authority that his parents feared.

Jones confesses that when he was a child racial hatred and difference was not yet intelligible for him and to the other children his peers. He writes, "we run with some and didn't run with others, that was final for us then" (AUTO: 11). Yet, as time passed, the adults

had built a wall between the children by destroying their spontaneity by forbidding racial melting: “adults fed us various poisons that pushed us apart as we grew, naturally. And by high school, almost miraculously, the relationship we’d had on the street level and in grammar school had disappeared” (Ibid: 9).

Jones’s family romances are built around his grandmother, his mother and especially his sister Elaine, a “tom-boy”, with whom he became inseparable during all his childhood. This surrounding female universe established a tender shelter for Jones. He, from time to time, had a cruel pinch from his grandma as a correction to his blunders. His mother was a social worker and from a rich middle class family. She was beautiful and yellow, meaning light-skinned not brown as Jones and his father. The degree of blackness is a code that accords some privileges because the more their skin looked white the better was for them. She was an educated woman, sent “to Tuskegee and then to Fisk...her name then was ‘Woco-Pep’, a Southern gasoline. She was that fast” (AUTO: 4), Jones recounts explaining that “Woco Pep” was a Southern fast gasoline car. In fact she received trophies for her athletic performances and speed: “her own medals undisplayed, although she’d once been the second fastest woman in the world” (Jones, H., 1990: 40), as Hettie, Jones’s ex-wife narrates in her autobiography. Jones was the cause of his mother’s dropping out of college because she was pregnant of him. After his birth, she could not attend the lectures. Consequently, she was obliged to work in many places so as to help nourish her family (Ibid: 10).

Freud explains that the most frequent content of the first memories of childhood are on the one hand occasions of fear, shame, physical pain, and on the other hand, important events such as illnesses, deaths, fires, births of brothers and sisters and so on (1989: 117). Thus, being aware that his birth was an accident and that it caused loss in the life of his mother made Jones feel guilty and shameful. Furthermore, the fact of being a faithful copy of his

father disturbed him to much that he started his autobiography with the absurd expression often repeated by people concerning father-son resemblances,

But people always would be sliding up to me saying, ‘you look just like your father’, or to him, ‘Roy, he look just like you,’ or to my mother or some other hopeless responsible in whose charge I was placed, ‘hey, he look just like Roy’-‘he look just like his father’. It made you wonder (even then) why they put so much insistence on this. Was this a miracle? Wasn’t I supposed to look like him? What was this wonder at creation? (Later, I would make up other implication of this) (AUTO: 2).

In fact, he was treated in such way because people wonder how ‘Woco Pep’, a wonderful woman from middle-class origins, could have espoused Roy. The implication to which Jones makes allusion is that his mother may have other relations with other men, without of course specifying when he started to think so. According to Freud, the boy becomes certain concerning his maternal origins, but uncertain of his parental ones, “*pater semper incertus est*’, while the mother is ‘*certissima*’”, and then the family romance changes for the child who started to imagine fictitious love-affairs for his mother,

The child, having learnt about sexual processes, tends to picture to himself erotic situations and relations, the motive force behind this being his desire to bring his mother (who is the subject of the most intense sexual curiosity) into situations of secret infidelity and into secret love-affairs. In this way the child's phantasies, which started by being, as it were, asexual, are brought up to the level of his later knowledge (1989: 299).

Being brown, short with bulbous eyes (it recalls Baldwin’s description of himself) makes Jones dislike his physical appearance. This feeling contributed to his painful shyness and low self-esteem. Laughing at his physical appearance that caused his personal pain, he writes: “I was not only short, little, a runt. But skinny too. Short and skinny. But as a laughing contrast I got these bulbous eyes. Big eyes. And it was no secret where they came from: my old man” (AUTO: 1). Jones did not give more explanation concerning his emotional relation with his father, and the nature of the feelings he bore him, except for this ironic dismissal, “but I don’t want to slander him, he is my father and I love him” (AUTO: 1).

Jones and his sister were permanently together during their childhood. He confesses that he was caught into a secret unrequited romance with her that he described as “secret protests

of love and fantasies”. About his admiration for her beauty he writes that, “[her] long hair is like a blond version of Shirley Temple” (AUTO: 55). Jones was jealous of other boys who wanted to date his sister. He declared that he stopped phone calls answering that she was absent each time a boy desired to see her (Ibid.). His sister was the only girl of their group of boys called “The Secret Seven”, and she was so fast and as able as an athlete in performing their sports games. About her skills, Jones:

My sister, a tomboy, dogged my tracks. I was always looking under my shoulder as I scaled another fence, when we took it in our minds to try to duck her. I would get furious when we couldn't and she would get furious when we could. I know we had begun to get older when I began to be able to beat her running, I guess from the added weight of hips and breasts. But in them early days it was hell getting loose. Her job, it seemed to me, in the Secret Seven was to see that I didn't get too far out (AUTO: 25).

For Freud, the boy's sibling incest is the displacement of his desire for the mother into the sister with whom he had been existed all the time. He explains that these affectionate fixations of the child persist throughout childhood. They continually carry along with them erotism which is consequently diverted from its sexual aims. Then at the age of puberty, as Freud expands, they are joined by the powerful “sensual” current. It never fails, apparently, to follow the earlier paths and to cathect the objects of the primary infantile choice with quotas of libido that are now far stronger. However, Freud affirms that it runs up against the obstacles that have been erected in the meantime by the barrier against incest. Consequently it will make efforts to pass on from these objects which are unsuitable in reality, and find a way as soon as possible to other, extraneous objects with which a real sexual life may be carried on (1989: 396).

Jones's infantile object-love (the incestuous figures of the mother and the sister) was displaced into other female figures of his neighborhood. These surrogate female figures were as he writes, “a light-skinned beautiful girl and her stepmother who is young, in her thirties, tall, dark brown and lovely...athletic and vigorous” (AUTO: 60). Jones's romance with the white-skinned girl hides his erotic desire to the girl's mother. Nonetheless, his perpetual

fixation on his sister was declared in his poem entitled “Hymn for Lanie Poo” that he started with Rimbaud’s expression, “Vous êtes de faux Nègres”. He urged her to abandon the middle class life and its fake opulence, criticizing with great jealousy her way of living with her boyfriend / husband. But, as Jones’s ex-wife Hettie writes, “Elaine wanted her own life” (Jones, Hettie, 1990: 192). Elaine wants upward mobility as the majority of the black bourgeois people who aspired to change their lives. This privilege trampled on the demands of the black race since she embraced racial hatred for her blackness, desiring complete assimilation into the white society even in the music she heard which was European, (Tchaikovsky’s) (Jones in Harris, W., 2009: 10).

His self-hatred he condemned in his mother and sister from the days of childhood erroneously directed him to live a bohemian life free from the fake middle class appearances he accused his parents and the black people to imitate and aspire to. The bohemian life he lived was white and middle class as well. He himself was lured by the life of intellectuals in Greenwich Village, among poets, painters and writers who were for the majority white and homosexual. He summarized this part of his (white) life in the following lines:

So this was the time of transition. From the cooled-out reactionary ‘50s, the ‘50s of the cold war and McCarthyism and HUAC, to the late ‘50s of the surging civil rights movement. And I myself was transitional figure, coming out of the brown world and its black sources but already yellowed out a bit by the Capstone employment agency on the Hill. And then to add insult to injury, or may be attempted homicide to assault, I had offered myself to the totalitarian ‘whiteness’ of the military. Running away from it, I dived into the books, only to get involved in a deeper, more ‘profound’, more rational version of the same thing. And then the runaway chump, seeking escape, runs into, strangely, a slender white woman with painted eyes, ponytail, and sandals with a copy of Strindberg under one arm (AUTO: 191).

The white woman described above would become his wife and the mother of his two girls. Her name was Hettie Cohen. In his Autobiography, she was called “Nellie”. This white woman passionately shared her intellectual and emotional life with him in the Village effervescent atmosphere. In her memoir entitled *How I became Hettie Jones* (1990), she declared her great love for LeRoi Jones, whom she mourned long after their divorce, writing that, “I haven’t learned to cook, but we were living on love of course...and when I am my

usual antic self, the look of pleasure on him is like grace. With no effort, or adjustment, I can't imagine life without him" (1990: 41).

The passion with which Hettie described their relationship contradicted Jones's stipulation that "there was still no real passion" between them, declaring that their marriage was a kind of an unexpected project that imposed itself because Hettie was pregnant for the second time. He says, "I didn't come over to the Village for no regular middle class shit, yet here I was in it. I had a responsibility, I was expected to do something, I couldn't just walk away" (AUTO: 217). The romance between the Jewish white woman and the black man was celebrated in an interracial marriage inside a Buddhist temple with two mulatto kids. Their marriage was applauded by the Joneses, but harshly rejected by Hettie's father who declared her dead (Ibid.).

Both Jones and Hettie suffered from an inferiority complex due to their origins. Their blackness and Jewishness that was intensified by the racist atmosphere of America of the fifties and the sixties poisoned their marital life. Jones explained that Nellie / Hettie had an inferiority complex because of her Jewishness just like himself. For this, she visited a psychoanalyst (Mary Washington). Jones writes that, "Going to Mary Washington had done nothing to eradicate her feelings of inferiority. The black middle class suffers from the same kind of malady, a lack of self-esteem caused by the great nation chauvinism that is so much a part of American life" (AUTO: 213). He further expands that this lack of self-esteem had been extended by the Americans through economically depriving the minorities from reaching respectful standard of life, "White supremacy, anti-Semitism, not only work on the victims to deprive them of material and spiritual ease but they can, with some of the victims, actually convince them that they are hated for correct reasons, and the victims take up the same view it is now self-hate" (Ibid.). Frantz Fanon analyzed these questions and he reached the same conclusion expressed in his rhetorical question. He writes: "Is there in truth any

difference between one racism and another? Do not all of them show the same collapse, the same bankruptcy of man?" (1952: 64). He further explains that all forms of racism and exploitations are the same since they are directed against one object: man. He declares that colonial racism is not different from any other racism like anti-Semitism or white racism. (Ibid: 66).

Jones's and Hettie's racial hate and alienation complicated their relation as a husband and a wife who struggled to find their selves in the American context. Their racial hatred undermined their love when Jones started to be popular. He became the spokesman of the black's struggle for their rights. This public image that demanded racial integrity and complete engagement with the struggle contradicted his personal life with a white woman and mulatto kids. This cultural paradox created a great psychological pressure conveyed in his drama, and then in his personal life. During the sixties, and in the public sphere, black Americans were asked to make choices. Jones was obliged to choose between racial love and racial hate to best represent his people. Consequently, he shattered his personal life and that of his white wife Hettie for his public image. The choice was not a moment of pleasure for Jones. He described himself "as doing wrong" to leave Hettie that way (Ibid: 288). He was transformed into a racist, a white men's hater. The following dialogue between them shows the pain of Hettie and Jones at the verge of shattering their seven years of marital life together because of race difference. He writes:

Nellie, we can't go down to D.C. together. I don't want to go with you.

She looked puzzled and tensed, somehow expectant. "What do you mean?"

'I'm black, Nellie. I'm black and you're' I trailed off. 'White. I can't do this Nellie, I'm black.'

That look in her eye then was of such deep hurt and confused amazement that I almost covered my face so I did not have to look at her face.

"Oh, Roi," she said. "That's silly. You're Roi and I'm Nellie. What are you talking about?" (AUTO: 288).

This dialogue took place after Jones wrote his two plays *Dutchman* and *The Slave* in which he preached violence and racist hatred against the white men as a kind of revenge and retaliation for centuries of silent sufferings. He was obliged to assume his engagement with his racial struggle and public life. As announced in his essay “LeRoi Jones Speaking”, he felt a heavy responsibility to speak for his people first and then for all those who wanted justice. Roland Barthes explains that the writer should enter into his own death starting from the moment he begins writing, meaning he is substituted for the language he uses and becomes other’s object. (1977: 145).

Jones’s romance is closely manipulated by his fear and hatred of the white race through the threat of castration that started during his childhood. His grandmother warned him against white people or “the crackers, the unknown monsters my grandmother told me had cut off a young boy’s ‘privates’ near Dothan, stuck ‘em in his mouth, then gathered the young black girls to see, so a lesson would be taught. They were definitely white” (Ibid: 61). The fact of hearing stories about blacks who were sexually castrated by whites, intensified fear and inhibition in black children like Jones who despite his awareness of the danger of sexually desiring white women, unconsciously internalized it and continued to yearn for such experiences. This desire would determine and in a way would be fulfilled in his future object-love. Erotic desire, says George Bataille arises from transgression, violence and violation (2003:16). This transgression would eventually end with Jones’s marriage with a white woman of Jewish origins by the name of Hettie Cohen.

As a child, and due to the members of his family like his grandmother and his mother who nurtured his racial awareness, Jones started to recognize his difference as a black / brown boy. This knowledge was painful because it first came from his best Italian friend Augie with whom he passed the major time of his childhood. Augie started to level racial insults at Jones whose mother he called “Black Terror” (AUTO: 40). He refused to lend him his comb saying,

“Don’t mix the breeds” (Ibid: 39), meaning that they are not from the same origins. Jones understood quite early that this racial difference was not an abstract game that could be erased by being laughed off. As he puts it:

[L]et you know that all that was abstract to you, about black and white and all that, was not really abstract, that it all could not be waved away, or laughed away, or forgot or not known about. It meant to me that there was real shit over which I did not have total control, that I did not even properly understand. And I could be, on such occasions, quietly stunned. Turned inward and set adrift in a world of my feelings I couldn’t yet deal with (AUTO: 40).

Jones who used to love his Italian friends and neighbors started to hate them and avoid the places they frequented namely in the school of Barringer and McKinley. In this school whites, and precisely Italians, were predominant. He was often insulted and cursed out in Italian and mistreated because of his blackness. As a result, he developed a split interior life: “It must be true, maybe obvious that the schizophrenic tenor of some of my life gets fueled from these initial sources (and farther back from words whispered into the little boy’s ear, from mouths and radios)” (Ibid: 41), he writes. According to Fanon, the double life of the black was created by the refusal of others to accept him as a normal human being. The black man, he explains “has two dimensions: one with his fellows, the other with the white man. A Negro behaves differently with a white man and with another Negro” (2008: 7).

Being brown is a sensitive and difficult matter for Jones and his own family because they were hated by all the ethnic groups for being neither black nor white. In the black community the skin color was a sign, a referent that determined the children’s future. This color code was apparent even in the church. As he says, “the church my mother and grandmother took us to was classic in that regard. It was a yellow church, a yellow folks’ church. In fact someone told me that they used to sing, ‘only the yellow, will see God’ some blunt agitprop (political literature)” (Ibid: 57). Jones disliked yellows’ and browns’ aspiration to become white confessing that, “the real life of where we lived I perceived as strongest was not any of that but black. That was the life I was tied to –‘even shot from guns’, like famous (brown) toasted cereals, the connection I made was with black life” (AUTO: 60). He explains

that despite the colour code imposed by the surrounding people and manipulated by the white supremacy, black people were attracted to their culture. He writes that “when we were true to ourselves, when we were actually pleasing our deepest selves, being the thing we most admired and loved, we were black (and blue)” (AUTO: 64). This reference to Armstrong’s song, and his racial love for the blacks was related to his love for the black music that had incessantly attracted the young Jones to his blues people and their spiritual music which though painful was a beautiful and sensual narrative that voiced their tormented souls under the black bodies.

Jones’s romance recalls the one discussed by Fanon in his *Black Skin White Masks*, in the chapter entitled: “The Man of Colour and the White Woman”. In his analysis, Fanon explains that the black man’s desire to marry a white woman stems from an unresolved inner subjective conflict. He says that the black man desires to be acknowledged not as black but as white. Discussing Hegel’s dialectics of the master and the slave, he discovered that unlike the Hegelian slave who loses himself in the object and finds in his work the source of liberation, the black desires complete recognition from the white man to reach self-consciousness. He writes, “...who but a white woman can do this for me... by loving me she proves that I am worthy of a white love...I am loved like a white man” (1952: 63). According to him, this conflict exists because the black man does not understand his own race and the whites do not understand him (Ibid: 64).

Jean Veneuse was a black man shaped according to the Western civilization that rejected him. He was not accepted by the white race as one of its own and was repudiated by his black race. Thus, the status of marriage between the black man and a white woman is paradoxical because on the one hand, it was seen as a “ritual of initiation”, a passage into an “authentic manhood”, a secure path into “deracialization” and whiteness (Ibid: 72). On the other hand, the black man who is guilty of lying with a white woman is castrated, and the one

who has a white woman makes himself taboo to his fellows as often repeated in Uncle Remits: Br'er Rabbit (Ibid.).

Fanon considers that Jean Veneuse is an introvert whose plight is caused by the “abandonment neurosis”. Basing his analysis on Dr. Germaine Guex’ comments, Fanon shows that this neurosis is founded on the *anguish* created by every abandonment, the *aggression* to which it gives rise, and the *devaluation of self* that flows out of it (Ibid: 73). According to this analysis, Jean Veneuse would like to be a man like others but he knows that this position is a false one. He looks for appeasement and permission in the white man’s eyes. Fanon contends the thesis that he is a neurotic and his colour is only an attempt to explain his organic conflicting structure. He is a neurotic who needs to be emancipated from his infantile fantasies. He does not represent an example of black-white relation but a certain mode of behaviour in a neurotic who by coincidence is black. His conflictual clusters arise in part out of the environment and in part out of the purely personal way he reacts to these influences (Ibid.).

Like Jean Veneuse, Jones lived this loneliness during his childhood. He often felt discarded by his mother. She was his first object-love who obliged to work, abandoned him to his grandmother. This feeling of solitude continued in school and in the Air Force Base. When he was alone he withdrew into his books. Writers like Sartre, Camus, de Beauvoir, Apollinaire, Rimbaud, and Dylan Thomas became his friends. His anguish and his desire to understand his race and the white racist stereotypes embarked him into a subjective conflict merging racial love and racial hate, personal and social influences.

Jones’s aggression was translated through his multiple white female conquests in the Village even after his marriage to Hettie Cohen. He escaped his marital and parental status to meet his romantic lovers like, Dolly Weinberg and Lucia DiBella (AUTO: 235), as he writes. His sexual and racial transgression spoke of his erotic desire kindled by the impulse of

violence and revenge against white women and the white laws that forbade interracial marriage. These conquests hid a latent complex which was directly related to his Oedipus complex and his homosexuality as some critics affirm (Altman, D., 1971). Turning away from one lover into another denounces what Roland Barthes calls “retournement” which is an important figure of homosexuality associated with his favourite principle of “non-vouloir-saisir”, i.e., (non-will to grasp). Barthes linked this notion to the idea of “la drague” in which desire circulates freely without grasping the object of love to master desire rather than master the other (Worton, M., Still, J., 1990: 106). Unlike Fanon’s Jean Veneuse who refused to love and to be loved for fear of being abandoned, Jones turned to be extrovert to the white friends of the Village. His bisexuality is revealed by many writers who knew him during his Bohemian life.

In an article entitled: “Baraka’s White Friend Blues” (2006), Andrew Epstein clearly referred to Jones’s homosexuality in his relation with the poet Frank O’Hara. The latter confessed, speaking about Jones, that he met with “this marvelous young poet who was black, good-looking and very interesting and... he is gay” (in Epstein, A., 2006: 199), as he writes. They worked together within the coterie tradition that consisted of reading poems to a small number of people in theatre. O’Hara considered his own poems of love as an act of “intersubjective communication” and a dialogic / cultural exchange with Jones (Ibid: 102). Joe LeSueur, another writer who knew both of them, declared that Jones had a close relationship with O’Hara and that he was among “his friends who saw him all the time, who confided in him, and who in some instances went to bed in with him” (in Epstein, 2003: 198). Moreover, Epstein went further in suggesting Jones’s homosexuality by studying the poetry written by Jones and the intertextual links that refer to the importance of O’Hara in his work. He writes:

O’Hara himself makes often subtle appearances in Baraka’s work, becoming a locus of complex attitudes about friendship and homosexuality. Just as Baraka would become a figure, or as Aldon Nielsen puts it, an ‘intertext’ in O’Hara’s poetry, O’Hara is an important marker in

Baraka's verbal and mental landscape, a magnetic force he is drawn towards and repulsed by—an attractive symbol of the avant-garde, whiteness, and homosexuality he will later feel compelled to renounce (Ibid: 197).

Like Jean Veneuse who loved French poets but felt rejected by the French society for his blackness and by his own people for his cultural assimilation (Fanon, 1952: 73), Jones's internal racial love-hate struggle complicated his relation with white and black friends. He had great difficulty to control his feelings because on the one hand he loved his white friends who were exceptional poets and on the other hand, he should participate in a revolution to voice the rights of his race. He lived a subjective dilemma as explained in an interview (1964). He writes, "I'm trying to work with complications of feelings, love and hate at the same time" (Ibid: 195).

Jones's ambivalence of feelings and the friendship that masked his erotic desire for O'Hara and his aspiration to be white like him were transformed into bitterness and inversion because of his newly adopted political stance. He turned away from his white friends to the struggle for his race. He violently denied his homosexuality. This rejection to believe Judith Butler's view is reinforced by the cultural context. She explains that disavowed male homosexuality culminates in a heightened or consolidated masculinity (1990: 89). Jones did not only deny his homosexuality but he even attacked other homosexuals. He called them "fags" a term for which he apologized in the outdated preface for his book *Home: Social Essays* (1964: 16). The pressures he received from the socio-political context of the sixties intensified with his racial struggle pushed him to take a position. He sided with the black racial fight repressing his love for his white friends and family.

Like Hansberry's, and Baldwin's, Jones's family romances are marked by two major features. The three authors love white partners but their Oedipus complex is not resolved. Jones like Hansberry and Baldwin cannot reveal his homosexuality. Instead of finding a way to express it like Hansberry who wrote secret letters to *The Ladder* or Baldwin who explored it in his literature, Jones openly attacks homosexuals accusing them of being weak. They

publicly disavow their “non-normative” sexual identity because of their racial struggle that excluded homosexuals. So, in a way, the three authors have acted a double subversion on the Western family romances. They do not only love white partners but white homosexuals, deflating by so doing the Hegelian master-slave dialectics supposed to involve only the master and the slave. They did not only desire to be like the white man but they even desire his disavowed white object-love (the gay / the lesbian).

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Conclusion to Part One

In this part of our thesis we have explored the nonfictional works of the three authors by demonstrating that they use the European Renaissance models of Platonism and Ovidianism to speak of their subjectivity as African Americans in post-World War II America. They use the Socratic dialogue to expose their ideas of the individual and the racial self in public. Their talks are close to the Greek public speeches such as the Socratic dialogue that has its parallel in the American soapbox. Our three authors divulge their inner thinking about the individual and the racial self in their autobiographical writings.

Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones, following the lead of European Renaissance authors, have appealed to the two Renaissance strains of Platonism and Ovidianism. Though in different ways and degrees, they speak about the theme of love and hate in a racial context. Their quest for philosophy and committed arts is similar to the Platonic quest for ultimate beauty and knowledge. Each in her / his particular way has attempted to interpret Western literature and philosophy to comprehend the black self. Yet, the concept of love as a spiritual or an elevating ladder to true knowledge is often displaced by its Ovidian counterpart in its celebration of *the banquet of sense* and transformation that speaks about the growth of the authors' consciousness.

Overall, Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's family romances are marked by two major features. The first one relates to the three authors' love of white partners in their attempts to affirm themselves and be recognized in the American racial system. The three writers, in a way, subvert the master-slave dialectic in that the struggle for recognition does not only involve the master and the slave but also white woman / man and white homosexual as object of love. To extend Fanon's famous dialectic, the three authors scored their victory over their white masters by linking themselves with white partners. Ultimately, this way of waging the

Hegelian struggle for recognition is a perversion of the theory and speaks about a wider inferiority complex born out of racial segregation and discontent.

The second feature of the authors' family romances is their homosexuality and lesbianism. The three authors as this research shows are not heterosexuals in the sense that LeRoi Jones and Baldwin are gay whereas Hansberry is lesbian. This is also another subversion of the family romance. However, as this research has also tried to demonstrate, the three authors could not perform their own gender identity for the simple reason that they wrote their works during a period marked by the fight for the Civil Rights. Naturally, during a period marked by a struggle for recognition, it is manhood and masculinity in its various forms that matters. So, to borrow Judith Butler's famous expression, one can say that the three authors' family romances, due to the complex racial situations in which they unfolded are marked by "gender trouble". This gender trouble could not be resolved because the three authors came of age in a period wherein non-normative genders could not be expressed because that would have definitely excluded them from their community which was at war against racial discrimination. In the coming part of our research, and at the level of literary romances, we will attempt at analyzing our three authors' fictional works and their relations with both white and black literary influences.

PART TWO

The Dialectic of Racial Love and Hate in Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's Plays.

In the second part of this research, we will attempt at demonstrating that Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's dramas are discursive sites that deploy the genre of the Socratic dialogue. They discuss the theme of love and hatred related to race as inspired from the Platonic and Ovidian models. We will explore the way they use the Platonic dialogue as a form in their plays to contribute in the discussion of the theme of love and metamorphosis in the content as inspired from Ovid's aestheticism. The analysis is also intended to show the hybridity of their fictional works that juxtapose Western literary forms with black aestheticism. We will try to probe into the way the three authors treat the theme of love and hatred in the plays under study to understand their objectives through stylizing or deflating European models when discussing racial love and hatred and the black identity formation as represented on the stage.

Moreover, we will investigate the way our writers react either to parody their contemporaries' racial discourses or submit to the notions of love and integration that exist in post-World War II America. This will be studied throughout the analysis of intratextual and intertextual bonds between their texts and the historical context. Moreover, we will explore the racial love-hate dialectics, family romances, Platonic and Ovidian love in Hansberry's *The Drinking Gourd*, Baldwin's *The Amen Corner* and *Blues for Mister Charlie*, Jones's *Dutchman* and *The Slave*. In this present chapter, we will attempt to demonstrate that Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, Baldwin's *Blues for Mister Charlie* and Jones's *Dutchman* and *The Slave* are written according to the Western tradition of the Socratic dialogue, using Ovid's aestheticism to voice their subjectivity and the struggle of their race against racial oppression.

CHAPTER FIVE

Socratic Dialogue, Ovidian Metamorphosis and Love in Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, and *The Drinking Gourd*, Baldwin's *Blues for Mister Charlie* and *The Amen Corner* and Jones's *Dutchman* and *The Slave*

Socratic Dialogue, Ovidian Metamorphosis and Love in Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, and *The Drinking Gourd*

Comparing a play to a Socratic dialogue is a pertinent undertaking because the Socratic dialogue is, at the basis, a syncretic philosophical artistic genre (Bakhtin, 1984: 112). Concerned principally with imaginary conversations of Socrates, Plato's dialogues as Turo Lewis argues are works of fiction and nonfiction as well. They are philosophical textbooks that tell a story. But their main purpose is to discuss the nature of truth as it applies to various disciplines: ethics, politics, law, logic, science and religion (1989: 2). It is needless to demonstrate that the most important element in plays is the dialogue among the characters. It is this dialogue among the fictional characters with the focus on the theme of love and hate that is the major concern of this thesis. The play shows love and hate as moving between two paradigms that appeared during the Renaissance and that critics like Kermode defines as the banquet of sense, which is inspired from Ovid and the Platonic love. They are also related to Plato's discourses of love in his two dialogues *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* already explored in the first part of our research. In this chapter, specific reference will be made to the fictions of the three authors under study with an emphasis on the features of the Socratic dialogue and Ovidian metamorphosis. Hansberry's *A Raisin* contains the five characteristics of the Socratic dialogue. These are: 1) the dialogic nature of truth and human thought about truth, 2) Syncrisis and anacrisis, 3) the dialogue's heroes are ideologists seeking and testing truth, 4) the dialogue on the threshold, and 5) the idea discussed in the dialogue is organically combined with its carrier.

The first trait of the Socratic dialogue to be found in Hansberry's play concerns the dialogic nature of truth and human thinking. This is evidenced in the dialogue between Walker, Ruth his wife, and Beneatha his sister turns around the way of spending the insurance money of the dead father. Each one defends his own point of view as being the one truth, arguing that the money should be used for his / her own benefits. Thus, just like Socrates, Hansberry brought her characters together and made them collide in a quarrel to give birth to truth in a collective way.

As a black man in post-World War II America, Walter pretends to possess a ready-made truth concerning black women. For instance he believes that the only job that they have to perform after their studies is that of a nurse rather than that of a doctor. The case of Beneatha his sister intrigues him because he cannot accept that a black woman can succeed in undertaking university studies. He angrily addresses his sister telling her what follows:

Walter: Who the hell told you you had to be a doctor? If you so crazy about messing 'round sick people- then go be a nurse like other women- or just get married and be quiet...(A Raisin: 38).

He is trying to convince her to stay home and conform to gender roles. The reason behind Walter's fury against his sister's dream of becoming a doctor is that her medical studies will need financial support that can only be taken from the dead father's insurance money. He wants all of it to finance his project of liquor store instead. Walter ends up his speech affirming that the black race is a "well-known type". He says that it is "the most backward race of people, and that's a fact" (Ibid.).

Beneatha counterattacks her brother's discourse to demolish it by explaining that the money pertains to the mother, and that she is the only one who can decide how to spend it. She treats him of being "a nut" and "a mad boy", (Ibid.). She believes that she is special. After her battle of words against Walter's prejudices she takes to task her mother Lena and her sister-in-law Ruth. Being found of horse-riding, playing guitar, and taking pictures with her camera, Beneatha appears like an eccentric to the rest of the family. There is something

also of a generation gap as can be seen in the following dialogue between Mama and Beneatha:

Mama: I just wonder sometimes why you has [sic] to flit from one thing to another all the time.

Beneatha: I don't flit! I- I experiment with different forms of expression-

Ruth: like riding a horse?

Beneatha: People have to express themselves one way or another.

Mama: What is it you want to express?

Beneatha: (Angrily) Me! (Mama and Ruth look at each other and burst into raucous laughter) don't worry -I don't expect you to understand (Ibid: 47-8).

The issue of self-introspection is followed up by the issue of Marriage. Mama asks Beneatha about her boyfriend George Murchison, who is from a wealthy black family looking forward to a future matrimonial alliance. However, Beneatha refuses to consider marriage with this "shallow man", pointing to the difference in class. Mama and Ruth persist in underlying the necessity of seizing her chance. Determined to become a doctor, Beneatha is mocked by everybody even by George Murchison who thinks that she is joking, "Jaded at twenty" (TBY: 79). She stands for Hansberry's old self trying to speak her torments in an attempt to find a suitable path to follow.

Syncretism which is the juxtaposition of various discourse-opinions on a definite object is also deployed by Hansberry in the discussion about the issue of marriage and love in the life of the black women during post-Second World War America. The three women's opinions convey different truths. For Ruth, marriage implies the notion of sacrifice and submission. It is fundamentally a question of financial security that the husband should provide for his wife. "George is rich...well what other qualities a man got to have to satisfy you little girl?" (Ibid: 49), Ruth admonishes Beneatha. Mama, who belongs to the old generation, agrees with Ruth's opinions. Nonetheless, she differs from her in that she wants to understand her daughter's new notions of women's freedom and right in choosing her partner. She forces Beneatha to speak her mind through her questions. However, like Ruth, she is shocked that Beneatha envisages staying single as shown in the following extract:

Beneatha: Get over it? What are you talking about, Ruth? Listen, I am going to be a doctor. I am not worried about who I'm going to marry yet- if I ever get married.

Mama and Ruth: *If!*

Mama: Now, Bennie-

Beneatha: oh I probably will...but first I'm going to be a doctor, and George, for one, still thinks that's pretty funny. I couldn't be bothered with that. I am going to be a doctor and everybody around here better understand that!

Mama: (Kindly) 'course honey you going to be a doctor, honey, God willing (Ibid: 50).

The priority for Beneatha is not marriage but her professional career. Marriage occupies a second place in her mind since she wants to be a doctor first before considering the question of embarking in a marital relationship.

Anacrisis appears in Beneatha's provoking the word by the word in her hot dialogue with her mother concerning the issue of religion and the idea of God. She has provoked her Christian mother's outrage by telling her that is her will to become a doctor: "God hasn't got a thing to do with it" (Ibid.), as she affirms. For her, it is man's toiling that results in great achievements. Beneatha wants her mother to understand that though she cannot accept the idea of God, it does not mean that she is immoral and a criminal. She tells her, "it's just I get tired of Him", she says, "getting credit for all the things the human race achieves through its own stubborn effort. There simply is no blasted God, there is only man and it is *he* who makes miracles!" (Ibid: 51). In response to such "blasphemous" discourse to old ears, Beneatha receives an unexpected violent slap across her face while being reminded that, "[i]n my mother's house there is still God" (Ibid.). Paradoxically, it is Mama who has forced Beneatha to recognize the existence of God she herself blames for the lack of a house of her own. Beneatha opposes her authority over her affirming that "all the tyrannies of the world will never put a God in the heavens!" (Ibid: 52).

Syncrisis and anacrisis are the two characteristics of the Socratic dialogue that are employed by the characters to force their interlocutors to express their preconceived opinions. Each opinion is subject to demolition by another one since the nature of truth is dialogic and that each character may be a hero-ideologist which is the third trait of the Socratic dialogue.

In Hansberry's play the interlocutors are ideologists. The first central character is Mama. She, like Socrates, seeks and tests truth of the other characters with a dramatic effect due to her wisdom and love for her family. In her dialogue with her son Walter she tries to change his love for money as the absolute aim of any human life. Her final decision is to buy a new house in Clybourne Park, which is a white neighborhood, instead of financing Walter's project of buying a liquor store.

Mama's choice to buy a new house seems the most appropriate choice because they are living in a ghetto, in a tiny house without light, infested with rats and cockroaches. To assuage her son's depression, she finally decided to test her own truth concerning his responsibility as a man by giving him the rest of the money. She, beforehand, subtracted from it a down payment for the house. She ends with recognizing the mistake of having undervalued him as a grown-up man able to engage in a serious project. She painfully confessed what follows:

Mama: Listen to me, now. I say I been wrong, son. That I been doing to you what the rest of the world been doing to you. Walter, what you ain't never understood is that I ain't got nothing, don't own nothing, ain't never really wanted nothing that wasn't for you. there ain't nothing as precious to me...there ain't nothing worth holding on to, money, dreams, nothing else-if it means- if it means it's going to destroy my boy...I want you to take this money...and from now on any penny that come out of it or that go in it is for you to look after. For you to decide...I am telling you to be the head of this family from now on like you supposed to be (Ibid: 107).

Walter becomes satisfied after his mother's decision and started to imagine a Gatsby-like life for his child and wife. Shortly afterwards, Mama is faced by the truth about her son. Walter trusted his friend Willy Harris who stole all the money and disappeared without leaving any address. Mama's hesitations to trust her son were proved to be true since Walter failed in his responsibility to be the head of the family and to protect their source of sustenance.

As an ideologist, Mama is a character holding and representing a system of beliefs and ideas. She is old and experienced. She cared for her children alone after the death of her husband. Yet, her age has not prevented her from questioning and testing other truths about

the new generation and their eccentricities. Her children often appear to her as strangers due to the generation gap. The generation-gap feelings are clearly expressed in the quote below:

Mama: There is something comes down between me and my children that don't let us understand each other, and I don't know what it is. One [Walter] done almost lost his mind thinking 'bout money all the time and the other [Beneatha] done commence to talk about things I can't seem to understand in no form of fashion. What is it that is changing Ruth? (Ibid: 52).

At the end of the play, and after the catastrophe, Mama remained a strong hero-ideologist and tried, with all her force, to keep the family from falling apart through her attempt to remind them that love was the only link able to tie them together.

The fourth characteristic of the Socratic dialogue that is displayed in the play is the dialogue of a man standing on the threshold. This moment of crisis forces the person to reveal the deepest layers of his personality through unfettered freed words. The Youngers have known two important moments of crisis. The first one was when Walter's loss of money and his acceptance of Lindner's offer, the representative of Clybourne Park Committee, to forestall their removal to a white neighborhood. During these two moments the characters' speech is free from all constraints. What follows looks like a court trial of Walter's jettisoning of the one dream of the family that of moving to live in a decent place.

After hearing the news of Willy Harris's escape with all the money, Walter underwent a kind of hysteria. He is described as "halted, life hanging in a moment...then he starts to pound the floor with his fists, sobbing wildly". He violently screamed repeating that, "That money is made from my father's flesh..." (Ibid: 128). The first reaction came from the mother who "starts to beat him senselessly in the face" (Ibid: 129). She was shocked and couldn't believe that the money had been stolen. She screamed and asked God to give her strength. As for his wife Ruth, she stayed silent, "like a dead woman" (Ibid: 127). She was trying to understand the incredible story Bobo reported to them about their cherished money.

However, the most outraged character is Beneatha with her speech that scorns Walter's attitude, treating him of being foolish aspiring "black bourgeois", "there he is!", she says,

“Monsieur le petit bourgeois noir-himself! There he is the symbol of a Rising Class! Entrepreneur! Titan of the system! ...I look at you and I see the final triumph of stupidity in the world” (Ibid: 138). This outrage is due to the fact that the loss of the money forfeits her chance of becoming a doctor, as she desperately explains to Asagai: “Me? ... Me? ... Me? I am nothing...Me. [...] when I was sleeping in that bed in there; people went out and took the future right out of my hands!” (Ibid: 134).

In an attempt at repairing his mistake, Walter thinks of recuperating the lost money by accepting Lindner’s offer, an offer they have previously refused with great pride. He explains to them that Harris taught him a very important lesson which was “to keep my eyes on what counts in this world” (Ibid: 142). Since ends justify the means, he takes the money without thinking “about the wrong and the right of things all the time” (Ibid.). This supposed solution has offended them more than the mistake of losing the money because it humiliates the whole family by trading black pride and staying in the ghetto for the white man’s money. Mama and Beneatha dismiss his manhood by telling him: “he is not a man but a toothless rat”. “Empty inside”, he is accused of performing a begging slave in front of his white master and trampling on the pride of six generations of his own family. The outrage of the family leads him to change his mind. Instead of imploring Lindner, Walter, on the threshold, defended the view that the house in the new neighborhood was won by his father brick by brick and that they would move into it after all.

The last element of the Socratic dialogue found in Hansberry’s play is the organic combination between the idea and its holder and the testing of the idea and its career. This parallel element is exposed in the dialogue of the characters who represent images of ideas that are treated freely and creatively throughout the play. Mama, Ruth, Walter, Beneatha, Lindner, George Murchison, Asagai, and even Mrs. Othella Johnson, represent a system of beliefs tested in the dialogic relationships whenever they enter in contact with other ideas.

Ideas are subject to change in these dialogues. For instance, Beneatha represent a new generation of black women who aspire to improve their educational careers instead of limiting themselves to the status of a nurse, often attributed to them by the American social system. She wants to be a doctor. Her decision seems to disturb an established order as expressed by the misogyny of her brother Walter and the ignorance of Ruth and Mama. Though the latter finds it strange, she attempts to understand her daughter and has promised to help her by financing her medical studies. Mama is against servitude to the white man. She defends her relatively revolutionary ideas against those of Othella Johnson who thinks that the blacks should only work using their hands instead of being educated. The debate between Mama and Othella Johnson regarding the destiny of the black folk sounds like the debate between Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Dubois:

Johnson: I always think like Booker T. Washington who said that time- 'education has spoiled many a good plow hand'

Mama: is that what old Booker T. said?

Johnson: he sure did.

Mama: Well, it sounds just like him. The fool.

Johnson: (indignantly) well- he was one of our great men.

Mama: Who said so?

Johnson: (nonplussed) you know me and you ain't never agreed about something, Lena Younger. I guess I better be going- (A Raisin: 103).

It is in this particular case that the characters emerge as followers of ideologues like Dubois and Washington.

Another example of this conflict of ideas occurs between Beneatha and her black boyfriend George Murchison. The conflict is due to the different ideas they sustain and backgrounds from which they came. Beneatha is from a poor working class family while Murchison is from a rich coloured family, well-known among the blacks for their opulence. Their divergent points of view are both racial and cultural. Thus, while Beneatha is proud of her African heritage and refuses assimilation, Murchison is already assimilated to the white culture and hates all that links him to Africa. He shows great contempt and hate for poor

blacks. When Beneatha cuts her hair to let it natural without straightening it as usual, Murchison told her that she has become an “eccentric” with her sharp African hair, saying to her, “Let’s face it baby, your heritage is nothing but a bunch of raggedy-assed spirituals and some grass huts!” (Ibid: 81). Beneatha responds by eulogizing the Africans replaying that, “The Ashanti were performing surgical operations when the English were still tattooing themselves with blue dragons” (Ibid.). This battle of words informs us of the characters racial love and hate and the divergence regarding their African heritage. Here again, Beneatha and Murchison look like ideologues reproducing the debate between the authors of the Harlem renaissance like Langston Hughes and Jean Toomer.

Overall we can say that *A Raisin* more or less meets all the five criteria of the Socratic dialogue as defined by Bakhtin in his *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*. The whole dialogue of the play shows the dialogic nature of truth and of human thinking about truth through syncrisis an anacrisis of the characters who juxtapose points of view by provoking the word by the word and forcing each other to unveil the idea in its deeper layer. The characters often emerge as ideologists who want to impose their own points of view thinking that it is the truth. Yet, after re-thinking the other’s response they recognize the incompleteness of their own ideas. In addition, the extraordinary plot situation, like placing all their hope in the insurance money and then losing it suddenly which is the dramatic situation or liminal position. It is created by the playwright by placing the characters in moments of crisis that forced them to feel free to speak their minds. It is a dialogue on the threshold when life means nothing after the death of their dreams. This transition from being sure about something and then losing confidence in what is waiting for them create fear and discontent that accompany their giant step from the ghetto to a respectable residence.

As a black Renaissance woman, Hansberry uses the theme of metamorphosis in her own creative effort to create change in her characters and themes. It is her artistic exertion to

participate in the racial struggle. The characters' ideas often clash. Some of them metamorphose through the course of the play. It is this change or metamorphosis that constitutes the core of the analysis that follows. This change informs of their growth and consciousness. As already mentioned, *Metamorphosis* is the title of Ovid's mock-epic poem that influenced the majority of Western poets Like George Chapman who wrote a poem entitled "Ovid's Banquet of Sense" (1595). In these fables metamorphosis appears at the surface or at the deeper level. It is a reward or a punishment to human acts. Ovid depicts humans as transformed into animals and object because of their tragic flaws, often *hubris* (excessive pride). Generally they refuse subjection to the gods' will or they escape a violent fate imposed by them to keep their identities safe.

Hansberry's characters in *A Raisin* have undergone a kind of metamorphosis in their own personalities as the events of the play unfold. This change is also the result of their dialogic interaction with other characters. In the case of Beneatha, change is obvious and enacted as a consequence of her quest for truth concerning her identity as an African American woman in post-World War II America. She is metamorphosed from a girl that mutilates her hair each week to meet the American white standards of beauty of a straight hair, into a young woman who accepts the sharp African hair, her brother Walter calls "African bush". Beneatha proudly affirms to her boyfriend Murchison, "I hate assimilationists" (*A Raisin*: 85). She cuts her hair and lets it natural, "close-cropped and unstraightened" (*Ibid.*), as she says, to assert her new identity. She rediscovers this new self after reconsidering her African heritage. This return to the sources is partly prompted by her African lover Asagai whom she approaches for the first time with her bold expression, "Mr. Asagai- I want very much to talk with you. About Africa. You see, Mr. Asagai, I am looking for *my identity!*" (*Ibid*: 61), as she declares.

