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Jari K. Kokkinen

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ABSTRACT

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Finnish summary

The present study examined racial discourse in the dialogues of conflict between black and white characters in the text of James Baldwin's play *Blues for Mister Charlie (1964).* Racial discourse was understood as a system of evaluative meanings that pertains to the hegemonic struggle between dominant and resistant ideologies. The study positioned itself to the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It's main concerns were language, power and society. It utilized Norman Fairclough's (1992) idea of the hegemonic power struggle of ideologies within discourse and aimed at connecting this struggle both to racial and dramatic conflict. For this purpose, the author of this thesis constructed four different Readers implied by the text, the ideological standpoints of which the identities negotiated by the play's characters were to depend on. The author also analyzed the play through four dramatic theories, concerning the ideological consequences of the kinds of catharses offered by them. All Four Readers stemmed from the racial situation of the USA in the early 1960s. During those times, the country's white population was divided into racial conservatives and liberals, while the ideology of non-violent Christianity promoted by Martin Luther King was challenged by the emerging Black Power Movement. This movement recognized the black frustration and anger and demanded whites to relinquish their socio-economic *power* and *privileges*, which caused many white liberals to retreat from the civil rights struggle. Baldwin's text brings these ideological conflicts on the level of interpersonal disputes. Crucial to the racial discourse of the play was the creation of *spaces* in which its characters, bound by the *context* of the racial power structure, *existed* and made *ideological choices*, and the way these spaces depended on each other. Besides these two kinds of spaces, I found attempts to create *spaces of innocence* between the black and white characters in the play. The depiction of racism as a *prison-like total institution* also resembled the Southern system of apartheid segregation, which was only temporarily challenged by the black protagonist, whose killing remained unpunished due to a false testimony that utilized racial prejudice and the Southern myth of the black man as a rapist.

Keywords: "race", drama, conflict, discourse, hegemony, ideology, struggle, language, power, society, identity, negotiation

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FOREWORD

I began this research officially in Oxford, UK, in 1996-97, while also attending a course there on drug and alcohol counseling. My year of study abroad was facilitated by both a benefit from KELA and a grant presented to me by the Faculty of Humanities and the Department of English in the University of Jyväskylä, with the late Kari Sajavaara as the Head of the Department, for which I am grateful. My year in Oxford gave me a good starting point for this research. After returning from my yearlong leave of absence in the UK to my employment in Iisalmi, I attended a course by the University of Kuopio on qualitative research methods, some of which I also applied in this research.

The beginning of the 21st century became one turning-point for my research, as I was, then, able to concentrate on it more than before, with financial assistance from the Department during 2003 and 2004. This progressive pace, alas, slowed down, due to a serious illness I struggled with the years from 2005 to 2008. Since the year 2009, I have been able to focus on this research in a more goal-oriented manner. For this, I have two people to thank for, in chronological order: Docent Michael Coleman and Professor Sirpa Leppänen. Michael, as the unofficial mentor of my work already since my *pro gradu,* with your example, patience and sense of humour you kept the flame of this research alive, even when it was faltering from this end. For that, I am truly grateful. Sirpa, you took on the task of providing the refining finishing touch as the head supervisor of this study, providing financial and intellectual support as well as encouragement for me to produce an appropriate dissertation. My deepest thanks to you for that. I am also grateful to the reviewers of my work, Professors Mikko Tuhkanen and Jopi Nyman, for their valuable and supportive comments on the dissertation as well as their swift execution of the task.

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Omistan tämän työni sille tärkeälle työlle, jota tehdään joka päivä Suvimäen Klubitalossa ja kaikissa Fountain House –Klubitaloissa ympäri maailman.

In Jyväskylä 27.11.2012

Jari K. Kokkinen

FIGURE

TABLES

ABBREVIATIONS

In my analysis, I shall be using the following abbreviations to refer to Baldwin's collections of essays

Blues for Mister Charlie (1964) – *Blues,* 1964

Notes of a Native Son (1955) – *Notes,* 1955

Nobody Knows My Name (1961) – *Nobody,* 1961

The Fire Next Time (1963) – *The Fire,* 1963

No Name in the Street (1972) – *No Name,* 1972

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the dramatic construction of racial discourse in the text of James Baldwin's play *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1964). It postulates that racial conflict in Western societies can be reconstructed, examined and commented upon in the form of pre-written ritualized speech known as drama.

The link between racial discourse and drama lies in the idea of *hegemonic struggle*, as introduced by Norman Fairclough (1992a:49-53; 1992b:91-93). This struggle of *ideologies* for *power* and *dominance* in society appears, I assert, also in drama between both *characters* and *outside forces*, described by Milton Marx (1961:23-36) as the conflict between *domination* and *defence*.

At the heart of racial conflict lies the concept of "race" as an artificial categorisation of human beings based on a biological myth (Fernando, 1991; Montagu, 1997; Banton, 1998; Pietikäinen, 2000; Puuronen, 2001) and motivated by an economic interest (Lomax, 1993; Wilson, 1996; Banton, 1998; Fredrickson, 2002) and cultural apprehension (Goldberg, 1993; Feagin and Vera, 1995; Harris, 1995).

In the present study, "race" will be examined from a discursive point of view. I shall look at racial discourse as a *system of meanings* (Jokinen et al., 1993:27; Harris, 1995:388) rooted in racial *ideology* (Van Dijk, 1998:132). "Race" constitutes a social reality of inequality (Fernando 1991:27), enabling the exercise of power (Foucault, 1977:26) by ethnic groups identified as "white" over those constructed as "non-white", here, "black" (Feagin and Vera, 1995:14-15; Wilson, 1996:12). The exercise of racial power elicits a variety of responses from the marginalized group it targets (Kuure, 1996:18), producing counter-practices that aim not at *reproducing*, but *transforming* racial *hegemony* (Fairclough, 1992a:49-51; 1992b:93) and thus promoting cultural *agency* (Grossberg, 1996:99-102). This dispute between *oppressive hegemony* on the one hand, and *emancipative agency* on the other, known as the hegemonic struggle (Fairclough, 1992a:49;1992b:91), appears in this study as either a *negotiation of identities* by individuals (Sweet, 1993:21-27), or as a *symbolic conflict of ideologies* as "outside forces" (Marx, 1961:21-26) rooted in the socio-historic context of the play.

Baldwin recognized well the problems on both sides of the racial barrier. On the one side, there were both the reluctance and effort of white Americans in the USA of the 1960s to dismantle the racial power structure of laws, norms and etiquette constructed by the institutions of slavery and apartheid segregation. On the other side, however, various strategies emerged for dealing with the traumatic memory of slavery and for re-defining black cultural identity (Eyerman, 2001:23-57).

Although the racial labels identifying people as "white" and "black" may nowadays, in this era of multiculturalism and of multiethnic identities, seem irrelevant, they were, at the time the play was written and performed, very much a reality. This is why, later on in this thesis, I refer to them without quotation marks. When dealing with "race", however, I retain the quotation marks to emphasize the concept's characteristic as a *social construction*.

1.1 Disposition: studying dramatic conflict as a struggle for racial hegemony

As both "race" (Stone, 1985:9-33) and drama (Marx, 1961:21; Sweet, 1993:13) entail the idea of conflict, i.e., opposition of interests (Habermas, 1973:19) between dominant and non-dominant individuals, identities and ideologies (Van Dijk, 1998:170-71), drama appears to be a valid object of research. Although primarily a product of individual imagination, drama, as a *genre* of literature, articulates the same collective meanings that can be found in real-life discourses (Fowler, 1996:233; Herman, 1995:6). In their dramatic form, however, these meanings can be not only articulated, but also manipulated by the author, according to the conventions of the dramatic process (Esslin, 1976:25), in a world *parallel* to reality, as "interpreted action" (Herman, 1995:6,11). Whether in films or theatre, drama can display sensitive social issues that need to be recognised.

Although the events portrayed in drama are fictional, the emotions and attitudes of the characters resonate with real ones. I am particularly interested in how these emotions and attitudes constitute *social meanings* in the discourse of ideologies (Van Dijk, 1998:20-22) within the struggle for racial hegemony in society, promoting either the *hegemony* of those in power, or the *agency* of the Other (see Grossberg, 1996:99-102). The promotion of agency also involves giving a *voice* to the forgotten Other. This voice has been studied in two significant post-Marxist traditions of literary analysis. The tradition of New Historicism (Gallagher and Greenblatt, 2000:49-74), in fact, regards literature, and thus also drama, as *counter-history* (52), as the documentation of cultural experience marginalized and forgotten in the production of the canonized version of history.

Throughout the history of humanity, drama has also been known to function as a ritual of emotional and spiritual healing (Moreno in Fox, 1987:46). A dramatic text deals with profound social and psychological problems in an artistic manner, following the literary conventions of creating *illusionary conversa-*

tion credible enough to its implied reader or spectator as *idealised speech acts* (Leech and Short, 1981: 160-66). Through these speech acts, it also conveys human emotions, attitudes and relations, combining the personal with the social, and the individual with the environment. Although the early dramas of ancient Greece and the Elizabethian dramatists, Shakespeare in particular, did successfully link the private and public sphere of their characters, modern drama, due to its characters' "inward turn to solitude and alienation", has largely been confined to the area of private emotions and, hence, received little attention from scholars. (Herman, 1995:208.) However, emotions, when examined more closely, can reveal socially shared attitudes of evaluation based on ideology (Van Dijk, 1998:28-33).

Herman (1995:209) asserts that, in the world of drama, "the clash of protagonist" as the main character and "antagonist" as his/her adversary, "is also a clash of different ideologies in their struggle for ascendency", and thus also, as I shall show, for hegemonic power. This offers a skilled dramatist the opportunity to expose elements of the social structures (Benston, 1987:65) behind the construction of racial discourse. I consider James Baldwin to be particularly talented in this respect.

1.2 The author of the text examined

James Arthur Baldwin (1924-1987) was an African-American writer of novels, essays and drama, who wrote about "race" and sexuality in a profound way. Baldwin's abilities as a dramatist have been less known and more disputed among critics than those of Baldwin as a novelist and essayist (Turner, 1977; Bigsby, 1985). Kilpeläinen (2010:1) and Lyne (2010: 13-14) also assert that, although the Baldwin of the 1950s and early 60s has been considered a prominent voice and has been widely quoted, the Baldwin and his works of the year 1964 and beyond have been, until recent years, neglected. I believe, as Lyne (2010:35) does, this is also the case of the play *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1964), as I have not yet come across a single Doctoral dissertation, and only three articles (Davies, 2005; Malburne, 2007; Mitchell, 2012) where the focus is solely and systematically on this particular text. Thus, with this study, I want to contribute to the recent revival of interest in Baldwin's works noted by Kilpeläinen (2010:1) and also called for by Lyne (2010:35), especially in those of a more complicated and controversial nature, such as the play studied here. Henderson (2009:236) names the most recent revival, starting from the 1990s, as the "Baldwin Renaissance"; this, along with the three waves of research on Baldwin before that, I shall deal with more thoroughly in Chapter 4.

Horton (1991:97-98) regards Baldwin as a bearer of the black intellectual tradition "reaching well back into the 19th century" before the American Civil War. This tradition, which, he contends, until the 1990s, was "totally ignored" by historians, was most eloquently expressed by W.E.B. du Bois as well as such prominent writers of the Harlem Renaissance as Richard Wright, Ralph Johnson

and Alain Locke. Of these, Wright had a special place in Baldwin's literary development as his primary mentor, from whom Baldwin later distanced himself (Campbell, 2002:64-65; Leeming, 1994:64-65). Bigsby (1985), on the one hand, sees Baldwin as part of the existentialist wave in American literature and culture of the 1950s and 60s along with playwrights Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee (9-10), and, on the other, acknowledges the author's impact on the black revolutionary drama that emerged during the middle of the 1960s and was expressed by such leading figures of the Black Theatre movement as Amiri Baraka and Ed Bullins (408). Hay (1994:94-95) emphasizes this impact on Baraka's early works in particular.

1.3 The play as the data of the present study

Blues for Mister Charlie (1964), from hereon *Blues* (1964), is the second of Baldwin's four plays, and was preceded by *The Amen Corner* (1955). It was written for and produced by the Actor's Studio in New York on Broadway, originally to commemorate the death of 14-year-old Emmett Till (Leeming, 1994:231), a victim of racial murder, the perpetrators of which were acquitted (Campbell, 2002:99; Leeming, 1994:116). In Baldwin's hands, however, the original story, where Till was lynched for allegedly flirting with a white married woman (Turner, 1977:191; Malburne, 2007:45,55), grew to represent racial conflict in its most brutal form, focusing on the "historical burden of race relations" (Malburne, 2007:45) prevalent in issues such as racial violence, as well as both its non-violent opposition and black self-protection.

Davies (2005) also makes a valid point concerning the absence of any kind of analysis of this particular play from two significant volumes of studies on Baldwin, namely those edited by Dwight McBride (1999) and D. Quentin Miller (2000), in both of which the play is mentioned only once and briefly. Though the play was more condemned than acclaimed by its early critics (Leeming, 1994:238), it has, during the 21st century, along with some negative criticism, also elicited new views on its significance to the debate on racial issues and the roles of whites and blacks in American social history.

Still in the 21st century, the play continues to evoke strong emotions, both eulogizing and excoriating it. For example, in a biographical essay on Baldwin, Canfield (2002) praises it as "perhaps the best sociopolitical American play ever written", while Als (2009:62), on the contrary, only in the context of a brief review of another protest play, dismisses it as "a piece of theatre that is little more than crude agitprop". All in all, the major issue determining the various critical responses to the text seems to be its strong political content, applauded by some and scorned by others. This makes it both an appropriate and interesting object for study of the racialized political discourse in the USA of the 1960s.

The basics of the black performing arts, and thus also African-American drama, are epitomized in the blues tradition. The first artistic expression of the black experience in America was the work song, which later developed into the

blues. (Jones, 1963: xii.) Moreno (1993:21-32) considers the therapeutic impact of blues songs as a ritual shared by both their singers and audiences. Esslin (1976:29-30) and Moreno (in Fox, 1987: 46-49) give the same cathartic value to any dramatic performance. Being aware of the tradition of black music since the beginning of his writing career (Miller, 2009:90) as a carrier of "a significant ideological and polemical weight" (Kilpeläinen, 2010:3,131), Baldwin aptly named the play a "blues", a song sung for "Mister Charlie", the symbolic representation of the "oppressive white boss" (Scott, 2009:165), which several blues songs refer to (Lomax, 1993: 226-229).

The play's milieu, called Plaguetown, is situated in the state of Mississippi, in the region named the Deep South. The term "Deep South" is defined in a variety of ways. Usually it refers to the cultural and geographical area covered by the states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and sometimes South Carolina. (http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.jyu.fi/view/Entry/48625?redirectedFrom=Deep%20South#eid7379714)

The play's plot follows two parallel storylines: the first one traces retrospectively through flashbacks what happened, when Richard, a young black musician who had returned to his home town to recover from his drug addiction and imprisonment, came across Lyle, the local white racist storeowner. The conflicted relations that sprang up between these two adversaries from the beginning soon worsened and broke into a fight, in which Richard overcame Lyle. Lyle then sought retribution with a gun in his hand, finally shooting Richard. The second storyline, told in the present tense, revolves around the event of the impending murder trial, where Lyle is accused of killing Richard. The trial is initiated by Meridian, a black priest and Richard's father, and Parnell James, the white liberal owner and editor of the local newspaper. Besides being a liberal supporter of black civil rights, Parnell is also a close friend of Lyle's family. In the end of the trial, Lyle is acquitted after his wife Jo has given false testimony, accusing the victim of attempting to rape her, which Parnell, when testifying, cannot refute.

The text is positioned at two watersheds of African-American political and cultural history in the 1960s. First, it marks the transition in both black and white racial politics from integration to mutual separation and hostility. After its initial legal triumphs, the last being the Civil Rights Act in 1964, the civil rights struggle experienced what Steinberg (1997) describes as the "white liberal retreat" (302). This meant that, as the debate for black emancipation shifted from voting rights to demands for socio-economic equality, and the voices demanding that equality became more aggressive than hitherto, many liberal whites deserted the Civil Rights movement (302-305). On the black side of the fence, the strategies of non-violence and racial integration promoted by Martin Luther King Jr. were, by many of their former supporters, increasingly perceived as too submissive and frustrating (Ture and Hamilton, 1992:50-51). Out of this frustration, the need for "black power" emerged (Garrow, 1989:481), creating the organization named the Black Panther Party, which aimed at promot-

ing black self-consciousness, self-determination, self-regulation and self–protection (Ture and Hamilton, 1992:44-48).

Baldwin's play depicts not only the discourse of racial conflict in the USA of the 1960s, but also that of the conflicts inside its opposite spheres, namely between the non-violent approach of the Civil Rights movement and black militant radicalism (Bigsby, 1985:388; Lyne, 2010:27-28), as well as white racism and liberalism. Furthermore, it also marks Baldwin's own conflict between the consideration and rejection of these ideologies, apparent in his essays (Ford, 1977:85-104), which was finally resolved by the author's, at least partial (Field, 2004:469), acceptance of the radical ideology of the Black Panthers (Campbell, 218-223; Leeming, 1994: 256-257, 281; Lyne, 2010:31-32). The play still fluctuates between the messages of those two ideologies.

The play's second transitional link to African-American culture lies in the, originally Sartrean (Eagleton, 1983:83-84), dilemma of what kind of implied (Leech and Short, 1981:259) audience the playwright should direct his/her plays to. The writers of the black revolutionary drama of the late 1960s and early 70s resolved this problem by addressing their works to solely black audiences as performed by only black actors to serve the purpose of education and empowerment (Bigsby, 1985:381). In this respect, Baldwin's play is especially interesting, as it has been argued to convey different messages, on the one hand, to black, and on the other to white spectators, which also contributes to the complexity of its interpretation (Molette, 1977:187).

Bigsby (1985:391) also refers to the text as both the last piece of African-American theatre in the 1960s which would attempt to appeal to the conscience of liberal whites and, at the same time, as the first Broadway play to introduce early elements of black revolutionary drama. Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), one of the first black revolutionary dramatists, in particular, recognized its revolutionary elements in the bold behaviour of the play's main character Richard (Hay, 1994:95). Here, I shall go even further, and argue that the play's multi-dimensional message can be interpreted through four different political viewpoints, embodied by the four implied readers which I shall introduce in Section 1.4 and discuss in more detail in Chapter 6.

Leech and Short (1981:259-61) state that, as the author of a text can only assume its readers to possess the same amount of background knowledge than s/he has, and thus writes, not directly to a real, but rather to an *implied* reader. This means that, without sufficient information on the author's views of the issues dealt with in his/her work, the reader of that work can only assume the author's opinions according to his/her understanding of the author as *implied* by the text. Baldwin's position as the *implied author* of the text in conflict, pulled between at least two different ideological identities during the writing of the play, is particularly interesting, as Clark and Ivanic (1997:136-158) divide writer identity into three subject positions they call the "autobiographical" and "discursive self" and "the self as author". The primary focus of my analysis falls on the two latter positions. Although I shall, on some occasion, point to Baldwin's personal history, I shall do this only in as much as this contributes to the discur-

sive and dramatic analysis of the play. In short, this thesis is not about Baldwin as a historical individual as much as both a discursive and working author seen as either *articulating* or *manipulating* the dramatic discourse of "race" in the context of American society in the 1960s.

My interest, as well as that of the field of my study, which is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), lies, in particular, in the choices Baldwin, as the implied author of the play (Leech and Short, 1981:260-61), has made in two respects. First, I explore, not only the explicit and implicit interaction of its characters, but also their various identities as these are produced in the reading process, as well as their relation to the hegemonic struggle for racial power represented in the analysis by four different reader types. Second, my analysis focuses on the way the major conflicts of the play are dealt with and resolved through four different dramatic readings, and the ideological consequences (Jokinen et al., 1993:41-43) suggested by those readings, ending with a contemplation of the play's political significance.

To illustrate the complexity and diversity of Baldwin's play, which, I believe, have been ignored by most of its few previous critics, I shall approach it from, not only one or two, but four different dramatic theories, each containing a different world view and thus a way of reading both the play's plot and its cathartic resolutions. I have chosen these theories, because they all contribute to different aspects of my interpretation. In parallel with these, and also actually before them, I contemplate the text's political message from the viewpoints of four different implied readers, reflecting those of their respective implied spectators. As my style of reading resembles that of a theatre director, who, in the creative process of rehearsing a play, is the sole representative of its implied spectator, I believe there is, if only faint, a link between the director's reading experience and the implied spectator's viewing one. However, as my focus is on the process of reading the play, and I shall probably never actually direct it, I shall limit my analysis to the reading experience, which, of course, consists of not one but several readings of the text. All the four reader types introduced are related to different aspects of the hegemonic struggle of racial conflict, since, as I shall demonstrate, a simple description of the two sides of the struggle would not be sufficient, and more points of view would make the thesis both unnecessarily long and impair its consistency.

Of the motives behind Baldwin's choices as the author of *Blues* (1964), not to mention those of its first actual director Burgess Meredith, I can only make historical assumptions based on two biographies of Baldwin both published in the 1990s (Campbell, 2002; Leeming, 1994), and several of his essays. The choices both Baldwin and Meredith made are present in the 1964 edition I have of the script, which also makes the text an interesting outcome of collaboration between these two artists. Whether the editor of the script has made any changes to the text, I have no knowledge.

1.4 The structure of the study: research questions, methodology and tools of analysis

The organization of this thesis is a fairly traditional one. In Chapter 2, I begin the journey to the core of racial discourse by first putting the play into its socio-historic context. This means introducing the reader to the injustices inherent in the black cultural experience of racial hegemony as part of U.S. history, starting from slavery and ending in the 1960s. I then move on to a theoretical discussion of "race" and racism in Chapter 3, juxtaposing them with concepts such as culture and ethnicity and paralleling them with class, caste and gender, and ending the chapter with a short contemplation of "race" as a discourse and the idea of hegemonic struggle. Chapter 4 presents an overview of the main trends in the research and criticism of Baldwin's works, as well as relates my study to the existing research. In Chapter 5, I briefly acquaint the reader with the basic principles of my field of study, namely CDA, and show how and why they best serve the purposes of this particular thesis. In Chapter 6, I present my research questions, methodology and the tools of my analysis.

My disposition, as expressed in Section 1.1, is that a dramatic text can be studied as containing both negotiations of identity (Van Dijk, 1998; Sweet, 1993), and a symbolic conflict between ideologies (Herman 1995), and that both of these interpretations constitute the dramatic struggle between dominative (Marx, 1961) hegemony (Fairclough, 1992) and defensive (Marx, 1961) agency (Grossberg, 1996:99-102). In Chapter 6, my aim is to link the process of drama with not just the two discursive practices, namely the reproduction and transformation of that hegemony, but with four different practices contained within them. These are the practices of habitualization (Fowler, 1996), legitimation (Habermas, 1973; Wetherell and Potter, 1992), criticism (Wetherell and Potter, 1992) and challenging (Jones, 1963; Ture and Hamilton, 1992; Hay, 1994) of racial hegemony in the American society of the 1960s. For this purpose, I have divided the political observations gained from my reading experience into Four implied Readers, and their respective potential spectators that I categorize as Habitualized, Legitimating, Critical and Challenging Readers.

Each of the Four Readers can be both black and white, so that, for example, the Reader challenging racial hegemony could equally be white, such as Marlon Brando, who was one of the few white artists to show support for the Black Panthers in the late 60s (Bigsby, 1985:387). Likewise, a black Reader could appear in the category of one habitualized to the Southern system of racial inequality. Although my reading experience could also be characterized as that of a potential spectator, I must admit I have never seen the play on stage or film myself. To my knowledge, it has never been filmed, although Leeming (1994:240-41, 248) reports there were discussions on the issue, together with initial casting ideas (257-61).

My analysis would, however, be incomplete without consideration of the text's position in the field of drama itself. Therefore, I shall also consider the

play from the angle of four dramatic genres that the text seems to adhere to. Different genres imply different world views and ideologies and are thus important to my analysis, particularly in terms of the kinds of readings and catharses they offer to the reader and potential spectator. The four possible readings of the play presented in this thesis follow the traditions of Aristotelian, Brechtian, American melodramatic and black revolutionary drama. Nicholas K. Davies (2005), in fact, suggests, as also I do, that the play can be regarded as both a Brechtian epic and Aristotelian tragedy. In addition to these two major interpretations, I want to consider it from the point of view of both black revolutionary drama and what I regard as its preceding counterpart, American Broadway and Hollywood racial melodrama (Williams, 2001).

Chapters 7 and 8 constitute the core of the thesis, depicting four dramatic conflicts between black and white individuals, Although Milton Marx (1961) states that, in drama, also conflicts between the individual and the environment, and conflicts within the individual are displayed, I have decided to concentrate on the inter-individual conflicts and only briefly address the other kinds of conflicts when needed. Because of its pivotal role in black folklore, and thus also for the purpose of this study as the main conflict acted out in the play, the conflict between Richard as the protagonist and Lyle as his antagonist is given a chapter (7) of its own. I have named the conflict the "master-trickster conflict", according to the main symbolic conflict of the blues tradition, namely that between the cruel white *master* and the clever *trickster* that escapes the master's control (see Lomax, 1993:195,211). The trickster figure has its roots in West African folklore (Gates, 1988:5-6).

In the organization of my material in the core chapters, I have drawn on the ideas of Milton Marx (1961) and Jeffrey Sweet (1993). I have chosen these two theorists of dramatic structure to supply the main tools for the organization of my analysis of the play, because their theories not only comply with the ideas of ideological conflict (Marx, 1961) and the production of identity through negotiation (Sweet, 1993), but also offer practical advice on how to approach the medium of drama. In addition to Marx's (1961:21-29) idea of dominative-defensive conflict of the symbolic kind, studied in this research in various inter-individual conflicts between black and white characters of the play, Sweet (1993) introduces the idea of negotiations occurring inside dramatic situations, or, in my analysis, frames. These negotiations are revealed by the various characters' relations to 1) objects, 2) other characters and 3) space (Sweet, 1993: 21-25), all of these correlating with the idea of the individual negotiating his/her identity with the various representations (Grossberg, 1996:90) of racial power.

Through my realist and dramatic readings of the play, I set out to explore how and why the text's racial discourse is linked to the political climate of the Deep South of the1960s, namely, to the different aspects of the struggle for racial hegemony. My main interest lies in three aspects: meanings, identities and consequences. I want to find out how racial meanings are present in the characters' interaction in their dramatic dialogue, how and why the characters' various identities are negotiated in the reading process as related to objects, charac-

ters and space (Sweet, 1993), and, finally, what kinds of ideological consequences the Four different dramatic Readings of the plot and its cathartic resolutions have for the characters' racial situations.

My method is eclectic. The first part consists of linguistic analysis of the characters' interaction and the second of its relation to hegemonic struggle on the level of identities. The third approach, also linked to the previous question of identities as well as to the dramatic readings of the play, comes from ethnomethodology and constitutes the kind of frame analysis invented by Erving Goffman (1974) and utilized by Anssi Peräkylä (1990), combined with Catharine Emmott's (1994) linguistic version of it. In accordance with this method, I have also divided the conflicts examined into frames of negotiation. Peräkylä (1990) studied the relations of doctors and the loved ones of patients deemed as terminal in a hospital, as captured in various action sequences called frames. Central to Peräkylä's (1990) ethnomethodological analysis is the participants' production of not only *identities* but also their common *social order,* which he defines as the consensus of their interpretations of reality, as the final result achieved by their actions (147).

Although I am not in a position to observe racial relations in the 1960s' Deep South, I can detect social meanings in the play that constitute identities for the characters within chains of frames that each form a conflict between a black and a white individual character. Furthermore, these conflicts can be seen to result in cathartic resolutions, which can generate an imaginary social order, with one major exception, viz. that, in these particular conflicts, there is no common social order that everyone seems to agree upon, but a *racial* and *hegemonic* order that some support and others resist, with the resolutions providing at least four different kinds of interpretations of that order. As mentioned above, my analysis divides the different conflicts of the play into frames, which serve as the basic units for both identity negotiations and the ideological conflicts in the play. My methodology, as well as research questions, will be further explained and elaborated in Chapter 6.

In the context of racial relations in the Northern states, both Campbell (2002:196) and Leeming (1994: 238-39) report that Baldwin's play was rejected by the majority of Broadway spectators in New York, which, along with the low-price concessions for poor black spectators, led to its closure after a run of four months. (Kenan, 2009:49). Answering the question of how the text itself may have contributed to the play's rejection and dismissal, not only by its audience, but also by some of its major critics, as well as most early researchers on Baldwin, is thus also included in my final discussion of its political significance in Chapter 9.

In the next chapter (2), I shall acquaint the reader with the socio-historical experience of black Americans by constructing a historical context for racial hegemony in American society. As the roots of the inequality between whites and blacks lie in the institution of slavery, I shall start my presentation of the history of racial oppression in the USA from that era. As this thesis is about "race" in American society in particular, I shall refrain from commenting more than

overtly on the racial theorizations that took place in Europe at the same time and, yet, also influenced contemporary U.S. citizens.

2 THE CONTEXT: BLACKS AND RACIAL HEGEMONY IN U.S. HISTORY

> In the United States, the traditions derived from slavery represent a very direct and obviously vicious racism in relation to the descendants of African people, who were taken there by force (Fernando 1991: 31).

My aim in this chapter is to present the reader a version of the socio-cultural experience of African-Americans and their status in American history. I shall do this by constructing what LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) (1963) termed as the "black experience". That experience will be analyzed mostly with the help of socio-historic knowledge and concepts, of which I have found three main aspects that can be applied to racial oppression. These are: the categorization and stigmatization of the black Other (Fredrickson, 2002; Goffman, 1963) ; the domination and exploitation of the black body (Foucault, 1977; Wilson, 1996) ; and finally, the control and exclusion of the black subject (Goffman, 1961; Harris, 1995).

2.1 Categorization and stigmatization of the black Other

Categorizations of cultural difference can be benign as long as differences are not evaluated and ranked against each other (Svenson, 2001, lecture). The categorization of African slaves and their descendants as Other, however, facilitated the construction of racially evaluated differences, which, compiled as traits of the juxtaposed white and black identities (Fernando, 1991; Feagin and Vera, 1995; Wilson, 1996; Fredrickson, 2002), were seen as "superior" and "inferior" to each other.

2.1.1 Ideas of "superiority" and "inferiority"

Racial subordination in the context of American political history was first and foremost connected with the issue of the slave trade. Michael Banton (1998:44-48) argues that, although racial debate had started in Europe as early as the 1500s, American writers in the 1800s, after the Declaration of Independence in 1776, developed the originally European ideas of "race", as the basis for deeming Africans inferior to white Americans, into a concise system of racial subordination. At first, theories of racial differences and white superiority had stemmed from various Christian interpretations of the Bible, leaving the then non-Christian Africans exposed to enslavement and oppression (Fredrickson 2002:30). In the 1800s, however, they were also supposedly backed by medical findings. These were dissimilarities in death rates from cholera, tuberculosis, malaria and yellow fever between American Southerners and African slaves. Later on, these theories were amplified by encounters between black slaves and white Americans, as well as between white and Native Americans (Banton 1998:49). This turns the issue to an epistemological one (Van Dijk, 1998:108-117), entailing a focus on the way the power in these encounters was structured and how this affected the acquisition of knowledge as an outcome.

Banton (1998:49-50) convincingly argues that practically every encounter between the two "races" occurred in situations where the Caucasian-Americans had the power and control in their own hands, with them remaining, in every respect, superior to the slaves. Also, the economic interests of the slave owners, their need for cheap labour, and the pressure they exerted upon the scientists of those times contributed heavily to the beginning of the construction of theories about the inferiority of slaves and Indians to white Americans (*ibid*.:61-62). Thus, along with the pressures of the slave trade, the knowledge obtained from encounters of whites and blacks also enabled the development of ideologies that supported white superiority.

In the racial theories of the 1800s (Banton, 1998:38-60,75; Montagu, 1997:62-74), Africans were categorized as having smaller brains than Caucasians, being poor in intelligence and moral character, as well as incapable of producing ideas and forming a democratic government. This, in turn, led to the conclusion that they were better off as "humanized and civilized", as well as subordinated by white slave owners, than in freedom. The ideas of "humanizing and civilizing" slaves often also included the missionary intent to convert them to the Christian religion, which, however, created a dilemma for those who had originally enslaved them on account of their heathenness. This problem was partly solved by reference to the Biblical myths of Ham and Canaan, with Ham as the son of Noah, who saw his father drunk and naked and mocked him for that, and Canaan as the son of Ham. Both myths were used to claim that a curse from God, instigated by Ham's mockery of his father, had designated Africans, as descendants of Canaan, to forever remain a "race of slaves". (Fredrickson, 2002:38-39, 43.) Just before the Civil War, ideas of the suitability of slavery to blacks were also amplified by a few psychiatrists, who

contended that slavery was essential for maintaining the mental health of slaves (Fernando, 1991:36-37).

In the period of Reconstruction, when attempts were being made to reunite America after the ending of the Civil War in 1865 and up to the year 1877, many writers, social scientists in particular, continued to argue for the benefits of slavery to the black "race", which was now seen as a Darwinian subspecies, but yet as savage (Fernando, 1991:14-15). This also encouraged Southerners to resist the reform of racial legislation and create a system of apartheid segregation known as "Jim Crow", starting from the end of the 12-year-long period of Reconstruction. Woodward (1957:4-6) calls this point in American history the "Compromise of 1877" (4).

The year 1877 was a turning point in Southern racial history, as this was the year when the victorious federal troops were removed from the South and the whole region was returned to Southern administration, which significantly worsened the situation of the now freed blacks in the South (Woodward, 1957:6-8). Once again, the fate of the ex-slaves was in the hands of their former masters, who managed to restore their hegemony over blacks and poor whites, despite political opposition from the Populist party, which advocated racial equality (Wilson, 1996:94-102). This situation further enabled the mostly successful efforts to disfranchise blacks (Lewinson, 1959:79-81) and poor whites (Wilson, 1996:102) as well as the enactment of the "Jim Crow" laws that segregated public facilities and forbade inter-racial contact (101-102). The beliefs in white superiority reached their peak in the two decades before the First World War, both in the writings of anthropologists and social scientists (Banton, 1998: 92,95) and in popular opinion (Wilson, 1996:100).

2.1.2 Notions of "purity" and "impurity"

Besides treating whites and blacks as "superior" and "inferior", Southern racism also separated them in terms of "pure" and "impure". For example, if, while shopping in a retail store, a black woman, who was, nevertheless, otherwise welcomed as a paying customer, would like to try on a hat, this was not allowed. The reason for this was that the hat would then be considered "unclean" and thus it could never be sold to any white woman. (Harris, 1995:391-92.)

Mary Douglas (1966:2,35) has pointed out a similarity between what is considered "dirty", on the one hand, and "disorderly", on the other. Harris (1995:392) corroborates this idea by stating that "hierarchical social orders are often protected with rules involving ritual pollution" and that the most important rule of "purity" in the South had to do with sexual contact. This rule considered that white women were the epitome of "white purity" and should thus be protected from being in any kind of contact with "unclean" black women, or, in particular, black men. Harris (1995) also observes that the norms of "purity" embodied in the Southern etiquette resonate heavily with the rules included in the caste system of Hindu India (392).

Goffman (1963:11) expands the Greek idea of stigma from physically marking socially subordinate individuals, such as slaves and criminals, so that they could be recognised, to modern social conceptions of individuals with traits that differentiate them from ordinary people. The sociologist (14-15) introduces three basic types of social stigma: 1) physical, 2) characteristic and 3) that of belonging to a stigmatized group. In the case of African-Americans, all three categories apply. Historically, in the case of most black individuals, complexion itself constituted a stigma. As for the smearing of the black character, I have already commented on the categorization and evaluation of blacks as "impure" and "inferior" to whites (see Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2). Finally, being a representative of the racial group identified as "black" was first seen by racists as a liability and later on by the American mainstream as a "marginality". The stigmatization of blacks was also perpetuated by popular stereotypes and images that subjected them either to ridicule or fear.

2.1.3 Images of ridicule and fear

The first means of introducing stereotypical representations of blacks in the field of entertainment were the minstrel shows, where African-Americans were ridiculed as childlike and superstitious by either black-faced white, or later, also genuinely black performers (Jones 1963:82-86).

Jones (1963:82-86) makes an interesting point about the significance of the minstrel shows to blacks. Although the shows perpetuated the stereotypical views of African-Americans as comically entertaining to their "white" audiences, as time passed, they also began portraying their black characters as more human and capable of feelings, such as pain. Alongside the early comical images of the childishly happy Sambo and Coon, presented in the minstrel shows, blacks were also, in turn, viewed as dangerously savage. (Jones, 1963:84). Wilson (1996:74) shows how both of these images were used to legitimate the institution of slavery:

> Whites had to see the slaves as Sambo, or they would have been driven to the brink of insanity by their *fear of the slave* […] The image of Sambo contrasted with that of the African savage [as…] the incarnation of unrestrained passions, uncontrolled rage and sexuality […] To some extent, this image arose from repressed white passions projected onto the black African – repressed fear of slave revolts, repressed sexuality, repressed drives to dominate and to destroy […] Within the white mind, the Sambo becomes the savage if *improperly cared for outside the white family* or *if freed from the civilizing influence of slavery*. This view […] dehumanized Africans and allowed unrestrained violence toward those who would revolt. It permitted Europeans to treat Africans atrociously on the one hand and to see themselves as decent, civilized human beings on the other. (Wilson, 1996:74., emphasis added)

Dehumanizing stereotyped images of blacks prevailed both in the everyday practices (Wilson, 1996:28-29) as well as the entertainment of Broadway and Hollywood (Bogle, 1992:3-4; Williams, 2001:298). In the history of the black performing arts, drama in particular, there has been an ongoing conflict between

the necessity for black artists to entertain the predominantly white audiences to earn a livelihood on the one hand and the subsequent desire to provide black spectators with heroic role models instead. The latter purpose originated in the early attempts of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) to use drama as "an instrument for social reform" from the year 1915 on and continued during and after the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. (Hill, 1987:1-2.)

At the beginning of the 1970s, King and Milner (1971:x), in their introduction to an anthology of black drama, still assert the need for black artists to offer their black audiences credible and identifiable portrayals of black life, culture and history. This need, they contend, was too often ignored by mainstream Broadway theatre, which these two black dramatists, in turn, stereotypically ridicule as a "contented fat white cow", who

> does not want our blackness, wasn't designed or intended for it, definitely doesn't want any strange new forms inspired by that very blackness [...] She wants you to be a singing hyena, dancing on the graves of yourself and everyone you know. (King and Milner, 1971:x.)

King and Milner's (1971:x) accusations entail the claim that the stereotypical requirements of mainstream Broadway theatre put black actors in positions where they had to succumb to the traditional popular images of fear and ridicule, prevalent in the history of American entertainment, that presented them and their culture as either funny or dangerous rather than individuals to be addressed seriously. This claim is, to some extent, corroborated by Hill's (1987:1-2) account of the historical dilemma of black actors to either entertain their white or emancipate their black audiences, which, he states was prominent also in the 1980s, with only a few exceptions:

> In the past blacks have sought to join the mainstream professional theatre to which they were first denied access […] and finally allowed entrance […] as song-and-dance clowns performing for the amusement of white audiences. Occasionally, […] black artists appear on Broadway in serious productions that offer some thoughtful insights into black life and history […] In the main, however, those black artists who remain on Broadway are in the business of entertainment […] unlikely to be fundamentally different from the established formulas and standards that apply to the Euro-American theatre and will continue to seem a weak echo of the dominant culture. The fact is that Broadway is the wrong marketplace for the theatre experimentalist, black or white. (Hill, 1987:6-7.)

Hill (1987:7) also accuses the majority of theatre critics before and in the 1980s for exhibiting "an intolerance of black theatre productions that do not fall within readily categorized modes". Furthermore, he claims (*ibid*.:7) that, while white theatre experimentalists "find a home on the fringe of Broadway or in community-supported regional theatres", black experimental theatre should constitute a norm for black artists as the kind of theatre that does not simply imitate the white mainstream theatre. A theatre of this kind, Hill (1987:7) argues, was only,

even in the 1980s, "in the process of becoming and deserves an assured place in the cultural life of the [U.S.] nation".

2.1.4 Practices of de- and hypersexualization

> If any feelings, especially those of assertive manhood, were expressed too strongly, then the slave was a threat, not to himself and his master but to the whole system itself. For that, he would have to be killed. (Grier and Cobbs, 1968:52.)

Various psychoanalytically-oriented theorists see behind the white fear of black sexuality the need of whites to either repress their own sexual desires or project their sexual or political anxieties over the increase of black agency, for example, equating black voting rights with an increase in the number of rape cases. The need to repress sexuality was pivotal to the ethic of Protestant Christianity, especially in its variations in the Bible Belt of the Deep South. Protestantism is also historically and ideologically affiliated with capitalism, where the human body is seen as an object of both exploitative control and contempt. (Wilson, 1996:114.) In a capitalist society, the controlled body could then be used more productively as labour. On the other hand, black sexuality also posed a temptation to white men in their fantasies of black women, who were easily exploited during and after slavery. This apparently precipitated the need to see black women as enticingly oversexual and black men as definitely non-sexual, though both of them were both hyper- and desexualized, depending on where the need for this was coming from.

One linguistic practice (Fairclough, 1992) of desexualisation, reported by blues singer Big Bill Broonzy (in Lomax, 1993:437) and Klotman (1985:56) was the habit of addressing black males with epithets that had no strong sexual connotations, such as "boy" and "uncle", never as "father", "Mr." or "man". Bogle (1992:4-14) and Williams (2001) show how the idea of de- and hypersexualization has also been present in the construction of black characters in the Hollywood film industry. This was apparently also the case with Broadway plays, the stories of which were also likely to end up on the silver screen. First, the films of early Hollywood depicted such black characters of the faithful "Mammy" and "Uncle Tom", both of them taking their masters' side against their fellow blacks in wartime (Bogle, 1992:13; Williams, 2001:114) Both of these characters represented to the white audience not only "good" and faithful, but also "safe" and desexualized (Bogle, 1992:15; Williams, 2001:62) blacks.

In contrast to this, the fear of repressed black aggression as well as black sexuality, once encouraged in slavery to produce more slaves (Lomax, 1993:84), but after the Civil War feared as a drive that needed to be controlled, was constructed in the images of the psychopathic and oversexed "black brute" and "black buck" (Bogle, 1992:7-8). The "buck"-character is introduced by Williams (2001) as an "anti-Tom", *viz.*, the violent antonym of Uncle Tom (8). In fact, Williams (2001:101-102,111) argues that early Broadway and Hollywood melodramas tended to present their black male characters stereotypically as either docile and desexualized "Toms" or dangerous and hypersexualized "anti-Toms".

However, Bogle (1992:13) states that, as another early "safe" representation of blackness, the childish and easily controllable "coon" also emerged for the amusement of white movie and theatre audiences. The "black buck" is also mentioned in Baldwin's play, where the white character Lyle has fears of "some black buck lying next to" his wife (*Blues* 1964:27). Baldwin's comment in an essay in *Nobody (*1961:172) on the white fear of black male sexuality is both poignant and flamboyant:

> It is still true, alas, that to be an American Negro male is also to be a kind of walking phallic symbol; which means that one pays, in one´s own personality, for the sexual insecurity of others. (*Nobody,* 1961: 172.)

However, Grier and Cobbs (1968:53-54) do not agree with Baldwin's counter-representational implication that all blacks are sexually more secure than all whites. Although Lomax (1993) observed in the 1940s that in the levee camps of the Mississippi Delta black children were encouraged to mature sexually at an early age for the purpose of producing more workers (84), the black male patients of these two psychiatrists (1968) in the 1960s showed symptoms of the kinds of sexual problems that any males suffer from, in other words, "the entire range of pathology which limits and distorts sexual life" (54). However, the two doctors (ibid.:53-54) also recognize the black cultural need to parade and celebrate sexuality in black folklore, particularly in blues and, later, rap lyrics, making the alleged sexual prodigy of black men a means of revenge towards the symbolic "white man".

The white categorization and stigmatization of blacks as "inferior", "impure", "ridiculous", "dangerous", or over- and undersexed, functioned to legitimate the domination and exploitation of their bodies for the benefit of their white masters. The history of this form of racial oppression is presented in the next Section (2.2).

2.2 Domination and exploitation of the black body

> It is largely *as a force of production* that the body is *invested with relations of power* and domination; but...its constitution as labour power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection (in which need is also a political instrument meticulously prepared, calculated and used); the body becomes a useful force *only if it is both a productive body* and a *subjected body.* (Foucault, 1977:26., emphasis added)

Foucault's (1975:26) plain observation of what constituted the historical rationale of the modern prison institution corresponds to the logic of racial exploitation by the institution of slavery. This, too, required the emergence of a system of subjection and maintained domination of the black slaves before their bodies could be exploited as labour, first in slavery and later in various forms of unfair employment.

As I pointed out earlier (see pp. 22-29), the social reality of "race" consists of norms derived from the belief in white superiority and "black" inferiority, creating a stigmatized idea of Otherness, a world where being black is regarded as shameful and non-wanted (Jones, 1963:123-24). The pressures to accommodate to these norms thus increase both aggression, referred to by Grier and Cobbs (1968) as "black rage" (168), and powerlessness, which Jones (1963) termed the "slave mentality" (57), in the social relations of the stigmatized (Gilbert, 1994:360-61). Of these two characteristics of the slave culture, the "slave mentality" was the one more visible to whites than "black rage", which either had to be suppressed, or was then turned against one's fellow blacks. This kind of displacement of anger, Lomax (1993:217) reports, happened also among the workers in the levee camps of the Mississippi Delta, although the "slave mentality" was regarded by most whites as the only rightful mode of behaviour for black people, at least whenever blacks were in contact with whites (Lomax, 1993:61).

Up to the 1960s , black Americans had been aware that the only way for them to get along with their oppressors was to "keep cool" (Grier and Cobbs, 1968:57), as well as "know their place" (Feagin and Vera, 1995:11; Harris 1995:393). Not only black aggression and assertiveness, but also all African cultural influences had been considered "evil" and "sinful" and had been given up by the predecessors of middle-class blacks, many of whom chose to accommodate to the situation by acting as in non-African way as possible and thus avoid the stigma attached to them by the white culture. (Jones, 1963: 123-124.) This caused educated blacks to experience a double-consciousness, also noted by Polakoff (et al., 1977:344), containing both a need to identify with and resist what was known as the dominant white values. This inner conflict, described by Gates (1988:207-209) as a mixture of depression and aggression, the first originating from the necessity to curb the other, which constituted the core of "black rage" (Grier and Cobbs, 1968), may, I believe, in turn have contributed to the black deviance identifiable in blues, and later rap lyrics, as a response to the domination and exploitation of African-Americans.

Since Howard Becker's classical study on marihuana smokers (1963, referred to by Kuure (1991:15), deviance has also been studied as a *product* of normality rather than a phenomenon *independent* of it. The choices made by those in power for and on behalf of those without it produce ideologically evaluative norms that constitute the idea of normality, the diversion from which is then defined as deviance. Therefore, what to white audiences would appear as non-normative, possibly even criminal behaviour, pointing to the image of the black "hustler", introduced by Keil (1968:20-26) as both a "tragic cultural hero" and a petty criminal, would, at least to some black spectators, seem the heroic and clever conduct of a trickster –character. In fact, early protest against racial oppression mainly appears in stories of the trickster figure, whose origins can be traced to West African mythology (Gates, 1988:5-6), escaping the control of the evil master figure (Lomax, 1993:195,211). In Baldwin's play, the master-

trickster –conflict of black folklore occurs most clearly in the play's main conflict between the characters of Lyle and Richard (see Chapter 7).

2.2.1 African-Americans as cheap labour

The first trickster stories in America were told by the African slaves, the first African-Americans, whose bodies were dominated and exploited by the Americans of European descent as constituting cheap labour, first through slavery, and later by other means.

The slaves

Most major theorists of "race" and slavery (Cox, 1948;480; Genovese, 1974:4; Wilson, 1996:46; Williams in Small, 1999:48; Fredrickson, 2002:42-47) agree that the need for the cheap labour provided by the institution of slavery was a crucial, if not *the* crucial (Cox, 1948:480; Genovese, 1974:4), factor behind the construction of theories of white superiority. Wilson (1996:52-53) argues this was particularly true from the end of the 1600s onwards, when the slave trade grew into a massive industry. However, Banton (1998:62) contends that the white slaveholding planters, who constituted the dominant class in the South, rejected those theories, and, on the basis of early European-based ideas of "race", defended slavery first on Biblical grounds, stressing the idea of extending kindness to their slaves. Banton (*ibid.)* also suggests that the brutalities in the slave trade emerged only, when the white free labourers, constituting the working-class of the South, had gained more influence in society and had become more confident, not only in expressing, but also promoting their political interests, based as these were on beliefs, fears, animosities and demands concerning blacks, leaving the planters little option, but to give in.

Banton's (1998:62) argument on the class division in Southern society and its impact on ideas about how slaves should be treated is, to some extent, plausible, as Genovese (1974:22-23) and Polakoff (et al., 1977:344) also report that considerable animosity existed between poor working-class whites and slaves, particularly those slaves working in their master's house, which also remained after the slaves were freed and continued to work for their masters (see Lomax 1993:186-188). However, this argument can also be seen as an attempt to shift the responsibility for the inhumanities of slavery from the slave owners wholly on their working-class employees, or, "overseers" (Genovese 1974:12) of slaves. In its extreme form, it depicts the planters as a humane and idealistic elite concerned with the welfare of their slaves.

The idea of slavery as a paternalistic institution, supported by Jones (1963:55) and Genovese (1974:3-7), is contradicted by Wilson (1996:73), who maintains that although paternalism existed, on small farms, especially between masters and their house servants, their need to profit drove the owners of large plantations to accept the use of sadistic treatment of their slaves by their overseers. However, Genovese (1974:12-25) shows that, while also discouraging any sympathetic relations between their slaves and overseers, many masters saw

themselves as benign and fair in their treatment of their slaves. Nevertheless, in the long run, their benignity was in contradiction with their need for the work performance of the slaves, and the profits that this entailed. This probably happened in the period immediately before the 1860s, when slaveholding wealth concentrated in the hands of a few owners of big plantations with large numbers of slaves (Genovese, 1974:13; Wilson, 1996:69-73).

Genovese (1974:13-14) also points out that, as African-American slaves were treated as the property of their masters, this also gave the slaves' bodies extra value compared to their overseers, who could easily be replaced, if they failed to treat the slaves according to their masters' orders, *viz.*, either punished the slaves for no reason, or failed to make them work the way the masters wanted. This must have been especially true on smaller farms with fewer slaves, which their masters could not afford to lose. The deaths of slaves were most often caused by improper conduct on the part of their overseers, or on the smallest farms, that of their masters.

Initially, some idealistic planters may well have wanted to be kind to their slaves, according to a study of their journals and diaries by Genovese (1974:10-12). In most cases, however, especially nearer to the Civil War, the mode of production, as well as pressure to conform (Douglass, 1982:81-82) did not allow them much leverage in the matter (Wilson, 1996:76-77). Nevertheless, Jones (1963:123) and Wilson (1996:73), as well as Genovese (1974:327-332), agree that to some of their more obedient slaves, particularly to the older men and women working inside the masters' houses, the owners were apparently kinder and more generous than to the slaves working in the fields. Genovese (1974:333), however, also reports occasional incidents of violence against house slaves. Also, Jones (1963:14) contends that the proportion of small farms, where there were no such house servants, was bigger than that of large ones and that, also in large plantations, only a few slaves were given this privilege.

Wilson (1996:69) states that, although the number of large plantations was smaller than that of farms, their slave populations were bigger, in a ratio of more than 25 slaves to one, so that by 1860, the planters, who represented 10 per cent of the whole Southern population, owned 3 million of the total of nearly 4 million slaves. In large plantations like these, the overseers, supervised by the masters, were perhaps more able to treat the slaves sadistically and drive them to the peak of their physical ability, as the possible demise of one overworked slave would not count for much in those factory-like conditions. However, in the early days of slavery, when small plantations, or farms, with fewer slaves were more frequent, one indeed must have had to consider the continuity of the work force and thus secure the well-being of one's property, as many slave owners did (Genovese, 1974:9-22).

In slavery, blacks had little say, and there was seldom space for complaint on any matters. Genovese (1974:16-21) reports that, in most states during slavery and the post-Civil War era, blacks were barred from receiving any education. However, in some cases, a master might listen to and believe some of his most trusted slaves, when they complained about too brutal or dishonest an

overseer. The descendants of some of the slaves who worked in the slave owner's houses actually had the opportunity to learn trades and become artisans and craftsmen (Jones, 1963:123).

Genovese (1974:12-25) also recognizes this ambivalence among both the white masters and their overseers, evident in walking the tightrope between gaining the respect of the slaves and making them work diligently enough to secure the year's crop yield quotas set by the masters. This, in the end, determined the overseer's success, and was only achievable through the overworking of slaves in a manner intolerable for free labour (Wilson, 1996:72). Frederick Douglass (1982), an escaped former slave and Abolitionist, recalls having met both overseers the slaves could respect and those they could not, the second being those who took pleasure in punishing slaves (52-56; 65-68).

To sum up, the overseer, usually a poor working-class white, could not always afford to be unaware of the needs of the slaves, as some slaves might complain to the master, but he could not lose his authority either by fraternizing with them, although some overseers did. At least a few poor whites, drifting from one overseeing job to another, were unable to handle this conflict and turned to drinking and/or excessive use of their punitive powers, namely whipping. (Genovese, 1974:23-24.) The basic conflict described in this section between the poor white overseers and the somewhat privileged house slaves resembles the conflict in Baldwin's play between the poor white character Lyle and the educated and artistic black Richard (*Blues* 1964).

The sharecroppers

In the period of Reconstruction between the years 1863 and 1877, many slaves freed by the Civil War, yet poor, chose to continue working for their former masters as sharecroppers in a system that, although giving them independence in working their own patches of land, left the financial control of the sharecropper to the white farmer, who rented the land as well as loaned farming tools to the cropper (Polakoff et al., 1977:413; Wilson, 1996:86), In the sharecropping system, the actual income as well as the well-being of the sharecropper depended not only on natural circumstances, but also on the extent of the farmer master's honesty and paternalistic goodwill, as well as on the latter's own economic situation (Lomax, 1993:93-97; Wilson, 1996:87-88). Some blacks, although fewer, could also work as share tenants and tenant farmers, which meant a slightly better situation, as they were able to own tools and work animals. Although most sharecroppers were white, a bigger percentage of the black than white population worked as sharecroppers. (Wilson, 1996:86.)

The restoration and continuation of the dominance and exploitation of blacks after the Civil War, particularly after the Compromise of 1877 (see p. 26), was enabled by the construction of the Jim Crow laws and culture codes, which left blacks in the South poor and ostracized and almost as dependent on their white ex-masters as in slavery, perhaps also even more vulnerable to random violence. During the period of industrialization in the Northern part of the USA,

especially in the beginning of the 20th century, blacks were also marginalized, which facilitated their use as reserve labour placed to work in conditions most white workers considered to be intolerable (Wilson, 1996:124).

Reserve labour for extreme conditions

Between 1910 and 1920, a great number of African-Americans migrated to Northern cities, where they were employed as factory workers and in other low-paid jobs (Jones, 1963:95-98). These migrants, along with the descendants of the "house slaves", educated as artisans and craftsmen, became what Jones (1963:123) called the first members of the black middle-class.

Although freed by the Civil War, blacks were still treated as second-class citizens, regarding their conditions of employment. In the North, they were given the jobs with the lowest pay and hardest work (Jones, 1963:97). Lomax (1993:216-217) provides an extreme example of the status of black labourers in the harsh conditions of the levee camps and railroad yards of Mississippi Delta in the 1940s:

> "Kill a nigger, hire another; kill a mule, you got to buy another one". This aphorism […] was wisdom to the greedy and often desperate men who contracted to build a section of Mississippi levee at so much a per cubic yard. They corvéed their labour, they overworked and underpaid them, ruling them with pistol-whippings and the ever-present threat of lynching, against which the blacks had no recourse, since they *had no legal status in Jim Crow Mississippi*. (Lomax 1993, 216-17., emphasis added)

Throughout the history of racial domination and exploitation in the USA, economic rivalry has persisted between working-class whites and the less disadvantaged blacks. Already during slavery, poor whites were envious of slaves who were seen as being close to the masters and thus assumed to be more protected than many free working-class whites (Polakoff et al., 1977:344). This prompted the poor whites to occasions of mob violence against the slaves. One such an occasion was described by a runaway slave Harriet Jacobs in her autobiographical narrative *Incidents in the life of a slave girl* (2001:55-56) to take place after the defeat of Nat Turner's slave rebellion:

> By sunrise, people were pouring in from every quarter within twenty miles of the town. I knew the houses were to be searched; and I expected it would be done by country bullies and the poor whites. I knew nothing annoyed them so much as to see colored people living in comfort and respectability […] It was a grand opportunity for the low whites, who had no negroes of their own to scourge. They exulted in such a chance to exercise a little brief authority, and show their subservience to the slaveholders; not reflecting that the power which trampled on the colored people also kept themselves in poverty, ignorance and moral degradation […] Everywhere men, women and children were whipped till the blood stood in puddles at their feet […]The dwellings of the colored people, unless they happened to be protected by some influential white person, who was nigh at hand, were robbed of clothing and everything else the marauders thought worth carrying away. All day long these unfeeling wretches went round like a troop of demons, terrifying and tormenting the

> helpless. At night, they formed themselves into patrol bands, and went wherever they chose among the colored people, acting out their brutal will. (Jacobs 2001:55-56.)

As for the privileges of slaves assumed and envied by poor whites altogether, Wilson (1996:124-25) contends that, while there may have been some leniency from the masters concerning the few house slaves, the majority of Southern slaves and later sharecroppers, as well as Northern factory workers, performed duties and were overworked in a manner that white free labourers would not have tolerated. Black workers were also, at first, excluded from trade unions, which the white industrialists "bent on undercutting wages and destroying unions" exploited by paying blacks significantly less than they paid to whites, using blacks as strikebreakers and attacking racially integrated unions (135).

2.2.2 Sexual exploitation

> I now entered on my fifteenth year – a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl. My master began to whisper foul words in my ear […] I turned from him with disgust and regret. But he was my master. I was compelled to live under the same roof with him […] He told me I was his property; that I must be subject to his will in all things. My soul revolted against this mean tyranny. But where could I turn for protection? (Jacobs 2001:26.)

As noted before (see Section 2.1.4; pp. 29-30), white men both de- and hypersexualized the black body, according to what their needs for doing so were. The hypersexualization of African-Americans preceded their sexual exploitation. Since slavery, black women and men have been regarded by many American whites as exotic and primitive, and therefore sexually desirable (Grier and Cobbs, 1968:41, 76.) In a similar vein to Jacobs's (2001:26) testimony above of her helplessness against her master's power, Baldwin himself, in *No Name In The Street* (1972:61), reports he had to yield to the sexual advances made at him by "one of the most powerful men in the South" in 1957:

> He had got himself sweating drunk in order to arrive at this despairing titillation. […] It was very frightening. […] The assumption of a swift and grim complicity: as my identity was defined by his power, so was my humanity to be placed at the service of his fantasies. […] This man, with a phone call, could prevent of provoke a lynching. This was one of the men you called […] in order to get your brother off the prison farm […] Therefore, one had to be friendly: but the price for this was your cock. (*No Name In The Street*, 1972:61-62.)

The sexual exploitation of black women by white men began, when, especially on small farms, "intimate contact between the master and the slave was unavoidable" (Jones, 1963:14-15), which gave the masters opportunities to "indulge in their daily passions" (Genovese, 1974:9). This phenomenon and its aftermath, the possibility that any black woman has been" sexually available to any white man who felt so inclined" (Grier and Cobbs, 1968:41), has had a detrimental effect on the sexual relations between black men and women, Furthermore, it has created animosity in the form of what Daly and Wilson (1995:268) would

categorize as "sexual rivalry", between black and white men (Grier and Cobbs, 1968:72-76.)

Grier and Cobbs (1968:68-69) stress the vulnerability of the slave family, as it then was "impossible" for black men to try to protect either their spouses or their children against physical or sexual abuse, or against their being sold to other plantations by white men and masters who felt so inclined. bell hooks (1992:105) argues that this vulnerability has continued in the history of the black family, asserting that, in the 1990s, many black men still sub-consciously saw black women in collaboration with white men against them, although historical documents prove this to be untrue, showing most black women to have acted "in solidarity with black men".

The anguish arising from the white repression of black masculinity as well as the misogynist accusations made by black men against black women for being responsible for it, could, however, be one more factor explaining the emphasis on machismo and sexism in various blues and rap lyrics. hooks (1994:134-44), however, associates that rather with the mainstream values of white capitalist patriarchy. A contradictory phenomenon occurred with the emphasis on chastity in the ideology of the black church (Lomax, 1993:358), particularly where women were concerned. This, as well as the chastity of white women was later to be challenged. For example, Malcolm X testifies that in the Harlem of the 1940s and 50s sexual relations between some black men and rich white women occurred quite openly (in Haley, 2007: 120-121). However, as Grier and Cobbs (1968:76-77) and Malcolm X (in Haley, 2007:121) also note, either of these relations were not devoid of elements of racial power struggle.

> The irony is that those white women had no more respect for those Negroes than white men have had for the Negro women they have been "using" since slavery times. And, in turn, Negroes have no respect for the whites they get into bed with. (in Haley, 2007:121.)

Harlem also became the ideal venue for a counter-cultural movement, starting from the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, promoting the idea of a "new Negro" identity, where white New Yorkers, for the first time, became acquainted with black performing arts, such as jazz, the blues and black poetry and drama. However, the white interest in black culture was still, to a large extent, stereotypical and rather perpetuated than resisted white hegemony manifested in the existence of many clubs, owned by white entrepeneurs, where blacks could work as servants and entertainers, but were not allowed in as customers. (Eyerman, 2001:107-108.)

The hidden aggressions within the relations of white women and black men were later depicted by LeRoi Jones (later Amiri Baraka) and Clifford Mason in black plays such as *Dutchman* (1964) and *Gabriel* (1968). The black male protagonist is, in the first case, teased and killed by a white woman he meets in the subway (1964), and, in the second, seduced and abandoned by his white master's wife (1968). Similarly, the character of Richard in *Blues* (1964:42,45-46)

shows contempt, when describing his former sexual relationships with white women in New York.

To ensure the domination and exploitation of blacks despite the loss of slavery in the Civil War, Southern whites created an apartheid system of control and exclusion, resembling Goffman's (1961) idea of a total institution, namely the prison (see also Foucault 1977:26; p. 30). In the next section, I shall introduce three characteristics of that system, namely segregation, discrimination and violence.

2.3 Control and exclusion of the black subject

Human relationships require the principles of equality and reciprocity (Peräkylä, 1990:31), the opposites of which are inequality and social distance (Maynard, 2002, lecture). The kind of imprisonment Southern racial etiquette constituted was primarily a symbolic order, known to every black and white Southerner, and thus also mostly maintained by the implicit white hegemony rather than the constant explicit exercise of coercive racial power in the form of lynchings. It was only in the extreme cases, when someone challenged that power, that the otherwise hidden racial order was to be restored by violence.

Harris (1995:390-93) notes that the reactionary subordination of blacks in the South after the Civil War stemmed from the desire to keep the black freedmen, despite the ethos of Reconstruction, in the words of a white Southerner, "in a niggir's place" (393). This also meant restricting their contacts with whites through ritual pollution, where "the most important of all rules of purity" involved sexual contact and the sanctification of "the home, as a women's 'place' " (392). Around the "rules of purity", the Southern whites constructed a series of cultural codes based on the ideological beliefs of the "inferiority" and "impurity" of blacks to enforce both gender and racial boundaries on them and strengthen white cultural identity. These codes included directions on how blacks should be addressed and forbade most physical contact of whites with them. In his autobiography *Black Boy (1945)*, Richard Wright shares the burdens of his own efforts of coming to terms with the cultural codes of Jackson, Mississippi in the 1920s, the codes here being taught to him by a sympathetic friend:

> "Do you want to get killed?" he asked me.
> "Hell, no!"
> "Then, for God's sake, learn how to live in the South!"
> […]
> He spoke to me in a low, full tone: "Dick, look, you're black, black, *black*, see? Can't you understand that?
> "Sure, I understand it", I said.
> "You don't act a damn bit like it," he spat.
> […]
> "Then tell me how must I act?" I asked humbly.
> […]

> At that moment a woman and two men stepped from the jewelry store; I moved to one side to let them pass, my mind intent on Griggs's words. Suddenly Griggs reached for my arm and jerked me violently, sending me stumbling three or four feet across the pavement. I whirled.
> […]
> "Do you see what I mean?" he asked. "White people want you out of their way." He pronounced the words slowly so they would sink into my mind.
> […]
> "When you're in front of white people, *think*, before you act, *think* before you speak Your way of doing things is all right among *our* people but not for *white* people. They won't stand for it."
> […]
> "You know, Dick, you may think I'm an Uncle Tom, but I'm not. I hate these white, hate 'em with all my heart. But I can't show it; if I did, they'd kill me. (*Black Boy* 1945:202-204.)

2.3.1 Segregation

> Theories of race…are developed from and become perpetuated through legal norms and mechanisms…legal norms and practices determine which characteristics, both superficial and deep, constitute either the markers or essence of race. The law, therefore, participates in how and which racial categories get constructed. (Banks & Eberhardt 1998:58.)

Similar to the working principles of a total institution (Goffman, 1961), particularly the prison, racial legislation and its normative system involves the control and exclusion of individuals regarded as in need of being so treated. After the Civil War, the idea that freed blacks had to be controlled was reproduced through the construction of not only what was named by them as the Jim Crow laws, but also specific norms. These norms, or cultural codes, characterized by Harris (1995:390-391) as "the racial etiquette" of the South, were designed to control the behaviour of blacks and ensure their exclusion from the everyday life of the whites. In the South of the 1930s until the 1960s, these norms were still common. Besides banning blacks from facilities reserved for "whites only", some of the norms also dictated the linguistic practices of racial relations:

> Blacks had to address whites by titles: "Boss, "Sir", "Mister", or "Missuss"; whites would address blacks by first names only. White people required titles because they had to be treated as representatives of the entire white race, whatever their personal worth; they were symbols as well as individuals. The use of a title also avoided any claim to familiarity, thus protecting the "ideal sphere" of honor around every white person. Whites denied blacks this sphere of honor, privacy and protected space. (Harris, 1995:391.)

The protection of space was maintained not only by the use of first names, but also racial epithets and the restriction of physical contact between whites and blacks. Besides being under suspicion of violation of this etiquette by having "shaken hands with a nigger", Lomax (1993) recalls the hostile reaction of the

same Mississippian law enforcement officer in the 1940s to him for accidentally having called a blues singer "Mister" Son House (23).

Similar norms, though not so overt, were also created in the North to exclude African-Americans from the social sphere of whites. Besides the obvious residential segregation, which led into the emergence of black ghettos in Northern cities, an important example of this was the exclusion of blacks from the activities of trade unions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This was partly due to the white industrialists' interest of using blacks as a reserve labour of strikebreakers, in addition to the marginalization of black workers through their recruitment for the most dangerous and low-paid jobs (see pp. 35-37). Jim Crow segregation was widespread in the South until the 1964 Civil Rights Bill (Wilson, 1987:146), which indicates that its normative systems as codes of conduct also applied until the same time and were perhaps properly dismantled only in the second half of the 1960s.

The cultural codes of the South deprived blacks not only of equality, but also of their humanity. In a Finnish hospital, Anssi Peräkylä (1990:31) observed the practices of addressing a sick patient and the way physical contact was exercised towards him/her as the two ways of establishing both his/her humanity and equality, and thus demonstrating his/her reciprocity with his/her carers and loved ones. It was precisely this reciprocity based on equality that was broken by the distance created through the racial codes of the South.

2.3.2 Discrimination by class and colour

Besides being subordinated as a group, black individuals were also treated differently, depending on their descent and/or class status. In the case of African-Americans, the line between lower and higher class was also that of colour, dividing them to classes determined by a lighter and a darker complexion.

The "black" and "brown" descendants

> If you white, you all right
> If you brown, stick around,
> But if you black, oh buddy!
> Get back, get back, get back (Big Bill Broonzy in Lomax 1993:443.)

LeRoi Jones (1963:123), later known as Amiri Baraka, regards the early differences in the treatment of most "field slaves" compared to the often older and weaker "house slaves" as the basis for the first class divisions among the slaves and later on in the black population.

> The "house nigger" not only assimilated "massa's" ideas and attitudes at a more rapid rate, but his[/her] children were sometimes allowed to learn trades and become artisans and craftsmen… (who) made up the bulk of the 500 000 freedmen at the beginning of the Civil War. These house servants…were the first to accept the master's religion, and…produced a new ruling class among the slaves: the officials of the church. The church officials, the house servants, and the freedmen were the beginnings of the black middle class. (Jones 1963:123.)

As some of the "house slaves" were also early descendants of their masters, due to the masters' more or less coerced sexual relations with their slave women (see pp. 36-37), they were therefore also lighter by skin colour than the field slaves, hence depicted by the blues singer Big Bill Broonzy (in Lomax, 1993:443) in the song above as "brown" blacks, who could expect some privileges provided they behaved as the masters wanted them to. (Jones, 1963:124.) In Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1990:64), the "brown" girls are thought of being not only wealthier and in closer terms with the whites, but also more beautiful, innocent and sophisticated than their "black" counterparts:

> These sugar-brown Mobile girls move through the streets without a stir. They are as sweet as buttercake. Slim ankles; long narrow feet. they wash themselves with orange colored Lifebuoyu soap, dust themselves with Cashmere Bouquet talc, clean their teeth with salt on a piece of rag, soften their skin with Jergens Lotion. They smell like wood, newspaper and vanilla. […] They do not drink, smoke, or swear, and they still call sex "nookey". […] They go to land-grant colleges, normal schools, and learn how to do the white man's work with refinement: home economics to prepare his food; teacher education to instruct black children in obedience; music to soothe the weary master and entertain his blunted soul. Here they learn the rest of the lesson begun in those soft houses with porch swings and pots of bleeding heart: how to behave. […] In short, how to get rid of the funkiness. The dreadful funkiness of passion, the funkiness of nature, the funkiness of the wide rage of human emotions. (*The Bluest Eye* 1990:64.)

The "brown" African-Americans, as Morrison (1990:67-68) ironically reveals, also educated their young not to associate with the children of the "black" parents, which they referred to as "niggers", from whom it was pivotal for them as the "colored" ones to distinguish themselves in any possible means:

> His mother did not like him to play with niggers. She had explained to him the difference between colored people and niggers. They were easily identifiable. Colored people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud. He belonged to the former group: he wore white shirts and blue trousers; his hair was cut as close to his scalp as possible to avoid any suggestion of wool, the part was etched into his hair by the barber. In winter his mother put Jergens Lotion on his face to keep the skin from becoming ashen. Even though he was light-skinned, it was possible to ash. The line between colored and nigger was not always clear; subtle and telltale signs threatened to erode it, and the watch had to be constant. (*The Bluest Eye* 1990:67-68.)

This division of the African-American community by colour, known as the "colour caste hierarchy" prevailed in black culture until the emergence of the Black Power movement, when it was challenged as a form of "internalized racism". hooks (1994:203-204) testifies:

> All black folks [...] know that racist white folks often treated lighter skinned black folks better than their darker counterparts, and that this pattern was mirrored in black social relations [...] The slogan "black is beautiful" worked to intervene and alter those racist stereotypes that had always insisted black was ugly, monstrous, undesirable [...] One of the primary achievements of Black Power movement was the

> critique and in some instances the dismantling of color caste hierarchies. This achievement [...] took place in within the psyches of black folks, particularly those of us from working-class or poor backgrounds. (hooks, 1994:203.)

This comment of hooks (1994:203) shows the kind of *deprogramming* (Van Dijk, 1998:261) effect of the Black Power ideology, particularly on poor and working-class blacks, in giving the earlier stigmatized individuals a new sense of self-worth and self-confidence through its slogan "black is beautiful". The characters in the play that most rigorously advocate Black Power are Richard and Lorenzo, both of whom I shall analyse in detail in Chapter 7. Next, I shall consider the role of the black preachers and the black church in African-American history.

The black preachers – for or against emancipation?

Jones (1963) accuses the black middle class, particularly the black church, of abandoning the African cultural traits that were considered as a liability by the slave masters (123-124). However, Lomax (1993:70) points out that, in the Mississippi Delta, the black church not only maintained African culture in its services, but also provided the slaves with a community of their own.

> The church, in political fact, was the only place, where blacks were permitted to assemble and carry out organized activities in large numbers. Thus worship became the main venue in which these transported Africans could continue to be as sociable as they liked to be. (Lomax, 1993:70.)

Genovese (1974:165) also regards the black church and slave religion as both a means of pacifying the slaves and a force that eventually turned out to be a liability to the masters' dominative interests. Although religion, as Nietzsche (in Genovese, 1974:163) contended, undoubtedly served to curb the rebellious aggressions of many slaves, those slaves who embraced religion also no longer saw their masters as the supreme powers in their lives. Hence, they started praying to the God they placed above their master for relief in their misery, rather than pleading to the master himself. This often led to whippings of the most religious slaves.

Lewis Jones, Lomax's (1993) sociologist friend and fellow traveller in the 1940s, however, accused black ministers of the Deep South of not only suppressing black resistance to white domination in their preaching, but also of acting as the masters' informants on any revolutionary activities or individuals, including on other preachers. These people could then be punished by either their employers or the Klu Klux Klan (119,125).

Manifestations of black emancipation through religion can be read e.g. from a writing by Maria Stewart (1988). Published as early as 1835, i.e., less than 30 years before the Civil War, the text stresses the equality of all "races" and the superiority of a loving God over the slavemasters (4-5), thus refuting both the dependence on the master's power and the mythical "curse of Ham" that legitimated the exploitation of blacks as the "race" doomed to servitude (see

Fredrickson 2002:38-39, 43; p. 25). Here, Stewart (1988) also combines religion with the politics of American society through referral to the spirit of the U.S. Constitution:

> This is the land of freedom. […] Every man has a right to express his opinion. Many think, because your skins are tinged with a sable hue, that you are an inferior race of beings; but God does not consider you as such. He hath formed and fashioned you in his own glorious image, and hath bestowed upon you reason and strong powers of intellect. […] And, according to the Constitution of these United States, he hath made all men free and equal. Then why should one worm say to another, "Keep you down there, while I sit up yonder; for I am better than thou?" It is not the color of the skin that makes the man, but it is the principles formed within the soul. […] I am firmly persuaded that the God in whom I trust is able to protect me from the rage and malice of mine enemies and from them that will rise up against me; and if there is no other way for me to escape he is able to take me to himself. (Stewart 1988:4-5.)

For Stewart, as to most slaves that fled to the North, emancipation was a matter of "do or die", hence the addition proclaiming her will to die, if she would not reach the freedom offered by the North.

A later and different depiction of black religious life is provided by Wright (*Black Boy* 1945:130-32) from an atheistic point of view, stressing the overbearingness of the ideology of the black church on a dissident boy in the South of the 1920s. The conflict escalates further when, due to a misunderstanding, there emerges a rumour that the boy has seen an angel. Consequently, he is questioned by the elder of the church:

> The last thing on earth I wanted was a mess like this. The elder blinked his eyes in bewilderment.
> […]
> He was stunned with disappointment.
> "You…you didn't see an angel?" he asked.
> "No, *sir*!"
> […]
> "With God, you know, anything is possible," he hinted hopefully.
> "But I didn't see *anything*," I said. I'm sorry about this."
> "If you pray, then God will come to you," he said.
> The church grew suddenly hot. I wanted to bolt out of it and never see it again.
> […]
> There they stood, the church members, with joyous astonishment written on their faces, whispering among themselves. Perhaps at that moment I could have mounted the pulpit and led them all; perhaps that was to be my greatest moment of triumph!
> Granny rushed to me and hugged me violently, weeping tears of joy. Then I babbled, speaking with emotional reproof, censuring her from having misunderstood me.
> […]
> On our way home she would not utter a single word. I walked anxiously beside her, looking at her tired old white face, the wrinkles that lined her neck, the deep waiting black eyes, and the frail body, and I knew more than she thought I knew about the meaning of religion, the hunger of the human heart for that which is not and can never be, the thirst of the human spirit to conquer and transcend the implacable limitations of human life. (*Black Boy,* 1945:130-32.)

Although providing a community for the socializing of its members and the, at least symbolic, outlet of their anger through tales from the Bible (Lomax 1993:115-119), the black church remained under white supervision and thus could be also used by the masters as a means of repressing the anger of those slaves and, later, sharecroppers prone to rebellion. Genovese (1974:263) acknowledges the ambivalence of the black slave preachers' situation, under the pressures of representing both pacifiers and emancipators to their parishioners. Also, in Baldwin's play, one key character is Richard's father Meridian, a black minister, who struggles between preaching non-violence and advocating self-defence against racial violence from the whites (*Blues,* 1964:56-57).

2.3.3 Racial violence: whippings and lynchings

In slavery, the primary punishment for slaves of inappropriate behaviour was whipping, which could result from practically any reason at all. As an example, Douglass (1982:118-19) testifies about a slavemaster who "could always find some excuse" for whipping a slave:

> It would astonish one, unaccustomed to a slaveholding life, to see with what wonderful ease a slaveholder can find things, of which to make an occasion to whip a slave. A mere look, word, or motion – a mistake, accident, or want of power – are all matters for which a slave may be whipped at any time. Does a slave look dissatisfied? It is said [then], he has the devil in him, and it must be whipped out. Does he speak loudly when spoken to by his master? Then he is getting high-minded, and should be taken down a button-hole lower. Does he forget to to pull of his hat at the approach of a white person? Then he is wanting in reverence, and should be whipped for it. Does he ever venture to vindicate his conduct, when censured for it? Then he is guilty of impudence – one of the greatest crimes a slave can be guilty of. Does he ever venture to suggest a different mode of doing things from that pointed out by his master? He is indeed presumptuous, and getting above himself; and nothing less than a flogging will do for him. (Douglass 1982:118.)

After the emancipation of black slaves in the Civil War, whippings gave way to a more sinister means of controlling the now "free" African-Americans, namely to lynchings. The threat of lynching, as Genovese (1974:32) asserts, was "minimal" until after the Civil War. After the War, however, the urge to control the emancipated black manhood precipitated the use of mob violence on those blacks who ventured to oppose the racial hegemony of the South. Blacks could now be killed for behaving in a more or less similar manner to that for which the slaves were whipped earlier, for instance, for acting as "impudent" and "presumptuous" in front of white people. Feagin and Vera (1995:11) provide the overall statistics for lynchings in the U.S. history:

> From the 1860s to the 1980s thousands of black Americans were lynched by groups of whites. Between 50 and 161 lynchings of black men and women were recorded every year from 1889 to 1916. The number dropped to 10-24 a year in the 1930s and 1-6 a year from 1938 to the 1950s, and occasional lynchings have occurred since the 1950s. At least half of all lynchings of black Americans were never recorded and

> many were carried out with the participation of police authorities…Such rituals...reflect white notions about punishing black challenges to white authority and white commitment to barring blacks from white status and privilege. Many lynchings were precipitated because black men were not deferential to whites or because they allegedly touched or looked at a white woman. Other lynchings were unrelated to the real or alleged behavior of the black victims but were simply intended to show local black residents that they must "know their place". (Feagin and Vera, 1995:11.)

The number of the lynchings of blacks in the South reached its height after the 1890s, as before then, more whites than blacks had been lynched (Wilson 1996:113). Ida B. Wells-Barnett (1991:234), one of the early founders of the NAACP, gives a more detailed account of lynchings in the South at the end of the 19th century, which refutes the then popular notion that, primarily, lynchings were performed to prevent black men from raping white women:

> Of the 1,115 Negro men, women and children hanged, shot and roasted alive [in the South] from January 1st, 1882, to January 1st, 1894, inclusive, only 348 of that number were charged with rape. Nearly 700 of these persons were lynched for any other reason which could be manufactured by a mob wishing to indulge in a lynching bee. (Wells-Barnett 1991:134.)

In fact, Wells-Barnett (1991:16-24) also cites cases in which black men were lynched for having consensual sexual relations with white women. These relations, of course, constituted perhaps the gravest violation of the racial etiquette of the South (see Harris, 1995:393). While this etiquette turned a blind eye to the non-consensual sexual contact between white men and black women, it, nevertheless, strictly condemned any kind of contact between white women and black men.

Although lynchings were justified by white Southerners mostly through fear of black sexuality, the majority of the lynchings of black men were non-sexually motivated and often included incidents where blacks had simply asserted themselves, for example registering to vote, "being disrespectful" or "disputing with" white men (Gossett in Wilson, 1996:114-115). This resonates with Harris's (1995:393) findings of lynchings in the South serving as means of social control, used to restore the racially symbolic order of white superiority. Lynchings can thus be categorized not only as rituals of punishment, but also as practices restoring racial power by strengthening the idea of the white Southern community. (*ibid.* 393.) During these rituals, besides being hanged, African-American men were also often burned and castrated (Klotman, 1985:56).

The organization most known for organizing and performing lynchings was the Ku Klux Klan, glorified in the Hollywood film *Birth of the Nation* at the height of its popularity in 1916 (Bogle, 1992:10-16). In many cases, not just lynchings, but even the threat of them, served to keep blacks wary. The constant fear of being intimidated and persecuted must also have contributed to the frequent occurrence of the deviant trickster figure in black folklore.

The trickster figure has its roots in the Yoruba tradition of West African folklore, where the trickster has supernatural abilities that make him both semi-

divine and semi-human (Gates, 1988:5-6). In the African-American folklore, the trickster is usually either too fast or too clever for the white man and thus escapes punishment for his crimes against the white man (Genovese, 1974:582-83; Lomax, 1993:134-35). One such character, found by Lomax (1993:37) in the black folklore of Mississippi Delta, was Old John, who always defeated the Old Massa, his white adversary, by his wits. Another character that represented the brutal white slave masters and the boss men of the Mississippi levee camps in the blues songs of that area, was often named in their lyrics as "Master Cholly" or "Master Charley". This mythical character symbolizing racial brutality, also reported by Lomax to have several white referents, seems likely to have been reincarnated as Lyle in Baldwin's play as the "Mister Charlie", for whom the play was named a "blues", with Richard as his *clever* and *ridiculing adversary,* the kind of *verbal* trickster figure.

In addition to the lynching mobs, the police of the South were alert to black aggression and assertiveness, being used to arresting, as Lomax (1993:61) puts it, "any black, who even wore a sullen look". In the Northern states of the USA, the residents of black neighbourhoods were also exposed to brutal violence from the police. The advocates of the Black Power Movement gave police brutality as one of the main reasons for the establishment of the Black Panther Party in 1966, which began as a paramilitary political organization for black self-determination and self-defence (Hayes and Kiene, 1998:159-61.) The crucial idea behind the Black Power movement was that, unless blacks could seize the political power from the well-meaning white liberals, there could be no emancipation for them (Ture and Hamilton, 1992:46-47).

My attempt in this chapter has been to acquaint the reader with the injustices inherent primarily in the Southern system of apartheid racism that categorized and stigmatized, dominated and exploited, as well as controlled African-Americans and excluded them from the American mainstream. My special interest has lain in the everyday and also linguistic practices that dehumanized and subordinated blacks to serve the economic and xenophobic purposes of their white oppressors, as these practices constitute the racial power structure Baldwin sets out to expose and challenge in his play. I must also concede that, due to limitations of space, I have omitted a considerable number of black achievements in the history of the civil rights struggle. I shall, however, attempt to cover the most significant of these, at least those from the 1950s and 60s, in the analysis section of this thesis.

After portraying some of the crucial socio-historic facts of racial oppression in the U.S., I now move on to a more theoretical and universal discussion of "race", racism and racial conflict. In the next chapter (3), I shall first consider "race" in relation to various other concepts which it is either connected to or juxtaposed with. My aim is to present "race" in relation to the two main features Fredrickson (2002:9) associates with it, namely, difference and power. Then, I shall proceed to my examination of racial conflict from a discursive and hegemonic point of view.

3 "RACE", RACISM AND RACIAL CONFLICT

This chapter intends not to cover the whole spectrum of "race" and racism. Rather, my objective is to highlight those of its characteristics crucial to the present study. Here, my discussion on "race" follows George M. Fredrickson's (2002:9) division of racism into *difference* and *power*, as these two aspects of it can be seen as embracing the main concepts associated with "race" through the history of racial studies. This history began with cultural anthropology and gradually moved on from the sociology of ethnicity to reach the study of "race" as an independent structure of power and ideology. I shall distinguish racial difference from cultural and ethnic differentiation and equate racial power with the construction of class, gender, and caste. I shall also argue that, although "race" is usually presented as a case of *difference*, it is more often *power* that constitutes and perpetuates, as well as evaluates racial differences.

3.1 Racism and difference: "race", culture and ethnicity

The first part of my argument entails three characteristics of racially constructed differences as opposed to cultural and ethnic ones, namely that racial differences 1) *focus on the exterior over the interior, 2) promote inequality instead of equality*, and 3) *are imposed* on racially different Others *rather than acquired* or *possessed* by them. I shall begin my argumentation by first focusing on the importance of physical attributes in the construction of racial difference.

3.1.1 The exterior and unequal over the interior and equal

> I'm white, inside, it don't help my case,
> 'Cause I, can't hide what is on my face (Andy Razaf in Singer 1992:218)

Ashley Montagu (1997:45-48) makes the point of "race" being a matter of the exterior rather than the interior, so that the racial classification of human beings focuses on extended physical characteristics, such as skin colour, shape of skull

and form of the lips and hair. This, in turn, creates prejudiced assumptions, such as the belief that, due to their physical differences from Europeans and Americans with a European genetic origin, Africans and African-Americans are mentally inferior and thus unable to create and cope with a civilized society. Montagu (1997:252-266) also argues that racial differentiation does not take into account historical difference in cultural experiences, such as the African history of colonial imperialism as well as racial oppression and discrimination, where the amount of positive intellectual stimulation was scarce, and thus hindered the development of African cultures compared with Western ones.

Montagu's (1997: 260-261) claim that different racial groups are equal in their potential for achieving civilization appears valid for the purpose of this thesis, which is to examine how and why racial inequality is socially constructed (Montagu, 1997:31) in American history beginning with slavery, as I have pointed out in Chapter 2. Therefore, by accepting as a paradigm Montagu's (1997:260) assertion that human beings from all cultural groups are "equally good in a biological sense and in cultural potentiality", one can then explore what contributes to the fact that racially differentiated ethnic groups are considered unequal in their potentiality. Another paradigm for this thesis, is to assume that, in normal human interaction, there exists an atmosphere of reciprocity (see Peräkylä, 1990:31; p. 38).

3.1.2 Imposition over acquisition: "race" and Otherness

Culture is acquired by experience within the sphere of one's own ethnic group (Montagu, 1997:254). Contrary to this, in the case of African-American history, racial characteristics, although originally thought to be innate, were, in fact, *imposed* upon the "non-whites" by not only the dominant Anglo-Saxons, but also the various European ethnic groups that emigrated to America and quickly resumed their common and symbolic "white identity" in the 19th century (Feagin and Vera, 1995:14-15; Wilson, 1996:144). Until the Great Depression in the 1930s, with the improvement in the status of black workers, due to the government's acceptance and legal protection of the then racially integrated trade unions, it was mainly the white representational notions that constituted the black racial attributes. These attributes were based on the white perception of African-Americans as any "non-whites" as "inferior, primitive, evil and moronic". (Wilson, 1996:145-147.)

Cohen (1985:115), Wetherell and Potter (1992:160) and Fredrickson (2002:9) state that ethnic groups establish their cultural identity through antithesis and juxtaposition, through the discursive and symbolic creation of Us primarily as different from Them, with the identity of the Other as pejoratively exaggerated and stereotyped. Cox (1948:531) and Operario and Fiske (1998:33) make a point in asking why white cultural stereotypes of "non-whites", particularly blacks, bear more significance than those blacks attribute to "whites". This leads Operario and Fiske (1998) to introduce the element of power into racial relations (35), and thus also the correlations between "race", class, caste and gender.

3.2 Racism and power: "race", class, caste and gender

In this chapter, I explore the *power* of "race" and racism. My focus lies on three aspects of "race", namely 1) racial *exploitation and privilege*; 2) the role of *"race" and patriarchy* in the public and private sphere and, 3) the *element of force* in racial relations.

3.2.1 Exploitation and privilege: "race", class and capitalism

Quoting Taguieff's (1987) original division, Fredrickson (2002:9-10) refers to two kinds of racisms that have to do with issues of power, namely those of inclusion and exclusion. The "racism of inclusion" means that the Other cultural or ethnic group is included in society only if it accepts its subordinated position in the "rigid hierarchy justified by a belief in permanent, unbridgeable differences". Exclusionary racism, named originally by Taguieff as *exterminating racism* ("le racism d'extermination"), as opposed to *exploiting* racism ("le racism d'exploitation") on the other hand, does not acknowledge any way that the group concerned could be tolerated by the dominant group, as in the case of anti-Semitism in the Nazi Germany of the 1930s and 40s. In this respect, Fredrickson's (2002) concepts of racism are to some extent milder and wider than those of Taguieff's. Yet, the idea of a rigid hierarchy of differences based on inequality and a system of privileges the racialized Other must accept to exist in the same space as the racial oppressor provides a valid starting point for an understanding of the impact of *power* as a *determining factor in the construction* of that hierarchy.

In *Caste, Class and Race (1948)*, Oliver C. Cox argued that race and class were inseparable. Although this argument, in its time, meant a significant breakthrough in the study of "race", it has, since the 1980s, been criticized by neo-Marxists as reductionist (Solomos, 1986:87). This thesis accepts the neo-Marxist paradigm that, although "race" and class correlate, they are not identical.

Solomos (1986:88-101) lists three main neo-Marxist models that link "race" and racism to a capitalist class society. First, there is the relative autonomy model developed by Hall (et al., 1978), which suggests 1) there is no common universal entity of racism but a group of historically specific racisms; 2) racial and class relations have no one-on-one correspondence; instead 3) they interact in a way that is crucial to the understanding of them both.

The second approach, known as the autonomy model and suggested by Gabriel and Ben-Tovim (1978; in Solomos, 1986:95-97), separates racism from capitalism on ideological grounds and stresses the role of human interaction and political struggle in the emergence of racism. It totally ignores the connections of racism to the class relations of the capitalist state and society. This model attempts to find ways of dealing with "race" as a concept of cultural politics. It is connected with the practical needs of the contemporary struggle against racism in Western societies. By refusing to acknowledge the determinative na-

ture of a fixed racial hierarchy and the social practices upholding it, this model appears optimistic about the possibility of future resolutions to racial conflict. In the debate over the macrocosm of structure and the microcosm of occasion (Bourdieu in Maynard, 2002), namely that between context and action (Barry, 2009;178-79), the model argues for the positive outcome of occasions, where racial hierarchies are politically challenged. In relation to my research, it stresses the impact of the black struggle for civil rights as pivotal to black agency.

The third, namely the migrant labour model brought up by Miles and Phizacklea (1984; in Solomos, 1986:98-101), makes a slight concession to Cox's (1948) views, in the sense that it sees class relations as a primary factor in the reproduction of racism. This model regards "race" as a social construction of the capitalist ideology, which produces racial meanings that are aimed at reproducing racial power. For the purpose of my analysis, this model, with its emphasis on constructs of ideological power invested in meanings, offers the most interesting standpoint. Although there are cultural elements in racial relations, particularly in the construction of racial representations, what seems pivotal to them, is the *extent of the material and social advantages* that one or more *privileged* cultural groups gain from their superior position over the non-privileged Other.

As far as African-Americans are concerned, their history began with the forced migration of the first black slaves from Africa to America, which was primarily motivated by the need to provide cheap labour for the plantations of the American South. This, along with the racially superior status and privileges and the *advantages* gained by the exploitation of generations of blacks by whites, is one of the main reasons why I have chosen the post-Marxist hegemonic approach of Gramsci (1971) and Fairclough (1992ab) as the framework for the present study.

3.2.2 Public and private: "race", gender and patriarchy

Esther Ngan-Ling Chow (1996: xix-xxvi), in her introduction to feminist analysis since the 1990s, attempts to 1) interconnect "race", class and gender, arguing that "gender dynamics are bound up in broader systems of race and class inequality", in relations forming "the structural and symbolic bases for both the objective conditions and the subjective meanings of women's and men's lives" (xxi). An analysis of this kind also 2) places all of the three concepts between both "*the social structure and the self*", on the one hand, and the "*macrostructural forces and the microprocesses of human interaction*", on the other (xxii, emphasis original).

Besides combining the interaction of the *microcosm* with the ideological *macrostructure,* hence also Bourdieu's (in Maynard, 2002) *structure* and *occasion*, as well as *context* and *action* (see p. 26), feminist analysis also attempts 3) to connect the private and public spheres that traditionally have been gendered as women's and men's domains. Chow (1996: xxiii) considers this "doctrine of 'separate spheres' as obsolete, due to the change in the economic status of

women, particularly those of "color", "female heads of single-parent families" and "immigrant women", to whom

> paid employment outside the home has historically been an integral, normative component of their roles as daughters, wives and mothers. At the same time, such women have engaged in unpaid domestic labour, child care, and maintenance in the home, creating double or even triple shifts for many of them […] The increase in the number of women participating in the labour force, a rising divorce rate […], the growing number of single-parent households headed by women, and the demand to combine work and family have made the "separate sphere" model increasingly inapplicable even to White women. The interpenetration of the two spheres in most women's lives has rendered obsolete the…gendered division of labour for the two spheres. (Chow, 1996:xxiii.)

Chow (1996:xxiii) also introduces 4) the realities created by "race", class and gender as dialectic, constituting not only social dysfunction, but also opportunities to "negotiate, cope with, and even resist various forms of structural domination and inequality". "Race", class and gender are here regarded as "structural sources of the dialectics of oppression". Finally, 5) feminist studies of race, class and gender are involved in the transformation of "sociological knowledge through theory, research and praxis". Power relations in society between the various positions and experiences of different men and women are both understood and presented in order to "raise their consciousness and improve their social conditions". By introducing gender as an equal element of social stratification to "race" and class, feminist research can "inspire collective empowerment and generate action to uplift diverse kinds of men and women" (xxiv).

Southern systems of slavery and racist segregation were both based on patriarchal separations of the public and private spheres, with the sanctification of the home as a protected space and the confinement of women in it (see Harris, 1995:392; p. 38). Being restricted by the system of slavery as well as the racial etiquette of the South themselves, white women not only abided by it (Douglass, 1982:82) but also appealed to it, when, for example, they encountered insubordinate blacks (Harris, 1995:390).

Traditional patriarchy also involves the protection of women by male dominance, which, in turn, stems from the idea of male warriorism and sexual rivalry between men from different ethnic groups (McCarthy, 1994:107), also detected in the psyche of African-American men by Grier and Cobbs (1968). This warriorism, generated to secure the safety of one's cultural group by the use of violence, can be detected behind the ideological fundamentals of paramilitary organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan in the 1900s, and the Black Panthers in the 1960s (see p. 46), with the exception that the KKK aimed at restoring racial hegemony, whereas the Panthers' objective was to challenge it. In Baldwin's play, the private and the public emerge through the rivalry between the main characters Richard and Lyle, in the sense that their conflict can be seen as not only ideological, but also both patriarchal and sexual. Both men act as protective of their own female partners as well as offensive towards each other and their "protected spaces" (Harris, 1995:391), including their women.

3.2.3 Force over freedom: "race", caste and oppression

After the Second World War, most social scientists started to regard ethnic differentiation as a benign phenomenon. John Rex (1986:71) criticizes them for leaving out the social aspect of racism as an imposition of identities on ethnic groups "to restrict their mobility and to facilitate their exploitation and oppression. Rex's (1983, in Rex, 1986:72) suggestion for the study of "race relations" between ethnic groups was that there was to be 1) a severe conflict between these groups restrictive of the free labour market; 2) that this conflict divided people into opposite groups by "cultural characteristics" that could not be changed, 3) preventing mobility from one group to another, and that this conflict as well as the oppression and exploitation within it was 4) justified by theories of biological determinism. Crucial to this model is that, contrary to Rex's own liberalistic model of the competitive capitalist society, these relations "between the employer and the employee […] involve the use of force" (Rex, 1986:73). Although acknowledging the element of coercive power and exploitation also in the history of industrialism alongside the idea of the "free labour market", Rex (1986:73-74) maintains that there is a difference in degree in the *forceful limitation of freedom and mobility* between the industrialist labour market and the institutions of slavery and post-slavery in the American South. This strengthens the argument of racism resembling a *caste* system more than one of class.

The idea of caste also coincides with the construction of gender, in the sense that besides the rigid regulation of status and privilege, as well as mobility from the lower caste to the upper one, there are also heavy restrictions on sexual relations between the members of the different castes (Montagu, 1997:180), to prevent the mixing of castes, or here, "races". One example of these restrictions was the introduction of miscegenation laws and the "one-drop rule", created in the American South after the Civil War (Williams, 2001: 181-82) to prevent the illegitimate mulatto descendants of some white slave owners from inheriting their possessions. The "one-drop rule" ordered that, if a person had even one drop of black blood in him/her, s/he would then be considered black. A noteworthy trait in the Southern racial etiquette resembling the caste system was also the requirement of racial "purity" (see Section 2.1.2 for details)

In the Southern racist society, the restrictions on sexual and all other intimate relations between the members of the two castes were enforced by racial violence (Harris, 1995:390). Here, the idea of male warriorism, linked with the patriarchal ideal of manhood (McCarthy, 1994:107-109), seems particularly relevant, as it was precisely this kind of assertive black manhood that the white warriors of lynching mobs in the South needed to control (Wilson, 1996:115) and which later prevailed in the ideology of Black Power and the Black Panthers.

Cox (1948:465) also states that, in the racial discussion of the social science up to the 1940s, there was confusion not only between the ideas of "race" and class, but also about the caste system as attributed to the society of the India of

the 1940s. Cox (1948:478), however, regards racial prejudice as the *effect* rather than the *basis* of oppression and argues that

> First [there is], [1.] *a capitalist need to exploit some people and their resources*; then [2.] *the more or less purposeful development among the masses, the public, of derogatory social attitudes toward that particular group or groups whose exploitation is desired*- here the strategy of the capitalists will depend upon the nature of the ethnic situation; [3.] *a consequent public estrangement of sympathetic feeling for and loss of social identification with the exploited group* - that is to say, a development of race prejudice; [4.] *the crystallization of a "we" feeling and of social solidarity on the part of the propagandized group against the exploited group;* and [5.] *a reaction of the latter*; and finally, [6.] the *continual appeal to this "we" feeling, consciousness of solidarity, or ethnocentrism as a means of intensifying race prejudice* so that the exploitative purpose might be increasingly facilitated. (Cox , 1948:480., emphasis original)

Here, Cox (1948:480) claims that the development of prejudice against racial Others is a matter of *intention* rather than that of *ignorance*, refuting the idea of racial exploitation as the result of a cultural apprehension by suggesting the reverse. However, this interpretation would require that e.g. the American slave owners in the 1600s and 1700s would actually have believed African-Americans to be their equals in the beginning, and would nevertheless have perpetuated the belief in their inferiority. While for Banton (1998:62; see pp. 25-26) this is not the case, racial prejudice did, nevertheless, work as a justification for the pursuit of oppressive and exploitative interests against the black slaves and their descendants in the South. Furthermore, it has served to legitimate (Habermas, 1973:19) the notion of white supremacy inherent in attacks of racial violence against blacks throughout American history (Feagin and Vera, 1995:61-81). The cultural fear of the dominated and exploited black body and sexuality also stems from the Southern etiquette of gender construction as well as the notion of racial "purity", indicating a hierarchy based on *caste* prejudice, to which the slaves were considered a threat (Harris, 1995:392).

3.3 "Race" as discourse: racial conflict as a hegemonic struggle

In this section, I shall introduce Norman Fairclough's (1992b) idea of discursive hegemonic struggle and examine how it corresponds to racial conflict. This idea, which is particularly useful for my study, also resonates with the dramatic struggle named by Milton Marx (1961:23-27) as the "dominative-defensive conflict", which I shall deal with in more detail in Chapter 5.

The concept of hegemony was introduced by the social scientist Antonio Gramsci to refer to the domination of the capitalist ideology in the Western society. Gramsci (1971:12) differentiates between two kinds of "superstructures": "the civil society" and "the political society". While the "political society" embodies the "direct domination" of the state and government, the "civil" one pertains to the "function of 'hegemony', which the dominant group exercises

through society", evidently in a manner more subtle than that by which the power of the state is being exercised. Hegemony connects with the spontaneous consent of the masses to the "general direction imposed on social life", thus also to *the* ideological choices promoted by the dominant group in society, This consent is "caused by the prestige…which the dominant group enjoys because of its [hegemonic] position and function in the world of production" (1971:12, brackets added). Individuals or groups who do not consent to the hegemony of the dominant group are disciplined by the "apparatus of state coercive power", as part of the political society, the task of which is to anticipate "moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed" (1971:12). Therefore, in the kind of Western capitalist society, presented here by Gramsci, in its most rigid form, the coercive power apparatus of the state would serve to successfully eliminate potential opposition challenging the hegemonic prestige of its dominant group ideology, unless, perhaps, this opposition was able to provide a power apparatus of its own.

While evidently valid for the political situation at the beginning of the 20th century, the Gramscian model appears as perhaps too reductionist for a 21st century, or even a 1990s society. However, it helps to explain the racial situation of the Deep South of the 1950s and 60s, as far as the coercive power of lynchings as means of upholding racial hegemony is concerned, and perhaps in some way comprehend the armed struggle of the Black Panthers to combat the coercive power of corrupt law enforcement in the ghettos of the American North in the 1960s. In the history of the South, however, the hegemony of white superiority was upheld by both the intimidation by the lynching mobs, such as the Klu Klux Klan, and the actions of Southern Congressmen. While the Klan and other mobs worked to scare blacks off from demanding their rights as free citizens through burning, hanging and castrating non-submissive black individuals, the Congressmen were busy resisting bills for anti-racist laws, as well as introducing and supporting new racist ones (Sawyer, 1978:215-216). These actions kept alive the oppressive white hegemony in the South, so that, despite the growing demands of both the NAACP and concerned black and white citizens, no bills for effective anti-lynching legislation were approved by the Senate until the end of the Second World War (Sawyer, 1978:216; Zangrando, 1980:20; Berry, 1994:127-28, 135-37). After the War, the focus of racial violence shifted from lynchings to public resistance against attempts for desegregation and the enfranchisement of blacks, which, along with the decrease in the number of lynching cases, made anti-lynching a minor political issue (Zangrando, 1980:200; Berry, 1994:139).