Her metamorphosis into an African “Queen of the Nile” (Ibid: 66) has been laughed at by the rest of her family. She appears dressed in African / Nigerian robes brought by Asagai from Yoruba, Africa. Her transformation is described using animal images like a butterfly. As the stage directions describe her, “Her hair completely hidden by the headdress; she is coquettishly fanning herself with an ornate oriental fan, mistakenly more like a *butterfly* than any Nigerian that ever was” (Ibid: 76). The reference to transformation into a butterfly is significant because in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* the butterfly is juxtaposed with the grave and the dead souls. Further, in Book XV, Ovid uses Pythagoras’s metempsychosis which is often portrayed through the butterfly as an allegorical device, a metaphor or a symbol (Gallagher, D. 2009: 159). Metempsychosis as claimed by the Greek philosopher Pythagoras is the hypothesis that all shapes change into other forms and everything is in constant state of metamorphosis, and that though the body and human identity perish, the soul survives in the process of transmigration of souls (Ibid.).

Beneatha’s transformation into a butterfly is a reference to the souls of her African ancestors that transmigrated into her body for a moment’s return among the living. Africans also believe in the immortality of the souls after death. In Yoruba culture to which Asagai pertains, death is not seen as the final event of human life but as an intermediary stage which leads people from this world to the next (Katrak, K., H., 1986: 59). Thus, Ovid’s metamorphosis, Pythagoras’s Metempsychosis and Yoruba’s myth of the return of the dead meet in the character of Beneatha. It is used by Hansberry to metamorphose the plot, mythos of the play into an African ritual, a masquerade, like those of the annual Egungun festival that celebrate the return of one’s ancestors. This persists in Yoruba society even today (Ibid: 60). The enactment of the ritual and transformation occurred with the Nigerian costumes worn by Beneatha and joined by her drunken brother Walter who participated in the ritual. The following extract describes the metamorphosis:

Ruth: What kind of dance is that?

Beneatha: A folk dance.
 Ruth: What kind of folks does that, honey?
 Beneatha: It's from Nigeria. It's a dance of welcome.
 Ruth: Who you welcoming?
 Beneatha: The men back to the village. They are coming back now...

....
 Walter: YEAH...AND ETHIOPIA STRECH FORTH HER HANDS AGAIN?... (all in a drunken, dramatic shout) shut up! ...I'm digging them drums...them drums move me!...(he thumps his chest)- in my hearts of hearts I am much warrior.
 Ruth: In your heart of hearts you are much drunkard.
 Walter: (Shouting) Me and Jomo. That's my man Kenyatta (shouting and thumping his chest) FLAMING SPEAR! HOT DAMN! (He is suddenly in possession of an imaginary spear and actively spearing enemies all over the room) OCOMOGOSIAY...
 Beneatha: OCOMOGOSIAY (A Raisin: 78-9).

While Beneatha is patterned on the Egungun the dancer by making the entry into the masquerade, Walter metamorphoses into a black Dionysos, or rather the African Ogun the god of war and metal with his unconscious state. He imagines himself as an African chief, the leader of black people, charged with the important mission of welcoming his ancestors coming back from war. Beneatha continues to play her role of a woman supporter, by praising the great warrior:

Walter: (On the table very far gone, his eyes pure glass sheets. He sees what we cannot see, that he is a leader of his people, a great chief, a descendent of Chaka, and that the hour to march has come). Listen my black brothers-
 Beneatha: OCOMOGOSIAY
 Walter: Do you hear the screeching of the cocks in yonder hills beyond where the chiefs meet in council for the coming of the mighty war (A Raisin: 78-9).

The Dionysian atmosphere of the play intensified by Walter's and Beneatha's metamorphosis and theatricality is disrupted by the coming of George Murchison. He is the well-ordered black Apollo. He comes to fetch Beneatha for their theatre evening together. His reaction has been critical to the way the sister and the brother transformed themselves. He addresses Beneatha saying: "Look honey, we're going *to* theatre –we're not going to be *in* it...so go change, huh?" (Ibid: 80).

George ironically calls the angry Walter "Prometheus" because the mythical character was a giant who knows everything, and then he rebelled against the gods. Prometheus defies the gods by stealing fire and giving it to humanity, an act that enabled progress and

civilization. As a chastisement, Zeus, king of the Olympian gods, condemned him to eternal torment for his transgression. The immortal Prometheus was bound to a rock, where each day an eagle, the emblem of Zeus, was sent to feed on his liver, which would then grow back overnight to be eaten again the next day. Walter's ignorance of the myth raised his anger, thinking that it was an insult from Murchison. But the latter does not know to what extent this myth truthfully represents the toiling and the miseries of the black men like Walter in America.

At the level of themes, metamorphosis turns the dream into a nightmare. It changes from a Platonic dialogue into an Ovidian / bestial banquet. The members of the family attack each other because Walter was unable to protect the money and his family's interests. The dialogue was swapped by violent physical actions. The words lost their function and replaced by shouting, beating and hitting. Like the myth in which Orpheus is torn by the Thracian women, Walter is violently treated by his mother and sister for selling out their dream. The house is described as a den in which "a sullen light of gloom...Beneatha surrounded by the now almost ominous crates... full of the empty sound of profound disappointment" (Ibid: 131).

The characters' metamorphosis is also rendered in Hansberry's second play *The Drinking Gourd*. In the beginning of the play, Rissa, the slave pushes her son Hannibal to accept the white master's offer to work in the house instead of the field. She accepts her fate as a slave and defends the white master whenever he is implicitly or explicitly insulted by the other slaves. She guards the plantation and the Big House as a part of her duty. She feels indebted as if she should pay back Hiram Sweet (her white master) for making of her his preferred slave. She asserts to her son: "I'm jes [sic] trying to tell you that life tend to be what a body make it. Some things is the way they is and that's all there is to it. You do your work and do like you tol' and you be all right" (The Gourd: 201; emphasis added). She is infuriated

whenever talks about escaping the plantation are intentionally or unintentionally mentioned because of her son Isaiah's running away. She exclaims to Hiram who asks, "You ever expect that Ezekiel would run off from me after all those years? Rissa: Surprise me just as you. Reckon I don't know what gets into some folks" (The Gourd: 186). She changes her mind and helps her son and Sarah to escape. Her revolutionary spirit rises at the sight of her son's eyes gouged out by Zeb and Everett at the end of the play. Hannibal is the interplay of personal fragments from Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., Emmet Till, Rosa Parks, and all the black figures who dared to defy docility and transgress the laws that encourage white racist power and authority over the black people in America. His revolutionary discourse echoes modern times black political consciousness.

In the opening scenes of the play, the characters invoke the absence of Hannibal with great anxiety because he flees to the woods, deserting his work. He is not a "good slave" and Coffin the slave driver notices his refusal to pick cotton. Thus, he intends to inform the master of this wicked behavior. Hiram Sweet respects and loves Rissa, so he shows tolerance for Hannibal's bad conduct in the fields. After his illness, the plantation became under the control of his son Everett and things started to change. The white overseer Zeb started his first working-day by flogging Hannibal to set him as an example for the other defying slaves. By doing so, he aimed at intensifying the fear of the slaves. However, Hannibal's determination to leave the plantation became more pressing than before. He pains to explain to his mother that the master does not have the right to flog and mistreat his slaves. Yet, this psychological process is blocked by her. The passage below clearly shows Hannibal's refractory spirit, unruly logic and consciousness in his debate with his mother:

Rissa: How come mine all come here this way, Lord? I done tol' you so many times, that you a slave, right or not, you a slave. 'N' you alive-you ain't dead like maybe Isaiah is-

Hannibal: Isaiah ain't dead!

Rissa: things ain't jes bad here. Lord, child, I been in some places (closing her eyes at the thought of it) when I was a young girl which was made up by the devil. I known marsters in my time what come from hell.

Hannibal: All masters come from hell.

Rissa: No, Hannibal, you seen what I seen- you thank the good Lord for Marster Sweet. Much trouble as you been and he ain't hardly never put the whip to you more than a few times.

Hannibal: Why he do it at all? Who he to beat me?

Rissa: (looking only at her sewing) He's your marster, and long as he is he got the right, I reckon.

Hannibal: Who give it to him?

And I tell you as I tell Coffin-I am the only kind of slave I could stand to be- a bad one! Every day that come and hour that pass that I got sense to make a half step to do for a whole —every day that I can pretend sickness 'stead [instead] of health, to be stupid 'stead of smart, lazy 'stead of quick-I aims to do it. And the more pain it give your marster and the more it cost him- the more Hannibal be a man! (The Gourd: 201).

Hannibal's extreme offence was to learn how to read and write which was forbidden by the black codes of the South. He undertook this quest for knowledge with great love and passion because he knew that it would help him reach the status of a free man. He made a transgressive deal. Tommy, the youngest son of the master should teach him how to read and write, in return, Hannibal should teach him how to play the banjo and sing some slave songs.

Tommy was reading and correcting Hannibal's first composition, when Everett discovered both the white teacher and his black student in the wood. The subject of Hannibal's first piece of writing was entitled "The Drinking Gourd". The strange side of this written performance was that he requested his young white master to read it loudly so that he could hear his own words. He says in jubilation: "I think it makes me feel good inside to hear somebody else kin actually make sense outside of something I wrote and that I made up out my own head" (The Gourd: 208). It is important for Hannibal to have a reader because it is the act of reading that gives birth to his text. Hannibal's composition is short. Yet, it is astute and clear conveying Hannibal's imagination and meditation about his actual status and his future aspirations. This field slave's revolutionary piece of writing genuinely succeeds to go

beyond the boundaries of his chains to reach universality. Hannibal writes the following composition:

The Drinking Gourd. When I was a boy I first came to notice the drinking Gourd. I thought it was the most beautiful things in the heavens. I do not know why, but when a man lies in his back and see the stars, there is something that happen to a man inside that is bigger than whatever a man is. Something that makes every man feel like King Jesus on his milk-white horse racing through the world telling him to stand up in the glory which is called –freedom. That is what happens to me when I lie on my back and look up at the Drinking Gourd” (The Gourd: 209).

Hannibal’s vision goes beyond the slave’s life to reach the divine forms in the sky. It is love and freedom that has this power “to make a man inside bigger than whatever a man is”. He is like a kind of a lover inspired by God. He is filled with desire (for freedom) that transports his soul into “the most beautiful things in the heaven”. The flow of beauty returns into the beautiful boy Hannibal through his eyes, the natural route to the soul just like the temperate lover in Plato’s *Phaedrus* (2002:40). Socrates uses the metaphor of the two horses and a charioteer to portray the human soul. One of the horses is black and difficult to control. It is devoted to the senses. The other is white, calm, beautiful and dedicated to temperance and philosophy. Love, according to Socrates, when felt by the soul irrigates and excites its wings’ channels and makes the plumage start to grow to fly if the wild horse is under the control of the charioteer (Ibid.). Hannibal tamed his senses and dedicated himself to learning. The light that came from his new ability to read the Bible gave him wings like a new lover. He aspired to other beautiful things that are beyond the slave’s life. The first sentence he read to his mother is “Oh that I had wings like a dove then would I fly away and be at rest” (The Gourd: 202). Hannibal thinks that he is at last ready to run away. The intratextual referent in the above composition denotes Hansberry’s father who used to lie in his back and look at the stars whenever they are in nature together. It is a kind of recollection and this passage is included in her semi-autobiographical work *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*. Its repetition in the play implies that her father is a contemporary American slave.

Tommy the white teacher has corrected some grammatical mistakes as Socrates did in Plato's dialogue the *Meno*. He taught the slave boy to recollect his knowledge through questions. At first, the slave boy was perplexed by Socrates' questions about finding the surface of a square. As a consequence to the thinking process, he recollected the way he could count it. Socrates' aim is to show Meno that the slave as anyone can learn through dialectics, and as he says, "These opinions have so far just been stirred up, as in a dream, but if he were repeatedly asked these sorts of questions in various ways, you know that in the end his knowledge about these things would be as perfect as anyone's" (2015: 20). Without understanding the danger of the words written by the slave and the passion they did stir in him, Tommy taught Hannibal the secret to overthrow the white master's enslaving bonds to reach freedom.

The young white teacher affirmed that there was no conflict in Hannibal's story. He says to him: "something has to happen in a story. There has to be a beginning and an end" (Ibid: 209). Significantly, a conflict occurred when Everett, Tommy's eldest brother arrived with his overseer Zeb. Like Socrates in Plato's *Phaedrus* and Stesichorus before him, Hannibal denied being the author of his words in front of the white master. He refuted the sin to save his life. However, Everett discovered the truth as soon as he looked at the composition of the slave. Socrates has spoken a palinode for the sake of presenting an apology to the god of love because he is afraid that praising the non-lover rather than a lover is an offense to Eros. Moreover, he speaks of the story of Stesichorus who becomes blind after slandering Helen (*Phaedrus*: 24). He recovered his sight after writing a palinode to correct his previous tale, "False was the tale / You did not travel on the fair-decked ship / Nor came to the citadel of Troy" (Ibid.). Unlike Stesichorus palinode Hannibal's words will not save him.

Everett explains to Hannibal the enormity of his sin against his master and that even Hiram Sweet will be abhorred by it. He affirms that, "there is only one thing I have ever heard

of that was proper for an 'educated' slave. It is like anything else; when a part is corrupted with disease-one cuts out the disease. The ability to read in a slave 'is a disease'" (The Gourd: 210). In order to extract the infection of education from Hannibal's spirit, Everett should kill or blind him since "as long as he can see, he can read" (Ibid.). Subsequently, Everett orders Zeb to gouge out Hannibal's eyes with his whip.

In writing her plays *A Raisin in the Sun*, and *The Drinking Gourd*, Hansberry deploys the Ovidian banquet and metamorphosis. Her borrowing is shown in the transformation that appears at the level of characters, themes and plot. The characters are tried out through a dramatic crisis showing their deepest states. This change in the characters is accompanied by the transformation of the theme of the dream shifting into a nightmare with the loss of their dead father's insurance money for the Youngers and the blindness of Hannibal. The thematic transformation is propped up by a move from a comic into a tragic mood that qualifies the play as a kind of ritual.

Socratic Dialogue, Ovidian Metamorphoses and Love in Baldwin's *Blues for Mister Charlie* and *The Amen Corner*

Like Hansberry's *A Raisin*, Baldwin's *Blues* is imagined as a Socratic dialogue following the characteristics of this genre as documented by Michael Bakhtin. In the preface preceding the play he entitles "Notes for Blues" (1964), Baldwin expresses his objective of conducting a dialogic investigation for truth throughout the play "to draw a valid portrait of the murderer" (Ibid: xiv). The murderer is the white man who killed the black boy Emmet Till in Mississippi in 1955. He was acquitted because he was the brother of a deputy sheriff in Rulesville, Mississippi. The whole story was told by the murderer himself after his acquittal to William Bradford Huie. He wrote the story in an article called "Wolf Whistle" (Ibid: xiv). Baldwin wanted to find the truth concerning this racial murder. For Baldwin, drawing his portrait of the racist murderer will unveil the truth about the white man's and the black man's

relationship in the United States. What is sought in the racial dialogue is the liberation of the white man from racial hate. As the narrator puts it, the play is performed in order “to understand this wretched man; and when we probably cannot hope to liberate him, begin working toward the liberation of his children” (Ibid.).

Baldwin’s play discusses this truth on both sides of the setting among the characters of the black and the white towns. The two communities held their own discourses and their system of beliefs. Like Socrates in *Euthyphro*, who wanted to accuse his father after killing a slave of theirs, Baldwin questions the legitimacy of a white man’s killing of a black man. Right at the beginning, he presents the audience with the dead corpse of the black boy Richard on the stage killed by a white man called Lyle. This is followed by the exposition of the white people’s discussion of the murder. They think that the assassination is justified by the racial prejudice that black people are rapists. Richard is just one of these rapists. This prejudice is rejected by black people who think him innocent.

Throughout the confrontation of the black and the white characters, Baldwin tests the truth and interrogates the minds of these people and their reaction to the murder because he knows that truth is born between people collectively searching for it in their dialogic interaction. The actions start in the black town, exactly in their church, with reverend Meridian mourning his son among his family and friends. The latter are coming from a non-violent protest to take part in the funeral and comfort Meridian. According to their dialogue Lyle will never be convicted simply because he is white and the victim is a black boy:

Meridian: I wonder if they’ll convict him.

Juanita: convict him. Convict him. You’re asking for heaven on earth. After all, they haven’t even arrested him yet. And anyway, why should they convict him? Why him? He’s no worse than all others. He’s an honorable tribesman and he’s defended, with blood, the honor and purity of his tribe! (Blues: 7).

In the funeral’s sermon, Parnell expresses his outrage and sadness at this hate crime and the treatment of the white town. He mentioned death of his wife in the hotel in which she used

to work without knowing the reasons behind her death. He moved to the murder of his son expressing his inability to direct the young generation and to inhibit their legitimate desire to use violence in their struggle for their rights. Addressing the audience, he wonders, “can I ask the children forever to sustain the cruelty inflicted on them by those who have been their masters, and who are now, in very truth, their kinfolk, their brothers and their sisters and their parents?” (Ibid: 77). His words evoke Martin Luther King’s preaching about non-violence especially in his prayer to God to give him a sign: “That in the terrible Sahara of our time a fountain may spring, the fountain of true morality and bring us closer” (Ibid: 78).

In the white town, Lyle and his wife Jo try to discuss the former’s arrest as an impossible thing because he affirms that he is not a murderer though she mentions to him an old crime story in which Lyle killed a black man. Lyle answers that it was “self-defense” (Ibid: 10). He wonders why black folks pay attention to this boy, and “what’s all this fuss about”. Parnell, the white journalist, who is Lyle’s friend and the defender of blacks as well, tries to counter-attack Lyle’s monologism and preconceived stereotypes concerning the black folks. For Lyle, black people “kill each other”. He asks Parnell: “has niggers suddenly got to be *holy* in this town?” (Ibid: 12). He openly affirms that he is against any kind of miscegenation with the blacks. He categorically refuses blacks integration. He repulsively asserts: “I’ll be damned if I’ll mix with them. That’s all. I don’t believe in it. I don’t want no big buck nigger lying up next to Josephine, and that’s where all this will lead to. I’m against it and I’ll do anything to stop it, yes I will” (Ibid: 14). Under Meridian’s request, Parnell without success tries to get Lyle’s confession about the murder of Richard. He returns disappointed to the black town. He discovers that Lyle has never trusted him despite their long lasted friendship. His interaction with Lyle did not succeed to change his ready-made truth about the blacks and his testing of him failed to clarify the circumstances of the crime.

The two basic devices of the Socratic dialogue that are present in the play are syncrisis and anacrisis. They clearly contribute to the testing of truth through the dialogue of the characters. Syncrisis which is the juxtaposition of diverse discourse-opinions appears natural since the play is based on the dialogues of different interlocutors. These interlocutors are from two confronting races black and white set in separate setting. Their dialogic encounter develops diverse, often conflicting opinions. The confrontational voices among the black characters as to the way to counter racism evoke the two dominant sociopolitical figures of the time: Martin Luther King Jr. who stood for non-violence and Malcolm X who advocated violence.

Syncrisis is also shown in the dialogue of the renegade Parnell, the white editor who befriends both white and black folks in the Plague town. Reverend Meridian / Martin Luther King Jr., represents the voice of religious love and compassion for the enemy, who is the white man in such circumstances. His opinions are inherited from his ancestors. According to his funeral sermon, they “have sung the Lord’s song in a strange land” despite the fact that they have expiated their supposed sins “by chains, by the lash, by hunger and thirst, by slaughter, by fire, by the rope, by the knife, for so many generations” (Ibid: 77). In spite of the murder of his son, he wishes to calm down the spirit of the young generation of blacks who use violence rather than love to stop racist killings. He ends up his sermon by imploring the Lord to appease the spirits, to “teach us to trust the great gift of life and learn to love one another and dare to walk the earth like men. Amen” (Ibid: 78). His words, in many ways, recall King’s sermons based on love and submission. Reverend King declared in one of his sermons: “I was a loud speaker but a quiet actor” (King, M., L., 1999: 335). His philosophy differs from that of Malcolm X because King Jr. thinks that it is based on violence which is not going to solve the problems of race. As he puts it: “I feel that Malcolm has done himself and our people a great disservice. Fiery, demagogic oratory in the black ghettos urging

negroes to arm themselves and prepare to engage in violence as he has done, can reap nothing but grief". He adds that, "violence and hate only breed violence and hate" (Ibid: 266).

Unlike Meridian's stance that represents King's philosophy of non-violence, his son Richard stands for Malcolm X's violent struggle against racism. He went North to follow a musical career and escape the Southern segregation after the ambiguous death of his mother in a white hotel. His father approved of this trip because he wanted to save him. However, after a short success, "the much loved on the Apollo Theatre stage in Harlem, the Richard who was the rising New York star" (Blues: 17) became a drug addict, and ruined his career in a long time descent to sickness. Thus, he came back, a changed man to the South to find support within his family (father and grandmother). This decision seemed to have disappointed him. After his return, he interrogates himself as follows: "What I can't get over is what in the world am I doing *here*? Way down *here* in the ass-hole of the world, the deep, black, funky South" (Ibid.). Richard is no longer afraid of white people. He continued behaving as he used to do in the North and feeling himself equal to them in the South. His hatred for the whites started after the death of his mother, wishing to take his revenge. His dialogue with his grandmother Mother Henry reveals his sentiments:

Mother Henry: You're going to make yourself sick with hatred.

Richard: No I'm not. I'm going to make myself well with hatred. What do you think of that?

Mother Henry: It can't be done. It can never be done. Hatred is a poison Richard.

Richard: Not for me. I'm going to learn how to drink it- a little every day in the morning, and then in a booster shot late at night. I'm going to remember everything. I'm going to keep it right here, at the very top of my mind (Ibid: 21).

Besides this great hatred that inhabits his mind, Richard decides to use violence by holding a gun to protect himself against the white man. His grandmother has implored him to hand her the gun, but he answers that he cannot since, "this is all the man understand. He don't [sic] understand nothing else. *Nothing else!* (Ibid.), as he replays. He expresses the same views to Juanita and Pete after hearing the story of Bill Walker's murder by Lyle saying to them. He feels outraged because the white men "can rape and kill our women and men and we can't do

nothing. But if we touch their dried-up, pale-assed women, we get our nuts cut off” (Ibid: 25). Syncrisis or the juxtaposition of these confronting views in the father and the son reflects Baldwin’s inner dialogue between his old self that believed in the power of love as a panacea to racism, and his new self which is impregnated by the discourses of violence of the sixties to end up white aggressions against black people. In a way, even Baldwin gradually started to change and became a nationalist.

In parallel with syncrisis, anacrisis appears in the characters’ speech, provoking other’s discourse to voice her / his opinions and prejudices. In the dialogue between Parnell and Reverend Henry Meridian, one feels that they try to provoke each other’s words to expose the deepest thoughts without masking them. Parnell seeks to understand the change in the philosophy of the Reverend. He, probably after failing to stop the murder of his folks through love, urged them to arm. The murder of his son and the fake trial that acquitted the murderer pushed him to question the ability of Christian love to heal the two races. Meridian wanted to understand the nature of the relationship that Parnell entertained with him and the black folks in general since his was the only white man of the town who spoke with them. He seemed to sympathize with their pains. Parnell played the intermediary between Meridian and the sheriff working to bring up the affair into trial and to judge Lyle. In these negotiations, Meridian noticed that Parnell showed coldness in speaking about the death of Richard in front of white authorities. For instance, he reproaches Parnell for considering the black man’s death as a problem to solve rather than a human case demanding sympathy:

Meridian: I watched you all this week up at the Police Chief’s office with me. And you know how to handle him because you know that you’re better than he is. But you both have more in common with each other than either of you have with me. And, for both of you – I watched this, I never watched it before – it was just a black boy that was dead, and that was a problem. He saw the problem one way, you saw it another way. But it wasn’t a *man* that was dead, not my son – you held yourselves away from *that*!

Parnell: I may have sounded – cold. It was not because I felt cold. There was no other ways to sound, Meridian. I took the only tone which – it seemed to me – could accomplish what we wanted. And I do know the chief of Police better than you – because I’m white. And I can make him listen to me – because I’m white. (Ibid: 39-40).

This conversation reveals the truth concerning the treatment of the black people's affairs by the police of the town. This treatment has nothing to do with the manner in which white affairs are dealt with. The death of the black boy is not as important as that of the white boy and things do not seem to change in the minds of white people.

Another instance of anacrisis occurs in the dialogue between Richard and Lyle. Richard first provoked Lyle's wife by addressing her in the same manner as white women were addressed in New York that is as "white chicks". He starts teasing her in a very strange way for a black boy of the South addressing a white woman. He said to her: "Hey, Mrs. Ofay Ednolbay Ydalay!" (Blues: 71), which means "Blonde Lady" pronounced backward with an African sounding to unnerve Josephine. He follows up saying: "did you put them [the cokes] in this box with your own little dainty dish-pan hands? Sure makes them taste sweet" (Ibid.). At the counter, Richard provokes Lyle's anger because he doesn't have the change for twenty dollars. Richard is bold enough to insinuate that Josephine is a woman of bad repute: in a sarcastic tone to him "I only said, you was a lucky man to have so fine a *wife*. I said maybe she could run *home* and look and see if there was any change – in the *home*" (Ibid.). Lyle never heard blacks speak with such boldness with whites mainly when they refer to white women, a subject which is almost sacred. Thus, offended, he responds to Richard with a provocation of his by addressing him as "a boy", a term was used to infantilize black men, denying them the maturity in order to keep them under control and guidance of white people. This insult further angered Richard who shouted at him the following rejoinder: "this boy outside is twenty four years old" (Ibid.). He referred to the slogans of the Civil Rights riders of 1961 reading "I Am A Man". Richard's and Lyle's battle of words and stereotypes is transformed into a physical brawl when Richards attacks Lyle's masculinity and manhood: "A baby, huh? How many times did you have to try for it, you no-good, ball-less peckerwood? I'm surprised you could get it up – look at the way you sweating now" (Ibid: 74). These words push Lyle to raise his hammer against Richard who grabs his arm, forcing it back then

they struggle. The fighting that opened ends with the humiliation of Lyle in front of his wife, and Richard's expression of racial pride: "look at the mighty peckerwood! On his ass baby – and his woman watching! Now, who you think is the better man, Ha-ha! The master race! You let me in that tired white chick's drawers; she'll know who's the master! Ha-ha-ha!" (Ibid: 75). This racial provocation intensifies Lyle's racial hate and provides further motivation for the murder of Richard.

Both syncretism and anacrisis are used to test the truth concerning racial relationship between white and black characters forcing them to unveil their deepest thoughts in a dialogue. In their dialogic interaction, white and black characters appear as hero-ideologists struggling to win the battle of words that includes racial stereotypes nourishing the hatred they feel for each other. Baldwin presented his audiences with a purely ideological event of seeking and testing truth concerning the murder of a black man by a white man. In this racial trial all the characters black and white are called to the bar to express their opinions. For instance, the black Reverend Henry and the white Reverend Phelps, though standing for the Christian voice, represent two conflicting systems of beliefs that still have their influence on the new generations of the black and the white people respectively. While Meridian tries to convince young black people to follow the precepts of Jesus Christ's love and compassion in their dealings with the problem of racism, Reverend Phelps reminds the people of the white town that race-mixing is evil and that black men are criminal communists. He commented concerning the young blacks who were active in the Civil Rights Movement saying that, "their minds have been turned. They have turned away from God. They are a simple-people warm-hearted and good natured. But they are very easily led, and now they are harkening to the counsel of these degenerate Communist race-mixers" (Ibid: 49). When Parnell tried to explain to him that Jesus Christ "was a communist, possibly the first", Reverend Phelps answers that it is "a blasphemous banter", and that he (Parnell) should clarify his position either with or against white people (Ibid: 52).

Baldwin wrote this play in 1964, during the Civil Rights Movement in America. It was a transitional period in African American history that witnessed the failure of the integration policy of the previous decade. He took back the case of Emmet Till in an attempt to participate the struggle for the black man's rights. His treatment of the Christian religion recalls his spiritual crisis and his leaving the church to pursue a literary career. These elements lead us to the fourth characteristic of the Socratic dialogue that can be depicted in the play, and which is the dialogue on the threshold or the liminal position of the interlocutor who is facing death or living a critical moment (Bakhtin, 1984: 111). After the murder of his son Richard, Reverend Meridian abandons his religious discourse of Christian love and peaceful reconciliation between white and black people and prepares his congregation for an armed revolt. This moment of crisis incites him to react rather than romanticize because the murder is not dealt with as it should be. The white authority wanted to close it without bringing to justice the white murderer. What shocked Reverend Henry is that his brother in religion Reverend Phelps thinks it unnecessary to bring Lyle into trial, "I saw the chief of police the other day. He really doesn't want to do it. But his hands are tied. It's orders from higher up, from the North" (Blues: 56). What is worse is that the trial turns into the defense of the white murderer Lyle.

Richard's death gave his father (Reverend Meridian), a freedom of speech that liberated him from his fears and the considerations of the Christian church. He explained to Parnell who wanted to convince him that arming is dangerous for blacks that the same blacks are killed anyway and without any trial. The dialogue below shows this change of attitude:

Parnell: you can't be the man who gives the signal for the holocaust.

Meridian: Must I be the man who watches while his people are beaten, chained, starved, clubbed, butchered?

Parnell: you used to say that your people were all the people in the world – all the people God ever made, or would make. You said your race is the human race.

Meridian: The human race!

Parnell: I've never seen you like this before. There's something in your tone I've never heard before- rage maybe hatred –

Meridian: you've heard it before. You just never recognized it before. You've heard it all in all those blues and spirituals and gospel songs you claim to love so much (Blues: 39).

The dialogue on the threshold or man's confession standing on the threshold is also obvious in the discussion between Lyle and Richard before the death of the latter. The scene is recounted by Lyle after Meridian's question, "what was the last thing my son said to you before you shot him down – like a dog? Did he beg you for his life?" (Ibid: 117). Lyle explained to Meridian that Richard "was too full of himself for that! He must have thought he was white" (Ibid: 118). Richard refuses to apologize for his treatment of Lyle during their previous strife. Thus, Lyle kills him after having given him many chances to save his life. Richard dies like a man, refusing to obey Lyle's humiliating request. Between two shots he succeeded to understand Lyle's psychology which is marked by cowardice:

Richard: (*Lyle shoots, once.*) Why have you spent so much time trying to kill me? Why are you always trying to cut off *my cock*? You worried about it? Why?

(*Lyle shoots again.*) Okay, Okay, Okay. Keep your old lady home, you hear? Don't let her near no nigger. She might get to like it. You might get to like it too. Wow! (*Richard falls*) (ibid: 120).

Richard dies and his body is carried by Lyle to the high weeds. We understand that the murderer is motivated by Richard's demeaning of the white man's virility. The latter is threatened by the black's sexual potency.

Southern ideas concerning miscegenation and their way of considering it as a menace for their superiority are organically combined with white characters who really represent them. Testing these ideas is also testing the white characters who believe on them. This combination between the idea and its carrier is the fifth feature of the Socratic dialogue as stated by Bakhtin (1984: 111). With the exception of Parnell, the people of the white town in the play express their contempt towards black people. Racial hatred is intensified by the coming back of Richard from the North who starts to behave as if he is a white man (Blues: 120). In act two of the play, the people of the white town are gathered in Lyle's house to

celebrate his marriage anniversary and to show him their support for the coming trial against the black town. Their dialogue is a testing of their clichés concerning blacks as they knew them in the South. The conversation turns around the black males' bestiality in matters of sexuality and their great fear of race-mixing with them. The purity of the white race is threatened since white women seem to regard white men as being less potent than black males:

Ellis: Mrs. Britten, you're married and all the women of this room are married and I know you've seen your husband without no clothes on - but have you seen a nigger without no clothes on? I guess you haven't. Well, he ain't like a white man, Mrs. Britten.

George: That's right.

Mrs. Britten, if you was to be raped by an orang-outang out of the jungle or a *stallion*, couldn't do you no worse than a nigger. You wouldn't be no more good for nobody. I've *seen* it.

Ralph: That's why we men have got to be so vigilant, I tell you, I have to be away lot nights, you know – and I bought Susan a gun and I taught her how to use it too (Ibid: 50).

White people are nostalgic of their past peaceful life when blacks are docile and respectful of their white masters. Blacks used to obey without questioning the orders and they never had the right to contest any decision made by white folks even if the matter turned around the killing of other blacks like themselves. They had always consented whatever the decision whites had to take:

Ellis: What's happened to this town? It was peaceful here, we all got along, we didn't have no trouble.

George: Oh, we had a little trouble from time to time, but it didn't amount to a hill of beans. Niggers was all right then, you could always get you a nigger to help you catch a nigger (Ibid: 49).

The new discourses of racial integration and equality have disturbed the minds of the whites who scared of the blacks, their slaves. The latter have suddenly changed into “degenerate communist race-mixers” (Ibid.) under the influence of the Civil Rights advocates. Parnell who counters the racist views of his people in his defense of the black man's aspiration to social justice appears suspect in the eyes of the white people. Ellis expresses this suspicion as follows: “A lot of people in this town, Parnell, would like to know exactly where you stand, on a lot of things” (Blues: 52). He deliberately calls Parnell's paper “a communist

sheet”, and his attitudes are described as “subversive” (ibid: 54). His articles are discussed as being immature and his paper as a way to make himself interesting. Ellis finally advised him to “go North” (Ibid: 53). Parnell explains in vain that blacks and whites should have the same opportunities. At his suggestion that often some blacks were smarter than whites, his white interlocutors are outraged and are led to leave Lyle’s house out of disgust to Parnell’s words. Racial hatred and the racist ideas as represented in the dialogue are organically linked to and stand for the persons who believe on them and want to perpetuate them. The white authorities do not appreciate the idea of convicting a white man for the killing of a black “boy”. For them, lynching has turned into a racial ritual, the purpose of which is to protect white manhood and purity. Baldwin debunks this ritual by exposing its psychological and social mechanism. As he tells us in “The Fire Next Time” whites “are still trapped in a history which they do not understand; and until they understand it, they cannot be released from it. They have to believe for many years and for innumerable reasons that black men are inferior to white men”. He adds that, “many of them [white people] know better, but as you will discover, people find it difficult to act on what they know. To act is to be committed to be committed is to be in danger. In this case, the danger in the mind of most white Americans is the loss of their identity” (Baldwin, 1963: 336).

Overall, Baldwin’s *Blues for Mister Charlie* includes the characteristics of the Socratic dialogue. It is a dialogue that seeks and tests the racial truth in the America of the 1960s, at a point when the Civil Rights Movement seemed to have been overtaken by violence. This liminal position is lived by Baldwin himself who revises his previous discourses about racial love and reconciliation, replacing them by a drama that seems to call for violence for racial equality and the condemnation of white aggression against black people. However, the end of the play shows blacks marching with whites in a pacific way. This end displays his optimistic view of a post-racial America. Baldwin presents black hero-ideologists who stand as one body in the black town to defend their rights against racist beliefs. The battle of words and

ideas on a historical threshold push black characters, who for a long time adjusted their ideas to the Southern separatist ideology, to change their minds and to support the new generation in their struggle.

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was among the books that fascinated Baldwin. It follows that metamorphosis is an important theme in Baldwin's *Blues*. The revolutionary aspect of this play created a great polemic over the violence expressed in it and the way Baldwin's discourse changes from his "love - thy - neighbor approach to civil rights issues". It marks, as Campbell writes it, "the end of his season as white liberal America's black darling" (Campbell, J. 1996: 192). Some other critics have taken Baldwin to task for having changed from "St James, the preacher, who had delivered 'we can change the world' sermon into James X the black militant" (Ibid: 196).

Ovidian metamorphoses appear in the play at the level of mythos (plot), theme, characters as well as setting. Through the black character Richard, Baldwin used the Greek myth of Marsyas, the musician who defied god Apollo in a contest to design the best musician. This myth is in Ovid's Book Six of *Metamorphoses* in which he narrated the punishment of Marsyas by Apollo through flaying his skin. The myth narrates that Marsyas who was considered as a satyr found a flute / mouthpiece made by Athena, but thrown by her after noticing that it made her ugly when she breathed on it. Finding it, Marsyas started to play his music as a god or a better player than Apollo himself. The contest took place, Apollo and the muses stood listening in awe. The music that flowed from Marsyas's flute was so perfect that the muses could not declare the winner from the two. Enraged, Apollo was determined to have his revenge from the human who defied him by proposing that they have to play their instruments upside down. He played his lyre but Marsyas could not play with the flute's mouthpiece pointing downward. So, the muses declared Apollo the winner. Apollo proceeded to punish Marsyas by flaying him and throwing his corpse into Phrygia's river. His

spirit was released into its waters in a beautiful music. Ovid's version centers on Marsyas's punishment, "And as he cried the skin cracked from his body / In one wound, blood streaming over muscles, / Veins stripped naked, pulse beating; entrails could be / Counted as they moved, even the heart shone red / Within his breast" (Horace, G., 1958: 159), as narrated by Ovid.

Baldwin's Marsyas, Richard echoes this myth with a direct reference in the stage directions to god Apollo, through performances that defy white musical performances in a distinguished place called "Apollo Theatre". He was described in the following passage: "we discover Richard standing in his room, singing. This number is meant to make vivid the Richard who was much loved on the Apollo Theatre stage in Harlem, the Richard who was a rising New York star" (Blues: 17).

Richard has defied the white man in the domain of music and proved to be better than him. Thus, "Charlie", or the metaphor used by Baldwin to refer to the whites, destroyed this star through initiating him to drugs and then stealing his money. "I was working hard at my music, and man, I was lonely...then I started to getting into troubles and I lost a lot of gigs and I had to sell my car and I lost my pad" (Ibid: 29-30). The North, like the South is far from being the Promised Land for the blacks. To believe Richard's experiences, the Northern pains that the black man survived were sometimes more horrific than those he experienced in the South. The poisonous racial hatred he was carrying inside him after the death of his mother intensified his sufferings.

Like the Ovidian Marsyas, Richard had a direct confrontation with the white man Lyle by questioning white manhood and sexuality. Richard humiliates Lyle in front of his wife by calling him a "ball-less peckerwood" (Ibid: 74), and knocking him down. Hurt, Lyle decides to avenge himself. Instead of Apollo's lyre, Lyle uses a gun to kill Richard in an unfair battle. This scene recalls Ovid's most recurrent theme in his book *Metamorphoses*, in which human

hubris often led its career into destruction in front of a god. The case in point is the story of Arachne. She is transformed into a spider by the goddess Athena because she dares to challenge her in weaving.

Henry Meridian is another character who underwent a metamorphosis. After the death of his son Richard, he abandoned his philosophy and the discourse of religious love to reach racial reconciliation and integration for a violent armed struggle in pursuing recognition by the white people. He told his white friend Parnell that his sermons about racial love and human compassion were no longer useful for his folks killed by the white man despite their pacific struggle for their legitimate rights. He witnessed the death of his wife and then that of his son without being able to do something to punish these crimes. In the final scene of the play, we see him encouraging the young blacks in their revolt. He becomes a militant by hiding a gun under his Bible.

Another character that witnessed the transformation due to the events of the play is Mother Henry, Richard's grandmother. She represented the black mama, the blacks' old beliefs and the heritage of slavery in the South. She was the child of parents born in slavery. So, she knew white people, and as she told the young people in the church, "I used to hate them, too, son. But I don't hate them no more. They are pitiful" (Ibid: 16). Her mind changed and this was shown in the court while answering some questions about her grandson Richard. She saw Richard's gun right at the beginning of the scene and advised him to get rid of it. In the witness box, she declared, under oath, that she had never seen any gun in Richard's possession. Though a devoted Christian, Mother Henry lied in front of the audience to defend her dead grand-son Richard. Besides, after the murder of Richard, she abandoned her loyalty to the white people and joined the young students in their revolutionary activities.

As for setting, the play moved back and forth from the black to the white town according to the dialogues of the characters. In the white town, people were described as

being calm and assured. This atmosphere changed into agitation and anguish when it came to the black town. There, the major dialogues were set either in the church or the jail. The blacks were planning their next active action after being caught by the white authorities. Baldwin metamorphosed the church, the divine court, into an earthly ground to show the dialectics of religion and politics in the South. This was clearly shown in the speech Meridian delivered in front of Parnell. He explained to him the corruption of the church and the blindness of its god, telling him:

I've had to think – would I have been such a Christian if I hadn't been born black? Maybe, I had to become a Christian in order to have any dignity. Since I wasn't a man in men's eyes, I could be a man in the eyes of God...the eyes of God, may be those eyes are blind (Ibid: 38).

The doubt that infused Meridian's mind came after the dialogic seeking for truth, after realizing that all this faith and discipline, "didn't protect my wife. She's dead too soon, we don't really know how. That didn't protect my son – he's dead, we know how too well" (Ibid.), as he says.

Like the divine court, the worldly court set in the last act of the play was of no help to the black man. The judges were white and about to declare innocent a white murderer who killed a black man. Despite all these political *mise-en-scenes* to calm down the black town, Lyle was acquitted by an all-white jury, and transformed into a courageous hero, who was "congratulated and embraced" (Ibid: 116). In the public eye, he turned into the savior of white manhood and women's purity.

Baldwin's play is a Socratic dialogue in its use of Platonic dialectic to reach truth and is also influenced by Ovid's aesthetics of metamorphosis. For Ovid, change is the constant element in the human being. Transformation from one state into another expresses man's rejection of the old state with all the constraints it imposes into another one which appears more adequate and relevant. He express this change through the fables that narrate the reasons inciting individuals to change either through *hubris*, that is challenging stronger, powerful creatures, in this case the gods, or in order to question the *status quo* through a desire to

change into a better state. Ovidianism has been influential during the Western Renaissance because at that time religious and political institutions had been questioned and all the domains of life had known change through humanism that decentered the Christian God and placed the human mind at the centre. However, Ovidian metamorphosis as shown in the epic poem is a solution to an impossible human situation, and is often undesirable and cruel as is the case of Marsyas or Arachne. The most recurrent theme in Ovid's epic is that of identity, and the imposed forms that the individual should cope with without becoming completely others than what they are. For instance, Arachne was cruelly transformed into a spider. Yet, she kept her identity of a spinner though under another form, weaving in a different way.

Baldwin's use of metamorphoses is linked with racial problems in a period known as the Black Renaissance of the sixties. His play *Blues for Mister Charlie* embodies the challenge of white authorities and the resistance against the white man's injustices. The main character Richard defied Lyle, the Southern white man. The latter felt humiliated by a black man, and for a white man living in the South, it is a great dishonour to be challenged by an impudent black man. Richard's defiance, "you a man and I'm a man," (Blues: 119) enraged Lyle who ultimately killed him. Richard's murder metamorphoses the other black characters outraged at such denial of justice. Richard's spirit, as through metempsychosis survives physical death and becomes eternal through his songs.