This account of racial oppression in the Deep South clearly underlines the historical role of white racial hegemony as a *generally accepted power position*. This position could, up to the 1950s and 60s, be maintained mostly through social practices and, as suggested in my study, through the habitualization of norms and values and their argumentative legitimation. Were these practices fail, there was still the coercive threat of lynchings known to all as the ultimate

means of restoring the racial hegemony, if this hegemony was *criticized* or *challenged*.

Fairclough (1992a:48-53), in his analysis of political texts of the 1990s, has further examined the manifestation of hegemony and the struggle to obtain and maintain it in the discourses of society. Unlike Gramsci, to whom hegemony was static, this scholar sees it as the target of a constant ideological *struggle* on the level *of discursive meanings* embedded in political texts. To Fairclough (1992b:91-92), the concept of hegemony

> provides a way of theorizing change in relation to the evolution of power relations which allows a particular focus upon discursive change […] contributing to and being changed by wider processes of change. Hegemony is leadership as much as domination across the economic, political, cultural and ideological domains of a society. Hegemony […] is a focus of constant struggle to construct or sustain or fracture […] relations of domination/subordination, which takes economic, political and ideological forms. (Fairclough 1992b:91-92.)

The idea of hegemonic struggle, then, offers

> the dialectical view of the relationship between discursive structures and events…The articulation and rearticulation of orders of discourse is correspondingly one stake in hegemonic struggle. Discursive practices, the production, distribution, and consumption (including interpretation) of texts, is a facet of hegemonic struggle which contributes in varying degrees to the *reproduction or transformation* not only of the *existing order of discourse*…but also…of *existing* social and *power relations*. (Fairclough 1992b:93., emphasis added)

In any society, there are both ideologies that support its prevailing system of norms and values and those that resist it. Within the framework of these ideologies, discursive practices are created that either reproduce or transform the values and norms that constitute what is known as the prevailing social order of society. Hegemonic struggle is, thus, *ideological struggle for the power position*, practised in the production of talk and texts. From this position, the preferred social order is, then, first produced and later reproduced, as well as attempts to transform it are constituted from the position opposite it. Therefore, the ideology that obtains the power to produce the prevalent norms and values in a society possesses the dominative hegemony of that society, as opposed to the emancipative agency of the cultural groups regarded as inferior and marginal to it. The present study views "race" as discourse, a socially constructed system of meanings (Jokinen et al., 1993:27; Harris, 1995:389-90) based on exterior characteristics, that habitualizes and legitimates the exercise of power by one cultural group over the other and thus constitutes an ongoing conflict between those perceived as "superior" and those as "inferior". "Race" and power are inseparable: there is not one without the other. "Race" and racial conflict include elements of both class and gender, and significantly those of caste, as there are implications of power in the construction of all these three elements of social stratification.

Although few scientists believe in the genetic significance of "race" any longer, the need to study the social and cultural consequences in societies that still uphold this belief continues to be a valid motive for research (Eriksen, 1997:34). This belief can occur either on the individual and group level, or the structural level. Although "race" no longer cannot be a biological fact, it can be a basis for social action. Behind the ideas of racial difference, lies the need to categorize other racial groups as "inferior" to one's own. This categorization also works to legitimate oppression and discrimination as the base for exploitation, generating a conflict between the opposing interests (Habermas, 1973:19) of the racial *hegemony* (Fairclough, 1992:49), maintained by the dominant group, and the *agency* of the dominated. The concept of *agency* is defined by Grossberg (1996:99) as the *ability of the oppressed and marginalized cultural groups to participate and access* "particular sites of activity and power", as well as *belong* to them in a way that *enables their active use* of that power.

As I have demonstrated, "race" is a multidimensional concept. Having separated the concept from its more benign counterparts, such as culture and ethnicity, my interest in this research lies in the relation of "race" to class, caste and gender, *with* power as their mutual element, articulated both explicitly and implicitly in the racial discourse of the play selected for study, and providing the basic framework of its characters' identity negotiations. The imposition of racial power on blacks, as, for example, the white right to choose on behalf of them, constituted the core of racial hegemony in the American South in particular, which, in the 1950s and 60s, met significant efforts at transforming it, mainly through the struggle of blacks for their civil rights against a second-class citizenship and, later, by the advocation of "black power".

A hegemonic struggle is always an ideological one. Ideologies consist of socially shared attitudes and values that govern choices common to group members (Van Dijk, 1998:122), namely of what is considered as "natural and necessary", as well as "appropriate" (Fairclough, 1992a:51-52). The 1950s and 60s, with the gradual fracturing of white hegemony and the emergence of movements promoting black agency in the South, provide an interesting context for examining the hegemonic struggle of racial conflict both in the private and public spheres of the black and white characters in Baldwin's play.

I shall further elaborate my analysis of the similarities of hegemonic struggle and racial conflict, on the one hand, and the dramatic conflict, on the other, in Chapter 5, where I introduce the field of my study. In the next chapter (4), however, I provide a brief overview of earlier criticism and research of Baldwin and the contribution of the present study to it.

4 EARLIER CRITICISM AND RESEARCH OF BALDWIN

In this chapter, I present a brief overview of the existing studies and criticism of Baldwin, as well as determine the position of the present study in relation to them.

Literary studies and criticism of Baldwin can be historically be seen as constituting four waves, as first suggested in Fred L. Standley and Nancy Burt's *Critical essays of James Baldwin* (1988) and modified by Henderson (2009:236). The first wave includes the critical response to his first two novels and first three collections of essays from the 1950s, which, Lyne (2010:14) contends, presented him as "the darling of the white liberal mainstream establishment". Lyne (2010:13) also states that giving him this title stems from Baldwin's early acceptance of the liberal integrationist orthodoxy, also present in the Civil Rights Movement of the late 1950s.

4.1 Baldwin's early years: the embrace of mainstream liberalism

Despite some oppositional criticism, Baldwin's "semiautobiographical" (Henderson, 2009:237) first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), was a success at the time of its publication and has been regarded as a "foundational piece for Baldwin criticism" for over 50 years, with a vast number of scholarly works that examine "the social significance of a book steeped in the cultural fervor of black religiosity" (2009:237). The publications to follow, Baldwin's collections of essays, *Notes of a Native Son* (*Notes*, 1955), *Nobody Knows My Name (Nobody*, 1961*)* and *The Fire Next Time (The Fire,* 1963*)* mostly brought the author prestige and accolades in the mainstream of the literary world in the USA, whereas his second and third novel, *Giovanni's Room (*1956*)* and *Another Country (*1962*)* aroused European interest in his works. (Henderson, 2009:237.)

Lyne (2010) observes that, while most former critics of Baldwin actually see *The Fire* (1963) as the pinnacle of his career (25), from which on, he was later

considered as having deteriorated as a writer (14), this volume already shows him as detached from the ideology of liberalism and turning towards a more radical view of racial relations, namely that of the black radicalism expressed later in the ideologies of the Black Power Movement and the Black Panther Party (14). This turning point in Baldwin's career, and its reception, is pivotal to my thesis as Baldwin was already writing *Blues* (1964), while finishing *The Fire* (1963) (see Leeming, 1994:185,197), and completing the play within a year of the publication of *The Fire* (1963) (Leeming, 1994:409-410). In the next section, I consider the second wave of interest in Baldwin's works, namely that from the late 1960s to the early 1970s.

4.2 The 1960s and 70s: division of criticism

In the late 1960s and early 70s, Baldwin was considered in Europe as the voice of black America and, as any socially revolutionary writer of that time, was, in his criticism, subject to a dilemma known as ”the Caliban-Hamlet paradox”. According to Henderson (2009:239), this paradox was prevalent in European-American and African-American cultural relations, in an era that Lesley A Fiedler (in Henderson, 2009:239) characterized as one of ”literary anthropologism”, referring to the practices of the scholars and critics of black literature at that time . This paradox involved

> the dilemma of the two dispossessed sons of America. That is, Hamlet – and more specifically his melancholy – represents those inherited histories and social commitments tied to the ideals of race in this country. Caliban is the monstrous Other – the African-American son – who needs to be reshaped into a respectable citizen. Baldwin's literary reflections speak to this moral dilemma from Caliban's perspective, laying before the nation its hypocrisies. (Henderson 2009:239.)

This positioning of Baldwin the writer and his characters as ”the monstrous Other” to be reshaped by white critics (Henderson, 2009:239) was also detected by Louis H. Pratt (1978), who contended that, both in the 1960s and towards the early 70s, the scholarly criticism of black literature was riddled with both anthropological and sociological categorizations of every piece of black literature, which was not seen as the artistic product of its writer as an individual, but rather as just one example of a collective. This collective represented what the critics chose to regard as ”black”, or then, ”Negro literature”, at the same time determining the phases in its development as a series of solely ”vertical movements in American literary history”, lacking any horizontal variety among individual black writers. This meant that, in that era, the analyses of the works of Baldwin, as well as those of many other black writers, viewed them mostly as examples of ”protest”, or ”race literature”, which the critics and scholars then, in a patronizing manner, dismissed as ”unworthy of their consideration on the

artistic level". This, Pratt (1978) argued, has been particularly true with the scholarly reception of *Blues (1964)* in the 1960s.

In the scholarly criticism of Baldwin in the 1970s, however, the trend also shifted gradually from the narrow context of sociology and/or anthropology to a more "comprehensive evaluation of artistic style and human concerns, which", Pratt (1978) contended, "constitute a more fundamental aspect of the Baldwin legacy". For example, Karin Möller (in Pratt, 1978) published her study of identity in Baldwin's essays. Also, Shirley S. Allen (in Pratt, 1978) produced an analysis of *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), which emphasized the "human concern" in the novel, comparing the book to the works of Charles Dickens and Fyodor Dostoyevsky and focusing on the use of Biblical symbolism in it. Both these works paved way for the kind of analysis of Baldwin which sees him as more than a social commentator, as a writer in 20th-century America whose work could be linked with other writers, both in the USA and Europe on a universal plane. The American writers compared to Baldwin included his early mentor Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison (see Pratt, 1978), Lorraine Hansberry (see Grabes, 1989; Üsekes, 2008), William Faulkner (see Canfield, 2002) Eugene O' Neill, and Arthur Miller (see Grabes, 1989), I shall return to these comparisons, where relevant, in more detail in my analysis of the play in question.

4.3 Baldwin's final years: times of obscurity

Apart from the two examples of Möller and Allen provided by Pratt (1978), Quentin D. Miller (2008) asserts that, while "undeniably the most prominent African-American writer of the 1950s and 60s, Baldwin had all but slipped into obscurity in the 1970s and 80s". As stated on pp. 58-59, many critics, and perhaps also scholars, still considered *The Fire (1963)* as the pinnacle of his writing career, and the common critical consensus of the era was that Baldwin had started to decline as an artist around the year 1963. Lyne (2010:13) regards this year not only as the turning point of his career but as the time after which any new works by Baldwin were considered to be excessively propagandistic. For Lyne, the reason for this lay in the change in Baldwin's political allegiances from liberalism to the radicalism of the black working-class, depicted in the doctrine of the Black Power Movement. Lyne concludes:

> This class allegiance is crucial to understanding the trajectory of Baldwin's career, a trajectory that has been generally misunderstood. In both critical discussions and classroom anthologies, James Baldwin's career begins with *Go Tell It on the Mountain* in 1953 and ends with *The Fire Next Time* in 1963. As Baldwin's understanding of race relations shifts from the liberal individualism that made him famous toward a Black class-based position, he loses the approbation of the mainstream literary establishment. The twelve books and dozens of essays published between 1963 and 1987 have virtually disappeared from the canonical understanding of Baldwin. This erasure of 25 years is usually explained as Baldwin having sacrificed his art to his politics. (Lyne, 2010:13.)

The idea of Baldwin having become somehow unintelligent as a writer after *The Fire* (1963) still comes through clearly in two fairly recent critiques, one from the turn of the 21st century and the other from the end of its first decade. Hilton Als (2009) specifically attacks the play through Baldwin's alliance with the leaders of the then emerging Black Power Movement and claims that Baldwin would have been coerced by them to make the play more radical than he originally intended. Neither of Baldwin's biographers from the 1990s (Campbell, 2002; Leeming, 1994), nor Üsekes (2008), though, seem to corroborate that claim. Leeming (1994:290-95), however, admits, as Üsekes (2008), that Baldwin, at the time of writing the play, oscillated between the ideologies of Martin Luther King, and Malcolm X, and apparently also that of the nascent Black Power Movement, but both biographers seem to maintain that he also remained in charge of the writing process, and thus also of the play's radical nature. Brooke Allen (1998), nevertheless, regards the play as Baldwin's attempt to seek the acceptance of the militants of the Black Power Movement, claiming that, with the writing of *Blues* (1964) and the works after that, Baldwin was trying to please the Movement's leading figures, but without success. This view also relies heavily on the, perhaps exaggerated, importance of the criticism of Baldwin by Eldridge Cleaver in *Soul On Ice* (1968). Cleaver not only abhorred the author's homosexuality, but also accused him of both "total hatred of blacks" and "shameful…love of the whites" (in Allen, 1998:29). Nevertheless, one of the founders of the Black Arts Movement, Amiri Baraka, praised the play, and its protagonist Richard in particular, regarding it as a crucial influence on his own plays (Hay, 1994:95).

4.4 The "Baldwin Renaissance" of the 1990s and the 21st century

Carol E. Henderson (2009:240-41) characterizes what she terms "the Baldwin Renaissance" as a multitude of "over one hundred articles, book chapters as well as a number of books and dissertations" that, since the 1990s, "have considered the significance of Baldwin as a transatlantic commuter and a political, social and cultural writer". Dwight Mc Bride (1999; in Henderson, 2009:241), for example, considers Baldwin's work as a "key to 'understanding'" many of" the 'contemporary social problems'" in U.S. society of the 21st century related to "structures of race, class, gender and sexuality". Mc Bride (1999) and Henderson (2009:241) also see in Baldwin's works, whether in his novels, dramas, poetry or essays, a "multiplicity of intersecting ideals". This multiplicity has, for example, inspired such writers as Rebecca Aanerud (2009) and Lawrie Balfour (2009) to ascertain Baldwin as a critic of both white liberalism and consciousness of "race" in the 21st century. Baldwin's play *Blues* (1964) clearly consists of intersecting ideals, such as conservatism, liberalism, and radicalism, violence and non-violence, as well as racial integration and separation. Furthermore, it depicts almost documentarily the discourse of "race" in its entirety, as it appears in the dialogue of the play's central characters.

D. Quentin Miller (2008) contended that a recent conference on Baldwin's work held in Boston (2009), after the success of an earlier one in London in 2007, epitomized the new trend in the research of Baldwin in two respects: 1) With a willingness to examine all of Baldwin's work, which required resisting the "critical cul-de-sac" based on ignoring "everything Baldwin wrote after *The Fire* (1963)"; and 2) a "serious and rigorous application of current critical trends and interest" in his work, "resulting in fresh readings of his more canonical texts", among which *Blues* (1964) was included.

4.5 My contribution to the analyses of *Blues* (1964)

Although the present study focuses on the racial perspective on the level of racial discourse, I do not, however, wish to belittle Baldwin's artistry, its "human concern" or its universality. I shall, nevertheless, examine his play in a manner slightly similar to its critics of the late 1960s, as a play about "race", namely racial discourse, but not exclusively as just one example of "black protest literature" (see Pratt, 1978). I consider Baldwin as an individually gifted artist, here, a dramatist, who, quite skillfully, *analyzes, articulates and manipulates all* kinds of racial discourse, whether it appears in the lines of a black or white, conservative, liberal or radical character. Furthermore, I applaud the author's imaginative ability in producing all these fully credible characters (cf. Littlejohn, 1966).

My analysis, however, delves more deeply than the previous criticisms of the play into the *political language* of racial relations as a revelator of *discursive meanings* as depicted and reshaped by Baldwin in this particular play. Therefore, I believe it to be unique in Baldwin studies. To give credit to Baldwin specifically as a dramatist, as Turner (1994) states, has been done by few of his critics in the past, I shall examine the play also in relation to four major dramatic perspectives: the Aristotelian, Brechtian, Melodramatic and Revolutionary drama. My analysis, making use of these four dramatic theories, will, I hope, bring new insight into Baldwin's dramatic abilities. In only one of the author's numerous biographies among my sources (see Leeming, 1994:235), has the play been claimed to resemble a Greek tragedy, and it is only in the 21st century that Rob Canfield (2002) and, more thoroughly, Nicholas K. Davies (2005) have also attributed to it a Brechtian kind of dramatic quality. Canfield (2002) actually praises the work as "perhaps the best sociopolitical play ever written", while Davies (2005) suggests that

> Blues [(1964)] is not a blemish on Baldwin's literary career but an *underrated achievement doomed to provoke discomfort* because it renders lethal American dilemmas and inbred social phobias in their complete, unbeautiful intractability […] I would like to submit two fundamental and concomitant defenses for this vision of Baldwin's play as a feat of radical theatre: first, that the structural and political textures of Blues for Mister Charlie are patently consistent with those of Baldwin's celebrated essays and novels, in sharp retort to those spurious contentions that Blues lays bare some different, not to say cruder, element in the writer's psyche; and second, that Blues is a specifically theatrical piece, its

> complex form and ethical stances credibly descended from such politicized dramatic traditions as the Attic tragedy and the Brechtian epic. In this play, Baldwin devises acutely stage-specific strategies for realizing his characteristically tough ideas about history, guilt, and the role of art and of audiences in considering them. By re-viewing Blues in these ways, it soon becomes clear that most of the critical objections mounted against Blues for Mister Charlie reflect deficiencies not in the play but rather in longstanding American paradigms for conceiving the theatre, not inadequacies in Baldwin's grasp of a social problematic but a reluctance of many Americans to admit just how unwieldy and variously reinforced our factionalized history really is. (Davies, 2005., brackets added)

Also, Pratt (1978) suggests that early (Roth, 1964; Littlejohn, 1966) and, perhaps, also later (Bigsby, 1985; Allen, 1998:29; Als, 2009:62) critics may have developed a ”rationale of rejection” towards the play to camouflage “their inability or unwillingness to [...] dealing with it as an *artistic* creation” (emphasis original). Offering a 1990s view, David van Leer (1991) first argues that the play was ”too long, political and bleak to find a commercial audience” and had an ”inconsistent” dramatic structure, but then asserts that, nevertheless, its “critics attacked the play *less for its form* than *for the anger it directed at southern white racists*” (emphasis added). One important objective of the present study is precisely to analyze that “anger”, also detected by the black psychiatrists Grier and Cobbs (1968) as the “black rage” of their patients, in a manner characterized by Pratt (1978) as ”retrospective tranquility”, *viz*., with a somewhat cooler hindsight. Pratt (1978) sees this as possible for, for example, a 21st-century scholar more than for any of Baldwin's contemporaries. However, as an exception to this, Fred L. Standley (1981) summarizes examples of the plays criticism in a fairly objective manner. This scholar (1981) regards *Blues* (1964) as a ”complex drama” and states that ”while some critics have dismissed the play as propagandistic, bombastic and melodramatic, others have praised the manner in which it reveals the myths and stereotypes relating to black-white relations”. Moreover, Standley (1981) regards this revelation as a recurrent theme also in Baldwin's essays in *The Fire* (1963), which was published not more than a year before the opening night of *Blues* (1964).

In another essay from the 1990s, besides that of van Leer (1991), Darwin T. Turner (1994), a scholarly critic of Baldwin's already in the 1970s, (see Turner, 1977:189-94) also praises Baldwin particularly for the author's ability to ”articulate eloquently and persuasively the bitterness, the alienation, and the despair of black Americans”, also in *Blues* (1964). This combination of “bitterness, alienation and despair” is epitomized in the play’s main character Richard. Richard, Meredith M. Malburne (2007:39) suggests, has been regarded, by most of the play’s critics up to the 21st century, as a mere “stereotypical provocateur” and “a card-board cut-out”, hence, so “predictably problematic that he negates any possibility for fruitful critical discussion”. The scholar then offers a different view of the character as “both the object of significant historical weight and the small but significant seed of potential revolution” (Malburne 2007:39).

Finally, one must consider a recent study of Baldwin's novels by Pekka Kilpeläinen (2010), which focuses on the dialectics between “ideology” and “moments of post-categorical Utopia” in those works, “Utopia” here meaning

the kinds of imaginary resolutions to racial conflicts based on an egalitarian space and state of affairs free of oppressive racial categorizations. My analysis also acknowledges the existence of two moments of the utopian kind in *Blues (1964)*, where Baldwin provides his characters with a "utopian enclave" as a "space of escape" from the unfortunate racial realities of their environment (see Kilpeläinen, 2010:82-83). I shall deal more specifically with those moments later in the course of my analysis.

All in all, Kilpeläinen (2010) tends to regard ideology as merely an oppressive force, and does not seem to recognize any ideologies that would have had positive effects on the self-consciousness of blacks, such as the black radicalism of the Black Power Movement. Therefore, his study seems to be leaving the hope for a better future to Baldwin's characters encapsulated in those faint utopian moments, offering the characters "spaces invested with personal and political ideals" which, at best, can be only regarded as "imaginary resolutions of real social contradictions" (2010:83). My interest, though, lies precisely in Baldwin's ability to describe and deal with not only the *realities* of Southern racial hegemony, but also its political *opposition* by ideologies promoting black agency. To serve that interest, I therefore shall focus on the political and, thus, ideological nature of the language in the play's dialogue, insofar that it reveals and deals with the meanings that constitute the racial power struggle, inherent in the South and, perhaps, in the whole USA of the 1950s and 60s. As traditional literary studies, particularly those of the Marxist tradition, on the whole, focus on ideology as merely an oppressive force and thus do not seem to offer a practical enough approach for me to reach my goal with, I am then compelled to turn towards a more linguistic discipline, namely that of Critical Discourse Analysis. In the next chapter (5), I introduce this approach to the reader.

5 FIELD OF STUDY: APPLYING CDA TO BALDWIN'S DRAMA

In this chapter, I acquaint the reader with the discipline of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The central questions in the study are language, power and society. In particular, it aligns with the kind of CDA as represented by Norman Fairclough's (1992a;1992b) work on the hegemonic struggle, also borrowing Vimala Herman's (1995) argument of dramatic conflicts as ideological.

5.1 What is CDA?

As a field of study, CDA is a heterogenous one (Wodak, 1999, lecture; Pietikäinen, 2000:65), including a body of scientific work by both linguists and sociologists who, as Pietikäinen (2000:65) puts it, "share an interest in the examination of "the relationship between language and the social in a particular way". Ruth Wodak (1999, lecture) dates the birth of this approach to the year 1993, when a special issue of the journal *Discourse and Society* came out. Before that, however, Fairclough (1992b) had already published his *Discourse and social change* (1992), in which he presented his concept of the hegemonic struggle, which is crucial to the purpose of this study.

The theoretical roots of CDA lie in the domain of critical theory and consist of a broad variety of theories interested in the criticism of power and ideology, the best representatives of which are the members of the Frankfurt school and Jürgen Habermas. Pietikäinen (2000:67) summarizes the main ideas presented in their works as "the transformation of philosophical problems" into political questions and "potential emancipation", to which political awareness of "the existing conditions and structures of power would contribute", echoing the central idea of the Enlightenment of knowledge as the bearer of change.

In this chapter, my aim is not to cover the whole field of CDA, but to focus on the kind of analysis most valid for the purpose of the present study, which is

to find out what racial conflict meant to Baldwin and his contemporaries and how the writer communicates this in a dramatic dialogue

In a study of ethnic representations in texts from Finnish newspapers, Pietikäinen (2000:66-67) summarizes two main characteristics of CDA. First, CDA resembles other forms of discourse analysis in the sense that it focuses on the "social, institutional, historical and political aspects of discourse rather than on individuals' intentions or competencies". This means that this study focuses on Baldwin's observations of the political climate of the racial situation in the USA, particularly the South of the 1960s, derived most accurately from his essays, rather than from his whole oeuvre, which constitutes a bulk too large to cover comprehensively in the scope of this work. Therefore, my approach provides just one piece that, hopefully, serves to complete the puzzle of Baldwin's artistry, being one that, so far, has not been introduced to the studies of it. The reason why Baldwin's essays are pivotal to this study is that they represent the most overt manifestations of the author's own political opinions, and thus also his ideological beliefs.

Central to CDA, is the conception of language as social as well as historical and constructive *action*. This means regarding discourse not as simply "representing the world, but also as constructing it", which gives discourse both a position of power and a double identity as both *conditioned* and *consequential*. This identity makes it a useful vehicle for the study of "racism or sexism, current political and social conditions, and historical events" (2000:67) and thus a prominent attribute of society, not to mention, "an interesting area of research" (2000:67). The double identity of discourse is also pivotal for the second feature of CDA that has to do with the "critical" nature of this approach, *viz*., as a means of "*studying the relationship between discourse and power*", namely how discourse both constructs and is shaped by relations of power (Pietikäinen 2000:67, emphasis original). To sum up:

> On one hand, CDA practitioners choose to study how discourse contributes to the construction, maintenance, reproduction, and legitimation of often unequal relationships between groups of people, institutions, capital, knowledge etc. On the other hand, CDA scholars are also *interested in exploring how existing power relations shape discourse*, that is, which ways of using language are possible or available for the language user in a particular context and which are not […] Finally, CDA practitioners are interested in how *discourse can be used as a resource* […] *to change and challenge existing power relations*. This aspect has been less studied so far […] Discourse itself, such as media discourse, can be *seen as an arena, where power struggles take place* […] To sum up, for critical discource analysts, critical means studying power of, in and over discourse […] This critical tenet gives its own character to CDA, differentiating it from other approaches of discourse analysis. Furthermore, criticality partly defines the focus and of study and research interest and even guides the data selection. (Pietikäinen 2000:66-67., emphasis added)

However, Pietikäinen (2000:68) also sees the implementation of CDA as complicated, mainly because criticality

> also entails a *political* aspect […] For some CDA practitioners the study of power is political enough. However, many CDA scholars have taken a more personal approach to what being political means. They, for instance, actively take part in various social movements or political groups, or […] make their research results available and useful for those studied to change things for the better […] This kind of promotion of politicalness has been criticized […as] scholarship has traditionally been regarded as a non-committed enterprise […]However, no science is value-free and CDA […] only differs from the others by explicating its goals. The second criticism centering on the position of the analyst is […] more serious […] Even though CDA specifies its focus on the discursive side of power, and on the consequences and conditions of discourse for those less advantaged, there is a danger to see the analyst as a person with a privileged access to such knowledge[…] Finally, critical and political aspects of CDA both suppose *self-reflectiveness*. That is, CDA practitioners should be explicit about their goals, theoretical and methodological orientations, research and political interests and background assumptions and explicate their merits and limitations. (Pietikäinen 2000:68., emphasis original.)

Here, I must also admit that my political interest in examining this play of Baldwin's lies in the desire to delve deep into the discourse of "race" in order to, first and foremost, find possibilities to transform it. Next, I shall briefly consider the compatibility of the analysis of racial hegemony with the objectives of CDA.

5.2 CDA and racial hegemony

The most well-known scholar representing the extreme kind of CDA, is Teun Van Dijk, to whom a political analysis of language and power means examining them from the point of view of the powerless (Van Dijk, 1998:11). Van Dijk's work, especially that on the formation of ideologies and identities (1998), is also pivotal to my analysis of racial discourse depicted by Baldwin as an African-American playwright, with the goal of negotiating positive black identity in a manner Van Dijk (1998:261) describes as *deprogramming*:

> Given the close relation between ideology and social identity […] ideological brainwashing may also affect the very *self-confidence* of whole groups. This has often been observed by women and blacks confronted with pervasive derogating discourse by men and whites, respectively. It is only through *raising group self-consciousness* and *ideological deprogramming* that the effects of this form of ideological hegemony may be countered. (Van Dijk, 1998:261., emphasis added)

Baldwin also recognized the importance of ideological deprogramming as means of breaking the representational barriers imposed on blacks through stereotypical racial discourse. In a speech given as late as in 1979 (Baldwin, 1979), the author contended:

> Writers are obliged, at some point, to realize that they are *involved in a language which they must change*. And for a black writer in this country to be born into the English

> language is to realize that the *assumptions on which the language operates are his enemy.* (Baldwin 1979, transcript., emphasis added)

This statement, taken from a speech Baldwin made at UC Berkeley in 1979, shows the author's later commitment to ideological deprogramming, which, at least partially, can also be seen in the play examined here. During the writing of this play, however, Baldwin oscillated between the ideologies of non-violent Christianity, which aimed at appealing to the conscience of righteous whites, and the emerging black radicalism, which promoted self-consciousness and self-defence (see Leeming, 1994:.290-95; Üsekes, 2008). This suggests that, while writing *Blues* (1964), Baldwin had not yet fully embraced the ideas of the emerging Black Power Movement. In fact, Douglas Field (2004:469) argues that he never did. Field contends that, from the mid-1960s, Baldwin "experienced deep anxieties about his roles both as [a liberal?] writer and revolutionary". These anxieties are also detectable in the text of *Blues* (1964), particularly in the dialogue between Parnell, the white liberal, and Meridian, the black priest.

Van Dijk (1998:2-3) also separates CDA from traditional analyses of ideology, which regarded it as a belief that is predominantly negative, untruthful, deceptive and opposite to the analyst's more "truthful" and "scientific" view, were the analyst studying communism, Christianity or capitalism, to name a few. Furthermore, the scholar refutes the traditional Marxist reductionism which regards power as merely a possession of the ruling classes and, instead, introduces the Gramscian idea of hegemony as a conceptualization of "the relations between ideology and society". This idea presents hegemonic power as a form of persuasion of the mind rather than as a coercion of the body. The restoration of hegemony through persuasion is most evident in the play's conflict between the black priest Meridian and Parnell, the white liberal, where the two discuss the issue of black self-defence (see Section 8.1). Having established a connection between CDA and racial conflict, I now turn to dealing with the possibilities of CDA in the analysis of a dramatic conflict, presented by Herman (1995).

5.3 CDA and dramatic conflict: *dramatic discourse as ideological*

This section deals with the introduction of CDA as a potential means of studying dramatic conflicts. Central to this approach, is the *political combination of ideas of the dramatic conflict and the hegemonic one.* This connection is also the *pivotal reason* why I find the idea of hegemonic struggle more applicable not only to Baldwin's, but also, perhaps to any similar kind of drama, than any literary theory in itself. The closest equivalents in the critical theory of literature for my approach would be new historicism and cultural criticism, as both of them acknowledge not only the reproductiveness of constraints of power, but also the opportunities to transform it (see Tyson, 2006:291-97). In fact, some of my research questions are constructed in accordance to these theories. However, I

have not found in literary criticism any concept that would match the analysis of dominative and defensive dramatic conflict as properly as Fairclough's (1992ab) idea of the hegemonic struggle. I shall deal with the potential shortcomings of my methodology more in the discussion at the end of this study. Here, I shall now present Vimala Herman's (1995) view of dramatic conflicts as *ideological*, and thus also *hegemonic* (Fairclough, 1992a;1992b).

Although Herman (1995) does not see discourse analysis as a fundamentally relevant means of study of the dramatic (77-78) and, all in all, claims to be more inclined to an ethnomethodological analysis of drama, her approach to language is fairly *critical* as well as *political*. Herman does, in fact, apply the same concept to "dramatic discourse" as Fairclough (1992b) and Fowler (1996) do to the political one, namely the idea of *turn-taking* as part of the theory of *speech acts*.

The concept of turn-taking derives from the discipline of Conversational Analysis (Herman 1995:78-80, 208), although also used in CDA. Herman (1995:208-209) does, in fact, acknowledge the connection between the world of drama and that of politics, as well as the role of drama in transforming political power through what Fowler (1996:54-58) also would characterize as defamiliarization of habitualized codes and practices. Herman contends:

> When institutional events and conventional acts enter a play and their workings are dramatized, *the taken-for-granted is defamiliarized*, and the wider issues of power and control […] are foregrounded as issues appropriate to that world [of drama]. They […] can be used to portray a fictional world, and, in a special way, since *they point to a pre-existing world* of political, corporate and civic life in a society. The issues enacted and outcomes achieved signify the state of the political world and the nature of the *forces that are operative in that world*, since it is in the name of society […] that institutional acts and events achieve their […] world-changing force […] The *clash of the protagonist and antagonist is* also a *clash of different ideologies* in their *struggle for ascendency* [and *hegemony*?]. Herman, 1995: 208-209., emphasis added)

Herman's (1995:208-209) naming of ideologies as "operative forces" relates to Milton Marx's (1961) theory of the dramatic conflict as not only that of characters as oppositional individuals, but also as symbols of juxtaposed dominative and defensive "outside forces" (26) . Ideologies, as powerful social forces, can well be incorporated to Marx's theory. Moreover, in accordance with Van Dijk's approach (1998:3), this could be said of both the ideologies that maintain hegemony and those promoting agency. The application of Fairclough's (1992b) concept of the "hegemonic struggle" to Baldwin's dramatic depiction of racial conflict, as the key idea in the present study, is thus supported. Besides turntaking, the CDA practiced by Fairclough (1992a;1992b) focuses on the implied presuppositions behind political speech acts, which Herman (1995:209) too recognizes as constituting "illocutionary conflicts" between hidden meanings that " set in motion social, ethical and inter-personal forces in a play". These "illocutionary conflicts" emerge, as dramatic characters

> are constructed within a variety of situated contexts in which they are required to perform with respect to the contingencies they face in the deictic [those of time and place] contexts of their interactions […] A […] subjectivity of power or powerlessness, unitary positions of dominance or subordination, or attendant strategies of power or non-power […] are hard to come by in the dramatic world, given that there are usually reversals of fortune and changes in states of affairs, and various inter-personal and institutional networks of relationships to be attended as part of the action […] The fictional world […] is a world of transactions with others like or unlike themselves, sharing political regimes […] [that are] subject to laws and governed by institutions and norms, their [the characters'] lives enmeshed in the bonds of community, convention, opinion, beliefs, taboos, of shared social life, and [these transactions] involving accommodations, alliances or antagonisms of various kinds. (Herman, 1995:209., brackets added)

Herman's (1995:209) observations of the fictional world as that of situational "transactions sharing political regimes subject to laws etc" and characters as agents of those transactions "enmeshed in the various bonds and in a world of accommodations etc." resonate heavily with the world of racial conflict in the Deep South of the 1950s and 60s and further legitimate the study of Baldwin's drama as both an articulation and manipulation of the racial discourse in that era. Herman (1995:6) particularly names as the ability of the dramatist the skill of *exploiting* the

> underlying speech conventions, principles and "rules" of use, operative in speech exchanges in the many sorts, conditions and contexts of society which [it's] members are assumed to share and use in their interactions in day-to-day exchanges. The principles, norms and conventions of use which underlie spontaneous communication in everyday life are precisely those […] exploited by dramatists […] Thus, "ordinary speech", or more accurately, the "rules" underlying the orderly and meaningful exchange of speech in everyday contexts are the resource that dramatists use to construct dialogue in plays […] It is the illusion of real-life conversation that is sought which is the product of consummate art. (Herman 1995:6., emphasis original)

In the analysis of racial power on the level of discursive meanings, one specifically has to be able to detect the implications behind the explicit use of speech acts, and, as Gramsci (1971:12) did, separate them from the coercive exercise of power. It is usually these implications that convey the underlying rules and conventions of the interaction between members of different racial groups, which need not to be explicated, as it can be presupposed that they are known by both parties to the dialogue. The most important rule of Southern racial discourse was, of course, the inequality of white and black individuals, which was elaborated in various forms in the racial etiquette of the South (see Harris, 1995), with the objective of increasing the social distance (Bourdieu in Maynard, 2002) between whites and blacks.

Identity, as a key element in my analysis, is analyzed by Herman (1995:201) in a manner wholly in accordance with the principles of CDA. Herman sees it as "assembled via contextual effects in discourse – the product of interpretation, even when *identity* is self-interpreted […] In whatever fashion *identity* and sub-

jectivity are privately or internally experienced, in interaction it is [they are?] *discursively and dialogically produced*" (Herman, 1995:201., emphasis and brackets added) The *dialogical* production of identities could perhaps also be translated into the production of the illusionary negotiations of identity that the characters seem to make, even if these are created and controlled by the author of the play. This would, then, to the reader and possible spectator of the play, seem *as if* the characters themselves are negotiating their identities with the power of, here, racial, discourse. In my own version of CDA, the characters' identities would, however, ultimately be regarded as the consequences (see Pietikäinen, 2000: 69) of the characters' own illusionary, but, nevertheless, discursive action depicted in their lines considered as speech acts. I shall explain this idea further in the next section (5.4), where I acquaint the reader with my approach to CDA. Before that, however, I shall note a piece of criticism offered by Widdowson (1998: 137, in Jeffries, 2010: 13) on CDA as too eclectic for representing "a systematic application of a theoretical model". Rather than that, Widdowson (1998:137, in Jeffries 2010: 13) calls the approach "a kind of *ad hoc* bricolage, which takes from theory whatever concept comes usefully to hand". I shall return to this critique in the Discussion Chapter.

5.4 The present approach to CDA

The reason for regarding the characters' identities as the *results* of their make-believe *negotiations* with the underlying racial discourse, particularly with the representational stereotypes embedded in it, rather than as the social *products* of that discourse, comes from my application of the kind of analysis of drama introduced by playwright Jeremy Sweet (1993). Sweet (1993:21-27) regards dramatic scenes as the characters' negotiations over objects, other characters or space. This theory seems appropriate to my analysis in the sense that if gives me *practical tools of analysis* to which I can anchor my examination of racial identities. Furthermore, I can then expand my analysis to the further consideration of those identities as products of the reading process. In this process, racial discourse is regarded *as the arena* (see Pietikäinen, 2000:67; p. 80) *of hegemonic struggle* (Fairclough, 1992b) between the ideological (Herman, 1995:209) viewpoints of my Four implied Readers.

Contrary to the traditional division, prevalent in dramatic scripts, of the script into the characters' *language*, expressed by their lines, *and* their actions, usually determined separately in the parentheses, CDA would also regard their lines *as part* of the play's action. My application of CDA also concentrates on both the *conditions* and *consequences* of *racial discourse* (see Pietikäinen, 2000:66-67) as *the system of meanings* (Jokinen et al., 1993:27; Harris, 1995:388) that constitutes the *basis* of the characters' both verbal and non-verbal action guided by *ideological evaluations* (Van Dijk, 1998:132).

To begin, I shall look at the conditions of discourse as constraints on the characters' interaction by first analyzing both the explicit speech acts and their

implicit presuppositions conveyed by their dialogue and, second, by viewing the strategies of turn-taking in their interaction. Then, I shall turn to the *consequences* of discourse by examining the various identities (Pietikäinen, 2000:67) the characters have been made by Baldwin to negotiate. Next, I shall analyze the relation of those identities to the four different Reader types I have constructed to represent the hegemonic struggle of racial conflict in the racial discourse of the USA of the 1950s and 60s, more specifically, that of the Deep South, with these Reader types again indicating the socio-historic conditions behind the characters' negotiations of identity.

The second part of my analysis has to do with the four different dramatic Readings and the cathartic resolutions each of them seem to offer as outcomes to the conflicts between the play's characters. I shall look at the *ideological consequences* (Jokinen et al., 1993:96-98) offered by those four kinds of readings and outcomes, namely in terms of 1) whether they support or resist the *status quo* of racial relations in the Deep South, 2) how and why they stress the impact of either the socio-historic *context* of or the characters' *action* in the play in bringing about those resolutions, and, finally, 3) whether they elicit a pessimistic or optimistic view of racial relations in the USA of the 1960s. In the next chapter (6), I shall demonstrate my methodology as well as present the tools of my analysis.

6 METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS OF ANALYSIS

Art deals with emotions, ideas and meanings as both constituents and consequences of ideologies. Therefore, art, at its best, can approach the covert part of the social reality of "race" in the realm of thoughts and attitudes, which, in turn, will prove important for finding the ways to transform racial hegemony. This is also true with drama, which combines the private and the public domains of individuals in society by creating a world, where society's structural framework blends with the confrontation between individual characters in the play (Herman, 1995:208-209).

Traditional sociology has usually regarded drama as a product of imagination and thus has shown little interest in it. The sociologist Erving Goffman (1974), for example, regards the world of drama as a "make-believe" reality (54), a "mock-up of everyday life" and thus less interesting to the field of social studies. However, since the 1990s, the social sciences and linguistics as well as literary analysts have been converging, as far as the social analysis of dialogue in conversations has developed. Thus, the present approach borrows its basic system of coding the lines of the play from Conversational Analysis (CA) (see Potter 2002, workshop). It is, however, in the kind of CDA practised by Fairclough (1992a;1992b) that I have found the most appropriate concept, namely the idea of hegemonic struggle, that links the dramatic and racial conflict as two types of ideological struggle for hegemony. So far, apart from Herman's (1995:209) account of dramatic conflict as an ideological conflict, I have not yet come across any other studies that have systematically examined the dialogue between the reproduction and transformation of hegemony either in a *dramatic* or a *racial* setting.

As far as ideology and literature are concerned, the Marxist literary tradition provides the most fertile ground source for their analysis. A Marxist critique of ideology in western theatre has been most effectively applied by Bertolt Brecht, to whom I shall return in Section 6.6, where I present the four different dramatic ways of reading Baldwin's play. Here, the Marxist theory of the dominative ideology is articulated by Augusto Boal (in Babbage 2004:55-56) and Frances Babbage (2004:56) as the argument that, during its evolution, Western theatre

> has remained *a tool in the hands of the dominant social group*, *reinforcing* the *ideology* of that group even when seemingly apolitical in content. As part of its coercive project, Boal argues, it has consistently *denied individuality and autonomy to the poorer classes*, who from the perspective of the powerful are simply 'the masses', the uncivilized lumpenproletariat. This is not the only way theatrical history can be interpreted, but it is a persuasive reading…reflected elsewhere in Marxist criticism, for example in the work of Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), Louis Althusser (1918-90) and Raymond Williams (1921-88). (Babbage 2004:55-56., emphasis added)

Van Dijk (1998:140) corroborates this argument as the early phase of the theorizing of ideology, and contends that, at first, the Marxist tradition associated ideologies solely

> with the notion of 'class' […] Ideologies were attributed to the ruling class, which disseminated them to conceal or *legitimate* its power, inequality or the status quo. Similarly, the *Gramscian notion of hegemony implies ideological domination and consent*, but also especially in terms of a power elite, on one hand […] and a large dominated group of […] the citizens whose ideologies are persuasively inculcated by these elites, on the other. At a later stage, however, with the increasing attention paid to *other forms of domination,* for instance those of *gender* and *'race'*, also other social groups […] were attributed ideologies […] In sum, *each social group* or *formation* that *exercises a form of power or domination* over other groups could be associated with an ideology […] as a means to legitimate or conceal such power[…but] *also those groups who resist such domination* should have an ideology in order *to organize their social practices.* (Van Dijk 1998:140., emphasis added)

My study can be considered post-Marxist in the sense that it recognizes the existence of *both* dominant and resisting ideologies in the play that are primarily attributed to the *racial* conflict of the 1960s in the USA. Furthermore, it takes into account not only the *negative*, but also *positive* traits of ideology as a *means of organizing resistance* against oppression by the oppressed and thus promoting their cultural agency The ideologies in question are the Southern white racism and liberalism as well as the black non-violent Christianity and that of the emerging revolutionary Black Power Movement. The struggle between the white hegemonic ideologies and their black counterparts also entails elements of class, caste and gender; for example, in his play, Baldwin also connects "race" with *privilege*, *inequality* and *patriarchy*.

6.1 Research questions

I shall now introduce my research questions. With these questions, I aim at finding out how Baldwin articulates and manipulates the racial discourse of the Deep South of the 1960s in his play *Blues* (1964).

1. What ***kinds of racial meanings are revealed in the characters' a) implicit presuppositions and b) dominative turn-taking found in the speech acts of their dialogue?***

Fowler (1996) as well as Fairclough (1992b) and Herman (1995) consider implicitness and turn-taking as important concepts for the analysis of fiction. Implicitness is detected in language as breaches of four conversational maxims, which I shall deal with more thoroughly at the beginning of Chapter 7. Implicitness usually occurs in *presuppositions* the speakers and writers may have as part of their *motivation* for using language (Fairclough, 1992b:234). It is used to refer to information and conventions, "assumed to be 'given' or 'true', and…therefore presupposed by the discourse" (Van Dijk, 1998:269), equally also *habitualized*, and thus *taken for granted* so that they *do not* in the everyday conversation *need to be justified or even made explicit*. This apparently was particularly the case with the Southern racial codes of conduct, as they were known to every Southerner, white and black. Also, turn-taking can be seen as an important attribute of racial power, namely in terms of who controls the interaction by beginning or closing the dialogue (Fowler, 1996:131; Van Dijk, 1998:273).

2. What kinds of *discursive identities* do the characters of the play as individuals seem to negotiate in their conflicted relations with each other in the text examined?

a) How and why do these identities relate to the historical popular representations of African-Americans?

Stereotypes, as negative representations, serve to legitimate the racial inequality and subordination of blacks by dehumanizing, degrading and either de- or hypersexualizing them. As noted in Section 2.1.3 (pp. 27-28), there existed a conflict among black artists between their spiritual wish to portray characters credible to African-American spectators, and their economic need to earn their living by playing characters stereotypically designed to entertain the masses of white mainstream audiences. To make ends meet, black actors were to yield to performing the roles of, as King and Milner (1971:x; see p. 28) would put it, "singing hyenas dancing on the graves of one's ancestors", which suggests that the roles available to blacks in mainstream theatre, with the exception of the few performances of texts by black authors, depicted them either as funny or dangerous objects of ridicule and fear. Adherence to these derogatory representations of blacks would legitimate treating African-Americans in ways that, if applied to a white person, would be unacceptable. Since Bigsby (1985:389) also claims that Baldwin's play "at times, comes perilously close to embracing the stereotypes it seems intent on denying", I feel the present study needs to address this question, too.

b) How and why do these identities correspond to the views of the Four Reader types that represent four potential aspects of the struggle for racial hegemony in the USA in the 1960s'?

This question is crucial to my research, as it connects the play to the racially hegemonic power struggle, which here serves as the framework for the construction of racial discourse.

3. What are the *ideological consequences* offered by the Four dramatic Readings of the play's plot and resolutions?

Here, I bring the study of the text closer to its origins by comparing its events and cathartic resolutions with those provided by the Four Readings, each of which implies a different *ideology* and *world view*. The following three questions have all been borrowed from the post-Marxist literary and cultural theories (see Barry 2009:166-84).

a) How and why does the *racial order* produced by these resolutions either support or resist the *status quo of racial hegemony* in the play's milieu?
b) To what extent does the production of this order in this text seem to be influenced by the play's socio-historic *context* of the *structure* of racial power or created within the *occasion* (Maynard 2002, lecture) of each frame through the *action* of its characters?

The dilemma of *structure* and *occasion*, originally introduced by Pierre Bourdieu, is pivotal to the social sciences (Maynard, 2002, lecture). All of the Four Readings of the play differ from one another also in this respect, some of them stressing the almost *deterministic* impact of the play's *context*, while others emphasize the importance of the character's own willful *action* to the play's outcomes.

c) Does the racial order interpreted through the Four Readings elicit a *pessimistic* and/or *optimistic* view of racial relations in both its milieu and the real Deep South of the 1960s?

The question whether the play promotes pessimism and/or optimism also pertains to the ideological consequences offered by the Four Readings, as these Readings, too, entail either *pessimistic* and/or *optimistic* interpretations of the play's message. The dilemma of *pessimism* and *optimism*, along with that between *context* and *action*, is also important in the post-Marxist literary and cultural studies. The nature of this dispute lies in the famous quotation from Karl Marx (in Barry, 2009:178) stating that "men and women make their own history, but not in the conditions of their own choosing". (Barry 2009:178.) This ambivalent statement also provides the basis for the kind of CDA practiced in this study, where racial discourse is also seen as both *conditioned by* and *constructive of* the hegemonic struggle of racial conflict. It is now time to introduce the kind of analytic approach applied in this study.

6.2 The analytic approach to investigating the dramatic and racially hegemonic conflict in Baldwin's play

> The ESSENCE OF DRAMA is conflict […] Although dramatic situations belong primarily to the theatre, they are not limited to the acted or printed play but abound in literature, history, science, business, if the observer is but keenly aware of their existence and import (Marx 1961:21., emphasis original)

What is typical of the dramatic experience, is the conflict between the major characters and also the major forces of the play in question. In the dramatic experience, the two opposing characters or forces, known as the dominative and the defensive force, are seen as equally powerful (Marx, 1961:21- 23). The idea of the defensive character struggling against the might of the dominator corresponds to Fairclough's idea of the linguistic "hegemonic struggle" (1992b:49). The hegemony of the dominative group or individual and the agency of their defensive counterparts can thus be seen as a feature of language use in western societies, such as the USA, the political system of which, in the 1950s and 60s, was based on the principles of pluralist competition between various interest groups, racial minorities excepted (Waltzer, 1980:27).

Different ideological interests strive for power in society (Habermas, 1973) and, in this struggle, attempt to bring about a discursive "socio-linguistic order" (Fairclough, 1992b:49) both affected by and reproducing their domination, whereas the defensive ones produce counter-discourse that is both influenced by and resists this order (Fairclough 1992a:48-51). Thus, the characters constructed in the text of *Blues* (1964) examined could be seen as either reproducing or transforming racial hegemony, as well as affected by it.

Traditionally, research on real-life speech in various social contexts has focused on the principles of co-operation and mutual understanding (Fowler, 1996:135-36). However, as noted above, drama as a *genre* of literature thrives on conflict, seeking to juxtapose not only individual thoughts and emotions, but also thought systems, namely the ideologies of different groups of individuals. On the stage, we seldom see characters as content and at peace with each other. Instead, as in my version of Peräkylä's (1990:17) metaphor of "bike-fixing", presented in Section 6.3, we are drawn into rivalries of personal wills and social forces, where the rewards are paid in the power and dominance one character can exercise upon the other. By "social forces", I mean ideologies as evaluative belief systems (Van Dijk, 1998:112) that help to organize either the domination of the oppressive racial group or the resistance of the oppressed group in society.

Although drama does not represent reality *per se*, as spontaneous action in a factual situation, but rather as a pre-formed carefully organized and rehearsed spectacle, it nevertheless creates a world parallel to reality (Herman, 1995:11). This discursive world includes meanings similar to real-life discourse (Fowler 1996:233). In the world of fiction, however, the language is more condensed and

focused than in real life speech (Leech and Short, 1981:180), and it also depends on the subjective choices made by its author.