Sylvander W. (1980) affirms that Baldwin's *The Amen Corner* "is about love" (1980: 184). However, she has failed to detect and specify that the same play reflects the notion of love as developed in Plato's dialogue *Symposium* (2008). This was despite the fact that Baldwin himself has repeatedly alluded to it in his essay "The Fire Next Time" (1963). In the latter, he writes that to love God is to love all his children without exception and to accept the enemy with love (Ibid: 336). Though his words sound Christian, they directly refer to Socrates' speech reporting Diotima in *Symposium*. She says that love is the ladder that helps

to love all people, to reach to the soul rather than the body without excluding it, and to acquire ultimate knowledge and wisdom (Plato, 2008: 50).

Baldwin's *The Amen Corner* is a kind of religious symposium in which Margaret Alexander preaches with great fervour her great love for the Christian God. The characters comprise of; Margaret's son, David; his father, Luke; Margaret's sister, Odessa. Also, the sisters and the brothers of the congregation who are ideologists having their own perception of love that often echoes the Platonic tradition as explained in the *Symposium*. They try to reconcile the antagonism of religious and earthly love that constitutes the most important theme of Baldwin's fictional and non-fictional writings. *The Amen Corner* and *Blues for Mister Charlie* question the religious love intended to subjugate African Americans to the principles of the Christian love. According to Baldwin, Christian love is associated to "blindness, loneliness and terror". It urges the black man to bow to "the white God", whose justice Baldwin questioned in his writing: "if His love was so great, and if He loved all his children, why were we, the blacks, cast down so far, Why?" (1985: 344), he says. Baldwin looks for the notion of justice which, according to Plato's dialogue, is one of the fourth cardinals of love together with moderation, courage, and wisdom. Throughout his plays, he explores love / agape to be felt and understood in the Christian church first, and among the black people. He discusses God's love for the mortals and people's love for honors, wealth or God by framing his ideas according to Plato's notion of love.

In *The Amen Corner*, Margaret is a fervent woman preacher who, like Plato's Diotima in the *Symposium*, plays the role of the instructress of Christian love to her congregation. She has known different forms of love ranging from her son, her sister, and her love for the Lord and her congregation. She thinks that her love for her musician husband Luke (common love), ceased after the death of her baby girl. As a result, she left her marital home and her husband and went to the North accompanied by her son and sister. Margaret devoted herself to the

Christian love, and her passion for the Holy Ghost, trying to raise her son according to the Lord's rightful path. However, behind her love and holiness lies the secret love story she dissimulated. She told others that if she chose the love of Jesus it was because Luke, her husband was sinful and abandoned her with her child. This story is the same as Baldwin's mother who came from the South refusing to reveal the real name of her Southern husband to Baldwin. The latter desperately longed to know his real father (Campbell, 1996: 3).

In Baldwin's play, Margaret's enigmatic story about her life in the South is clarified after Luke's sudden coming. His entrance to the church sounds like Alcibiades' in Plato's Symposium who disturbs the order with his Dionysian temper. Alcibiades' arrival tersely alters the philosophical mood settled by Diotima's speech. This entrance does not only shift the mood of the banquet of philosophy, but it shows that Alcibiades' speech is different from the other speeches in the sense that while the first five speeches contradicted each other and were reconciled in Diotima's speech, Alcibiades' changes the topic of the conversation from praising Eros to praising Socrates, "the truly superhuman" (Plato, 2008: 58). For him, Socrates started as a lover and ended up as the beloved of those who approached and listened to him.

In the same way, Luke enters the church and counterattacks the religious views of Margaret about the nature of love all along the play. He forces her to reveal the deepest layers of her personality and thoughts. He succeeded to move the audience's attention from the love of the Lord to his love for Margaret in a calm but teasing tone. Yet, it soon turns into a quarrel when Luke urges her to acknowledge their previous love and happiness before devoting her life to the love of the Lord. The following extract displays the dimensions of their quarrel:

Margaret: How long you going to be in New York, Luke? When did you get here? Nobody told me.

Luke: A couple of weeks is all. I figured I'd find you somewhere near a church. and you a pastor now? Well, I guess it suits you. She a good pastor?

Sister Moore: Amen!

Luke: What do you think David? Well she sure used to keep on at me about my soul. Didn't you, Maggie? Of course, that was only towards the end, when things got so rough. In the beginning...well, it's always different in the beginning.

Margaret: You ain't changed, have you? You still got the same carnal grin, that same carnal mind...you ain't changed a bit.

Luke: People don't change much, Maggie...

Margaret: Not unless the lord changes their hearts... (The Amen: 28)

"Carnal grin and carnal mind" recalls Pausanias' speech in the Symposium. He declares that there are two kinds of love and distinguishes inferior or common, and heavenly love. He explains that while the former is more sexual and is more attached to the body, the latter is associated with the mind and the soul. Physical love is not constant because the body is not constant. The heavenly one compels the lover to aspire to excellence by making oneself better in wisdom (Plato, 2008: 13). Moreover, "Carnal love" refers to Ovid's banquet of senses in which love's aim is the material gratification of the senses instead of an ascent into philosophical knowledge. Margaret accuses Luke by referring to the sinful erotic love he indulges in. She herself struggles against it as a sanctified Christian. For her, it is only the love of the Lord that can save people from their worldly tempting demons. She explains her decision to leave her household as follows:

Margaret: I had to go. The Lord told me to go. We'd been living like ...like two animals, like two children, never thought of nothing but their own pleasure. In my heart, I always knew we couldn't go on like that...we was too happy (The Amen: 59).

Baldwin's projection of ideas concerning love is rendered through the different often combative views of his characters who are inspired from his real life. David is the real name of his father and of his elder brother who left the house. He explains that by the time he was writing the play, he was old enough to understand the dues paid by his father and the reasons that pushed him to be terrified concerning his son's future in a racist society. In this context, he writes: "I am old enough by now at last to know that that I had loved him and wanted him to love me. I could see that the battle we had fought had been dictated by the fact that our temperaments were fatally the same" (Baldwin, 1968: xv). Luke represents Baldwin's idea of his absent father. This part of himself desperately looks for his father's love and recognition.

He attempts to challenge his paternal and religious authority by following the objective of being a better and successful preacher (Baldwin, 1963: 347). Further, his desire to free himself from the control of the church to which he escapes out of terror is represented in *The Amen Corner* by David's escape from both the church and his mother's influence as him, to follow a musical career.

Luke's and Margaret's dialogue about love turns into confrontation when Luke forces Margaret to confess in front of her son David and the church members, that she is the one who left the marital home. This confession is detrimental to her status as a pure sanctified priestess who preaches to her son and all the members of her congregation to tell the truth whatever the circumstances because "God don't like Liars" (*The Amen*: 30). From this critical moment on, the members of the church doubt and openly criticize her authority and credibility as a pastor. This is suggested in the words of Brother Boxer who says, "she been going around all these years acting so pure...she always up there on that mountain, don't you know, just a-chewing the fat with the Lord...how come she thinks she can rule a church when she can't rule her own house" (*Ibid*: 35).

Margaret sacrifices her real / earthly love to the love of God for the sake of curing her guilty and tormented spirit after abandoning her husband and marital house. This idea echoes the one developed by Eryximachus, the third speaker in Plato's *Symposium* saying that, "all the ways in which gods and men have dealings with one another - are entirely concerned with either the safeguarding or the cure of love" (Plato, 2008: 21). She tries to conquer reality through the religious illusion of loving the Holy Ghost and preaching, with the hope that this invisible love can satisfy all her needs and cure her discontent. However, her vision differs from that of Eryximachus who instructs the other speakers that love must reconcile the most hostile elements in the body, make them love one another, gives all happiness, and finds fulfilment in company with temperance, justice whether on earth or among the gods (*Ibid*:

19). Margaret acted unjustly. She neglected her husband and her son by preventing them from living in complete love and happiness. Ironically, her often cited passage from the Bible that says “set thine house in order” (The Amen: 8) is completely disregarded by her. She strives to rule over a congregation when her own house is dismantled.

Margaret’s (mistaken) sense of self-sacrifice also recalls Phaedrus’s speech in which he praises the lover’s self-sacrifice in front of his beloved. He introduces the idea that love leads to virtuous actions concluding that “the lover has a god within himself and he is more akin to the divine than the beloved” (Plato, 2008:11). This applies to Margaret’s public preaching and sense of martyrdom. She sacrifices her love for her husband and family to secure a privileged place with the Lord. She fervently says that, “the Word say if you put father or mother or brother or sister or husband...or anybody...ahead of Him, He ain’t going to have nothing to do with you on the last day” (The Amen: 68). However, at the end, she expressed remorse for this sacrifice and wished to start her life again with her husband. She exclaims: “my Lord! If I could only start again!” (Ibid: 88).

Luke, the name Baldwin has given to Margaret’s husband, refers to one of the evangelist writers of the New Testament appearing in two separate parts; first, as The Gospel According to Luke and second, as Luke-Acts. Luke, in the play ironically represents the “prodigal” father who follows the career of a jazz man “on the road”, whom Baldwin portrays as a Dionysian disciple. He acts as a fallen person in the eyes of his wife and the Christian church. At his sickness, Luke succeeded to retrieve his family, to declare his love to Margaret.

Contrary to Margaret who loves the Lord excluding any physical relationship with others, Luke believes in love between humans. He explains to his wife and son that looking for spiritual things is not sufficient to satisfy human desires. Luke’s speech recalls Aristophanes’ in Plato’s banquet of love. The latter parodies Eryximachus’ speech by resorting to the myth of “the two halves” instead of science. Luke parodies the religious love

that encourages hypocrisy and lies by overtly denying the authority of the Holy Ghost. He tells Margaret, “I remember you when you didn’t hardly know if the Holy Ghost was something to drink or something to put on your hair...Maggie we was everything to each other, like that Bible of yours say, we was one flesh.” (Ibid: 59).

In Plato’s *Symposium*, Aristophanes starts by celebrating Aphrodite and Dionysus, by giving great tribute to erotic love, wine and drunkenness. They are the major themes in Greek comedies. He explains that human beings were round-shaped with four hands and four legs each, two faces, and two sets of sexual organs. Tempted by their strength, they attacked the gods. Thus, Zeus and the other gods decided to cut them into halves to weaken their strength. Aristophanes ends his speech concluding that “love is the two halves’ desire and pursuit of the whole” (Plato, 2008: 26).

Luke’s desire is to be reunited with Margaret as conveyed in his dialogue. He tries to make her remember their past life together. He forces her to recognize her mistake and accept change instead of pretending to have “a new mind”. However, she explains to him, exactly in the way she addresses her congregation that his stubbornness comes from the sinful Adam that lies inside him:

Margaret: I ain’t never wanted you to learn but one thing, the Love of Jesus.

Luke: You done changed your tune a whole a lot. That ain’t what we was trying to learn in the beginning.

Margaret: The beginning is a long time ago. And weren’t noting but foolishness. Ain’t nothing but the love of God can save your soul.

Luke: I know we can go back, Maggie. But you mean that whole time we was together, even with all our trouble, you mean it don’t mean nothing to you now? You mean... you don’t remember? I was your man.

Margaret: You is still got that old, sinful Adam in you. You’s thinking with Adam’s mind. You don’t understand that when the Lord changes you, He makes you a new person and He gives you a new mind.

Luke: Don’t talk at me like I was a congregation. I ain’t no congregation. I am your husband, even if I ain’t much good to you no more (Ibid: 58).

Luke explains to his son David that music is not enough because humans need others’ love and compassion to be happy and to feel alive:

Music is a moment. But life's a long time. In that moment, when it's good, when you really swinging ...then you joined to everything, to everybody, to skies and stars and every living thing. But music ain't kissing. Kissing's what you want to do. Music what you got to do, if you got to do it. Question is how long you can keep up with the music when you ain't nobody to kiss. You know the music don't come out of the air, baby. It comes out of the man who's blowing it. (Ibid: 44).

Luke thinks that human love is the first rung in the ascent to other beautiful forms of knowledge like music. His words echo Socrates's (Diotima's) view that love is a helper, a kind of ladder that permits the ascension from the common beauties of this world to the original forms of beauty. She adds that the last rung of the ladder makes one a "lover of wisdom, or a philosopher" (Plato, 2008: 49). Luke who lived the life of a musician "on the road", believing in the Platonic view of making one part with the universe by performing his music, always felt incomplete because he needed the love of his wife and son to renew his melodies. Nevertheless, he cannot erase his past life and live with them as a religious disciple without playing his jazz music. So, when Margaret finally declared her love to him, he died in her arms. On the one hand, this death symbolizes the impossibility of being Dionysus and Socrates at the same time. On the other hand, it shows Margaret's transformation and her reconversion to human love. It is also a metaphor for Luke's rebirth through Margaret herself. It is as if he completes Aristophanes' concept of wholeness which is not only physical / sexual since it embodies both the desire to reach excellent forms of virtuous and physical love. This wholeness is shown at the end of the play when Margaret addresses the congregation, "still holding Luke's mouthpiece [a component of his musical instrument] clenched against her breast" (Ibid: 87).

Margaret cannot forget her old carnal love. Her role of a priestess disappears giving place to her real love. As she puts it, "maybe, it's not possible to stop loving anybody you ever really loved" (Ibid: 86). Baldwin replicates Margaret's expressions in his prologue to the play. Admittedly, she fails to reconcile religious and worldly love but she recognizes the weaknesses of her character. Baldwin makes her confess her life to the audience saying to them: "all these years it just been waiting for me to turn a corner, and there it stand, my whole

life, just like I hadn't never gone nowhere. It's awful thing to think that love never dies!" (Ibid: 81). Baldwin also repeats her saying, "to love the Lord is to love all his children...and suffer with them and rejoice with them and never count the cost!" (Ibid: 88), as he writes in his notes. This concluding notion about love directly refers to Agathon's speech in Plato's *Symposium* who affirms that love has four cardinal virtues of justice, moderation (the power over pleasures and passions), bravery and wisdom. He asserts that, "it is love that takes from us our sense of estrangement and fills us with a sense of kinship; who causes us to associate with one another" (Plato, 2008: 31).

David no longer believes in the Holy Ghost despite the fact that Margaret planned the same religious career as herself. Like his father, he chooses instead to follow a musical career. He declares to her that he has a mission outside the walls of the church in the world stating, "I want to be a man...who's going to speak for all of us?...maybe I can say something...one day" (Ibid: 80). After the death of her husband and her son's leaving, Margaret rejects the Holy Spirit, telling her sister Odessa that the vision is an illusion: "Oh sister, I don't remember no vision. I just remember that it was dark and I was scared and my baby was dead and I wanted Luke, I wanted Luke, I wanted Luke" (Ibid: 81). Margaret decides to follow a more virtuous love, an ideal / Platonic one beyond the hypocrisy of the church, without excluding the love of all humans as she says at the end of the play: "to love God is to love all his children" (The Amen: 88).

It is worth mentioning here that Baldwin wrote this play before the Black Arts' Movement of the sixties to criticize the church and to subvert the effectiveness of religion in the Civil Rights struggle. He made a direct reference to Martin Luther King Jr.'s strategy of racial reconciliation based on religious love that turned out to be utopian. The play is Baldwin's testing of the self and of his (religious) love that changes at different stages of the African American struggle for equality. The play is inspired from his real experience in the

church as a preacher and the son of a Harlem preacher. He left the church after discovering that it is “a mask of hatred and self-hatred” for black people and that it is an institution devoid of any kind of love avowing that “there is no love in the church” (Baldwin, 1963: 348). He denounces the hypocrisy and the falsehood of its rituals intended to love some people (white) and to hate others (blacks).

Baldwin’s theatre is a revolutionary tool inciting everyone to think and reconsider the way they love by respecting the four cardinal pillars of justice, moderation, bravery, and wisdom that are stated in Plato’s *Symposium*. In love, Baldwin insists on justice because for him, “if love will not swing wide the gate, no other power will or can” (Baldwin, 1963: 344). His characters are projections of the self and its different conceptions of love. He is Margaret (Phaedrus, Diotima) when he was a preacher, Luke (Alcibiades) after the church intoxication, and finally David (Socrates) who escapes the church and its hypocrisy following the path of art / knowledge (Music for David and writing for Baldwin). Thus, these characters have in mind the objective of saying something about their race and the philosophy of love.

Socratic Dialogue, Ovidian Metamorphoses and Love in Jones’ *The Slave* and *Dutchman*

Jones’s *The Slave* was performed in 1964 the same year as *Blues for Mister Charlie*. It is a play that defies the previous traditions of integrationist politics and poetics after the failure of the Civil Rights Movement. It announced the Black Revolution in America. Just like Baldwin’s it includes the features of the Socratic dialogue and Ovidianism. *The Slave* is Jones’s second play after *Dutchman* written and performed in the same year. In the script, the black character Walker Vessel visits the house of his white ex-wife Grace to see his two daughters. She is now the wife of Walker’s previous white drama teacher. The atmosphere is warlike. Grace’s husband Easley had an argument with Walker showing him hate and discontent. Easley’s attacks were triggered by Walker’s accusations of the couple of racism. Walker’s aim was to find excuse to take back his two daughters from Grace. The real purpose,

as we shall argue, was his nostalgia for his ancient life with Grace and his love story with this white woman, despite the fact that he was a commander-in-chief of a black army designed to destroy the white city.

Jones' play is set as a Socratic dialogue between the three characters Walker, Easley and Grace. They debate the nature of racism and its hidden dimensions. The first element of the Socratic dialogue which is, according to Bakhtin, the dialogic nature of truth and the human thinking about it, is revealed throughout their discussion. Right at the beginning, Walker's dialogue was the projection of his ideas in front of the audience as if he spoke to his mind. He treated the notion of truth; he identified with the self. as he puts it so well: "whatever the core of our lives. Whatever the deceit. We live where we are, and seek nothing but ourselves" (The Slave: 43). His monologue on the stage, before meeting with the other characters, addressed the audience by negating their possession of a ready-made truth: "figure still, you might not be right. Figure still, that you might be lying...to save yourself. Or myself's image" (Ibid: 44). Walker attacked (white) people who think that they knew something and possessed a certain truth. He ended his monologue by giving a simple example concerning "the color brown" to shatter the individual's certainty concerning truth. He says: "your brown is not my brown...we need a meta-language. We need something not included here" (Ibid: 45). This explanation corresponds to Bakhtin's definition of truth which is not to be found inside the head of the individual person, but it is born between people collectively, in the process of their dialogic interaction (Bakhtin, 1984: 110). Like Socrates, Walker stands as a "midwife" in the truth's process of birth. He plays the double role of a real person addressing the audience at the beginning of the play, and as a character colliding with the other characters and participating in the quarrel that will result in the birth of truth.

Bakhtin affirms that in the dialogic seeking of truth syncrisis and anacrisis are two important devices that respectively juxtapose the different points of view on a specific object

and provoke the interlocutor to speak his deeper thoughts without masking them (Ibid: 110). Anacrisis is started by Walker after coming to the house of his white ex-wife supposedly to see his two daughters. He did not visit them a long time ago. He provoked the words of his interlocutors Grace and her white husband Easley by his undesirable presence in their house with a gun in hands, and an insolent language. His words forced Easley and Grace to respond in the same hurting way, telling him:

Grace: What are you doing here, Walker? What do you want?

Walker: I was in the neighborhood; thought I'd stop by and see how the other half lives?

Grace: Isn't this dangerous?

Walker: Oh, it's dangerous as a bitch. But don't you remember how heroic I am?

Easley: Well, what the hell do you want, hero?

Walker: Nothing you have, fellah, not one thing.

Easley: oh? Is that why you and your noble black brothers are killing what's left of this city, I would say...what's left of this country... or world? (The Slave: 48-9).

This dialogue informs us of the tensions that have already existed between the three characters. Their triangular linguistic collision leads to a physical brawl between Easley and Walker. Anacrisis is not only acted by Walker's words. Even Easley and Grace force Walker to speak his inner thoughts under their provoking arguments. Moreover, liquor started to exert control over his consciousness. Grace reminded him of his "twisted logic and heroism" (Ibid: 49) that resulted on their precipitated divorce, decided by Walker alone to dedicate his life for the racial struggle.

Another provocation came from Easley who told Walker, after attempting to console Grace in a romantic way, that he was not good at it and that, "once a bad poet always a bad poet... even in the disguise of a racist murderer" (Ibid: 50). Saying so, Easley contested Walker's earlier discourses that centred on his belief that "the Renaissance is an evil time" (Ibid: 50). This is because of the changes in all the domains that gave birth to the spirit of Renaissance desire for the quest of knowledge and power. This new Western spirit has started

navigation with the invention of the compass and gunpowder marking the beginning of the long history of colonialism and genocide. However, Walker is now “the gaudiest example of a Renaissance man” (Ibid.). He is himself a commander-in-chief who wants to destroy the white city. To appease the tone of the debate between the two men, Grace asked Walker if he were still writing. The latter answered by re-appropriating Yeats’ following verses from his poem “News from the Delphic Oracle”, “Straddling each dolphin’s back / And steadied by a fin / Those innocent relive their death, / Their wounds open again.” (The Slave: 50). This intertextuality shows his acquaintance with the Irish poetry and is intended to identify and make a link between the pains of the slaves whipped by white masters and the Irish battle for their independence and identity. Easley says that these verses were not Walker’s but are borrowed from Yeats; exactly from the second part of “News for the Delphic Oracle”. This rectification pushed Walker to mock his erudition. He defended himself arguing that “mimesis”, as considered by Plato, is imitating something higher and intelligible. “The Delphic Oracle” echoes the Greek inscription “know yourself”, the one that urged Plato to lead a life of philosophy to improve his spirit. However, the masters who straddled the dolphin’s back and steadying them with a fin in Yeats’ poem were Pythagoras (who influenced Plato) and Plotinus (Plato’s disciple), two other Greek philosophers that Walker mocked and attacked for being the representatives of classical Greek knowledge.

Syncrisis in Jones’s *The Slave* represents the opinions of the characters concerning the racial situation in which a black army is destroying white cities for revenge. Grace’s husband Easley was Walker’s teacher at the university. Their dialogue contained political opinions they used to debate. After a period of time, they changed their personal and racial situation due to the growth in consciousness. Racial hatred is reciprocated between the white and the black characters. Their words collide for proving who is right and who is wrong in an emotional and philosophical conflict. Walker showed a paradox working his inner self. He is fragmented between his love for Grace and his political choices of his race. The Grace / race

conflict is revealed by his former teacher's attacks who considered him as a renegade. This was because he changed his political aspirations and chose to serve his race by denying his earlier life with the white people. Grace thinks that Walker's self is fragmented into many selves:

Grace: There are so many bulbs and screams shooting off inside you, Walker. So many lies you have to pump full yourself. You're split so many ways...your feelings are cut up into skinny horrible strips...like umbrella struts...holding up whatever bizarre black cloth you're using this performance as your self's image. I don't even think you know who you are any more. No, I don't think you ever knew (The Slave: 61).

Walker did not refute Grace's comments because they told the truth about his tormented self. These multiple attitudes that haunted and confused Walker's self were projections of the playwright's self and ideas. Like Walker, Jones separated from his white family and white friends to concentrate on the racial struggle.

Another opinion that is juxtaposed to that of Grace is that of Walker's previous teacher Easley who thinks that Walker used to be "a fantastic idealist" (Ibid: 62), who talked about humanity and beauty of the Western culture and civilization. Easley tested and contested Walker's (imagined) mission of a saviour of his race. He noticed that he trampled on all his previous philosophy to defend the romantic view that "only black man could restore this quality [idealism of rational liberalism] to Western culture because he still understood the necessity for it" (Ibid.). Instead, Walker abandoned Western idealism for an armed revolution by becoming "the commander-in-chief of the forces of righteousness" (Ibid: 62), as ironically declared by Grace. He believed in a new system, that of nihilism and destruction.

The three characters of the play hold a system of beliefs they attempt to defend in the dialogic interaction with the other interlocutor to seek and test truth pertaining to racial love-hate dialectics. These three characters stand for the predominant ideas of the racial problem. As an ideologist, Walker represented the black revolution of the sixties after the failure of the Civil Rights Movement. He exposed his ideology for both Easley and Grace, his enemies,

drinking liquor with an arm in his hand, explaining that he is not angry against Grace his wife since he loved her and had children with her. But he is against white oppression:

Walker: I was crying out against three hundred years of oppression; not against individuals.

Easley: But it's individuals who are dying.

Walker: It was individuals who were doing the oppressing. It was individuals who were being oppressed. The horror is that oppression is not a concept transferable. From the oppressed, down on the oppressor. To keep the horror where it belongs...on those people who we can speak of, even in this part of the twentieth century, as evil. (Ibid: 72-3).

Walker's ideology is countered by Easley who intends to contest the new philosophy that Walker considers to be the most appropriate for the racial context of the black struggle.

Easley, as a hero ideologist and a white university teacher, analyses the situation and thinks that Walker is wrong, and that his struggle is only going to change the colour of oppression.

His long answer goes as follows:

Easley: You're wrong about everything. So terribly, sickeningly wrong. What can you change? What do you hope to change? Do you think Negroes are better people than whites...that they can govern a society *better* than whites? That they'll be more tolerant? Do you think they'll make fewer mistakes? I mean really, if the Western white man has proved one thing...it's the futility of modern society. So, the have-not people become the haves. Even so, will that change the essential functions of the world? Will there be more love or beauty in the world...more knowledge... because of it? (Ibid: 73)

Walker refuses to adhere to Easley's romanticized and pessimistic view about the Western modern society. This is because he thinks that he is speaking from the white man's point of view to defend the white values rather than black ones. Walker explains that love and beauty have never been problematic under the white man's rule. He believes that: "that was not ever the point. Not even in the crusades. The point is that you had your chance, darling, now these other folks have theirs" (Ibid.). Walker supports his point of view by telling Easley that this armed revolt is caused by the cruelty of the white man. They did nothing to avoid the actual destruction. He dismisses him as a "sick liberal" who "never did anything concrete" to save the black man from oppression (Ibid: 74).

To counter-attack, Easley reminded Walker of his earlier life when he used to share with the white group of aesthetes protest against the system. This is arguably a reference to

the life of Jones in the Village when he wrote “formless poetry” that rejected anything political. However, Walker expressed his disgust to these days when he imitated white Beat poets, trying to be like them, recalling what he himself said in his article “Hunting is not those Heads on the Wall”, that “the imitator is the most pitiful phenomenon since he is like a man who eats garbage” (1966: 199). His change of position from his aesthetic abstractness into action was the result of the experiences that shaped his black self and his absolute rejection of neutrality when confronted with injustice. In this regard, he explains, “I have always found it hard to be neutral when faced with ugliness. Especially an ugliness that has worked all my life to twist me” (Ibid: 75).

In this testing of the truth, both Walker and Easley attempt to impose their beliefs despite the long time they spent together sharing the same aspirations and aesthetic forms. Times have changed and the process of art and thoughts has changed as well. Walker desired to commit himself to the racial struggle. He insisted on act rather than abstract verses as an effective means to change the racial situation. He declared, though drunk that, “Walker: the aesthete came long after all the things that formed me. It was the easiest weight to shed. And I couldn’t merely be a journalist...a social critic. No social protest...right is in the act! And the act itself has a place in the world...it makes some place for itself” (Ibid: 75). His language reflected the revolutionary theatre and the politics of the Black Art’s Movement that Jones and his friend Larry Neale worked for and applied in their literary works.

As a woman ideologist, Grace sides with her husband Easley to counter attack Walker. She becomes enraged after discovering that his visit is intended to take the girls away from her. She cannot understand his stubbornness because besides his military task as a commander-in-chief of the black troops and the dangerous way he lives, he wants his daughters with him. She interprets his behavior as extreme hatred, desiring to see her lonely and suffering from the loss of her daughters:

Grace: I guess the point is that now when you take the children I'll be alone...as you have been alone...as you have been now for so long? I'll bet that's the point, huh? I'll bet you came here to do exactly what you did...kill brad, then take the kids, and leave me alone...to suffocate in the stink of my memories. [*She is trying not to cry*]. Just like I did to you. I'm sure that's the point. Right? [*She leaps up suddenly at Walker*]. You scum! You murdering scum (Ibid: 84).

At the end of the play, the moment of the great explosion, Walker seems to be more concerned about Grace's life rather than that of his two daughters upstairs. This twisted position leads to the dialogue on the threshold, or the liminal position which is the fourth characteristic of the Socratic dialogue. Bakhtin argues that a man standing on the threshold confesses and cleanses his word of all of life's automatism and object-ness, which would force a person to reveal the deepest layers of his personality and thought (Bakhtin, 1984: 111).

In the second act of the play, the three characters are confronted with death. However, it is only Walker who is shown in the process of becoming while the two others stay constant. It started with the physical battle between Walker and Easley who took the occasion of the bombing of the house to attack Walker. With his gun in his pocket, Walker succeeded to shot Easley. The imminent death liberated Easley's speech. He uttered his last words to dismiss the type of theatre defended by Walker calling it "ritual drama" (The Slave: 81). A ritual which was a mere metaphor for the real act, reiterating his dialogue of the first act in which he considered Walker's art as "ritual filth" (Ibid: 56).

Grace witnessed the scene of crime. She could not do anything to save her husband from the hands of Walker. Her speech was also liberated and her language turned from that of the graceful intellectual woman into a coarse insulting one. She treated Walker of a "Murdering scum, Nigger" (Ibid: 82). Throughout her speech, her main objective was persuading Walker to forget about taking his daughters from her. She implored, arguing and even showing hypocrite kindness towards him. Nonetheless, after her failure to convince Walker, she started to incite Easley to kill him as a final solution: "He [Walker] is not to be

taken seriously. Unless there's some way you can kill him" (Ibid: 70). Easley's attempt at killing Walker at the end of the play is foiled.

On the stage, it was Walker who stood on the threshold liberating his words from any constraints, creating an extraordinary situation standing against and killing the white man. The dramatization of the selves by Jones is obvious since the play was written at the verge of his separation from his white life in the Village to join the Black Art's Movement in Newark (Jones, 1984: 244). Jones confesses that "This play *The Slave*, which shows a black would-be revolutionary who splits from his white wife on the eve of a race war was what Nellie [Hettie Cohen Jones] calls 'Roi's Nightmare'. It was so close to our real lives, so full of that living image" (Ibid: 288). Thus, like Socrates who relies on the memoirist and historical nature of his dialogues, Jones's play is based on his personal life and the historical context of the period in which it appeared. Walker exposed his "twisted mind" marked by doubts and remorse:

Grace: Walker you were preaching the murder of all white people. Walker, I was, am, white. What do you think was going through my mind every time you were at some rally or meeting whose sole purpose was to bring about the destruction of white people?

Walker: Oh, goddamn it, Grace, are you so stupid, you were my wife...I loved you. You mean because I loved you and was married to you...had had children by you, I wasn't supposed to say the things I felt. I was crying out against three hundred years of oppression, not against individuals (*The Slave*: 72).

His ambivalent feelings for Grace informed of his liminal position or transition. In the second act of the play, he killed Easley and witnessed the death of Grace with great determination to carry on his struggle at the head of the black army. He is the only survivor of the three characters and his speech foreshadowed his complete commitment to his race by killing the white residues of his spirit.

The ideas that are conveyed in *The Slave* represent the characters who utter them. Easley and Grace, the white characters in the play represent the ideas of white American liberals though they used to be close to Walker sharing the same aesthetic values. Their ideas

show their racist vision towards all that is black including black literature. Easley expresses the liberal point of view of committed black art as follows:

Easley: [*raising his head and shouting as loud as he can manage*]

You're filth, boy. Just filth. Can you understand that anything and everything you do is stupid, filthy, or meaningless! Your inept formless poetry. Hah. Poetry? A flashy doggerels for inducing all those unfortunate troops of yours to spill their blood in your behalf" (The Slave: 56).

Easley is portrayed as Walker's drama teacher and a friend as well. His ideas are liberal and represent his own personality. After Walker's commitment to the black cause and his changing position concerning the racial struggle, Easley no longer considered him as close as before because of what he considers as his murdering impulses against the white race. White liberals were known for their supposed sympathy to the black people. Yet, they had never shown real engagement when it came to the struggle for the black people's rights and emancipation. In his essay "Tokenism: 300 Years for Five Cents", Jones describes the liberals and their attitudes towards the black people. He writes that, "the liberal is in a strange position because his conscience, unlike the conscience of his richer or less intelligent brothers, has always bothered him about these acts, but never sufficiently to move him to any concrete actions except the setting up of palliative and symbols to remind him of his good faith" (1962: 95). Jones explains his idea by providing the example of the attitudes of liberals towards slavery, saying that the more liberal-minded Americans justify slavery by considering it as a method to convert heathens to Christianity rather than for purely commercial reasons (Ibid.). Thus, the ideas of the white characters Easley and Grace who pertain to the bourgeois middle class reflect their refusal of any engagement with the black struggle.

Grace's ideas are the same as her white husband Easley. She is a part of the dialogue only to defend Easley's position. Her unique concern is the fate of her two daughters that Walker wants to take away from her. She mocks his attitude of a white people-hater and his new violence to accommodate his black cause. She cannot understand the way this violence

directs his personal and public life by becoming the rule with which he judges and acts on everything. When he decides to take the girls and kills Easley, she ironically says that it is because “the cause demands it” (*The Slave*: 83).

Walker is against the liberals’ hypocrisy and pity for the blacks. These ideas are organically linked to both Jones the essayist and Jones the playwright who puts his own philosophy in Walker’s mouth. He unveils Easley’s hypocrisy telling him: “we called for a strike to show the government we had all the white intellectuals backing us. No one wanted to be intellectually compromised...no one but Negroes” (*Ibid*: 76). Discovering the reality of his white friends, he decides to quit them and dedicate his life to the racial struggle. The same schism happened in the life of Jones who separated from the bohemian life and his Beat poets friends of the Village. He started the black revolution and “the black and white thing was over” (Jones, 1984: 289).

Ovidian metamorphoses are used by Jones as his subtext to show the development of his characters. In the prologue to his play, Jones introduces an old minstrel figure / slave who metamorphoses in the two acts into a black revolutionary leader called Walker Vessels whose name recalls both David Walker the first black abolitionist, and Denmark Vesey who rebelled against slavery in America. Walker’s prologue informs us of his earlier life as a dream with his white wife Grace, and his transformation into a warrior for his race represents his mature consciousness as a revolutionary man. References to fables inspired by Ovid appear as the dialogue of the play goes on. The character of Walker can be compared to the Ovidian Bacchus / Dionysus and even Orpheus for instance. Throughout the play, Walker is shown as drinking wine, “one of the few real pleasure left in the Western world” (*The Slave*: 47). He is enthused by Dionysus / Bacchus the god of wine. Under the effect of wine, he metamorphoses into a satyr or one of Dionysus’ companions. Then, he started to attack Easley and his wife in their own house imagining the same atmosphere as the one created by Yeats’ poem “News for

the Delphic Oracle”, citing him in “Intolerable music falls. Nymphs and satyrs copulate in the foam” (Ibid: 51). This mythical setting recalls, at first hand, Ovid’s fable *Thetis and Peleus* (Ovid, 1958: 304), in which the naked goddess of water Thetis, after riding her dolphins, took rest in Pan’s cave where Peleus strived to approach her, but in vain because she changed her forms as Ovid describes her:

One moment, so it seemed, he held a bird,
The next, a green ash tree, the next, a leopard
(This last was terror breaking through desire)
Which he let go He thought of prayer, and with a cup of wine;
Tossed on the waters, he called the sea gods (Ibid: 305).

However, Peleus, helped by the sea god’s advice, followed her into the deep dark cave, trapped her in a net and after witnessing her metamorphoses and hearing all her lies; she became again what she was once. Then, he succeeded in his quest and together they had a son called Achilles. Jones has reworked this myth in his play showing Walker’s coming back to his white ex-wife, his two daughters and his white life to make a kind of nostalgic break from war and violence. Yet, the white goddess Grace emphatically refused his apology and invited him to take a drink and then leave as soon as possible. Unlike Thetis and Peleus who lived happily ever after with their child, the black-white marriage failed when Walker decided to dedicate his life for the racial armed struggle and rejecting all that is white.

Walker’s confrontation with Easley is played as a dual between god Dionysus and Apollo, two paradoxical figures of the Greek and Roman culture that interact as two opposing forces through battles of words that have been transformed into a physical contest at the end of the play. Dionysus stands for the god of intoxication, madness and disorder. He is represented by Walker who keeps on drinking wine, shouting and menacing until the end of the play. Easley is portrayed as an Apollonian figure arguing through theories of structured forms, aestheticism and politics to calm down Walker. However, the two opposing forces coexist in one character, considering the characters created by Jones as projections of his own

ideas. These two figures constitute one personality and it is this eternal inner struggle that is able to create change in the process of becoming.

Walker's coming back to his white life also recalls Orpheus's journey into the underworld to fetch his beloved wife Eurydice who dies after being bitten by a viper. As narrated in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book X), Orpheus prayed the god of love about the return into life of his beloved. The king and the queen of Hades accepted after hearing his sweet music and song. Their condition was that when they arrive to a place called "Dark Avernus", he should not look back at Eurydice until they reach the surface. However, and because of his love and fear for her, he looked back to see her disappear in front of him again.

Jones's Walker comes back to fetch his two daughters and eventually Grace to whom he attempts to explain his attitudes. Yet, the latter refuses to hear more lies from him, telling him, "You love! No one else exists in the world except you, and those who can help you. Everyone else is nothing or else they're something to be destroyed" (*The Slave*: 67). The banquet of philosophy was metamorphosed into a banquet of violence and aggression when the white characters refused to obey the black revolutionary who killed Easley and witnessed the death of his ex-wife, mistakenly thinking that his two daughters were dead as well, under the bombing of his army.

Walker's metamorphoses into Peleus, Dionysus and Orpheus, inform us of Jones's literary influences that direct the projection of his ideas through drama in the racial context of post-World War II America. His desire to comprehend his own subjectivity and his dilemma of being a black Renaissance man influenced by Western literature explained the paradoxes included in his play. He both uses and at the same time rejects these influences that are part of his own personality. The dialectic of (racial) love and hate determines his stances as an educated black American who is a product of the white system and simultaneously struggles against it for self affirmation.

The play's tripartite recalls Plato's "Allegory of the Chariot" induced by the talk of love in the *Phaedrus*. The Chariot as explained in the first part of this research contains the charioteer (reason), the white horse (spirit) and the black horse (irrational emotions). In the case of Jones's *The Slave*, the charioteer is the white Easley, the teacher, the good spirit is Grace and the bad horse is Walker. However, unlike the Platonic ideal of divine love, temperance and reason, Jones mocks the platonic allegory by killing Easley and Grace. He makes the irrational emotions triumphs over reason and good spirit. He metamorphoses the Platonic banquet of philosophy into a banquet of sense, destroying any hope of racial love and reconciliation between the two races.

In the same way, in Jones's *Dutchman*, Clay-Lula match foreshadows the racial chaos that lies latent in the psyche of the playwright. He is no longer able to retreat after announcing his anger on the stage. Lula's and Clay's encounter in the dark subway evokes a Platonic love story. The meeting of the two spirits starts as an intellectual dialogue about love recalling Phaedrus's and Socrates' conversation in Plato's *Symposium*. The black intellectual who read Baudelaire's poems is teased by the bold white Bohemian woman who interprets his words searching for truth. However, their conversation drifts into an Ovidian banquet of sense. This reversal in the form and content is intended by Jones to subvert the Western Neo-Platonic love and racial reconciliatory policy of both Hansberry and Baldwin.

Jones's *Dutchman* is a public forum that discusses the racial issues, and the difficulty of the black / white relationship in America of the sixties. Jones, like Hansberry and Baldwin has used the two dominant cultural paradigms of the Western Renaissance, Platonism and Ovidianism and their treatment of love and hate to write his play. Thus, while his play *The Slave* shows all the characteristics of the Socratic Dialogue, behind *Dutchman*'s Socratic aspects, lies Ovidian love. As explained by Frank Kermode, Ovid's banquet of sense is a predominant genre in Renaissance literature and is understood as the counterpart of the

Socratic dialogue. “The Platonic banquet”, he argues, “represents the ascent from sense to the higher powers of the soul, and ultimately the apprehension of divine beauty. The banquet of sense represents the descent from sight to the senses capable only of material gratification” (Kermode, F. 1973: 99).

Dutchman’s setting: “the flying underbelly of the city steaming hot and summer on top, outside, underground” (*Dutchman*: 1) echoes Plato’s myth of the cave inferred in book VII of *The Republic*. In this myth, Plato describes a group of people living in an underground. These prisoners have their legs and necks chained so that they can only see what is drawn in the wall in front of them. Behind, there is a fire blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised wall that acts as a screen. The latter reflects their shadows and the shadows of the passing along the wall. One of these prisoners is released to the light upward and his eyes become wounded by it. This newly released slave is told that his previous life, with all the shadows he saw were illusions of reality which exists in this upper world. The man goes down with this insight in order to convince his still chained counterparts that the shadows are unreal. Finally, after telling them the truth, they kill him (Plato, 1948: 46).

Plato explains that the cave is the world of sight, the light is the sun and the journey upward is the ascent of the soul from earthly / sensual world into the world of heavenly / intellectual one (Ibid.). Thus, the cave can be compared to *Dutchman*’s subway while the ex-slave is Clay, dazzled by the beauty of the white woman Lula in the darkness of the subway. At the beginning, Clay indulges in his innocent dream-like state, seeing the underground as a fantastic starting point for a great love story with Lula. He thinks that in the darkness of the subway, the white woman will transcend the racial barrier reaching the intellect and accepting the black man as her possible lover. Love as “the union of the opposites” (Plato, 2008: 36), as defined by Eryximachus in Plato’s *Symposium* has lured Clay’s mind, who becomes deaf to Lula’s racist insults.

However, Clay's Platonic vision about the underground metamorphoses into a den for sexual / sensual contact, recalling Kermode's "Cave of Mammon". According to Kermode, this cave lures innocent young men after being seduced by women or improper learning (1973:60-83). Lula starts the play by performing the role of Diotima (Plato's *Symposium*). Like a Sybil, she succeeds in guessing many facts about Clay's life. However, her philosophical discourse turns into a sexual teasing. She sexually provokes Clay intends to participate in a banquet of philosophy in Warren's house. Clay descends from the higher senses to the lower ones following the scheme of the banquet of sense.

Lula plays the role of diverse mythical seductresses "Calypso, Cleopatra, Duessa and Dalilah" (Benston, K., 1976: 156-7). She is a direct reference to Circe, who, according to Ovid's fable (Book XIV), attracts warriors, like Ulysses and his men, with her sensual voice and songs. She offers them wine, and then, she transforms them into animals with her wand (Ovid, 1958: 397). However, Circe becomes kind at the end. Ulysses' roots save them from their metamorphoses. Jones reverses the Ovidian fable by making Lula stabs Clay at the end of the play declaring the failure of the racial love story between the black man and the white woman in America.