Clark and Ivanic (1997:136-158) divide the identity of any writer into three subject positions, or selves: 1) the autobiographical, 2) the discursive, and 3) the authorial. The autobiographical self refers to the writer's life experience, the discursive one to his/her following of pre-existing discursive and, here, racially determined conventions, such as the Southern practice of desexualizing all black men by calling them "boys" or "uncles", and the authorial self to those parts of the text where s/he asserts his/her own voice and control over the text. These three dimensions can also be found in Baldwin's (*Notes*, 1955:4-5) own account of the identity of the writer as an artist:

> One writes out of one thing only - one's own experience [1] . Everything depends on how relentlessly one forces from this experience the last drop, sweet or bitter it can possibly give. This is the only real concern of the artist, to *recreate out of the disorder of life* [2] *the order which is art* [3]. (*Notes*, 1955: 4-5., emphasis original, numbering added)

In Baldwin's words, writing begins with autobiographical *experience,* and continues with recreating, thus perhaps also first *reproducing* the conventional discursive meanings referred here as the "disorder of life", ending with the creation of *one's own* authorial *order*, which constitutes the writer's artistic expression, and, hopefully, produces the *catharsis* of the Reader and possible spectator. As my aim is to analyze Baldwin less as an autobiographical individual than as a *working author* who either *articulates* or *manipulates* the discourse of the racial conflict in his times, I shall first attempt to distinguish between these two functions of the writer. However, I also need to bear in mind that, when reading Baldwin, I am only dealing with my assumption of him as implied by the text, through a suggested "common fund of knowledge and experience" (Leech and Short, 1981:259), retrieved mostly from my readings his essays along with historical accounts of the black experience in the USA of the 1950s and 60s. This means that I shall be limiting not only my analysis on the drama itself, but its background information to Baldwin's essays, as I feel they provide me with sufficient information about the ideological framework behind the writing of the play at hand. Hence, I have had to leave out the vast array of his novels from my readings, as I feel they do not offer any new information on Baldwin's ideological conflicts.

Racial discourse is a conflicted one. It is a system of ideological meanings that either reinforce or oppose the racial order of the Deep South represented in the play's milieu Plaguetown. Within the various frames in the play that constitute this conflict, the text's characters are made to negotiate racial identity, according to the conventions of the town's sociolinguistic order created by Baldwin on the basis of the racial order of the South. In the next section, I shall present the reader the next pair of my tools of analysis, namely *frames and identities*.

6.3 Frames and identities

I now move on to the examination of not only what kinds of identities are constructed within the racial conflicts of the characters of the play, but also how these identities constitute racial ideologies through the attitudes of evaluation (Fairclough, 1992; Van Dijk, 1998) expressed by the author through the characters' fictional speech acts. The point I want to make is that the interaction of these identities in the context of racial conflict produces both individual identities of the speakers and generalizing representations of the Other. Thus, in this study, the identities produced by the reader/spectators promoting black agency are regarded as *questioners* of the *traditional process* in which "identities are produced and taken up through practices of *representation*" (Grossberg, 1996:90). In my political analysis of Baldwin's play, these questioning identities work as *counterparts* for racially stereotyped *representations* produced by racial hegemony. This view is introduced by hooks (1994:196), who also sees generalizing representations of the Other as primarily negative and stereotypical. The difference between these and identities would then be that identities are *negotiated,* whereas representations, as manifestations of racial power, are *to be negotiated with*.

In the present study, dramatic characters are seen as negotiating various identities for themselves that are considered as either reproducing white hegemony, or transforming it by promoting black agency in Plaguetown. This division into white hegemony and black agency, however, does not apply in as clear-cut a view to the division between the white and black characters. Therefore, a black character in the play can also serve as reproductive of white hegemony, just as a white one may function as promoting black agency.

The avoidance of racial essentialism, seeing identities as "strategic" and "positional" instead of as "stable" and "authentic" (Hall, 1996:3) also applies to the Four different implied Readers and potential spectators introduced further in this chapter. Therefore, each of these Readers could be both black and white. However, one would be inclined to start with the historical presupposition that more, especially Southern, white than black reader/spectators from the 1960s would be inclined towards reproducing the white hegemony, and that it would be more in the interests of black readers and spectators than white ones, to resist and try to transform that hegemony.

The identities found in this analysis are both ideological and situational, reflecting the dilemma between *structure* and *occasion* (see Bourdieu in Maynard, 2002, lecture) and that of *context* and *action*. I shall examine the situational nature of the identities by dividing the text into scenes, which I then regard as frames (Goffman, 1974; Peräkylä, 1990) of experience.

"Race", as a powerful social construct (Montagu, 1997; Banton, 1998; Banks & Eberhardt, 1998), and an integral part of American society, maintained and resisted through the language conveying racial discourse, meets the requirements of CDA. The analysis of the play in question focuses on racial meanings manifested in stereotypical representations within the discourse of the text

and their impact on the construction of the characters' identities. The analysis is based on a number of readings of the play and the results are presented through the way these identities correspond to the views attributed to the Four different Readers and also the way the ideological consequences of their action pertain to the four distinguishable ways of reading the play I call the Four Readings.

Marx (1961:26-27) divides dramatic conflicts into three separate categories, namely to those between characters (inter-individual conflicts), those between a character and outside forces (individual and environment conflicts) and each character's inner conflicts. In my analysis, I focus on four inter-individual conflicts, as these provide me with enough material to work on. I shall, however, also comment on the other two types of conflicts insofar they appear to be connected to the primary ones, but shall not deal with them in chapters of their own. Although there are some borderline cases, which I shall comment upon, when they arise, I believe this is a satisfactory solution for the overall clarity of the thesis. Following Sweet's (1993) idea of scenes as negotiations (13-15), I shall look at situations where racial meanings are negotiated through objects, characters and various kinds of spaces.

Frames, originally termed "organizations of experience" (Goffman, 1974) and also "mental models" (Emmott, 1994), constitute a situation dependent on its context, whether in the real-life or make-believe world of a fictional text or performance. Thus, I have divided the text of the play into frames, in which the characters negotiate identity. Switching from one frame to another occurs, when the topic of the frame, namely the target of negotiation, is changed. To illustrate this, as well as the fundamentals of my method, I shall now elaborate on Anssi Peräkylä's (1990:17) metaphor of "bike-fixing"

Peräkylä (1990:17) demonstrates the switching of frames of experience by the example of himself (P.) fixing a bike and suddenly being greeted by a friend. Here, the topic of the first frame would be the fixing of the bike and that of the other the greeting of the friend. Similarly, if Peräkylä were telling this story to someone else, the narrative could be broken down into the same two frames as speech acts, indicating P. first talking about the bike and then starting to talk about the friend. Thus, the two frames would, in the story, focus on the *bike* and the *friend*, or, in terms of Sweet's (1993) dramatic theory, on an *object* and a *character*.

The third possible target of negotiation in Sweet's (1993) theoretical framework is *space*. In my analysis, I shall examine different kinds of spaces. My first division of individual space comes from Davina Cooper (1998:15), who divides space into the individual's *physical location* on the one hand and the *symbolic* domain in which s/he *is entitled to make ideological choices of his/her own* on the other. I shall call these two dimensions the *space of being* and the *space of choice* and illustrate their use in my analysis by further extending P.'s metaphor of "bike-fixing".

If P., instead of the friend, when fixing his bike in a particular location, say, the yard of the building he lived in, met, for example, an authority figure,

such as the janitor of the building, who then claimed that P., due to some regulation, was not allowed to fix his bike in that yard and told him to go elsewhere, the target of negotiation would then be the *physical space* of the yard, here, P.'s *space of being*. If, for instance, the two were arguing about the way the bike should be fixed, the target of negotiation would be P's *space of choice*, meaning his freedom to choose, for instance, which brand of glue to use, were the fixing of the bike, say, to include the repair of a flat tyre. Moreover, if P's adversary was a persistent salesman promoting a brand of glue, which was not P's first choice, we would then, in Marx's (1961:23) terms, have *a dominative-defensive conflict of interests* between the salesman pushing his product and P. resisting this. Furthermore, if the particular make of glue promoted by the salesman was the one used by everyone else in the neighbourhood, due to its being *evaluated* as better than P's choice, we would then have the structural framework of a conflict between not only individual, but social, hence, *ideological* interests (Herman, 1995:209; Van Dijk, 1998:114). This conflict would be characterized as one between the *agency of the individual*, here, the entitlement to choose differently, on the one hand, and, on the other, the *hegemony of the environment* manifested, at its worst, as the coercive pressure to conform by choosing the kind of glue that is regarded by the community as the "appropriate" one.

My analysis will divide this conflict into four *frames of negotiation*. These frames will each focus on, in this order, 1) the *object* of the bike 2) *the space of being* between P. and the salesman, 3) the *object* of the glue, and, finally, 4) P.'s *space of choice* between his individual and the mainstream values of consumption. The identities negotiated within these four frames for P. might then, for example, be those of 1) a bike-fixer, 2) a competitor (for the space between P. and the salesman), 3) a consumer (of the glue) and 4) a dissident (from the ideology of the rest of the community).

The purpose of using Peräkylä's metaphor here was to illustrate the three basic targets of my initial analysis, which focuses on objects, characters and space as symbols of hegemonic power, with which the characters are made to negotiate their identities. Although my original analysis set out to examine each separate scene of the play as a frame of negotiation, I soon discovered that the actual conflicts between one character and another, or with one's environment, overlapped not only beyond the various scenes of the play, but also from one act to another. Therefore, I decided to follow the boundaries of conflicts rather than those of scenes. Thus, in my present analysis, I deal with separate conflicts as kinds of stories or narratives narrowed down to the interaction between two characters, one black, and the other, white. The division of the conflicts into frames is defined as marking the transition from one frame to another by the change of the target of negotiation in the frame (see Emmott, 1994), whether an object, a character, or one of the two kinds of spaces introduced (pp. 80-81), or, perhaps, of yet another kind of space. Next, I shall introduce my Four different Readers and their connection to the racial conflict in both the play and American society.

6.4 The Four Readers

A crucial aspect of my analysis, is the understanding of how the Four Readers, and also the possible spectators implied in the text of interest are positioned in the power struggle between racial hegemony and agency and how each of them constructs different kinds of identities for each character in various situations. I shall now explain what I mean by these Four Readers, which I choose to refer to as just Readers, although they also give cues to the reactions of potential spectators.

At first, I shall explain the term "implied reader". The referent of this term is described by Leech and Short (1981:259) as a hypothetical person "who shares with the author not just background knowledge but also a set of presuppositions, sympathies and standards of what is pleasant and unpleasant, good and bad, right and wrong.". This means that, just as the reader of a text expects the author implied in the text, namely the *image of the writer constructed* by the reader, to possess similar values and knowledge to his/hers, also the author can assume that the *kind of reader implied by the text* as its appropriate recipient would share these values and knowledge with him/her. In both cases, neither the author nor the reader can be sure that this is actually true. In my study, this idea becomes particularly interesting, as I shall argue that the text can be examined from the points of view of four different Readers that are implied in it, all of which certainly do not represent the values of the author. Although Baldwin's conflict between non-violent Christian liberalism and black radicalism is present in the play, the author has also had to be able to create credible characters to represent Southern white racism and liberalism. Next, I shall present my Four Readers in detail through two juxtapositions, starting from the conflict between the Habitualized Reader and the Challenging Reader.

6.4.1 The Habitualized vs. the Challenging Reader

Fowler (1996:12) describes habitualization as

> a basic tendency in the psychology of perception […] If *experience* is *habitual*, perception becomes *automatic* and *uncritical*. As for language, meanings become *firmly established* in the minds of members of a society in so far that they are *coded in conventional, often used, and familiar* forms of expression. Habitualization is *staleness* of thought and language. (Fowler, 1996:12., emphasis added)

As a former inhabitant of the South, Alan Lomax (1993:61) provides a poignant example of the local habitualization of racial inequality:

> Like every Southerner, I had been *raised to believe that blacks were contented with their lot* . We *had been taught* not to think about the bad housing, the poor schools, the exclusion from restaurants, the Jim Crow rules about bathrooms and drinking fountains, the beatings, the police brutality, even the lynchings. A prosperous and expanding America *had taken almost all this for granted.* We had all got *used to the conven-*

> *ience* of a *black undercaste* that would do all the hot dirty jobs for whatever we paid them and thank us for giving them a chance. We were *used to the smiling and subservient black*, because the Southern police *customarily arrested any black who even wore a sullen look*. (Lomax, 1993:61., emphasis added)

In my analysis, the Habitualized Reader *takes racial inequality for granted* and, *being used to the status quo* of the *racial hegemony* of the South, *appears surprised* and *shocked every time this hegemony is threatened* in the play, *expecting* disciplinary and, perhaps, also punitive *action* to restore it This Reader, either sincerely or intentionally, upholds the notion, which also Lomax (1993:61) was "raised to believe" in his youth; that blacks were, or should be contented with their subordinate position in the South of the 1950s and 60s, and appears particularly apprehensive towards any attempt to criticize or challenge the white racial hegemony. Such a Reader could either be characterized as ignorant or, at least, arrogant to the human rights and needs of the black citizens of Plaguetown. Moreover, s/he would be fully prepared to call upon outside powers of coercion, either the police or the lynching mob, to re-instate the norms and codes of Southern racial etiquette, it they, in his/her opinion, were, in any way, at risk.

Conversely, The Challenging Reader remains at rage against any white character in the play, including white liberals, and *reacts provocatively* to what s/he interprets as *open manifestations* or *subtle initiations* of racial hegemony. Besides viewing all white characters stereotypically as either an enemy, or just "useless" (Hay 1994:94) to the purpose of racial revolution, this Reader also takes delight in every occasion where black characters, in a manner similar to that of the trickster figure (see p. 32), are able to *outwit* and *ridicule* their white racist adversaries. Furthermore, s/he is repeatedly searching for *opportunities* for the black characters to *act out* what Van Dijk (1998:261) terms "ideological deprogramming" (see p. 94), namely *elevating* the *self-esteem and self–consciousness of* blacks through *constant challenging* of racial *norms* and *practices* fundamental to the racial order of the Deep South, and thus promoting the cultural *agency* of African-Americans.

6.4.2 The Legitimating vs. the Critical Reader

> Legitimation […] is obviously a social (and political) act [or practice] […] typically *accomplished by text or talk*. Often, it also has an *interactive* dimension, as a *discursive response to a challenge* to one's own legitimacy. Pragmatically, legitimation is related to the […] *act of defending oneself* […] One of its appropriateness conditions is that the speaker [real or imaginary] is *providing good reasons, grounds or acceptable motivations* for past or present *action* […] *criticized* by others […] Legitimation is […] a […] broadly defined *communicative act* [or practice] that usually requires more than the utterance of a single proposition […] [It] may be a *complex, ongoing discursive practice* involving a set of interrelated discourses. (Van Dijk, 1998:255., emphasis added)

In my analysis, legitimation occurs in the lines of the characters as a *discursive practice* through which racial *inequality* and oppression are *motivated and defended* against their *critique and challenge* in the discourse of the play. The Legitimating

Reader attempts to *justify* and *promote racial hegemony* by what seems to be *rational argumentation*. The Critical Reader, in turn, will attempt to refute this kind of argumentation and *promote* the *transformation of racial power* through *critical analysis and debate*, paying particular attention to Baldwin's efforts as the author to *defamiliarize* (Fowler 1996:115-16; see p. 96) the Southern racial norms and practices that are taken for granted by the Habitualized Reader and defended by the argumentation of the Legitimating Reader.

Of the Four Readers, the Critical Reader, being the more *analytical* and *argumentative* one of those *promoting black agency*, more eager to *investigate* the *structure* of racial power than vent his/her anger on the people upholding it, seems closest to the principles of CDA. However, in the end, I shall also have to distinguish between a Critical Reader of the 1960s and one from the 21st century, as the knowledge these two, as implied Readers, are assumed to possess differs substantially. This concerns, for example, not only the essays of and information about Baldwin, but also scholarly findings on the history of the South. Equipped with evidence of this kind , a 21¨st- century Critical Reader should also be able to practise what Pratt (1978) names as "retrospective tranquillity" (see p. 63), *viz*., ability to look at the events of the play from a somewhat cooler hindsight than any of its contemporary Readers. The Critical Reader greatly resembles Judith Fetterley's (1978) "resisting reader", being based on the premise that

> To create a new understanding of our literature is to make possible a new effect of that literature on us. And to make possible a new effect is in turn to provide the conditions for changing the culture that the literature reflects…to make the system of power embodied in the literature open not only to discussion but even to change…by a consciousness radically different from the one that informs the literature. Such a closed system cannot be opened up from within but only from without…from a point of view which *questions its values and assumptions* and which has its investment in *making available to consciousness precisely that which the literature wishes to keep hidden*. (Fetterley, 1978:xix-xx., emphasis added)

This strategy, crucial to Fetterley's (1978) groundbreaking feminist study of several hallmarks of American fiction, also provides a good standpoint for the critical reading of the text at hand. One must, however, note that there is a critical stance to racial hegemony already embedded in Baldwin's play. Nevertheless, there are also instances in the dialogue, where Baldwin simply articulates the racial discourse of the South without attempting to change it in any way. It is in those instances that the Critical Reader is found most useful in bringing in the surface the hidden elements of racial ideology.

To sum up, the first Readers of each pair presented in Section 6.4 support the racial *hegemony* of whites in the 1960s South, and the latter two strive for the cultural agency of African-Americans. Among the social forces of the 1960s represented by these Readers, one can clearly recognize the conflicted ideologies of the Civil rights struggle and the Black Power Movement. These two would also serve as bases for the ideological standpoints of the Critical and the Challenging Reader. The Habitualized Reader, in turn, would represent the most racist and

conservative, or, from a black point of view, the most submissive views of racial relations, whereas the Legitimating Reader would articulate the more liberal effort to seek to implicitly maintain racial hegemony by argumentation. To further understand the nature of legitimation and criticism of racial exploitation, I have also relied on the findings of Margaret Wetherell and Jonathan Potter (1992) in their study of speakers from the dominant Pakeha population in New Zealand, as I have found a correlation between that rhetoric and, for example, the lines spoken by Parnell, Baldwin's characterization of the dubious white liberal in *Blues* (1964).

To fully understand how not only all these Four Readers relate to racial *hegemony* and *agency*, but also, to what extent these Readers are for or against *violence* as means of achieving them, we can turn to the following Figure (1.):

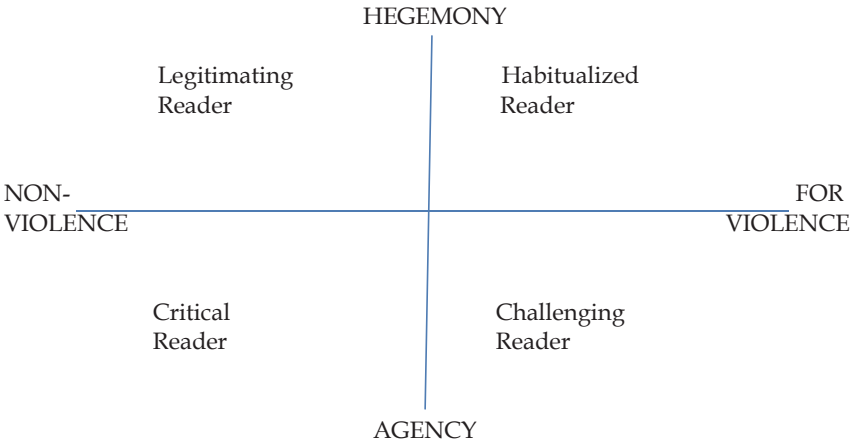

Figure 1: The Four Readers as related to hegemony, agency and violence.

From Figure 1, we can see that the two Readers that are pro-hegemony differ from each other, so that while the Legitimating Reader mainly believes in supporting hegemony non-violently, the Habitualized Reader approves of its violent restoration. Likewise, of the two Readers promoting *agency*, the Challenging Reader believes in the revolutionary, thus, violent dismantling of racial power, whereas the Critical Reader is critical of any kind of violence as means of transforming racial hegemony.

Having introduced my *discursive* tools of analysis, I now turn to the other main part of my methodology, namely the *dramatic* one. I shall begin by first presenting the originally Aristotelian concepts of identification and catharsis, and then move on to short introductions to the Four dramatic Readings applied in this study.

6.5 Reading drama: identification and catharsis

> Drama, theatre and other performance genres like film, carnival, ceremonial ritual etc [...] whose hallmark it is to provide forms of activity through which subjectively experienced values, principles and modes of conduct, which are nationalized in social culture, may be *reflexively confronted* by members of that culture and known as *other* as object. Such presentations can either *undercu*t or *endorse* the *assumptions* of the *dominant* culture. (Herman 1997:7., emphasis added)

For the audience to "confront reflexively" the norms and practices of racial hegemony, could also mean to *identify* with the situation of the characters on the stage. To be able to do this, the spectator has to feel that the illusion created in the performance is credible enough both socially and psychologically. Also, in order to both entertain emotionally and stimulate intellectually, drama has to be able to offer a world both eccentric and ordinary. This constant tension of keeping the characters both "like" and "unlike" people at the same time is one of the fundamental challenges facing the creator of a dramatic work. It has to offer its spectators not only experiences familiar to them, but also mentally challenging "alternatives, possibilities, […] worlds that could or might be, in different modalities, to some operative notion of 'what is'." (Herman, 1997:8.) Hence, drama is based on the individual's experience of the social, a *private response* to *what is regarded as public* in the play.

As dramatic characters are, to some extent, constructed to represent social reality, with their lines resembling the speech acts of normal people and stemming from similar discourses to ordinary speech, drama qualifies as a target of CDA. Drama depicts in the relations of the characters of a play issues evident in the social relations of human beings, though in a more condensed and juxtaposed manner. Also, the power relations between characters in drama are usually balanced by the writer to seem more even than they perhaps would be in reality (Marx, 1961:23.).

Drama both does and does not imitate life through characters that represent types of personalities that spectators can identify with, i.e., feel empathy for. Through following the characters' struggle to its very end, the spectators of a traditional Aristotelian tragedy can experience a purging feeling of *catharsis*, resulting of first feeling the *pathos* of both pity and fear for the protagonist in the reading or watching of the tragedy (see *Poetics*, 1997:9-10). The Aristotelian concept of *catharsis*, has, as Babbage (2004:49) points out, been widely criticized and contested.

The first influential dramatists who aimed at changing the traditional views how theatre should be performed and experienced were Bertolt Brecht and Augusto Boal. Both (Brecht, 1964:57; Boal, 1979:46-47) accused the Aristotelian ideas of empathetic *identification*, and *catharsis* as its resulting emotionally purgatory and purifying experience, of *reproducing the status quo* of state hegemony by "re-inforcing the dominant ideology" (Babbage 2004:50). While Brecht (1964:181) regarded the Aristotelian kind of drama simply as uninterest-

ing and non-intellectual, Boal (1979:47) accused it of coercing the spectator to abandon his/her own anti-social, and thus also revolutionary, tendencies (Babbage, 2004:47). However, as Babbage (2004:48) further contends:

> There is too little evidence for us today to know conclusively whether Greek tragedy operated as 'coercively' as Boal suggests [...] .Boal interprets *hamartia* as a flaw, a socially undesirable behavioural extreme that ultimately brings about the hero's downfall. [In Boal's view] The spectators empathize with the hero but are terrified by his [/ her] fate, and thus are purged of their own extreme impulses. However, *hamartia* has been understood by many critics to mean not 'flaw' but *error*, one that might result from *ignorance* of some circumstance or fact. (Babbage 2004:48., emphasis and brackets added)

Indeed, both Eagleton (2003:154) and Babbage (2004:49) refer to Aristotle's claim in *Poetics* (1997:23) that what makes the play cathartically tragic is that the protagonist's "misfortune is brought about *not by vice or depravity*, but by some *error or frailty*". Nevertheless, what Boal interpreted as *hamartia*, *viz.*, a tragic flaw, could well be incorporated within the word "frailty", which the dictionary WordWebPro defines as either a "physical" or, in particular, "moral weakness". As I shall return to the different interpretations of Aristotelian tragedy in Chapter 9, I, for the present, agree with Eagleton's (2003:153-54) view that

> Tragedy can perform the pleasurable, politically valuable service of draining off an excess of enfeebling emotions such as pity and fear, thus *providing a kind of public therapy* for those of the citizenry in danger of emotional flabbiness. We feel fear, but are not inspired to run away. We are, so to speak, shaken but not stirred. In this sense, tragic drama *plays a central role in the military and political protection of the state*...For Aristotle, then, *tragic theatre is a refuse dump for socially undesirable emotions*, or at least, a retraining programme. Whereas Brecht believed that the audience should check in their excessively tender feelings with their hats and coats, Aristotle holds that we should *leave them behind us* as we exit. (Eagleton 2003:153-54., emphasis added)

To Brecht (1964:181) and Boal (1979:46-47), the "Aristotelian system of tragedy" (46) would mean leaving the spectator content and pleased with him/herself in an unintelligent non-revolutionary state, as reluctant to undertake the social change suggested in the actions of the tragically flawed protagonist.

Despite the animosity of these two revolutionary theorists to the concept, if we broaden the term *catharsis* to mean the *outcome* of the reading or watching of a play, so that the catharsis derived from that experience can be both *intellectual* and also, as a British theatre director once told me in an interview in Oxford (1997), *political*, then we could apply this concept in the analysis of not only Aristotelian, but also Brechtian, or black revolutionary and Boalian theatre. As the fourth wheel of my analysis, I would add the theory of American melodrama introduced by Linda Williams (2001), as one of the play's prominent critics, C.E.W. Bigsby (1985:389), apart from its 3rd Act, dismisses it as a "simple melodrama".

The kind of catharsis offered by American melodrama consists of the *release of sensational suspense*, providing the spectator with either *relief over the pro-*

tagonist's rescue from his/her *virtuous suffering* "in the nick of time", or sorrow over his/her destruction, with the rescue having come "too late". Racial melodrama also presents its black male characters as either safely desexualized and docile servants like Uncle Tom, who become the virtuous but victimized heroes, or as rebellious anti-Toms, who are to be feared and controlled by whites. The typically melodramatic outcome would also constitute an ending with the characters' wishful retreat to their *home*, as the kind of *space of innocence*. (Williams, 2001:8,26-32.)

Within the realm of revolutionary theatre, and as a more direct counterpart of melodrama, which emerged in the USA in the 1960s in connection with the Black Power Movement, one must mention the Black Theatre, this meaning dramas written and produced by black professionals only for black audiences. The Black Theatre aimed at *exposing racial injustices* and providing black spectators *heroic role-models* that were to overcome and outwit their *stereotyped white adversaries* (Benston, 1987:65).

6.6 The Four Readings

My argument is that catharsis, as the outcome of the characters' actions and as resolution of the conflict in a play, can be both melodramatically and tragically reproductive, or intellectually and politically transformative of racial hegemony. Therefore, parallel to the Four Readers, I feel it is justified to examine the play from an equal number of dramatic viewpoints, each of which also correspond to a Reader of their own. I have chosen to call them the Four Readings of the play. These readings are: the Aristotelian, the Brechtian, the Melodramatic and the Revolutionary Reading. As in the case of the Four Readers, I shall also present the Four Readings through their two pairs of juxtapositions. I shall begin with the conflict between the Aristotelian and the Brechtian Reading.

6.6.1 The Aristotelian vs. the Brechtian Reading

According to Boal (1979:11,46-47), Aristotelian tragedy serves as an aesthetic for *legitimating* the prevailing racial hegemony as a "natural order" by showing the spectators the fate of the tragically flawed protagonist who dares to defy the "natural" forces outside his/her power. In doing so, it regards the protagonist solely responsible of to his/her tragic end. In turn, Brechtian drama can be considered as presenting the spectator with a *critical* perspective (Brecht, 1964:78) on racial inequalities rooted in the power structure of capitalist society and based on the domination and exploitation of racial minorities. The critique of this structure expresses the point of view closest to CDA. In both Aristotelian and Brechtian drama, however, it is the ideological *context* of the hegemonic conflict "between opposite forces" (Marx, 1961:21), inherent in society, that seems to have the primary impact on individual characters. This characterizes the two kinds of readings as *contextual*, although Brecht (1964:87) also renounc-

es the determinism inherent in Aristotelian drama. Brecht also sees his own kind of "non-aristotelian" theatre as an *instrument of instruction* about the power structure of capitalist society, instead of a medium for merely maintaining that structure:

> Non-aristotelian drama would at all costs *avoid* bundling together the events portrayed and *present them as an inexorable fate*, to which human being is handed over *helpless* despite the beauty and significance of his[/her] reactions; on the contrary, it is *precisely this fate* that it would *study closely, showing it up as of human contriving*. (Brecht, 1964:87., emphasis added)

Brecht's claim that the "fate" of the protagonist is dependent on the action of human beings within a society, corresponds with the idea of "race" as a *social construct* created and upheld by groups of human beings driven by economic interests and cultural apprehension. Next, I shall present the main ideas of the opposition between the Melodramatic and the Revolutionary Reading.

6.6.2 The Melodramatic vs. the Revolutionary Reading

What is common both to the Melodramatic Reading and its counterpart, the Revolutionary Reading, is the *action* of racially stereotyped and juxtaposed characters, which is linked *either* to the black characters' *virtuous suffering* (Williams 2001:30-38), or their *emancipative victories* (Benston, 1987:61-78).

Eventually, the Melodramatic Reading aims at finding means to *restore* a *space of innocence* by *returning to the way things used to be*, *before* someone or something *disturbed* the status quo (Williams, 2001:28-29). Owing to this aim, with the obligation to sacrifice its black heroes or at least their initial objectives, it can well be seen as maintaining the *habitualized* paternalistic subordination of "smiling and subservient" blacks. (Lomax, 1993:61). Conversely, one must then consider the *challenging* stories anticipated in the Revolutionary Reading as incidents of racial *heroism,* where the black protagonists *overpower white villains*, whose *oppressive acts* are then *exposed* to the audience. Such a Reading would be typical for the plots of the Black Theatre Movement of the 1960s and 70s (Benston, 1987:65), and also, partly, for the "non-white" Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal, 1979). An early example of revolutionary drama would be the black trickster stories (Lomax, 1993:132-34), which would, in turn, leave little substance for the stereotyped white characters in them. After the introduction of the main concepts and methods used in this study, we can now, in the core of this study, turn to the proper analysis of the four inter-individual conflicts selected from Baldwin's play for this study, beginning with the most prominent one, namely that of Lyle and Richard. Because this conflict represents not only the core of racial relations in the South of the 1960s, but also most of the issues crucial to their understanding, it has, in this analysis, been given a chapter (7) of its own.

7 THE MASTER-TRICKSTER –CONFLICT BETWEEN LYLE AND RICHARD

My analysis of this conflict begins with a look at both the explicit and implicit negotiation of racial identities through the symbolic exercise of racial power in both the characters' presuppositions (Fairclough, 1992b:234) and their turn-taking (Herman, 1995:91-92; Fowler, 1996:131; Van Dijk, 1998:273), as these occur in the occasions constituted by each of the frames examined.

Roger Fowler (1996:135-36) states that the implicit production of discursive meanings happens in the kind of dialogue where a character is seen as saying one thing and meaning another, by referring to e.g. knowledge "between the lines", thus breaching at least one of the four maxims of 1) quantity 2) quality 3) relation and 4) manner, originally introduced by the philosopher H.P. Grice. These maxims coordinate the co-operative and explicit nature of ordinary conversation, ensuring that the contribution offered in the conversation by its participants is 1) precise 2) truthful, 3) relevant and 4) transparent. Fowler (1996: 135-37) writes:

> An implicature is a proposition emerging from *something that is said, but not actually stated* by the words uttered, nor logically derivable from them. It must therefore be a *product of the relationship between utterance and context*; and a vital part of context would be the *knowledge and motives of speaker and addressee* […] The linguistic peculiarities found in 'literary' texts, like those breaches of maxims that produce implicatures are *motivated*: there is a reason for the deviation, and it is up to the reader [and spectator] to figure out that reason; then, guided by the structure of the text and its relation to implied context, the reader [and spectator] arrives at a new perspective on what is being expressed." (Fowler, 1996:135-37., emphasis original)

Fairclough (1992b:234) studied the presuppositions shown in implicatures in talk and texts, here meaning the characters' lines, along four dimensions, namely 1) how they are cued in the dialogue, 2) whether they are linked to the prior texts of others, or those of the writer, 3) whether they are sincere or manipulative, and 4) whether they include instances of irony. The dramatic aspects of domination and defence (see Marx, 1961:23) in the characters' lines can be

found in the way they, as the speakers of written speech acts, attempt to control "what happens, how much is said, and who says it", through the "openings, developments, and closings of conversations" as well as "conventions for holding the floor, for interrupting, and for *turn-taking*" (Fowler, 1996:131).

In the case of the present study, the context implied is first and foremost historical, consisting of accounts and anecdotes of the history of blacks in the USA from slavery to the 1960s (see Chapter 2), and intertextual, such as in references to cultural works such as songs, books, plays, and films. The main conflict in the play, resembling the master-trickster conflict in black folklore, is constructed between the characters Lyle and Richard.

Lyle is a hard-working storeowner and a recent father, respected by his peers in the white community of Plaguetown, and in the midst of financial difficulties, because of both a boycott his black customers have declared against him and the stigma of dealing mostly with black buyers (*Blues*, 1964:20-21). However, as the story unfolds, he is also revealed to have exploited black women sexually and previously killed a black man after exploiting his wife (*Blues*, 1964:40-41,93). He then meets Richard, the artistic and outspoken black son of a local priest. Richard has lived in the North but has returned to his hometown in order to recover from a drug addiction he developed in New York (*Blues*, 1964:45-46).

In the following frames, I shall argue that the conflict between these two characters is racially hegemonic (Fairclough, 1992:63-64), in the sense that Richard constantly makes efforts to transform Lyle's racial power over him, whereas Lyle attempts to reproduce it. Their dispute also entails a conflict of class and status, with Lyle being characterized by Baldwin as "a poor white man" (*Blues*, 1964:60) and Richard as the only child of a black middle-class family, who has acquired wealth by working as a musician in the North. Furthermore, their encounters entail a strong sense of sexual rivalry.

As the primary conflict of the play, that between Lyle and Richard includes 105 lines, spoken both by them and by other characters, who appear as both witnesses and co-constructors of the conflict. I have divided the conflict into 11 frames according to the targets of negotiation, whether these are objects, characters or space. I shall first examine the frames as conveying *implicit control* and responses to it (Fowler, 1996:131, Marx, 1961:23), insofar as the presuppositions entailed in the characters' speech acts can be seen as *breaching the Gricean maxims* (Fowler, 1996:134-35), on the one hand, and *following the conventions of turn-taking* provided by the cultural codes of the Deep South, on the other. These speech acts convey the exercise of and resistance to racial power as well as contain symbolic identity negotiations (Potter, 1996) through objects, characters, and space, both physical (Sweet, 1993) and ideological (Cooper, 1998). I shall refer to the two kinds of space as *the space of being* and *the space of choice*. Second, I shall look at the various identities the characters seem to negotiate and connect them with my four kinds of implied reader responses, which either reproduce racial hegemony, or aim at transforming it, namely those of the Habitualized, the Legitimating, the Critical and the Challenging Readers.

The first frame of the conflict between Lyle and Richard begins, when Lyle enters the bar owned by the black character Papa D., where Richard is sitting with his black friends, Juanita and Pete. At first, Lyle converses with Papa D., only watching the three, as they start dancing.

7.1 Negotiating Juanita

The first target of negotiation between Richard and Lyle that we notice, as the two now meet for the first time in the play, is Juanita, Richard's girlfriend. Juanita becomes an object of *sexual rivalry* between the two, when Lyle jostles her (line 12, parenthesis). First, however, as a setup for the scene, we are shown what kind of relationship exists between Lyle and Papa D., the black barkeeper whom Lyle refers to as his "friend" (line 03), and at whose bar the scene occurs. Following the kind of codifying of the lines adapted from conversational analysis, I shall treat each whole speech act, which in fact can consist of one or more sentences or words, as one numbered dramatic line. Each frame is separated from the others according to a change in the target of the characters' negotiation, whether this is an object, a character, or space.

(*Lyle enters, goes to the counter. His appearance causes a change in the atmosphere, but no one appears to stop whatever they are doing.)*
01 LYLE: Joel, how about letting me have some change for cigarettes? I got a kind of long drive ahead of me, and I'm out.
02 PAPA D.: Howdy, Mister Lyle, how you been? Folks ain't been seeing much of you lately.
03 LYLE (*Laughs*): That's the truth. But I reckon old friends just stays old friends. Ain't that right?
04 PAPA D.: That's right, Mister Lyle.
05 JUANITA: That's Lyle Britten. The one we were talking about before.
06 RICHARD: I wonder what he'd do if I walked into a white place.
07 JUANITA: Don't worry about it. Just stay out of white places - believe me!
08 RICHARD (*Laughs*): Let's TCB - that means taking care of business. Let's see if I can dance.
(*They rise, dance....they are enjoying each other. Lyle gets his change, gets cigarettes out of the machine, crosses to the counter, pauses there to watch the dancers.)*
09 LYLE: Joel, you know, I ain't never going to be able to dance like that.
10 PAPA D.: Ain't nothing to it. You just got to be supple, that's all. I can *yet* do it.
(*Does a grotesque sketch of "The Twist")*
11 LYLE: Okay Joel, you got it. Be seeing you now.
12 PAPA D.: Good night, Mister Lyle.
(On Lyle's way out, he jostles Juanita. Richard stops, holding Juanita at the waist. Richard and Lyle stare at each other.)

13 LYLE: Pardon me.
14 RICHARD: Consider yourself pardoned.
(*Blues* 1964: 47-48.)

Although *explicitly*, the conversation between Lyle and Papa D. (lines 01 to 04) might look friendly and co-operative, *implicitly*, it is not. This becomes evident in the different ways the two address one another (Goffman, 1961:37; Peräkylä, 1990:31). In terms of Gricean maxims, Papa D.'s calling his friend Lyle "Mister" would be a violation of the maxim of manner (Fowler, 1996: 135), were these two men thought to be equal to one another. As the reader already knows this is not the case, their manner *implies* (Fowler, 1996: 136) the context of an *imbalanced power structure*. According to the *convention* inherent in that structure, a white character is allowed to call a subservient black character by his forename "Joel", while as a white man he has to be referred to as "Mister". This practice of address, as part of the Southern racial etiquette (Harris, 1995:391; see p. 39), gave whites an elitist sense of superiority, while it also deprived blacks of their privacy and "protected space", creating what Maynard (2002, lecture) would refer to as *social distance* between the two in the spirit of segregation (see Section 2.3.1; p. 39).

In the *turn-taking* of this interaction, there is no controversy, either, as to who *dominates* the conversation and who *follows*. In fact, in line 03, Lyle leaves Papa D. no possibilities other than to agree (line 04) or disagree, a speaker position which, Fowler (1996:131) detects, is often, in conversations of control, left to the controlled party by the one in charge of the dialogue. Here, Lyle uses his kind of a tag question ("Ain't that right", line 03), to *confirm* (Herman, 1995:250) the perpetuation of their uneven relationship as a kind of "friendship". Actually, given the realities of the racial order of the South, there is, for Papa D., only one proper way to respond, which is to go along with Lyle's *manipulative presupposition* (Fairclough, 1992b:231) by restating this unequal "friendship" between them and assuming the speaker position of the "smiling and subservient" black (see Lomax 1993:61; p. 83). To Jones (1963), this would represent the submissive "slave mentality" (57; see p. 31) that was expected, or here, *presupposed* by Southern whites as the only acceptable kind of behavior of blacks in the South. Apparently, these expectations seldom needed to be made explicit, as everyone was expected to be fully aware of them. Lyle here seems to occupy the identity of a *dominator* and/or *controller* of the interaction. However, Lyle is soon to meet Richard, who will not comply with his assumption of domination and control.

The conversation between Richard, his girlfriend Juanita and their friend Pete concerning Lyle, referred to by Juanita (line 05), has already begun, before Lyle enters the scene. In this conversation (*Blues*, 1964:39-41,47), Pete and Juanita have characterized Lyle to Richard by calling him a "peckerwood", i.e., a rural and ignorant white man (http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.jyu.fi). Pete also tells Richard that Lyle is a former sexual exploiter of black women and a capitalistic store-owner, who, although cashing in on his mainly black customers, still in the 1960s, in Pete's words, expects them to "step off the sidewalk", when

they see him. This account of Lyle, topped by the information that he killed the husband of the woman he exploited (*Blues*, 1964:40-41), causes Richard to wonder what would happen, if he "walked into a white place" (line 06). Richard's line clearly shows his *motivation* for confronting Lyle. Dramatically, Richard's *sincere presupposition* (line 06) as a prediction of the coming conflict between him and Lyle, and Juanita's warning of Richard to "stay out of" such places (line 07) give the reader the first hint of suspense (Marx, 1961:44), with regard to how that conflict is to develop.

Next, Lyle expresses his attraction to Juanita, and envy of Richard, concerning the way they dance, which he regards as exotic, maybe even savage, remarking that he could "never be able to dance like that" (line 09). What follows then, would, *explicitly*, seem an innocent accident from Lyle's part. However, *implicitly,* it constitutes the initiating move for possible sexual rivalry over Juanita.

Historically, the sexual rivalry between whites and blacks, as noted in Chapter 2, was not evenly constructed. As former slavemasters and dominators, whites had the upper hand, which enabled them to intrude on the private space of blacks. With this in mind, Richard's protective response (line 14) looks more understandable. Lyle's envy of Richard's dancing (line 09) is also characteristic of the historical white man's fear of the black man's alleged sexual superiority.

Having considered the first pair of my research questions, which had to do with the implicit presuppositions and turn-taking of the characters in this frame, I now turn to the kinds of identities Baldwin seems to make them negotiate in their rivalry for Juanita. Lyle, at first, seems to be constructed as a *controller* of Papa D., who has assumed the identity of an *accommodator* to the Southern racial codes of conduct by taking up the role of the "smiling and subservient" black. After his either intentional or accidental jostling of Juanita, Lyle can be regarded as an *intruder* on Juanita's "protected space" and Richard as its *defender,* as well as a *confronter* of Lyle. Richard's response to Lyle's apology ("Consider yourself pardoned", line 14), instead of a common "That's all right", or "Don't mention it", is not only *bold* enough as claiming the right for him to *forgive a white man*, but also clearly too *formal* for the occasion.

The use of the passive form "pardoned", in particular, as not quite transparent an expression, indicates another violation of the Gricean maxim of manner (Fowler, 1996:136). As such, it implies Richard's motivation to exercise *authority* (Bolinger, 1980:86) over Lyle. Richard's speaking in a manner used commonly by persons of authority, thus, also suggests that he is showing off his middle-class status. Here, Richard can be presupposing that, as the only son of a black minister, he has had a higher education than Lyle and attempting to ridicule Lyle, while also creating the first hint of social distance between them.

Historically, the scene also, though as yet slightly, resembles the rivalry between the cunning *trickster* figure and the strong *master* figure present in African as well as blues folklore (Lomax, 1993: 87), although perhaps with a more aggressive, as well as sexual, undertone. Also in this situation, the two juxtaposed master and trickster identities are given to two men competing for the

same woman, and, unlike in the blues songs of the Missisippi Delta (Lomax 1993: 87), the *trickster* here will not flee from the scene, but will rather use his wits and assertiveness to resist the *master*.

After having suggested some potential identities that the two characters seem to negotiate, I now bring my Four Readers into the discussion. My hypothesis is that each of these Readers assigns the same characters different identities, according to both the situation they find these characters in and the perspective of each Reader to that situation. Each of the identities negotiated should, then, have its basis in the corresponding Reader's point of view, which would represent either the habitualized, legitimating, critical or challenging orientation to racial hegemony.

I shall begin with the two Reproducing Readers, namely the Legitimating and Habitualized ones. Richard's aggressive manner also identifies him, at least in the eyes of the Legitimating Reader, as a *defier* of the Southern racial etiquette. By regarding Richard as defiant, the Legitimating Reader would, then, *argue* for the "*rational" justification* of any future measures aimed at *controlling* him. To the Habitualized Reader, the mere idea of a black man even *complaining* about the violation of his and his girlfriend's "sphere of honour" (see Harris, 1995:391), let alone that man placing himself in the position of *forgiving* a white man, seems outrageous enough. In light of the account given by Lomax (1993:61; see p. 115) on the *habitualized* norms for black behavior in the South, Richard can be even attributed the identity of a criminal *hustler* (see Keil, 1968:20-26; p. 43), a *deviant* (see Becker, 1963 in Kuure, 1991:15; p. 43) from those norms. Such an identity would be a likely outcome for the point of view of the Habitualized Reader, whom Richard's surprisingly non-submissive behavior would shock to the extent of him/her expecting, and perhaps also demanding Richard's immediate arrest.

The Critical Reader, in turn, would recognize the impact of the *hidden power structure* revealed by Baldwin "between the lines" (see Fowler, 1996:135; p. 90) of Lyle and Papa D. This structure would entail the aspects of *domination* and *control* as well as explain Lyle's *intrusive* behavior towards Juanita, which Richard as the *defender* of Juanita by holding her at the waist and staring at Lyle (parenthesis, line 12) shows no signs of accepting, but *confronting*. Lyle's intrusion would, of course, be totally ignored by the Habitualized and the Legitimating Reader.

The Legitimating Reader, would, particularly in the next frame (7.2), notice Richard's *defiance* of the racial order of Plaguetown with apprehension, defining Richard as a potential *troublemaker* and Lyle as an exceptionally polite *gentleman*, who would apologize to a black man for an act that both s/he and the Habitualized Reader would simply consider accidental and trivial. The Habitualized Reader would, indeed, be puzzled over why Lyle would bother to apologize to any black man and regard Lyle as morally weak, or at least *condescending* to Richard, his bold and deviant black *adversary*, who should "know his place". The Challenging Reader, would, however, *react* to Lyle's audacity, as to that of any white man, to make, what s/he considers as purely an *intentional*

sexual advance of the white *master* towards a black woman, one of the many both in the history of racial relations as well as in Lyle's personal history (see *Blues,* 1964:39-41; p. 133). This Reader would also applaud Richard for his verbally clever and *tricksterish* response, along with its implicit attempt to, perhaps, ridicule Lyle as being less educated than Richard, and for his *heroic protection* of Juanita. The ability of black men to protect both themselves and black women derived from the ideology of the Black Power Movement, in fact, constitutes one of the major issues of the play,

The Challenging Reader might also regard Richard as a new kind of role-model for black men, *elevating their self-consciousness* and *self-protection* by *acting non-submissively* in the presence of a white man. For this, he can be considered as a verbally fluent *deprogrammer* (see Van Dijk, 1998:261; p. 42) of the racially hegemonic ideology and the notion of black inferiority common in the South, a kind of *early messenger of the Black Power Movement*, the movement which, in 1964, was yet to come. In the eyes of the Critical Reader of the 1960s, Richard would, more and more as the story unfolds, appear as a verbally gifted black man, who has both the motive and means to *confront* racial hegemony. To a European educated 21st century-reader demonstrative of "retrospective tranquility" (see Pratt, 1978; pp. 63,84), however, two more aspects need to be acknowledged.

First of all, Baldwin here seems to be *manipulating racial discourse* in order to *defamiliarize* the fundamentals of Southern racial etiquette by introducing the character of Richard as a *deviant* from those norms and practices. Fowler (1996:115) testifies this is a practice often used by the writers of fiction, as opposed to the rules of non-fictional discourse. According to Fowler, non-fictional discourse

> refers to any individual entities and activities which are both familiar, and known to exist, within the society referred to by the text. Fictional discourse may refer to such entities, but also *adds references to imaginary individuals and events which have not existed* (or it is immaterial whether or not they existed. Now these fictional creations *may be more or less compatible with the norms of the context of culture*. At one extreme we have, for instance, the classic nineteenth-century realist novels […], in which the fictional world is constructed to approximate closely to a known cultural context. *Defamiliarization* occurs when the context of reference *introduces elements which in any way deviate from the expected cultural context*. There are numerous techniques by which this can be effected […] for example, the *introduction of sociologically deviant characters* with *discourse styles at odds with the norms of the narrative voice*. Fowler, 1996:115., emphasis added)

As part of the defamiliarization process, measures such as the introduction of deviant characters are motivated so that "there is a *reason* for the deviation, and it is *up to the reader to figure out that reason*; then, *guided* by the structure of the text and its relation to the implied context, the reader *arrives at a new perspective on what is expressed*" (Fowler, 1996:137, emphasis added). This clearly shows that the purpose of acts of defamiliarization, such as Richard's use of the passive form, marking a style of discourse "at odds with the norms" for the kind of a

response expected in the context of Southern racial etiquette, is to *transform* rather than *reproduce* the hegemony of society. Hence, we could also regard Richard as a *defamiliarizer*.

As a former drug user and an ex-convict (*Blues,* 1964:45-46), Richard qualifies as a sociologically *deviant* character. Richard's deviance would be most apparent to the Habitualized Reader, who would stereotype him as a fundamentally evil criminal, whose only motive would be the disruption of the racialized social order in Plaguetown, and who should thus immediately be arrested. Already on the basis of information derived from this frame, the Critical Reader of the 1960s would apparently regard Richard as a verbally fluent *confronter* of the racial norms and practices of the Deep South as they are represented in Plaguetown. This identity of Richard's would, in fact, constitute the opposite of Papa D.'s "smiling and subservient" (Lomax, 1993:61) *accommodator*, who has decided to conform to the rules of the racial order in Plaguetown, his motive being indicated further on in the play (see *Blues,* 1964:117).

Papa D.'s motivation to accommodate to the subordinating racial order of Plaguetown resembles the solution of a convict in the folk blues song about his relationship with his prison guard, titled *Me and My Captain:*

> Me and my captain don't agree
> But he don't know 'cause he never asks me
> He don't know my mind
> [...]
> Got one mind for the captain to see
> Other for what I know is me. (Silverman 1968:61)

The song reveals a dualistic division of contexts, to those controlled by the Captain, where the *space of choice* is abandoned by the singer, and to others, where the singer can protect his own identity and maintain his *space of choice*. In fact, the line of thought between the verses "He don't…" and "Got one mind…" indicates a *choice* made by the singer to project one, perhaps more stereotypical identity, or representation, to the Captain, while privately holding on to his own protected identity. Richard apparently does not promote this kind of double-consciousness, which, to many blacks, may have constituted a valid strategy of coping with oppressive whites. Grier and Cobbs (1968:57; see p. 43) call this practice "keeping cool".

Another observation arising from a more contemporary and educated 21st-century perspective has to do with Lyle's intrusion in and violation of the "protected space" of a black woman and ,in particular, his following bemusement (see p. 100) over Richard's response to it. It is, in fact, a matter of interpretation, whether Lyle would have apologized, if Richard had not behaved in the confrontational manner of holding Juanita from the waist and staring at him (line 12, parenthesis). The Legitimating Reader would contend that Lyle, as a *gentleman* would have done so in any case, whereas the Critical and Challenging Reader would think the opposite. The Habitualized Reader would dismiss the

whole apology as unnecessary, maybe even expect Juanita to be the one who should apologize for being in the way of a white man.

Lyle's puzzled reaction, shown especially in the next frame (7.2), in fact, can be explained as one of the last indications of the old dominant-paternalistic pattern of racial relations based on the socio-economic conditions of slavery and pre-industrialism. Van der Berghe (1978, quoted by Stone (1985:51), introduces the change in racial relations in the USA in his claim that

> Increasing social and geographical mobility found in the competitive type contrasts with the static character of the slave plantation or feudal serfdom...There is also a break-up in the traditional value systems with the ideological 'consensus' of the slave plantation...characterized by the 'benevolent despotism' of the master and the subservience of the slaves, being replaced by the conflicting values of the competitive system. These value conflicts are usually between the universalistic ideology of the competitive society and the discriminatory practices that are still prevalent, if no longer unchallenged. (Van der Berghe, 1978, in Stone, 1985: 51.)

Coming from the more urban and industrialized North, where people were perhaps used to more openly *competitive* encounters between blacks and whites (see Wilson, 1996: 118-138), Richard appears as an exceptional black person in Plaguetown, with enough self-confidence to make Lyle accountable. As a former sexual exploiter and abuser of black women, before he was married, Lyle has already once been confronted by Old Bill, the husband of Willa Mae, the woman he first raped and then continued to exploit. Lyle then killed Old Bill, but was never indicted for the murder. (*Blues*, 1964:40-41, 84,93). Before and since then, no black man in Plaguetown has dared to question his or any other white man's secret practice of having their ways with black women. Richard, as a newcomer from New York City, although born and raised in Plaguetown (see Frame 7.5, line 37), constitutes a challenge to this practice. This becomes even clearer in the next frame (7.2), where the target of negotiation changes to Richard's existence, namely his *space of being* in Plaguetown.

7.2 Negotiating Plaguetown as a *space of being*

In this frame, Lyle and Richard, still in Papa D.'s bar, negotiate over Richard's existence in Plaguetown, the milieu of the play, qualifying as a physical *space of being* (see Cooper, 1998:14-15; p. 80). Here, we learn that Richard, as a suspected newcomer and stranger, has only recently arrived in the town. Whether his existence there is seen as a positive or negative matter, depends, once again, on interpretation.

15 LYLE: You new around here?
16 PAPA D.: He just come to town a couple of days ago, Mister Lyle.
17 RICHARD: Yeah, I just come to town a couple of days ago, Mister Lyle.

> 18 LYLE: Well, I sure hope your stay'll be a pleasant one.
> *(Exits)*
> 19 PETE: Man, are you *anxious* to leave this world? Because he wouldn't think nothing of helping you out of it.
> 20 RICHARD:
> Yeah. Well, I wouldn't think nothing of helping him out of it, neither.
> (*Blues* 1964: 47-48., emphasis original)

At first, particularly to the two Reproducing Readers, Lyle would appear here as a Southern *gentleman*, a gracious host innocently and politely curious about a newcomer in Plaguetown. However, his question (line 15) also implicates (Fowler, 1996: 135) another meaning, revealing more than just a casual interest in Richard and his arrival in Plaguetown. It now shifts the focus of negotiation from *Juanita* to the *space* (Sweet, 1993: 24-25) of Plaguetown, to the contemplation of how Richard should act to make his stay "a pleasant one" (line 18), with Lyle determining the boundaries for Richard's, as for any young black man's, *space of being*. As noted earlier (p. 98), Lyle is still inclined to the old *paternalistic* kind of discriminatory racial relations and is therefore puzzled, when he meets a *competitive*, *non-submissive* black youngster, who, he then assumes, must be a newcomer in Plaguetown.

By his deictic question, focusing on the space of "here" (Fowler, 1996:79), Lyle as an *insider* (Wetherell and Potter, 1992:43) implicitly takes over the space of Plaguetown, constituting Richard as Other, an outsider who is deviant from the town's social norms (Becker in Kuure, 1996:15), as well as a newcomer disobedient to the rules of racial segregation. As a non-subordinated black from the North, Richard again violates the Gricean maxim of manner (Fowler, 1996:136), with his facetious repetition (line 17) of Papa D's apologetic answer (line 16), as a possible attempt to ridicule Papa D's submissive "slave mentality" (Jones, 1963: 57; see p. 31). Richard's mockery, applauded by the Challenging Reader as another characteristic of the verbally gifted *trickster*, could also be interpreted as containing an *ironic presupposition* of the way in which he thinks Lyle expects him to answer. Once again, we are to witness Baldwin's defamiliarization of the conventions of Southern racial hegemony through Richard's use of a style of discourse "at odds" with the norms of ordinary conversation (see Fowler, 1996:115; p. 96).

By mimicking (line 17) the stereotype of the ignorant and childish black, depicted in Hollywood films (Bogle, 1992:4-8), by dialect ("I just come to town") as well as by manner ("Mister Lyle"), Richard also appears as an idiolectic master of Halliday's "antilanguage", the "medium of verbal play and verbal art", with an antagonistic undertone (Halliday in Fowler, 1996: 189), fluent in both highly standardized middle-class (see 6.1.1. line 14) and non-standard (line 17) registers of speech (Fowler, 1996:187,189). Lyle responds to Richard's provocation with a twofold wish: while wishing Richard's stay "to be pleasant" (line 18), he also insinuates that it might not be. This questions the truth value of Lyle's line and suggests a breaking of the Gricean maxim of quality (Fowler, 1996:135). Lyle's use of "sure" as emphasis and the expression of "hoping" that Richard

will find his "stay a pleasant one" (line 18) both imply that this might not be the case, if Richard continues his challenging behavior of breaking the habitualized (Fowler 1996: 44-46) codes of black subservience.

As the play continues, Lyle's speech acts increasingly resemble those of the personnel in Erving Goffman's "total institutions" of control and exclusion (1961; see p. 38), who conducted "obedience tests" for newcomers (26-27). Goffman observed:

> Because a total institution deals with so many aspects of its inmates' lives...there is a special need to obtain initial co-operativeness from the recruit. The occasion on which staff members first tell the inmate of his [or her] deference obligations may be structured to challenge the inmate to balk or to hold his [her] peace forever. Thus these initial moments of socialization may involve an 'obedience test' and even a will-breaking contest: an inmate who shows defiance receives immediate visible punishment, which increases until he [or she]... humbles him[her]self. (Goffman, 1961: 26.)

The first obedience test occurred in the first frame (see pp. 135-36), when Lyle asked Papa D. whether their "friendship" still existed, with the tag question ("Ain't that right?", line 3, Frame 7.1). Now, Lyle's inquiry (line 15) of Richard being a newcomer to Plaguetown implies his *manipulative presupposition*. According to this presupposition, all blacks in Plaguetown should know better than to challenge him the way Richard has done. However, because of being a new face in the town, the youngster is, for now, forgiven by Lyle. This interpretation is corroborated by Papa D's attempted *apology* (line 16) *on behalf of Richard*, explaining Richard's conduct as that of someone who does not yet know, but *will learn* how to behave in front of a Southern white man in the future. Here, Papa D. could be identified as a *pacifier* of the arising conflict.

To return to the Four Readers, the Challenging Reader, still regarding Richard as the *heroic trickster*, would be annoyed by what s/he would regard as the *master* Lyle's question, as it, to him/her, implies a *subtle test of Richard's obedience*, with Lyle checking whether Richard will learn to behave submissively in the future. This possibility would also be doubted by the Habitualized Reader, who would already call for someone to show Richard "his place". However, the Challenging Reader would both react angrily to Lyle's question (line 15) as a yet subtle initiation of racial hegemony and applaud Richard's brave mockery of ironically mimicking Papa D's apologetic answer (line 17). For the Legitimating Reader, nevertheless, Richard's manner would continue to indicate his *defiance*, which this Reader might still expect him, as a *newcomer*, to learn to abandon and, in the future, become as submissive as the other blacks of Plaguetown. While acknowledging Richard's anger towards the historical racial oppression now projected on Lyle, the Critical Reader might also begin to be concerned for this young man's safety in the South, notorious for its lynchings (see Harris, 1995). Dramatically, here the reader is also given another hint (Marx, 1961: 44) about the events to come in the play. Lyle's covert intimidation (line 18) seems clear enough to Pete, whose warning (line 19) Richard does not heed. Instead, he expresses his own aggression toward Lyle (line 20).

Richard's covertly aggressive response (line 17) to Lyle's question would make him, once again, appear as a threatening *deviant* to the Habitualized and a potential *troublemaker* to the Legitimating Reader. The Critical Reader would, however, consider this *ridiculing* of Papa D. as, again, the sign of the *verbally talented trickster figure*, which has "one foot anchored in the realm of the gods" and the other in "our human world" (Gates, 1988: 6). This *trickster*, as only half present in the "human world" of Plaguetown, seeming, for example, to Pete (line 19) as if "anxious to leave" it, is evidently dangerously unaware of the severe consequences of his conduct. For the Challenging Reader, however, the trickster would, again, represent a heroic *deprogrammer*.

From the point of view of the Critical Reader, the conflict between the two characters is realized in the identities of Richard's defiant and aggressive *ridiculer,* and Lyle's *insider* and *intimidator*, with the first hint (Marx, 1961: 44) of the tragic end of this conflict in Lyle's implication (line 18) that Richard's stay in Plaguetown will not end pleasantly (see Frame 7.10). Richard's lack of self-protection, criticized by Pete ("are you *anxious* to leave this world?", line 19), becomes more evident for the Readers in the following frames, where Richard proceeds to challenge Lyle in what could be seen as Lyle and Jo's "protected space" (Harris, 1995:391), namely their store and home.

7.3 Negotiating the 20-dollar bill

The next encounter of the two adversaries happens at Lyle's store, where Richard overcomes him in a fight, after behaving flirtatiously toward Lyle's wife Jo. The prelude for the scene starts with Richard and his friend Lorenzo, a student in Plaguetown, on the road to Lyle's store, which Lorenzo and many other local blacks are boycotting:

> 21 LORENZO: We don't trade in here. Let's go.
> 22 RICHARD: Oh! Is this the place? He'll, I'd like to get another look at the peckerwood, ain't going to give him about a dime. I want to get his face fixed in my mind, so there won't be no time wasted when the time comes, you dig? *(Enters the store)* (*Blues* 1964: 98.)

Having learned (line 22) that the store he is about to enter belongs to the "peckerwood" Lyle (http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.jyu.fi; see p. 93), Richard also appears as prepared for an open conflict between them "so there won't be no time wasted when the time comes" (line 22). Thus, he willfully decides to embark on the unfriendly territory of Lyle's store. To the Habitualized Reader, he then possesses the identity of a *trespasser* on white property, which, in turn, would make him seem heroic to the Challenging Reader. As a boycotter of the store, his friend Lorenzo here is simply attempting to avoid possible conflict (line 21). After entering the store, Richard flirts with Jo, with his final act of

flamboyance being the pulling up of a twenty-dollar bill to pay for the drinks he has bought from Jo (see Section 8.3). Lyle is behind the stage, hammering, when Jo calls for him:

> 23 JO: Lyle! (*Lyle enters, carrying a hammer*) You got any change?
> 24 LYLE: Change for twenty? No, you know I ain't got it.
> 25 RICHARD: You all got this big, fine store and all - and you ain't got change for *twenty* dollars..
> 26 LYLE: It's early in the day, boy.
> 27 RICHARD: It ain't that early. I thought white folks was rich at *every* hour of the day.
> 28 LYLE: Now, if you looking for trouble, you just might get it. That boy outside - ain't he got twenty cents?
> 29 RICHARD: That boy outside is about twenty-four years old, and he ain't got twenty cents. Ain't no need to ask him.
> 30 LYLE (*At the door*): Boy! You got twenty cents?
> 31 LORENZO: Come on out of there, Richard! I'm tired of hanging around here!
> 32: LYLE: Boy, didn't you hear what I asked you?
> 33 LORENZO: Mister Britten, I ain't in the store, and I ain't *bought* [sic] nothing in the store, and so I ain't *got* to tell you whether or not I got twenty cents!
> (*Blues* 1964: 98-99., emphasis original)

Here, Richard attempts to control the frame, with his accusation in line 25. Lyle responds with the degrading practice of desexualization (lines 26, 28, 30 and 32), calling Richard and Lorenzo "boys", according to the habitualized (Fowler, 1996:44) custom of the South (see p. 28). This custom also indicates the inferiorizing ideological notion that blacks are, by nature, more child-like than whites, based on the white fear of black manhood (see pp. 45, 53). Blues singer Big Bill Broonzy (in Lomax, 1993: 437) expresses the black frustration over this practice:

> "Down here a man ain't nothing nohow. He never gits to be a man down here. It's always 'Boy' until you git too old, then they call you 'Uncle'. You never be called a man in the South, you know that!" (in Lomax, 1993: 437.)

Besides desexualizing their former slaves set free by the Civil War, Southern whites, out of a mixture of fear and economic interests, constructed, one might say, a cultural prison of control and exclusion that would keep blacks in a subordinated social position, referred to by a white Mississippian (in Harris, 1995: 393), "a niggir's [nigger's] place":

> "When they paid them 'tention [attention], the niggir respected the white man. He come to the back door and didn't come to the front door. And he took his hat off when he come in...But when he got out of the niggir's place [daddy] (sic) put him back. And they always said 'yes, sir' to him. If he didn't, he would wind up on the ground." (Harris, 1995: 393.)

Baldwin experienced the exclusion and control of Southern racism personally, when he walked to a segregated restaurant in Montgomery, Alabama in 1957:

> I had realized my error as soon as I opened the door: but the absolute terror an all these white faces [...] paralyzed me. They stared at me. I stared at them. "What you want, boy? What you want from here? And then, a decontaminating gesture, "Right around there, boy. Right around there." I had no idea what she was talking about. I backed out the door. "Right around there boy,", said a voice behind me. A white man had appeared out of nowhere [...] I stared at him blankly. He watched me steadily, with a kind of suspended menace.[...] He had pointed to a door, and I knew immediately that *he was pointing to the colored entrance*. And this was a dreadful moment [...] I realized that this man *thought he was being kind* [...] I realized that I must not speak to him, must not involve myself in any way whatever [...] Not only because this would have forced both of us to go further, into what confrontation I dared not think, but because of my Northern accent...This accent was going to be a very definite liability [...] on this dark and empty street. I saved my honor, hopefully, by reflecting [...] I tore my eyes from his face and walked through the door he had so kindly pointed out. (*No Name*, 1972: 72-73., emphasis added)

In this frame (7.3.), Richard is not only challenging Lyle as a black man refusing to stay in his "place" (Harris, 1995:393), but also attempting to dominate him by the power of his wealth symbolized in the 20-dollar bill, perhaps exceptional for a black man in the South to have, or, at least to flaunt, which Lyle is unable to find change for, even if it is "early in the day" (line 26). Here, Lyle is evidently trying to defend his honor as a businessman, which would further motivate his malevolent use of the desexualizing and infantilizing epithet "boy" as a means of reminding Richard of his position (line 26). This position, determined by the racial codes and conventions, would not allow a black man to make judgements of a white man's finances. For the Challenging Reader, Lyle's line (26) in fact, constitutes a slightly stronger "obedience test", implying that, as it is only early in the day, Richard should just accept that and not comment any more on Lyle's wealth, However, as Richard (line 27) refuses to stop his prying, which is now motivated with his *ironic* presupposition to ridicule Lyle for his poverty, Lyle expresses an intimidation (line 28) more overt than before ("If you looking for trouble…"). Richard (line 29) challenges Lyle's attempt at referring to Lorenzo by the same epithet as to him (see lines 28, 30 and 32), by providing a relevant account of Lorenzo's age ("That *boy* outside is about *twenty-four years old*…", line 29, emphasis added). Here, to the Challenging Reader, he again appears as an *ideological deprogrammer*, *elevating Lorenzo's manhood* through *challenging the* Southern *convention* that required black adult men, such as Lorenzo, to be addressed as "boys".

Richards's remarks about Lyle having "this big fine store and all" (line 25) as well as "I thought white folks was rich at *every* hour of the day" (line 27), once again, indicate an *ironic presupposition* aimed at mocking Lyle by, perhaps again, mimicking the white stereotypical image of the childlike and ignorant black, prevalent in the melodramatic Hollywood movies in the 1920s (see Bogle, 1992:4-8; p. 99). Again, this would indicate the identity of the *ridiculing trickster*. Loaded with a more aggressive and insulting intention than its forerunners, it could also be evidence of an *empowering* attempt to mock the stereotypical notion that, to all blacks, all whites are always rich. This quality of Richard, as a

black man richer and more verbal than a white man, reversing the relations of power between them, would then earn him, once again, as a *self-confident* and *heroic role-model* for black spectators, the identity of a *deprogrammer*, given to him by the Challenging Reader. Contrary to Richard, Lorenzo, as a local black and boycotter of Lyle's store, avoids both the conflict and the space of Lyle's store, maintaining a polite but non-submissive stance to Lyle, addressing him by the title "Mr". and his surname (line 33).

Lyle's intimidating remark that if one looks "for trouble, one might just find it" (line 28), predicting racial violence as a promise of a punitive act, would probably be cheered by the Habitualized Reader. The Legitimating Reader would probably also acknowledge that the potential disciplinary action would justifiably be at the extreme end of the scale, yet this kind of action would also to him/her be gradually seem as inevitable. The Challenging Reader, in turn, would detest Lyle's intimidation as one more indication of racial oppression.

Besides shifting the responsibility for a possible conflict onto Richard, Lyle's remark (line 28) also dramatically points towards a resolution of their conflict that is close to an Aristotelian view, in which Richard would be tragically defying the forces of the "natural order" of society (see Boal, 1979:27-28), were the racial ideology and power structure considered as such. The Legitimating Reader, prone to the Aristotelian view of Richard as a tragically flawed, troubled and rebellious person, might well be inclined to an interpretation of this kind. For the Legitimating Reader, Richard's defiant behaviour would then justify (Fowler, 1996: 42-44, Van Dijk, 1998:260) the ensuing use of violence as a disciplinary act, whereas the Habitualized Reader would not need any further justification for wanting him to be punished. In the next extract, Richard proceeds to trespass further on Lyle's "sphere of honor" and "protected space" (Harris 1995: 391), his wife and home.

7.4 Negotiating Lyle's *protected space* of Jo and home

In this frame, Richard continues his intrusive behaviour, venturing to *the space most sanctified and protected* by the racial codes of the South, the privacy of the white man's home (see Harris, 1995:392; p. 39). Placing a somewhat deviant black youngster in a position to discuss monetary affairs in connection with the white man's domesticity could be another deliberate move by Baldwin to defamiliarize the core of Southern racial etiquette, which did not even allow blacks to come to the white man's front door (see Harris, 1995:393; p. 102), let alone to talk about the white man's money or other domestic matters. In this frame, also the "purity" of Jo, Lyle's wife, is at stake, at least from Lyle's point of view.

34 RICHARD: Maybe your wife could run home and get some change. You *got* some change at home, I know. Don't you?
35 LYLE: I don't stand for nobody to talk about my wife.

> 36 RICHARD: I only said you were 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.*
> (*Blues,* 1964:99-100., emphasis original)

Richard's suggestion in line 34, where he ventures further to Lyle's protected space of his wife and home, would appear even more preposterous to the Habitualized Reader, who would be demanding punitive action against this outrageous *trespasser*. This would also, to the Legitimating Reader, further justify the need for subjecting Richard as a *provoker* of Lyle's to disciplinary action. As noted earlier (see pp. 94,101), the Legitimating Reader might see Richard's actions as the attempts of a troubled individual to "stir up trouble for the sake of it", a common accusation made against Maori civil rights activists by the Pakehas, the dominant ethnic group in New Zealand, to discredit their protest (Wetherell and Potter 1992:153). The Challenging Reader would, however, react to any attempt to discredit Richard's demands (lines 32,34) as an impatient *customer*, who would simply be asking the white storeowner to produce change for his bill. The Critical Reader, being aware of the challenge Richard here poses to the racial power structure of the South, would consider him a brave *venturer*, perhaps too brave for his own good.

Historically, Richard's suggestion, as a new attempt to dominate the scene, whether innocent or contemplated, once again turns the conflict into the kind of racial and sexual rivalry described by Grier and Cobbs (1968:68-69) and Daly et Wilson (1995: 268), this time with "Jo" and "home" as the topics of negotiation. It is interesting, though, that when earlier in the play their white friend Parnell has twice made an even more provocative suggestion to Jo and Lyle than Richard's (lines 34 and 36), the two have regarded it as a joke (*Blues,* 1964:24,26) . Also, the mention of Lyle's "home" and "cash", constitutes a double threat to his "sphere of honor" (Harris, 1995:391). For the Legitimating Reader, this could appear as an intrusion by Richard against Lyle as the *defender* and *protector* of Jo and the privacy of their home.

For the Habitualized Reader, home "as the woman's place", linked to the protection of her white "purity", is particularly sanctified (Harris 1995:392). The threat of sexual assault inflicted on "defenseless" white women by the stereotypical black violent villains depicted in early racial melodramas, such as D.W Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation (1916)*, an apology for the Ku Klux Klan, was a compelling force in the construction of white identity (Bogle, 1992: 13-14; Williams, 2001: 99-100).

The original emphasis of the words *got* (line 32) and *home* (line 34) could also show the authorial Baldwin deliberately playing with the white stereotypical fear of all young blacks as deviant criminals, and "dope fiends", as Lyle, in another scene, labels Richard, when being accused of his death (see *Blues,* 1964:27). This suggests that, in terms of social thought, Baldwin was ahead of his era, as it was only in 1963 that Howard Becker's ground-breaking *Outsiders*, the first *non-stigmatizing* study of drug users, was published (see Kuure, 1996:15). In fact, Weir (1995:13-17,40-46) claims that the mythical stereotype of

the "dope fiend" was created in the 1920s, along with the new rise in the popularity of the Ku Klux Klan. This organization propagandistically used this negative representation against not only racial minorities, such as blacks, Native Americans, Chinese and Mexicans, but also women who contemplated or filed for divorce, in order to *legitimate white male vigilantism as self-protection*.

The emphases on the words *wife* and *home* and the repetition of the latter (line 34) also indicate that Richard is deliberately breaking the Gricean maxim of manner (Fowler 1996:136). This condescending manner of his, as if he were talking to someone less intelligent than himself, once again constitutes him as the tricksterish *ridiculer* of Lyle. This would appear as not only heroic but also amusing to the Challenging Reader. The Critical Reader, however, aware of the might of racial intimidation, for example that of the Klu Klux Klan, or the commonplaceness of lynchings of blacks in the South initiated by much more modest forms of challenging behaviour than Richard's (see section 2.3.3, pp. 59-60), would now be even more worried for the safety of this bold *confronter* of the racial order of Plaguetown. .

Richard is also breaking the racial code of Plaguetown with his suggestion that Jo should go to see if there is cash in the home (line 32). If made by a white customer, it could have passed as normal, although Lyle insists that "nobody can talk about his wife" that way (line 35). The double negative here could be a possible marker of Lyle's non-standard sociolect (Fowler, 1996:187) marking his working-class background, or it can indicate the outrageousness of Richard's suggestion to Lyle, strengthening Lyle's response (line 35) even further. By having enough self-esteem to behave *as if Lyle and him were equals*, Richard again, can be seen as acting like a *deprogrammer* of the ideological notion of the inferiority of blacks that compelled them to wait at the back doors of white men's homes.

While the Legitimating Reader would perhaps not openly condone Lyle's prejudice, s/he nevertheless would question the motives for Richard's aggressive behaviour and sympathize with Lyle's efforts to *defend* his privacy. To the Critical Reader, Richard's remark about Jo "running home" (line 34) could also suggest a misogynic reduction of Jo's status into Lyle's errand girl, showing the contempt Richard feels for white women (see *Blues,* 1964:45-46). This attitude was epitomized in the ideology of black radicalism, for which reason it would probably be condoned by the Challenging Reader.

To the two Reproducing Readers inclined to racially habitualized melodramatic and legitimating views, all this would, in turn, evoke sympathy for Lyle. The Habitualized Reader would be certain of, and the Legitimating Reader prone to assume, that Richard, although his past as a former drug addict is yet unknown to Lyle, as a black young man is up to steal Lyle's money. This fear, still popular in the end of the 20th century (Farley, 1997:250, 257-58), is heightened by Baldwin, when Richard challengingly indicates that he *knows* there is *cash* in the house (line 34). Dramatically, Richard's tricksterish flashing of the twenty-dollar bill not only evens the balance of domination and defense (Marx, 1961:23) but also, in Frames 7.3 and 7.4, has reversed them for a while

(*ibid*:24). Now, Lyle attempts to regain his domination by controlling the next frame (7.5), when the two, once again, start negotiating Richard's *space of being* in Plaguetown.

7.5 Negotiating Richard's *space of being and space of choice*

In this frame, the conflict between Lyle and Richard escalates into an open confrontation, constituting the prelude to their actual fight, which ensues in Frame 7.6 . The dispute begins with Lyle's recognition of Richard as the same black youngster who confronted him in Papa D's bar:

> 36 LYLE: I seen you before some place. You that crazy nigger. You ain't from around here.
> 37 RICHARD: You *know* you seen me. And you remember where. And when. I was born right here in this town. I'm Reverend Meridian Henry's son.
> 38 LYLE: You say that like you thought your Daddy's name was some kind of protection. He ain't no protection against *me* - him, nor that boy outside, neither.
> 39 RICHARD: I don't need no protection, do I? Not in my own home town, in the good old USA. I just dropped by to sip on a Coke in a simple country store - and come to find out the joker ain't got enough bread [money] to change twenty dollars. Stud ain't got *nothing* [sic] - you people been spoofing the public, man.
> 40 LYLE: You put them Cokes down and get out of here.
> 41 RICHARD: I ain't finished yet. And I ain't changed my bill yet.
> 42 LYLE: Well, I ain't going to change that bill, and you ain't going to finish them Cokes. You get your black ass out of here - go on! If you got any sense, you'll get your black ass out of this town.
> 43 RICHARD: You don't own this town, you white mother-fucker. You don't *even* own twenty dollars. Don't you raise that hammer. I'll take it and beat your skull to jelly.
> (*Blues* 1964: 100-101., emphasis original)

Discursively, Lyle's recollection of Richard shows how his *insider's* motive (Wetherell and Potter, 1992: 43) is to both *stigmatize* and *exclude* Richard as an *outsider* in Plaguetown by calling him "that crazy nigger", who "ain't from around here" (line 36). Lyle also dominates the frame, with his accusation (line 36). Here, the epithet "nigger" suggests its addressee is more of a threat to the racial order than the referent of the term "boy" that was used by Lyle in the earlier frame to remind Richard of his subordinate position and which Richard refuted. The attribute "crazy" could also heighten the sense of danger attached to the black person referred to as a "nigger", as someone almost "out of control".

In Southern racial etiquette, a "nigger", perhaps contrary to the "boy", who was one more aware of his "place", had to be made aware of his/her position by first having it explicitly told to him and later on by violence (Harris 1995: 393). In line 39, Richard responds to Lyle's overt intimidation (line 38), as both a *citizen* and a *ridiculer,* ending up, again, tricksterishly reminding Lyle of his economic superiority to the poor storeowner. In line 43, he states the fact that

Lyle cannot own Plaguetown, as the poor white man does not even have twenty dollars in his store for change. Here, the dominative and defensive power positions are shifted back and forth by Baldwin the author, creating suspense.

As an *insider* (Wetherell and Potter, 1992: 43) in the white hegemony, Lyle again states that Richard "ain't from around here" (line 36), "ain't" apparently marking a non-standard sociolect (Fowler, 1996:187), and "here" deictically meaning the space of Plaguetown. Richard responds with a declaration of his rights as a *citizen* of his hometown, along with his middle-class status as a minister's son, thus asserting his *space of being* both in Plaguetown and in Lyle's "simple country store" (line 39), while also criticizing Lyle's ability to run the store properly.

The Habitualized Reader would fully agree with Lyle's view of Richard as "crazy" as well as a dangerous *deviant*, who would be obnoxious enough to talk back to a white man, let alone criticize him, whereas the Legitimating Reader could attribute his "craziness" to the fact that he is from outside Plaguetown, particularly from the North, where the norms for black behavior were slightly different. However, although the Legitimating Reader might acknowledge the difference between the Northern and Southern way of life, s/he would still insist that, when in the South, Richard should abide by its racial etiquette.

Once again, Richard's mockery of Lyle's entrepreneurship (line 39) would seem amusing to the Challenging Reader, with Richard's insinuation that the store is either poor or its owner is less intelligent than him. As revealed in the beginning of this conflict, Richard also was more than ready for a possible conflict, which would be started by him "walking into a white place" (see p. 92, line 06) and getting "another look at the peckerwood" Lyle (see p. 101, line 22). This motive of Richard's, revealing that he also had an intention, or at least readiness, to engage in a violent confrontation, might seem less acceptable to the Critical Reader than to the Challenging one. Nevertheless, from the perspective of them both, Richard has a right to occupy Lyle's store, just as the whole of Plaguetown, as his *space of being*, without being intimidated. However, this is not the case, since Lyle utters further threats as an *intimidator* ("Your Daddy's name ain't no protection", line 38), and even a *coercer* of Richard, telling him to "put down" the drinks and "get out of" his store (line 40). His final agenda, then, is to drive Richard and his "black ass" (line 42) away from Plaguetown altogether.

Lyle's threatening opening remarks in line 42 show a shift from Richard's *space of being* into his *space of choice*. Here, Richard can now only succumb to Lyle's domination and leave Plaguetown for good or resist it by refusing to do so. Moreover, Lyle's speech act (line 42) diminishes Richard's *space of choice* to the obvious alternative of leaving Plaguetown. This is clearly expressed in the coercive clause "If you got any sense..." (line 42), with the implication that it would not be reasonable for Richard to stay in Plaguetown under such threat of violence. Richard responses to this by degrading Lyle as the "son-of-a-bitch" who does not own Plaguetown, also, once again, reminding Lyle of his poverty (line 43).

Historically, Lyle could here be seen as symbolizing the poor whites for whom the special status of a middle-class black, ever since the emergence of the first educated house servants during slavery (see pp. 35-36), has been a source of envy, whether the protection of their black rivals was afforded by rich slave owners (see Polakoff et al., 1977:344), or, later on, by the middle-class status of their families. This protection, however, in the Southern system with its *caste* rather than *class* hierarchy epitomized by the lynchings of blacks (see Harris 1995), was not adequate, which Lyle also verifies by stating to Richard that "Your Daddy's name [or middle-class status] […] ain't no protection…" (line 38, brackets added) .

To the Challenging Reader, Richard's jokes may constitute a pleasurable revenge for all the white man's historical economic exploitation, now laid on one single poor white man. However, in its spitefulness, it might annoy the Legitimating Reader, who would condemn Richard's audacious manner and sympathize with Lyle as the *victim* of ridicule. To the Habitualized Reader, the situation of an "evil" and deviant black degrading a white man, would seem unbearable and should be punished. The Critical Reader would recognize Richard's mockery of Lyle as further escalating the conflict, finally "from threats to physically damaging acts", according to Archer's (1994b: 129) observations of violent conflicts, just as Lyle's intimidating and coercive remarks (lines 38, 40, and 42) from their side have done.

As in the first encounter of these two characters (see Frame 7.1), there is again a diversity of identities, depending on the perspective one views them from. To the Legitimating Reader, Richard appears a *provoker*, who has come to Lyle's store simply to "stir up trouble". To the Habitualized Reader, he seems not only as an *intruder* but also a dangerous *deviant,* who should be arrested for his disobedient behaviour. From the point of view of the Legitimating Reader, he should also be disciplined, whereas the Habitualized Reader would rather see him severely punished. The Challenging Reader would exult in his advances as both a heroic *deprogrammer* and a tricksterish *ridiculer* fully entitled to aggravate Lyle to the maximum, and the Critical one could acknowledge him as a *venturer*, an individual struggling against racial hegemony and heading for tragedy when pushing the limits of his *citizenship* against the established racial order of Plaguetown.

For the Legitimating Reader, Lyle could also be seen as trying to protect his wife and defend his business. The Critical Reader, in turn, would detect behind him the power structure of white domination and patriarchy, to which Lyle implicitly refers in his intimidating and coercive remarks to Richard, often expressed as conditional (If you…) . As in Frame 7.1, with the negotiation over Juanita, the difference between these interpretations is *dependent on the context*. For instance, if one ignored Richard's desire to confront Lyle (see p. 92, line 6; p. 99, line 20, and p. 101, line 22), one might be inclined to regard Richard's claim (line 39) of him entering Lyle's store purely accidentally (see p. 101, lines 21 and 22) as truthful.

Discursively, starting from line 39, Richard's ridiculing remarks are now emphasized by the use of *insulting* epithets with *sexual undertones*, which suggests a shift from a generally funny *trickster* to a much more focused and spiteful *insulter* of Lyle as a "stud" (line 39) and "white mother-fucker" (line 43), with the suggestion that Lyle is a dishonest businessman who has been "spoofing the public" (line 39). In addition, Richard is counter-intimidating Lyle with the threat of beating his "skull to jelly" (line 43). This move, as well as Lyle's earlier intimidations, escalates the conflict further from threats to the following physical confrontation. The final basis for the degradation of Lyle's identity as a white man is given by Baldwin in the next frame, where the two confront each other physically, still in Lyle's store. This instigates a series of more sinister confrontations, which, at the end, culminates in Richard's murder.

7.6 Negotiating the hammer

In this frame, Lyle and Richard fight each other over Lyle's hammer. The hammer would here symbolize Lyle's hegemonic power, which Richard now finally succeeds in overcoming. The whole scene happening in Lyle's store and containing the Frames from 7.3 to 7.6 is presented in the play retrospectively as a flashback to the past, with Lyle narrating the story to his friend Parnell.

> 44 JO: Lyle! Don't you fight that boy! He's crazy! I'm going to call the Sheriff! (*Starts toward the back, returns to counter*) The baby! Lyle! Watch out for the baby!
> 45 RICHARD: A baby, huh? How many times did you have to try for it, you no good, ball-less peckerwood? I'm surprised you could even get it up- look at the way you're sweating now.
> (*Lyle raises the hammer. Richard grabs his arm, forcing it back. They struggle.*)
> 46 JO: Lyle! The baby!
> 47 LORENZO: Richard!
> (*He comes into the store)*
> 48 JO: Please get that boy out of here, get that boy out of here - he's going to get himself killed.
> (*Richard knocks the hammer from Lyle's hand, and knocks Lyle down. The hammer spins across the room. Lorenzo picks it up.)*
> 49 LORENZO: I don't think your husband is going to kill no more black men. Not today, Mrs. Britten. Come on, Richard. Let's go.
> (*Lyle looks up at them)*
> 50 LYLE: It took two of you. Remember that.
> 51 LORENZO: I didn't lay a hand on you, Mr. Britten. You just ain't no match for - a *boy*. Not without your gun you ain't. Come on, Richard.
> 52 JO: You'll go to jail for this! You'll go to jail! For years!
> 53 LORENZO: We've been in jail for years. I'll leave your hammer over at Papa D's joint. - don't look like you're going to be doing no more work today.
> 54 RICHARD (*Laughs)*: Look at the mighty peckerwood! On his *ass*, baby - and his woman watching! Now, who do 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!
> (*Exits. Richard's laughter continues in the dark. Lyle and Parnell as before.)*
> 55 LYLE: Niggers was laughing at me for days. Everywhere I went.
> (*Blues* 1964: 101-102., emphasis original)

With the might of his youthful energy, Richard continues to *insult* Lyle sexually as a man and a father, first by taking away his hammer and then ridiculing him with a face-threatening and stereotypical attribute in the remark "How many times did you have to try for it [making the baby]...you ball-less peckerwood" (line 45, brackets added). Here, the hammer could be taken from Huddie Leadbetter's blues song "Take this hammer" (in Asch and Lomax, 1962:45), symbolizing the racial power that Lyle is here disarmed of, which, though only for a short while, reverses the power positions of the dominative-defensive conflict (Marx, 1961:23).

When the fight is over, Richard again tricksterishly boasts about his victory, expressing a facetious, but also degrading sexual threat to Jo, claiming to show her "who's the master" (line 54). To both the Habitualized and Legitimating Reader, Jo could be seen to act as a *protector* of her and Lyle's baby (lines 44 and 46) against Richard as the "crazy boy", the *insulte*r and *intimidator* of her husband. However, to the Challenging Reader, Richard might appear as a *heroic avenger*, representing all the blacks oppressed by white men like Lyle, when physically overcoming a white man and being able to joke about it. This probably also happened for the first time in the history of Broadway in the play's performances.

The significance of Richard's victory to the play's black spectators in particular can be compared to how blacks in the ghetto of the Harlem of the 1950s admired and identified with their hero Joe Louis, the boxer victorious over many white opponents. Baldwin (*Notes* 1955:53) reports:

> In every act of violence, particularly violence against white men, Negroes feel a certain *thrill of identification*, *a wish to have done it themselves*, a *feeling* that *old scores are settled at last*. It is no accident that Joe Louis is the most idolized man in Harlem. (*Notes,* 1955: 53., emphasis added)

In a similar vein, Archer (1994b: 322) states that traditional Western culture promotes male domination over women as well as interpersonal physical competition between men, regarding them both not only as cultural *values,* but also as *practices,* by which one achieves status in society. Therefore, losing a fight to another man, particularly to someone the loser has the need to consider as his inferior, can have a devastating impact on his concept of himself. In turn, for the winner, it can have an exhilarating effect.

The effect of Richard's victory over Lyle on the Challenging Reader and probably also on a spectator of that kind can well be compared to the catharsis experienced by blacks watching, for example, the black boxer Joe Louis *overcome his white opponent*. As drama and sports both produce suspense in their audience (Marx, 1961:23; Esslin, 1976:12), they can also elicit their spectators' *identifi-*

cation with the *athletes* as well as dramatic characters, this experience aptly described by Baldwin (*Notes,* 1955:53) as the black spectators' fantasy that they had "done it themselves", *viz*., settled their "old scores" with whites.

The Critical Reader would recognize Richard's remarks as a counter-intimidation, with their roots in the resistance against the racial power structure symbolized here by Lyle. To the Legitimating Reader, when telling the story to his friend Parnell, Lyle (line 55) appears to justify his shooting of Richard by exaggerating the extent of his humiliation ("Niggers was laughing...for days...everywhere where I went"). Lyle's abasement, as that of the white *master*, would undoubtedly be something the Challenging Reader would rejoice in. By the exaggeration of his shame, Lyle could also be breaking the Gricean maxim of *quality* (see Fowler, 1996: 135) Nevertheless, after being ridiculed by Richard and Lorenzo (lines 51, 53 and 54), and after his wife had been, though facetiously and verbally, sexually threatened, Lyle has become even more eager to seek retaliation.

To the Challenging Reader, Lorenzo's judgment of Lyle "of not being a man enough against a *boy* without his gun" (line 51, emphasis original) may, indeed, bring temporary enjoyment by highlighting the white man's helplessness against the black youngster. To the Critical Reader, however, it may appear as a careless statement, which further escalates the conflict. It also serves as one more hint (Marx, 1961:44) to all the different Readers of the tragic end of the conflict, where Lyle *does* use his gun to restore his identity as "a white man" (see Frame 7.11).

Both the Critical and the Challenging Reader would agree with Lorenzo's reply (line 53) to Jo's threat of imprisonment (line 52). If taken symbolically, it indicates that, for over three centuries, blacks in America have been oppressed, *as if* they had been literally imprisoned. Prison, in fact, constituted a metaphor dominant to Baldwin's later works, arising from his experiences of prisons and prisoners. This was particularly true of his novel *If Beale Street Could Talk,* (1974). (Leeming, 1994:323.) This metaphor could present racism as a *cultural prison*, resembling a Goffman's (1961) "total institution" of *exclusion* and *control*. The Habitualized Reader would regard the cultural codes and conventions of Southern racial etiquette constituting this prison as representing an inexorable reality, while the Legitimating Reader would argue for their "rational" necessity (see Wetherell and Potter, 1992:195), particularly for the curbing of the kind of black aggression Richard has just demonstrated.

By overcoming Lyle in the fight in his own store, Richard has fundamentally challenged the hegemony of white supremacy. Historically, a similar task of refuting the white "master race" ideology was performed by several black athletes including for example the World Champions in heavyweight boxing, Jack Johnson, Joe Louis and Mohammad Ali. Both Johnson and Ali were notorious for their criticism of American whites. Johnson's life also resembles Richard's in the sense that he, already in the early 1900s, married three white women (Encarta Encyclopedia), while Richard boasts about his sexual relationships with white women in the North (*Blues,* 1964:41-43). This would, to the Habitu-

alized Reader, seem as repugnant as to many white men in Johnson's times. In addition, the original model for Richard in the play, the 14-year-old Emmett Till, was alleged boasting to the white shop assistant he flirted with that he had had "white girlfriends before" (Huie, 1956:46).

Historically, in the eyes of the two Reproducing Readers, if he did not act upon the matter, Lyle would probably lose his 'face', *viz..*, public self-image and reputation (Goffman in Lemert & Branaman, 1997:110-11) and status in the white community as the laughing-stock of Plaguetown blacks. In the play, Lyle's concern for his reputation can be seen in his desperate attempt to make the incident look as if he had been overpowered by *both* Richard and Lorenzo. He even tries to coerce them to agree (line 50), but Lorenzo immediately refutes this (line 51), adding the moral but dangerous judgement "without your gun you ain't" [any match for Richard]. In that brief moment, there is a major disruption of the hegemony of "the master race" (line 54), which was thought to be physically superior, a notion also inherent in Nazi racial ideology (Puuronen 2001:36-37). This superiority Lyle now seeks to restore, along with his hurt pride, and protect the safety of his wife and home against the threat of Richard returning to the store. Here, the Readers are also given a hint of what is to happen in the next encounter of the two, which Lyle enters with his gun.

7.7 Negotiating the drink and the record

The next encounter between Lyle and Richard takes place at Papa D.'s Juke Joint, the place where the two first met. This scene is narrated retrospectively by Papa D. in the witness stand during Lyle's trial for Richard's murder.

> 56 PAPA D.: That boy had good sense. He was wild, but he had good sense. And I couldn't blame him too much for being so wild, it seemed to me I knew how he felt.
> 57 RICHARD: Papa D., I been in pain and darkness all my life. All my life. And this is the first time in my life I've ever felt – maybe it isn't all like that. Maybe there's more to it than that.
> 58 PAPA D.: Lyle Britten come to the door – (*Lyle enters*) He come to the door and he say -
> 59 LYLE: You ready for me now boy? Howdy, Papa D..
> 60 PAPA D.: Howdy, Mr. Lyle, how's the world been treating you?
> 61 LYLE: I can't complain. You ready, boy?
> 62 RICHARD: No. I ain't ready. I got a record to play and a drink to finish.
> 63 LYLE: You about ready to close, ain't you, Joel?
> 64 PAPA D.: Just about, Mr Lyle.
> 65 RICHARD: I got a record to play. (*Drops coin: juke box music, loud*) And a drink to finish.
> 66 PAPA D.: He played his record. Lyle Britten never moved from the door. And they just stood there, the two of them, looking at each other. When the record was just about over, the boy came back to the bar - he swallowed down the last of his drink.
> 67 RICHARD: What do I owe you, Papa D.?

68 PAPA D.: Oh, you pay me tomorrow. I'm closed now.
69 RICHARD: What do I owe you, Papa D.? I'm not sure I can pay you tomorrow.
70 PAPA D.: Give me two dollars.
71 RICHARD: Here you go. Good night, Papa D. I'm ready, Charlie. (*Exits*)
72 PAPA D.: Good night, Richard. Go on home now. Good night, Mr. Lyle. Mr. Lyle!
73 LYLE: Good night, Joel. You get some sleep, you hear?
(Exits)
(*Blues,* 1964:119-120.)

Lyle's behavior here can be seen as dominative, when he impatiently urges both Richard to finish his drink (lines 59 and 61) and Papa D. to close down the bar, with his manipulative tag question ("You about ready to close, ain't you…", line 63). He also calls Richard, "boy" again (lines 59 and 61).

As in the first dialogue between Lyle and Papa D. (see p. 131), Lyle does now leave both Richard, like Papa D. then, only little room to respond to his subtle efforts of coercion (lines 59, 61, 63). From the point of view of the Critical Reader, Richard (lines 62 and 65) could be seen to resist this by defending his right to listen to a record of his own choice and finish his drink, these two determining his protected *space of choice*, before confronting Lyle for the last time. However, Richard's lines in this extract, particularly lines 69 and 71, have been criticized by Hay (1994:94) as uncharacteristic of the tricksterish "street dude" he has been previously constructed as.

Admittedly, the change from an aggressive youth in conflict with the white society to a gentle self-reflective person may seem sudden, even when it is explained in line 57 as Richard's realization of having been in "pain and darkness" and, for the first time, realizing that "maybe it isn't all like that". However, seen as the mental recovery of an ex-addict and –convict, motivated strongly by Richard's new-found love for his girlfriend Juanita (*Blues* 1964:52-54;118-119), it perhaps reveals Baldwin's early optimistic belief in the transcending power of positive emotions over social conflicts. This optimism of Baldwin's was evidently contradicted by, for example, the harsh realities of the murder of the civil rights worker Medgar Evers and the bombing of the four schoolchildren in Birmingham, Alabama, both happening in 1963, while Baldwin was still writing the play (Campbell, 2002:174-75,196; Leeming, 1994:228,234). I shall discuss this optimism and its potential ideological connections further in Frame 7.9 .

Here, the mood of the play also comes close to the traditions of racial melodrama, with Richard's sudden change from a revolutionary victorious hero, a kind of anti-Tom, to a helpless victim hero, such as Uncle Tom, who virtuously accepted his tragic fate at the hands of the white villain. Williams (2001:29) claims this was also the stereotypical way black characters were depicted in Broadway plays and Hollywood films. First, however, Richard has to settle his earthly business by insisting on paying what he owes to Papa D., as he is "not sure" of being able to pay him tomorrow, as if predicting he might be dead then (line 69).

Intertextually, there is a strong sense of Christian martyrdom and melodrama similar to that in the plot of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Williams, 2001:47-48), which, in turn, resembled the story of Jesus's death (29). This could be heightened also in the Legitimating Reader's recognition of Richard's virtue that has, however, come "too late" (see Williams, 2001:30). For the possibly melodramatically oriented Habitualized Reader, it certainly has. Leeming (1994: 201) lists other victim heroes of this kind, appearing in Baldwin's novels both before and after Richard in *Blues* (1964). Such main characters include another Richard in *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), Sonny in *Sonny's Blues* (1957), Rufus in *Another Country* (1962) and Arthur in *Just Above My Head* (1979).

Here, the Four Readers would actually begin to anticipate the four possible catharses offered by the Four Readings of the play. The Legitimating Reader, for example, perhaps from an Aristotelian viewpoint, would see Richard as owing his ensuing tragic fate to his defiance, whereas the Critical Reader, from a presumably Brechtian perspective, would attribute this to the underlying racial power structure of Plaguetown.

In contrast, both the Challenging and the Habitualized Readers would simply anticipate the end of the conflict. To them, this end would mean that either one walks out as a winner, be it Richard as an *avenger* of all racial oppression on all whites in Plaguetown, which would please the Challenging Reader, or Lyle as a potential *punisher* for disobedience, thus satisfying the Habitualized Reader. Again, the Legitimating Reader would regard Richard as a *troublemaker* being *disciplined* by Lyle, while the Critical Reader could anticipate Richard's fate as a non-conformist *confronter* fighting Lyle's growing *coercion* of him. The Challenging Reader could yet also wonder, why Richard had left his gun behind (see *Blues,* 1964:54), which to him/her, as the kind of behaviour highly atypical of a "street dude" (Hay, 1994:94), would mean a disappointment.

The Habitualized Reader might also still hope for a "happy ending", where Richard would finally, "in the nick of time" (Williams, 2001: 30), restore Lyle's superior status as the white man by apologizing to him. In Williams' (2001) view, this suspense between "hope and defeat" is the crucial element of melodramatic sensation (35), evidently utilized by Baldwin in bringing about the end of the play. There is, however, one crucial exception, namely that the reader-spectator already *knows* that Richard is going to die, as the following final scene is presented as a flashback of Lyle's. This gives the following scenes a strong Brechtian sense of the principles of the Epic Theatre, in that it "deliberately highlights" the drama "as foreknown narrative", instead of "unfolding spontaneous action" (Babbage, 2004:142). This means *instructing* (Brecht, 1964:71-73) the readers and spectators of *how* and *why* Richard is going to die, instead of *creating* melodramatic *suspense and sensation* (Williams, 2001:35), or Aristotelian pathos of *pity and fear* (Babbage, 2004:49) over *whether* he will die .

Although the readers and spectators were already, in the beginning of the play, made *aware* of the dramatic fact of Richard's death, they *might* nevertheless momentarily *wish* for a happier ending. Their disappointment in this sense could, in turn, make them *ponder why* such an ending was not possible. Here,

Richard's acts of listening to the record and finishing his drink also constitute him as resembling the condemned prisoner who is granted his last wish before his impending execution. Once again, the Christian symbolism of the Last Supper comes to mind.

The sense of Richard's *virtue* (Williams, 2001:30), embracing the Christian doctrine of non-violence, also uncharacteristic of a "street dude" (Hay, 1994:94), is heightened by yet another dramatic fact. In a previous scene, the play's readers and spectators have already learned that Richard has, indeed, given away the gun he had obtained for his protection to his father (*Blues* 1964:54), while Lyle has not left his behind. There is, nevertheless, some of the challenging "street dude" (Hay, 1994: 94) left in Richard, as he declares (line 71) he is "ready" for "Charlie", namely, the mythical "Mister Charlie", who in blues folklore had become the ideologically symbolic stereotype of the white master figure (Lomax, 1993:225-227; see p. 47). Lyle and Richard then meet for the last time, in the play's murder scene, on the road outside Papa D.´s bar.

7.8 Negotiating Richard's *space of choice*

The following scene is, once again, narrated retrospectively, this time by Lyle, after he has already been acquitted in the trial. After the trial, Richard's father Meridian confronts Lyle by asking if Richard's had "begged for his life" (*Blues,* 1964:154) before Lyle shot him, which makes Lyle not only *confess* to the murder but also to *legitimate it racially*.

> 74 LYLE: *That* nigger! [....] He was too smart for that! He was too full of himself for that! He must have thought *he was white*! [last italics added]
> And I gave him every chance – every chance – to live!
> 75 MERIDIAN And he refused them all.
> 76 LYLE: Do you know what that nigger said to me?
> (*The light changes, so that everyone but Lyle is a silhouette. Richard appears, dressed as we last saw him, on the road outside Papa D.'s joint.*)
> 77 RICHARD: I'm ready. Here I am. You asked me if I was ready, didn't you? What's on your mind, white man?
> 78 LYLE: Boy, I always treated you with respect. I don't know what's the matter with you, or what makes you act the way you do - but you owe me an apology and I come out here tonight to get it. I mean, I ain't going away without it.
> 79 RICHARD: I owe *you* an apology! That's a wild idea. What am I apologizing for?
> 80 LYLE: You know, you mighty lucky still be walking around.
> 81 RICHARD: So are you. White man.
> 82 LYLE: I'd like you to apologize for your behavior in my store that day. Now, I think I'm being pretty reasonable, ain't I?
> 83 RICHARD: You got anything to write on? I'll write you an IOU.
> 84 LYLE: Keep it up. You going to be laughing out of the other side of your mouth pretty soon.
>
> (*Blues*, 1964: 154-155.)