As a conclusion to this chapter we can say that Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's plays are steeped in the European tradition of the Socratic dialogue and Ovidian aestheticism that reemerged during the Black Renaissance. In their dramas, the three authors entertain a dialogue with the self following Plato's artistic and philosophical forms of dialogue. The aim is to seek the truth concerning their subjectivity as related to the context of the racial experience of post-World War II America. In the quest for identity they have used Platonism and Ovidianism to discuss the subjective issues of the black identity. Just as their nonfiction the plays discussed above are sites of discussion, a mind talking to mind dialogues about the

different selves and ideas in their relation to the white mainstream American society. Their identity concerns are clearly expressed in their plays as it will be extended in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER SIX

Racial Love-Hate Dialectic: Family Romances in Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* and *The Drinking Gourd*, Baldwin's *The Amen Corner* and *Blues for Mister Charlie* and Jones's *Dutchman* and *The Slave*

In this chapter we will study the racial love-hate dialectic as expressed in Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's plays with reference to their subjectivity and quest for identity as African American authors in Post-World War II America when the blacks struggled for equal rights. To comprehend this dialectic, we will explore the dialogue of love and hate within the black family according to Freud's essay "Family Romances".

The dynamics of racial love and hate as explored in the first part of our dissertation dealing with the nonfictional works of Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones are stated in their plays. The analysis will seek to demonstrate that their intimate desires are entangled in the fabric of family and personal love stories which interact with their racial struggle. We will show that the racial love-hate dialectics as lived in the black family is transposed into their fictional works with more ease and freedom despite the racial pressures that burden black writers. We will investigate two important aspects. The first one is the way they use their plays as templates for the wishfulfilment of their repressed desires. The second one is the manner their personal and racial love-hate stories coexist in their plays negotiating their existence according to the context of their writings.

In our analysis we shall deploy Freud's theory of psychoanalysis as exposed in his essays entitled "Family Romances" and "Creative Writings and Day-Dreaming" among others. Psychoanalysis helps the critic to consider the black text / play as a partly self-conscious fantasy, reflecting child's playing games within the oedipal drama. This conceptual framework supports the research's argumentation about the playwright's inscription of love / pleasure as well as hatred / pain in the text. The analysis of the emotional language of the

writers is the only way to understand their secret inner existence especially in the case of the black text which is often a coded dialogue between the (racial) cultural and the personal experiences of the black authors.

Family Romances in Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* and *The Drinking Gourd*

The Socratic dimensions of *A Raisin in the Sun* dissimulate other no less important aspects in Hansberry's aesthetics. These aspects are directly related to the (black) family romances. Racial love and hate as provoked by the Oedipian dialectics of the black family is necessary in the understanding of Hansberry's subjectivity which remains uncharted. The source of love in the play is the mother Lena Younger (Mama). She is omnipotent and directs the lives of the other characters. She strongly relates to Baldwin's Margaret Alexander in his play *The Amen Corner*, sharing the same strength, holiness and determination. The stage direction describes her as follows:

She is a woman in her early sixties, full-bodied and strong. She is one of those women of a certain grace and beauty who wears it so unobtrusively that it takes a while to notice. Her dark brown face is surrounded by the total whiteness of her hair, and, being a woman who has adjusted to many things in life and overcome many more, her face is full of strength. She has, we can see, wit and faith of a kind that keeps her eyes lit and full of interest and expectancy. She is in a word, a beautiful woman. Her bearing is perhaps most like the noble bearing of the woman of the Heroes of Southwest Africa-rather as if she imagines that as she walks she still bears a basket or a vessel upon her head. Her speech is, on the other hand, as careless as her carriage is precise-she is inclined to slur everything -but her voice is perhaps not so much quiet as simply soft (*A Raisin*: 39).

This description includes love and admiration for a woman who is more than a character in this play since it refers to Hansberry's mother who protected her children with a gun when a mob of white racist attacked her house and children (TBY: 20). This mental image about a strong mother from her childhood memory dominates her works that are replete of such images like Rissa, in *The Drinking Gourd*. Despite the fact that she physically adjusts to the cliché of the black mammy, she belies the fake docility and servitude through her ceaseless struggles to unite her family through love.

In *A Raisin in the Sun*, Lena's strength and stronghold on her family thwarts her son Walter's growing up to be a responsible man. This situation nourishes the mother-son conflict complicated by the absence of the father. After the death of her husband, Lena was obliged to work as a servant in the houses of rich white families for the sake of nourishing her family and paying the rent. Being a matriarch is not a matter of choice or privilege. Instead it is a social obligation if not a tragic fate for the black women.

Lena's husband, Big Walter died young before seeing his dream of moving out of the ghetto into a house with a garden come true. His son Walter Lee has the same dream despite the fact that he works like a chauffeur for a rich white man, driving a limousine all the day. He shows the same behaviour of his father towards women. His discourse of hatred is an attack on the women of colour (Ruth his wife, Beneatha his sister, and Mama) who oppose his project of investing his father's money in a liquor store. His hatred is stated in the following dialogue:

Ruth: (wearily) Honey, you never say nothing new. I listen to you every day, every night and every morning, and you never say nothing new. (Shrugging) So you would rather be Mr. Arnold than be his chauffeur. So-I would rather be living in Buckingham Palace.

Walter: That is just what is wrong with the colored women in this world...don't understand about building their men up and making 'em feel like they somebody, like they can do something.

Ruth: (Drily, but to hurt) there are colored men who do things.

Walter: No thanks to the colored woman.

Ruth: Well, being a colored woman, I guess I can't help myself none.

Walter: We one group of men tied to a race of women with small minds! (A Raisin: 34-5).

His hatred for women of color informs of his self-hatred because of the inferiority complex he develops being a black man serving Mr. Arnold, a white rich man. He tells his wife, "This morning, I was looking in the mirror and thinking about it...I'm thirty-five old; I been married eleven years and I got a boy who sleeps in the living room and all I got to give him is stories about how rich people live...(A Raisin: 34).

The discourse of the man of color with women of color in this act is characterized by male-chauvinistic hatred that reveals Walter's narcissism. He considers himself worthy of great attention and love from these females in the confines of his black family. Despite the fact that these women try to protect him as they can, Walter seems asking for something that is beyond these women's power. The passage below expresses the black woman's emasculation of the black man:

Walter: (straightening up from her and looking off). That's it. There you are. Man say to his woman: I got me a dream. His woman say: eat your eggs. (Sadly but gaining in power) Man say: I got to take hold of this here world, baby! And a woman will say: eat your eggs and go to work. (Passionately now) Man say: I got to change my life, I'm choking to death, baby! And his woman say- (In utter anguish as he brings his fists down in his thighs) - your eggs is getting cold! (A Raisin: 33).

Walter is bitter and his wife cannot provide him with a balancing sweetness that could tame the sharpness of his spirit except some warm food before going to work. She is herself ill and as miserable as her husband. In an essay entitled "Is a Raisin in the Sun a Lemon in the Dark" (2011), Baldwin discusses the relationship between the black women and the black men in relation to Hansberry's play, explaining that, "eat your eggs" is a kind of castrating expression for the black man since it is literally a reference to his male organs (2011: 30).

Freud speaks of the anxiety of castration in the child's phallic age which is the conscious or unconscious fear of losing all or part of the sexual organs, or the function of such which generates the fear of having one's genitalia removed to castigate sexual desires of a child. According to Freud, when the infant male becomes alert of the differences between male and female genitalia he assumes that the female's sexual organ has been detached and becomes anxious that his male organ will be cut off by his rival, the father figure (Freud, 1989: 23). This comes as chastisement for desiring to become a man in an essentially dangerous racial situation in the case of Walter. At the metaphorical level, Walter feels as a powerless child who desires to be a man. However, he is still entangled in a system that

breaks him down each time he wants to progress and pushes him to be insignificant which is damaging for his personality.

Without a father, he struggles with his mother Lena the matriarch who controls everything in the house from the meals to the clothes of her family members. Furthermore, her power intensifies because the insurance money is her own and she is the only one who decides of the way to spend it. Like Plato's Diotima, she instructs her children the way to love each other through hard work and respect. Moreover, she is a religious woman who fervently believes in the precepts of Christian religion. This creates a problem for her son because she rejects his project of investing her money in a liquor store since it is a sin. She tells him, "But liquor, honey. Well- whether they drinks it or not ain't none of my business. But whether I go into selling it to'em is, and I don't want that on my ledger this late in life" (A Raisin: 42).

This confrontation with his mother occurs when the check arrives and Lena refuses to give him the money for the store. Thus, Walter leaves to drink himself dead in order to bear his frustration and depression. His mother's castrating influence on him as a boy still works in his coming of age. The wall of silence breaks between them and what Lena understands is that Walter is unsatisfied with his conditions and that he wants to be rich and prosperous. Walter's aspirations are expressed in the dialogue bellow:

Walter: I want so many things that they are driving me crazy...Mama-look at me.

Mama: I'm looking at you. You a good-looking boy. You got a job, a nice wife, a fine boy and-

Walter: A job. (Looks at her) Mama, a job? I open and close car doors all day long. I drive a man around in his limousine and I say, "Yes sir; no, sir; very good, sir; shall I take the Drive, sir?" Mama, that ain't no kind of job...that ain't nothing at all. Mama, I don't know if I can make you understand...Sometimes it's like I can see the future stretched out in front of me- just plain as day. The future Mama. Hanging over there at the edge of my days. Just waiting for me- a big, looming blank space- full of nothing (A Raisin: 73).

Walter Lee Younger has been denied access to the mainstream white American way of life. In fact he is repressing his desires and his dreams that are manifest in his everyday life. Yet, he cannot realize them. His daydream is intelligible at the level of obsession. Its

impossibility generated by his mother's refusal to give him his father's money to invest and become a black bourgeois. This pushes him to condemn all the members of his family starting by his mother to include all the American system that refuses the American dream to the black man.

His mother's rebuttal frustrates him more than the American system. He feels himself abandoned like a small orphaned child. To mourn his lost dream, he refuses communication with the members of his family even with his wife Ruth who is pregnant and decides to abort because of their miserable situation. He openly declares that his marriage with Ruth is his "biggest mistake" (*A Raisin*, 71). His hatred for his race originates from his hatred for his mother, his wife and his sister. It is justified by their lack of trust in him as their family chief able to protect them from the ghetto's constraints. He repeats that he wants "to be a man, think big" (*A Raisin*: 84). Yet, the religious / Platonic love that the females feel for him seems to reduce his importance and his self-love and regard as a man.

Another reference to his castration anxiety happens in the second scene of act one, when he was drunk and playing an African chief coming home from the war. Beneatha participates in the pageant through dancing and pronouncing nonsensical African (Ethiopian) words, crying and shouting, turning the ordered setting into a banquet of sense led by Walter's Dionysian intoxication. Kermode explains that such banquets, unlike the Platonic ascent to higher knowledge, represent the descent from sight to the senses, capable only of material gratification (Kermode, 1973: 83). Walter has brandished an ancestral sword he calls "the Flaming Spear", leading his tribe; his black brothers to victory, suggesting that "the world of Walter's imagination, it is the inner Walter speaking: the Southside Chauffeur has assumed an unexpected majesty" (*A Raisin*: 79). He imagines himself a great warrior:

Walter: Me and Jomo, That's my man, Kenyatta. (Shouting and thumping his chest) FLAMING SPEAR! HOT DAMN! (He is suddenly in possession of an imaginary spear and actively spearing enemies all over the room) OCOMOGOSIAY...THE LION IS

WAKING...OKOMOGOSIAY (he pulls his shirt open and leaps up on the table and gestures with his spear) (A Raisin: 79).

His wishfulfilment is unveiled in this passage under the effect of liquor's intoxication that protects him from receiving unpleasable impulses. Guided by the senses, he openly exposes his latent dreams and aspirations through being the leader of his people. His ephemeral superiority through reference to his African ancestors who were kings and queens is a kind of antidote to the oppression and inferiority complex created under the domination of a female matriarch and the white racism that act as agents of emasculation. "The flaming spear" is a phallic symbol that speaks for Walter's sexual power. It is also considered as a threat to the white woman, and the cause of persecuting the black man. In this respect, Baldwin writes that:

America never wanted its Negroes to be men, and does not generally treat them as men. It treats them as mascots, pets or things. Every Negro woman knows what her man faces when he goes out to work, and what poison he will probably bring back. There is no guarantee that she will always be able to suck the poison out of him; the more particularly as the male's aspirations, and his failures are so thoroughly bound up with herself (Baldwin, 2011: 26).

Ruth suffers for her husband because she knows all the humiliation he undergoes every day. Thus, she tries her best to support his moods, his addiction to liquor to forget his self-hatred and disgust.

Walter looks for his father's help in the insurance money that the latter left for his family. He claims to his mother that the man is his father, and that he has the right to possess a part of this money. The absence of a father influences Walter's hatred for other blacks who are rich through family lineage like George Murchison who is from a black bourgeois class. George's intention in coming to the house of the Younger is to join in an intellectual banquet with Beneatha, imagining her brother to be an intellectual like her. Yet, when he arrives, he feels the atmosphere of a carnival with Walter drunk, leading the dance.

Walter's envy of having a rich and affluent father like George's is expressed in his dialogue exposing his most intimate and latent dreams, and his hatred to the black

bourgeoisie. At the beginning, he tried to familiar with George by offering ideas to help his father in enlarge their family fortune. He tells him what follows:

Your old man is all right, man. I mean he knows how to operate. I mean he thinks big, you know what I mean, I mean for a home, you know? But I think that he's kind of running out of ideas now. I'd like to talk to him. Listen, man, I got some plan that could turn this city upside down. I mean think like he does. Big. Invest big, gamble big, hell lose big if you have to, you know what I mean. It's hard to find a man on this whole Southside who understand my kind of thinking. Me and you ought to sit down and talk sometimes, man. Man I got some ideas... (A Raisin: 84).

Murchison was bored by Walter's speech and answered indifferently to silence him. This attitude offended Walter who tried to counterattack in a violent way, criticizing the behavior of the black petit bourgeois whom he hated. His racial hatred is directed towards George and all the coloured college boys "who talk proper and read books and wear their faggoty-looking white shoes" (Ibid: 85). He harshly criticized the blacks who appear all the time with books under arms, studying psychology and sociology. However, for Walter, they can never learn "how to be a man? How to take over and run the world? How to run a rubber plantation or a steel mill?" (Ibid.) as he says.

Except for this sentence, "You're all wacked up with bitterness, man" (A Raisin: 85), Murchison does not really pay attention to Walter's speech. Instead, he waits for his sister Beneatha to come with him outside. Walters hates the petit bourgeois because he is not one of them. At the same time, he admires and loves their lifestyle since his dream is to become one of them. He compares himself to Murchison, telling him: "Man, I'm a volcano. Bitter? Here I am a giant-surrounded by ants! Ants who can't even understand what it is the giant is talking about" (A Raisin: 85). This expression conveys Walter's narcissism during childhood when he used to be the center of the family, surrounded by a loving father and mother. Nevertheless, this self-esteem underwent a reversal that resulted in his hatred for the blacks like Murchison to whom everything is provided by their fathers. He is a giant in a sense that unlike Murchison who led a rich life, he passed through many experiences.

The sorrows of the young black Walter are transmitted through his lover's discourse that usually ends with "no one understands me" (Ibid.). What the others cannot understand about Walter Lee Younger is his love for others, a pathos that is mocked at by his surrounding environment as being obscene because of his clumsy and painfully sincere attempt to get to them and gaining their consideration. Destroyed by rejection, he remains an unrequited lover who cannot say his love even to his wife. As a result, his love started to slip away from him and great confusion starts between them as this passage explains:

Walter: it's been rough ain't it, baby? I guess between two people there ain't never as much understood as folks generally thinks there is. I mean between me and you. How we get to the place where we scared to talk softness to each other. (He waits, thinking hard himself) why you think it got to be like that? (He is thoughtful, almost as a child would be) Ruth, what it gets into people ought to be close?

Ruth: I don't know, honey. I think about it a lot.

Walter: On account of you and me, you mean? The way things are with us. The way something done come down between us.

Ruth: there ain't so much between us, Walter...not when you come to me and try to talk to me. Try to be with me...a little even.

Walter: (Total honesty) Sometimes... sometimes I don't even know how to try (Ibid: 86-7).

Just like a child, Walter needs to be loved because it is important to feel useful and significant. According to him, to be loved a black man should be important and admired by the others. This a view is explained by Fanon who writes that, "The person I love will strengthen me by endorsing my assumption of my manhood, while the need to earn the admiration or the love of others will erect a value, making superstructure on my whole vision of the world" (1952: 28). This scene ends with reconciliation between the two lovers without any language except for their skin rubbing against each other, replacing the confused words that desperately fail to convey any emotional message.

The mother-son romance becomes more complicated. Walter's hatred for his mother intensifies when she proceeds to "butchering his dream" (A Raisin: 95), as he says, by placing the insurance money in a new house. Walter has been depressed and interrupts his work for three days. To explain his escapade, he informed them that he drove around the town. He

stayed in the Green Hat, a night club, where a band of saxophone and piano players diverted the blues people with their sweet music to help them chase the blows of life. Lena recognized that she had participated in destroying her son. She intended to correct herself through a passionate declaration of love that Walter desperately waited for:

Mama: I helped do it to you, haven't I, son? Walter I been wrong.

Walter: Naw- you ain't never been wrong about nothing, Mama.

Mama: Listen to me, now, I been wrong, son. That I been doing to you what the rest of the world been doing to you. Walter- (she stops and he looks up slowly at her and she meets his eyes pleadingly)... I want you to take this money. It ain't much, but it's all I got in the world and I'm putting it in your hands. I'm telling you to be the head of this family from now on like you supposed to be.

Walter: You trust me like that, Mama?

Mama: I ain't never stop trusting you. Like I ain't never stop loving you (Ibid: 107).

After losing the whole money, Walter enters into a period of mourning and melancholia, imprisoning himself in his room, refusing to speak to anyone. His self-regard lowered and critically assessed his way of thinking about the wrong and the right side in doing things. He acts as the melancholic that Freud describes in the passage below:

Extraordinary diminution in his self-regard, an impoverishment of his ego on a grand scale. The patient represents his ego to us as worthless, incapable of any achievement and morally despicable; he reproaches himself, vilifies himself and expects to be cast out and punished. He abases himself before everyone and commiserates with his own relatives for being connected with anyone so unworthy. He is not of the opinion that a change has taken place in him, but extends his self-criticism back over the past; he declares that he was never any better (1989: 584).

However, this tragedy strengthened Lena the matriarch who should protect her family instead of lamenting the lost money. It is only the force of love that can bring the fragmented family together again. In fact, Lena's love for her family succeeded to reunite them again. She started by scorning Beneatha for disrespecting her brother in his lowest circumstance. She corrected her discourse, telling her what follows:

Mama: I taught you to love him.

Beneatha: love him? There is nothing left to love.

Mama: There is always something left to love. And if you ain't learned that, you ain't learned nothing...Child when do you think is the time to love somebody the most? When they done

good and made things easy for everybody? Well, then you ain't through learning –because that ain't the time at all. It's when he's at his lowest and can't believe in himself 'cause the world done whipped him so! When you starts measuring somebody, measure him right, child, measure him right. Make sure you done taken into account what hills and valleys he come through before he got to wherever he is (A Raisin: 145).

Mama, the instructress of love in this black family, links loves to learning. For her, if Beneatha has not learnt how to love persons who suffer she has learned nothing. Her perception of love is the same as stated by the wise Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*. Diotima considers love as a helper and a ladder to all that is beautiful. Agathon's speech in Plato's *Symposium* affirms that love has the four cardinal virtues of justice, moderation, bravery and wisdom. He asserts that "it is love that takes from us our sense of estrangement and fills us with a sense of kinship that causes us to associate with one another" (Plato, 2008: 31). Lena's love for her children saves her son from debasing himself in front of the white man. It teaches her daughter that the peak of true knowledge is the ability to love the persons at their most painful moments, and to know the experiences they underwent before judging them at the concrete level.

Another form of romance is also expressed through Beneatha's story with Murchison. Her views about marriage shock both Lena and Ruth who cannot understand why Beneatha refuses to marry him though he is a brilliant black intellectual from the upper rich middle class. Both of them wonder what should be required in Beneatha's future husband "if" one day she accept to marry anyone. She mocks the way Ruth and her brother live their timid romance at the verge of breakdown because of the economic problems the family suffers from. She is not planning to marry George because "he's so shallow, and he knows he's rich" (A Raisin: 48), as she says. She has understood that Murchison is with her for her physical beauty only and not for her character. This is shown in his comments about her, dictating what is expected from her as a woman. She prefers a banquet of philosophy, "to hear all about thoughts", rather than the banquet of senses that he proposes. Her intellectual inclinations are expressed in what follows:

George: O.K. whatever you say... (They both sit on the couch. He tries to kiss her. She moves away) look we've had a nice evening, let's not spoil it huh? ...

Beneatha: I'm trying to talk to you.

George: We always talk.

Beneatha: yes—and I love to talk.

George: (Exasperated; rising) I know it and I don't mind it sometimes...I want you to cut it out, see the moody stuff, I mean. I don't like it. You're a nice-looking girl...all over. That's all you need, honey, forget the atmosphere. Guys aren't going to go for the atmosphere—they are going to go for what they see. Be glad for that. Drop the Garbo routine [to know her place as a woman]. It doesn't go with you. As for myself, I want a nice—(groping)—simple (thoughtfully)—sophisticated girl...not a poet—O.K.?...I don't go out with you to discuss the nature of 'quiet desperation' or to hear all about your thoughts—because the world will go on thinking what it thinks regardless-- (A Raisin: 96).

Murchison desires Beneatha to reflect the middle class perfect woman imitating white standards of femininity in a patriarchal society. Beneatha is against these clichés and desires to go beyond female submissiveness. She refuses his carnal advances and the physical love he wants her to indulge in. She is looking for herself, "I don't flit, I experiment with different forms of expression" (Ibid: 48) as she says. For her, philosophy is more important than material gratification of the senses. She provokes his words by asking him, "then why read books?" George answer is, "to learn facts, to get grades to pass the course to get a degree, that's all. It has nothing to do with thoughts" (Ibid: 97). His replay deeply disappointed her. Unlike George's Ovidian conception of love, Beneatha's is a Platonic one. This is clear from her decision to interrupt their evening dialogue. He is not the man with whom she intends to share her life since he prefers her physical bloom rather than her spirit. By this aspect of her personality she recalls Pausanias's speech in Plato's *Symposium*, who declares that:

The bad man is the lover of the common sort, the one who loves the body rather than the soul. He is not constant, because the thing he loves is not constant. As soon as the physical bloom that he fell in love with begins to fade, 'he flits away and is gone', revealing the worthlessness of his protestations and promises. But the lover who loves a virtuous character remains constant for life, because he is joined with that which remain constant (Plato, 2008: 16)

The character of Beneatha is a disguised lesbian who speaks on the behalf of Hansberry herself. She informs of her disavowed inversed sexual tendencies. Hansberry uses some markers to direct the reader to the lesbian identity of Beneatha when she compares her to a

Hollywood's star of the thirties named Greta Garbo, "Drop the Garbo routine" (Ibid: 96). According to Karen Hollinger, Greta Garbo is a lesbian who spent her life in loneliness and despair because of an unrequited love with her sweetheart the Swedish actress Mimi Pollak. Her androgynous, exotic and ambiguously sexualized screen presences successfully resisted patriarchy and affirmed her lesbian identity. (Hollinger, K., 2006: 63).

Beneatha, as a character, reflects Hansberry's self and the influence of Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialism. According to Steven R. Carter, Hansberry passed months studying de Beauvoir's book *The Second Sex* (1948), and wrote an article in 1957 entitled "Simone de Beauvoir and Second Sex: An American Commentary" (1991:14). The part entitled "The Lesbian" influenced Hansberry. This influence is reflected in her female character Beneatha who stands as a revolutionary figure. She rejects and criticizes the American and the black man's myths about women as summarized in Murchison's comment in the previous quotation. These myths are worked out to oppose women's career's aspirations, and thoughtful spirit.

In the analysis of feminine homosexuality or lesbianism, Simone de Beauvoir took into account both Freud's and Adler's views of it. She recognizes Freud's considerations that the maturing of female eroticism requires change from the clitorid stage to the vaginal one, a change which is symmetrical with the transfer of love to the father the little girl feels for her mother. The woman may not become resigned to her 'castrated' state, hiding from herself the absence of the penis and remain fixed on her mother, for whom she is ever seeking substitutes (1956: 397). De Beauvoir espouses Adler's view who considers that the arrest of development, that is lesbianism in women is not an accident passively suffered, but it is desired by the subject who through the *will to power*, deliberately rejects her mutilation and seeks to identify herself with the male while refusing his domination (Ibid: 397). Between

these views, de Beauvoir thinks that the great mistake of the psychoanalysts is to regard homosexuality as an 'inauthentic attitude', explaining that:

The truth is that homosexuality is no more a perversion deliberately indulged in that it is a curse of fate. It is an attitude chosen in a certain situation—that is, at once motivated and freely adopted. No one of the factors that mark the subject in connection with this choice—psychological conditions, psychological history, and social circumstances—is the determining element, though they all contribute to its explanation. It is one way, among others, in which woman solves the problems posed by her condition in general, by her erotic situation in particular. Like all human behaviors, homosexuality leads to make-believe, disequilibrium, frustration, lies, or on the contrary, it becomes the source of rewarding experiences, in accordance with its manner of expression in actual living—whether in bad faith, laziness, and falsity, or in lucidity, generosity and freedom (Ibid: 413).

Hansberry believes in the strength of the lesbian woman and in lesbianism as being a site for negotiating issues of love, race and freedom. Nevertheless, to protect her public image in the hetero-patriarchal American society, she proceeded to auto-censorship in her autobiographical work.

Her lesbianism is clearly masked under Beneatha's romance with another lover Asagai who is from Africa. He is a Nigerian student who comes to study in America, meets Beneatha and falls in love with her. She spoke with him because she wanted to know more about her African identity from an authentic African. She addressed him with great respect, "Mr. Asagai—I want very much to talk with you. About Africa. You see, Mr. Asagai, I am looking for my identity!" (A Raisin: 61). In his first visit to the Youngers, Asagai brought African robes for Beneatha who grew so enthusiastic about them. However, he did not miss the occasion to tease and mock her mutilated hair which is an assimilationist sign in America. Conking the hair of black people is like using industrial products to whiten / bleach their black skin to resemble the whites. In the same context, Fanon speaks of the desire of the black woman's desire of whiteness as a sign of her self-hatred. He takes the example of Mayotte Capécia from Martinique. She dreamed of whiteness during her childhood and when she couldn't negrify the world using ink she started the opposite process which was bleaching her skin through her attempt to whiten / bleach her black skin. Being disappointed again she

became a laundress, (Fanon, 1952: 31). It is the job of Lena and Ruth who whiten the clothes and the houses of white American families.

Beneatha answers Asagai's attacks by affirming: "I am not an assimilationist" (A Raisin: 62). To confirm her sayings she goes out after his departure, cut her hair short and decides to keep it natural without straightening. This fact angers Murchison, and astonished her brother and his wife Ruth, considering it "eccentric", and as "an African bush" (Ibid: 80) as they say. However, her desire to be natural by cutting her kinky hair is not only a way to find her original African heritage. But it was to espouse a certain fashion of the fifties that designed lesbian appearance. She advocated a hair-style adopted by the butch or (lesbian) who publicly affirmed her homosexuality. The "butch persona" is also referred to as "street dyke" (Lipari, L., 2007: 232). It is a concept that emerged in the fifties as a response to sex, class and gender oppression, with the increased visibility of the established gay community and the resulted post-World War II inflexibility of sex roles and the political authoritarianism of the McCarthy era (Ibid.). De Beauvoir has mentioned the special wear apparel of the lesbian, and her short hair which is in fact an imitation of man's garments and aspect (De Beauvoir, S., 1957: 395). In her quest for understanding her sexual identity, Hansberry discovered that she could be a subject able to act instead of being an object. Mixing racial and sexual struggle strengthens the image she wishes though the compromising sexual side lies latent behind her racial protest and identity quest.

Beneatha refused to settle as a black woman attending a man. Instead, she aspired to be a doctor which was at that time the highest point in a woman's most brilliant career. Her mother supported her dreams as if she wanted to live the same aspirations. She understood her desire of freedom and provided her with the necessary means to their fulfillment. She affirmed to Ruth that, "some of it got to be put away for Beneatha and her schooling—and ain't nothing going to touch that part of it. Nothing" (A Raisin: 44). Lena looked at her

daughter's dreams and her future projects as a revenge on the mediocrity of her past and present life.

Walter is the symbol of the male / father presence. Lena's interest in him often caused Beneatha's jealousy who sought to show that he was inferior to her because he was not as educated as her. This complex family structure recreates an Oedipian drama with the ambivalent love-hate feelings in the midst of racial atmosphere. Notwithstanding the difference of dreams and objectives, complicity existed between them. This is shown for instance when they perform their play within a play about African women waiting for their husbands / warriors to come back from war or hunting. In this scene, Walter, though drunk, played the leader / the father of black people with a flaming spear. Beneatha mockingly played the singer mother / wife who supported her husband, the place to which the black woman is relegated in the family romance.

Beneatha refused the place consigned to the black woman by the family and the society through her violent debates with her brother Walter. Her idea of being a doctor was mocked by all the members of the family except her mother. They implored her to abandon the idea of being different and a rebellious black woman. She rejected Murchison's marriage proposal. She expressed her loathing to his recurrent sexual teasing as the stage direction shows: "he starts to kiss her, she rebuffs him again and he jumps up" (*A Raisin*: 96). She took the decision to refuse even Asagai's marriage proposal clearly exposing her views about marriage and men. Freud expresses this state by the girl's non-resignation of her 'castrated' state hiding from herself the absence of the penis and remains fixed on her mother, for whom she seeks substitutes. She is likely directed to homosexuality rather than towards the heterosexual life that the members of the family push her on through marrying the rich black Murchison to secure her future. Her determination and revolutionary character influenced Lena to the extent of hearing her utter expressions like, "my plant, it expresses Me" (*A Raisin*: 121), to convey

her devotion to the plant. She also advised Beneatha to stop wasting time with her lover, saying: “Well—I guess you better not waste your time with no fools” (Ibid: 98), after hearing her saying that “Murchison is a fool” (Ibid: 97).

As previously explained, Hansberry became famous after her Broadway performance *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959). Unlike the American media that limited her to the status of an integrationist playwright, her works were more profound and politically oriented. In fact, Hansberry used her fame to speak for her race in radio interviews, magazines and became a black national icon. Her second play *The Drinking Gourd* written in 1961 was intended to television but was blocked by the directors and the authorities because she explicitly discussed the theme of slavery through the voices of black characters.

In a symposium grouping Baldwin, Langston Hughes, and Alfred Kazan among others, Hansberry expressed her desire to revisit the problem of slavery and the Negro question (TBY: 152). She affirmed to the group, “I am so profoundly interested to realize that in these one hundred years since the Civil War very few of our countrymen have really believed that their Federal Union and the defeat of slavocracy and the negation of slavery as an institution is an admirable fact of American life” (Ibid.). During the same symposium, she criticized the blindness of the American books of history.

Her rage was provoked by the rejection of her play judged as an inadequate program for the Americans. According to Robert Nemiroff, Hansberry’s Jewish ex-husband and artistic director, the play was commissioned in 1959, a year before the start of the non-violent Southern protest that filled the South’s jails with the modern counterparts of field slaves. Though it was judged “Superb” the manuscript was put in a drawer and was banned from the American screens (Nemiroff, 1972: 151).

Racial love and hate dialectic is central to Hansberry’s *The Drinking Gourd*. She re-writes the theme of slavery from a contemporary point of view by shedding light on the

family romances within the black family under the system of slavery. Her play can be considered as a prequel to *A Raisin in the Sun*. In fact, the two plays share the same theme of the strong black mother and the rebellious son in their resistance to the oppression of the social milieu because of racial prejudice in America. However, in *The Drinking Gourd*, the oppressor is the system of slavery that destroyed the history of blacks who were reduced to a mere property in the hands of white masters who worked to erase their identity and conditioned them both physically and morally to serve whites' interests.

Oedipian dramatizations and family romances lie behind the fabric of the play. Rissa the black mother and Hannibal her son indulged in an oedipal love. This romance prevented the son from leaving the mother. It is only towards the end of the play that this mother understood that securing a place as a house-slave for her rebellious son would never change his desire to run away from slavery to reach freedom in the North. Unlike the stereotypes that show the slave family as a fragmented one, lacking love, Hansberry depicted black family where love is supreme. Family love and solidarity permitted the slave family to survive the master's cruel oppression. The slave mother is shown as the first revolutionary woman who has pushed her son to rebel against the white master with a gun in hand to reach freedom.

The setting of the play is a cotton plantation, a prison for the slaves. It was a lucrative factory for the white masters who maintained this "peculiar institution" by using power and fear to control the slaves in order to serve in the Southern American plantations. These masters legitimated slave subjugation. They turned out the plantation into a "bio-political" industry wherein race and power relations interplayed to re-create a microcosmic serfdom which recalled the days of feudalism.

At the centre of Hansberry's *The Drinking Gourd* lie the issues the black family resistance to slavery, the prohibited education of the slave, and the dialectic of racial love and hate. Trade and separation are the tools of terror that break their romantic ties. The children of

the slave family understand that despite the hybridity of the black and white authority it is the master who really held the whip and who decides for their emotional life. Despite blood ties and romantic love, the slave family cannot be an organic unit of permanently linked, interdependent persons.

The play opens with a narrator / soldier who is described as being “Lincolnesque”, a Southerner whose comments concentrate on questions of land, seeds and slaves. These three components, when combined, as the narrator says, can reverse or build up a force, a powerful economy based on slave trade and on slave labour. As she puts it, “This is soil, Southern soil. This is cotton seed. Europe, Africa, the New World and cotton. They have all gotten mixed up together to make the trouble...You see this seed and this earth only have meaning –potency-if you add a third force. That third force is labor” (The Gourd: 167). The narrator does not specify that this labour in question is conducted by the slaves. As he moves closer to the plantation, he hears the sweet sound and the voices of the unseen slaves singing a plaintive and sad of spiritual with the refrain of “steal away, steal away / steal away to Jesus” (Ibid: 168). This spiritual is pertinent to the opening of the first act since it foreshadows Hannibal’s, the main character’s obsessive desire of running away North to freedom. Hansberry speaks directly to the reader through the device of the narrator who describes and comments on the play. For instance, she inserts a detailed description of the slaves’ quarters. She writes:

These people are slaves. They did not come here willingly. Their ancestors were captured, for the most part, on the West Coast of Africa by men who made such enterprise their business...Few of them could speak to each other. They came from many different peoples and cultures. The slavers were careful about that. Insurrection is very difficult when you cannot even speak to your fellow prisoner. All of them did not survive the voyage. Some simply died of suffocation; others of disease and still others of suicide. Others were murdered when they mutinied. And when the trade was finally suppressed-sometimes they were just dumped overboard when a British Man-o’-War got after a slave ship. To destroy the evidence. That trade went on for three centuries. How many were stolen from their homeland? Some scholars say fifteen million. Others fifty million. No one will ever really know (The Gourd: 169-70).

This historical truth exposes the white men’s discourse about the reality of slavery. It describes their horrifying procedure of uprooting the Africans from their land for their own economic prosperity in the context of imperialism. Their inhuman ways were often

dissimulated under the mask of religion and the white man's burden of civilizing backward nations. Malcolm X explains that the white man who participated in the slave trade was actually "nothing but a piratical opportunist who used Faustian machinations to make his own Christianity his initial wedge in criminal conquests" (Malcolm X, 1965: 272).

The narrator described the life of the slave in the plantations and explains that the slave is a chattel that costs nothing for his master. He expands his views telling the audience: "you see among other things there is no education to pay for-in fact some of the harshest laws in the slave code are designed to keep the slave from being educated. The penalties are maiming, mutilation, or death" (The Gourd: 170). White men were so afraid of educated blacks that they created laws forbidding their instruction. Educated slaves were for the majority insightful persons who endeavored to free their brothers from slavery by revealing the truth about their captivity and the illegitimate abuses of the white masters. Frederick Douglass relates the way his master Mr. Auld forbade his wife to instruct him. In the passage below, he explains to her the dangers of educating slaves:

[I]f you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master-to do as he told to do. Learning would spoil the best nigger in the world. If you teach that nigger how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy (Douglass, F., 1845: 29).

Revealing the effects of knowledge on the slave perplexed Douglass. Like the biblical Adam, he was tempted by the tree of knowledge. He started to learn how to read and write secretly. This learning was both a great joy and an immense pain. As he puts it: "the more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslaver. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers". He adds that these educated people "had left their homes, and gone to Africa and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men" (Ibid: 35). By

outwitting the white man's power to enslave the black man, he understood that education is the most secure pathway to freedom.

The slave quarters stand at the periphery of what Hansberry calls in this play "the Big House". It is the central tower in which the white master Hiram Sweet and his family live. Just like Baldwin's *Blues for Mister Charlie*, the racial fissure between the whites and the blacks is highlighted to mark the social hierarchy of the Southern plantation. The reader / viewer is in front of two different societies functioning according to different systems. This segregation is created by the master to maintain the hegemonic power over the slaves. These latter are as Everett (the white master) says, "a labor force of four million who can just go on working undisturbed" (The Gourd: 177).

Hansberry has understood the necessity of love in the black family, and that being loved by others should pass through loving and accepting one's own self. She invents other possible types of slaves like Hannibal who refuses to accept himself as a slave. He aspires for recognition. At the beginning of the play, Hannibal is portrayed as a tool in the hands of the white master working in the fields. He receives no wage in return for his work. However, unlike the other slaves, he questions his state and desires to be a man. He wants to be the master of his self like the white master. Hannibal displaces the Hegelian dialectic of the slave and the master. Hegel's slave as explained before proves his existence in his work. Hannibal is not satisfied and refuses to serve the white man as we shall see. He needs to be recognized by him as a man equal to his master. Among his path to reach recognition is that of educating himself despite the black codes that forbid knowledge for the slaves.

Hannibal secretly undertook the quest of knowledge and education using the ink and the paper of the master. He even used his white master's son, probably his white half-brother Tommy to realize his project of freedom. In Plato's *Symposium*, Diotima explains that love is a helper, a kind of ladder that permits the ascension from the common beauties of this world

to the original forms of beauty, and the last rung of the ladder makes one a lover of wisdom or a philosopher (2008: 49). In the same way, Hannibal, the slave entertainer succeeds in reaching knowledge. Hannibal admired his brother Isaiah who was brave enough to run away from the plantation. His transgression of the codes that prohibited the education of slaves caused him physical torture and blindness. He, despite his tragic fate, never abandoned his project to flee to the North. Helped by his beloved Sarah and his mother Rissa, he followed the “Drinking Gourd” towards freedom.

Rissa recalls Lena in *A Raisin in the Sun*. She is the wandering black mammy figure in the works of Hansberry. She is the symbol of racial love. Her sufferings did not prevent her from loving her own children and her master’s ones. However, this source of love and passion would fade once the children, white or black became conscious of the surrounding hostile environment congenial to racial abhorrence. Like Lena, Rissa is strong enough to confront her white master Hiram Sweet and claim him a position for her son Hannibal in the house instead of the fields. This promise was made by him the day Hannibal was born. This detail denounces the secret love story between Rissa and Hiram Sweet, the father of both Rissa’s sons Hannibal and Isaiah. What supports this affirmation is Maria, the white mistress and her jealousy of Rissa. In fact, the master’s incessant escapes to the slave quarters to find Rissa are suspicious enough of their romance. He loves her and yet, he should save appearances by espousing a white woman, the mistress of his home. Rissa participated with Hiram Sweet to sow the first seeds of cotton in this plantation. This is clearly shown in the following dialogue between them:

Hiram: Took a stubborn man to do the things I had to. To come into the wilderness and make a plantation. Came here with four slaves and fifty dollars and made one of the finest plantations in this district.

Rissa: (attending to him gently, patiently, mopping his brow as she stands behind his chair) Yessah. Jes you and me and old Ezra and Zekial who run off and poor old Leo who died last year (The Gourd: 186).

Like the majority of the female slaves, Rissa is owned as both a procreative and a sexual object in the hands of the white master. Her family romances are destroyed by slavocracy. She witnessed the prosperity of her white master from a poor planter into a huge producer of cotton in the South. Things started to change in her life of a slave since she became excessively worried about her first child Isaiah who ran away and her younger one Hannibal whose obsessive desire was to escape slavery and join his brother in the North following the drinking gourd.

Isaiah romance and family is destroyed by the white master. The southern laws did not defend the slave families. The slave family as Margaret A. Burnham explains was constructed outside of legal developments governing family relationships. The notion of legal autonomy within the private sphere had no meaning for the slave family whose members could lawfully be spread to the four corners of the slave south (1987: 4). After falling in love with a slave woman, Isaiah marries her and they have a child called Joshua. However, the master sells her. He separates her from her child and husband (*The Gourd*: 175). This results in her husband “going mad” (*Ibid.*) and his running away from the plantation abandoning his child. Hannibal wants to flee like his brother despite his romance with Sarah who is scared at hearing her lover’s desire to run away.

Hannibal was not submissive to his master’s cruel sentence. He resisted both Everett and Coffin. He daringly screams at them in defiance in the face of hopelessness, saying to them, “You can’t do nothing to me to get out my head what I done learned...I kin read! And I can write! You can beat me and beat me...but I can read... (*to Zeb*) I kin read and you can’t (*Ibid.*). After blinding Hannibal, he was stung by all four limbs between two saplings, until gangrene caused the infection of his body and castrated him.

Hiram Sweet was not directly involved in Hannibal’s chastisement. He treated his son Everett of a murderer after hearing this crime. His reaction is due to his romantic attachment

to Rissa. She ends this hybrid romance after Hannibal's punishment. Being in his deathbed, Hiram visits Rissa's cabin to apologize and proposes some medical aid for Hannibal. Rissa refuses his help. She prepared some quinine for Hannibal's fever which can be read as a metaphor foreshadowing her escaping plan from the plantation. In an unusual tone, she accuses her master, raising her voice, questioning the logic of being a master over slaves only and not over his family members. She criticizes the white father's inability to assume his responsibility towards his own family. She emphasizes the view that the arms of the extended plantation family shielded only the white mistress and her children excluding the black slave and her kids:

Hiram: I –I wanted to tell you Rissa- I wanted to tell you and ask you to believe me that I had nothing to do with this. I-some things do seem to be out of the power of my hands after all...other men's rules are a part of my life...

Rissa: (for the first time looking up at him) Why? Ain't you Marster? How can a man be marster of some men and not at all of others-

Hiram: (the question penetrates too deeply and he looks at her with sudden harshness) you go too far—

Rissa: (with her own deadly precision) Oh-? What will you have done to me? Will your overseer gouge out my eyes too? (shrugging) I don't 'spect blindness would matter to me. I done seen all there was worth seein' in this world-and it didn't 'mount to much. (Turning from him abruptly). I think this talking disturb my boy (The Gourd: 215).

This scene of motherly love recalls the last one in Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*. Walter Lee was sustained by his old mother Lena to defy Lindner the white man who wanted to chase them from the white neighborhood by purchasing their new house. Like Lena, Rissa approves of Hannibal's decision to escape from slavery. Though she cannot change the reality of their miserable state she in fact changes her attitude towards this reality by disobeying her white master. More than that, she steals a gun from his living room to arm Sarah, Joshua and the blind Hannibal the night of their escape.