Richard's declaration of "being ready" (line 77) indicates that he is prepared for a confrontation with Lyle. Lyle's determination to get an apology from Richard shows that Richard has not only trespassed on Lyle's "protected space", but also disturbed the racial order of Plaguetown.

Taking control of the scene, Lyle is now determined to make Richard apologize (line 78). For the Legitimating and Habitualized Readers, Lyle's intimidation anticipating physical violence, in line 84 in particular, ("You're going to laugh on the other side of your mouth pretty soon"), seems to depict Lyle as a *discipliner* and potential *punisher* of Richard, constructed by the Legitimating Reader as *a defiant troublemaker* and as *a deviant* by the Habitualized Reader. The Critical and Challenging Readers, however, could acknowledge Richard's attempts to *defend* himself and his masculinity and, eventually, also to *parade* his sexuality (see Grier and Cobbs, 1968:53-54; p. 30), in the face of Lyle's use of the desexualizing epithet "boy".

Both Richard's question containing the epithet "white man" (line 77) and Lyle's claim of treating Richard "with respect", although addressing him derogatively as "Boy" (line 78), could be characterized with the help of Wetherell and Potter's (1992:195) ideas as attempts to *disclaim* racial prejudice, which was also inherent in the racial ethos of Pakeha New Zealanders as well as modern white Americans (*ibid.*). The two scholars found that speakers from the dominant ethnic group of NZ, when talking about the island's Maori population showed *ambivalence* between their desire to *present* themselves as *non-racist* and claim that their *racial perceptions* of Maoris were based not only on "individual prejudice", but merely reflected "rational judgement". Here, both Lyle's claim that he has respected the "boy" Richard (line 78) and Richard's pretense of not knowing what the "white man" has on his mind, although perfectly aware of what Lyle as "the white man", the symbol of racial oppression, wants (line 77), serve as examples of *ambivalent* racist and counter-racist discourse. In line 78, Lyle clearly constructs himself as a *rational* man, who does not understand the *irrational* behaviour of Richard as the Other.

For the Challenging Reader, Richard's bold behaviour towards Lyle, as well as his inquiries to why he has to apologize to Lyle, seen by him as the ultimate "white man", a symbol of the historical oppression of him and all African-Americans (line 78), would apparently seem heroic. For the Critical Reader, Richard could seem dangerously unaware of the consequences of challenging not only Lyle but the whole racial power structure of Plaguetown. For the Legitimating Reader, Richard would still appear as a *provoker* and to the Habitualized Reader as a *deviant*, who just pretends that he is unaware what he has to "apologize for" (line 79). The beginning of Lyle's line (78) could also be seen by the Critical Reader as Baldwin's attempt to defamiliarize the habitualized (Fowler, 1996:44-45) Southern practice of desexualization (see p. 29). Here, Baldwin seems to reveal the Southern white man's impossible claim to *both respect* a black man and simultaneously *degrade* him. Lyle also hegemonically (Fairclough 1997, personal consultation) focuses on Richard's behavior as that of

the Other, him being "not right", puzzled by "what makes" (line 78) Richard act the way he does, further legitimating his need to have Richard apologize to him.

By constructing Lyle as a poor Southern white man of the early 1960s, perhaps unaware of the degrading effect of the habitualized epithet 'boy', Baldwin could emphasize the originally Marxist 'false consciousness' argument of racial ideology as a state of *ignorance* (Wilson, 1996:146; Van Dijk, 1998:96-97). This, again in contrast to Aristotelian tragedy or melodrama, would bring the play closer to the *exposure* (see Benston, 1987:65) of white villainy by black revolutionary drama as well as to Brecht's (1964:74) idea of theatre as an *instrument of instruction*, revealing "the exceedingly complicated machinery within which the struggle of power [in modern society] takes place", here, in the codes and practices of the South.

The impossibility of Lyle's self-contradictory claim (line 78) would probably elicit ironic amusement in the Challenging Reader. However, both the Reproducing Readers would not notice the contradiction at all and would, instead, sympathize with Lyle. The Legitimating Reader would argue in support of Lyle's benevolence and toleration of Richard's behavior, thereby entitling Lyle to the apology he pursues (line 78), and the Habitualized one would simply be waiting for Richard to be punished. The Critical Reader, however, might acknowledge Lyle's inner conflict (Marx, 1961: 28) between his *personal and social identity* (see Van Dijk, 1998: 118-22). This idea, along with a discussion on the *racial significance* of the apology, will be developed further in the next frame (7.9). Also, Richard's not taking Lyle's demands seriously (see lines 79 and 83) could please the Challenging Reader, whereas the Habitualized Reader would abhor it.

When confronting a white male character as a "white man", i.e., as a stereotypical symbol of oppression instead of an individual, let alone as a "stud" or a "mother-fucker" (see p. 155, lines 39, 43), with little awareness of the possible consequences, Richard again appears as a tricksterish model for the heroic black characters depicted later in the plays of the Black Theatre Movement (Hay, 1994: 95-96). Lyle replies to Richard's question of "what" he "should apologize for" (line 79) with a subtle note of intimidation "you mighty lucky still be walking around" (line 80), which insinuates a future punishment, perhaps even a lynching, if Richard continues his challenging behavior. This line (80) of Lyle's, as an attempt to manipulate Richard through intimidation, constitutes a less subtle "obedience test" than before (see Frames 7.2 and 7.4) . Yet, Richard contradicts Lyle again, now implying that also Lyle could be equally in danger himself (line 81), this statement probably predicting the rise of black counter-violence in the form of the Black Panthers.

Richard's line (81) would be intimidating enough on the personal level and, perhaps, in the context of the race riots that happened in cities of the North during the other half of the 1960s. However, compared to the threat of lynchings in the Deep South, referred to by Lyle in his remark that Richard is "lucky to still be walking around", Richard's remark (line 81) is unlikely to have the

same amount of power as Lyle's. Even if, in a man-to-man fight, he has overcome Lyle, he would be unlikely to be able to defend himself against a lynch mob. Dramatically, as well as discursively, however, line 81 serves a purpose by creating suspense through balancing the existing power relations in the public context of the South through Richard's private intimidation. The conflict between the two appears as *symbolic* to the dominative-defensive conflict introduced by Milton Marx (1961), where the power of the dominant force is diminished by the author to strengthen its defensive counterpart, to the extent that this counterpart at least *theoretically* is given a chance to overthrow the dominant one (23-24).

Ideologies can be regarded as powerful social forces (Van Dijk, 1998). Therefore, here the originally interpersonal conflict between a white male storeowner and a young black man, who seems to have chosen to ignore the evident imbalance of power between them by refusing to submit to it, expands into a social one between racial ideology and social equality (see Van Dijk, 1998:11). Here, Lyle symbolizes racial power, and Richard a challenge to it. At this moment, Richard still seems to have kept his *space of choice* flexible enough to be able to refuse Lyle's intimidating demands.

In the next line (82), Lyle attempts to *persuade* Richard to apologize, rather than to intimidate him. To the Challenging Reader, though, the way he presents his request for apology can seem *condescending* rather than sincere, as he also rhetorically asks to be credited with being "reasonable" (line 82), as if behaving rationally would be a sacrifice rather than the appropriate choice in the situation. In fact, given the historical context of white domination in the South, to the Legitimating Reader, Lyle's suggestion could seem as that of a benevolent *persuader*. The Critical Reader, however, would probably regard it as a kind of *coping strategy*, described by Gilbert (1994: 356).

This moment in the play, nevertheless, hints towards the next frame (7.9) where hope of a possible reconciliation between these two men emerges. This frame brings the identities of both Richard and Lyle close to transcending racial hegemony through possible co-operation and compromise. However, the Challenging Reader might still regard Lyle's coping strategy as just another form of manipulation. This may also motivate Richard to respond with the escapist joke of "writing an IOU" (line 83) to the white storeowner, perhaps also implying that Lyle, as a capitalist, could be soothed with money. Richard's joke in line 83 also resembles the kind of wisecracking the spectators of Hollywood movies would expect to find in the discourse of white private detective characters such as Philip Marlowe (see http://thrillingdetective.com/).

Discursively, line 82 serves as another *ambivalent* attempt by Lyle to present himself as *sympathetic*, while *subtly stigmatizing* Richard as the Other (see p. 172)[1], In the history of the American South, it would have been unwise to challenge a white man to a fight, let alone beat him in it, without the threat of being

[1] This practice seems similar to Bill Clinton's testimony about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky (Workshop with Potter, 2002).

lynched or incarcerated (Campbell, 2002:122-124). Thus, Lyle's attempt to persuade Richard to apologize to him (line 82) has the dramatic impact on the plot as neutralizing the conflict in order to keep the audience in the state of ambivalence as to its possible resolution (Marx, 1961:54). Richard's response (line 83), contemptuous and playful at the same time, once again, shows him as a kind of trickster figure, unreachable by white control because of his cleverness (Lomax, 1993: 132). In this situation, however, to the Critical Reader, Richard's wisecracking seems to escalate the conflict. Also, to both the Reproducing Readers, it seems inappropriate to the situation, as it evades Richard's own responsibility for his behaviour in the situation and elicits further intimidation from Lyle (line 84)

An extra motivation for Richard's character can be elucidated with the help of Kuure's (1996) *Marginaalin politiikkaa* (*Politics at the Margin*), a study of prisoner rehabilitation through the writings of inmates. Kuure (1996) studied a group of prisoners' individual attempts to challenge their deviant identities and construct the identities appropriate for living as citizens in Finnish society, namely to "break away from the margin". As the reader-spectator has learned earlier in the play, Richard, an ex-drug user, having been imprisoned in Lexington (see *Blues*, 1964:46), has come to his home town to recover from his addiction, namely to "break away" from the margin of drug addiction and prison, yet finding to his disappointment that he is, still, marginalized by "race".

Kuure (1996:12) also contends that living on the margins of society can give the individual an insight different from and sometimes more profound than the hegemonized view of society, which usually sees marginalized individuals as deviants who have failed to conform to its norms. When one has little to lose, one also feels freer to criticize and challenge society's practices, including racial ones. On the other hand, in the process of alienation from the society, one may also become hypercritical and self-derogatory, when struggling with one's stigma, i.e., "spoiled identity" (Goffman 1963).

For Richard, as a black man and a recovering ex-addict and -convict, the stigma would be doubled, or perhaps even tripled. Baldwin's characterization of Richard apparently also as a former heroin user struggling with his aggression (see *Blues*, 1964:45-46) is also credible[2]. The inner rage Richard attempts to control can easily be attributed to the "black rage" Grier and Cobbs (1968:168) found their black patients to harbor (see p. 39). By venting his anger on Lyle, Richard could, to the Challenging Reader, once again, appear as heroic.

Richard's hypercriticality and self-awareness of being stigmatized by "race", shown as both introverted and extroverted aggression, namely "anger forged out of constant humiliation", is seen by Bigsby (1985:389) as the key element in his following destruction. For the Legitimating Reader, this may suggest an Aristotelian interpretation of the character as "tragically flawed" (see section 6.3.1; p. 123). Baldwin, too, seems to use "race" as a possible motivation for Richard's drug addiction as well as for his tricksterish behavior. In the plot,

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[2] Users of heroin and other opiates have been found by Khantzian (in Coombs 1997:85) to utilize the drug to soften their inner rage and aggression.

the character's vindictive rage is also shown to stem from the unsolved death of his mother, for which he blames the white men that harassed her (see *Blues*, 1964:34-35). Dramatically, he is neither an example of the purely innocent and good-hearted victim, an Uncle Tom, nor of the extremely dangerous or unjustifiably violent anti-Tom, proposed by Williams (2001:8) as the two kinds of stereotypes for black characters on Broadway and Hollywood. Instead, he is an ideological *deprogrammer*, challenging these two stereotypical representations. This deprogramming quality in him makes him a truly *self-conscious hero* for the kind of revolutionary drama performed later in the Black Theatre[3].

What makes Richard specifically appealing to the Challenging Reader, is that ever since his coming to Plaguetown, unlike the town's other black residents, he has chosen not to hide his emotions. If he had, this would have required him to "keep cool" (Grier and Cobbs, 1968:57), and succumb to the town's racial order. This, to the Critical Reader, in the form of an insincere apology, the kind perhaps Papa D. as the accommodator (see p. 95) would have made, might constitute a way for Richard's survival in the situation. However, as we can see in the next frame (7.9), this is not a *choice* Richard is willing to make, regardless of its possible temporary usefulness for any black person living in the Deep South of the 1950s and 60s.

7.9 Negotiating "home" as a *space of innocence*

In this frame, the two men, still situated on the road outside Papa D's bar, negotiate the possibility of them both returning to their homes. The homes here, as to Williams (2001:28-29; see Section 6.6.2, p. 89), would, in addition to the *spaces of being* and *choice*, constitute *spaces of innocence*, where a *melodramatic resolution* would take these two characters, were Lyle willing to act upon Richard's suggestion (line 84), or Richard, in turn, to apologize.

84 RICHARD: Why don't you go home? And let me go home? Do we need all this shit? Can't we live without it?
85 LYLE: Boy, are you drunk?
86 RICHARD: No, I ain't drunk. I'm just tired. Tired of all this fighting. What are you trying to prove? What am I trying to prove?
87 LYLE: I'm trying to give you a break. You too dumb to take it.
88 RICHARD: I'm hip. You been trying to give me a break for a great, long time. But there's only one break I want. And you won't give me that.
89 LYLE: What kind of a break do you want, boy?

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3 Another revolutionary theorist of drama was Augusto Boal, who, in the 1980s, as part of the development of the Theatre of the Oppressed, began to run workshops that focused on exploring and treating the depressive feelings resulting from oppression as internalized in the minds of the oppressed. Boal named these workshops after these feelings as "The Cop in the Head". (Babbage 2004:23). This also resonates with Richard's struggle against his "Cop in the Head", or, in his prison lingo, "the man" (*Blues* 1964:43)].

90 RICHARD: For you to go home. And let me go home. I got things to do. I got - lots of things to do!
91 LYLE: I got things to do, too. I'd like to get home, too.
92 RICHARD: Then why are we standing here? Can't we walk? Let me walk, white man! Let me walk!
93 LYLE: We can walk, just as soon as we get our business settled.
94 RICHARD: It's settled. You a man and I'm a man. Let's walk.
95 LYLE: Nigger, you was born here. Ain't you never said sir to a white man?
96 RICHARD: No. The only person I ever said sir to was my Daddy.
(*Blues,* 1964:155-156.)

The play's most likely moment for a possible peaceful resolution of this conflict is found in this same frame. After Richard's attempt to take control of the frame (line 84) Lyle also attempts the strategy of a *coper* (see Gilbert 1994:356), trying to avoid a potentially violent situation by asking Richard "what kind of a break" he wants, though still calling him "boy" (line 89). For the Challenging Reader, Richard, when ironically acknowledging the history of white domination for trying to give blacks "a break for a great long time" (line 88), is not only exposing the history of racial oppression, but also acting in an amusingly heroic way. Regarding Lyle as *a symbol of white domination rather than a person*, and stating that he himself is "hip" (line 88), i.e., aware of both the present conflict and its cultural past (http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/hip--3), Richard then proceeds to make his claim for equality, stating that, in his *space of choice,* there is only one particular kind of "break" he wants (line 88), one which does not include submission.

Here, the difference between Fredrickson's (2002:9-10; see p. 50) racisms of *inclusion* and *exclusion* comes into play, as Richard refuses to be included in the space of Plaguetown, if this means that he would have to apologize to Lyle. For Richard, an apology here would appear as a symbol of subordination that, in turn would restore the racial order of Plaguetown, as a sign that he "knows his place" and will no longer challenge either racial inequality or privilege, these two being the basis of the racism of *exploitation* (see Taguieff, 1987, in Fredrickson, 2002:9; see p. 50). For Lyle, however, the alternative to Richard's apology would be Richard's exclusion from Plaguetown, or, as we learn later, even his *extermination* (see Taguieff, 1987, in Fredrickson 2002:9; p. 50).

Through the rare moment of possible *identification*, with both Lyle and Richard wanting to "go home", symbolically, to end the conflict between them, the text, suddenly, and for a brief moment, rids both characters of the conflict of their opposed racial identities, presenting them as two human beings *both* wanting to live in peace and "having things to do" (lines 90 and 91). These lines create the kind of *empathy*, and perhaps also *solidarity*, *between them* which Feagin and Vera (1995:16) state, are usually eliminated from relations involving racial hatred. Furthermore, they produce an atmosphere of *equality* and *reciprocity*, pointing to the characters' individual and private, rather than social and public identities (Van Dijk 1998:119-20). However, Bigsby (1985:389-390), and Hay (1994:94) are critical of Richard's recovery, behind which Bigsby sees

Baldwin yielding to the ideological "belief" of the 1960s' "love generation", according to which social processes could be overcome by individual encounters.

> The existentialist idea inherent in American post-war theatre of the 1950s and 60s of dissolving relations of power on the level of personal relationships was [...] crucial to the ideology of the 1960s' "love" generation. This ideology sought to "transcend history with a gesture of grace" by asserting the conviction that problems like racism and war could be overcome with the idea of universal and interpersonal "love". Crucial to it was the belief that, when stripped from their social roles of national and international authority, "all people meet at the level of the body". (Bigsby 1985: 389-390.)

Here, Baldwin seems to use his power *as the author* (see Clark and Ivanic, 1997:152-53) in an attempt not just to transform but *transcend racial power*, shifting the focus of the analysis from the racial power *structure* to the unique *occasion* (see Maynard, 2002, lecture) between these two characters, with the hope that, despite their social identities, they could resolve their conflict peacefully and by themselves. This also indicates the dramatist's characteristic to bringing in, besides the realistic events "worlds that could, or might be" (see Herman, 1997:8; p. 86), as well as a glimpse of *political optimism* (see Barry, 2009:178-79; p. 76). However, Williams (2001), might also argue that this attempt gives the scene a sense of traditional American melodrama, which aims at ending in the "home" of each character as *a space of innocence* (28-29), where racial issues would not matter. This view might also be shared by the Challenging Reader, who would claim that a solution of this kind would leave intact the racial order of Plaguetown outside these two characters, as the *spaces of innocence* Baldwin offers the two are their respective "homes", where they each should "go", ignoring the racial conflict of the society surrounding them. Here, the Critical Reader of the 1960s could well ask whether Baldwin is attempting to *transcend* "race", or simply *deny* it.

In a recent study on Baldwin, Kilpeläinen (2010) introduces, as central to Baldwin's novels, the author's desire to create an imaginary state of "post-categorical" non-ideological "utopia" between his characters, as also in lines 90 and 91. In a "utopia" of this kind, first conceptualized by Fredrick Jameson, which could also be regarded by Williams (2001:28) as perhaps a kind of melodramatic "space of innocence", racially ideological categorizations would cease to matter, and black and white individuals would treat each other as equals (Kilpeläinen 2010:65-66). However, Kilpeläinen (2010:173) also acknowledges that these "utopian moments", found in those of Baldwin's novels that deal with racial conflict, while offering glimpses of a better kind of world, last only for a short while, after which the author returns to the reality of the racial conflict of his time. Nevertheless, to an educated 21st-century Critical Reader viewing the play with the, possibly more optimistic, "retrospective calmness" called for by Pratt (1978; see p. 86), those moments constitute an important message regarding the futility and danger of "race" to society and human relationships, showing Baldwin as an author way ahead of his time.

To the Critical Reader of the 1960s, an ending of this kind would probably have constituted an unrealistic resolution to racial conflict, regardless of that, for some individual blacks and whites, it might, in the course of history, have turned out to be successful. As it stands in the play, the power of Southern racism, still highly prevalent in its norms and practices, seems to be too strong for a catharsis of this kind to be credible enough. Also, in line 96, Richard gives us a clue that the "home" in his childhood was a place of rigid *discipline* and *authority* rather than one of *innocence*. This view of one's childhood home also corresponds to Baldwin's own childhood, which was sternly dominated by his stepfather (see Leeming 1994:5-6).

Although Richard's propositions (lines 90, 92, 94) would save the *occasion*, they would still leave the outside power *structure* unchanged, unless Richard were to share the news about his victory with the black community. Wetherell and Potter (1992:217) also remain skeptical about resolving a fundamentally socio-economic racial conflict through psychological confrontation. However, from a calmer and retrospective viewpoint from the 21st century, Richard's suggestions (lines 90,92,94) for the resolution of the whole conflict between him and Lyle might seem reasonable, as it does split the usually common *space of innocence* into two different "protected spaces". Furthermore, it would not only allow both parties their manhood through gender bonding ("You a man and I'm a man"; line 94), but also define both rules of mutual respect and boundaries of behavior between them (Hoogland, 1999), hence, suggesting *reciprocity*. This kind of a resolution, however, *is not enough for Lyle*, who craves the *restoration of his position as Richard's superior*, a "white man" to be addressed as "sir" (line 95), according to the Southern etiquette (see Harris 1995: 391; p. 40).

In this frame, Baldwin seems to validate his claim, also expressed in his early essays (*Notes,* 1955: 146-47), that, particularly in the South of the 1950s and 60s, it was not possible to promote black manhood without compromising its white counterpart. Baldwin took this idea to the extreme in *Going to Meet the Man*, the title story of a collection of short stories published next to the play in 1965, by creating the character of a white sheriff, who is incapable of having sexual intercourse with his wife without first recalling the lynching of a black man from his childhood and then pretending his wife to be a black woman (Leeming, 1994: 249). The play also shows Baldwin's belief both in the best and the worst sides of human nature, where racial issues are concerned, which, at the time of writing the play, shifted from an early optimism to a later pessimism, or, at least, disillusionment (Campbell, 2002:192; Leeming, 1994:233). In the final resolution of this conflict, however, it is the worst side that wins.

Lyle's next line (93), after Richard asks him to "let me walk" (line 92), ending Richard's turn at dominating the scene, reproduces the power relation between them. In real-life violent situations, even those where their participants are merely attempting a coping strategy, conflicts may escalate, if the participants have a "limited repertoire" of options for resolving them, or of incentives to do so (Gilbert, 1994:356). Richard's *incentive for social equality* is evidently too much for Lyle, who then is made by Baldwin, this time *articulating* racial dis-

course, to retreat to his social identity as the *discipliner* of Richard as the defiant "nigger" (line 95). Lyle first attempts to assume command of the situation, trying to make Richard understand that *he* will decide, when the two "can walk", which is not to happen *until he has had his apology*, meaning that their "business" would be "settled" (line 93) and the racial order of Plaguetown thus restored. When Richard (line 94) replies with an attempt to "settle the business", without apologizing, but by asserting the honor of both by gender bonding, Lyle responds to this with a line (95) beginning with the controlling racial epithet "nigger", as an attempt to remind Richard of his position. Also Lyle's puzzlement over Richard's refusal to call him "sir" is expressed by his question "ain't you never" (line 95), again emphasized by the double negative.

Although given the opportunity to flee from Plaguetown, Richard has decided to stay for a while longer (see *Blues,* 1964:118-19) and commit the political act (Kuure, 1996:131) of first confronting Lyle, not as a silent Tom or violent anti-Tom (Williams 2001: 8), but *as a free citizen*. At the same time, Richard's decision to confront Lyle without his gun moves the play in the direction of melodrama, with Richard as a naive victim hero rather than the victorious trickster hero of black revolutionary drama.

Having recovered from his racial and self-hatred, Richard now possesses a profound insight into racial conflict, which at this stage of the conflict could rescue him and Lyle from the tragedy of murder, were the matter left only for the two to decide. However, Lyle, in his demands for Richard's apologetic submission, due to either his racial pride or restricted ability to communicate, shown in his lines (85 and 87), considers Richard as either too "drunk" (85) or too stupid (87) to understand his point of view. For both the Critical and the Challenging Reader, this would indicate that it is, in fact, Lyle who is incapable of responding to Richard's plea for a better solution. For the Legitimating Reader and the Habitualized Reader, Richard's proposition (line 94) would suggest that he would have been able to defy the Southern racial order, a force more powerful than either of them can control, almost that of a "natural" kind (see Boal, 1979:32), or, at least one the Habitualized Reader had gotten used to. The Critical Reader would, however, refute the claim of the racial power structure constituting a "natural" order, and, instead, see it as a *hegemonic* state of affairs.

Here, the Legitimating Reader might acknowledge Lyle's responses (lines 85 and 87) as appropriate to Richard's behaviour, whereas the Critical Reader would not accept this, pointing out Lyle's inability to enter into *reciprocal* interaction with Richard. The Challenging and Habitualized Readers would already have chosen who they sympathize with a long time ago. Richard's contemptuous wisecracking joke earlier (line 82) could also motivate the Legitimating Reader to support Lyle's indifferent responses (lines 85 and 87) to what the Challenging Reader would regard as a naive, but the Critical Reader as a humane plea from Richard to him. The Habitualized Reader would, however, wonder why the two are still talking and demand punitive action from Lyle. For the Critical Reader, Richard's plea (lines 84 and 86) constitutes a claim of equality by the character now constructed as a *questioner* of racial hatred, asking

Lyle “can't we live without it?” (line 84). Unfortunately, this plea comes from the less powerful character in the conflict.

From the Legitimating point of view, when concluding that Richard is too "drunk" or "dumb" (lines 85 and 87) to understand the situation from his side, as he is struggling to give a Richard a "break", Lyle exhibits the identity of a *discipliner*, *rationalizing* his actions in an attempt to help rather than to oppress Richard, jeopardizing even his own status as the “white man” who, in normal circumstances, would not even give a black youngster "a break" like this (87). From The Critical perspective, he resembles the image of a good-natured prison guard or police officer, letting the guilty party off with a warning, as long as *his hegemonic authority is acknowledged and unchallenged*. *This is the limit of Lyle's benevolence*. Again, Lyle seems to struggle between his individual and social identity, between his will to treat Richard with respect and his responsibility as a “white man” to restore racial hegemony. This observation, also noticed by the Critical Reader, again brings Baldwin close to the Brechtian idea of instructing the play's audience about the power structure behind racial conflict. The Habitualized Reader would, of course, wonder why Lyle should give any “break" to Richard at all.

To the Legitimating Reader, Lyle's "break" would have appeared as a chance for Richard to end the conflict without any further consequences, providing Lyle's hegemonic status as a “white man” was restored through the apology. Richard, in fact, refused this offer by questioning the whole idea of racial conflict (lines 84 and 86). Lyle's inability to fully understand Richard's initiative for a peaceful solution of the conflict is perhaps further emphasized by the ungrammaticality of his verbless sentence “You too dumb...” (line 87).

Both Lyle's desperate need for Richard to apologize and Richard's reluctance to do so show characteristics of male sexual rivalry typical of violent conflicts (Daly and Wilson, 1996:268). In their earlier confrontation, which was threatening to Lyle's male identity, with Richard insulting Lyle and boasting about being sexually more competent than him in front of his wife, the Legitimating Reader would easily have identified with Lyle's fear of becoming ridiculed, among not only his peers but all his black clients, too, as being too weak to show a black “boy”, or “nigger” his “place”. Lyle claims this has already happened in the play after the fight (see line 55; p. 112), when Richard asserted himself as superior to Lyle both economically and physically, reversing their respective statuses concerning these two fundamental premises of the racial power structure.

Lyle could also be regarded by the Habitualized Reader as a patriarch trying to protect his family, namely, his wife and new-born child, by ensuring their future safety through Richard's apology. Where the Challenging Reader would be annoyed by Lyle's need to deprive Richard of the pride of overpowering the "white man", the Habitualized one would see Richard as a threat not only to Lyle's masculinity, but also to the institution of the ideal “white” family and thus Lyle's “protected space” (see Harris 1995:393). Here, the Legitimating Reader would perhaps also argue for Lyle's right to protect his family, while

denying Richard's equal right to self-protection. Richard's attempts to question the whole idea of "race", on which the conflict between him and Lyle is based, may have puzzled the Readers of the 1960s, while to an educated and critical Reader of the 21st century, they represent the core of the play's non-violent message. In the next frame, however, the message is lost irreparably.

7.10 Negotiating Richard's *space of choice and of being*

The conflict between Lyle and Richard culminates, when Lyle makes his last demands for Richard to apologize, with the final alternative for that to Richard being the loss of his life.

> 98 LYLE: Are you going to apologize to me?
> 99 RICHARD: No.
> 100 LYLE: Do you want to live?
> 101 RICHARD: Yes.
> 102LYLE: Then you know what to do, then, don't you?
> 103 RICHARD: Go home. Go home.
> 104 LYLE: You facing my gun. (*Produces it*) Now, in just a minute, we can both go home.
> 105 RICHARD: You sick mother! Why can't you leave me alone? White man! I don't want nothing from you. You ain't got nothing to give me. You can't eat because none of your sad-assed chicks can cook. You can't talk because won't nobody talk to you. You can't dance,because you've got nobody to dance with - don't you know I have watched you all my life? *All my life!* And I know your women, don't you think I don't - better than you!
>
> (*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)*
>
> Juanita! Daddy! Mama!
>
> 106 LYLE:
> I had to kill him. I'm a white man! Can't nobody talk that way to *me*!
> (*Blues,* 1964: 156-157., emphasis original)

Here, the negotiation, controlled by Lyle, fluctuates between Richard's *space of choice* and his *space of being*, with the first determining the second. This situation

also resonates with Fredrickson's (2002:9) division between inclusive and exclusive racism as well as Tagueiff's *le racisme d'extermination* (1987, in Fredrickson, 2002:9; see p. 50). Here, Lyle offers Richard's submission as the only way to survive the incident, with his coercive question "Do you want to live" (line 100), stating that apologizing to him is the only alternative for Richard to stay alive, which he says Richard already "knows" (line 102). Here, Lyle's demand is again expressed in a tag question ("Then you know what to do, don't you?"), leaving Richard with only one appropriate choice for an answer. Richard, however averts the question (line 103), with the unfortunate consequence of Lyle producing his gun to back up his demands.

The conflict also implies a class distinction between these two, with Richard as a minister's son and an artistic intellectual, perhaps also symbolizing the "new Negro" of the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s and 30s depicted by Eyerman (2001:60). Contrary to another well-known hero of black fiction, Bigger in Richard Wright's (1940) *Native Son*, Richard does not kill a white character, but instead has grown "tired of fighting" and is, perhaps, also free from the "black rage" portrayed by Grier and Cobbs (1968). In the end, evidently due to Lyle's coercive behavior, also Richard reverts to his old insulting and defiant behavior, claiming that he "knows" (line 105) white women better sexually than white men such as Lyle (Hay, 1994: 93), as he also tried to boast about his white women in the North to his friends at Papa D.'s bar (see *Blues,* 1964:41-43). It is ultimately this *expression of bravado* that *makes* Lyle, whose worst fear as a Southerner is *miscegenation* (see *Blues,* 1964:27), shoot at Richard for the first time.

By parading his sexuality through presenting his Northern sex contacts as evidence of his alleged mastery of love-making (see *Blues,* 1964:41-43), Richard may have been attempting to revive his repressed black masculinity. This kind of behaviour seems to have constituted a temporary uplift to Richard's self-esteem and, of course, a chance to retaliate against the "white man" by stealing his women and giving him all the more reason to envy as well as attempt to control the black man's sexuality. Grier and Cobbs (1968:74) suggest that

> Insofar as the black man sees himself as a cornered, debased, and castrated sexual object, this […] allows himself to *circumvent the inhibitions of sexual desire.* In his degradation, he lays hold of a fuller range of sexual powers. It is as if he says: "If I am a beast and an animal, then let me show you how this animal makes love!" With this *enhancement of his sexual powers, his self-esteem rises*. Out of his feelings of *devaluation* come *an increase in his feeling as a man,* and […] a resolution to enter again into outside competition [,…] which *in every other way is so heavily weighed against him.* (Grier and Cobbs 1968:74., emphasis added)

As one manifestation of white envy and fear of black sexuality, the white desire to desexualize the black man, referred to by Richard in the end as the need to "cut off my cock", (line 102) was also evident in lynchings, which often included dismemberment, namely castration, of the black victim (Klotman, 1985:56; Feagin and Vera, 1995:11). The envy and fear of black sexuality has also been expressed by Lyle earlier (see p. 93, line 09). To Baldwin, this reflected the sex-

ual repressiveness of the South's Protestant religions, of the "guilty imagination" of white people, investing the black man with "their hates and belongings", and "sexual paranoia" (*Nobody,* 1961:151) as the fear of the "black" body and its alleged "animal" as well as "savage", powers. Baldwin seems to equate this with his idea of "race" as a disease, a "plague", to be exact (see *Blues,* 1964:7), with also Richard calling Lyle a "sick mother" (line 105).

Baldwin's implied answer to why Lyle, like any other "white man", could not leave Richard alone (line 105) could also correlate with what Wilson (1996:35) calls "the radical psychoanalytical approach" to racism. Accordingly, Lyle would, then, represent the sadistic slave master, the cruder stereotype of "Mister Charlie". A psychoanalytic interpretation would attribute Lyle's violence to his psychopathological state, which also Baldwin, in his foreword for the play (*Blues,* 1964:7), attributes to him and other Mississippian Plaguetown whites being "plagued" with the disease of "race".

How relevant is Baldwin's metaphor of, say, perpetrators of racial violence being "diseased", *viz.*, pathological? Feagin and Vera (1995:15-16) resist the idea of racists expressing emotions exclusively different from the scope of ordinary ones, including feelings from "indifference to fear to anger", which serve to destroy a sense of the "solidarity that people normally feel for each other" (16). Racial hatred of the Other also eliminates any feelings of empathy one would have for him/her as a fellow human being, allowing the hated Other to be treated in ways that Fredrickson (2002:9) describes as those "we would regard as cruel or unjust if applied to members of our own group". Harris (1995:389) agrees with this, corroborating Pierre van der Berghe's (1978, in Harris, 1995:389) statement that "while there is unquestionably a psychopathology of racism [...] in racist societies, most racists are not sick", regardless of how convenient it would be to discard the structural and group framework, as well as *self-interest,* behind racist attacks through the pathologization of the particular racist individual.

Rather than an indication of deranged personalities, the racial violence perpetrated by white supremacists would seem to connect with the underlying attitudes of many especially poor whites attempting to compete with their black contemporaries for survival, starting from the era of Reconstruction. Lyle's stating of his "whiteness" (line 106) resonates with Klotman's (1985:56) and Harris's (1995:393) depictions of racial violence as both an act of *punishment* on blacks for disobedience, and a *symbolic display* of white social identity, as well as a *restoration of the order* of racial inequality.

The main reason for Lyle's shooting of Richard was that Richard presented a challenge to the main fabric of the system that, so far, had guaranteed Lyle his hegemonic position over blacks, which he did not want to surrender. His perhaps exaggerated description (line 55, p. 112) to Parnell of how the blacks, after him losing the fight with Richard, were laughing at him "for days"and "everywhere" he went, is pivotal to this interpretation. Also, his referring (line 93; p. 122) to his dispute with Richard as "business" to be settled, which meant the restoration of his white man's status, shows the *social* nature of racism, sug-

gesting that, above all, it is a *social pathology*, an aberration of the ideas of *equality* and *reciprocity*, in the social relations between whites and blacks. These ideals were also accepted as the paradigms of this study in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.3; p. 49).

Next, I turn to the analysis of the four kinds of catharses for the conflict and the potential character types Richard and Lyle could be seen as.

7.11 Summary of the conflict: reaching the Four Readings and Catharses

As echoed in the two extracts below, the second drawn from the original story of Emmett "Bobo" Till's murder as it was told by its perpetrators to a Mississippian reporter, Richard's murder has characteristics of a lynching. It *results* from Richard's *assertion of himself* as well as him *challenging* the Southern racial order, and *is used as to restore that order*, just as the anonymous informant, quoted by Harris (1995:393; see p. 103) in the first extract, indirectly testifies happened to non-submissive blacks in the South.

> "My Daddy," he said, "liked a niggir, *as long as he stayed in a niggir's place*" […]The informant's description illustrates well the role of violence in the culture of race. Etiquette maintained boundaries; *when crossed, violence restored them*. (Harris 1995:393., emphasis added)

> He [Bobo] stood there naked. It was Sunday morning, a little before 7.
> Milam: "You still as good as I am?"
> Bobo: "Yeah."
> Milam: "You still 'had' white women?"
> Bobo: "Yeah."
> That big .45 [revolver] jumped in Big Milam's hand. The youth turned to catch that big, expanding bullet at his right ear. He dropped. (Huie, 1956:50.)

Although Richard's murder, like the murder of Till, depicted above by the first journalist to whom the story of the murder was told by the acquitted killers, was perpetrated individually, it otherwise bears a strong resemblance to the historical lynchings of blacks as *restorations of white hegemony*. Lyle here persists in the identities of the white *discipliner*, sympathized with by the Legitimating Reader, and the white *punisher*, approved of by the Habitualized Reader. However, for the Critical Reader, he represents *a persistent hegemonizer incapable of treating Richard as his equal*. For the Challenging Reader, Lyle's attempts to restore the racial order of Plaguetown and hence of the historical Deep South (see Harris 1995: 387-393) could also appear *coercive*. Lyle's bafflement over how and why Richard challenges the hegemonic belief of white supremacy (Feagin and Vera 1995) by refusing to be treated as a "nigger" is therefore comprehensible to both of the Reproducing Readers. To them, it also suggests that Richard

is fatally failing to respond appropriately to Lyle's "tests of obedience" (Goffman, 1961:26-27), of which the demand for an apology was the final one.

Because Richard has challenged the hegemony of Plaguetown, the Habitualized Reader would regard his death as a just punishment for his deviance, while the Critical Reader could consider him foolish, but for reasons other than his defiance. The Challenging Reader would expect that, when meeting Lyle for the last time, Richard, if he were a real "street dude" (see Hay, 1994:94), would have with him the gun he gave to his father Meridian earlier on in the play (*Blues,* 1964:54). Here, Richard's "street credibility" as someone prepared to "back up his talk" is, indeed, at stake. This, along with Richard's statement to Papa D., ("I'm not sure I can pay you tomorrow", line 69, p. 114), suggests Richard's full, even suicidal, acceptance of his fate. (Hay, 1994: 94.) It also brings the play closer to producing a melodramatic catharsis, with Richard as an Uncle Tom-like and virtuously suffering victim hero (Williams, 2001: 42). Furthermore, it also resonates with Baldwin's own background as a preacher in a black church in his youth (Campbell, 2002:10-11; Leeming, 1994:27-29).

To both the Legitimating and the Critical Reader, Richard's death constitutes a tragedy determined by his challenge to the social order of racial hegemony. However, the Legitimating Reader would attribute this tragedy to Richard's own behaviour as a sign of a flawed personality and thus probably go through an Aristotelian catharsis, containing the purging experience preceded by the pathos of *pity* and *fear* (see p. 86) first felt towards Richard's defiance. A catharsis of this kind would leave the Southern racial order intact, as a "force of nature" not to be tampered with without consequences. The Critical Reader, however, would argue that Richard had unsuccessfully confronted an unjust racial power structure, which should thus be dismantled in the future to prevent more murders like this from happening. The catharsis experienced by the Critical Reader would thus be an *intellectual acknowledgement* of the way *Southern racism has operated once again.* The Challenging Reader, in turn, would feel anger over the death of a black hero as yet one more inevitable display of racial oppression *exposed* by Baldwin. Finally, the Habitualized Reader would be content with the demise of an "evil" and deviant criminal and the restoration of the racial "innocence" of Plaguetown.

The sense of tragedy is heightened by the hope Baldwin offered for Richard through his almost complete recovery from racial hatred, motivated by his relationship with Juanita (*Blues* 1964:118-19). However, from the point of view of racial melodrama, Richard's recovery has come "too late" (Williams, 2001:30) to save his life. He has already aggravated Lyle to the point where Lyle can only act as the stereotypical white villain (see Van Leer, 1991), the violent "Mister Charlie" of black folklore, perhaps also like a punitive overseer of slaves both abhorred and needed by white slave owners (see pp. 33-34). Melodramatically, Lyle's murder of Richard would tie his action to Richard's suffering (see Williams, 2001:30-31), particularly if Richard had behaved "virtuously" from the beginning of the play, namely non-defiantly to the habitualized white hegemony, which, of course, has not been the case. Richard's death does, however, cor-

respond with the fate of the melodramatic character Uncle Tom, who died from the whipping administered by his evil master, although Tom suffered in silence. Nevertheless, Tom was also whipped for resisting "the moral authority of his master" (Williams 2001:48).

As the results of my analysis of the play combining the political with the dramatic, I shall now introduce four main types of characters that Richard and Lyle seem to occupy the most. These types are offered by both the four Reader types and kinds of Readings. Central to them are their *ideological nature* and *the consequences* of their actions. The four characterizations of Lyle and Richard and their connection with both the four Readers and the four Readings are illustrated in the following table (2).

TABLE 1 Characterizations of Lyle and Richard

Habitualized Reader / Melodramatic Reading	*Legitimating Reader/ Aristotelian Reading*	*Critical Reader/ Brechtian Reading*	*Challenging Reader/ Revolutionary Reading*
Richard as a **deviant character**	**Richard** as a **defiant character**	**Richard** as a **frustrated character**	**Richard** as a **deprogramming character**
Lyle as a **punishing character**	**Lyle** as a **disciplining character**	**Lyle** as a **hegemonizing character**	**Lyle** as a **coercive character**

In the two following sections, I shall introduce my grounds for each of the eight character types of the two characters in this conflict. I shall begin with characterizing Richard.

7.11.1 Characterizing Richard

From the challenging point of view expressed in revolutionary drama, excluding the gun episode, Richard can be seen as heroically both challenging and refusing to restore white hegemony by not apologizing to Lyle. What is also noteworthy, is Richard's final challenge to Lyle's heterosexuality, when he suggests that Lyle, along with his wife, might also find black men desirable (line 103), as this is the only visible homosexual comment of the author in otherwise a fairly heteronormative play.

Richard's character also realizes the claim Keil (1966) makes of the necessity of recognizing the hustler figure, namely the ghetto version of the trickster, "not as an anomic criminal but as a tragic hero" (192). In fact, since the early

1990s, the hustler figure has gained the appreciation of the entertainment world through the success of rap artists, whose songs mainly handle the themes of sex and violence. hooks (1994:134-144), however, regards the genre of the black performing arts known as "gangsta rap" as an example not of black, but of white patriarchal capitalist normative values.

In the political context of the 1960s, when the play was performed (Campbell, 2002:195-197), in his persistence in seeking to bring about social change, even at the cost of his life, Richard also symbolized martyrs of the civil rights movement. The most prominent of them was Medgar Evers, the head of the NAACP in Mississippi assassinated in 1963 (Campbell 2002:175), with whom Baldwin traveled in the South during the writing of the play (*Blues* 1964:7). Moreover, as a verbally affluent contender of white hegemony, Richard resembles the political figure of Malcolm X, about whom Baldwin later wrote a screenplay (Leeming, 1994:288). Ideologically, as a relentless challenger of white hegemony, at first as a youthfully tricksterish ridiculer, later as a legitimate questioner of racial ideology and finally as a citizen unwilling to subordinate himself, for the Challenging Reader of revolutionary drama, Richard does appear as a *deprogramming* (Van Dijk, 1998: 261) *character*. In fact, Amiri Baraka, one of the leaders of the Black Theatre Movement, gave Baldwin credit for this character, which he regarded as the predecessor of his own black heroic characters (Hay, 1994:94-95).

Baldwin's text was also one of the last black plays targeted at both black and white spectators, representing "the last vestige of integrationist thinking in black theatre", entailing the conflict between "indicting racism and believing in its transcendence [...] as evident in the play as it was in black politics of the 1960s" (Bigsby, 1985: 391). However, it also functioned as a predecessor for the Black Theatre of the 1960s and early 70s that was aimed at exclusively black audiences for the purpose of raising their consciousness.

Baraka's early criticism of Baldwin in 1963 (see Campbell, 2002:191) may also have influenced the characterization of Richard, whom Turner (1977:191) sees as representing the first black stage hero to boldly attack white hegemony in the lifetime of young "black" spectators. *As an active black hero* and *a recovering drug addict and ex-convict*, Richard also represents a black character indigenous to Broadway drama, apart from Eugene O Neill's *Emperor Jones,* which in the 1920s first introduced its audience to the black trickster figure as superior to his white companion (Bigsby, 1985: 175).

As a *deprogramming character*, Richard questions and challenges what from the perspective of a 21st century reader/spectator might appear as the 'false consciousness' or "social representation" of the white racial hegemonic ideology (Van Dijk, 1998:96-97). He accomplishes this by constantly defying the habitualized (Fowler, 1996) racial codes and practices of the prison-like total institution (Goffman, 1961) in which, as Lorenzo puts it, "blacks" had lived "for years" (see Frame 7.6 , line 53) In the very end, however, he also appears as a melodramatic, virtuously suffering Christ-like victim-hero unable to overcome the injustice of racial oppression (Williams 2001:29). Richard's partly vindictive behavior is also

motivated in the play by events in his past, particularly the death of his mother, for which he blames white men (see *Blues* 1964:35). Another biblical character which Richard would represent is the Prodigal Son out of a metaphor told by Jesus about a young man, who returns to his father's house, after spending all of his advanced inheritance in the outside world.

One important explanation for Richard's behaviour would, in fact, lie in his *frustration* over racial oppression, described by Bigsby (1985) as "anger forged out of constant humiliation" (388). As a *frustrated character*, following the Brechtian Reading of the Critical Reader, Richard seems simply to have had enough of the constraints and injustices of racial hegemony and decided not just to ignore, but fight them, just as, Baldwin testifies, happened to the author himself in New Jersey in 1943, when

> A white friend from New York took me to the nearest big town, Trenton, to go to the movies and have a few drinks. As it turns out, he also saved me from, at the very least, a violent whipping…[At] the […] diner […] we walked in, the counterman asked what we wanted and I remember answering […]"We want a hamburger and a cup of coffee, what do you think we want?" I do not know why, after a year of such rebuffs, I so *completely failed to anticipate his answer* […] "We don't serve Negroes here"[…] When we re-entered the streets, something happened to me […] I felt like a physical sensation, a *click* at the nape of my neck[…] I began to walk […] I walked […] until I came to an enormous, glittering and fashionable restaurant I *knew* not even the intercession of the Virgin would cause me to be served. I..took the first vacant seat I saw […] and waited […] Whatever I looked like, I frightened the waitress, who shortly appeared and, the moment she appeared, *all of my fury flowed towards her* […] She repeated the formula: "…don't serve Negroes here."[…] There was […] an ordinary water mug half full of water, and I picked […] [it] up and hurled it with all my strength at her […] It missed her and shattered against the mirror behind the bar. And with that sound, my frozen blood abruptly thawed […] *I realized what I had done, and where I was,* and I was frightened […] A round potbellied man grabbed me by the nape of the neck just as I reached the doors and began to beat me about the face. I kicked him and got loose and ran into the streets […] My friend stayed outside the restaurant long enough to misdirect my pursuers and the police, who arrived, he told me, at once […] I felt […] I had somehow betrayed him […] I lived it over and over and over again […] I could not get over two facts, both equally difficult […] and one was *I could have been murdered*. But the other was that *I had been ready to commit murder*. (*Notes* 1955:69-71., emphasis added)

On account of Richard's defiant and aggressive behaviour, the Legitimating Reader would approve Lyle's violence against Richard. Although perhaps regarding the murder as a *disciplinary* act gone too far, this Reader would, nevertheless argue that it was instigated by, in Aristotelian terms, Richard's defiance of the, "natural force" of racial hegemony, due to his "tragically flawed" personality. The Habitualized Reader would, however, welcome the murder as a *necessary punishment* for Richard, whom this type of Reader would consider an "evil" and deviant *delinquent* who sought to breach the Southern racial norms habitualized in Plaguetown. Richard would thus appear as a *defiant character* in the Legitimating Aristotelian view, and a *deviant one* to the Habitualized Reader. From the point of view of melodrama, the Habitualized Reader would, indeed,

see the characters of the play through the stereotyped melodramatic view, as either "good" or "evil" (Brooks, 1995 in Williams, 2001:40), and thus also as either "normal" or "deviant".

Both Reproducing Readers would be cathartically pleased on the restoration of the racial *status quo* in Plaguetown, disturbed only momentarily by Richard. On the one hand, the Habitualized Reader would melodramatically welcome the re-establishment of the racial "innocence" of Plaguetown, of what the town was like, before Richard arrived there to provoke its white inhabitants, considered by him/her as "innocent" of the racial conflict at hand. On the other hand , the Legitimating Reader would also be content with the fact that Richard, in the end, was not successful in what this Reader would consider his strictly personal attempt to vent his inner rage on Lyle and "stir up trouble for the sake of it" (see Wetherell and Potter, 1992:153; p. 105). Next, I shall present the four potential characterizations of Lyle.

7.11.2 Characterizing Lyle

As for the character of Lyle, to the Critical Reader, he is presented as torn between his individual conscience and the habitualized traditions of his community that kept blacks aware of "their place". Lyle's character also indicates the presence of an inner conflict, when he finds his masculinity as the patriarchal protector of his family challenged and confounded for the first time by Richard, who seems not to respect it at all. Lyle's attempts to restore his ideological superiority over Richard make him a persistently *hegemonizing character,* whether the hegemony he pursues has to do with class, caste or patriarchy. In the tragic plot of the play, provoked by Richard's boldness, he chooses to uphold the old values of racial oppression by murdering him. This gives the resolution of the conflict a Brechtian sense of *instruction* in the dynamics of the Southern racial power structure. The *intellectual* nature of this catharsis, *arguing for the transformation of* the Southern racial hegemony, also supports a Brechtian Reading performed by the Critical Reader. To the Challenging Reader, Lyle could appear as a *coercive character*, like a Goffmanian (1961) *prison guard,* constantly *testing Richard's obedience.* The reason for this was, for this type of Reader, because Lyle simply "could not leave" any black man "alone", at least *until he had coerced that man to submit to him.*

The conflict between Lyle and Richard can also be characterized as that of a Southern rural white supremacist and a Northern urban black artist, resembling the figures of the master and the trickster, a juxtaposition evident in black folklore (see p. 21). The conflict entails representations of "race" that can also be seen to concern issues of class and sex. First, there is the imbalance in their relative educations; second, Richard also seems to be wealthier than Lyle; third, as a younger man than him, Richard is also physically stronger, which further degrades Lyle's masculinity and encourages him to bring his gun to their final confrontation.

Richard is the son of Meridian, a black minister in Plaguetown, and thus has evidently had a middle-class upbringing, whereas Lyle is a self-made store-

owner with a working-class background. This can be seen in the first few lines the characters say to one another. Second, Lyle is also constructed as a patriarch, as protective of his family as Richard is of Juanita, with the exception that Baldwin allows Lyle to carry a gun and denies Richard this right. Lyle is also eager to preserve the sanctity of his home, to which he sees Richard as presenting a threat, unless disciplined or even coerced to "know his place" (Harris, 1995: 391-393). In this respect, Lyle also symbolizes the ideology of white vigilantism, embodied by the Klu Klux Klan.