Hiram Sweet shares in the guilt of blinding and torturing Hannibal. Like all the slaveholders, he is for the prohibition of teaching slaves since an educated slave was an informant about the world outside the plantation. He knows and informs his fellow slaves of

the abolitionist movement, slave revolts, the conflict between the North and South and can prepare a revolution to reach freedom. The master's love for Rissa and his romantic attachment to his slaves and his cotton plantation proves to be an impediment to their freedom. Finally the white man's desire is where his interests are. He believes that his slaves (should) love him and expect them to be indebted forever while he firmly thinks that they are not capable to love each other. Hiram gullibly wonders why Isaiah flees the plantation after selling his young wife to another slave-owner, abandoning his white master behind.

Hansberry has demonstrated that love and family connections between the slaves is of great importance. Love often protected them from death and torture at the hands of white masters. Hannibal's love for Sarah was depicted in a romantic manner. Hannibal, "romantically, wistfully playing the poet-fool", as he is described by the stage direction. He approached Sarah rehearsing a love poem: "when she comes to me it were the moonrise / and when she touch my hand, it were the true stars falling" (Ibid: 172). Sarah's love for Hannibal pushed her to change from a fragile female character into a dynamic and strong one as the events of the play unfolds.

Through this character, Hansberry undermines the stereotypes of the black young female slave as being silly and stupid. These images are conveyed by Margaret Mitchell's Prissy in *Gone With the Wind* for instance. Hansberry displaces these clichés by presenting a spirited black woman able to lead her black blind lover to freedom. Sarah's attitude changes after Hannibal's blindness in front of the other passive slaves. Though at the beginning she believes Hiram Sweet's propaganda that abolitionists "catches runaways slaves and makes soap out of them" (Ibid: 176), she becomes conscious that these words are used by the masters to scare their slaves and prevent them of running away. She understands that hatred is the only true feeling that a slave should sense towards his cruel white master. She reaches the

assumption that it is only after the death of the master that slaves could reach freedom. This resentment is conveyed in song of the slave quarters, she sings mimicking her white mistress:

Sarah: my old mistress promise me

Mmm Mmm Mmm (mimicking)

Say-rah! When I die I'm going to set you free!"

Mmm Mmm Mmm

But a dose of poison kinda helped her along

Mmm Mmm Mmm

And may the devil sing her funeral song!

(Sarah pantomimes gleefully helping mistress along to her grave with a shoving emotion of her hand) (Ibid: 197).

The hidden romance between the master and the slave swerves into blind hatred whenever the slave attempts to assert himself as a human being having the same rights and feelings as the master. The slave pretends to love the master to save his life.

Family romance within the black family is a powerful element that the playwright conveys through her play. Rissa loves her children and is terrorized by their desires to run away. She has in fact jeopardized her life to save Hannibal. The love story between this mother and her son Hannibal tends to obsession. After the running away of Isaiah to the North, she grappled with Hannibal as mothers do with their babies to protect them.

Hannibal does not abandon the idea of escaping the plantation in quest of freedom following in the steps of his brother Isaiah. The desire to find his brother was in fact twined with that of freedom. He desires to find his father, the important figure that frustrated Hannibal all his life because he does not know him and ignores that Hiram Sweet is his father. Blinding using the pointed part of the whip to gouge up the eyes of Hannibal can be read as an instance of castration. The white overseer castrates the black slave because he is afraid of his ability to dethrone him with knowledge. Zeb Dudley is white but illiterate. After this cruel act, the last thing Hannibal sees is the eyes and the face of Zeb fixed in his mind.

Hannibal was castrated to inhibit his rebellion and strength knowing already that in the white psyche, he and the other slaves are dangerous rivals for the white man's sexuality. Fanon explains that the black man is a sexual threat for the white man's sexual potency. He says, "the Negro is fixated at the genitals...the Negro symbolizes the biological danger" (1952: 165). The blinding was not deliberate from the slave but imposed on him by the white master. Thus, Hansberry deflated the Western family romances through her distortion of the Oedipus complex.

Though *The Drinking Gourd*'s main concern is slavery revolving around Hannibal, the plot incessantly turns around Rissa, the protagonist mother. She is present even during the scenes that treated the white family romances between Hiram sweet, his son Everett and his wife Maria. This figure was Hansberry's intratextual figure that wandered in her texts having the same strength. She is Lena Younger (Mama) in *A Raisin in the Sun*. Using a female character as a trope and an opaque area in her dramas is significant because it refers to the playwright's complex relationship with her mother and also her strong feminist ideals that place the woman in the same pedestal as man. Rissa at first is both a docile slave. Yet, she turns into the authoritative female voice that thrusts her family to the armed. She is the man, the father of the black family and the chief in both the plantation's kitchen and in the Big White House.

She is described by the stage direction as "a woman of late years with an expression of indifference that had already passed resignation." (The Gourd: 170). Yet, as the drama unfolds, she shows multifaceted character that ignores resignation and indifference. The relation between her and her son Hannibal is a complex one and it recalls Hansberry with her mother Nannie Perry. Hansberry's mother was possessive and so feminine that she wanted to shape her daughter according to her own image. She even exaggerated about her clothing and tried to effeminate her. In the same way, Rissa wants to shape Hannibal in her own image.

She is the docile slave that happily serves the white master. She wants her son to appear as dependable as her to the white master. So, she obliges him to wear the master's used red jacket. Hannibal rejects her suggestion as this extract explains:

Rissa: What's the matter with you, Hannibal? The one thing I allus planned on was that you and Isaiah would work in the Big House where you can get decent food and nice things to wear and learn nice mannas like a real genamun. (Pleadingly) Why, right now young Marse' got the most beautiful red broadcloth jacket that I heard him say he was tired of already- and he ain't hardly been in it. (Touching his shoulders to persuade) Fit you everywhere 'cept maybe a little in the shoulder on account you a little broader there-

Hannibal: (Almost screaming) I don't want Marster Everett's bright red jacket and I don't want Marster Sweet's scraps. I don't want nothin' in this world that to get off this plantation! (The Gourd: 200-01).

Hannibal's rebellion against being turned into a house keeper for the white master clearly renders Hansberry's defiance of her mother's wish to be transformed into a perfect feminine American housewife. Betty Friedan explained in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) this myth of the ideal American woman. According to this myth, women should espouse a paradigm that permeated the American society during the post-Second World War era. For Friedan, in the fifteen years after World War II, the mystique of the feminine fulfilment became the valued and self-perpetuating core of contemporary American culture. For her, the only dream of million American women is to be perfect wives and mothers. Their highest ambitions were to have children and a beautiful house, and their fight was to get and keep their husbands who decided for everything (Friedan, 1963: 14).

Hansberry's mother wanted her daughter to be exactly like these women. Yet, Lorraine rejected such compliant position and espoused "leftist feminism" to defend her ideas and aspirations. This mistaken feminine mystique was not appropriate for Hansberry who participated with her father and his male friends in debating national and political issues of the day when other women discussed problems of children and husbands' well-being. Anne Cheney reports Mamie's speech (Hansberry's eldest sister). She said that their mother was against her daughter's political and artistic career, her life in New York, and rooming with

three girls in the same apartment. She wanted to preserve her reputation of a well-respected middle-class woman. In this respect she affirms the following:

Mother was begging her about coming home after she had been in New York for a couple of years or so. She said, 'Well, any middle-class lady shouldn't be in New York so long, because you know it is time for you to think about getting married and you know'. I think she [Lorraine] has two or three roommates, and mother began to say, 'well, it is time you were getting married, time you started looking for a husband...' Lorraine kept saying, 'yes, I am busy and I am happy'. 'Yes, but you ought to think about getting married, and just girls setting in an apartment isn't safe, and it will subject you to ridicule and all that stuff'(qtd. in Cheney, 1984: 20).

Hansberry's rejection to lead the life of a perfect American housewife informs of her commitment with another struggle in addition to her racial, communist and anti-colonial one. She was a feminist. Her short lasting marriage with her white Jewish husband of Russian origins, Robert Nemiroff silenced for a while her family's contempt for her personal life. Yet, it was during married life, her mask of heterosexuality, that Hansberry joined the Daughters of Bilitis and encouraged the lesbians through her secret letters to *The Ladder*. This informs of her "gender trouble" and troubled family romances as explained in the first part of this thesis.

After being discovered by Everett, Hannibal denies being the writer of the letters he transcribed in the paper. When he understood that he could no longer convince his master about his innocence he replied saying: "jes a few letters, suh. I figger I could be of more use to Marster if I could maybe read my letters and write, suh" (The Gourd: 209). Hannibal's speech echoes Hansberry's hesitation and fear about the letters addressed to *The Ladder* concerning her homosexuality. This fact about her identity is included in both colons of "I like" and "I hate" sections found in a recent Testemonia published by Brooklyn Museum after opening an important archive dealing with Hansberry's personal life (Kaithlyn G., 2014: 2).

Hansberry's dilemma is due to the context of post-World War II turmoil caused by the struggles for human rights in the American society. These included women's rights, black Civil Rights, homosexual rights that significantly overshadowed the lesbians' rights. It is the race struggle that really hindered her pronouncement about her sexual identity. It was hard for

her to struggle against a whole system in a period when McCarthy's witch-hunting suspected any new idea of being communist in the American society. Nevertheless, she continued to urge all women black and white, mainly the conscious ones to act for change to break submissiveness and serving "the anti-feminist male system". As she claims in one of her secret and anonymous letter addressed to *The Ladder* (1957):

It is time that half the human race had something to say about the nature of its existence. Otherwise-without revised basic thinking- the woman intellectual is likely to find herself trying to draw conclusions-moral conclusions- based on acceptance of a social moral structure which has never admitted to the equality of women and is therefore immoral itself. As per marriage, as per sexual practices, as per the rearing of children, etc. in this kind of work there may be women to emerge who will be able to formulate a new and possible concept that homosexual persecution and condemnation has at its roots not only social ignorance, but a philosophically active anti-feminist dogma. But that is but a kernel of a speculative embryonic idea improperly introduced here (qtd. in Carter, 1991: 7).

The end of *The Drinking Gourd* is a hidden message about Hansberry's silenced lesbianism because her racial struggle dominated her individual life while her public celebrity prevented her from overtly pronouncing her sexuality which was far ahead from her time. Hannibal the male slave is strung till gangrene sets in his body and transforms him into a dried empty gourd. Castrated and blinded by the white master, Hannibal does not abandon his desire to flee North. Rissa arms Sarah who becomes both the crutch and the eyes of Hannibal in the dark night. Giving control to the "Skeerified" (The Gourd: 176) Sarah tells us of Hansberry's desire to transfer the power into the hands of a black woman to continue the race struggle.

As we have tried to show, at the core of *The Drinking Gourd* lie the hybrid black / white family romances as corroded by slavery. Rissa's secret romance with the white master does not save her sons and their romances from the horrors of the plantation's demands. Her eldest son Isaiah runs away after the selling of his wife to another master. Her son Hannibal is obsessed by the idea of running away following his brother. To be effective in his dangerous plan, he chooses first to educate himself secretly. He neglects his romance with his beloved Sarah and dedicates himself to the quest for knowledge. Ultimately, and after being blinded

by the master, he becomes more determined to break the shackles of slavery by running away with Sarah his guide in this journey to freedom.

Hansberry's creative work reflects her sense of responsibility and concern with her race and humanity in general. She believes that art possesses the spiritual and intellectual energy able to change things. She did not neglect the black political struggle that would be the ultimate key to the liberation of American Negroes. Change and revolt in the personality of her characters espouse the cultural and historical dynamism of post-World War II American society with more emphasis on the black activism. Hansberry is not only "twice militant" but she is a versatile strong conciliatory militant woman. She struggled for her feminist, racial and lesbian identity through a subtle merging of artistic expression and political activism for self-affirmation.

Family Romances in Baldwin's *The Amen Corner* and *Blues for Mister Charlie*

This section of our dissertation deals with the family romances. It explores the way the family romances are treated through probing into the Oedipian dramas of the play. *The Amen Corner* is surrounded by the ceremonial climate of religious observances of the believers who belong to the church of Sister Margaret Alexander, David's mother. In an essay entitled "Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices" (1927), Freud explains that there are striking resemblances between obsessive actions in sufferers from nervous affections and the observances by means of which believers give expression to their piety. He adds that the resemblance is more than superficial, "so that an insight into the origin of neurotic ceremonial may embolden us to draw inferences by analogy about the psychological process of religious life" (Freud, 1989: 429). The play starts with religious ceremonial and even the dialogues between Sister Margaret, Baritone and Sister Moore are done in a religious singing. This black church gathers all the children, the sinners and the poor to praise God and to repent their sins since it is the only shelter for them.

The first character that appears in the first act of the play is the young David playing the piano in the church. David as a name refers to Baldwin's real life since his step-father as well as his eldest brother were called David. Furthermore, David is also the name of the fictional white homosexual in his novel *Geovanni's Room* (1956). In *The Amen Corner*, David was educated by his mother Margaret and his aunt Odessa. He is fond of music and he is the piano player of the church. The most important event occurred in Act I when Luke, Margaret's husband reappears after ten years of absence. This produced an enormous upheaval in the life of the woman pastor. Consequently, the secret story that Margaret told her son was corrected by Luke himself. He informed David that it was his mother who left and abandoned him because he wanted to pursue his jazz-musical career. The revelation of truth happened in a direct confrontation between the father, the mother and the son in front of the members of the church comprising Odessa, the Sisters Moore and Boxer.

This play originates from Baldwin's real life. According to Freud's "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming", imaginative works are "the re-fashioning of ready-made and familiar material" (Freud, 1989: 442). David who is Baldwin's alter-ego suffered from the absence of the father. To satisfy the fantasy of finding him, the playwright created a poetic day-dreaming to fulfill his own thwarted desire of finding an absent father. This was to relieve his traumatic feelings of parental abandonment. To give life to his own fantasy through theatre Luke is resuscitated as a jazz singer. Baldwin desired his father to adopt this image. Baldwin loved music but he could not play or sing like all the bands of jazz musicians. He befriended them in Greenwich Village and the bands' members loved him and called him "the kid" (Baldwin, 1984: xi), as he says. His familiarity with music happened in the church when he participated in the singing and the religious services accompanied with music. In his article "Of the Sorrow Song", Baldwin expressed his love for music by writing that "music is our witness and our ally, 'the beat' is the confession which recognizes, changes and conquers time" (2011: 145). David, Baldwin's step-father forbade his children to play or sing music with the

exception of the gospels. However, in their house there hung an old picture of Louis Armstrong, a symbolic detail that informs of the father's secret excessive, yet repressed love for black music.

In *The Amen Corner*, David fled to music in order to confess the emotional wound ignored by his mother. The church-folks mistakenly thought that it is religion, the love of God that seduced him. His love for music translated his quest for a father and the self as well. During the day, he is the graceful angel who sings and plays the piano for the congregation. During the night, he metamorphoses into a demonic fallen angel overwhelmed by jazz. His secret adventure with music and the ultimate meeting with his father are discovered by his mother Margaret who becomes disappointed because of his lies. She tells him: "I never Knowed [sic] my son to lie to me, neither. God don't like liars" (The Amen: 28). She warns her son against lies when she herself lied for him for ten years concerning the absence of his father. The dialogue below the father reveals the truth:

David: You run off and left us.

Luke: Boy, you daddy's done a lot of things he's ashamed of, but I wouldn't never run off and left your mother. Your mama knows that. (A pause).

You tell him, Maggie, who left? Did I leave you or did you leave me?

.....

Margaret: I did! I left! To get away from the stink of whisky...to save my baby...to find the lord!

Luke: I wouldn't never left you, son. Never, never in this world.

Margaret: Leave us alone, Luke. Go away and leave us alone. I'm doing the Lord's work now...

David: Mama, you just said...God don't like liars.

Margaret: Your daddy weren't hardly ever home. I was going to explain it all to you...when you got big.

Luke: I done spent ten years wishing you'd leave the Lord's work to the Lord

(He rises slowly) You know where I'm working boy. Come on down and see me. Please come on down and see me (Ibid: 30)

Right at the beginning of David's speech, there is a kind of ambivalence towards what he feels inside. It is both "terrible and wonderful, hates and desires". This paradox directly

refers to the Oedipian dialectics. It is deeply rooted in the emotional ties to his mother's omnipotence in his life. But it is also due to the absent father. David desperately needs his father to the extent of dreaming and imagining that they are together. He critically questions every detail of his life. He rethinks the house and the church in which he was brought up. David feels sexually castrated whenever he wants to make love because of the religious guilt he feels. This also reflects Baldwin's recognition of his own homosexuality dating back to the days of childhood and the threat of castration as a subsequent punishment.

In the case of Baldwin and that of David in *The Amen Corner*, the church and its religious percepts intensify the threat of castration by creating a complete inhibition of which David tries to speak with his father Luke. His detachment from his mother's control means that he resolved the Oedipus complex and his mother's love through the love of music. The family problems influence his sexuality. His body, as he says, does not respond to his desires because of fear and loneliness. Freud explains this inhibition by stating that, "the libidinal instinctual impulses undergo the vicissitude of pathogenetic repression if they come into conflict with the subject's cultural and ethical idea" (Ibid: 557). This intimate realization of impotence is extremely depressing, resulting in negative effect on self-regard. It leads directly to the feeling of inferiority complex. Consequently, David redirects his sexual inhibition into music. this process is what Freud calls sublimation, "a process that concerns object libido and consists in the instinct's directing itself towards an aim other than, and remote from, that of sexual satisfaction; in this process the accent falls upon deflection from sexuality" (Ibid: 558).

Music is David's surrogate object-libido cathexis. His passion for music compensates his sexual impotence and his repressed desires before turning his inferiority feelings into self-love / narcissism or ego-libido by performing the piano like a maestro. In this respect, Freud explains that:

When the libido is repressed, the erotic cathexis is felt as a severe depletion of the ego, the satisfaction of love is impossible, and the re-enrichment of the ego can be effected only by a

withdrawal of libido from its objects. The return of the object-libido to the ego and its transformation into narcissism represents, as it were, a happy love once more; and, on the other hand, it is also true that a real happy love corresponds to the primal condition in which object-libido and ego-libido cannot be distinguished (Freud, 1989: 561).

Music calms David's depressive fear of others outside the confines of his limited life. Further, music is important because all the reminiscences he had with his father during the happy days of his childhood, before the family break down and the separation of the parents, are tied to his father's playing music to him. He declares: "I remember how you used to play for me sometimes. That was why I started playing piano. I used to go to sleep dreaming about the way we'd play together one day, me with my piano and you with your trombone" (The Amen: 41). As is the case with his father, music for David is a way out, an outlet used to swerve his inner depression, and to find the lost figure of the father that symbolizes authority, power and security.

David desires to be like his father whom he takes as a model. He is attracted by the life of errand that Luke leads with his music band. Deep inside he believes that he is going to end like him. Luke (probably a reference to Duke Ellington) explains in the following passage to his son that it is not because of music that he lives like a tramp. He traces the loss of all that gave a meaning to his life, his family love and self-love:

Luke: Well son, tell you one thing. Wasn't music put me here. The most terrible time in a man's life David, is when he's done lost everything that held him together...it's just gone and he can't find it. The whole world just get to be great big empty basin. And it just as hollow as a basin when you strike it with your fist. Then that man start going down. If don't no hand reach out to help him, that man goes under. You know David it don't take much to hold a man together. A man can lose a whole lot, might look to everybody else that he done lost so much that he ought to want to be dead, but he can keep on...he can even die with his head up, hell, as he got that one thing. That one thing is him (The Amen Corner, 44).

Luke did not try to hide his urgent desire to find both his wife and his son. He was a famous musician. Yet, he revealed to his son that music was not enough to be happy. Instead, it was only one ingredient of life that could never replace a lover made out of flesh, alive and human. He explained to him that music was an obligation, a job when you should perform it, while loving and living are the things that all human beings desire.

In *Blues for Mister Charlie*, Baldwin has provided an insightful analysis to the question of love between black men and women. The black woman / mother herself lacks love of the black husband, brother and son. After seeing the broken arm of Juanita, the people of the Blacktown declare: "Everybody knows we strong in loving! Except, when it comes to our women" (Blues: 95). Lyle, Richard's white murderer acknowledges that he killed his black secret lover Willa Mae's husband. He also confesses that, "there wasn't a nigger alive could be as good to her as me. That's right. She said she'd like to see the nigger could do her like I done her" (Blues: 115). It follows that the anxiety and fear present in the psyche of the black mother originates in what Freud calls Family Romances. These, in Baldwin's play, are based on the dialectics of racial love and hate as felt by the subject. Being herself brought up within the cultural imposition of white supremacy and the oppression of black males: husband /brother/father, the black woman is torn between distress and exaltation, passion and frustration. She needs to be loved by lovers of her own race. At the end of *Blues for Mister Charlie*, before the death of Richard, Juanita describes her intimate last moment with him wishing to be pregnant. She defies her mother's authority upon her. She transgresses the social code of abstaining from physical love till marriage by her amorous act with Richard, her "real black lover". She boldly says:

Juanita: Mama is afraid I am pregnant. Mama is afraid of so much. I am not afraid. I hope I am pregnant. I hope I am! One more illegitimate black baby, that's right, you jive mothers! And I am going to raise my baby to be a man. A man you dig? Oh let me be pregnant, let me be pregnant, don't let it all be gone! A man. Juanita. A man. Oh my God, there is no more. For me. Did this happen to mama sometime? Did she have a man sometime who vanished like smoke? And left her to get through this world as best she could? Is that why she married my father? Did this happen to Mother Henry? Is this how we all get to be mothers-so soon? Of helpless men-because all the other men perish? No, no, no, no. what is this world like? I will end up taking care of some man some day. Help me to do it with love. Pete. Meridian. Parnell. We have been the mothers for them all. It must be dreadful to be Parnell. There is no flesh he can touch. All of it is bloody. Incest everywhere. (Blues: 95)

Juanita's final confrontation with her mother conveys her successful passage and psychosexual development from a 'castrated' tomboy child to a feminine adult. She defeats the Electra / Oedipus complex. Her growth to heterosexual femininity culminates in bearing a

child who replaces the absent masculine organ. Juanita's lover's discourse unveils the "perverse" character of human feeling. It is the appeal of a woman in need of love and understanding in a society that alienates her because of her black skin and physical difference.

However, she succeeds to understand her mother's pains and fear of seeing her daughter bearing a fatherless child. She sympathizes with her mother because she sacrifices many things to rear these "helpless men" with love despite racism and misogyny that assault her. Juanita is determined to take care of her baby but this time privileging the discourse of love rather than that of fear. In this regards, Kristeva writes that:

A word of love is often a more effective, profound and durable treatment than electroshock therapy or psychotropic drugs; sometimes is the only treatment for a condition that is no doubt a consequence not only of our biological nature but also, and at the same time, of an importune or ill-intentioned word (Kristeva, 1986: 48-9).

Throughout this section of our dissertation we have analyzed *The Amen Corner*, and *Blues for Mister Charlie* in the light of Freud's essay "Family Romances" to explore the borderline that separates the real life of the author and his creative work. The play acts as a wishfulfilment of the playwright's childhood memories that lie latent in his psyche. There remained still a veil over the realities that were private despite some subtle slips and the Oedipian dialectics of the family romance dramatized in the play. By choosing an all-black cast for his play, Baldwin does not exclude the racial love-hate subjectivity. It is symbolized by the long white immaculate robes worn by the members of the black church. Despite their blackness, they represent the white men's system and supremacy through preaching the words of the Bible. Baldwin goes beyond the racial love-hate perspective to reach the whole human condition in a universal vision of love which is Platonic in essence. This is not the case with LeRoi Jones's play *Dutchman* that will be the focus in the section that follows.

Family Romances in Jones's *Dutchman* and *The Slave*

In Jones's *Dutchman*, the confrontation between the black male character Clay and the white female character Lula clearly exposes the dialectic of racial love and hate and the

interplay of the black-white / love-hate obsession of the sixties. Right at the beginning, Clay, the coloured college boy, is physically portrayed as a (black) dandy, whom Lula calls, “the Black Charles Baudelaire” (Dutchman: 20). His books of poetry are tucked under his arms due to his exaggerated passion for symbolism. However, the corollary dialectics of racial love and hate has never been explored through the lenses of the family romances of the characters. The dialogue between a white prostitute and a young naïve black man ends up when the white woman kills him with complete composure. The play is set in the subway, a perfect scene of murder which is dark and frightening. Lula stabs black young men while the dumb and invisible people of the train participate in her racist ritual.

However, this play is far more complex than it appears. The setting is “the flying underbelly of the city. Steaming hot and summer on top, outside. Underground. The subway heaped in modern myth” (Dutchman: 3). According to Freud, myths are the distorted vestiges of wishful fantasies of whole nations. They are the secular dreams of youthful humanity (Freud, 1989: 442). This definition supports the assertion that the play is related to both the real life of the playwright and the context in which it was written. Further, it inscribes the play in the tradition of storytelling that transports and nourishes human imagination through the ages.

The dialogue of the play shows that the racial problem is an important issue in this period of American history. Lula is a white woman with “a long red hair hanging straight down her back” (Dutchman: 5). She recalls the mythical Medusa and the castration complex as explained by Freud’s essay entitled “Medusa’s Head” (1922). According to the essay, decapitation means castration or the fear / threat of the boy to lose his most cherished bodily part: his sexual organ. Thus, medusa’s head which is full of living snakes, instead of normal hair, symbolizes castration or female “penis envy”. Freud explains that the hair upon Medusa’s head is frequently represented in works of art as snakes, and these once again are

derived from the castration complex” (Freud, 1963: 212). He adds that, “however frightening they may be in themselves, they nevertheless serve actually as a mitigation of the horror, for they replace the male genital organ, the absence of which is the cause of the horror. This is the confirmation of the technical rule according to which a multiplication of the male genital organs is a symbol that signifies castration” (Ibid.).

In Greek mythology, Medusa was a pretty woman with a lengthy hair that seduced the majority of men. This fact pushed the Goddess Athena to envy her and feel jealousy. Thus, she transformed her into a monstrous double with snakes instead of the beautiful hair so that any man who looked at her would be transformed into a stone. Furthermore, knowing that the god secretly made love to her against her will, Athena decided to kill her by sending her son with an invisible cape who succeeded to perform the murder (Betty B., L. 1999: 162).

Jones’s *Dutchman* reverses the myth permitting Lula / Medusa to kill the black Clay at the end after her insults to his family and his black race. She provokes Clay by mentioning the sexual stereotypes about black men in America. She falsely believes that they are lusting after the white woman to feel their manhood. Lula behaves with Clay as though she knows him well. She amazes him and makes him her easy prey. She challenges him as follows:

Lula: You look like you been trying to grow a beard. That’s exactly what you look like. You look like you live in New Jersey with your parents and are trying to grow a beard. That’s what. You look like you’ve been reading Chinese poetry and drinking lukewarm sugarless tea. [Laughs, uncrossing and recrossing her legs]. You look like death eating a soda cracker.

.....

Clay: How’d you know all that? huh? Really, I mean about Jersey...and even the beard. I met you before? You know Warren Enright?

Lula: You tried to make it with your sister when you were ten. [Clay leans back hard against the back of the seat, his eyes opening now, still trying to look amused].

But I succeeded a few weeks ago. [She starts to laugh again].

Clay: What are you talking about? Warren tells you that? You’re a friend of Georgia’s? (Dutchman: 8).

In the beginning of his autobiography, Jones informs the reader that he is “short with bulbous eyes”. These physical features created in him a complex, an obsession. He writes, “Growing has obsessed me”, he writes, “may be because I reached a certain point and stopped. My feeling is that I was always short...I was not only short, little, a runt. But skinny, too. Short and skinny. But as a laughing contrast I have these big bulbous eyes” (AUTO: 1). Clay in *Dutchman* is a kind of a fulfilment of his wish of being a handsome man. Clay is “a tall skinny black boy” (Dutchman: 8), who has attracted the white beautiful Lula throughout the play. In fact, the portrayal of Clay in the play may refer to the real appearance of Jones’s grandfather. He describes him as follows: “he was big with distinguished looking. A black businessman in a boater hat and three-piece suit and cane. He was a Republican, the legacy of Lincoln, and known as a ‘race man’, i.e., something of a Nationalist...he got a job as a night watchman” (AUTO: 18). The recurrence of the grandfather’s figure in his play is significant because the time Jones passed during his childhood with his grandparents is more than the one spent with his parents. His mother and father were frequently absent. Thus, he felt abandoned. Despite the fact that he lived in an extended family, his world was surrendered by females since his father is always drunk, his grandfather is paralyzed and his uncle is permanently on the road (Ibid: 18).

Jones’s grandfather’s interest in the black race and the way it is treated in America is referred to in the autobiography. The incidents that paralyzed him was a deliberate racial crime and is caused by his racial commitment. Regarding this incident, Jones writes: “they told me a streetlight dropped out of the fixture onto his head! They did. That’s what they said. I repeated it but somehow never (to this day) believed it” (AUTO: 19). Jones found important elements that suggest his grandfather’s intellectual attempts to understand racial issues. He writes, “I Found One Hundred Facts about the Negro, with Complete Proof by J.A. Rogers in his drawers, I also found Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis*, a book on the masonic mysteries, and a revolver” (AUTO: 18). The link with the play *Dutchman* is made between

Psychopathia Sexualis that speaks of the abnormal, perverse sexual life of individuals in general and the importance of sexual life in creative writings and art. Ebing says that, “If a man were deprived of sexual distinction and the nobler enjoyments arising therefrom, all poetry and probably all moral tendency would be eliminated from his life...Sexual feeling is really the root of all ethics, and no doubt of aestheticism and religion” (Krafft-Ebing, 1939: 2).

Jones’s love for his race fuses with his family romance. His Oedipus complex is implicitly referred to in the autobiography. His mother and sister are the main figures of the incestuous secret love stories. Despite the fact that he had been raised by his grandmother, Jones felt great admiration for his mother whom he describes as the “Southern gasoline [Woco Pep], brown and beautiful” (AUTO: 33) as he writes. The time passed with his sister was longer than the one he passed with his mother, the social worker. They were always together during their childhood. He was caught into a secret unrequited romance he described as “secret protests of love and fantasies” with his sister, “whose long hair is like a blood version of Shirley Temple”. These characteristics recall Lula. His jealousy incited him to reject other men’s attempts to seduce his sister as he writes. Each time a gentleman caller wanted to date her, he “stopped phone calls” or answering them saying, ““she’s not here. Don’t call here anymore!”” (AUTO: 55). His sister was the only girl of their group of boys called “The Secret Seven”. She, according to Jones, was so fast and as able as an athlete in performing their sports games. According to Freud, the boy’s sibling incest is the displacement of his desire for the mother into the sister with whom he existed all the time. He explains that these affectionate fixations of the child persist throughout childhood into adulthood. These fixations have an erotic charge and a sexual aim. Freud goes on saying that, this sensual charge works against the obstacles or the barrier against incest. It will make efforts to pass on from these objects which are unsuitable in reality to other extraneous objects with which a real sexual life may be carried on (Freud, 1989: 396).

Jones's Oedipus complex is mentioned in another chapter of his autobiography entitled: "Black Brown Yellow White". He shows his displacement of the incestuous figures of the mother and the sister into two female figures of his neighborhood. They were surrogates to his infantile object-love. These two female figures are "a light-skinned beautiful girl" and her stepmother who is "young, in her thirties, tall, dark brown and lovely...athletic and vigorous" (AUTO: 60), like Lula. Jones's apparent romance with the white-skinned girl hides an unrequited love for the girl's mother.

The white woman in *Dutchman* stands for his Jewish wife (Hettie Cohen), the mother of his two girls. In her memoir entitled *How I became Hettie Jones* (1990), Hettie declares her great love for LeRoi Jones, and affirming her disappointment about their divorce. She states that, "I haven't learned to cook, but we were living on love of course...and when I am my usual antic self, the look of pleasure on him is like grace. With no effort, or adjustment, I can't imagine life without him" (Jones, H., 1990: 41). The passion with which Hettie describes their relationship contradicts Jones's stipulation that "there was still no real passion" (Jones, L., AUTO: 217), between them. This can be explained by the fact that their marriage was a kind of an unexpected project that imposed itself when she became pregnant for the second time. As Jones puts it: "I didn't come over to the Village for no regular middle class shit, yet here I was in it. I had a responsibility, I was expected to do something, I couldn't just walk away" (AUTO: 217). Jones's public image required racial integrity and complete engagement with the racial struggle. Yet, it contradicted his life with a white woman. This cultural paradox created great psychological pressures that exploded in his arts and drama. In the public sphere, during the sixties, black Americans were asked to make choices. So, Jones was obliged to choose his racial struggle forsaking his family. Consequently, he shattered his personal life and that of his white wife Hettie to consolidate his public image. The choice was not a moment of pleasure for Jones. He described it "as doing wrong" to leave Hettie that way (AUTO: 288), after becoming himself a hater of white people.

Dutchman's intimate details about Clay's private life seem to come from the imagination of Lula who subverts them at the same time by insisting on the fact that they are lies, "I lie a lot, it helps me control the world" (*Dutchman*: 8), she says. But, Clay innocently admires her right guessing about "the beard" since he is young and indeed he is trying to wear one which means that he is looking for his manhood and identity. Further, the supposed incest with his sister informs of his castration complex and his desire to be a man. The playwright's father is a barber for white men (Jones, *AUTO*: 4). So, "trying to grow a beard" means that the young man tries to defy the father's laws to defeat his attempts to reach manhood. Lula suggests that Georgia, Clay's sibling is a lesbian since she herself alludes to having already made love with her. Clay's desire for his sister means that his Oedipus complex is not successfully resolved. Lula refers to his sexual impotence. Freud explains that impotence is "a question of the inhibitory influence of certain psychical complexes which are withdrawn from the subject's knowledge [like] an incestuous fixation on mother or sister, which has never been surmounted" (Freud, 1989: 495). Clay is horrified by Lula's words. He vainly sound pleased by her evocation of intimate family matters.

New York's "underbelly" is an allusion to the mother's womb as desired by children in their oedipal and pre-oedipal stages. The reference to the Oedipus complex is used by Lula to speak about Clay's lack of self-love. According to her, this emotional deficiency is represented by Clay's looking for a white older female that stands for the figure of the mother. She tells Clay that he looks like "all the Jewish poets from Yonkers, who leave their mothers looking for other mothers, or other's mothers, on whose baggy tits they lay their fumbling heads" (*Dutchman*: 28).

She levels racist insults to Clay's black family by calling his "republican" mother "a socialist worker" for white men. His father is portrayed as a man who "voted for the man rather than the party and for America where he is free to vote for the mediocrity of his choice"

(Ibid: 20). Finally, she describes the whole black family as a fake copy of middle class white families, “And yea for both your parents who even though they differ about so crucial a matter as the body politic still forged a union of love and sacrifice that was destined to flower at the birth of the noble Clay... The Black Baudelaire! Yes! My Christ. My Christ” (Ibid.).

As the talk goes on, Lula sexually provokes Clay, suggesting to him to take her somewhere. Angered by the calm answers of Clay, she starts to mock his clothes:

Lula: Everything you say is wrong. [Mock smile]. That’s what makes you attractive. Ha. In that funny book jacket with all the buttons. What have you got that jacket and tie on in all this heat for? And why’re are you wearing a jacket and tie like that? Did your people ever burn witches or start revolutions over the price of tea? Boy, those narrow-shoulder clothes come from a tradition you ought to feel oppressed by. A three-button suit. What right do you have to be wearing a three-button suit and striped tie? Your grandfather is a slave; he didn’t go to Harvard (Ibid: 18).

For Lula, Clay is just a middle class black man imitating the white man of that class. He is a mimic man identifying himself with people who belong to a different culture. He espouses their lifestyle and denies his own African heritage and his blackness. The three-buttons jacket is not black but it pertains to a tradition which is white. Imitating the master through imitating his way of clothing is a sign of love, as Roland Barthes explains in his *Fragments of A Lover’s Discourse*. He speaks of “le costume à la Werther” (1977: 128). It is a garment worn by Werther as a mask whenever he wants to magically re-create a certain moment. As an enchanted lover, he was transfixed by the image of dancing with his beloved Charlotte. The costume is “the same sack of skin, the envelope of that coalescent substance” (Ibid) that makes the lover resembles the other he loves.

Wearing a three-buttons jacket, in a summer’s day, speaks of Clay’s inferiority complex. The only part of his body which is apparent is the hands. However, they are covered by the book of Charles Baudelaire’s poetry. This French symbolist, unlike Clay, disobeyed the conventions of his society through his symbols. Covered by a newly grown beard, Clay’s whole skin is covered by white culture’s physical and spiritual masks. Lula affirms that Clay is a “well-known type” (Dutchman: 12). She is speaking about what is called “passing” in

American culture. Clay tries to pass for a white man by wearing what is supposed to be white man's typical clothes. In Lula's imagination, he is a man who is trying to identify himself with white civilization. Frequenting a white woman is a symbol of recognition.

In his essay *Soul on Ice* (1968), Eldridge Cleaver explains the black man's desire for the white woman and the black woman's desire for the white man. His companion Eunuch argues that there is no real love between a black man and a black woman: "I love white women and hate black women. It's just in me, so deep that I don't even try to get it out of me anymore" (1968: 159). He retraces the black man's love for white women to the days of slavery. For him, the white woman has become an object of worship. Cleaver's Eunuch says, "I love her skin, her soft, smooth white skin. I like just to lick her white skin as if sweet, fresh honey flew from her pores, and just to touch her long, soft, silky hair...she is like a goddess, a symbol. My love for her is beyond fulfilment. I worship her" (Ibid.). The black man is frustrated because the white man has forbidden him access to the possession of a white woman. It becomes an incestuous figure for him. His unfulfilled desire, as he writes firmly, turns into an obsession which sometimes leads to rape. Cleaver, following his discussion of the black man's love for the white woman explains that:

The white man made the black woman the symbol of slavery and the white woman the symbol of freedom. Every time I embrace the black woman I'm embracing slavery, and when I put my hands around a white woman, well, I'm hugging freedom. The white man forbade me to have the white woman on pain of death. Literally if I touched a white woman it would cost me my life. Men die for freedom but black men die for white women the symbol of freedom. That was the white man's will, and as long as he has the power to enforce his will upon me, force me to submit to his will in this instance or any other, I will not be free. I will not be free until the day I can have a white woman in my bed and a white man minds his own business. Until that day comes, my entire existence is tainted, poisoned and I will still be a slave-and so will the white woman (Ibid: 160-61).

The above quote echoes Fanon's description of the black man's craving to possess a white woman who loves him (1952: 221). The white woman stands as a symbol of recognition for the black man. Fanon argues this in a kind of twister for the Hegelian dialectic (1977: 117). Towards the end of the play, Lula feels outraged because Clay does not totally conform to the image she has made of the black male: "turning pages. Change change change. Still, I don't

know you. Wouldn't, for that matter. You're too serious. I bet you're even too serious to be psychoanalyzed" (Dutchman: 28), as she exclaims. She grows hysterical and starts a racial pageant in which she curses, cries using all the racial stereotypes to provoke Clay:

Lula: Come on, Clay...let's do the thing. Uhh! Uhh! Clay! Clay! You middle class black bastard. Forget your social-working mother for a few seconds and let's knock stomachs. Clay, you liver-lipped white man. You would-be Christian. You ain't no nigger, you're just a dirty white man. Get up, Clay. Dance with me.

Don't sit there dying the way they want you to die. Get up (Ibid: 31).

Clay's self-control makes her more provocative. She goes on in her insults:

(She begun to dance a kind of jig, mocking Clay with loud forced humor):

Lula: There is Uncle Tom...I mean Uncle Thomas Woolly-Head. With old matted mane. He hobbles on his wooden cane. Old Tom. Old Tom. Let the white man hump his ol' mama, and he jes' shuffle off in the woods and hide his gentle gray head. Ol' Thomas Woolly-Head (Ibid: 30).

Clay is finally roused up. He stops wearing the mask by speaking his mind. He asserts that to escape neurosis black men and women should directly kill the white man instead of writing poetry or singing love songs to sublimate their anger and frustrations. He defies all the spectators in the underground train threatening them of murder. He angrily affirms that, "when all it needs is that simple act. Murder. Just murder! Would make us all sane" (Ibid: 35). However, by his reaction he falls in the trap set for him by Lula the white huntress. She ultimately succeeds to make him play the role of the racist-hater murderer of the white race. By so doing, she justifies the collective lynching to save the white community from this threat. His racial love wins over. For him, Bessie Smith's and Charlie Parker's songs are misunderstood by white men. He explains that these singers suffered from hating white people and that their art is used to replace their aggressive impulses against white people.

Clay's real self can no longer be repressed. He celebrates his racial pride and manhood in a fierce discourse that calls for the murder of the white man as a remedy for the black man's insanity / neurosis. He rejects the white woman's appropriation of the blues and jazz songs such as the ones performed by Bessie Smith and Charlie Parker. He affirms that his people do not need a spokesman to speak on their behalf, "they got legs and arms of their

own”, he says. “Personal insanities. Mirrors. They don’t need all those words. They don’t need any defense” (Ibid: 36).

Playing the victim in the hands of a violent black man, Lula gains the sympathy and the adherence of both black and white persons present in the train to prepare her murder. She stabs Clay and the people in the train help her to throw the dead body outside. Lula finds a black scapegoat in the character of Clay. She performs a purgative ritual to expel her beastly instincts. Lula is a kind of Hyena “Lula the Hyena” (Ibid: 14). The consequence of looking at the Medusa (Lula), the myth with which we have started this section, brings about the death of Clay. Jones reenacts the Western myth but within the dynamics of racial love and hate that results in the purgation of the repressed pressures created by the white society’s and Lula’s racist stereotypes. The aftermath of this racist provocation is the explosion of Clay’s repressed racial hatred. He rejects them and defends himself against these images at the expense of his life.

Jones’s (black) family romance is also represented in his play *The Slave* (1964). Blinded by the effect of wine Walker, Jones’s alter-ego, dances and laughs like a child in his “ritual drama”. He kills his rival / intellectual father Easley, and performs an oedipal drama to have Grace and the children. He was not a king but he represented a “phallic personality” or a “Dionysus”. Grace (Hettie’s surrogate) no longer reciprocates his love. Instead she defends Easley and accuses Walker of being a black rapist.

Like a child who feels guilt for the incestuous desire of the mother and the occasioned anxiety of castration, Walker feels castrated. This is because of the racial digression he committed after espousing Grace. It is not only an ironic adjustment to the stereotype of Uncle Tom, but his carnivalesque joy and laughter informs of a latent desire for murder and revolution (Kristeva, 1986: 50). He represents Uncle Remus Br’er Rabbit. This figure is a Southern trickster in the slaves’ folktales. In this regards, Fanon writes:

We know historically that the Negro guilty of lying with a white woman is castrated. The Negro who has had a white woman makes himself taboo for his fellows. It is easy for the mind to formulate this drama of sexual preoccupation. And that is exactly the ultimate goal of the archetype of uncle Remits: Bre'er Rabbit, who represents the black man. Will he or will he not succeed in going to bed with the two daughters of Mrs. Meadow? There are ups and downs, all told by a laughing, good natured, easy going Negro, a Negro who serves with a smile (Fanon, 1952: 52).

Walker marries a white woman and has two mulatto daughters with her. He shortly lives the feeling of being equal to the “great” white race. However, He grows boastingly hysterical showing his complete hatred for the white man after changing his cultural position. He now belongs to racial separatism as inspired by Malcolm X and Richard Wright. This present state is antithetical to the Greenwich Village position, when he used to be an assimilationist claiming whiteness with the Beat poets.

American racial love and hate relations were withdrawn by Walker who cannot escape the fact of being a slave. The scares of slavery as a signifying identity mean racial “inferiority”. Regarding this issue, Jones writes,

So as I wrote that article ‘LeRoi Jones Speaking’, there came over me this most terrific sense of purpose and focus. It rose up within me like my grandfather’s ghost. Yeh, I was some colored Bohemian liberal living on the Lower East Side in hedonism heaven, yet, I could not sound like that (AUTO: 278).

Walker’s lack of clear racial position weakens his role as a black leader. He falls into the trap of racial love knitted by the family bonds. He still loves Grace and desires his two daughters. Their presence haunts the stage on which their father dances and whoops like a child. He shows and explains his psychological cleavage between racial love and racial hate to Grace in the following violent outcry:

Walker: I never stopped telling you I love you...or that you were my wife!

Grace: Walker you were preaching the murder of all the white people. Walker, I was, am, white. What do you think was going through my mind every time you were at some rally or meeting whose sole purpose was to bring about the destruction of white people?

Walker: Oh, goddamn it, Grace, are you stupid? You were my wife...I love you. You mean because I loved you and was married to you...had had children by you; I wasn’t supposed to say the things I felt. I was crying out against three hundred years of oppression; not against individuals (The Slave: 72).

Grace refuses to give him the two mulatto girls. She does not trust him and she incessantly thrusts him out of her house. Walker affirming his love for his family refuses to abandon his girls. This love characterizes the racially denigrated black family romances that resisted centuries of disintegration caused by slavery. Walker desires to lead his army ahead. Yet, he staggers under the weight of his personal guilt. He is aware that this revolution is only “at best a war that will only change the complexion of tyranny...” (The Slave: 66). His desire to possess the two girls is also supported by his will to avenge centuries of repression. He refuses white man’s appropriation of his own family:

Walker: Mr. Easley, Mrs. Easley, those girls’ last name is Vessels. Whatever you think is all right. I mean I don’t care of what you think about me or what I’m doing ...the whole mess. But those beautiful girls you have upstairs there are my daughters. They even look like me. I’ve loved them all their lives. Before this there was too much to do, so I left them with you. But now...things are changedI want them with me very much (The Slave: 66).

His love for his children is threatened by the love for his blackness and the racial hate for white people. He fervently says, “those two lovely little girls upstairs are niggers. You remember circa 1800, one drop makes you whole?” (The Slave: 55). The mulatto in the American culture intensifies racial discourse. She / he is considered as a racial hybrid, an embarrassing threat, compromising white racial purity and betraying the black race. Walker subverts the racist attitudes against the mulatto by loving his daughters. His emphasis on the name of the father ‘Vessels’ symbolizes his will to trace back the family line and origins. He wants his children to know their ancestors and their black race. His purpose, as a black father, is to implant on them self-love instead of self-hate. In his attempt to grasp the woman of color’s feelings to the white man, Fanon writes the following:

First of all, there are two such women: the Negress and the mulatto. The first has only one possibility and one concern to turn white. The second wants not only to turn white but also to avoid slipping back. What indeed could be more illogical than a mulatto woman’s acceptance of a Negro husband? For it must be understood once and for all that it is a question of saving the race (1952: 38).

Walker’s dream of turning white ceased after having two mulatto girls. His wish is immediately displaced by his will to superpose the color of his skin with his cultural and

racial reality. He rejects even the idea that his daughters can suffer from the “dream of turning white” mainly that their mother and their step-father are white. He wants to preserve them from what Fanon calls “effective erethism” (Ibid: 42). It is applied to a person of neurotic orientation who feels racially alienated and inferior because of her skin color and who aspires to admittance to the white world.

The reference to the real life of the playwright has been discussed by many critics among them Sollors Werner (1978) and Benston Kimberly (1976). The emphasis of this analysis is on the fact of considering *The Slave* as a memory drama about the black family romances. In it the term “Remember” is used almost in all the pages. Jones reads himself following Freud’s division of the human psyche into the id, the ego and the super-ego pivoting around the oedipal dialectic. This dialectic relates the (black) individual to the cultural environment that shapes his personality: “the aesthete came long after all the things that really formed me” (*The Slave*: 75) as Walker says.

In the play, Jones creates three characters and an interactive dialogue. Though they seem individual, these characters are fragments of Jones’s personality. They render life and desires. Walker (the slave) stares at Easley (the master) as if he is looking at himself in a mirror. The white man’s gaze Fanon argues, “dissect”, “fixes” and “cuts away” the black man (1952: 116). The black man is overwhelmed from without, as he tells us. He is the slave not of the “idea” the others have of him but of his “own appearance” (Ibid.). Easley’s gaze is intended to instill in Walker feelings of shame and self-contempt. After looking into Easley’s eyes, Walker starts a long reflection about his subjectivity, his identity and the meaning of being a black man in America. At the end of the play, Walker stares again at Easley’s eyes: “the two men stare at each other, in almost the same way as they had at the beginning of the play” (*The Slave*: 80). Looking back in the white man’s eyes with defiance provokes more

Easley who wants to kill Walker. Understanding this intention, Walker kills the white man to defend himself. This murder symbolizes Walker's desire to be recognized as a man.

According to Freud, the structural construction of the personality is divided into the id (the zone of pleasure that ignores reality), the ego which is the reality that controls the pleasures of the id, and the superego which is the sum of the ideal morals and ethics that restrains the personality (1989: 640). Therefore, in Jones's *The Slave*, the three characters represent Freud's components. Walker is the Id, Easley is the Ego, and Grace symbolizes the Superego. Walker is the Id because he represents all the desires in their rawness. He acts as a child respecting no restraint and intruding other's family house with no ethical barriers. Furthermore, drinking wine throughout the play means that Walker's unconscious side is freely exposed. Easley symbolizes the superego; the father. He is Walker's teacher, and the feared white authority's voice. The audience hears him saying, "You're so wrong about everything. So terribly, sickeningly wrong. What can you change? Do you think Negroes are better people than whites? ..." (The Slave: 73). Grace symbolizes the ego that stands between the id and the superego, as a controller of the instincts respecting ethics and morals. She is incessantly trying to inhibit Walker's desire to kill Easley. She resorts to Western ethics and logic to tame his destructive impulses and his aggressiveness towards all that is white. As a white woman who marries a black man, Grace represents the failure of the white mother to accommodate her black husband's racial struggle. Her interracial romance fails. This romantic failure represented by her death at the end of the play.

In conclusion, we can say that the characters in Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's plays show an ambiguous or ambivalent attitude to love. Their family romances are marked by complexity because of the essentially matriarchal nature of the black family and the racial situation in which they evolve. In the next chapter, we will analyze the family romances in terms of intertextual relation between the authors.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Anxiety of Influence and Dialogism in Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's Plays

After dealing with the family romances in the nonfictional works of the three writers, in this chapter we will investigate two aspects that characterize their literary romances. The first one is the anxiety of influence and the second one is the dialogic relationship between their texts. The anxiety of influence relates to the romances that connect them to their white and black literary predecessors. The three writers were not pioneers in the writing of the African American literary tradition. As belated writers they are influenced by the discourses of their forerunners. Their texts are oedipally dialogic since they are considered as a defense against poetic castration. Bloom writes that, "like criticism, which is either part of literature or nothing at all, great writing is always at work strongly (or weakly) misreading previous writing" (Bloom, H., 1997: xix).

Bloom's theory of influence studies the psycho-poetical ties that exist between writers and their predecessors, or what he calls "intra-poetic relationships" and "the anguish of contamination" (Bloom, 1997: vi). The aim is "corrective" in order "to clear imaginative space for themselves" within the agon which is the oedipally dialogic literary battle. His theory is based on intertextuality, misreading and anxiety of influence. He believes that there are no texts but only relationships between texts" (1974: 4). Misreading for him is the nature that characterizes these relationships. It is a process in which the poet deliberately misinterprets the work of his precursor, translating it to the act of writing. The anxiety of influence is for Bloom the affliction to which all strong poets are subject to. According to him,

Strong poets make history by misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves. My concern is only with strong poets, major figures with the persistence to wrestle with their strong precursors, even to the death. Weaker talents idealize; figures of capable imagination appropriate for themselves. But nothing is got for nothing, and self-appropriation

involves the immense anxieties of indebtedness, for what strong maker desires the realization that he has failed to create himself? (Bloom, 1997: 5).

Bloom says that the anxiety of influence comes out of a complex act of strong misreading, a creative interpretation he calls “poetic misprision”. For him, misreading happens after a reader falls in love with a literary work. He adds that this reading is likely to be idiosyncratic and ambivalent, though the ambivalence may be veiled (Ibid: xxiii). He classifies poetic relationships into six revisionary ratios in which writers respond to this anxiety misreading the works of the precursors that have influenced them. In this analysis Tessler applies to the writers’ reaction to the previous literary models.

Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones were influenced by Western literature like the Greek and the Roman Mythology, the Holy Bible, William Shakespeare, Malraux, Baudelaire, and Gide among others. This influence is inevitable since they have immersed themselves in the discourses of this literary tradition through the English language, and they are exposed to the greatest literary figures because they are writers. These influences are either accepted and exposed as a debt to their masters, or denied in a form of anxiety as explained by Bloom. Wrestling with their strong precursors help clear a space for themselves.

As it will be argued in this chapter, our three writers’ borrowing from white authors does not stop at the level of form but includes the style as well. For instance, Hansberry inspired her plays from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. However, it is in Jones, who strongly rejected the influence of white literary paradigms, that this influence is the most evident. His play *Dutchman*, for example, is produced by Edward Albee at the Cherry Lane Theatre off-Broadway. It reflects the influence of the Theatre of the Absurd, the most influential of which is Albee’s *The Zoo Story* (1957). *Dutchman* is also inspired by Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. The same will be argued about *The Slave*. The title itself reminds us of the Master-slave dialectic developed in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, and also evokes Shakespeare and his play *Othello*.

The second aspect of this chapter's analysis deals with the dialogic relationship between the three authors' texts. The study includes both intratextual and intertextual relations. The objective of this investigation is to probe into their reflexivity and self-reflexivity that completes the (Socratic) dialogue they entertain with the self and with the others. Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's plays were written in the late fifties and the sixties, a climate saturated by racial and sexual identity questions. Reference to their other plays is important to understand the nature of the influence of reading each other's text or attending each other's performances. While Baldwin's and Jones's plays were written in 1964, Hansberry's first one (*A Raisin in the Sun*) was written in 1959. The second one (*The Drinking Gourd*), is a screenplay, written to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the Civil War (1961). Her play *A Raisin in the Sun* was the first one of the three to be written, and performed. Therefore, it constitutes a (pre)-text, or a site of literary reference for the two other playwrights who absorb, interact and interpret it through their own texts. Literary influence, that is, anxiety, infatuation or rejection are the reactions of the two male playwrights to Hansberry's play.

Anxiety of Influence in Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's Plays

In *Shadow and Act* (1964), the part titled "The World and the Jug", Ralph Ellison studied poetic influences of both black and white literary predecessors on the black writers. He dissected the ideas proposed by Irving Howe's essay "Black Boys and Native Sons" (1963). Ellison examined Howe's declaration stipulating that Richard Wright was his literary father and that of Baldwin and the coming generation of the black writers. Howe, as reported by Ellison, considered that Wright was not only the "archetypal and true blue-black boy...but the spiritual father of Ellison, Baldwin and all other Negroes of literary bent to come" explaining that "in the Platonic sense, he [Richard Wright] is his [Ellison's] own father and the culture hero who freed Ellison and Baldwin to write more 'modulated' prose" (1964:

108). As an answer, Ellison affirmed that Wright was not his father but his competitor who viewed him as “a potential rival” (Ibid: 140). He explained that Wright feared that Ellison would accept to be used against him (Wright) by political manipulators who envied and hated him. Regarding Wright’s influence on him, Ellison writes what follows:

I say he [Wright] did not influence me. If I point out that while one can do nothing about choosing one’s relatives, one can as artist, choose one’s ‘ancestors’. Wright was, in this sense, a ‘relative’; Hemingway an ‘ancestor’. Langston Hughes, whose work I knew in grade school and whom I knew before I knew Wright, was a ‘relative’. Eliot, whom I was to meet only many years later, and Malraux and Dostoevsky and Faulkner, were ‘ancestors’-if you please or you don’t please (Ellison, R., 1964: 140).

Black writers were influenced by the Western literary models they used to write their own works. Thus spoke Ellison and our research follows in his claim stipulating that in this black and white literary battle the white predecessors will be called the “fathers” while the black authors will be their “relatives”.

Like Ellison, Hansberry was a fervent reader of Western literature. She was influenced by both white and black writers. Her indebtedness to white European writers is clearly acknowledged in her semi-autobiography *To Be Young Gifted and Black*. She refers to great writers as William Shakespeare and the Irish Sean O’Casey. The intertextual ties relating her works to theirs are clearly shown in her plays. Their themes were redeployed by her as a playwright who participated in the construction of her subjectivity within the confines of her own race as a black woman writer.

As a dominant poetic precursor, William Shakespeare exercised an overwhelming influence on the majority of his later European and American writers who anxiously wrestle to swerve the influence of his literary legacy. Hansberry sublimated her relation with Shakespeare by overtly asserting her admiration for him. In the *Show* magazine’s questionnaire (1964) she clearly displayed her awe to her literary white father by giving the following responses:

Question: Which is your favorite Shakespeare play and why?

Favorite? It is like choosing the superiority of autumn days; mingling titles permits a reply: *Othello* and *Hamlet*. Why? There is sweetness in the former that lingers long after the tragedy is done. A kind of possibility we suspect in man wherein even its flaw is a tribute. The latter because there remains a depth in the Prince that, as we all know, constantly re-engages as we mature. And it does seem that the wit remains the brightest and most instructive in all dramatic literature.

Question: What is the most important result of your familiarity with Shakespeare, and what has he given you?

Comfort and agitation so bound together that they are inseparable. Man as set down in the plays, is large... Rollicking times, Shakespeare has given me. I love to laugh and his humor is that of everyday; of every man's foible at no man's expense. Language; at 13 a difficult and alien tedium, those Elizabethan cadences; but soon a balm, a thrilling source of contact with life (TBY: 45).

These affirmations are an evidence of Shakespeare's literary impact on Hansberry's plays. She admits that Shakespeare gives her a paradoxical set of feelings: 'comfort and agitation'. She loves and laughs at his popular humour despite the difficult Elizabethan language. Concerning *Othello*, she affirms that there is sweetness after the tragedy because the reader feels that even his jealousy is a kind of complement instead of being a defect. She approaches it with a humanistic insight rather than racial lenses that might accuse Shakespeare of racism.

Hansberry's plays *A Raisin in the Sun* and *Les Blancs* recall in many ways *Othello* and *Hamlet* respectively. Steven R. Carter explores the parallel between Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Hansberry's play *Les Blancs*. According to him, this play repeats *Hamlet* and *The Oresteia Tragedy*. *Les Blancs* in fact expands the comments of the Nigerian Asagai in *A Raisin in the Sun*, which links the evils committed by whites against blacks to those committed by white colonizers against the Africans. Hansberry's comments on colonialism and neo-colonialism are clearly exposed through the play. Her attack on colonialism is shown through her depiction of the colonial powers that seized control over African lands and people as counterparts to the perfidious Claudius who seized his brother king Hamlet's thrown after murdering him. Besides, Claudius's manipulation of Laertes into fighting against a mistaken enemy Hamlet instead of Claudius himself is paralleled and portrayed by the deceitful African

characters like the sell-out Abioseh Matoseh (the black character in Hansberry's *Les Blancs*) who contributes and cooperates with the colonial structures against his country.

By building up her play on the Shakespearean paradigm, Hansberry pays tribute to his genius as a part of a European civilization that can create other things than colonialism, destructive weapons and wars. She attests the striking continuing relevance of Shakespearean work and its adaptation to modern times, and the theatrical mobility of his works and creativity that has no final form. Consequently, it is positive for Hansberry as a writer to be aware about her own admiration to Shakespeare because, and according to Bloom, it might partly cleanse her of the resentments of a scholarly belatedness (Bloom, 1997: xxv).

Hansberry loved and was greatly influenced by another European, Irish-born playwright called Sean O'Casey. She has openly declared that her great interest for theatre has been galvanized after seeing his play entitled *Juno and the Paycock* (1922). As she puts it,

I love Sean O'Casey. This, to me, is the playwright of the twentieth century accepting and using the most obvious instruments of Shakespeare, which is the human personality in its totality. O'Casey never fools you about the Irish; you see...the Irish drunkard, the Irish braggart, the Irish liar...and the genuine heroism which must naturally emerge when you tell the truth about people. This, to me, is the height of artistic perception and is the most rewarding kind of thing that can happen in drama, because when you believe people so completely-because everybody has their drunkards, their braggarts, and their cowards, you know- then you also believe them in their moments of heroic assertion: you don't doubt them (TBY: 68-69).

She openly states her debt to O'Casey as it clearly appears in her play *A Raisin in the Sun*, which strikingly echoes *Juno and the Paycock* at the textual and contextual level. O'Casey's play concerns the Boyle family who live in the Dublin tenements during the year of the Irish Civil War 1922-1923. The particular context of war and violence is significant since the play discloses its devastating aftermath on the characters. They live in poverty and suffer the consequent degradation of war. This working-class family struggles against economic crisis which plays a primary part in the unraveling of the family unit. The family is disconnected and the members are alienated from each other, fighting against one another over their values and beliefs. Hansberry uses the same atmosphere of violence as a backdrop to the fight of the

middle class black family, the Youngers, in *A Raisin in the Sun*. Like the Boyles, the Youngers' financial worries push them to dream, find self-reliance and financial security in a segregated society where jobs' opportunities for blacks are scarce.

The Boyles begin to borrow money and accumulate a great deal of debts, the end is tragic and ends with the following passage that Hansberry has inserted in her semi-autobiographical work:

Mrs. Boyle: [...] Mother O' God, Mother O' God, have pity on us all! Blessed Virgin, where were, you when my darling son was riddled with bullets, when my darling son was riddled with bullets? Sacred Heart o' Jesus, take away our hearts o' stone, and give us hearts o' flesh! Take away this murderin' hate, and give us Thine eternal love! (O'Casey S, in TBY: 72).

Like the Boyles, the Youngers are trapped in a Chicago ghetto waiting for ten thousand dollar check from the defunct Big Walter's life insurance policy. However, Hansberry's play ends in a different way than *Juno and the Paycock*. She prefers hope and reaffirmation of the human spirit as Walter Lee regains his dignity and manhood by refusing the white man's humiliating offer to not to move into the white neighborhood.

Hansberry has also been influenced by black male and female writers. Their house was a Mecca for many black intellectuals and literary figures like DuBois, Langston Hughes and others. She was in close touch with these personalities and was acquainted with their works. Her presence in the debates about political and racial issues in symposia gathering her father with his black friends sharpened her intellectual spirit and started to shape her racial subjectivity. Cheney declares that, "Hansberry did not get from [Hughes] her social consciousness, what she got from him instead, was a consciousness of poetic possibilities of her own race, an appreciation of the black American culture" (1984: 53). This is why she decides to lead a political and a literary career rather than a commercial one like her siblings and her father Carl Hansberry.

She was a fervent reader of Langston Hughes who was the most representative of the African American culture. (Bloom, H., 2007:1). He was a poet, a social activist, a novelist, a

playwright and an essayist. He is well-known for being the earliest innovator of the Harlem Renaissance literary movement of the twenties when “Harlem” and the “Negro” were in vogue. His writings, mainly his poetry, influenced Hansberry who started reading them while still a child. His poems reflect the lives of black people, (Cheney, 1984: 53). Hansberry openly acknowledged his influence on her works through the title of her play *A Raisin in the Sun* which is taken from Hughes’ poem “Harlem”. She believed that no poet, before Hughes, managed to speak the sufferings of the black people in the limits of one poem. Moreover, in an early draft of the same play, she titled it *The Crystal Stair*, which is also an expression taken from Hughes’s poem entitled “Mother to Son” (1922) that truthfully translates the toiling of the black mother in her work as a servant in white houses. This portrait of black women is deployed in Hansberry’s characters; Mama and her daughter-in-law Ruth.

In addition to Hughes’s impact on her writings, Hansberry was influenced by another outstanding female literary figure of the Harlem Renaissance, Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960). She is looked at as a literary foremother by many African American writers. Alice Walker for instance, praises Hurston’s legacy in the essay “In Our Mothers’ Gardens” (qtd.in Smith R. 1999: 301). Among other books, Hurston wrote important novels like *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and plays like *Color Struck*. The latter received a prize from the magazine *Opportunity* for the treatment of important themes as intraracial colour prejudice, ethnicity, identity, marriage and parent-child relations. The topic of colour consciousness and intraracial colour prejudice towards lighter-skinned blacks by darker-skinned blacks is a central concern in her play *Color Struck* (Jones S.L., 2008: 25).

Though she is rarely cited as a great icon of that period, Hurston’s literary achievements and participation as black female voice is prominent and still continues to influence recent generation of African American dramatists, novelists, poets and essayists. Hurston is an accomplished novelist, essayist and anthropologist. Yet, few critics recognized her as a

successful stage master though she worked as a performer, director, choreographer, playwright and teacher of drama at several historically black southern colleges. She once said, “You know how interested I am in the theatre, and I am just running wild in every direction trying to see everything at once” (Krasner, J., 2001:12).

Her first play *Color Struck* examines the experience of a dark-skinned African-American woman Emmaline Beazely who competes with a light-skinned woman for her lover John. The significant side of the play is the disclosing of a black woman who suffers because of her dark color. Later on, she envies her light-skinned child. Racial love and hate is shown as permeating the black race in its intraracial web because colorism plays an important role in the self-hatred present as an obsession in the dark-skinned blacks who envy the light-skinned ones.

Hurston tried to establish an African American theatre characterized by musical improvisation as shown in her play *Color Struck*. By so doing, she emphasized dancing and acting. This characteristic is used by Hansberry’s *A Raisin*, in Scene I act II, when Beneatha begins to perform “a folk dance” (*A Raisin*: 68).

Hansberry refers to Hurston’s unpublished essay entitled “You Don’t Know Us Negroes” (1934). In it Hurston claims that “most white people have seen our shows but not our lives. If they have not seen a Negro show, they have seen a minstrel or at least a black face comedian and that is considered enough, they know all about us” (qtd. in Kolin, 13). This claim is revisited in Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun*. It was directly explained in her essay “I Am a Writer I Am Going to Write”, included in a letter addressed to her mother echoing Hurston’s words. She writes,

Mama, it is a play that tells the truth about people, Negroes and life and I think it will help a lot of people to understand how we are just as *complicated* as they are- and just as *mixed up*- but above all, that we have among our miserable and down trodden ranks- people who are the very essence of human dignity. That is what after all the *laughter and tears*, the play is supposed to say. (TBY: 91, emphasis added).

Hansberry's dialogue with her dead mother renders her desire to say more about the black people's life that whites reduce to mere minstrel show. She aspired to give more authenticity to black life with its details and particularities. Hurston accused the Northern black people of ignoring the particularities of Southern black folk life. In this regards, she writes that, "unless they have spent years in residence and study, Northern Negroes know no more about Negro life in the South than Northern white folks do" (qtd. in Kolin, 2007:14). Nevertheless, Hansberry tried to give a pen picture of a typically South Side Chicago family living in the ghetto with all its complexity and dignity.

Hansberry did not only admire predecessors but she also wrestled against some of them like Richard Wright. Gilbert and Gubar (1979) argue that in the case of female writers, it is not possible to speak of Bloom's anxiety of influence. It is called instead the "anxiety of authorship" because the Oedipus complex is not applied to women in the same way as men. According to Freud, the invert / homosexual woman is the product of her family disturbed romances. Great disappointments that are directly linked to her Oedipus complex are revived during puberty. Thus, she becomes conscious of her wish to have a male child, her father's child that her consciousness is not allowed to know. Yet, it was not she who bore the child but "the unconsciously hated rival-her mother" (Freud, 1963: 144). Being furious and embittered, she turns away from her father and from men all together, abandoning her motherhood and looking for a new goal for her libido. This attitude is greatly adopted by her when she became aware that it hurts her father. Thus, she takes revenge on him by remaining homosexual out of defiance against him. Freud explains this attitude as being "a direct continuation of the strong mother-fixation of the two influences of her mother's indifference and of her comparison of her genital organs with her brother's" (Ibid: 157). Therefore, her frustration creates an inversion.

Bloom's model of influence which is metaphoric of the Oedipal complex between writers, can be applied in the case of a homosexual / lesbian writer who seeks revenge against the father in her desire for the mother. Consequently, Hansberry who is a lesbian black writer from the twentieth century can feel such an anxiety against her literary fathers by desiring her mother(s). Symbolically, Hansberry's metaphorical mother is Hurston who was harshly criticized by Richard Wright for her use of the Black American dialect and folklore in her works. Wright's article "Between Laughter and Tears" (1937) is a review of Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). He considers that "the sensory sweep of her novel carries no theme, no message, no thought" (Wright R., 1937: 23). He maintains that as a novelist she had taken profit from the simplistic life of rural black peoples making out of it a carnival to provoke white audience's laughter. He writes,

Miss Hurston voluntarily continues in her novel the tradition which was forced upon the Negro in the theatre, that is, *the minstrel technique that makes the 'white folks' laugh*. Her characters eat and laugh and cry and work and kill; they swing like a pendulum eternally in that safe and narrow orbit in which America like to see the Negro live between *laughter and tears* (Ibid: 23; emphasis added).

Wright's criticism was answered by Hurston who rejected the attacks because she had her own philosophy concerning race, nurtured by her love and pride of being a black woman. She answered Wright saying that, "she wrote novels not treatise on sociology" (qtd in Gates, H. L., 1988: 99). Hurston's struggle against black male writers helped secure a room for her and the coming generation of black women writers, like Hansberry. She forced black men to read her differently. They operated what Adrienne Rich called "re-vision" in the male black writers' arena.

The expression "between laughter and tears" is doubly dialogic since it was re-written by Hansberry at the eve of the first performance of her play *A Raisin in the Sun*, in the letter addressed to her mother. This intertextual signpost is a free passage that permitted Hansberry, the daughter, to enter into a simultaneous dialogue with her literary predecessors Hurston and Wright. So, while she answered both of them, her answers were strikingly different. She

quarreled with her neighbor Weight (he lived in Chicago like herself) to avenge her remote mother Hurston. Hansberry answered Hurston's accusation of northern black writers ignoring the life of Southern people. At the same time she defended her against Wright's accusation that reduced her novel into a minstrel show provoking laughter on the white men's audience.

Hansberry openly criticized the existential perspective of Wright's novel *The Outsider* (1953) as being detached from the blacks' reality in America:

The Outsider is a story of sheer violence, death and disgusting spectacle, written by a man who has seemingly come to despise humanity...Cross Demon is the symbol of Wright's new philosophy—nothingness.... Wright has lost his talent. He exalts brutality and nothingness. He negates the reality of our struggle for freedom and yet works energetically in behalf of our oppressors (qtd. in Cruse, H. 1967: 270).

Criticizing both the man and his work shows her disagreement with the existential stance of the novel and his advocacy of violence concerning the race struggle. Furthermore, she accused her mentor of working for the imperial / colonial forces. Many critics like Harold Cruse and Paul Gilroy (1993) disagreed with her analysis and attack on Wright's *The Outsider*. Hansberry's negative attacks on her black Chicagoan relative are due to her anxiety of being engulfed by his themes and the way of expressing them.

Despite her attacks on Wright's *The Outsider*, she uses the setting of his novel *Native Son*, Chicago South Side for her play *A Raisin in the Sun*. The opening of her play, "place: Chicago's Southside...At raise it is morning dark in the living room...an alarm clock sounds from within the bedroom at right" (*A Raisin*: 24), echoes Wright's *Native Son*'s morning scene, described as follows: "BRRRRRIIING! An alarm clock clanged in the dark and silent room. A bed spring creaked. A woman's voice sung out impatiently: 'Bigger shut that thing off'" (1940: 33). Further, both Bigger Thomas and Walter Lee Younger works as chauffeurs for rich white men, and while Bigger works for Mr. Dalton, Younger works for Mr. Arnold. The two of them are looking for an issue to escape the ghetto life and misery. Both of them developed self-hatred and are angry characters who hate their families and surroundings.

This racial hatred is determined by the socio-economic oppressive context in which the Thomases and the Youngers lived in the slums of Southside Chicago. Though there is a gap of 19 years between the first publication of *Native Son* and the performance of Hansberry's play the ghettoized urban blacks from Chicago still live in the same oppressive circumstances. Nothing had changed or improved in the circumstances that made out of the black family a dysfunctional nucleus.

However, Hansberry's Walter differs from Wright's Bigger in their way of approaching life within the constraints of racism and oppression. Bigger commits crimes because of the fear implanted by the whites' stereotypes against the blacks. So, he was obliged to kill the white woman rather than being found in her bedroom by her white family. He also killed and raped his black girl-friend because she discovered his crime. He thought that through killing and violence, he would change his life.

Unlike Bigger, Hansberry's Walter did not commit any murder or rape against white or black women. Yet, he destroyed the dreams of his own family because he trusted a black fellow thief from the ghetto. However, despite Walter's deed, kinship ties proved to be stronger than the deteriorating circumstances of the ghetto. Unlike Bigger's estranged and estranging family, the Youngers' solidarity saved the family union. The love of his mother, the bedrock of the family, protected them from disintegration.

Walter's minstrel show is a *clin d'oeil* from Hansberry to Hurston's theatrical technique. It informs of her assimilation of the aspects that contribute to the writing of the black life and all its constituents. Walter decided to play a coon show in front of the white man to beg him for money "groveling and grinning and wringing his hands in profoundly anguished imitation of the slow-witted movie stereotype" going down on his black knees as a minstrel show actor who shocked his family with horror (*A Raisin*: 144). But, when time came to meet the white man, Walter did not perform the show. Instead, he proudly confronted

the white man, kicking him out of the house and deciding to move and to lead the family out of the ghetto.

The opening scene of *A Raisin* reminds the reader of its pretext in Wright's *Native Son*. This communication between the two texts can be explained by Hansberry's reading and misreading of Wright's work, to use Bloom's expression. Her text is not a closed system, but it is tied to a family of texts that preceded it. Furthermore, the dominant socio-historical context of the black people in America contributed in mirroring approximately kinship images in the text of black writers, necessary to the creation of the African American literary tradition.

Thus, both Hansberry's and Wright's text are oedipally dialogic since to swerve the predecessor's influence and defend herself against poetic castration, she performed a change in her plot and characters for instance. She permitted her characters to choose between dignity and submissiveness. Walter at the end, proved to be proud of his race. She executed a kind of *tessera* (Bloom, 1999: 14) in relation to Wright's work. In this case, which appears as a corrective movement in Wright's own work, she antithetically "completes" the work of her precursor. She read the parent-poetic work as to retain its terms but to mean them in another sense, as though the precursor had failed to go far enough. Her literary position as the daughter of both black and white fathers made of her literary work a hybridized composite.

Like Ellison, Hansberry openly expressed her admiration for white fathers like Shakespeare and O'Casey. At the same time, she felt anxiety of influence after misreading the black predecessors' works as Wright's that Ellison called "relatives" instead of fathers and against whose works hers communicate to "correct" their views. But to clarify this poetic kinship Bloom insisted on the fact that the writer misread the poetic work not the person who wrote it. He writes that:

Any adequate reader of this book, which means anyone of some literary sensibility who is not a commissar or an ideologue, Left or Right, will see that influence-anxiety does not so much concern the forerunner but rather is an anxiety achieved in and by the story, novel, play, poem, or essay. The anxiety may or may not be internalized by the later writer, depending upon temperament and circumstances, yet that hardly matters: the strong poem is the achieved anxiety. "Influence" is a metaphor, one that implicates a matrix of relationships-imagistic, temporal, spiritual, psychological-all of them ultimately defensive in their nature (Bloom, H. 1999: xxiii).

Overall, we can say that Hansberry's literary connections to her white and black fathers and relatives are due to her extensive reading and misreading of their works. In her comments, she acknowledged her love and pride of being affected by such great works. Yet, after analyzing her response in fictional texts of her play it becomes clear that she is not only stylizing the text of her predecessors but she tried to answer them in a way, to swerve or to complete them antithetically. These intertextual ties hybridized her works and created intimate bonds between white ancestors and tie her to black relatives in quest of the self within the context of the racial struggle.

Just like Hansberry, Baldwin openly declared his indebtedness to his white mentors. He read Dickens, Dostoevsky, and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* before he reached his teens, and he secretly tried to write, because his father was against his intellectual ambitions (Baldwin, 1955: 135). His great anxiety was felt towards a black predecessor Richard Wright and a white one Henry James. His essays testify to his great love for the latter and his rancorous hatred for the former with whom he entertained an oedipally dialogic *agon*.

There is in fact an implicit influence of Henry James whom Baldwin considers as his father and mentor. In the essay "The Discovery of What it Means to be an American" (1959), Baldwin directly cites him, "It is a complex fate to be an American", Henry James observed, and the principal discovery an American writer makes in Europe is just how complex this fate is" (199: 171). In this article, Baldwin speaks of the effect of self-imposed exile in any writer like Henry James, and how distance provides a panoramic view about one's own country and an inevitable comprehension and involvement in its most burning issues. In the same way,

Baldwin confessed that it is only in Paris that he started to listen to Bessie Smith. He declared that he discovered his soul through her voice to whom he never listened when he was in America. As he puts it, “it was Bessie Smith with her tone and cadence who helped me to dig back to the way I myself must have spoken...she helped to reconcile me to being a ‘nigger’...I was released from the illusion that I hated America” (Ibid: 172). Baldwin loved the works of Henry James. As reported by David Leeming, he even lectured several times on Henry James’s novels like *The American* (1877), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), *The Ambassadors* (1903) for his classes at Robert College in Istanbul (Leeming, D., A. 1986: 47).

Just like his mentor Henry James, Baldwin took the road of exile in quest of the self. He affirmed in an interview with David Adam Leeming that he needed a master in Europe, and Henry James was that model and a “key into the self as a journey” (Ibid: 56). Further, he couldn’t take as a model a European writer since they are so different from him culturally speaking. He tells us that:

I had to start facing where I really came from, the speech I really spoke, which is much closer to Bessie Smith than it is to Henry James. But as a writer I needed a box to put thoughts in –a model. I couldn’t use D.H. Lawrence, for example (I was far too much like him). I had to find someone else, and James became, in a sense my master. It was something about point of view, something about discipline. And something about the silence in which I myself was...I have read Balzac before but Balzac was French. The closest thing to a model I could find for the means to order and describe something that had happened to me in a distance –America- was James (Ibid: 55-56).

Throughout the quote above, it is clear that Baldwin never denied the influence of Henry James on his writings, his American model in exile. He called him his master without any shame or hesitation. Thus, the Bloomian agon /antithesis that is supposed to lock the two writers in a deadly battle is absent after Baldwin’s affirmation of his debt to his white master / father.

However, and like Hansberry, Baldwin’s antithetical battle is against his black uncle Richard Wright. His influence on him was contested. In his article “Everybody’s Protest Novel”, Baldwin attacks Richard Wright’s *Native Son*. He writes that Bigger Thomas is

“Uncle Tom’s descendant, flesh of his flesh, so exactly opposite a portrait that when the books are placed together, it seems that the contemporary Negro novelist and the dead New England woman are locked together in a deadly, timeless battle” (Baldwin, 1949: 33). “Uncle Tom” is Harriet Beecher Stowe’s black submissive character in her novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1851). In fact, Bigger Thomas can be considered as the hidden face of Uncle Tom’s personality, his subconscious. Uncle Tom is the Christ-like martyr who represses his frustrations, hatred, anger and desires for the white master in an unconscious template. So, if Stowe had ever permitted Uncle Tom to be himself for a span of time, he would retaliate instead of forbearing the unbearable humiliation and aggression of the white master. However, Baldwin refuses Bigger Thomas’s murdering instincts and acts, judging them as flirting with extremes and often against nature. He denies both writers their literary offspring because they are either utopian-angelic like Uncle Tom, or dystopian inhuman killers as Bigger Thomas. He also speaks of a possible melting of Wright and Stowe in an interracial marriage that transgresses the laws of the land in a daydreaming, which created literary monsters instead of normal human beings (1949: 40).

According to Fanon Bigger Thomas acts through murder to end the tensions of fear that consumed him (1952:107). This means that even Uncle Tom was afraid of white people and consumed by fear. However, he couldn’t heal his neurosis, because he repressed his desire of revenge and retaliation as acted by Bigger Thomas. In the racial battle blacks and whites can only thrust and counter thrust at one another, as Baldwin writes. Bigger Thomas and his ascendant Uncle Tom blindly struggle against the white man, in a battle of lust and fury, love and hate.

Wright is the literary black uncle whom Baldwin has long resented despite the help and attention he received from him during the beginning of his literary career. Baldwin rejected him after acquiring certain renown in the American literary scene. Apart from the

above article “Everybody’s Protest Novel”, many indications inform of the intertextual ties between Wrights’ works and Baldwin’s. Baldwin’s collection of essays entitled *Notes of a Native Son* (1955), for example, echoes Wright’s novel *Native Son*. The article speaks of the death of his father and explains the complex ambivalent love-hate feelings he had for his step-father David Baldwin. After his death, he regretted the lack of communicate between them to clarify their ambiguous relation. This situation can be considered as a metaphorical replication of the one he lived with Wright, his literary uncle.

Wright had approximately the same life as Baldwin mainly in their relation with the father. Their meeting happened through the intermediate space of reading started by Baldwin’s exceptional appreciation of Wright. The latter accepted to read Baldwin’s manuscript *Go Tell it on the Mountain*. Wright encouraged Baldwin and he even helped him to obtain a grant of \$500 from the Eugene F. Saxton Memorial Trust in 1945 to follow his career as a writer. He did this despite his (Wright’s) problem of being under FBI’s investigation for his communist ties. This moment also coincided with his failure to buy a house in New York, because he is black (Campbell, 1991: 32). However, the relation pupil-master was spoiled by Baldwin’s article “Every Body’s Protest Novel” (1949), and his attack on Wright’s novel *Native Son*. This attack seen as ungratefulness angered Wright who overlooked this literary incident. In this regards, he writes, “the work of Baldwin seemed to carry a certain burden of apology for being a Negro, and we always felt that between his sensitive sentences there were echoes of a kind of unmanly weeping” (qtd. in Campbell, 1996: 65-6), suggesting Baldwin’s homosexuality.

Baldwin argues that Wright was the voice of the “New Negro” in America of the thirties. He represented the workers who struggled for better working conditions under the shade of a Marxist revolution. However, Baldwin blames Wright for having forgotten his mission as an artist. He explains that the Negro and the white worker do not share the same

aim. Unlike the white worker, the black one is the worker of whites' welfare and fantasy. He writes that, "that fantasy Americans hold in their minds when they speak of the Negro: that fantastic and fearful image which we have lived with since the first slave fell beneath the lash" (Baldwin, 1951: 69). Thus, despite the hard conditions the white worker can suffer from, he can never be acquainted and equated with the stains of slavery.

The essay as an intertextual discourse is used by Baldwin as a site of dialogue between the self and the father /other. His article entitled: "Alas, Poor Richard" (1961) written just after Wright's death resembles a fragmented love story in three parts, dedicated to a dead lover. It sounds much more as a lover's discourse rather than a metatext, a writing that reflects on another text. He addresses his interlocutor in terms of a disoriented lover who regrets words and expressions written against him as if the purpose is to erase a past strife and to join forces instead of the antagonistic struggle nourished by self-hate and envy. With time, Baldwin seems to be cured of the racial self-hate. He is still begging love and recognition from his literary black uncle. In this regards, he writes what follows:

This is but another way of saying that I wanted Richard to see me, not as the youth I had been when he met me, but as a man. I wanted to feel that he had accepted me, had accepted my right to my own vision, my right as his equal, to disagree with him. I nourished for a long time the illusion that this day is coming. One day Richard would turn to me, with the light of a sudden understanding on his face, and say 'Oh, that's what you mean.' And so run the dream, a great and invaluable dialogue would have begun (Baldwin, 1961: 200).

Despite the fact that the title includes Richard Wright's name, the essay is dramatically self-referential and confessional. In it, Baldwin looks for a remedy to self-hate.

Baldwin spoke in psychoanalytic terms acknowledging his love-hate feelings, his (literary) Oedipus complex and his fear of castration by Wright's talent. He explained the reasons that pushed him to look for a possible meeting with the master. Baldwin identified with Richard as a black writer and at the same time with the black characters he created in his fictional and nonfictional works. As a young black writer in the search of a model, he justified his quest for Richard Wright in the following extract:

I had my pilgrimage to meet him because he was the greatest black writer in the world for me. In *Uncle Tom's Children*, in *Native Son*, and above all, in *Black Boy*, I found expressed, for the first time in my life, the sorrow, the rage, and the murderous bitterness which was eating my life and the lives of those around me. His work was an immense liberation and revelation for me. He became my ally and my witness, and alas! My father (1961: 191).

However, towards the end of the article he bitterly criticized Wright's behaviour as a black intellectual in Paris. He exposed his corrupted purpose in serving the American business men in France. He accused him of being an exiled "sell-out Uncle Tom" who was completely detached from the African American racial struggle. He affirmed that he himself defended Wright when an African, laughingly, mocked him, "I believe he thinks he is white" (Ibid: 203). In a speech delivered before an all-black audience in an attempt to group the blacks of Paris and help them to find work Wright appeared condescending and ended his speech saying that, "a great many white people had wished to be present, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Camus-and my own wife. But I told them, before I can allow you to come; we've got to prepare the Negroes to receive you" (Ibid: 209). Richard's speech was racist and despising as well. Baldwin added that there is a chill in the love affair between him and the French intellectuals and that his behavior estranged him from the majority of the young black writers of Paris. "They did not trust him", as he says, and "their distrust was venomous because they felt he had promised them so much" (Ibid: 212).

What can be deduced from the struggle between the black writers is that their black subjectivity is shaped by the white man who fixed in them self-hate. The white man metaphorically castrated them from the days of slavery and lynching. This self-hate often transforms into hatred of other blacks, "For who has not hated his black brother? Simply because he is black, because he is a brother" (Ibid: 213), as Baldwin puts it at the end of his article.

Wright's influence on Baldwin appears in his play *The Amen Corner* (1955). Baldwin tries to imagine the life of David who comes from the South with his mother to the North fleeing the Jim Crow laws and his drunkard father. This strongly echoes the journey of Wright

in his autobiographical work *Black Boy* (1945). In another play *Blues for Mister Charlie*, Baldwin names his protagonist Richard Henry. This name symbolically contains Baldwin's hybrid influence formed partly by the name of white father Henry James and that of the black relative Richard Wright. Being a rebellious character, Richard left the South to live in the northern slums and work as a musician. Richard went back to the South to confront his father. He found out the secret about the death of his mother and questioned the Jim Crow laws that brought about his death.