To Lyle, racial segregation is a "natural" social order: in another scene he is constructed as having been as willing to exploit black women as he is now to protect his wife and family. When he attempts to give Richard "a break" to apologize, this, to the black hero, would mean giving up his victory, and not only returning Lyle's "sphere of honor" (Harris 1995: 391) to him, but also restoring the hegemony of white domination. As suggested earlier (see p. 134), for the Legitimating Reader, Lyle would represent an excessively *disciplining* and for the Habitualized one, a *punishing character* of the either *defiant* or *deviant* character of Richard. For the Critical Reader, however he would constitute a *hegemonizing* character, and for the Challenging Reader a *coercive* one.

7.11.3 Why not apologize?

Because Richard's refusal to apologize is central to the plot of the play, I shall thus address it in a section of its own, contemplating on the reality of the resolution of this conflict. For example, from a 21st-century perspective, one might raise the question why Richard couldn't apologize simply for the sake of politeness, thus saving the 'face' of both men, as this also seems to be Lyle's intention. This question can be answered best by Fairclough (1992:162-63), who introduces Bourdieu's (in Fairclough, 1992:162) equation of the act of saving 'face' with *submission to power*.

> People have 'positive face' - they want to be liked, understood, admired, etc. - and 'negative face' - they do not want to be impinged upon or impeded by others. It is generally in everyone's interests that face should be protected […] What is missing is a sense of [...] links between variable politeness practices and variable social relations, or of producers being constrained by politeness practices. Bourdieu (1977: 95, 218) [...] suggests a view of politeness which is very different from that of Brown and Levinson, claiming that *particular politeness conventions embody, and their use implicitly acknowledges, particular social and power relations*, and in so far as they are drawn upon *they must contribute to reproducing those relations* [...] My position is a dialectical one, recognizing the *constraints of conventions*, but also the possibility, under certain conditions, of *creatively rearticulating, and so transforming* them. (Fairclough 1992: 162-163., emphasis added)

For Richard, to apologize to Lyle, would mean to submit to Lyle's and every other white man's racial power. Here, there indeed seems to be no room for "creative rearticulation" (Fairclough 1992: 163) of the contextual conventions

between the two, Having been aggravated by Richard's face-threatening conduct, Lyle insists that the conflict should be resolved to his satisfaction and thus in his way, which is for Richard to apologize for beating him in the fight, while Richard contends that the conflict should be settled on equal terms, preserving the dignity of both parties. To a European educated 21st-century reader looking for opportunities to *transform* Southern racial hegemony, Richard's suggestion appears far more appropriate, as it suggests both equality and reciprocity between the two. In the next section, I shall deal further with the ideological consequences of Richard's murder and its cathartic outcomes.

7.11.4 Catharses: context and pessimism or action and optimism?

In the end, both characters resort to their "black" and "white" social identities motivated both historically and individually by the ideas of domination and defense (Marx, 1961:23) as well as discipline and revenge. Individually, Lyle pursues restoration of his status, both in the history of the play and Southern society, whereas Richard seeks both respect and vengeance at the same time, projecting his personal anger on Lyle as the symbol of "whiteness" rather than as his mere adversary. As the text (*Blues,* 1964:35), in fact, characterizes Lyle as having exploited black women, Richard also remembers his deceased mother having been harassed by white men (40-41).

Both Lyle and Richard are shown as driven by both personal vengeances and conflicting social motives. Lyle's motive is to restore his white man's dominative status; a status historically constituted by the subjugation of the black man, whereas Richard's is to defend his own, as any black man's status against that subjugation. Hence, both the Aristotelian and the Brechtian analyses of theatre as a presentation of the *power of contexts* apply here. Whether Richard's racial pride and anger as tragic flaws against nature, or racial statuses as parts of the power structure of society, are seen as the crucial factors in the youngster's death, is a matter of interpretation. The text, in the frames analyzed so far, emphasizes the *deterministic* nature of white racial hegemony over the glimpses of black *agency*, highlighting the impact of the underlying power structure with its fixed positions restored, determining that the occasions, where the two characters meet, remain, in the end, *non-transformed by their possible intervening action*. Therefore, the resolution of this conflict indicates a *pessimistic* rather than *optimistic* view of racial relations in the Deep South as the geographical context of the play.

While frequently resisting the white popular representations of African-Americans as dangerous, funny, poor or criminal, the frames in this conflict also emphasize the strong impact of two racial stereotypes, popular in the context of *black* folklore, namely *the master and the trickster* (see p. 21). Following these stereotypes, Lyle and Richard are, in the end presented either as naturally tragic or socially powerless, incapable of transforming either their "fate" or social status, with the exception that, here, the trickster is defeated. It is only for a brief "utopian moment" (Kilpeläinen 2010:173; see p. 123) that Baldwin gives Richard and Lyle even a chance to attempt to transcend "race". This moment is sabotaged by

Lyle's persistence in seeking to coerce Richard into submitting to the power of the “white man” and Richard's frustrated response to this. In the second major conflict of the play, namely that of Parnell and Meridian, which is presented in the next chapter (8) as the first of the three remaining conflicts, there seems to be more room for negotiation.

8 OTHER INTER-INDIVIDUAL CONFLICTS

In this chapter, I shall analyse the three remaining conflicts between the black and white characters that I have decided to include in this study, namely because they represent aspects of racial conflict known to Baldwin that have not yet been discussed in this thesis. Such aspects include his views on white liberalism and the black church as well as the sexual norms against miscegenation manifested in the relations between blacks and whites of opposite sexes in the play.

Besides the conflict analyzed in Chapter 7, I shall, in this chapter (8), examine three other conflicts, all of which entail an encounter between a black and a white character. The conflicts are those between Parnell and Meridian, Richard and Jo, and Parnell and Juanita. First of them, and the second major racial conflict in the play is the one between Parnell, the white liberal journalist, and Richard's father, the black priest Meridian.

8.1 Parnell and Meridian

> *Question 19*: *(same questioner)*: If it was our white ancestors who bought you and enslaved you, we are their children. We are the *new generation*. Why don't you *call us brothers*?
> *Malcolm*: A man has to *act like a brother* before you can *call him a brother*. The only reason that the present generation of white Americans are in a position of economic strength that they are is because their fathers worked our fathers for over 400 years with no pay [...] That money that piled up from the sale of my mother and my grandmother and my great-grandmother is what gives the present generation of American whites [the ability *sic*] to walk around the earth [...] like they have some kind of *economic ingenuity*. (Malcolm X in Clark 1992:123., emphasis added)

The quotation above, taken from a speaking event of Malcolm X, as I shall show later, aptly describes the main issue separating the two characters of the follow-

ing conflict, which has to do with the impact of *privilege* gained from the history of racial oppression.

This conflict consists of 68 lines divided here into 5 frames, with a summary in the end. It deals with issues of integration and interracial loyalties in the context of racial conflict, as well as the question of black self-protection. Central to the conflict are the two men's loyalties to each other as well as to their other friends, their social identities, and their collaboration in bringing about the trial of Lyle for Richard's murder. In Meridian's case, his social identity as a priest involves loyalty to the ideas of Christianity and non-violence. In Parnell's case, his social identity is a dissident white journalist who promotes integration, inter-racial friendship, and social justice in his writings (*Blues,* 1964:74-76. Baldwin juxtaposes both of these *public* identities with the characters' *personal* relations and emotions: Meridian's bereavement as a father over his son Richard's death and Parnell's friendship with Richard's murderer Lyle and his wife Jo.

8.1.1 **Negotiating Meridian's *space of choice***

The first frame, containing a negotiation over Meridian's *space of choice* between non-violence and self-defence, begins, when Parnell enters Meridian's church late in the evening.

> 01 PARNELL: I hear it was real bad tonight.
> 02 MERIDIAN: Not as bad as it's going to get. Maybe I was wrong not to let people arm.
> 03 PARNELL: If the Negroes were armed, it's the Negroes who'd be slaughtered. You know that.
> 04 MERIDIAN: They're slaughtered anyway. And I don't know that. I thought I knew it - but now I'm not so sure.
> 05 PARNELL: What's come over you? What's going to happen to the people in this town, this church - if you go to pieces?
> 06 MERIDIAN: Maybe they'll find a leader who can lead them someplace.
> 07 PARNELL: Somebody with a gun? (*Meridian is silent)* Is that what you mean?
> 08 MERIDIAN: I'm a Christian. I've been a Christian all my life, like my Mama and Daddy before me and like their Mama and Daddy before them. Of course, if you go back far enough, you get to a point *before* Christ, if you see what I mean, *B.C.* - and at that point, I've been thinking, black people weren't raised to turn the other cheek, and in the hope of heaven. No, then they didn't have to take low. Before Christ. They walked around just as good as anybody else, and when they died, they didn't go to heaven, they went to join their ancestors. My sons's dead, but he's not gone to join his ancestors. He was a sinner, so he must have gone to hell - if we're going to believe what the Bible says. Is that such an improvement, such a mighty advance over B.C.? I've been thinking, I've had to think - would I have *been* such a Christian if I hadn't been born black? Maybe I *had* [sic] to become a Christian in order to have any dignity at all. Since I wasn't a man in men's eyes, then I could be a man in the eyes of God. but that didn't protect my wife. She's dead, too soon, we really don't know how. That didn't protect my son - he's dead, we know how too well. That hasn't changed this town - this town, where you couldn't find a white Christian at high noon on

> Sunday! The eyes of God - maybe those eyes are blind - I never let myself think of that before.
> 09 PARNELL: Meridian, you can't be the man who gives the signal for the holocaust.
> 10 MERIDIAN: Must I be the man who watches while his people are beaten, chained, starved, clubbed, butchered?
> 11 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 was the human race.
> 12 MERIDIAN: The human race!
> 13 PARNELL: I've never seen you like this before. There's something in your tone I've never heard before - rage - maybe hatred.
> 14 MERIDIAN: You've heard it before. You just never recognized it before. You've heard it in all those blues and spirituals and gospel songs you claim to love so much. (*Blues* 1964: 55-57., emphasis original)

In this frame, the conversation is initiated and controlled by Parnell by speaking first (Fowler, 1996:131). He also leads Meridian to tell him about a bombing attack made earlier on a black family in Plaguetown (line 1), symbolizing an actual bombing of a church in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963, where four black schoolchildren were killed (Campbell, 2002:176; Leeming, 1994:228). Explicitly, and to the Legitimating Reader, Parnell's friendly line 01 would appear that of a *sympathizer*, and his further argument concerning the armament of blacks (line 03) would seem that of a well-meaning *adviser* of Meridian. However, implicitly, Parnell's concern ("What's come over you", line 05) is not only Meridian's well-being but, as shown in his question in line 07, also Meridian's loyalty to the ideology of non-violence, which is now beginning to falter, due to Richard's death. Parnell's hidden *manipulative presupposition of the continuance of that loyalty* would be notified by both of the two Transformative Readers.

Here, Meridian is questioning not only the principle of non-violence (lines 02 and 04) prevalent in the civil rights struggle led by Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1950s and 60s, but also his Christian faith and ability to lead his congregation (line 06) as well as his strengths as a husband to his deceased wife and a father to his dead son. In line 08, he blames himself for not being able to protect either his wife or son, his self-doubt resembling the patriarchal ethos of the Black Panther party (Davis in Lowe, 1999:415). As opposed to the physical conflict of Richard and Lyle, this conflict appears as more of an ideological one, involving more *spaces of choice* than *of being*. Here, Meridian's *space of choice*, namely his freedom to choose, for example, between non-violence and self-protection, is limited by Parnell's imperative pleas for consensus in lines 03 ("You know that") and 09 ("You can't be the one that…"), not to mention his intimidating sentence using the conditional form in line 03: "If the Negroes were armed…, [then] it's the Negroes who'd be slaughtered. (brackets added)"

The Legitimating Reader would probably agree with Parnell's argument (line 03) that non-violence is the only possible way for blacks to come to terms with white hegemony, the alternative to which for them would mean "being slaughtered". The Critical and Challenging Reader, however, would consider Parnell's concerns (lines 03, 05, 07 and 09) as manipulative attempts to curb and control Meridian's aggression. The Challenging Reader could even see Parnell

as conducting subtle "tests of obedience" on Meridian, Historically, Parnell's warnings did come true in the fate of the Black Panther Party, the black paramilitary revolutionary organization of the 1960s and early 70s that was defeated by the police and the FBI (Johnson 1998: 394-95).

The Challenging Reader, contrary to the ideology of non-violence, would also pose the reasonable question, first expressed politically by Malcolm X (in Clark 1992: 160), why blacks, apart from the idea of an armed rebellion suggested by Parnell (line 03), should not be permitted to protect themselves against racist attacks. This, however, the Critical Reader would have a hard time to consent to. The Habitualized Reader, while regarding Parnell's friendship with Meridian as dubious, maybe even treacherous to the white race, would abhor the mere suggestion of black self-protection as an advocation of racial hatred and black violence, and the Legitimating Reader would also argue against it to, instead, promote the practise of non-violence as a safer alternative, at least for whites. Originally, as a Christian priest, Meridian would then, first appear to the Challenging Reader as a *pacifier*, the term used by the rapper Ice Cube (in hooks, 1994:160) of Martin Luther King. However, to this type of Reader, Meridian would also have the potential of becoming a revolutionary hero, if he encouraged his parishioners to arm themselves. The Critical Reader would, in turn, regard Meridian as a concerned citizen and father in mourning for his son. The Legitimating Reader could consider him a non-violent civil rights leader just having a moment of weakness and feel as apprehensive as Parnell about his frustrated "black rage" (see Grier and Cobbs, 1968). Apparently, Meridian has, so far, kept his frustration hidden, as Parnell claims not to "have seen [it] ever before" (line 13, brackets added).

Here, Parnell dominates the discussion (Fowler 1996:131) through the whole frame by attempting to soothe Meridian's frustration, though finding it a difficult task. Meridian's doubt of himself and his faith in Christianity (line 08) also reflects Baldwin's own conflict between the teachings of Martin Luther King and the black church, on the one hand, and Malcolm X and the Black Muslims, on the other (Leeming, 1994: 219). King preached Christianity, non-violent integration with whites, and citizenship in American society, wheras Malcolm X advocated the black culture's consciousness and pride in itself. The ideology of black nationalism was based on an alternative view of African cultural history, (Eyerman, 2001:180-81), referred to by Meridian as the time B.C., when Africans had a civilization, where they "did not have to take low" (line 08).

Having begun as a literary advocate for non-violence, Baldwin later concentrated on the teachings of Malcolm X, insofar that he wrote a screenplay based on his life (Leeming 1994: 288-300); this was later reworked and finally directed by Spike Lee as the film *Malcolm X* (301). Leeming (1994:256-57) also claims that, to resolve his dilemma of choosing between integration and separatism, Baldwin, in the end, put his trust in the Black Power Movement initiated by former followers of King such as Stokely Carmichael, but did not agree with the Marxist doctrine of the Black Panther Party formed by Carmichael and his contemporaries (290-94). Meridian's long contemplation of whether blacks

should attempt to change white hegemony by non-violence or violence (line 08) again shows him as a *questioner* of both non-violence and Christianity as the appropriate ways to achieve social equality. This identity, doubtful of the then dominant ideology of the black civil rights movement seems most closely related to the *argumentative criticism* of the Critical Reader.

Parnell is still trying to persuade Meridian to continue the non-violent struggle (lines 09 and 11). Here, the Habitualized Reader could share Parnell's apprehension over Meridian expression of the black aggression that, in the history of the South, previously had to be hidden from white Southerners (see Lomax, 1993:61; p. 140), and would thus regard Meridian's behaviour as *defiant*, perhaps even *rebellious*. Thus, Parnell's puzzlement, which he states in line 13 over Meridian's anger he undoubtedly had seen "never before", seems plausible enough. Parnell also attempts to evoke the habitualized image of Meridian as the virtuously good-natured Christian black priest, who "used to say" the only "race" he was concerned with was "the human race" (line 11). Evoking the image of Meridian as the ideal docile character of racial melodrama, seems like an effort by Parnell to constitute a *space* (Williams 2001:28) *of innocence* between them. This kind of unawareness of the injustices of Southern racism, also again suggests a *utopian attempt* to *obliterate the categorized racial inequality and privileges by denying their existence, at least for a moment*, noted by Kilpeläinen (2010:65-66,173; see p. 123). Wetherell and Potter (1992:123) also found a desire to retreat to this kind of innocence in the racial discourse of the Pakehas in New Zealand. The dilemma of transcending, or denying "race", evident also in the conflict of Lyle and Richard (see p. 123) , will be discussed in more detail in Frame 8.1.2 .

Meridian's accusation (line 14) that Parnell has ignored the black frustration and double-consciousness expressed covertly in blues and gospel lyrics would seem valid to the Challenging Reader, who would have suspiciously regarded Parnell as a manipulative white man from the very start. On the contrary, the Legitimating Reader would consider Meridian's accusation as unfair, and the Habitualized Reader would abhor it as a sign of black aggression that should be controlled. The Critical Reader would argue that, while there is an element of protest in the blues and spirituals, it is well hidden and considered as belonging to the "other" side of the black double-consciousness which, in the words of the blues song shown earlier (see p. 97) was not appropriate "for the Captain to see". (see Silverman, 1968:61; p. 97) . It seems that, when in dispute with "the white man", most blacks in the South chose to hide their frustrated anger, and obtain a double-consciousness of what they let the white "Captain to see", on the one hand, and what they themselves felt, on the other.

Baldwin's change from a liberal optimist to a radical pessimist, or, at least, disillusioned writer, depending on the perspective of the Reader, shows in this frame most visibly in line 08, when Meridian questions his belief in God as all-powerful and –knowing, contemplating instead, for the first time in his life, that "maybe those [God's] eyes are blind" (line 08, brackets added). Parnell's fear of Meridian's rage, now expressed openly for the first time (lines 13 and 14), corresponds with the historical situation several white liberals found themselves in

during the mid-1960s, when retreating from the civil rights struggle (see Steinberg 302-303). This was partly due to the introduction by more radical blacks of self-defensive demands to replace the non-violent martyrdom these liberals had gotten used to, described by Friedman (in Steinberg 1997:303), of wanting "to have the change, but without trouble", or, as in the case of the Pakeha speakers in New Zealand (1992), of the "need for a painless remedy" (Wetherell and Potter, 1992:123). In the next frame, Meridian's criticism shifts to the character of Parnell.

8.1.2 Negotiating Parnell

In this frame, Meridian questions Parnell's integrity by accusing him of fraternizing with the Police Chief at the sheriff's office, to which Parnell responds by maintaining his devotion to their common cause of finding Richard's murderer. However, Meridian still expresses his mistrust of Parnell as a white man, implying that all "white men" are the same. The frame opens with Parnell's response (line 15) to Meridian's accusation that he has not wanted to pay enough attention to the hidden message of the black songs he claims to have listened to.

15 PARNELL: I was talking about *you* - not your history. I have a history, too. And don't be so sure I've never heard that sound. Maybe I've never heard anything else. Perhaps my life is also hard to bear.
16 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're sure 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!*
17 PARNELL: I may have sounded - cold. It was not because I felt cold. There was no other way 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. I don't know if I think I'm so much better than he is. I know what we have done - and do. But you must have mercy on us. We have no other hope.
18 MERIDIAN: You have never shown us any mercy at all.
19 PARNELL: Meridian, give me credit for knowing you're in pain. We are two men, two friends - in spite of all that could divide us. We have come too far together, there is too much at stake, for you to become black now, for me to become white. Don't accuse me. Don't accuse me. *I* didn't do it.
20 MERIDIAN: So was my son - innocent.
21 PARNELL: Meridian - when I asked for mercy a moment ago - I meant - please - please try to understand that it is not so easy to leap over fences, to give things up - all right, to surrender privilege! But if you were among the privileged you would know what I mean. It's not a matter of trying to hold *on*; the things, the privilege - are part of you, are *who* you are. It's in the *gut*..
22 MERIDIAN: Then where's the point of this struggle, where's the hope? If Mister Charlie can't change -
23 PARNELL: Who's Mister Charlie?

> 24 MERIDIAN:You're Mister Charlie. *All* white men are Mister Charlie!
> (*Blues,* 1964: 57-59., emphasis original)

Meridian now takes control of the scene (Fowler 1996:131), forcing Parnell to defend his behaviour with the sheriff at the police station (line 16). Meridian's accusation of Parnell having "more in common" with the white police chief than with him or his dead son. His account of the callousness he felt both the white men showed over Richard's death (line 16) is met by Parnell's defence of his conviction. Parnell defends himself by explaining that he was compelled to adopt this behaviour to achieve their mutual purpose (line 17) of bringing about the trial.

Parnell's plea for Meridian to acknowledge that, as a liberal white man, he "has a history too" and a life "hard to bear" (line 15) would, for the Legitimating Reader, seem a valid argument, but not for the Challenging Reader, who would see him as nothing more than the historical oppressor. The Critical Reader would recognize that what Parnell refers to as his "history" is, fundamentally, a history of a rich white man in white racial hegemony. However, in Parnell, we also see a potential dissident with respect to racial hegemony, when, for example, he tells Lyle's wife Jo (*Blues,* 1964:87) that he has developed a sense of guilt and frustration over the racial oppression evident in the sexual exploitation of black women practiced by his fellow whites. Parnell's distaste for this has even made him "ashamed of being white" (1964:87).

For the Critical Reader, Parnell's attempt to identify with the black struggle, with his implication that he may never have heard "anything else" (line 15) but black music, would give the slight impression of over-identification with the black culture. One concrete example of this was present in the "blackfacing" of white actors from minstrel shows to the musicals of 1920s' Broadway (Williams 2001:136-40). Another, a more symbolic example, would be the famous essay by Norman Mailer, aptly titled the *White Negro*, which was also criticized by Baldwin (*Nobody,* 1961: 173) for the writer's romantic infatuation with black culture, but applauded by Baldwin's fiercest critic, the Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver (1968: 98). For the Legitimating Reader, this intellectual "blackfacing" would perhaps applaud the kind of empathy and devotion Parnell seems to have for the black culture, as long as this would not change him to a dissident from the white norms. This, however, has already happened and made his life in Plaguetown "hard to bear" as an outsider in Plaguetown's white community (line 15). The Critical Reader, though, would doubt that Parnell's life would be as "hard to bear" as that of any black citizen of Plaguetown. The Challenging Reader might even claim his identification with blacks is motivated by a kind of sexual obsession about them (see Hay, 1994:92), as Baldwin also gives grounds for such an interpretation in Parnell's monologue before his testimony at the trial (see *Blues,* 1964:140). The next negotiation is, in fact, about the character of Parnell and his privileged status as a white man. Here he, once again, attempts to create a melodramatic *space of innocence* (see Williams, 2001:28; p. 124) between himself and Meridian. In *Nobody* (1961:172), Baldwin had this to say of Mailer and liberal whites in general:

> There is a difference […] between Norman and myself in that I think he still imagines that he has something to save, whereas I have never had anything to lose […] The things that most white people imagine they can salvage from the storm of life is […] their *innocence*. It is a terrible thing to say, but I am afraid that that for a very long time *the troubles of white people failed to impress me as being real trouble* […] The attitude sketched was my first attitude and I am sure that there is a great deal of it left. (*Nobody,* 1961:172., emphasis added)

Here, the Challenging Reader would join Meridian in his suspicion and discard Parnell as primarily "useless" to the struggle for black freedom (see Hay, 1994: 94), a white man not able to escape the "whiteness" part of his social identity, having more "in common" with even the white sheriff than with Meridian (line 16). However, Parnell is also seen by Meridian through the perspective of class: he knows Parnell to be "better" than the police chief (line 16), which suggests an attempt by Meridian to bond with Parnell through class status. It would, indeed, be the desire of the Critical Reader to see them both as potential collaborators for black *agency* in trying to bring about the trial and achieve justice in Richard's case. However, as the story later shows, these two are driven by different motives.

When admitting the atrocities of the history of white oppression (line 17), Parnell simultaneously pleads with Meridian for "mercy". Once again, for the Legitimating Reader, as to many white liberals of the mid-1960s, this idea of blacks *forgiving* whites for past injustices, constituting a kind of a "change without trouble" (see Steinberg 1997:302; p. 144) and "remedy without pain" (Wetherell and Potter, 1992: p. 144) would seem as convenient. Wetherell and Potter (1992: 177) also note, as one of the main arguments of the Pakehas, the plea that present generations should not be held accountable for the deeds of their predecessors, regardless of the *privilege* and *statuses* they have gained because of them.

To the Challenging Reader, Parnell's pleas would seem as insincere as they do to Meridian, who proclaims that Southern whites have "never shown no mercy at all" (line 18) to black people. To the Habitualized Reader, however, even the idea of a white character not only *apologizing* to, but *pleading for mercy* (line 17) from a black one would, to this Reader seem outrageous. The Critical Reader would contend that Parnell's suggestion for a remedy, though perhaps sincere, would require a large amount of willingness from all Southern whites, which in the context of this play will not happen. Baldwin here depicts Parnell's inner conflict as both an *educated white apologizer* for the past and present injustices committed by whites and, at the same time, *a defender of the white privilege to determine how quickly these injustices should be disposed of*, which, Baldwin (*Nobody,* 1961: 99-105) testifies, was also characteristic of the white Southern novelist William Faulkner. Moreover, Parnell's *ambivalence* also resonates with the kinds of arguments behind the legitimation of the racism of Pakeha New Zealanders embodied in the maxims of "you can't turn back the clock", and "no-

body should be compelled" to *surrender their privileges* (Wetherell and Potter, 1992: 177). Once again, these arguments appear more convenient to whites privileged by racial oppression than to blacks subordinated by it. The Habitualized Reader, would, of course, claim that such injustices never happened, and that there would be no trouble, if blacks knew "their place" and behaved themselves.

Parnell's reminding of Meridian of their friendship as well as the attempt at gender bonding as "two men" (line 19) would, in the eyes of the Legitimating Reader, seem like an honest effort to save the friendship of these two, whereas the Critical Reader would regard it as an attempt to simplify, perhaps also, *deny* some crucial aspects of the racial conflict between them, such as white privilege. Once again, as in the example of the black Southern sharecroppers' situation (see Lomax, 1993: 93-97; Wilson, 1996: 87-88; p. 34), the implementation of the rights of the oppressed individual could be seen as dependent on the *privileged exploiter's benevolence*, or, in this case, *friendship on his/her terms,* rather than the *mistreated party's entitlement* to them.

However, from an educated 21st-century perspective, Parnell's plea in line 19 can also be seen as an attempt to *transcend* the underlying racial conflict between them. Once again, Baldwin seems to use his power as the author of the text to manipulate racial discourse by emphasising the impact of the *occasion* between the two characters and their *action* over the *context* of the racial power *structure* behind them. To the Legitimating Reader, Parnell's efforts might seem a genuine attempt to create an equal friendship between him and Meridian, where their social identities as black and white would not matter. This attempt, if successful, would tip the scale of pessimism and optimism on the more optimistic side, as it also hints at Baldwin's concern over the perils of the racial hatred behind the juxtaposition of blacks and whites. However, implicitly, Parnell's plea (line 19) also seems to have an ulterior motive.

The Challenging Reader could regard Parnell's plea (line 19) as a melodramatic attempt to create a *space of innocence* between the two "friends", where the two could attempt to escape their *social identities* (Van Dijk 1998: 120-21) as "black" and "white". This idea also resonates with the argument of solving racial inequalities by negotiation between two individuals, although the Critical Reader would point out that this would require the existence of an atmosphere of equality and reciprocity between them, to start with. Parnell's later point about racial privilege being in the "gut" (line 21) of every white person, however, also indicates the level of habitualization of racial inequality in the white ethos and culture codes of the South, shown by Lomax (1993: 61) and Harris (1995: 390-95) in Chapter 2. This, Parnell first has to deal with at a later point in the play. In the words of Malcolm X (in Clark, 1992:123), Parnell has not yet *acted* like a true "brother" of Meridian's, and thus the conflict between them cannot yet be resolved simply "at the level of the body" (Bigsby 1985:389).

How valid may a conflict of this kind have appeared in the historical context of the 1960s? As mentioned before, Steinberg (1997) acknowledges the problem for many white liberals constituted by their lack of awareness if the

economic disadvantages of black life, along with their fear of black counter-violence (302) after the passing of the major civil rights legislation from 1964 onwards (304). Dramatically, one also detects here the tension between the *"innocence"* of racial melodrama (Williams, 2001: 7-9) in Parnell's lines and the *self-consciousness of black drama* in those of Meridian. The end of this conflict, however, will show that Parnell has indeed had naive beliefs of possibly establishing a friendship with Meridian without having to make any major sacrifices himself.

Parnell does, nevertheless, recognize and admit the difficulty of surrendering the white man's privileges, habitualized as deeply as in his "*gut*" (line 21). The Critical Reader would count this as honesty and give him credit for it, but also acknowledge Meridian's question of where the hope for racial equality would then lie, "if Mister Charlie", this time the *rich* white man, "could not change" and surrender his privilege (line 22). The Challenging Reader would apparently sum up Parnell's confession as a further excuse of his, which would strengthen this Reader's revolutionary interest in seeing a violent overthrow of Parnell's position.

From a 21st-century point of view, one can also detect in Parnell's plea for both Meridian "not becoming black"and himself not "becoming white" Baldwin's desire to create another post-categorical "utopian moment" (Kilpeläinen, 2010: 173; see p. 123) between these two characters. Alternatively, in this extract, Meridian's frustration could be considered by the Challenging Reader as justified. This Reader, adhering to the ideology of Black Power, would regard the doctrine of non-violent Christianity as merely a part of reproducing white hegemony through pacifying (hooks, 1994:160) black resistance and applaud any self-conscious attempt by Meridian to challenge it.

Meridian also claims that, through their "white" identity and history of racial oppression, all "whites" have the seed of "Mister Charlie" in them (line 24). To the Critical Reader, this would suggest a frustrated exaggeration of displaced anger, a breaking of the Gricean maxim of relevance (Fowler 1996: 137), reducing all white men, including Parnell, to the stereotype of "Mister Charlie" (line 24), which would not be able to change its oppressive nature (line 22). The Legitimating Reader would probably consider Meridian's exaggerated statements as influenced by his bereavement, while sympathizing with Parnell's statement that, although a white man, *he* did not murder Richard, or any other black man, and should not be so accused (line 19). Again, as with Richard and Lyle (see p. 121), Baldwin seems to express through Meridian's accusations the black anger over racial oppression vented on one white man only, as a symbol of white oppression, here, of white privilege. However, the negotiation soon turns to Richard's real murderer.

8.1.3 Negotiating Lyle

In this frame, the focus of the negotiation shifts to Richard's tragic fate and, from there on, to the character of Lyle. The main issue here is Lyle's responsibil-

ity for Richard's murder, being at this stage only alleged by Meridian and doubted by Parnell.

25 PARNELL: You sound more and more like your son, do you know that? A lot of the colored people here didn't approve of him, but he said things they longed to say - said right out loud, for all the world to hear, how much he despised white people!
26 MERIDIAN: He didn't say things *I* longed to say. Maybe it was because he was my son. I didn't care *what* he felt about white people. I just wanted him to live, to have his own life. There's something you don't understand about being black, Parnell. If you're a black man, with a black son, you have to forget all about white people and concentrate on trying to save your child. That's why I let him stay up North. I was wrong, I failed. I failed. Lyle walked him up the road and killed him.
27 PARNELL: We don't *know* Lyle killed him. And Lyle denies it.
28 MERIDIAN: Of course he denies if - what do you mean, we don't *know* Lyle killed him?
29 PARNELL: We *don't* know - all we can say is that it looks that way. And circumstantial evidence is a tricky thing.
30 MERIDIAN: *When* it involves a white man killing a black man - if Lyle didn't kill him, Parnell, who did?
31 PARNELL: I don't *know*. But we don't know that Lyle did it.
32 MERIDIAN: Lyle doesn't deny that he killed Old Bill.
33 PARNELL: No.
34 MERIDIAN: And we know how Lyle feels about colored people.
35 PARNELL: Well, yes. From your point of view. But - from another point of view - Lyle hasn't got anything *against* colored people. He just -
36 MERIDIAN: He just doesn't think they're human.
37 PARNELL: Well, even *that's* not true. He doesn't think they're *not* human - after all, I know him, he's hot-tempered and he's far from being the brightest man in the world - but he's not mean, he's not cruel. He's a poor white man. The poor whites have been just as victimized in this part of the world as the blacks have ever been.
38 MERIDIAN: For God's sake spare me the historical view! Lyle's responsible for Richard's death.
39 PARNELL: But, Meridian, we can't even in our own minds, *decide* that he's guilty. We have to operate the way justice *always* has to operate and give him the benefit of the doubt.
40 MERIDIAN: *What* doubt?
41 PARNELL: Don't you see, Meridian, that now you're operating the way white people in this town operate whenever a colored man's on trial?
42 MERIDIAN: When was the last time one of us was on *trial* here, Parnell?
43 PARNELL: That *can't* have anything to do with it, it *can't* We must forget about all – *all* the past injustice. We have to start from scratch, or do our best to start from scratch. It isn't vengeance we're after. Is it?
44 MERIDIAN: I don't want vengeance. I don't want to be paid back - anyway, I couldn't be. I just want Lyle to be made to know that what he did was evil. I just want this town to be forced to face the evil that it countenances and to turn from evil and do good. That's why I've stayed in this town so long!
45 PARNELL: But if Lyle didn't do it? Lyle is a friend of mine - a strange friend, but a friend. I love him. I know how he suffers.
46 MERIDIAN: *How* does he suffer?
47 PARNELL: He suffers - from being in the dark - from having things inside him that he can't name and can't face and can't control. He's not a wicked

> man. I know he's not. I've known him almost all his life! The face he turns to you, Meridian, isn't the face he turns to me. (*Blues* 1964:59-61., emphasis original)

When the focus of the negotiation shifts to Lyle as the suspect for Richard's murder, the control of the frame (Fowler, 1996: 131) also takes a turn.. After Meridian's statement of his belief that Lyle killed his son (line 26), Parnell assumes the defensive and responsive position, protecting Lyle's right to be "innocent until proved guilty", as stated in the American Constitution (lines 27, 29, and 39). He also attempts to empathize with Lyle's plight as a "poor white man", offering a slightly exaggerated class perspective (line 37).

By claiming that poor whites have been "just as victimized" in American history as blacks "have ever been" (line 37), Parnell can be seen by the Critical Reader as exaggerating and, by a 21st-century educated one, as breaking the truth-value of the Gricean maxim of quality, as described by Fowler (1996: 136). Bearing in mind the historical fact that fewer "poor white" than African men were brought to America by force, one can indeed doubt the truth-value of Parnell's statement. However, Genovese's (1974:13-22) depiction of the situation of the white overseers and other workers and their vulnerable economic position during slavery (see p. 34) does resonate with some part of Parnell's argument. Nevertheless, along with the emergence of "white" cultural identity after the Civil War, to be accepted as "white" meant to be acceptable specifically as "non-black" (see Feagin and Vera, 1995:14-15; Wilson, 1996:144; p. 64). Goldberg (1993:21) offers a poignant explanation to the need of poor whites, who were also oppressed by the capitalist society, to feel superior to blacks, when he states that

> Racist expression is the assertion of power by perpetrators who often otherwise lack it, or it is the maintenance of relations of power, to remind an individual or class of people who it is that occupies the position of power. Such expressions therefore involve the assertion of others constituted as Other in *a space of diminished, threatened or absent control*...the relatively powerless, or those who perceive their power as threatened, resort to asserting themselves over those who are – who are *created* as – more powerless than they. (Goldberg, 1993: 21., emphasis original)

In the film *Mississippi Burning* (1988), noted by Webb (2002:52-53), the need for this caste hierarchy, surpassing all other qualifications for the social evaluation of individuals such as class, is illustrated in a story an FBI agent tells about his childhood in the South:

> "There was a Negro farmer who lived up the road from us. His name was Monroe, and […] he bought himself a mule. That was a big deal around town and my daddy hated that mule because his friends were always kidding him […]one morning that mule just showed up dead […] and after that there was never any mention about that mule around my daddy […] one time we we're driving […] and we passed Monroe's place and we saw it was empty […] I looked over my daddy's face and I knew he had done it […] He looked at me and said '*If you ain't better than a nigger, son, who are you better than?*'." (in Webb, 2002:52-53., emphasis added)

However, to present Lyle and other "poor white men" as "equal" victims of the Southern capitalist economy to blacks in the South (line 37) resembles the dilemma of the so-called "men's movements", criticized by Sally Johnson (1997:18), to show men as "suffering the consequences of a social order of which they are constitutive agents". Nevertheless, Johnson (1997) also admits the existence of "hegemonic" and hierarchical masculinities that "marginalize not only women, but also other men, on the grounds of...class, race and/or sexuality" (20). Evidently, for example, in the racial history of the South before and after the Civil War, social pressures from the planter class against white working-class men, especially those who resisted the racial order of the South, for example members of the Populist Party (see p. 32), did exist. Nevertheless, the restrictions of the caste hierarchy in the postbellum South must have made sure that, despite the rise of the black middle class, the poor white man could always regard himself superior to any black man.

To the Challenging Reader, Parnell, by bonding with Meridian (line 37) through class status in his academic analysis of the plight of the white working-class, would once again seem to be attempting to cloud the reality of the racial inequality between them. Parnell, himself, is occupying the *privileged* position on both accounts (lines 27, 29 and 31) and, perhaps therefore, trying to present himself as impartial to the issue, while, *implicitly,* attempting to hold on to his *presupposition* that Lyle, as his friend, despite his hot temper, *could not* be capable of murdering Richard (line 37). *Explicitly,* however, and to the Legitimating and Habitualized Reader, he *would* appear as impartial and merely defending the fundamentals of the Western justice system that gives every defendant the benefit of the doubt (line 39). The Critical Reader would, here, acknowledge Parnell's blindness to Lyle's racial beliefs and corroborate Meridian's views of them as examples of how Lyle "feels" (line 34) and "thinks" (line 36) about blacks.

To the Challenging Reader, Parnell's claim of how American justice "always" gives the defendant the benefit of the doubt (line 39) would apparently seem both a ludicrous and idealistic exaggeration, ignoring, for example, the argument by Cole (1999:5-13) that the administration of justice in the USA fundamentally favours wealthy against poor "non-white" defendants. The Critical Reader would here acknowledge the difference between the idea of justice and its implementation in the course of American history, where racial issues were concerned.

The validity of Meridian's remark, pointing out the history of the lynchings of blacks without trial (line 42), would be justified by both the Challenging and Critical Reader, who would also both disagree with Parnell's suggestion that all the past injustices of racial oppression in America should just be forgotten, after which everyone should "start from the scratch" (line 43). This suggestion can, in fact be seen as a means of legitimating the racial power structure, with its ignorance over the impact of the injustices that created that structure. Here, Parnell again resembles the Pakeha speakers in New Zealand (Wetherell and Potter, 1992), who were described as wanting "a painless remedy" (123)

with the requirement that past injustices could and should be forgotten (185). However, the Critical Reader would agree with Meridian's demands (line 44) for the recognition of the oppressive past of black history in the USA, as well as the injustice of Richard's murder, whereas the Challenging Reader would demand retaliation. The Legitimating Reader would, though, point out that, although a likely suspect for Richard's murder, Lyle has not so far been proved guilty for it, not even in the plot of the play.

Dramatically, Parnell's wish that blacks and whites could just forget the injustices of the past (line 43) again reflects a melodramatic mood, a wish that the conflict would end here and now, in a "space of innocence". In a post-categorical utopia of this kind (Kilpeläinen, 2010), racial inequality and privileges would not matter (Williams, 2001:28) ever again and everyone could "start from the scratch" (line 43) , *viz.*, "with the same chances in life" (Wetherell and Potter, 1992:193). However, in light of the might of the power structure of racial hegemony in Plaguetown, as well as in the South of the 1960s, this could not be the case. At the end of line 43, Parnell, with his pleading tag question ("It's not vengeance we're after, is it?"), when put into a wider perspective, also expresses a hidden white fear of black retaliative violence. This may have been one of the reasons for whites to perpetuate the tight control of black assertiveness feared as aggression ever since the abolition of slavery. It could, perhaps, arise from the hidden guilt many whites may have felt and thus feared that, if allowed to arm or even show the least bit of open aggression, blacks would immediately seek revenge.

In fact, in the retreat of many white liberals from the civil rights struggle in the first half of the 1960s, their focus soon shifted from advocating black civil rights to championing for the rights of "everybody". This required blacks, as Steinberg (1997:304-305) puts it, "to subordinate their agenda to a larger movement for liberal reform". This meant giving up their struggle against racial power and joining a more symbolic, and thus imprecise, (see Cohen, 1985:115) struggle for what was best for "everybody", leaving the elements of racial inequality and oppression intact. This obliteration of racial issues for the benefit of all, meaning, of course, less benefits for those most discriminated against, is aptly criticized in the lyrics of B.B. King's
bitterly ironical blues song "Why I sing the blues"
http://www.sing365.com/music/lyric.nsf/Why-I-Sing-The-Blues-lyrics-B-B-King/9F85DE14228254F148256968002960DF), where the singer proclaims:

> I've stood on a line, down at the County Hall
> I've heard a man say, we're gonna build *some*
> *new apartments for y'all*,
> and everybody wanna know,
> *why* I'm singing the blues

(B.B. King http://www.sing365.com/music/lyric.nsf/Why-I-Sing-The-Blues-lyrics-B-B-King/9F85DE14228254F148256968002960DF., emphasis added)

8.1.4 Negotiating Parnell's *space of choice*

In this frame, we come closer to the core of the conflict between Parnell and Meridian, as the focus of their negotiation shifts from Lyle to Parnell and his loyalty to Lyle, on the one hand, and to Meridian, on the other, activating Parnell's *space of choice*. This happens, when Meridian confronts Parnell and sets himself in open rivalry with Lyle over Parnell's loyalty:

> 48 MERIDIAN: Is the face he turns to you more real than the face he turns to me? *You* go ask him if he killed my son.
> 49 PARNELL: They're going to ask him that in court. That's why I fought to bring about this trial. And he'll say no.
> 50 MERIDIAN: I don't care what he says in court. You go ask him. If he's your friend, he'll tell you the truth.
> 51 PARNELL: No. No, he may not. He's - he's maybe a little afraid of me.
> 52 MERIDIAN: If you're *his* friend, you'll know whether he's telling you the truth or not. Go ask him.
> 53 PARNELL: I can't do it. I'm his friend. I can't betray him.
> 54 MERIDIAN: But you can betray *me*? You *are* a white man, aren't you? Just another white man - after all.
> 55 PARNELL: Even if he says yes, it won't make no difference. The jury will never convict him. 56
> MERIDIAN: Is that why you fought to bring about the trial? I don't care what the jury does. I know he won't say yes to them. He won't say yes to me. But he might say yes to you. You say we don't know. Well, I've got a right to know. and I've got the right to ask you to find out - since you're the only man who *can* find out. And *I've* got to find out - whether we've been friends all these years, or whether I've just been your favourite Uncle Tom.
> 57 PARNELL: You know better than that.
> 58 MERIDIAN: I don't know, Parnell, any longer - any of the things I used to know. Maybe I never knew of them. I'm tired. Go home.
> 59 PARNELL: You don't trust me anymore, do you Meridian?
> 60 MERIDIAN: Maybe I never trusted you. I don't know. Maybe I never trusted myself. Go home. Leave me alone. I must look back at my record.
> 61 PARNELL: Meridian - what you ask - I don't know if I can do it for you.
> 62 MERIDIAN: I don't want you to do it for me. I want you to do it for you. Good night.
> 63 PARNELL: Good night.
> (*Parnell exits. Meridian comes downstage. It is dawn.)*
> 64 MERIDIAN: My record! Would God - would God - would God I had died for thee - my son, my son!
> (*Blues,* 1964: 61-62., emphasis original)

Meridian's growing distrust of Parnell becomes even more explicit, when he starts to pressure the liberal to find out for him whether Lyle has killed Richard (lines 48, 50, 52, 54 and 56) by, again, assuming the control of the frame (line 48). Here Meridian is presented as a *competitor*, reflecting the change in racial relations noted by Van Der Berghe (in Stone, 1985:51; see p. 99), a rival of Lyle over Parnell's loyalty (line 54); a move that the Critical Reader would recognize him as entitled to make. The Challenging Reader would probably agree with Merid-

ian's pessimistic reduction of Parnell to the "useless" (Hay, 1994: 94) stereotype of "just another white man" (line 54). This Reader would also share Meridian's suspicion that Parnell is just treating him as the white man's "favourite Uncle Tom" (line 56), a judgment echoing the melodramatic (Williams 2001: 29) stereotype of the docile and victimized black slave first depicted in Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). The Legitimating Reader would probably see Meridian as overreacting, when demanding that Parnell should choose between Lyle and him. This Reader would also empathize with Meridian's suffering as a bereaved father, whom s/he could, nevertheless, see as a defying the "natural" social order of white male bonding. The Habitualized Reader would abhor Meridian's suggestions (line 48, 50, 52) that Parnell should betray Lyle by asking him whether he had killed Richard, whereas the Challenging one would be convinced that Parnell should, but will not do it.

Baldwin's criticism of the stereotyped image of Uncle Tom as the desexualized and non-aggressive servant of the white man (*Notes,* 1954: 20-21) is corroborated by Williams (2001:29), who, nevertheless, contends that the character was both a response to and an improvement of the early stereotype of the Coon, which depicted black males mainly as oversexed and lazy (41-42). Here Baldwin offers an *occasionalist* solution to the conflict between Meridian and Parnell by making Parnell show how much he values his friendship with Meridian, who, by his *action,* is now intruding on Parnell's *space of choice*. Parnell evades this demand that he should ask Lyle about the truth of the murder by trying to convince Meridian as well as himself that they "know better" (line 57) than to reduce their relationship to the stereotypes of the "white man" and his faithful servant. Meridian's accusation would, however appeal to the already suspicious Challenging Reader. The Critical Reader would, in turn, contend that what is at stake here is the issue of not who is Parnell's friend, but who is his *best* friend. Here, Meridian sees himself as entitled as Lyle to Parnell's complete friendship. Therefore, this moment between them also marks a shift in their friendship from a *paternalistic* relation to a *competitive* one (see p. 98).

Next, although still mourning his son, Meridian claims that he wants Parnell to find out the truth about Lyle, and Richard's murder, for Parnell's own sake (line 62), From the point of view of the Critical Reader, the statement has some truth-value (Fowler, 1996: 135), in the sense that Parnell does eventually have to make a choice between his friendships with Lyle and Meridian, as these two have become adversaries. To Parnell, that means taking on the pain of both abandonment and commitment. The question of mixed loyalties constitutes Parnell's inner conflict between his identity as a liberal journalist and that of a friend of a racist and a potential murderer. From a dramatic point of view, Meridian's line 62, as well as line 54 ("You can betray *me?*") also works as a hint at the future events of the play, enhancing suspense in the reader/spectator as s/he expects to find out which one of the two characters Parnell will turn against in the end. Another issue, now concerning Meridian, was raised at the beginning of the extract, namely, how Meridian will resolve his own inner conflicts between non-violence and self-defence arising out of his repressed anger

and criticism of Christianity. Will he still be able to "play it cool" (Grier and Cobbs, 1968: 57), or will he succumb to either individual aggression or the force of racial hegemony?

Returning to the dilemma of *structure* and *occasion* (Maynard, 2002, lecture), examined here as the impacts of *context* and *action*, Baldwin, at this juncture, gives more importance to the characters', here, Meridian's, *action in the occasion* realized in the minister's proposition (line 48), than to the *context of the power structure*. The possible solution to the question of Lyle's potential guilt offered by Meridian (line 48) does suggests a *reversal of racial power on the individual level*, provided that Parnell is willing to sacrifice his relationship with Lyle.

The question of how much white liberals would be willing to risk to promote the idea of black civil rights is also raised by Steinberg (1997). He argues that, in 1965, after the passing of the Civil rights Act in 1964 and Voting Rights Act in 1965, having become apprehensive of black radicalism, many white liberals considered these legal actions as sufficient implementations of social equality and abandoned the further struggle for black civil rights (302-305). This led Steinberg (1997) to conclude that racism as "the enemy"

> depends on the so-called liberal to put a kinder and gentler face on racism; to subdue the rage of the oppressed; to raise false hopes that the change is imminent; to modulate the demands for complete liberation; to divert protest; and to shift the onus of responsibility [...] from powerful institutions that *could* make a difference onto individuals [...] rendered powerless by these very institutions [...] evading. […]reckoning with [...] - slavery – and its legacy in the present (Steinberg 1997: 316-317., emphasis original)

A somewhat more analytic approach was offered already in the 1960s by Stokeley Carmichael (Kwame Ture in Ture and Hamilton, 1992:61), a former follower of Dr. King and founding member of the Black Panther Party , when he wrote:

> No matter how "liberal" a white person might be, he cannot ultimately escape the overpowering influence - on himself and on black people – of his whiteness in a racist society. Liberal whites [...] share a sense of superiority based on whiteness [...] Perhaps one holding these views is not a racist in the strict sense [...] but the end result of his attitude is to sustain racism (Ture and Hamilton, 1967:61-62.)

Parnell, indeed, could be seen, depending on the perspective, by an educated 21st-century reader, as a character attempting to *transcend* "race", or, by the Challenging Reader, as making an effort to *transfer the responsibility* of it to Meridian and subdue Meridian's rage. From the point of view of the Critical Reader, Meridian's apprehension of Parnell as well as Richard's anger would seem to give the Southern racial hegemony the same leverage as the Pakehas' in NZ gained, when discrediting the Maori protest by reducing the Maori activists to the stereotype of aggressive troublemakers (Wetherell and Potter 1992:153).

Dramatically, Parnell and Meridian's dialogue also constitutes suspense (Esslin, 1976:95) in the form of their inner conflicts between their private and

social identities. Due to both his racial frustration and his parental grief, Meridian remains sceptical about the motives of their friendship and now clearly articulates the underlying racial conflict shadowing that friendship, even implying that during their collaboration he has not fully trusted Parnell (line 60). The possibility of a similar distrust of Meridian by Parnell is raised during Lyle's trial by the hegemonizing defence lawyer symbolizing the State of Mississippi. The defence attorney, aptly named The State, defends not only Lyle, but the whole State of Mississippi and its racial hegemony by seeking to discredit Parnell's friendship with Meridian, noting that the two have never gone hunting together as Lyle and Parnell have. Finally, Parnell ends up betraying Meridian out of loyalty to Lyle and Jo, as he is unable to refute Jo's false testimony that makes the jury sympathize with Lyle as well as acquit him. (*Blues* 1964: 144-49.) In the end, Parnell, encouraged by Meridian, confronts Lyle and dissolves their friendship, when the three meet for the last time in front of the courthouse.