Richard is Baldwin's version of Wright's Bigger Thomas. He is used as a symbol of a conscious black man. His knowledge concerning black and white relationship in the South and the North prevented him from prostrating in front of the white man and his Jim Crow laws. However, once home, he decided to hear the voice of his father and to calm down his revolt and anger. Nevertheless, the father was wrong and Richard was killed by Lyle. Baldwin who harshly criticized Wright's *Native Son*'s violence created a character that lacked Bigger's courage. His Richard did not kill white people but died in the process of taming his desire to defend and free himself from the white men's yoke. Notwithstanding, Richard's death was not in vain. It caused the whole black community's rage and anger and raised their consciousness to stand as one man against racism.

For Bloom, influence between writers is a metaphor that implicates a matrix of relationships that are ultimately *defensive* in their nature. He says that what matters most is that the anxiety of influence comes out of a complex act of strong misreading, a creative interpretation he calls "poetic misprision". He writes that, "the strong misreading comes first; there must be a profound act of reading that is a kind of falling in love with a literary work" (Bloom, H., 1999: xxiii). Bloom's *tessera* explains Baldwin's defensive literary connection with Wright's work. Applying Bloom's theory of influence we can say that Baldwin falls in love with Wright's work because his ultimate desire is to be like him. He antithetically

completes his work. Baldwin's literary swerve that Wright calls unscrupulous and ungrateful conduct is understood as a kind of self-hatred. For Wright, Baldwin lacked confidence. He continually apologized for his blackness thinking that he does not have the right to share in the arena of the great American writers. His shame originated from his complex of inferiority. He acknowledged Henry James as his white father and resisted in a corrective way his black relative's influence.

Stylization of Western Models in Jones's *Dutchman* and *The Slave*:

Just like Hansberry and Baldwin, Jones was influenced by the Western literature and indebted to the white literary fathers borrowing from them not only the form but even the style. Furthermore, he holds hidden and overt polemics with his black predecessors (relatives) over the "racial referent". However, he was the most resenting and angriest writer in regards to the white and Western texts in general. He was an extensive reader though his desire to read books and to learn occurred relatively late in his life, during the period of the Air Force. As stated in the part of his autobiography entitled "Error Farce", it was in South Side Chicago that he bought his first books like James Joyce's *Ulysses* (AUTO: 150). In fact, it was the great door that would lead him into the marvelous world of literature that changed his life. From that time on, as he declares, "I read constantly, almost every waking hour I wasn't actively soldiering or bullshitting with the fellas...the Times best-seller list became a kind of bible for me" (Ibid: 163). His first experience as a reader has been narrated as an epiphany, love at first sight that engulfed him. He felt himself ravished, captured and enchanted by the text / the love-object. As a black ephebe who never wrote something before, he felt himself overwhelmed by his desire to create. Jones did not reveal the title of the poem and the name of the poet whose words influenced and inspired him. His reading experience performs the birth of his poetic urge to read and write. Jones tried to write poems and his first experience as a reader of poetry metamorphosed him into a poet whose eagerness to know the world of

literature pushed him to read further and discover Sartre, Camus, de Beauvoir, anthologies of poetry, Apollinaire, Rimbaud, Evelyn Vaughan, Dylan Thomas among others.

Frank O'Hara was the most important personality of the Village that exercised an influence on Jones. He was a kind of a literary father for him. Avant-gardist poet and a homosexual, O'Hara was Jones's best friend. He was well-known for his New York School of poetry that defied the old conventions. According to Hazel Smith, O'Hara's New York School appeared with two other avant-gardist schools:

The New York Poets (including Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery and Kenneth Koch), the Black Mountain Poets (including Charles Olson, Robert Duncan, Robert Creeley, Gregory Corso) and the Beats (including Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and Gregory Corso) positioned themselves as an avant-garde antidote to the academic and traditional poetry of poets such as Richard Wilbur and Randall Jarrell, and the confessional poetry of Sylvia Plath and Robert Lowell. They also rebutted the New Critical orthodoxy of the poem as a 'well-wrought' urn fashioned through paradox, ambiguity and metaphor (2000: 4).

Despite the fact that all these groups have an influence on Jones's poetry, he is well-known for having made his own in the Beat's style and their poetic conventions (Jones, 2009: xviii). Jones believes that a poet has to be free while writing his poems. As he puts it, "there must not be any preconceived notion or design for what the poem ought to be...I am not interested in writing sonnets or sestinas or anything...only poems...the only 'recognizable tradition' a poet needs to follow is himself" (Ibid: 16). This concept of freedom is deeply rooted in O'Hara's style called "Personism". It was based on the freedom of saying exactly what was in the mind in a kind of conversational tone. (Gooch, B.1993: 338).

Many critics among whom Andrew Epstein (2006), studied the intertextual relationships of O'Hara's poetry with Jones's because they were readers of their own and each other's poems. In their poems, they addressed each other using their real names. The substitution of daily language for poetry blurred the boundaries between their real and fictional worlds. This created experimental kinship structures between them as black and white persons living in the same period of time, and between their texts as Western literary productions in the Village scene.

An instance of intertextuality with O'Hara's verses appears in Jones's poem entitled "Look for You Yesterday, Here You Come Today". Jones writes: "*Frank* walked off the stage, singing / '*My silence is as important as Jack's incessant yatter.*' / I am a mean hungry sorehead. / Do I have the capacity for grace??" (In Harris, W., J., 2009: 12; emphasis added). Jones refers to O'Hara with his name "Frank" and alludes to his verse "My quietness has a man in it". He made this reference to contrast O'Hara's "silence" and Jack Kerouac's "yatter". Standing in the midway, he questions his ability for grace as well. O'Hara's poem speaks of the multitudes of selves he has to struggle against in his world called by Jones "dopey mythic" (Ibid). His self-deprecation as stated in the verses transmits his doubts as for the status of being a black poet in the white bohemian world of the Village. Beat poetry deeply influenced Jones's works. However, the pressures he received from the socio-political context characterized by the racial struggle pushed him to choose his containing his love for his white friends and family. This love and hate feelings are also described in his poem "An Agony. As Now", from which are extracted the following lines:

I am inside someone
Who hates me. I look
Out from his eyes. Smell
What fouled tunes come in
To his breath. Love his wretched women.
Slits in the metal, for sun. Where
My eyes sit turning, at the cool air
The glance of light, or hard flesh
Rubbed against me, a woman, a man,
Without shadow, or voice, or meaning. (Ibid: 52).

The poem above is an intertextual indication to his real life in the all-white environment of the Village. His hedonism undermined his political position and racial consciousness. In order to make a rupture with the whiteness of the Village, he changed the form of his poetic writings from poetry to fiction. He started to write his novel *The System of Date's Hell*, he described as a descent to the depth of the soul and psyche with "endless variations" that he called "association complexes". In this novel, he wanted to separate from the white poets' ready-

made imitations of Creely or Olsen. For him, if you “imitate people’s form you take on their content as well” (AUTO: 247). O’Hara continued to support Jones’s political stance. He considered his novel as being a “major contribution to recent literature, certainly the finest piece of American prose since Kerouac’s first publications” (in Shaw, L., 2006: 100).

His white friends’ influence on him is sensed in his writings despite the fact that he harshly rejected their principles and ideas during his revolutionary period. It was O’Hara and the other poets he met in the Village that helped him construct his works. He read and misread the works of O’Hara the literary father and his sibling. But, he had to slaughter (metaphorically) to justify his political stance and to protect his public image. Jones’s coming poems were pervaded by dramatic dialogues with transitional overtones and his prose *The System of Dante’s Hell* included a play he called *The Eighth Ditch* (AUTO: 275). He completely turned to theatre since he believed that it was more militant than poetry. As he puts it,

I wanted some kind of action literature, and the most pretentious of all literary forms is drama, because there one has to imitate life, to put characters upon a stage and pretend to actual life. I read a few years ago in some analysis of poetry that drama is a form that proliferates during periods of social upsurge, for those very same reasons. It is an action form, plus it is a much more popular form than poetry. It reaches more people and its most mass form today is of course television and, secondarily film (Ibid.).

This turning away from poetry to drama was partly due to the influence Malcolm X, who, for Jones, said loudly what his brothers felt silently. Malcolm X’s angry voice replaced King Jr’s tamed and non-violent one against racist oppression. This change of tone in his writings came first in Jones’s play *Dutchman* (1964). His comments on the play started with a comparison to Baldwin’s play *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1964), which he considered as a “powerful play”. In this play, Baldwin’s avoidance of reality and confrontation shifted into rebellion and violence. This is embodied in his two other figures Richard a surrogate for Malcolm X and his father Meridian as the alter ego of Reverend King Jr. Towards the end of the play, Meridian, takes a gun and drops the Bible.

His essay entitled “The Revolutionary Theatre” (1964) is inspired from his great radical enthusiasm to separate his writings from the Western Literary tradition. Jones desired to force change in the situation created by the racist raids against the militants of the Civil Rights Movement in America through drama. As he puts it, “Clay in *Dutchman*, Ray in *The Toilet*, Walker in *The Slave*, are all victims. But The Revolutionary Theatre, even if it is Western, must be anti-Western” (1964: 237). The content of the essay is violent and though originally commissioned by the *New York Times* in December 1964, it was refused, with the pretext that the editors could not understand it. *The Village Voice* also refused to run this essay. It was first published in *Black Dialogue* in 1965.

The theatre he intended to create contained a clear influence of the theatre of cruelty as advocated by Antonin Artaud in his essay “The Theatre and its Double” (1938). He deliberately referred to him saying, “Even as Artaud designed The Conquest of Mexico so we must design The Conquest of White Eye, and show the missionaries and wiggly Liberals dying under blasts of concrete. For sound effects, screams of joy from all the people of the world” (Ibid: 238). Critics, like Mike Sell argue that Jones’s hypothetical theatre is a “volatile convergence” that interwove the shock of agit-prop, the antvisual bias of Artaud, and the populism of street festival to articulate a critical metaphysics that blended avant-garde experiment, postcolonial politics, and African and African American cultural traditions. (2001: 61).

His hatred for the white race was clearly expressed as a kind of retaliation. Jones openly attacked the Western literary models and Broadway theatre. He writes, “the popular white man’s theatre like the popular white man’s novel shows tired white lives, and the problems of eating white sugar, or else it herds bigcaboosed blondes onto huge stages in rhinestones and makes believe they are dancing or singing” (Ibid: 239). His aim is to show whites and

bourgeois blacks that real theatre is “a political one” and a spectacle that includes all kinds of performances acted by African American actors displaying their cultural heritage.

Though Jones rejected in the strongest terms the influence of white literary models this influence is the most evident in his plays. His first play *Dutchman*, for example, is produced by Edward Albee. This production at the Cherry Lane Theatre, off-Broadway speaks of the influence of the Theatre of the Absurd, the most influential of which is Albee’s *The Zoo Story* (1957). Edward Albee had given a new breath for the American theatre. His plays were particularly bold in explicitly returning socio-political criticism to the mainstream stage in a moment when the theatrical establishment was reduced to silence by Joseph McCarthy’s witch-hunts. He loudly affirmed his discontent with the bourgeois artificial values. He openly declared in a preface to his play *The American Dream*. (1962). He states that, “the play is an examination of the American scene, an attack on the substitution of artificial for real values in our society, condemnation of complacency, cruelty, emasculation and vacuity” (in Kernan, A., B. 1967: 80). Albee was influenced by the European absurdists like Samuel Becket, Eugene Ionesco (Downer S., A. 1967). It is from their experimental theatre and the existentialist philosophy (Albert Camus and Jean Paul Sartre) that he built his notion of theatre, though Esslin has warned us not to confuse between the philosophy of the Absurd as advocated in Camus’s *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* (1955) and the Theatre of the Absurd as a dramatic tradition. Albee admits that “we [post- World War II] dramatists all come from that period in French thought between 1919 and 1947” and that “we’re all Becket’s children” (Mann J. Bruce, 2003: 130-131). His attempt to import this kind of theatre to America canonized him as the primary practitioner of the theatre of the Absurd.

According to Martin Esslin *The Theatre of the Absurd*, this drama defies the conventional realistic theatre in many aspects (1961: 400). He tells us that in this theatre setting lacks verisimilitude and is never realistic. It is a representation of fantastical places

with small casts and some props. The characters are mere caricatures with whom the audience is unable to identify, remaining largely incomprehensible. Plot, as he explains is circular and defies the conventions of a well-made-play which stipulates that plot should be linear and develops in time. As for the themes of the theatre of the absurd, Esslin argues that they mirror the ultimate realities of human condition fundamentally constituted of death and life questions, isolation and communication. They render the image of a disintegrated world that lost its unifying principle, its meaning and its purpose. These aspects are conveyed through a language that runs riot in an age of mass communication in which the modern man becomes an adept of reading between the lines trying to guess the reality that this language conceals rather than reveals (Ibid: 26).

Like Albee's *The Zoo Story*, Jones's *Dutchman* shares in the aspects of the theatre of the absurd and clearly renders Albee's influence. Both plays start in the same way staging two characters each. The setting in Albee's *The Zoo Story* is a public park. Peter is said to frequent Central Park on Sundays, taking seat on one of its benches with foliage and trees behind them in order to indulge his favourite hobby, reading books. He has visited this bower so regularly that he has developed an exclusive property consciousness over that park bench. It is in one of these Sundays that Jerry accidentally "intrudes" on Peter disturbing his peace of mind, leading him to fight over what he considers as his vital space. The struggle over the bench culminated with the impaling of Jerry on the knife that he has teasingly handed to Peter in order to push him to fight for the bench.

As Jones's *Dutchman* was directed by Albee himself, its setting echo's that of *The Zoo Story*. Lula and Clay meet in a public place, the New York Subway. Clay is sitting alone in one of the coaches, and is deeply involved in reading. In one of the train stops, our regular traveler catches sight of a fading image of a white woman who is staring at him through the coach window. As the train gets ready to resume its journey, Clay forgets about her just as she

was a dream image. Yet, this dream image soon becomes a reality as Lula “intrudes” on his privacy. She seats next to him and in the same way as Jerry in Albee’s play, Lula starts provoking Clay both physically and verbally to make him talk.

Like Albee’s characters, both Lula and Clay are types in the absurdist tradition. Martin Esslin tells us that “the thesis of the theatre of the absurd is that human nature is not a constant, and that human nature is not a constant and that it is possible to transform one character into another in the course of a play” (1961:377). This thesis is openly applied by Jones’s who transforms his characters into caricatures and reified types. They are described as puppets referring to Clay as “man” and Lula as a “face” right at the beginning of the play. Lula’s face as reflected in the window represents Clay’s image, the black from the middle class who is cloistered in a completely closed system of values, like Peter, in Albee’s *The Zoo Story*. His metaphorical cage is the three-button-suit he wears and about which Lula says, “[t]hose narrow shoulder clothes comes from a tradition you ought to feel oppressed by” (Dutchman: 18). Lula is described as a white woman with sexual designs on the black Clay. She seduces him and then attacks his legitimacy as an American to kill him at the end after hearing him affirming his black identity against her racist clichés.

Like Albee’s *The Zoo Story* and the plays of the theatre of the absurd, *Dutchman*’s plot is circular. According to Esslin, this kind of plot is due to the fact that these plays present poetic images rather than narrative events as is the case with the epic theatre (Ibid: 26). This technique of circular plot translates the existential idea that man is always a prey to his truths. Once he had admitted them, he cannot free himself from them since the vicious circle is but the first of the series in which the mind that studies itself is lost in an unstable spiraling. The full circle which makes *Dutchman* ends the way it begins allows for an eternal repetition of the same plot as Sollors explains (1978: 56). In fact, Lula’s murder at the end of play suggests that she is going to repeat her act with all the Clay(s) of the subway. As a puppeteer, Lula

handles Clay to serve her desires. She provokes with her harmful insults, calling him “Uncle Tom, Thomas Woolly head” (Dutchman: 32). Clay violently removes his middle class masks and starts to defend the Negro race in an aggressive reaction that costs him his life. As a complete adoption of European absurdist techniques, Jones leads his play to a circular ending, with Lula preparing her coming racial murder as conveyed in the stage direction that reads as: “Very soon a young Negro of about twenty comes into the coach with a couple of books under his arm. He seats in back of Lula (Dutchman: 36).

Dutchman’s racial love and hatred dialectic explores the same problem of language as the theatre of the absurd and *The Zoo Story*. Jones’s language has a “poetic implication”. He uses understatements, evasions, unfinished sentences and a combination of clichés as those of Ionesco and Albee to indicate through the linguistic texture of the play a dramatic world much larger than that which pure naturalism can convey (Benston, K., 1978: 155). He handles the language of his play to execute social criticism which the main concern of the theatre of the absurd. Furthermore, Jones shares the absurdist sense of humour and the grotesque in tragic situations. Thus, under the surface of his language lurks deep significance which gives his plays a poetic value. Besides, Jones uses dozens (coarse language) and name-calling (forms of insults) which reflect the inner racial conflict between Lula and Clay. His intention is to laugh at the seriousness of Clay, the middle class Negro and at Lula the white bohemian who thinks that “she controls the world with her lies” (Dutchman: 9). This clearly recalls Albee’s bohemian Jerry who provokes the middle class Peter with his anecdotes that are salient echoes to those of Lula’s and Clay’s conversation.

Among the words that Jones masks and then reveals in the play is “love”. The basis of Lula’s encounter with Clay is racial love. As a white temptress, Lula teases the black Clay with sexual and ludic speech that she constantly initiates, controls and disengages. Her language is reinforced by her physical / tactful mood using appropriate theatrical gestures to

excite her prey Clay. The latter responds according to her desires intensifying his role of a puppet by his passivity in front of Lula's racist insults. His recurrent reply, "I don't understand" to Lula's question, "you don't know what I mean," (Dutchman: 28) epitomizes this role. However, Lula's violent dance with obscene sexual challenges and racial insults incites Clay to defend his dignity in a theatrical turning point constructed as a Greek *mimus*. The latter is a spectacle containing dancing, singing, and juggling which is a parent tradition of the theatre of the absurd (Esslin, 1961: 330).

During Lula's morbid dance in which she utters all kinds of stereotypes that whites use to call blacks in America, Clay breaks out and slaps her in the face. He removes the inhibiting mask of white philosophy, white language, and white religion. He speaks for all the blacks preaching violence against the white people. Ironically, the quest of love that Lula pretended at the beginning of the play, turned into racial hatred and violence that ended by the murder of the black Clay.

Thus, Jones, following in Albee's steps, staged alienated characters in a hostile American society where conformism, social classes and racism constructed barriers preventing communication between the individuals. Clay is like Peter, an eccentric conformist from the middle class. Their conformism to the puritan bourgeois values made out of them two caricatures enmeshed in an isolated rigid system. They represent what Norman Mailer calls "square", while Lula and Jerry stand for the Beats / Hipsters in a strange, unusual manner. Jerry assaults Peter with his questions in an unconventional way, and Lula sexually teases Clay. Both Jerry and Lula are led by their desires to incite the conformists to communicate and push them to liberate their emotions / aggression. Lula and Jerry succeeded in a way in their quests. Lula witnesses the violent break out of Clay through his racist speech preaching the murder of white people, a fact that pushed her to stab him. Jerry threatens Peter with a knife, then gives it to him and ultimately impales on it.

The two plays communicate. Albee's play is a pre-text for Jones's in which Lula and Clay repeat Jerry and Peter respectively. For instance, Clay says, "well in College I thought I was Baudelaire" (Dutchman: 9) that echoes Peter who affirms that "Well I like a great man writers, Baudelaire of course is by far the finer" (The Zoo: 2104). Jones's parodies Albee's expression, and though the end of *The Zoo Story* and *Dutchman* are different, they are controversial and paradoxical. While Albee offers a solution through sexual intercourse (knife as a phallic symbol) to reach unity and wholeness between Peter and Jerry, Jones paradoxically denies love as a solution for racism and violence. Instead of integrating the alienated Black man into the main stream American society, Jones preaches separatism and the orientation of black men into their community. Furthermore, Jones's play contains hostile references to Albee himself, in Lula's saying to Clay, "We'll make fun of the queers. Maybe we'll meet a Jewish Buddhist and flatten his conceits over very some pretentious coffee" (Dutchman: 23), referring to Albee's who is often considered as a "Jewish Buddhist" (Borris, F., 1990). This confirms Jones's anxiety of influence towards his master and play-director Albee. Bloom calls this literary dynamic *tessera*. Jones the belated poet / playwright works out his individuality in contradistinction with that of his earlier master Albee engaging in an intensive and negative dialogue with him. Both plays are antithetical and complementary. However, the analogies between their works owe a great deal to the tradition of the absurd and to the post-World War II social and political context.

In addition to Albee's influence, Jones owes much to Shakespeare and his plays *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello* to which he openly refer in his plays *Dutchman* and *The Slave: A Fable in a Prologue and Two Acts*. The beginning of Jones's *Dutchman* promises a Shakespearean romance marked by the triumph of love and reconciliation between the two opposing clans. *Dutchman* is the enacting of a forbidden love story between a black man and a white woman. It sturdily echoes the love story of Romeo and Juliet that succeeded to erase enmity between their two opposing families the Capulet and the Montague. Jones is

influenced by the Shakespearean style. This is made clear in the explicit reference to “Juliet’s tomb” in his own play, when Lula tries to anticipate Clay’s discourse before exposing their imagined sexual games. Clay consents to call Lula’s dark room “Juliet’s tomb”. However, In Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, the tomb is described as a place full of light because of Juliet’s celestial beauty. Romeo says: “a grave, one, a lantern, slaughtered youth / For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes / This vault a feasting presence full of light. (V.ii.130). Jones uses the same expression ironically to portray the prevailing darkness in Lula’s room and to mock the racial reconciliation through love. Instead of a peaceful solution, Lula murdered Clay, the black Romeo at the end of the play. Thus, the black-white love story aborted at the end pointing at the impossibility of racial love and reconciliation between white and black people in post-World War II America.

The same literary connection exists between Jones’s *The Slave* and Shakespeare’s *Othello* as briefly mentioned before. As a title, *The Slave: a Fable in a Prologue and Two Acts* is an explicit intertextual tie that appears at the end of Shakespeare’s play *Othello* though with slight change. Before his suicide which is Othello’s personal punishment for killing Desdemona, Shakespeare makes the Black More say, “O cursed *slave*! /...I look down towards his feet; but that’s a *fable*” (V. ii. 135, emphasis added). Walker and his wife Grace are the equivalents of Othello and Desdemona, and the master being Shakespeare himself as represented by Easley in Jones’s *The Slave*. However, instead of celebrating love between the races as in *Othello*, Jones’s *The Slave* exposes a racial war and proposes separatism as a solution to the racial problem. This is symbolized by the divorce of the black Walker and the white Grace. More than that, Jones’s play contains a direct ironic allusion to Shakespeare’s *Othello*. He writes what follows:

Walker: [laughs]. Yeah. But remember when I used to play a second-rate Othello? Oh, wow...you remember that, don’t you, professor No-dick? You remember when I used to talk around wondering what that fair sister was thinking? [hunches Easley]. Oh, come on now, you remember that... I was Othello, Grace there was Desdemona...and you were Iago... [laughs] or at least you were Iago between classes? I forget to find that out. Ha. The key, the key to my

downfall. I knew you were Iago between the classes, when I saw you, but never knew who you were during classes. [...]. If a white man is Iago when you see him...uhh...chances are he's eviler when you don't (Dutchman: 57-58).

Walker's and Easley's verbal combat in *The Slave* recalls Hegel's master-slave dialectic developed in his *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. Hegel tries to demonstrate that consciousness is the quest of knowledge of itself (self-certainty). He tells us that self-consciousness begins from the moment we start to identify an object as other because of our desire for it. He writes that "self-consciousness is desire" (Hegel, Frederick, 1977: 67). This means that we first encounter ourselves as objects of self-knowledge when we separate ourselves from the immediate life, or the objects we desire. When we consume objects we prove the lastingness of our existence through the disappearance of the consumed objects. Nevertheless, the sense of self-consciousness attained through the consumption of desired objects is incomplete because we cannot shape a stable self-consciousness on desired objects that die out as soon as they are expended. Thus, we need a more enduring "other", a living human being bond to us through mutual recognition instead of desire. To have the recognition of another self-consciousness, Hegel tells us that we have to show that we are ready to risk our life by declaring our complete spiritual indifference towards death. This spiritual freedom comes after the combat of two self-conscious individuals that he explains in what follows:

Thus the relationship of two self-conscious individuals is that they prove themselves and each other through a life-and-death struggle. [...] It is only through staking one's life that freedom is won; only thus is it proved that for self-consciousness, its essential being is not just being the immediate form in which it appears. (1977: 114-115).

Consequently, true recognition as Hegel stipulates is mutual. However, the achievement of self-knowledge and freedom through a life-and-death-struggle is finally as transitory as the one achieved through the consumption of objects. Neither self-knowledge nor freedom can be preserved in the winner if it is exposed in front of a corpse. As a remedy to this situation Hegel imagines that this dialectic takes place between a master and a slave submitting to different imperatives that are freedom and continual existence. The winner comes out of the

life-and-death struggle with a sense of independence and freedom while the defeated whom Hegel associates with the dependent consciousness is simply living or being for another.

The perverse version of Hegel's master and slave dialectic as concerns the black man is found in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*. In Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* the master forces his slave (the dependent consciousness) to work as soon as he establishes his domination over him. The slave consents to work to save his life. Hegel writes, "[t]hrough his service [to the master] he rids himself of his attachment to natural existence in every single detail; and he gets rid of it by working on it" (1977: 117). However, Fanon's representation of the slave differs from Hegel's explaining that the role which labour performs for the servant in the Hegelian dialectic does not apply to the historical experience of the blacks in the United States of America or in the colonial context of the French Negroes. Regarding this different situation Fanon writes what follows:

I hope I have shown that here the master differs basically from the master described by Hegel. For Hegel there is reciprocity; here the master laughs at the consciousness of the slave. What he wants from the slave is not recognition but work. In the same way, the slave here is in no way identifiable with the slave who loses himself in the object and finds in his work the source of his liberation. The Negro wants to be like the master; therefore he is less independent than the Hegelian slave. In Hegel the slave turns away from the master and turns towards the object. Here the slave turns towards the master and abandons the object (1952: 220-221).

Moreover and as fully detailed in the previous chapter of this research the Hegelian dialectic of recognition assumes the perverted form of the quest and the conquest of the white woman. In his attempt to report the alienated Black French man, Fanon writes, "I wish to be acknowledged not as a black but as white. Now – this is a form of recognition that Hegel had not envisaged – who but a white woman can do this for me? By loving me she proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man" (1952: 63).

When Jones / Baraka was married to the white woman Hettie Cohen, he poses as her master limiting her relations and exhibits her in the Village as a trophy of his combat and victory over the racist laws that forbid mixed marriages. Thus, in Jones's play, Walker is not

like the Hegelian slave (the student) who identifies with the services done to the master as a source of his liberation. Instead he wants to be like his master, the master of literature Easley. As the play progresses, Walker metamorphoses from the field slave of the starting into a military general and an intellectual who decides to overthrow his master and regain his white wife and his two daughters from him.

Jones's *The Slave* by reference to the Master of literature Easley and his student Walker does not only evoke Shakespeare and his play *Othello*, but stages the Fanonian master-slave (Easley-Walker) dialectic with Walker willing to be the equal of the master. Walker does not hesitate to sacrifice his life to gain recognition from the white master. He intrudes the whites' house in the middle of a race war and engages a battle of words against his white teacher Easley. This quarrel is reported in the following dialogue:

Easley: [raisin his head and shouting as loud as he can manage]

You're filth, boy. Just filth. Can you understand that anything and everything you do is stupid, filthy, or meaningless! Your inept formless poetry, Hah. Poetry? A flashy doggerel for inducing all those unfortunate troops of yours to spill their blood in your behalf. But I guess that's something! Ritual drama, we used to call it at the university. The poetry of ritual drama. And even giving that crap the benefit of doubt. Ritual filth would have been the right name for it.

Walker: Ritual drama...[Half musing]

Yeah, I remember seeing that phrase in an old review by one of your queer academic friends...
[Noticing Easley getting up]

Walker: Oh well, look at him coming up by his bootstraps. I didn't mean to hit you that hard Professor Easley, sir...I just don't know my own stent'.

[Laughs and finishes the bottle...starts as if he is going to throw it over his shoulder, then he places it very carefully on the table. He starts dancing and whooping like an 'Indian']

Easley: as I said, Vessels, you're just filth. Pretentious filth (*The Slave*: 59).

Trying to apply the theories of the white teacher, Walker was violently insulted by him. For Easley, Walker is a useless poet who fails in his vocation. Jones attacks the notion of the white intellectual's authority. Easley calls his art "ritual drama" because for him a slave is and will forever be unable to produce anything except filth. These words refract Jones's thoughts concerning the Beat poets' lack of political engagement. He should remain their eternal subordinate.

Unlike the end of *Othello* and *Dutchman*, *The Slave*'s verbal strife ends with the murder of the white master (Easley) by the black slave (Walker). Jones clashes hastily with Shakespeare over the referent (the black man Othello) who is depicted as being deceived by Iago. Through the dialogue, Walker laughs at Othello and answers his interlocutor Easley showing him his disgust towards white people and white culture. Thus, unlike Shakespeare's Othello who was led to destruction by Iago, Jones's Walker killed the slave in himself by avenging Othello and killing Easley, the white master.

After Jones's literary stylization of Western models he harshly denied, we will move to the influence of black authors on his works. His relation to his literary black relative Richard Wright's fiction is expressed in an article entitled "The Revolutionary Tradition in Afro-American Literature" (1974). In this article he writes that, "Wright was one of the most publicized and skilled black writers of the 1930s and 1940s" (2009: 319). Jones affirmed that at the age of thirteen he read Wright's *Black Boy*, and that he was so much affected by it that he felt afraid for the life of this writer who dared say dangerous things against the white men: "I read *Black Boy*, the alternate selection of book-of-the-Month Club, and I feared for R.W.'s life and wondered how he dared say such things and still walk around" (AUTO: 62). However, and just like Hansberry and Baldwin, Jones attacked Wright for his "idealism and individualism and petit bourgeois vacillation". According to him, these "sabotaged and isolated" him both from the Communist and his community and its struggle. As a result, he fled to France and became an existentialist writer. This was during the McCarthyism's investigation to purge the U.S.A. and its intellectual life from "all left, Marxist and anti-imperialist influences" (Ibid: 319).

Despite this critique of Wright's work and his political and social engagement, Jones often referred to his fiction either directly or indirectly in his own writings. For instance, in his autobiography, more than once, Jones calls himself "Cross Demon", the name of the

protagonist in Wright's novel *The Outsider*. As he writes, "I was black and that made me, as Wright novel asserted, an outsider, (to some extent even inside those 'outsider circles'". He goes on to add that, "it was curious to me listening to one's obituary. Perhaps like Cross Demon in Wright's *The Outsider*" (AUTO: 230-315).

Moreover, Jones's two plays *Dutchman* and *The Slave* contain references to Wright's works. In *Dutchman*, Clay the black character is the nephew of Bigger Thomas. He enacts a kind of metamorphosis from a docile black petit bourgeois of the middle class into an aggressive murderer who preaches the killing of the white men to purge the black's neurosis. Nevertheless, his trip with the white woman Lula, who provokes him both sexually and racially, ends up with his murder instead of murdering the white woman as done by Bigger. Clay's swerve from his relative's Bigger marks the difference at the level of the racial message conveyed through the protest stance of the play. He executes what Bloom designed as *tessera* in relation to Wright's *Native Son*, which is completion and antithesis (Bloom, 1997: 14). To apply Bloom's analysis here, this literary link (*tessera*) represents Jones's attempt to persuade himself and his readers that the precursor's (Wright's) word would be worn out if not redeemed as newly fulfilled and enlarged word of the ephebe (Jones).

At the time of performing *Dutchman*, Jones was not yet totally radicalized concerning racial relations. However, it prefigures his coming incitation to violence and hatred against the whites. This brings him back to Bigger's actions as enacted in his coming sequel play *The Slave*. The reference to Bigger Thomas is ironic because Walker is not a rapist. The reason for this allusion is to expose the dialectics between saying and acting as explained by Frantz Fanon in "The Fact of Blackness". For him, the white man is afraid of the Negro, but ignores that the Negro is also afraid. So, he (the white man) anticipates the black man's aggressive reactions against him, and the latter is going to act the white man's imagination. Fanon states that, "the Negro is a toy in the white man's hands. So, in order to shatter this hellish cycle, he

explodes.” (Fanon, 1952: 107). So does the black who acts out of guilt or fear, as in the case of Wright’s Bigger Thomas. Walker Vessel is described by the Grace as follows, “Mr. Vessel is playing the mad scene from Native Son, a second rate Bigger Thomas” (The Slave: 57). Easley used to be Vessel’s teacher whom he calls “professor No-Dick”, remembering that Wright is also called Dick. Generally “Dick” is the diminutive of Richard in Western countries. Yet, the name has a pejorative meaning. In the case of the play, it can also signify that the white professor can never be as talented as Wright.

Like Hansberry’s scene in which Walter acts a minstrel show as a token of indebtedness to Hurston’s theatricality, Jones also makes Walker play what he calls in the play “ritual drama”. The revolutionary general, under the effect of liquor, starts “dancing around and whooping like an ‘Indian’ more Bwana, me want more fire water” (The Slave: 56). Playing the fool to entertain the white family was the slaves’ tasks after finishing a long-day working in the plantation. Yet, Walker dances not because he is afraid of the white man but rather to frighten him. He uses minstrelsy to deflate its first purpose which was pleasing the master. He intends to show the repressed aggressive nature of the slave, signing his complexity as a normal human being. His show compresses dancing, crying, and aggression as a site of dialogue with both his white ancestors and black uncles. It also prefigures the coming minstrel in reverse (whitening black faces) he will adopt in his Black Art Repertory / Theatre. It is his means of avenging centuries of white men’s racism and oppression on the stage.

In *Blues People*, Jones, using Hegelian dialectics, explains that minstrel shows are black ironies of the white performances. He supports the thesis that “the Negro theatre in form was modeled on the earlier white minstrel shows” (1963: 82). Yet, he defends the antithesis that the contents “were more authentic”, and that the black shows though they originate from white burlesques of Negro mores, are full of vitality and humour that their earlier predecessors never had. (Ibid: 85). As a synthesis, Jones reconciles both the form and content

of the black shows through blending classic blues with the smooth emotional appeal of the performance that marked a new entrance of the blacks into the mainstream American society (Ibid: 86).

Jones's literary influences originate from white literary ancestors and black literary uncles. His love-hate feelings for Richard Wright as expressed through his paradoxical state of doubt and pride convey an anxiety of influence that exists in both Baldwin and Hansberry. It is expressed in a defensive and corrective way, as a form of *tessera* in relation to the works of the black uncle. All of them were overwhelmed by these literary predecessors. Their belatedness creates in them a sense of admiration for their works, and at the same time envy towards their literary achievements. However, they read and misread their works as a revision in order to create a room for their talents in the American literary tradition. They worked on the literary kinship for the construction of their racial subjectivity by measuring their art with both white and black texts.

Intratextuality in Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's Plays

Intratextuality is what Jean Ricardou (1975), Lucien Dallenbach (1976), and Gerrard Genette (1982) call "restrained intertextuality" or call "autotextuality". It is a creative practice in which the text of one author refers to his other texts. It is a kind of dialogue with the self through one's own texts. It aims at providing the progressive process of the author's personal thoughts and literary production. This textual circulating interference in the writer's works position him in the ideological and the literary scene of the context. "Through autotextuality", Dallenbach writes, "a text reflects upon itself, both *structurally* and in terms of *content*, and establishes dialogues within itself through internal repetition. This specular process questions whether the text ceases to exist, or recreates another 'self'" (qtd. in Bulman, 2007: 283; emphasis added).

Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones have experimented with different literary genres. Autotextuality is reflected in their works as a means of transgressing the boundaries of fiction to the real life-experiences. It is also called *mise en abyme* (Dallenbach, 1976). “Mise en abyme”, as Dallenbach explains, is discovered by André Gide. It refers to any aspect enclosed within a work that shows similarity with the work that contains it. He adds that, it is a means by which the work turns back on itself and appears to be a kind of reflexion (Dallenbach, L., Whitely, J., 1989: 8-9). In Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun*, the pageant performed by Walter and Beneatha is an autotextual exercise applied to the form of the play. The play within a play refers to her works as a whole. It redirects attention to her position as a culturally hybrid black American writer. Like her character Beneatha she aspires to complete the fragments of her identity to understand her own subjectivity. Like in a mirror, she replicates her lost African identity dressing and singing like a Nigerian woman, welcoming her husband’s return to the village from the war. This pageant includes Walter, who participates in this performance. as stated in the stage directions: “he leans against the door heavily and watches his sister, at first with distaste- then his eyes look off- ‘back to the past’” (*A Raisin*: 77).

At the level of *content*, autotextuality is present in Hansberry’s play-text through the reference to her childhood incident. A mob of violent white men attacked their house at night because they were the only blacks in the white neighborhood. This play is the prequel to *The Drinking Gourd*. To believe Hansberry, it was written in 1959, shortly after finishing *A Raisin in the Sun* (TBY: 126). *The Drinking Gourd* is an “autotext” wherein she traces back the past of her ancestors the slaves “not from the white consciousness but the black one” (Hansberry, 1972: 158) as she says.

Intratextuality in Baldwin’s plays helps position him in the post-World War II American literary scene. *The Amen Corner*, which urges to the love of all the people without exception, replicates the proposal exposed in his essay “Letter from a Region in My Mind”.

He preaches racial love and reconciliation between whites and blacks. Baldwin is looking at himself in a kind of a mirror through the portrait of David. Like him, the young man experiences a religious crisis, and then leaves the church to follow a musical career. This *Baldwinian* traveling poetic figure has its literary ancestor in the character of John Grimes in Baldwin's first novel *Go Tell it on The Mountain* (1953). John Grimes as lives a religious and emotional crisis after his conversion at the age of fourteen. He becomes a young preacher to please his father. The same experience is narrated in *The Fire Next Time*, in Baldwin himself. In this essay, he speaks of his own religious crisis that pushed him to leave the church. This crisis is lived by Meridian in *Blues for Mister Charlie*. After being disappointed by the utopian religious love, these characters choose different methods to defend their people's rights. This intratextuality links all the parts of Baldwin's literary work by looking back to the past, discussing his present state, in an attempt to plan the future of his career. The continuity between the different literary genres experienced by Baldwin informs of the projection of the different selves and the changing aspects of his own personality according to his intellectual and political metamorphosis as supplemented by the contextual historical changes.

Intratextuality is deployed in Jones's plays that are discursive sites for his own subjectivity. They are moments of self-reflexivity that allows him to project his ideas and to understand his personal paradoxes. Greg Tate writes in his preface to *The Fiction of LeRoi Jones / Amiri Baraka* (2000) that Baraka was not just mimicking his influences. He, as he tells us, passionately invents forms that address his readings in Western literature and philosophy. Tate goes on saying that Jones's abiding passion for the black working class and culture has pushed him to be committed to their struggle. Reading Hegel's philosophy, namely *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*, as Tata states, provides him with the dialectical method he uses in his essays like *Blues people* (1963). Thus, though he appears to eschew racial polemics in favor of self-reflection, "he has often used his fiction, as he would his other mediums, to stab

away at American middle-class existence as not just corny but sterile, moribund and inhuman” (2000: xiv).

Jones poetic works communicate through intratextual bonds. The most pertinent example of autotextuality exists in *The Slave* which is a sequel to his play *Dutchman*. The stage direction that reads as, “looks over slowly at Grace and waves as from a passing train” (The Slave: 47) describes Walker’s and Grace’s first encounter in the first act. It refers to the previous play *Dutchman* in which Lula and Clay meets in a subway train, looking at each other through the window and smiling (Dutchman: 4).

This *endogenous* dialogism that originates within the texts of the play conveys another truth about the black character Clay. He metamorphoses into Walker in the sequel play. Clay matures and changes from a naïve black intellectual who intends to join a banquet of philosophy in the village into Walker, a fierce revolutionary commander-in-chief who has raised a black army to destroy white people. According to Jones, Walker is weak because, he “suffers from an ego-worship...if he is a general, the commander of this revolutionary army he has no business being in that white man’s house”. However, he affirms that Walker’s intentions are close to reality since he believes if an equitable social structure is going to be reared in America; it will be probably by force (qtd. in Sollors, W., 1978: 137). Therefore, the exposition of his ideas and inner conflicts throughout his characters helps him to understand the different constituents of his personality and the limitations of his own views.

The previous analysis has explored some of the intratextual allusions that connect the aforementioned authors’ works. The self-referential nature of their writings suggested that their creative response to contradictions they could not solve embarked them on a continuing and open-ended process of self-refashioning. They vainly strive towards wholeness but never achieving it. Often this internal dialogue happens between an earlier self and a later one. Their writings on the racial issues are situated within the context of their work as a whole rather

than being separated in the fragments one genre or another proposes. Autotextuality or intratextuality is related to the discourses of other authors in what is called intertextuality. The latter is the main concern of the next section of our thesis.

The Clash Over the (Racial) Referents of Love and Hate in Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's Plays

Our three authors' internal dialogue is also related to the external dialogue they entertain with other black writers who share the same racial experience. This dialogue is expressed through the intertextuality that exists between their texts, or what Bakhtin calls dialogism. According to Bakhtin, dialogism is the distinguishing epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. It is understood as a part of a greater whole since there is a constant interaction between meanings that have the potential of conditioning others (Bakhtin, 1981: 426). What is interesting in the dialogic interaction between the black authors of this present research is what Bakhtin calls stylization, hidden or open polemic and parody. Following Bakhtin's definition of stylization, hidden and overt polemic and parody, we will try to trace this discursive battle between Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's discourses. Each author either tries to bring low the high figure of his or her poetic target or follow in the same direction.

Though Baldwin was Hansberry's friend, he bitterly criticized her plays mainly *A Raisin in the Sun* in an article entitled "Is a Raisin in the Sun a Lemon in the Dark". He overtly treated this play as flawed as Richard Wright's *Native Son*:

Both *Native Son* and *A Raisin in the Sun* are flawed pieces of work...the flaw in *A Raisin* involves the juxtaposition of the essentially stock-certainly familiar-figure of the mother with the intense (and unprecedented) figure of Walter Lee...part of the corrosive ambiguity of his mother's role in his life, this brings up the whole question of the role of the mother in Negro Life, and the peculiar horrible problems of the Negro woman (2010: 25).

Baldwin criticizes the way Hansberry mystifies the black woman mainly the mother and the way she feminizes the black male who is incessantly backed up and saved by his mother. The

figure of the loving and forceful black mother is also present in Hansberry's *The Drinking Gourd*, in the character of Rissa. The latter emphasizes the strength and the courage of the black woman as a partner and a savior of the black man and her family from the early days of slavery.

Though Baldwin criticizes these figures, he stylizes Hansberry's play and recreates approximately the same mother and a weaker father (Meridian) in *Blues for Mister Charlie*. By the time Baldwin wrote the play, his religious faith had already known a crisis. He became doubtful of the Christian God about whom he makes Lorenzo says: "doesn't care what happens to nobody, unless of course they're white [...]". He goes on to say that white man's God, "been lynching us burning us and castrating us and raping our women and robbing us of everything that makes a man a man for all these hundreds of years" (Blues: 4). Crawford Cordier claims that Baldwin falls down in the trap of producing stereotypical discourse that imprisons his vision. He writes that Baldwin slips back into assaulting the white people. He openly considers them as "devil" while black men are good. With *Blues for Mister Charlie*, Baldwin himself is "locked in a timeless battle shooting curses against whites" (in Campbell J, 1991: 196).

This new racial hatred against white people marks a turning point in Baldwin's career. He vociferously affirmed it even during the actual production of the play that caused him the loss of many white friends like Elia Kazan who proposed him to write *Blues for Mister Charlie*. The cause of the breakdown was that Baldwin at first promised Kazan to direct the play. After Kazan's trip to Greece, Torn Rip persuaded Baldwin to give his play to the Actors Studio Theatre, instead of giving it to Kazan. Baldwin's ideas gradually turn nationalist. The "lukewarm" James Baldwin, as Campbell writes, becomes the "violent James X". These ideas are shown in his play. He transforms Reverend Meridian and his black congregation into an underground army ready for an armed revolution against the white town.

Baldwin's new discourse of violence corroborates an intimidating idea about the role of theatre. By doing so, he subverts his own initial idea about theatre he often compares to a church that preaches love and communion between people whatever their differences. He stylizes Platonic love as stated in the *Symposium*. As he puts it, "to love the Lord is to love all his children-all of them, everyone!-and suffer with them and rejoice with them and never count the cost!" (The Amen: 93). However, this racial love changes into racial hate. This change is endorsed by other black writers' overt polemic that targets his principle of Platonic love. These two antithetical views are in fact part of the dialectical thinking that tortures Baldwin's spirit. The hostile dialogue between his old and new self as conveyed throughout his writings. He ends his protest play by a synthesis that shows his white intellectual character Parnell with the black activists for freedom and racial love singing his hope in post-racial America.

Ironically, when Baldwin started to express his racial hatred against white liberals he was scorned by the overt polemic of the new black leaders like Eldridge Cleaver and Ishmael Reeds. In his essay called "Reflections of Two Hotshots" (1963), Jones attacked him for his insufficiently radical agenda. Jones argues that, "a writer must have a point of view, or he cannot be a good writer. He must be standing somewhere in the world, or else he is not one of us, and his commentary then is of little value" (1963: 139). He mocks Baldwin's "individuality" and lack of concern in a parodic way. He writes, "I can, feel, I am intelligent, people should love each other" (Ibid: 140), to convey Baldwin's selfishness and lack of commitment. Jones dismisses Baldwin's calling the racial struggle a "horrible animal" that disturbs his life. Jones claims that an idea should be specific and useful. It must function in the world. It should be an interpretation of this world that permits a man to use himself and to be committed to what is real and not to the sanctity of his feelings (Ibid.). His vocal attacks on Baldwin are based on the racial question and the social function of art. He understands the context's urgent need for a racially committed black aesthetic.

Jones's *Baptism* is a parody to Baldwin's *The Amen Corner*. He believes that organized religion is treachery and hypocrisy. So, Jones overtly attacked Baldwin's religious crisis and his discourse of Platonic love. Baldwin's homosexuality is considered by Eldridge Cleaver as a betrayal for the black struggle. He is attacked by the young black militants who openly referred to him as "Martin Luther Queen". Ishmael Reed considered him as "a hustler who comes on like Job", and Jones called Baldwin "Joan of Arc of the cocktail party" (qtd. in Gates, H., J., 2007: 16).

Setting in *Baptism* renders the original image of Baldwin's *The Amen Corner* by recalling the Baptist church of Margaret Alexander. *The Amen Corner* is a dialogue between a homosexual who cannot stop sinning, a minister who argues against sin, a virtuous old woman and a boy who admits his sinning each time he prays. He wants to be baptized because he is afraid of God's wrath. These characters can be read as Baldwin's selves in a dialogue discussing religion and sexuality. These two themes create discomfort in the American society. Jones subverts Baldwin's discourses by showing that his concerns were absurd and that he should be committed to the racial struggle instead of speculating about sin and its religious outcomes.

The end of Jones's *Baptism* shows the resistance of the Homosexual and the death of all the members of the church. The Homosexual rises from the pile of bodies on the stage and speculates on what happened. "Damn, it looks like some really uninteresting kind of orgy went on in here," (The Baptism: 32). He says, and again suggests that the Minister should not have catered to "rough trade", meaning religious hypocrisy (Ibid.). As he leaves the church, thinking about getting a drink before the bars close for the evening, he wonders, "[W]hat happened to that cute little religious fanatic?"(Ibid.). Jones completely frees himself from the dogma of the Christian religion and the Platonic philosophy that seems to chain Baldwin in a paradox of racial love and hate. He inserts his intention of subverting Baldwin's religious

atmosphere and the discourse of his church by turning it into an “orgy” in *The Baptism*. Jones strikes a polemical blow on Baldwin’s discourses of Christian brotherhood and the Platonic love of both his play *The Amen Corner* and his essay “The Fire Next Time”.

These violent assaults on Baldwin’s sexuality push him to answer and wage a war against the newly sexualized black nationalism that could stigmatize homosexuality as a capitulation to alien white norms (Ibid:16). This carefully aimed attack smashed Baldwin’s ego. It also pushed him to review his discourse of racial love, and to shape a new consciousness that accommodates the *status quo*. He participates in an open revolt against racism. Hence, Baldwin wrote and produced *Blues for Mister Charlie* in 1964. In his own way, he revisited the life of Emmett Tell as represented by Richard in the play. The submissive discourses are supplanted by new ones that reinforce the black family and community bonds.

Furthermore, through this play, Baldwin tried to answer back Jones’s and other writers’ attacks. He, in a way, seems to inverse Hansberry’s “myth of black mammy” by seemingly creating defiant female figures like Richard’s grandmother called Mother Henry, Juanita and her mother. These characters are but stylizations of Hansberry’s. He inserts the character of Esther, the dead servant remembered by white people as their preferred slave. She was exaggeratingly described as a woman full of love and sacrifice for the white race. This woman fulfills all the loving characteristics that exist in the “black mammy”. Hazel, the white woman, describes this black mammy (Esther), and tries to imagine her reaction concerning Richard’s boldness:

Hazel: I’m so glad Esther’s not here to see this. She’d die of shame. She was the sweetest colored woman-you remember her. She just about raised us, used to sing us to sleep at night, and she could tell just the most beautiful stories-the kind of stories that could scare you and make you laugh and make you cry, you know. Oh she was wonderful. I don’t remember a cross word or an evil expression all the time she was with us. She was always the same. And I believe she knew more about me than my own mother and father knew. I just told her everything. Then, one of her sons got killed- he went bad, just like this boy having a funeral for here tonight- and she got sick. I nursed her; *I bathed that woman’s body with my own hands*. And she told me

once, she said, 'Miss Hazel, you are just an angel of light.' She said, 'My own couldn't have done more for me than you have done.' She was a wonderful old woman. (Blues: 50; emphasis original).

This discourse accommodates the myth of the black mammy, which, according to Patricia Hill Collins, is the faithful, obedient domestic servant created to justify the economic exploitation of the house slave. She argues that, "by loving, nurturing, and caring for the white children and 'family' better than her own, the mammy symbolizes the dominant group's perception of the ideal black female relationship to elite white male power" (Collins, 2000: 74). Collins uses the myth to argue that the "mammy image" represents the normative yardstick used to evaluate all black women's behavior to keep them submissive for economic reasons (Ibid.). Hazel's discourse about Esther conveys the latter's docile character and her silence even after the death of her own son killed by white people. In spite of her sufferings she surrenders to those who lynched her son and ravish her daughters. She perpetuates her love for the white master and his children. She is the perfect substitute of the white mother with no authority on the white children she nursed.

Black children are the direct victims who suffered from the absence of their mothers. That feeling of abandonment would raise their feelings of jealousy and hatred against white children who stole their mothers from them. The black mothers were encouraged to teach their own children deference, a behavior they internalized in their jobs of servants because transmitting this submissiveness to their children was the purpose of the white racist oppressive system. Baldwin himself suffered from the absence of his mother, and he overtly mentioned it in "The Fire Next Time". He informs his nephew that his grandmother "was also there, and no one has ever accused her of being bitter. I suggest that the innocents check with her. She isn't hard to find. Your countrymen don't know that she exists, either, though she has been working for them all their lives" (1963: 334).

In *Blues for Mister Charlie*, Baldwin uses this image of the black mammy in a specific way. His poetic response to the stereotype is the death of this woman in the play and she is

only referred to through Hazel's discourse. The latter is a racist white woman who remorsefully remembers her preferred black slave. Esther's love for the white family is exaggerated and Hazel's repetition of "she said" in the quote tends to mimic rather than convey reality. Besides, the passage in italics "I bathed that woman's body with my own hands" speaks of Hazel's repugnance and racism concerning that "black body" that nursed her. For Hazel, "the black body" is uncanny, terrifying and dirty. The fact of bathing Esther is felt as a concession.

Another female black figure in the play is Mother Henry who is from the first generation of freed slaves. She still believes that she is a slave. She enacts the four cardinal virtues of the cult of womanhood as mentioned by Patricia Collins: piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity (2000: 72). She is the voice of love in the play. She wants Richard to stay with them in the South and forgets his hatred for white people. She told Richard, "you can't start walking around believing that all the suffering in the world is caused by white folks, you're going to make yourself sick with hatred" (Blues: 21). She, like Rissa in Hansberry's *The Drinking Gourd* and Ruth and Lena in *A Raisin in the Sun*, insists on feeding her grandson to strengthen him, "seat down and eat, you got to get your strength back" (Blues: 17). She hides Richard's gun so that he is not going to use it against white people.

However, the hesitant grandmother becomes bold at the end of the play. In the court of justice she deliberately tells a lie under oath, affirming that she has never seen Richard with a gun. She is courageous enough to defend her son and grandson refuting the accusation of his drug addiction in front of the jury. She confidently answers the question of the state, telling him; "No white man never called my husband Mister, neither, not as long as he lived. Ain't no white man never called me Mrs. Henry before today. I had to get a grandson killed for that...I been under oath all my life and, and I tell you I never saw no gun" (Blues: 100).

Baldwin's Juanita's discourse is also a stylization of Hansberry's Beneatha's words. In *Blues for Mister Charlie*, Juanita deflates the myth of the black mammy by her innovative character and actions. Baldwin's Juanita differs from Hansberry's Beneatha in that she is an energetic militant in the activist movement of the Blacktown. She organizes the civil fight in a pacific way with her friends Pete, Lorenzo, Meridian and others. She was imprisoned many times for her political activism. Here lies Baldwin's poetic endeavour to subvert the conventional clichés of the black female character. He arms her with civil protest and disobedience. Nonetheless, Juanita echoes Hansberry's Beneatha in *A Raisin in the Sun*, and both roles (Juanita's and Beneatha's) have been played by the blazing black actress Diana Sands (1934-1973). Baldwin uses the same actress in order to stylize the discourse of her former role in *A Raisin in the Sun*. In *Blues for Mister Charlie*, Juanita is the only black woman who participates in the Civil Rights Movement. Just like Beneatha, she is a student in "abnormal psychology" and she aspires to understand human behavior and relationship with others. Furthermore, she echoes Beneatha's hatred for the Christian God and all the spirits that her mother worships. She expresses her cultural identity and acceptance through the changes in her hair, a fashion that precedes the "Afro-style" of the late sixties. She declares, echoing Beneatha:

I want a lover made out of flesh and blood, of flesh and blood, like me, I don't want to be God's mother! He can have His icy, snow-white heaven. If he is somewhere in this world around this fearful planet, if I see Him I will spit in His face. How dare he presume to judge a living soul (Blues: 94).

Discussing the possibility of hair distortion by making it straight like white people's hair, she defends her "African bush" recalling Beneatha's point of view concerning the black women's curly hair: "I am not worried about my hair I am thinking wearing it the way God arranged it in the first place" (Blues: 37).

Throughout the character of Juanita, Baldwin enacts his intrinsic desire to join the two antithetical sides of the black mother by sealing the junction between the new educated young

black woman and the loving mother who never denies her black children. By so doing, he links his artistic creation with Hansberry's, correcting the defects he thinks exist in the figures of Hannibal, Walter, Lena, Rissa and Beneatha. He uses Richard, Meridian, Mother Henry, and Juanita, that stood for love and integration. We can say that both Baldwin and Hansberry stylize the Western discourse of love and reconciliation. They address a hidden polemic to white and black separatists who criticize the black female characters. They deplore their pessimism about the idea of an American racial symposium. Hansberry's and Baldwin's characters who protest the behavior of the black docile women represent the two playwrights' celebration of racial integration through stylizing the Platonic / Socratic love directing a hidden polemic to those who question the idea of post-racial America.

Just like Baldwin Jones, in his own way, criticizes Hansberry's plays. This polemic is shown through the allusions that he makes to her characters, setting and theme. His intention is to parody her views of racial love and integration. For Bakhtin, each literary genre or type of direct discourse has its "parodying or travesty double, its own comic-ironic *contre-partie*" (1981: 53; emphasis original). Jones's *The Slave* treats the racial love-hate relations in America of the sixties and is the sequel to his first play *Dutchman* in the same way as Hansberry's *The Drinking Gourd* is a sequel to her first play *A Raisin in the Sun*. Jones's *The Slave* portrays a field slave who ends as a black revolutionary leader. Like Hannibal, Walker Vessels tries to free himself from the white master / father. Jones attacks Hansberry's theatre considering it as an "integrationist one". For him, it is born from the values of the assimilationist black middle class (Benston, 1976: 53). He severely critiques the way she portrays her black male characters like Walter Lee and Hannibal having as an argument "feminizing" and stiffening them through the domination of a powerful black mother / matriarch like Lena and Rissa. For him, these women often succeed to prosper more than black men despite the American racial context (Ibid: 227).

Jones's characters in *The Slave* are antithetical to those created by Hansberry. His displacements assume the shape of a parody. Walker Vessels, who is drunk and almost a blind black revolutionary, recalls Hansberry's Hannibal who is blinded by Everett Sweet because he starts to learn the language of the white master. Jones tries to bring law Hannibal's serious education. Jones's Professor Bradford Easley, the white male character in *The Slave* is Walker's teacher and the husband of his ex-white wife Grace.

Jones strikes a polemic blow on Hansberry's discourse and her characters by setting his play in the North, Hannibal's most desired destination. The intoxicated atmosphere in which Walker lives is chaotic. Jones's trio in his play *The Slave* echoes Hansberry's climactic scene in *The Drinking Gourd*. The scene gathers the slave Hannibal, his white master Everett Sweet and his white overseer Zeb Dudley. Hannibal is the romantic slave-poet who plays the banjo to entertain the white master. When the latter discovers the slave's literacy he charges Zeb Dudley of blinding him as a punishment for his digression. Hannibal who writes an awkward composition full of mistakes is displaced by Jones's Walker, who brilliantly discusses the white master's theories of aestheticism and politics.

Like Hannibal, Jones's Walker is initially described as a field slave who arrives in the house of his white teacher to destroy it. Walker needs ritual drama to act his violence. Easley's discourse that considers Walker's as "filth" also echoes Everett's after discovering Hannibal's secret education. He says: "There is only one thing I have ever heard of that was proper for an 'educated' slave. It is like anything else; when a part is corrupted by disease-one cuts out the disease. The ability to read in the slave is a disease- (The Gourd: 210). In reality, it is a dis/ease for the master who is obliged to struggle against his own slave because he is anxious about his rapid and unexpected skills. Professor Easley belittles Walker, neglecting the fact that he is armed and leading an army of people who were oppressed for centuries and now are seeking retribution. Contrary to Hannibal who was blinded by the white master,

Walker ultimately killed his white intellectual rival (father). He shatters the romanticized vision of the loving black slave by exposing the revolutionary modern black man and the tactics of guerrillas on the stage for his desired freedom and self-affirmation.

The white man considers the black man as “filth”. For him, a slave cannot think for himself without the help of his white master as demonstrated by Jones’s Easley Bradford’s discourse. Hannibal deliberately breaks the tools of the white master in the plantation to stop picking cotton. However, the overseer cautions him. He answers both the driver and his mother who wants him to be a good slave:

Hannibal: Coffin, how you get so mixed up in your head? Them ain’t my fields yonder, man! *Ain’t none of it my cotton what’ll rot if I leaves it half-picked. That ain’t my tools what I drops and breaks and loses every time I gets a chance.* None of it mine.

And I tell you like I tell Coffin-I am the only kind of slave I could stand to be-a bad one! Every day that come and hour that pass that I got sense to make a half step do for a whole –every day that I can pretend sickness ‘stead of health, to be stupid ‘stead of smart, lazy ‘stead of quick-I aims to do it. And the more pain it give your master and the more it cost- the more Hannibal be a man! (The Gourd: 199- 201 emphasis original).

In the same way, Walker Vessel plays with the language and the theories of the white teacher. He deflates them through his dialogue though he is drunk. The gourd of wine that plays the role of the double spirit and the double discourse under which Walker says the truth, “in vino veritas”, frees his unconscious desires in a torrent of words that stand as signposts to his reflection. He ultimately killed his white master. These words incited him to acts with a gun. This last resort to weapons reveals the necessity of the armed revolt as intended by Jones’s play.

It follows that Jones’s and Hansberry’s discourses serve directly opposing aims. Hannibal’s love of knowledge symbolizes Hansberry’s ladder of love from slavery towards racial reconciliation. Hannibal the slave metamorphoses from a romantic banjo player and a hand field slave into a literate person who can think using reason and understand his own situation. Jones’s Walker metamorphoses from a fields slave musician into a revolutionary leader whose aim is to destroy white America. Jones’s aim is to show the impracticality of the

path of knowledge to establish a reconciling dialogue between the master and the slave despite the latter's erudition. The battle of Hansberry's and Jones's discourses renders their opposing visions concerning post-racial America. Thus, Hansberry's wish is reconciliation, while Jones believes in separation between the two races.

The battle of words between Hansberry and Jones and their clash over the referent of racial love and hate becomes more hostile after her last play *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*. *The Slave* was first presented at the St. Mark's Playhouse, New York City, in December, 1964 while Hansberry's *The Sign* was first performed at the Longacre Theatre, New York City on October 15th, 1964. *The Slave*'s setting is "a large living room, tastefully furnished the way an intelligent university professor and his wife would furnish it" (*The Slave*: 41) in Greenwich Village. This setting recalls Hansberry's apartment in her play *The Sign*. The action takes place in the Brustein's house and adjoining courtyard, in Greenwich Village, New York City. It is "the preferred habitat of many who fancy revolt or at least, detachment from the social order that surrounds us" (*The Sign*: 211), as is put in the stage direction. The white couples' quite lives were intruded by a black character, Walker Vessels and Alton Scales respectively.

However, these black characters were presented in different ways. While Alton is Sidney's friend who helps him preparing the next campaign, Walker is violent and threatens to kill his white teacher Easley. He attacks his poetry as being "Tired elliptical little descriptions of what he could see out the *window*" (*The Slave*: 76). This directly refers to Hansberry's play's title. There is another reference to *The Sign* when Walker mentions Easley's sister-in-law. He means that she is a "whore" just like Gloria, Sidney's sister-in-law. Walker says: "for Lawrence [Ferlinguitti] and all the cocksmen of my underprivileged youth. When we used to chase that kind of frail little sissy punk down Reymond Boulevard and compromise his *sister-in-law*, in the cloak room" (*The Slave*, 53). This passage implicitly

refers to Jones's Beat period and his bisexuality. He attacks Gloria, "the middle class whore" of *The Sign*, with whom the black character Alton Scale falls in love and decides to marry before even knowing the nature of her profession.

Alton is portrayed by Hansberry like LeRoi Jones in his youth, when he used to befriend Frank O'Hara and the white Beat poets band in Greenwich Village. Just like Jones, Alton loves a white woman Gloria, Sidney's sister-in-law. He participates in the movement that Sidney and Wally O'Hara prepares for social reform. He is still defending the cause of the blacks, which is explicit in the following dialogue with Iris, Sidney's wife:

Iris: You knock it off, sometimes, Alton! It's a bore. You and the causes all the time. It's phony as hell!

Alton: (sharply back at her) I was born with this cause.

Iris: That's what I mean! Fun with illusion and reality; white boy playing black boy all the time.

Alton: I am a black boy. I didn't make up the game, and as long as a lot of people think there is something wrong with the fact that I am a Negro- I am going to make a point out of being one. Follow!

Iris: But that's what makes it so phony. The country is full of people who dropped it when they could-what makes you so ever-loving different?

Alton: it's something you either understand or don't understand.

Iris: heroes, heroes, everywhere-and not a battle won. (*The Sign*: 246-7)

This dialogue is echoed in Jones's *The Slave* when Walker tries to explain for Grace his position. If he should change it is because of the racial struggle he has to defend instead of being a black who plays the white all the time. He tells her, "I was preaching hate the white man...get the white man off our backs...if necessary kill the white man for our rights ..."
(*The Slave*: 71).

Like Walker who divorces from his Jewish wife for racial reason, Alton refuses to marry Gloria after discovering that she is a prostitute. He justifies his decision to Sidney by explaining his revulsion for her prostitution. He told her, "I don't want white man's leavings, Sidney. I couldn't marry her" (*The Sign*: 303). Gloria commits suicide, not because she loves Alton but because she is refused by a black man. She speaks her racist discourse of hatred in

front of Sidney after handing her Alton's notes saying, "I was going to marry that vanilla dinge...Oh Jesus, that yellow-faced bastard!"(The Sign: 327). Through Alton, Hansberry enacts a clever reversal. It is no longer the black man who should accept anything that comes from the white man. She endows her black character with a free will. Alton refuses white men's remaining by refusing to marry Gloria though she accepts to change her own life. She sees in Alton her ultimate saviour. Alton's words are evoked in Walker's discourse that hurts Grace by calling her: "the whore of the middle class" (The Slave: 62).

David probably refers to Jones. He is portrayed as a homosexual playwright who can only write plays with no more than two characters. This refers to Jones's *Dutchman* that stages Clay and Lula. Sidney asked David for a small role for his wife Iris in his coming play. David refuses his request. Hansberry makes Sydney says: "What's so awful about it? *Can't you write about more than two characters at a time?* How could it hurt?" (The Sign: 293; emphasis added). This overt polemic over the form of drama contains Hansberry's reply for Jones's critique of her play he calls "integrationist". Her polemical blow is also directed towards his referential object that is the theme of racial hatred. Moreover, she questions the illegitimacy of the European influences like the theatre of the absurd in Jones's plays. Noting that, Clay's favorite book of poetry as mentioned in Jones's *Dutchman* is Charles Baudelaire's. The same play share absurdist traits with Samuel Becket's *Waiting for Godot* performed with only two characters. In the same dialogue, David's drama was criticized by Wally O'Hara who claims that imitating French writers is not fair because these writers suffer from the loss of an empire and two world wars. He explains that David's problem stems from his family romance "Wally: [...] as far as I have ever been able to make out from your writings- some problem or other about your mother" (The Sign: 295), as he tells him.

David's homosexuality is among the important point of the debate between Alton (the black heterosexual), Iris (the female actress) and Sidney (the Jew). They have shown different

stand points concerning the sexual identity of David. While Iris explains that she is not against queers, Alton shows great hostility towards him. He says, "Hanging out with queers gets on my nerves" (The Sign: 268). As a result, David leaves the house angrily. Iris, who tries to cool up the climate, tells David, "Eat your supper David, Alton's a big Kid. You Know" (Ibid: 268). Then, she affirms to him that she accepted queers. David grows disappointed. He considers her as an ignorant woman. He thinks that she is not able to measure the reality of his problem. He tells her, "Yes, because you accept anything. But I am not anything. I hope he never has to explore the why of his discomfort" (Ibid: 268-9). David's last expression means that if Alton nervously attacks the homosexuals, it is because he is one of them but he refuses to acknowledge it. Walker in *The Slave* and Jones in his real life hysterically attacked homosexuals because he should appear as manly as possible for the racial struggle that demanded being harsh and heterosexual.

Sidney's viewpoint about homosexuality incited David to simplify his queer "problem" instead of writing many plays about the isolation of the soul, the alienation of the human spirit and the desolation of all love and communication. These are the main themes of the theatre of the absurd. According to Sidney, David should say it openly instead of wrapping his feelings and sexual identity under the theatrical discourse:

What you really want to say is that you are ravaged by a society that will not sanctify your particular sexuality! If somebody insults you-sock 'em in the jaw. If you don't like the sex laws, attack 'em, I think they are silly. You wanna get up a petition? I'll sign one. Love little fish if you want. But, David, please get over the notion that your particular 'thing' is something that only the deepest, saddest, the most nobly tortured can know about. It ain't -it's just one kind of sex-that's all. And, in my opinion the universe turns regardless (The Sign: 269-70).

Sidney's opinions anger David who leaves the house of the Brusteins. Hansberry's herself shares this opinion and considers that sexual identity is a right for the individual. The split between the Jew, The woman, the black and the homosexual, though all of them are fragments of the same society denigrated by the American heterosexual white system, echoes Hansberry's analysis of the lesbians' issue in one of her anonymous letters to *The One*

magazine. She explains that minorities' hatred for each other and their animosity is the reason for their downfall. She adds that the first reason is the intellectual impoverishment of women. Ignorant women, as she thinks, better serve the male patriarchal society and continue to produce the same prototype of society that refute any change. She writes, "Men continue to misinterpret the second-rate status of women as implying a privileged status for themselves; heterosexuals think the same way about homosexuals; gentiles about Jews; whites about blacks; haves about have-nots" (qtd. in Carter, 1991: 6).

Jones's dialogue with Hansberry is meant to disentangle racial and sexual issues. They clash over the referents of racial love and racial hate. Hansberry is hopeful concerning racial integration while Jones remains hostile to her vision and adheres to the separatist agenda. They use their plays as an arena for their discursive battle in which each strikes polemic blows on the other's discourse to influence him / her as far as the aims of their arts in the post-World War II racial struggle are concerned.

To sum up, the above analysis has explored the three authors' literary romances, focusing on their relationship with the white and the black American authors. We have dealt with the black American and the white literary tradition. We have already shown that Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones have borrowed their erotic / love discourses from Plato and Ovid. In this chapter, we have reinforced the same idea with reference to other black and white authors. We have defended the argument that despite Jones's literary proclamation, that the literary fathers are not white authors, Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones borrowed their style from white literary ancestors while holding a hidden or overt polemical relation with their black relatives. Hansberry considers Shakespeare and O'Casey as her mentors. She openly admired their works she thought inspired her own. For Baldwin, the white literary father is Henry James. He admired and took him as a model in his writings. In the case of Jones, the white predecessors who marked his literary career were both Shakespeare and O'Hara. The

black predecessors who influenced the three authors' works can be considered as black relatives following Ralph Ellison's expression. They have attempted to swerve their black precursors in what Harold Blooms calls *tessera*.

This chapter has also explored the mesh of intratextual and intertextual references that connect our three authors' works. So, while they feel either admiration or contempt for their white literary ancestors, they clash over the racial referent with their black literary relatives. The self-referential nature of their writings shown through intratextuality suggests that their poetic response urge them to be involved in a process of self-refashioning to achieve wholeness. Often, this internal dialogue occurs between an earlier self and a later one because of the changes caused by the historical context and the racial experience.

Their dialogic relationships are related to the discourse they entertain with other black writers who share the same racial experience in post-World War II America. This dialogue is expressed through intertextuality, in what Bakhtin calls parody and hidden or open polemics. Their texts speak with each other to correct each other's views concerning the racial struggle. Both Baldwin and Jones attack Hansberry's plays for their lack of engagement in the black struggle, and for emphasizing the myth of the black mammy. Jones overtly polemicizes against both Hansberry and Baldwin accusing them and their works of lacking revolutionary posture by parodying them. He inserted a hostile intention to their discourse to serve his own aim of separation from the white influence.

Hansberry's integration into the white neighborhood in *A Raisin in the Sun*, and Baldwin's Platonic love and philosophy in *The Amen Corner* for instance celebrate the integrationist ideology of the activist Martin Luther King Jr. and the writer Ralph Ellison, who asserts that his literary ancestors are white authors while his relatives are black ones (1964: 140). Jones accuses both Hansberry and Baldwin of compliance with the white liberals' ideology and literary tradition. So, he tried to subvert their discourses by Clay's in

Dutchman, and Walker's in *The Slave*. These characters have violently asserted their hatred to all that is white, celebrating racial separatism rather than integration, answering, as such, the racial codes advocated by Malcolm X.

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Conclusion to Part Two

In this part of our research we have demonstrated that Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's selected plays are written following the form of the Socratic dialogue as documented by Bakhtin. They have used Ovidian aestheticism based on love, identity formation and metamorphosis to treat the main theme of racial love and hatred. We have explored the themes of racial love and hatred and their relation to the family romances and the Platonic and Ovidian notions of love in the black family as portrayed by Hansberry's *The Drinking Gourd*, Baldwin's *The Amen Corner* and Jones's *Dutchman* and *The Slave*. Their major characters as their writers subvert the Western family romances by being lesbian in the case of Beneatha and homosexuals like David and Clay.

The plays under study are public sites wherein the three playwrights express themselves on the issues of racial integration and the notion of (racial) love using the same Western paradigms of Platonism and Ovidianism. However, in the deployment of these models, they operate different displacements. Hansberry, as shown in her play *A Raisin in the Sun*, believes that Platonic love crowned by knowledge is a secure path to complete integration into the American society. Thus, she installs these Western notions of love within the black family to show its importance in fighting white racism.

Baldwin's play *The Amen Corner* shows the importance and ultimately the triumph of the Neo-Platonic love over the religious and the Ovidian one through the character of Margaret. He models his play according to the genre of the Socratic dialogue (*Symposium*) treating the content of Platonic love as a move from the beauty of one body through all the beautiful bodies to the soul to reach the ultimate knowledge and wisdom. This notion is recurrent throughout his play and directly uttered by Margaret at the end of it. As a Renaissance man, he uses the Platonic model to recreate his own that combines his aspirations of a Western and an African American writer.

Like his elders Hansberry and Baldwin, Jones uses the two Western Renaissance models in his plays. However, he works a different displacement that denotes a clash with them. Jones replaces Platonic love by the Ovidian one because he believes that love between the black and the white race is impossible. He displaces the Hegelian dialectic of recognition assuming the perverted form of the quest and the conquest of the white woman. His discourse fosters hatred and racial separation. He mocks Hansberry's and Baldwin's proposed Platonic love-symposium by celebrating the Ovidian / sensual one capable only of material gratification.

At the level of literary romance, the three authors consciously or unconsciously show that the influence which is sought is that of the white precursors at least at the level of form. The major one as this research makes it clear is the Socratic dialogue. In addition, the authors have mentioned white predecessors as their white literary fathers, Shakespeare and Sean O'Casey for Hansberry, Henry James for Baldwin, and O'Hara for Jones. In this double case of influence, the black predecessors, like Richard Wright, hold the status of literary uncles with whose contents, or themes our three writers execute Bloom's *tessera* for corrective aims. Hence, Richard Wright appears as the black / uncle whose fictional writings are sites of clashes with his nephews / nieces, Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones.

The racial self-referential nature of their writings through intratextuality suggests that their poetic response to contradictions in their subjectivity has incited them to be involved in a process of self-refashioning to achieve wholeness. Often, this internal dialogue occurs between an earlier self and a later one because of the changes caused by the historical context and the racial experience. The latter is situated inside their poetic work as a whole, rather than being separated in the fragments proposed by the different genres.

Our three writers, as this research attempted to demonstrate, use stylization, parody, overt and hidden polemics in their clash with each other over the referents of racial love and

racial hate. Overall, as clearly demonstrated by the fictional writings of these authors, the anxiety of influence is doubled since it involves both black and white precursors. This is why the literary romance shows the same perversion as the psychological one.

General Conclusion

The investigation of the dialectics of racial love and hate in selected non-fictional and fictional works by Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones has made it possible to draw the following conclusions. One of these conclusions is that the choice of autobiography, essay or drama by the three aforementioned authors is also a matter of content which discusses subjectivity, identity and a dialogue about racial love and hate. The authors have used the dialogue with the self in their fictional and the non-fictional works to understand their subjectivity as African- American writers in a bid to reconcile their identity's fragments and mixed feelings within the context of the late 1950s and 1960s black struggle for freedom. In this regard, one would claim that no matter the genre in which the authors produced their works, these remain fundamentally autobiographical, both in an individual and collective or racial senses. The dialogue with the self is performed in the manner of the ancient Greeks in the sense that they expose their ideas of the individual and racial self in public. In this respect, self-exposition or the talking with the self in public is very close to Greek public speeches in the agora, or its American avatar the soapbox. Greek philosophers and artists did not think silently but aloud, so is the case with our three authors in this research, who divulge their inner thinking about the individual and racial self in their autobiographical writings.

Bakhtin has probed into the way the Socratic dialogue informs the Western literary tradition, most notably that of the novel. For him, the Socratic dialogue as a philosophical and literary genre still lives in the present, but always remembers its past, its beginnings, and represents "a creative memory" in the process of literary development (1984: 106). Concerning the Ovidian model, metamorphosis, identity and love are its main concerns. For Ovid, change is the constant element of the nature of life, including that of human beings. Transformation from one state into another informs of one's own rejection of the old state with all the constraints it imposes, into another one which appears more adequate and

relevant. He transmits this change through aesthetics in the fables that narrate the reasons inciting individuals to change either through *hubris*, that is challenging stronger, powerful creatures, in this case the gods, or for the sake of questioning the *status quo* through a desire to change into a better state. Ovidianism has been influential during the Western Renaissance because at that time religious and political institutions had been questioned and all the domains of life had known change through humanism that decentered the Christian God and placed Man at the center. However, Ovidian metamorphosis as shown in the epic poem, though is a solution to an impossible human situation, is often undesirable and cruel like the case of Marsyas or Arachne. Thus, the most recurrent theme is that of identity, and the eventual imposed other forms that the individual should cope with without becoming completely others than what they are. For instance, Arachne has cruelly been transformed into a spider. Yet, she is still keeping her identity of a spinner though under another form, and weaving in a different way.

So in a nutshell, our second finding in this research is that Baldwin, Hansberry and Jones entertain a dialogue with the self following Plato's artistic and philosophical form of dialogue to seek the truth concerning their subjectivity as related to the context of the racial experience that characterized post-World War II America. Their fictional and non-fictional works are steeped in two strains of the Western literary and philosophical traditions, Ovidianism and Platonism in the form of the Socratic or Platonic dialogue, notwithstanding the black writers' claim of a black aesthetics. In the final analysis, the Black Renaissance of the 1950s and 1960s embodied by our selected authors did not really blaze new literary grounds but was a follow-up to the European Renaissance of the 1500s and 1600s in their appeal, though in different ways and degrees, to Ovidian and Platonic aesthetic ideals. The selected authors for this research have also followed in the lead of European Renaissance authors even in terms of theme since they were concerned mostly in the treatment of theme of love and hate in a racial context. The dialectic of love and hate as related to the two opposing

codes of racial separatism and integration that characterized the black racial struggle of the 1950s and 1960s is expressed from the perspective of Platonism and Ovidianism. As black Renaissance women and men, the writers' quest for identity passes through different stages of their life following a personal metamorphosis that starts from the phase of self-confident ignorance of childhood to ultimate knowledge, and through an intellectual ascent recalling Plato's dialogues to reach ultimate wisdom and beauty, and Ovid's metamorphosis in the process of transforming a black boy / girl into an African American writer under a racial context that helped fashion their subjectivity.

The third finding of this research demonstrates that our writers' productions are not immune to what Bloom, after Freud, would call the family romance. Freud writes that the freeing of an individual from the authority of his parents, as he grows up, is one of the most necessary though one of the most painful results brought about by the course of his development. In this process, feelings of love and hate against the parents nourish the child's imagination and his Oedipal struggle. In the same way, the black writers' attempt to free themselves from their black families' authority is a double bind because their families are not yet freed from the authority of the white society that repress them. Thus, another fierce battle, a racial one, awaits them while confronting the white society. Consequently, their works are sites of discussion, a mind talking to mind dialogues about their different selves within their black families and communities, and with the white mainstream American society. Furthermore, their family romances and the dialectic of racial love and hate that stem from their Oedipal dramas as related to their childhood have been experienced by them just like any child in the world, yet with greater anxiety after discovering that for the whites they remain eternal children, like their parents, because they are black.

Their family love-hate feelings that are transferred throughout their non-fictional writings, speaks the secret desires that are often disguised under "the protocol of race" to

preserve their public image and credibility as black activists in the racial struggle of the sixties. Thus, just like Hansberry's and Baldwin's, Jones's quest for gender identity has been destabilized by the problem of race struggle that pushed them to dissimulate the homosexual traits of their personality to satisfy the demands of the black fervent militancy thinking to protect and strengthen their racial reliability. Overall, in due regard to the compliance of our authors with the Western Renaissance literary impulses of Ovidianism and Platonism, we came to the same conclusions as Ralph Ellison when he claims that his literary ancestors are white authors while his relatives are black ones. This felicitous statement by Ellison in *Shadow and Act* summarizes very well the black family romance that we have tried to probe into in this research. It follows that the authors under study in this research, in spite of their claim to a black aesthetics, have steeped their respective works in an understated, though clearly obvious aesthetic, cultural and linguistic hybridity.

This fourth finding about this often disavowed hybridity shows the black American writers' deployment of the Platonic and Ovidian love as two main important sources in their non-fictional works. Such an impulse reveals their desire to take part in the Western literary tradition through reading or misreading Western philosophy and poetry to understand the black self. Yet, the concept of love as a ladder to true knowledge as defended by Diotima in Plato's *Symposium* is permeated by their Ovidian love as explained in the Renaissance model called "the Banquet of Sense", in a counter-philosophical quest that often descends to gratify their physical desires. This is clear mainly in Jones's autobiography who indulges in a Bohemian life through the village's symposia for physical gratification. In the case of Hansberry and Baldwin, the Platonic quest for ultimate knowledge and love wins over the Ovidian love and their vision of love and knowledge remains predominantly Platonic rather than Ovidian whereas the contrary prevails in Jones's works.

Moreover, the result of the analysis of the family romances while transposed to the poetic ground and that has been explored in this research demonstrated that apart from Plato and Ovid, Hansberry, Baldwin and Jones have read and misread predecessors, both white and black fathers and mothers, who influenced their way of thinking and writing. Bloom explains that the anxiety that the *ephebe* feels towards his predecessors in literary domain recalls the love-hate feelings felt by the child towards his parents in his family romances as documented by Freud. These literary ties that are named psycho-poetical ones are mapped by Bloom into six revisionary ratios, generally generated by the young authors' ambivalent love-hate feelings towards their predecessors. He explains this paradox, by the "token of recognition" or their admiration and at the same time their fear of castration by their literary fathers' talent. Thus, they either recognize the influence or feels anxiety towards it.

Hansberry's, Baldwin's and Jones's ties are manifested through their execution of a kind of *Tessera* (Bloom, 1999: 14) in relation to Wright's work. In this situation, which appears as a corrective movement in Wright's own work, it is implied that their plays constitute literary completion and antithesis. However and apart from their personal literary influences, our three writers define their subjectivity and poetic identity with the persistent shadow of the racial struggle as a backdrop for their works. Therefore, they are also defined by the racial codes of the moment, and whenever, their mentors drift from the path in which they aim to act change, they rebel against them in a kind of anxiety and self-hate working off their frustrations on the father's or the mother's supposed shortcomings. From here follows the conclusion that the three selected authors have been impacted a double family romance, which, to paraphrase Bakhtin in another context, makes their respective works literally "double-voiced" in the sense that they hold a dialogue with both their white literary ancestors and their African-American, or black American relatives.

The fourth finding of this research pertains to the types of dialogue that our three authors hold with their white and black counterparts. If we shift from Bloom's psychopoetic perspective of the authors to a historicist dialogic perspective propounded by Bakhtin in *Dostoevsky's Poetics* we realize that the three authors "clash over the referents" of love and hate. Overall, whilst Hansberry and Baldwin predominantly "stylizes" the Socratic dialogue in the treatment of the theme of love, they also do not miss the opportunity to develop a "hidden polemics" with the separatists over the racial board. For Hansberry and Baldwin racial love notwithstanding the prevailing racial tensions of the 1950s and 1960s remains a possibility. In this belief in the possibility of love, these two authors follow in the lead of white American liberals and African-American writers and activists like Ralph Ellison in terms of literary tradition and of Martin Luther King JR. in terms of the Black struggle for a post-racial American society. Their hidden polemics is addressed to those white racists and black thinkers and militants who have despaired about the idea of melting-pot such as Richard Wright and the followers of Elijah Muhammed and Malcom X. In short, the integrationist ideology of Baldwin and Hansberry has largely contributed to their celebration of racial love, and hence their stylization of the Socratic love with a covert polemics with those who question the idea of an American racial symposium.

For Jones, the dialogue with his black relatives and white literary ancestors takes a strikingly different turn. For example, we note that Jones or as he would come to re-name himself Amiri Baraka, the ideology of racial separatism, or Black nationalism has borrowed a lot from that of Wright and the one developed by Malcolm X. It is these two Black American thinkers and militants for the Black cause that Jones of the nationalist phase stylizes in terms of ideology. In his relations with the white and Black American contemporaries, Jones/Baraka resorts to what Bakhtin calls "parody" and "overt polemics". For him, the type of racial love and integration defended by Baldwin and Hansberry is just a sham and a bad bargain for the black cause. Jones turns into an overt polemicist with, for example, the William Shakespeare

of *Othello* and his black and white contemporaries (e.g., Frank O'Hara) by displacing the Socratic or Platonic dialogue of Plato's the *Symposium* by an Ovidian aesthetics, which more or less was announced by Plato in his the *Phaedrus*. It has to be observed that the *Phaedrus* in its treatment of the theme of love is the obverse side of *Symposium*. Whilst the former castigates love as a mere experience of the flesh, a type of animalism, the latter turns into it a means of achieving the ideal of human felicity. However, the metamorphosis of white and black lovers into racial haters and the hatred of the black self has made us think that Jones / Baraka predominantly stylizes his Roman literary author Ovid, but largely parodies the Socratic dialogue of *Symposium*.

From here follows the fifth and last finding of this research. In *The Blues People*, Jones/Baraka celebrates in very strong terms the contribution that Hegel has brought to the Black American thought. At first, this might look as a strong paradox, since the very same Hegel in his *Philosophy of History* laid the philosophical foundations for the later exclusion of the black "race" from the human fold and history. However, as Jones/Baraka strongly argues it is also Hegel who gave the black political thinkers the methodological tools to liberate the black people from the shackles of slavery. Jones/Baraka sustains this argument with reference to Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* and the emphasis that this work puts on the master-slave dialectics and the dialectic operation of human thought, thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. In *The Blues People*, Jones/Baraka refers to the evolution of Black American thought in the Blues music developing Hegel's dialectics as a methodological tool. This research shows that this ambivalent attitude to the Western literary and philosophical tradition holds true for a large section of the African-American authors. As is shown by our three authors, it is against this tradition from which they have borrowed their methodological tools (the Socratic dialogue and Ovidian aesthetics) that they have affirmed their individual talents in their handling of the theme of racial love and hatred in the context of the racial tensions of the 1950s and 1960s.

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