> 64 MERIDIAN: Did you kill him?
> 65 LYLE: They just asked me that in court, didn't they? And they just decided I didn't, didn't they? Well, that's good enough for me and all these white people and so it damn sure better be good enough for you!
> 66 PARNELL: That's no answer. It's not good enough for me.
> 67 LYLE: What do you mean, that's no answer? Why isn't it an answer? Why isn't it good enough for you? You know, when you were up on the stand right now, you acted like you doubted my Jo's word. You got no right to doubt Jo's word. You ain't no better than she is! You ain't no better than me!
> 68 PARNELL: I am aware of that. God knows I have been made aware of that – for the first time in my life. But, as you and I will never be the same again – since our comedy is finished, since I have failed you so badly – let me say this. I did not doubt Jo's word. I knew that she was lying and that you had made her lie. That was a terrible thing to do to her. It was a terrible thing that I just did to you. I really don't know if what I did to Meridian was as awful as what I did to you. I don't expect forgiveness, Meridian. I only hope that all of us will suffer past this agony and horror.
> 69 LYLE: What's the matter with you? Have you forgotten you a white man? A white man! My daddy told me not to *never* forget I was a white man! Here I been knowing you all my life – and now I'm ashamed of you. Ashamed of you! Get on over to niggertown! I'm going home with my good wife.
> (*Blues,* 1964:153-154., emphasis original)

In line 69, Lyle also terminates his friendship with Parnell and suggests Parnell should go to "niggertown" to find friends there rather than among "white men" like himself. Before that, Parnell apologizes to Meridian, although he says he does not expect Meridian to forgive him (line 68). In this line (68), Parnell apologizes not only to Meridian for not being able to help him with his testimony, but also to Lyle for ending their white friendship. The underlying class conflict between the educated Parnell and Lyle as the representative of the working-class is shown by Lyle's constant comparison between him and Parnell and the insistence that Parnell is "not better" than him (line 67). Coming to its final, this conflict ends with an interesting act by Meridian.

8.1.5 Negotiating Meridian's *space of choice*

> 70 MERIDIAN: You know, for us, it all began with the Bible and the gun. Maybe it will end with the Bible and the gun.
> 71 JUANITA: What did you do with the gun, Meridian?
> 72 PARNELL: You have the gun – Richard's gun?
> 73 MERIDIAN: Yes. In the pulpit. Under the Bible. Like the pilgrims of old.
> *(Exits)*
> (*Blues,* 1964: 157-58.)

Finally, Meridian resolves his conflict between non-violence and counter-violence by deciding to keep the gun Richard left behind for self-protection, just as the early Americans, "the pilgrims of the old" had done. This line (70) was frequently cheered by black spectators of the play (Leeming, 1994:237). Meridian also gives the same prophetic warning (line 70) as expressed by Baldwin in *The Fire* (1963:89) of potential looming racial confrontations, for which Meridian, now disillusioned, is prepared. The Habitualized Reader would abhor and the Legitimating one would also feel uneasy with the concept of an armed black man in Plaguetown, whereas the Critical Reader would, in the end, acknowledge bearing arms to protect himself as Meridian's right as a citizen, as also Martin Luther King (1967:27) did, although insisting that when marching in a demonstration, none of his followers should bear weapons (see p. 174). The Challenging Reader would not, however, condone Meridian's decision to hold on to his Christian faith, but would applaud his combining it with his realism demonstrated by the keeping of Richard's gun (line 73).

Dramatically, both Meridian's resolutions to the racial conflicts of Plaguetown seem to transform the *status quo* of racial hegemony. His rivalry with Lyle for Parnell's friendship, *viz.*, with a white man over another white man (see Frame 8.1.4, p. 154), can be seen to undermine white solidarity. Also, his decision to arm himself against potential white racist attacks (lines 70 and 73) undoubtedly horrified some spectators of the play. Furthermore, both of these resolutions are suggested by Baldwin through the action within the *occasion* of the frame, and not as the impact of the context of the racial power structure. All in all, for the cause of black *agency*, this aspect of the conflict does offer a sense of *optimism*.

For Meridian and Parnell, however, there seems to be little chance for reconciliation, which Parnell, also disillusioned, knows not to expect. Having, in the end, betrayed Meridian by being unable to challenge Jo's false testimony, he nevertheless commits himself to the cause of civil rights by joining the civil rights marchers to protest against Lyle's acquittal (*Blues,* 1964:153-54,158). To the Critical Reader, Parnell's commitment, at the cost even of his personal relationships, does not appear as insignificant, since it symbolizes the plight of those white liberals who remained faithful to the civil rights struggle, often at the cost of their lives (King 1967:28). However, the Challenging Reader would probably agree with Hay's (1994) labelling of him as "useless" and thus to be avoided (94). This Reader would also join Turner's (1977:191) view of him as a forfeiter of Meridian's trust and support Hay's (1994:92) claim that the sole mo-

tive for his further commitment to the black struggle is to seduce Juanita, Richard's former girlfriend, with whom he joins the protesters (*Blues* 1964:158). I shall return to the relationship between Juanita and Parnell in Frame 8.3. Next, however, I shall summarize the characterizations and the catharses of this conflict.

8.1.6 Summary of the conflict: characters and catharses

Although apparently empathetic to the character of Parnell early in the process of writing the play, Baldwin later sympathized more not only with Malcolm X , but also the Black Power Movement, with both of them representing challenge to the white hegemony. In *No Name* (1972: 88), he contended that

> For power truly to feel itself menaced, it must somehow *sense itself in the presence of another power* [...] which it has not known how to define and therefore does not really know how to control [...] For a very long time [...] America prospered [...] This prosperity cost millions of people their lives. Now [...] the [...] *recipients of the benefits* of this prosperity [...] *cannot, or dare not, assess or imagine the price paid by their victim*s, or subjects, for this way of life, and so they cannot afford to know *why the victims are revolting*. They are forced, then, to the conclusion that the victims – the barbarians – are revolting against all civilized values – which is both true and not true – and, in order to preserve these values [...] make up in cruelty what they [...] lack in conviction. This is a formula for [...] decline, for *no kingdom can maintain itself by force alone.* (*No Name* 1972: 88., emphasis added)

Pondering whether social change would, or should be brought about by nonviolence or violence, Baldwin, in his essays, also shifts from promoting integration to advocating black cultural integrity. However, Nick Aaron Ford (1977:102) misinterprets Baldwin's (*No Name,* 1972) statement about "killing a white man" (191) as a justification for racial murder, while what Baldwin appears to defend is the right of a black individual to protect him/herself from possible racist attackers by the extreme act of possibly killing a lethally dangerous white supremacist. This intent of his becomes clearer, when one reads the text both before and after the controversial sentence, where Baldwin first acknowledges the tensions of the situation:

> Many white people appear to live in a state of carefully repressed terror in relation to blacks. I think that [...] whereas white men have killed black men for sport, or out of terror, or out of [...] hatred, or out of the necessity of affirming their identity as white men [...] *it is not necessary for a black man to hate a white man, or to have any particular feelings about him at all, in order to realize that he must kill him* [...] *Of course, whenever a black man discusses violence he is said to be "advocating" it* [...] I have no desire to see a generation perish in the streets [...] *I do not carry a gun and do not consider myself a violent man: but my life has more than once depended on the gun in a brother's holster* [...] *I know what I would do if I had a gun and someone had a gun pointed at my brother* [...] *and there would be no hatred in it, nor any remorse.* People who treat other people as less than human must not be surprised when the bread they have cast on the waters comes back to them, poisoned. (*No Name* 1972: 191-92., emphasis added)

In the last sentence of the quotation, Baldwin walks on tightrope within the dilemma of black counter-violence as both self-defence and retaliation. Here, he also seems to be answering Meridian's questions whether he should just watch, while his people are being " beaten, chained, starved, clubbed, and butchered" (line 10, see Frame 8.1.2), or show mercy to whites who have "never shown" him "any mercy at all" (line 18, see Frame 8.1.3). This, in fact, was what happened also to the black civil rights demonstrators in the South of the 1950s and 60s (King 1967:33-34).

However, the Critical Reader would also recognize that the problem of retaliation includes a danger of displacement, of blaming the wrongs of one person or group on the other. Taken to extremes, Meridian's early conclusion that his friend Parnell is "just a white man" (line 54), even another "Mister Charlie" (line 24), could also justify racial violence against any white liberal as "just another white man", something that many white liberals deserting the civil rights struggle from 1965 onwards evidently feared. (Steinberg, 1997:302-303). hooks (1994:158) also sees the need to differentiate between the white supremacist power structure and white individuals.

From the point of view of the Habitualized Reader, Parnell could also have accused Meridian of being "just another" black militant, and thus, a dangerous and maybe even "crazy nigger". However, he pleads for their friendship, which to him transcends racial conflict ("we've come too far together for you to become black and me becoming white again", (see Frame 8.1.2, line 19). Nevertheless, as Baldwin demonstrates, Parnell does entertain a naïve belief in the possibility of obliterating a racial power structure constituted during over three hundred years of oppression, simply by his own decision.

The closest opportunity for restructuring racial hegemony and fostering interracial friendship is reached, when Parnell admits his own incapability of giving up his white man's habitualized *privilege*, which, as he states, runs deep in his "*gut*" (see frame 8.2.3, line 21). This argument is equalled by Meridian's frustrated question concerning the significance and "hope" of the civil rights struggle, if "Mister Charlie", this time as the educated and liberal white man, cannot, or will not change (see Frame 8.2.3., line 22), namely *surrender his socio-economic privileges*. This makes Parnell, from the point of view of the Critical Reader, in a Brechtian Reading, a *privileged character*, who has to respond to Meridian's demand for loyalty to him over Lyle, which, to this Reader, shows Meridian as a *competitive character*. From the Aristotelian viewpoint of the Legitimating Reader, Parnell would appear as a *defensive character,* defending white privilege as well as his friendship, and Meridian as an *aggressive character*. The Habitualized Reader, however, would see Parnell melodramatically as a weak and *treacherous character* collaborating with Meridian, seen by him/her as a *rebellious character*, whereas The Challenging Reader pertaining to the suspicions of black revolutionary drama would regard Parnell, due to his efforts to soothe Meridian's anger, as a *pacifying character* and Meridian as a *disillusioned character*. These characterizations are illustrated in the succeeding table:

TABLE 2 Characterizations of Parnell and Meridian

Habitualized Reader / Melodramatic Reading	*Legitimating Reader/ Aristotelian Reading*	*Critical Reader/ Brechtian Reading*	*Challenging Reader/ Revolutionary Reading*
Parnell as a **treacherous character**	**Parnell** as a **defensive character**	**Parnell** as a **privileged character**	**Parnell** as a **pacifying character**
Meridian as a **rebellious character**	**Meridian** as an **aggressive character**	**Meridian** as a **competitive character**	**Meridian** as a **disillusioned character**

Assuming the various implied reader positions, the researcher here also faces the dilemma of *structure* and *occasion* (Maynard, 2002, lecture), namely the question which one of these elements can, in the end, be seen to have a bigger impact on what kinds of resolutions to this conflict are provided by the Four different Readings of the text. Is it the *occasion* of the characters' negotiating *action* within the frames, or the *context* of the hegemonic *power structure* behind them? Although suggested otherwise by Meridian that Parnell should ask Lyle whether he killed Richard (see p. 153), along with Meridian's decision to keep Richard's gun (see p. 153), it is mostly the social pressures of the *power structure* as the *context* of the play that seem to win over the spontaneous *action* of the characters in the *occasions* supplied by the frames. This is particularly true of the murder trial, in which Lyle is acquitted. Despite his willingness to testify otherwise, Parnell is forced to validate Jo's lies about Richard in the witness stand and thus first betray Meridian instead of Lyle (*Blues,* 1964:149). However, after the trial, he proclaims himself free of his friendship with Lyle, too, as well as initiates the conversation during which Lyle admits having killed Richard (153-57). Therefore, the victory of *pessimism* over *optimism* is not as evident as in the conflict between Richard and Lyle, for one is compelled to notice Meridian's decision to keep Richard's gun for self-protection as well as, perhaps, the ensuing civil rights march to protest against Lyle's acquittal as examples of intervening *action* aimed at transforming the *status quo* of racial hegemony.

Having described the two main conflicts between male characters, I now address two basically conflicted not only inter-individual, but also *intersexual* encounters, the first of which deals with Richard and Lyle's wife Jo.

8.2 Richard and Jo

In this short conflict, I have included 23 lines, of which 1 to 14 represent the actual dialogue between the two characters. The rest shows how Jo lies in the murder trial about what happened between them in the actual occasion, speaking of Richard as if he were present in the court. The conflict begins at Lyle's store, which Richard enters.

8.2.1 Negotiating the Cokes and the 20-dollar-bill

01 RICHARD: (*Enters the store)* Hey Mrs. Ofay Ednolbay Ydalay!.You got any Coca Cola for sale?
02 JO: What?
03 RICHARD: Coke! Me and my man been toting barges and lifting bales, that's right, we been slaving and we need a little cool. Liquid. Refreshment. Yeah, and you can take that hammer, too.
04 JO: Boy, what do you want?
05 RICHARD: A Coca cola, ma'am. Please ma'am.
06 JO: They right in the box there.
07 RICHARD: Thank you kindly. (*Takes two Cokes, opens them*) Oh, this is fine, *fine*. Did you put them in this box with your own little dainty dish-pan hands? Sure makes them taste *sweet* .
08 JO: Are you talking to me?
09 RICHARD: No ma'am, just feel like talking to myself from time to time, makes the time pass faster. (At screen door) Hey Lorenzo, I got you a Coke.
10 LORENZO: I don't want it. Come on out of there.
11 JO: That will be twenty cents.
12 RICHARD: *Twenty* cents? All right. Don't you know how to say please? All the women I know say please - of course they ain't as pretty as you. I ain't got twenty cents ma'am. All I got is - twenty dollars!
13 JO: You ain't got nothing smaller?
14 RICHARD: No ma'am. You see, I don't never carry on me more cash that I can afford to lose.
(*Blues,* 1964:98-99., emphasis original)

Here, Richard is evidently breaking the Gricean maxim of manner in order to be humorous, perhaps even ironical, addressing Jo as "ofay", another derogatory epithet used of whites by African-Americans (http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.jyu.fi).

Richard's tricksterish joking (line 03) also intertextually targets the racial melodrama *Showboat* (1927), particularly the song *Ol' Man River*, where the character of Joe sings about "toting barges and lifting bales" for the white man (see Williams, 2001:165-173). For the potential amusement of the Challenging Reader, Richard's line (03) could appear as an ironic mockery of the stereotype of the black slave, also in the form of Richard's claim that he and Lorenzo have been "slaving", also showing his contempt of white women, which he has already expressed to Juanita (see *Blues,* 1964:45-46).

Richard is also stereotyping Jo as an ignorant (repetition in line 03) but later also "pretty" (line 12) white woman with "dainty dish-pan hands" (line 07), a

line more appropriate for the Jester of Hollywood movies (Bogle, 1992: 27). This line (07) as a more severe act of condescension, peculiar also to the trickster figure of black folklore, would cater to the misogyny against white women inherent in the Black Power movement and thus evidently delight the Challenging Reader. While seen by this Reader as a comical *trickster*, for the Habitualized Reader, Richard here, with his bold and flirtatious manner, would constitute a *disturber* of the Southern code of conduct governing relations between black men and white women. The Legitimating Reader would perhaps consider him as a *defier* of those codes, whereas the Critical Reader would regard his risk-taking behaviour when talking flirtatiously to a white woman as that of a *venturer*, these identities being similar to the one mentioned in Chapter 7.

Also, the taking of "that hammer" mentioned in line 03, intertextually refers to Ledbetter's famous blues song *Take This Hammer* (in Asch and Lomax (eds.), 1962:45), where a prisoner fantasizes about escaping and asks the other prisoners to tell the white guard that he is "gone". This also gives metaphoric significance to Lyle and Richard's following fight over Lyle's hammer as a symbol of hegemonic power (see p. 111).

All in all, Richard seems to be dominating the frame until line 04, when Jo reminds him of his status as the desexualized "boy" in the South, which, probably as Baldwin's momentary concession to the racial discourse of the South, elicits Richard's response (line 05) softened with the word "please" and the polite address term "ma'am". For the Challenging Reader, Jo's angry question could here constitute an "obedience test" (Goffman, 1961: 26-27), to which Richard (line 05), this time, to this Reader's discontent, momentarily yields. The question also serves to reproduce the social distance between them, similar to the one between Lyle and Papa D. (see p. 93) and would thus be appreciated by the Habitualized Reader as a momentary restoration of the racial order in Plaguetown, whereas the Challenging Reader could apprehend Richard's response (line 05) as a form of submission. To the Habitualized Reader, Jo here (line 04), would seem to act as a momentary *discipliner* of Richard, whereas the Challenging Reader would see her as his *dominator* and the Critical Reader as his *controller*, as both of these identities resonate with the use of the epithet "boy" as a means of reminding its referent of the context of white domination and control.

After taking the bottles from the box, Richard starts his flirting again (lines 07 and 09). His friend Lorenzo seems less amused by his humour, urging him to get out of the store (line 10). As a black trickster figure, Richard is then showing off his alleged wealth as a former musician (*Blues,* 1964: 46) in the form of the 20-dollar bill, with his hint (line 14) that that is not all the money he owns, as well as continuing to talk in his flirtatious manner. This would, in the eyes of the Legitimating Reader, make Richard a *braggart*, whereas the Critical Reader would again still see him as a *venturer*, pushing the limits of his existence to its edge by daring to flirt with a white Southern woman. The Habitualized Reader would, vehemently, and with envy of his affluence, regard him as a *disturber* of the "innocence" of Plaguetown, where blacks were expected to be poorer than

whites and be content with their lot. For the Challenging Reader, Richard's wealth makes him a *deprogrammer* of the stereotypical notion that blacks are always poorer than whites, which gives the 20-dollar bill a significant meaning as a *symbol* for black *agency*. Although this frame between Richard and Jo is not long, it gives the Reader and also the spectator a view of what actually happened in the encounter of these two characters, as opposed to the fantasized account Jo gives to the court later on in the witness stand during the murder trial (*Blues,* 1964: 112-13) This account is depicted in the next frame.

8.2.2 Negotiating Richard

> 15 JO: Well, I was in the store, sitting at the counter, and pretty soon this colored boy come in, loud and talking in just the most awful way. I didn't recognize him, I just knew he wasn't one of *our* colored people. His language was something awful, awful!
> 16 THE STATE: He was insulting? Was he insulting, Mrs. Britten?
> 17 JO: He said all kinds of things, dirty things, like – well –just like I might have been a colored girl, that's what it sounded like to me. Just like some little colored girl he might have met on a street corner and wanted – wanted for a night! And I was scared. I hadn't seen a colored boy act like him before. He acted like he was drunk or maybe he was under the influence of that dope. I never knew nobody to be *drunk* and act like him. His eyes was just going and he acted like he had a fire in his belly. But I tried to be calm because I didn't want to upset Lyle, you know – Lyle's mighty quick-tempered – and he was working in the back of the store, he was hammering –
> 18 THE STATE: Go on, Mrs. Britten. What happened then?
> 19 JO: Well, he – that boy – wanted to buy him two Cokes because he had a friend outside –
> 20 THE STATE: He brought a friend? He did not come there alone? Did this other boy enter the store?
> 21 JO: No, not then he didn't – I –
> 22 BLACKTOWN: Come on, bitch. We *know* what you going to say. Get it over with.
> 23 JO: I – I give him two Cokes, and he – tried to grab my hands and pull me to him, and I – he pushed himself up against me, real close and hard – and oh, he was just like an animal , I could – smell him! And he tried to kiss me, he kept whispering these awful, filthy things and I got scared, I yelled for Lyle! Then Lyle come running out of the back – and when the boy seen I wasn't alone in the store, he yelled for this other boy outside and this other boy come rushing in and they both jumped on Lyle and knocked him down.
> (*Blues,* 1964:112-13., emphasis original)

In the courtroom scene, the lines of the audience at the trial are divided racially into those of Whitetown and Blacktown. The previous frame in mind, where Richard and Jo only talked without even touching each other, with it being immediately followed by the frame in which Lyle and Richard disputed about the change for the twenty-dollar-bill (see p. 102), one can see clearly that Jo is lying about the incident and exaggerating both Richard's involvement and manner in it. Here, she is constructing Richard first as "awful" (line 15) as well as doped (line 17). Later (line 23), she depicts him as "dirty" and, thus, "impure" (see Douglas, 1966 in Harris 1995:392), both in his speech and body, animalistic and,

finally, cowardly. She also claims that Lorenzo took part in the fight, following Lyle's wishful version of the event (see p. 114), although Lorenzo appeared reluctant to enter Lyle's store from the beginning (see pp. 102-104).

Jo's lies would apparently be condoned by the Habitualized Reader, who would be totally aware of the "real" reason why Lyle should be acquitted, not because he did not kill Richard, but because, to this Reader, he did so for the right reason, which was to preserve the racial order and protect Plaguetown from the black disturber of the peace. Richard's bold behavior, namely the flashing of his wealth in the store owned by a poor white man and the disturbance of the "innocence" constituted by Southern racial etiquette caused by it might have annoyed this Reader from the beginning. Thus, s/he would evidently experience a melodramatic catharsis of relief over the following result of the trial with the restoration of Plaguetown's habitualized racial order. The Legitimating one would persist in his/her fundamentally Aristotelian claim that Richard's unfortunate fate was due to his own obnoxious manner, with which he defied the Southern racial hegemony. The Challenging Reader, epitomized in the misogynist line (22) of Blacktown ("come on, you bitch…"), would, perhaps, neither be surprised by Jo's lying nor in favor of it. The Critical Reader, however, would disapprove of the fact that Jo commits perjury and not only gets away with it, but also manages to free her guilty husband from the charges of Richard's murder.

Here, articulating racial discourse rather than manipulating it (see Clark and Ivanic, 1997: 142-45), Baldwin shows Jo exploiting the primal prejudiced fear inherent in white culture also depicted in racial melodramas (see Williams, 2001: 104-109; 122-125), namely that of the sexual violation of the "innocent" white woman by the stereotypical "black buck" (Bogle, 1992:13-14). Although historically exceptional and exceeded by similar crimes committed by white men against black women (Williams, 2001:105), the myth prevailed as the primary justification for lynchings (Wilson, 1996:113-14; Williams, 2001:106-107), for which the most common actual reasons, when there were any, were the black victims' assertive behaviors (Wilson, 1996:114-15).

Jo's testimony actually resembles more of the original story of the 14-year-old Emmett "Bobo" Till's behavior, as he, alleged by Huie (1956:46), had caught the white shop assistant by the waist and had told her to relax, as he said he had had white girlfriends before. In fact, Richard had been less forward in his actions than the 14-year-old was claimed to.

8.2.3 Summary of the conflict: characters and catharses

The Critical Reader, from a Brechtian point of view, would evidently consider Richard's flamboyant demeanor with, for instance, the 20-dollar bill, as the mark of his anti-stereotypical affluence. The fact that he ventures not only to flaunt his wealth but also flirt with Jo makes him, for this type of Reader, someone that deliberately opposes the racial power structure of Plaguetown, hence, *a courageous character*, perhaps too courageous for his own good. The Challenging Reader, from the perspective of a Revolutionarily Reading, would consider him as a *deprogramming role model* for blacks, and thus *a heroic character*, both characteristics posing a challenge to the popular Southern hegemonic representation of blacks as poor and submissive. However, these two characteristics would also lead the Legitimating Reader to consider him as a *defiant* and the Habitualized Reader as even a *dangerous character*. Jo, on the other hand, could be regarded by the Legitimating Reader as a *loyal character*, both to her husband and the racial order of Plaguetown, committing perjury not only for the sake of her family, but also for the common good of Plaguetown whites.

The Habitualized Reader could even consider Jo as *an innocent character* of the kind depicted in Hollywood racial melodramas (Williams, 2001:99) as harassed by a brutal black man, who, to this Reader, might even, if given a chance, have been capable of raping her. The Critical Reader, in turn, would acknowledge her lying as an attempt to save her marriage and retain the support of her and Lyle's family. This Reader would also regard her perhaps as a *character frightened* by not as much Richard's behaviour in the store as her *realization* before the trial that her husband is, in fact, capable of murder (see *Blues,* 1964:90). To the Challenging Reader, she would simply appear as a thoroughly *dishonest character*, referred to as a lying "bitch" by residents of Blacktown (line 22). The different characterizations are illustrated in the succeeding table:

TABLE 3 Characterizations of Jo and Richard

Habitualized Reader / Melodramatic Reading	*Legitimating Reader/ Aristotelian Reading*	*Critical Reader/ Brechtian Reading*	*Challenging Reader/ Revolutionary Reading*
Richard as a dangerous **character**	**Richard** as a **defiant character**	**Richard** as a **courageous character**	**Richard** as a **heroic character**
Jo as an **innocent character**	**Jo** as a **loyal character**	**Jo** as a **frightened character**	**Jo** as a **dishonest character**

With respect to the dilemma of *context* and *action*, the resolution of this conflict between Richard and Jo clearly suggests the victory of the racial power structure, hence, the *context* of the play. Here, the racial order of Plaguetown is already partially restored by Jo's false testimony, which reproduces the popular and fearful Southern representational image of the black man as a potential rapist, reinforcing the ideological need to control black men by violence and reinstating the *status quo* of racial hegemony, which was only momentarily endangered. Hence, the resolution of this conflict supports a *pessimistic* rather than *optimistic* interpretation.

Another, this time more amicable, black-white man-woman –relationship, however, emerges in the play between Juanita and Parnell, the next conflict dealt with in this study. Although basically racially juxtaposed, and thus originally in conflict with each other, the two, in the end, develop a connection.

8.3 Parnell and Juanita

This conflict entails 43 lines divided into three frames, starting from near the beginning of the play and ending in its last pages. Although the relations between the two characters seem quite amicable, I argue that there is an underlying element of racial conflict between them, which has, up to this point, prevented them from entering into a closer relationship. The first target of their negotiation is Lyle, and his impending trial.

8.3.1 Negotiating Lyle

(Parnell enters)
01 PARNELL: Hello, my friends. I bring glad tidings of great joy. Is that the way the phrase goes, Meridian?
02 JUANITA: Parnell!
03 PARNELL: I can't stay. I just came to tell you that a warrant's being issued for Lyle's arrest.
04 JUANITA: They're going to arrest him? Big Lyle Britten? I'd love to know how you managed *that* .
05 PARNELL: Well, Juanita, I am not a *good* man, but I have my little ways.
06 JUANITA: And a whole lot of folks in this town, baby, are not going to be talking to you no more, for days and days and *days* .
07 PARNELL: I hope that you all will. I may have no other company. I think I should go to Lyle's house to warn him. After all, I brought it about and he *is* a friend of mine – and then I have to get the announcement into my paper.
08 JUANITA: So it is true.
09 PARNELL: Oh yes. It's true.
10 MERIDIAN: When is he being arrested?
11 PARNELL: Monday morning. Will you be up later, Meridian? I'll drop by if you are – If I may.
12 MERIDIAN: Yes, I'll be up.
13 PARNELL: All right, then. I'll trundle by. Good night all. I'm sorry I've got to run.

14 MERIDIAN: Good night.
15 JUANITA: Thank you, Parnell.
16 PARNELL: Don't thank me, dear Juanita. I only acted – as I believed I had to act. See you later, Meridian.
(Parnell exits)
(*Blues,* 1964: 18-19., emphasis original)

Parnell enters Meridian's church jokingly (line 01), but bearing a serious message of Lyle's upcoming arrest (line 03). Here, for the Critical Reader, the character of Parnell appears as a good-natured *collaborator* of blacks, for which he has, in Juanita, an *admirer* who is impressed with how he managed to arrange Lyle's arrest (lines 04, 15). However, lines 06 and 07 already give a clue to the reader/spectators that Parnell will have to pay a price for his co-operation with Meridian and Juanita in terms of his relationships with the other white inhabitants of Plaguetown. The root of Parnell's inner conflict between his conscience, not to mention his occupation as a liberal journalist, and his friendship with Lyle is planted in the juxtaposition of line 07, where he declares this friendship, and line 16, in which he reveals his will to act according to his beliefs. In this, he is being encouraged by Juanita, who is nevertheless aware of his underlying allegiance to "Big Lyle Britten" (line 04), which is probably one of the factors that stand in the way of them having a relationship. The significance of this becomes more evident in the second frame of the conflict, in which the two meet in Meridian's church after Richard's funeral. This time, the focus of their negotiation shifts from Lyle and Richard to Parnell.

8.3.2 Negotiating Parnell

17 JUANITA: What's the matter, Parnell? You look sick.
18 PARNELL: I tried to come sooner. I couldn't get away. Lyle wouldn't let me go.
19 JUANITA: Were you going to beat a confession out of him? But you look as though he's been trying to beat a confession out of you. Poor Parnell!
20 PARNELL: Poor Lyle! He'll never confess. Never. Poor devil!
21 JUANITA: Poor devil! You weep for Lyle. You're luckier than I am. I can't weep in front of others. I can't say goodbye in front of others. Others don't know what it is you're saying goodbye to.
22 PARNELL: You loved him.
23 JUANITA: Yes.
24 PARNELL: I didn't know.
25 JUANITA: Ah, you're so lucky, Parnell. I know you didn't know. Tell me, where you live, Parnell? How can you not know all of the things you do not know?
26 PARNELL: Why are you hitting out at me? I never thought you cared that much about me. But – oh, Juanita! There are so many things I've never been able to say!
27 JUANITA: There are so many things you've never been able to hear.
28 PARNELL: And – you've tried to tell me some of those things?
29 JUANITA: I used to watch you roaring through this town like a St. George thirsty for dragons. And I wanted to let you know you haven't got to do all that; dragons aren't hard to find, they're everywhere. And nobody wants you to be St.George. We just want you to be Parnell. But, of course, that's much harder.
30 PARNELL: Are we friends, Juanita? Please say that we are friends.

31 JUANITA: Friends is not exactly what you mean, Parnell. Tell the truth.
32 PARNELL: Yes. I've always wanted more than that, from you. But I was afraid you would misunderstand me. That you would feel that I was only trying to exploit you. In another way.
33 JUANITA: You've been a grown man for a long time now, Parnell. You ought to trust yourself more than that.
34 PARNELL: I've been a grown man far too long – ever to have dared to dream of offering myself to you.
35 JUANITA: Your age was never the question, Parnell.
36 PARNELL: Was there ever any question at all?
37 JUANITA: Yes. Yes. Yes, once there was.
38 PARNELL: And there isn't – there can't be – anymore?
39 JUANITA: No. That train has gone. One day, I'll recover. I'm sure that I'll recover. And I'll see the world again – the marvelous [sic] world. And I'll have learned from Richard – how to love. I must. I can't let him die for nothing.
(Juke box music, loud. The lights change, spot on Parnell's face. Juanita steps across the aisle. Richard appears. They dance. Parnell watches)
(*Blues,* 1964:106-108.)

Here, Juanita opens and takes control of the frame. She could here be seen by the Critical Reader as an *empathizer* of "poor Parnell", asking him what is wrong with him and commenting on his appearance (line 17). He responds by telling that he was detained by Lyle (line 18). To the Critical Reader, Juanita's empathy is evidently welcomed, whereas to the Challenging Reader, it is not, since s/he would feel suspicious of any white character and thus would also think that Juanita is a *fool* to trust the white man. Also, the Habitualized and Legitimating Reader would feel uneasy by the intimacy that is developing between the two characters, with the Legitimating Reader seeing Juanita as an *initiator* of a possible and, to them, dangerous relationship with Parnell, whom this Reader would regard as a potential *miscegenator*. The Habitualized Reader, in turn, could hypersexualize Juanita as a promiscuous *seducer*, who would be attempting to manipulate Parnell with her sexuality, and consider Parnell as a *traitor* to his race.

Parnell comes to his and Juanita's second meeting from Lyle's home, where he has been stigmatized and intimidated by Lyle's friends. They have labeled him a Communist drunkard and discredited his life's career as the editor of his newspaper, suggesting that he only started it, because he was just an idle and "spoiled rich boy with nothing better to do", who "tried to make himself interesting" with his, to them, "subversive attitudes" (see *Blues,* 1964:72-76) of social justice and racial equality.

Whereas Juanita seems concerned about Parnell (line 19), Parnell expresses his own worry about Lyle (line 20). Next, the focus shifts to Juanita's relationship with Richard and Parnell's lack of awareness of it (lines 21-24). In the following lines (25 and 27), Juanita scolds Parnell for not knowing "things he should have known", possibly concerning the relations between the two. In line (29), she tells Parnell that he would not need to be as ferocious as "St. George", that is, as a medieval knight looking for dragons to kill, the "dragons" here meaning those of racial injustice, with his writings, but just to be himself. En-

couraged, Parnell asks Juanita about the nature of their relationship (line 30), which he hopes to have the potential for more than friendship (line 32), although he does not want to exploit her in any way.

In the next line (33), Juanita implies Parnell that she could have been willing to start a relationship with him and would have expected him to trust himself more as a ”grown man”, to which Parnell answers by having feared he was too old for her (line 34). When Juanita says that Parnell's age was not the reason why the two could not be lovers (line 35) and reveals that there was another question (line 37), it seems that the reason for that might have been racial, probably also Parnell’s close friendship with Lyle, the well-known racist. However, there is another way to interpret what Juanita means by the “question” that for Parnell “cannot be anymore” as well as with the “train” that is now “gone” So, in line 39, Juanita either gives Parnell the impression that there is no racial barrier between the two, or that there is no way for them to have an intimate relationship any more. Nevertheless, the readers and spectators are left in a state of anticipation what might happen to these characters in the future, as, in the present, Juanita is still mourning Richard (line 39). This question is, at least partly answered in the final scene of the play.

8.3.3 **Negotiating Parnell and Juanita’s *space of choice***

In the finale of the play, the two meet outside the courthouse after Lyle's trial. Parnell asks Juanita, if he can join their march to protest against the verdict

> 40 PARNELL: Well.
> 41 JUANITA: Well. Yes, Lord!
> 42 PARNELL: Can I join you on the march, Juanita? Can I walk with you?
> 43 JUANITA: Well, we can walk in the same direction, Parnell. Come. Don't look like that. Let's go on.
> *(Exits.)*
> *(After a moment, Parnell follows.)*
> (*Blues* 1964:158.)

In this extract, there is hope for a co-operative relationship between Parnell and Juanita. Hay (1994:94), however, mockingly renders Parnell as ”useless”, due to what happened with his testimony at the trial, suggesting his only motive for joining the march is his “lusting after Juanita” (92). Bigsby (1985:390), in turn, regards Juanita as simply ” a black girl willing to dispense her sexual favours [to anyone?] with some abandon”. These stereotypical views might well be expressed by the Challenging and Habitualized Readers, respectively. However, to the Critical Reader, this would seem, as if Baldwin would be letting Parnell to be redeemed by Juanita from his inability to refute Jo's false testimony, as she states (line 43) that the two “can walk in the same direction”. At the same time, however, Parnell would also be taught a lesson, expressed in the words of Malcolm X (1970:123), that ”one has to act like a brother to be called one”, which he now does by joining the march to protest against Lyle’s acquittal.

The Legitimating Reader would apparently condone the march, as a democratic expression of an opinion, as long as it remains non-violent, and no white citizens or their possessions are harmed (see *The Fire,* 1963:55). As for Juanita, her character, as a woman leader of the student movement, is given credit by Orsach (1977:56-59) as one of Baldwin's credible women characters, to which also Jo is included. In Orsach's view, such characters are rare in western literature, which, Orsach claims, has traditionally obtained a patronizing and protective attitude to women. Here, in light of the historical context in the play, particularly the patriarchal history of the Civil Rights Movement, Juanita's character appears as a highly exceptional one.

Waldschmidt-Nelson (2001:87-104) makes the point that, up to the 21st century, historians have mostly focused on the famous male heroes in the struggle. This has left the accomplishments of women leaders, among them Rosa Parks, whose civil disobedience launched the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 (Steffen, 2001:127-28), and Ella Jo Baker, called by Congressman John Lewis (in Waldschimdt-Nelson, 2001:88) the "spiritual mother" of non-violent resistance, largely unrecognized. This, again, suggests that Baldwin, also downplayed in the struggle himself, due to his sexual orientation (Leeming 1994:228), was, at least in terms of portraying dramatic women characters, ahead of his time.

8.3.4 Summary of the conflict: characters and catharses

In his reading, Darwin Turner (1977:192) seems to regard the second main storyline of the play, building up to the event of the trial, also as *Parnell's* tragedy, in which *his* tragic flaw would have been his friendship with and thus also loyalty to Lyle. Indeed, the Aristotelian type of tragic character was usually of "high status, 'distinguished', and enjoying great good fortune" (Babbage, 2004:49).

As for Juanita, her message to Parnell could be that she will accept him as a potential partner in a committed relationship, sexual or non-sexual, if he is willing to "walk in the same direction" (line 43) as herself, which means active participation in the civil rights struggle and the acceptance of all the sacrifices that come with it, including violence and ostracization from Plaguetown's white community. However, as the Readers have learnt, from earlier on (see *Blues*, 1964:72-76; p. 168), Parnell has already irritated most Lyle's white friends by his dissident questioning of the town's white hegemony and thus drifted into a conflict with his environment. In the Brechtian view of the Critical Reader, Parnell could have evolved from a powerfully *privileged character* into a *committed character,* the one who "acts like a brother" (see p. 141) and strives for black *agency*, whereas Juanita on this Reading seems like a *redeeming character*, willing to "go on" walking "in the same direction" (line 43) with him. In the Revolutionary Reading of the Challenging Reader, as for Hay (1994:94), Parnell would still constitute a *useless character* to the black revolution, whereas Juanita could seem an *idealistic character*, possibly too confident that "Mister Charlie" really could change.

The two Reproducing Readers, in turn, would reject the mere possibility of sexual relations between the two. The Legitimating Reader would regard Parnell as a tragic *miscegenating character* and Juanita as a *seductive* one. The Habitualized one would, then, melodramatically see them both as "evil". S/he would label Parnell as a *deviant character*, *breaking the most sacred norm* of the racial order in the South, which forbade any non-exploitative sexual relationships between blacks and whites (see Harris 1995:392; p. 26), and hypersexualize Juanita as a *promiscuous* one, regarding her, in Bigsby's (1985: 390) words, as just "a black girl willing to dispense her sexual favors", this time, to Parnell.

All in all, Baldwin's depiction of a meaningful relationship between a white man and a black woman, in this case, Parnell and Juanita, clearly upsets the *status quo* of racial hegemony in the South, which allowed white men to secretly exploit black women sexually, but never to fall in love, let alone have an open relationship with them. The characterizations of Parnell and Juanita are illustrated in the succeeding table:

TABLE 4 Characterizations of Parnell and Juanita

Habitualized Reader / Melodramatic Reading	*Legitimating Reader/ Aristotelian Reading*	*Critical Reader/ Brechtian Reading*	*Challenging Reader/ Revolutionary Reading*
Parnell as a **deviant character**	**Parnell** as a **miscegenating character**	**Parnell** as a **committed character**	**Parnell** as a **useless character**
Juanita as a **promiscuous character**	**Juanita** as a **seductive character**	**Juanita** as a **redeeming character**	**Juanita** as an **idealistic character**

Even if lustful, Parnell appears here as a character commendable for his bravery, wanting to have a love relationship with Juanita, instead of just exploiting her sexually (see line 32), as many white men of his era would have sought to do, as well as wholeheartedly joining the struggle for black civil rights. By having Parnell fully commit himself to the struggle for black *agency*, Baldwin gives, to the Critical Reader, a possibility also noted by Scott (2009:165-66) that, at least one, "Mister Charlie" is capable of change. All in all, it seems likely that Baldwin wrote the ending for Parnell and Juanita to provide "the relatively conscious" (*The Fire*, 1963:89) blacks and whites among its audience some hope of reconciliation of the racial conflict in America, without which, the future of ra-

cial relations in the USA would appear violently grim. Baldwin the essayist, still optimistic, wrote in 1963 (*The Fire*: 83,89):

> We, the black and the white, deeply need each other here if we are really to become a nation – if we are really, that is, to achieve our identity, our maturity, as men and women [...] Everything now, we must assume, is in our hands [...] If we – and now I mean the relatively conscious whites and the relatively conscious blacks [...], do not falter in our duty now, we may be able [...] to end the racial nightmare, and achieve our country and change the history of the world. If we do not now dare everything, the fulfillment of that prophecy, re-created from the Bible in song by a slave, is upon us: *God gave Noah the rainbow sign, No more water, the fire next time!* (*The Fire* 1963:83,89., emphasis original)

Also, although King (Garrow 1986:476) admitted that too many whites in the South stressed the importance of social order over social justice, he also had a pessimistic view of the black revolution succeeding on its own. In fact, King (484) maintained that blacks could not win their struggle without the commitment of empathetic whites, as African-Americans alone constituted only 10 per cent of the American people.

Here, the *actions* of both Parnell and Juanita seem to transform the Southern hegemony in terms of racial segregation, and the *status quo* of the play's socio-historic *context*, as they pose a significant threat to the norms of the Southern caste system, which, above all, sternly prohibited inter-racial sexual relationships (see Harris 1995: 392; p. 26). In even contemplating a possible sexual relationship, the two are breaking the most important norm of Southern racial etiquette concerning racial "purity". This, undoubtedly, would offer an educated 21st- century – reader a sense of optimism of "men and women making their own history", nevertheless shadowed by the fact that they do this "not in conditions of their own choosing" (Karl Marx in Barry, 2009:178) However, one could ask, imagining the plot further, whether the optimism offered by Baldwin here would remain, namely, would racist whites in Plaguetown leave this relationship intact without trying to break it by intimidation and possible violence.

Another interesting question here is why Baldwin, and also Spike Lee decades after him. in the film *Jungle Fever* (1991), allow an inter-racial relationship to evolve between a white man and a black woman, but, at the same time, also condemn those of black men and white women. In the play, the sexual relations between Richard and his white girlfriends are, indeed, depicted as "sad", aggressive, and also inappropriate to his contemporaries (*Blues* 1964: 42,45-46). In Lee's movie (1991), a relationship between a married black architect and his secretary is soon dissolved and dismissed as a temporary case of "jungle fever".

Having analyzed these four inter-individual conflicts in the play, I now move on to the discussion of my findings of the racial discourse that was articulated and manipulated by Baldwin in the text at hand.

9 DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to examine how racial discourse was articulated and manipulated by Baldwin in the text of his play *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1964) as part of the ideological conflict between white racial hegemony and black cultural agency. The research questions in the study served to examine three main concepts that were: meanings, identities and catharses. I begin with the issue of racial meanings.

9.1 Baldwin and racial meanings

"Race" manifests itself in the play as the socially constructed system of ideological meanings behind the imposition of class privilege, as well as caste restrictions, on the social relations of the black and white citizens of Plaguetown, both between and within their racial groups. In the end, racial hegemony, though first contested, is, in the play's first storyline, restored by patriarchal violence in the form of a racial murder and, in the second one, through the verdict delivered by the racially biased jury of the murder trial.

The racial meanings looked at in the text were mainly implicit and occurred in the text as the characters' presuppositions of each other as well as the control of the turn-taking during the dialogue. The analysis confirmed Herman's (1995: 250) and Fowler's (1996: 131) findings that the controlling of the dialogue appears in *tag questions* as attempts of the powerful addressers to *confirm* the existing power relation by allowing the addressees the choice either to agree with, or resist it. Whenever resisted, the power relation in the play, expressed, at first, mostly *implicitly,* would be made more *explicit* and entail elements of intimidation, manipulation and subtle coercion. The first conflict examined did finally escalate to physical violence and, ultimately, homicide. The black protagonist's responses to the *tag questions* which resembled the kinds of "tests of obedience" found in Goffman's (1961:27) "total institutions", were usually ironic, which escalated the conflict further. A subtler approach in *cuing*

in the manipulative presuppositions was represented in the second conflict of the play at hand, which dealt with *privilege* and *loyalties* to the ideology of non- violence, on the one hand, and to the idea of friendship, on the other.

9.2 The Four Readers and identities

The second research question dealt with identities. Racial discourse, as I have shown, can be articulated and manipulated by a race-conscious author, such as Baldwin, through dramatic expression. The same hegemonic struggle that constitutes racial conflict in U.S. history, particularly in the 1960s, can be seen to establish the socio-historic context of Baldwin's play, in which racial identities were negotiated. Where I found Baldwin particularly skillful, was in the way individuals in the play were made to represent ideologies, thus, in bringing public issues onto the level of private relations

In particular, the identities negotiated in the text inclined to transforming racial hegemony clearly served to *question* and *deprogram* the stereotypical depiction of blacks as funny or dangerous in the mainstream entertainment of Broadway and Hollywood. However, they also put some of the more contemporary versions of this stigmatization, which are still current, into a new light. These are the stereotypical depictions of blacks as poor and ignorant drug addicts or criminals. My argument is that Baldwin, instead of "coming dangerously close to embracing" these stereotypes, as Bigsby (1985: 389) claims, actually gives *depth* and *substance* to those stereotypes by, for instance, eloquently articulating the black frustration and aggression already shown on Broadway, on a smaller scale and a less threatening form, by Lorraine Hansberry in *A Raisin In The Sun* (1958).

To the ear of a European educated 21st-century reader, Baldwin gives a clear and comprehendible voice of the yet relatively unheard and stereotyped African-Americans, were these people struggling with a drug problem, the shadow of imprisonment, a crisis of religion, or plain racial oppression. This voice was, evidently, not perceived by many white spectators of the play's performances on Broadway, who were merely apprehended by the arguments for black self-defence, which these spectators as well as most white critics regarded as advocation for black violence. Baldwin's depiction of the play's characters also introduced a stereotyping of whites from the black folklore, depicting Lyle as the "evil" master figure of "Mister Charlie", with Richard the trickster as his clever and verbally gifted opponent. However, also the two white main characters embodying Mister Charlie, Lyle physically and Parnell ideologically, were depicted with subtlety.

As tied to the way the characters spoke of inanimate but also symbolic objects, about each other, and about the physical (Sweet 1993) and ideological (Cooper 1998) space between each other, the analysis showed how the identities they seemed to negotiate varied according to from which political viewpoint the text could be read by the Four Readers constructed by the researcher. These

Readers represented the Habitualized, Legitimating, Critical and Challenging points of view to the racial hegemony inherent in the play.

The Four Readers implied by the text examined represented a four-dimensional approach to the hegemonic struggle of racial ideologies, such as white conservatism and liberalism, and black liberalism and radicalism. The various identities negotiated in the text were all contingent to each of the characters' situation in the plot of the play, on the one hand, and to the ideological standpoint of each of the play's clearly differentiated Four Readers, on the other. These identities were also summarized in the character types constructed at the end of each conflict. The four dramatic and political viewpoints examined in the present study can be detected in the hegemonic struggle of the racial discourse in the American society during the early 1960s that was depicted in the play in question. Furthermore, the analysis confirmed the postulated compatibility of this struggle with the dramatic conflict. The play examined positioned itself at the ideological crossroads of at least these four intersecting racially motivated ideologies All these were prevalent both in the public political climate and in the personal world of the author. These ideologies were skillfully brought by Baldwin to the level of private disputes, with the characters functioning not only as individuals occupying and negotiating various situational identities, but also as symbols of these "social forces". Next, it is time to assess the consequences of the clashes of those forces in the form of their cathartic resolutions.

9.3 Ideological consequences

The third and final question in the present study combined the dramatic with the ideological. Its concern was what kinds of ideological consequences concerning the racial conflict depicted in the play would the cathartic resolutions offered by four major dramatic perspectives elicit in the readers/spectators. The dramatic *genres* offering these perspectives were the Aristotelian, Brechtian, Melodramatic and Revolutionary drama. First, one was to look at whether these four interpretations of the play would sustain or resist the *status quo* of racial inequality in the Deep South of the 1960s.

9.3.1 Preserving the *status quo* of racial hegemony?

In the course of this research, it was revealed that, while the Aristotelian interpretation laid the responsibility for the violence of the conflicts on the "tragically flawed" black main character Richard, due to his defiance of the "natural order" of racial inequality, thus legitimating that order, the Melodramatic viewpoint abhorred the momentary disturbance of the "innocence" of that same order, thus applauding its restoration by both the murder and the verdict of the trial. Therefore, both of these interpretations supported the racial *status quo* and racial hegemony in Plaguetown.

The Brechtian Reading, however, critically acknowledged the structure of power behind the events of the play and the impact of that structure as detrimental to black agency. This Reading, nevertheless, also noted the two emancipative actions of Meridian's armament against potential white assailants and the potential inter-racial relationship between Parnell and Juanita, as well as the involvement of the two in the march protesting against Lyle's acquittal, as improvement. The Revolutionary perspective, although rendering Parnell as "useless" and Juanita as foolish, would also strongly support Meridian's act of self-protection. Thus, these two interpretations can be seen as resistant to the racial *status quo* of Plaguetown and, perhaps, supportive of the rising "black power" symbolized in the character of Lorenzo, Baldwin's characterization of the Black Panther–to-be Stokely Carmichael (Leeming 1994:289). Yet, on the whole, through both the killing of Richard and the acquittal of his murderer Lyle, the *status quo* of Plaguetown's racial order remained almost intact, except for the individual actions of Meridian, Parnell, and Juanita.

My next contemplation deals with how the ideological consequences the main catharses offered for the four conflicts can be seen as answers to the dilemmas of context and action, on one hand, and pessimism and optimism, on the other. At first, I shall take on the question whether the resolutions of the play can be seen more as results of the impact of its *context* or the *action* of its characters.

9.3.2 Context over action?

The second objective for the last research question (3) was to find out, if the play emphasized the impact of the text's *context* more than its characters' *action* on the final resolutions of its conflicts. My presupposition, which proved to be correct, was that both the Aristotelian and Brechtian interpretation dealt more with what Marx (1961:27) would call the "outside forces" in the play, with the difference that, in the Aristotelian view, the "outside force" of racial segregation against which Richard was positioned was perceived as a "natural" state of racial affairs, whereas, from the Brechtian perspective, that "force" was the structure of racial power constructed socially and ideologically in the course of history. Therefore, these two *genres* would stress the impact of the *context* on the main resolutions of the play's four conflicts, both in Richard's murder and the verdict of the trial, carrying more weight in the outcome than in the Melodramatic and Revolutionary interpretations. These viewpoints would emphasize the *action* of the characters that were stereotyped from their two opposite ideological world views. While the Melodramatic perspective would applaud the actions of Lyle, when murdering Richard, Jo's false testimony and finally the verdict of the jury, the Revolutionary Reading would welcome Meridian's armament as resistant *action*. However, the actions of Lyle, Jo and the jury could all be accounted as being determined by the context of the racial power structure, as the Brechtian interpretation would claim, and, by the Aristotelian Reading, as "normal" acts of preserving the "natural" racial order. Next, I shall consider the extent of pessimism and optimism elicited by the play's catharses.

9.3.3 Pessimism over optimism?

When articulating racial discourse, the implied Baldwin stresses the impact of the context of racial power structure over that of the negotiations between individuals in the occasions of the frames analyzed by showing that, for Richard, it was naive to expect Lyle to be able to "let him walk" without first restoring Lyle's racial power. This, as well as the verdict of Lyle's trial, suggests a strong case for a *pessimistic* interpretation of the play. However, Baldwin does attempt to offer the reader and spectator still inclined to integration glimpses of hope on the grass-root level, with Parnell showing the way for, perhaps, other white liberals to fully commit themselves to "acting like brothers", or "sisters", by joining Juanita in the protest against Lyle's acquittal. This would be also true about his acknowledging of Meridian's right to defend himself. In fact, in his last book *Where do we go from here?* (1967), also Martin Luther King accepted the use of weapons by his followers for individual self-protection in situations *outside demonstrations*, maintaining, nevertheless, that during the official marches everyone should refrain from bearing arms, as this could precipitate the legitimation of more sinister manifestations of white violence (27).

By striving for social equality and stressing the continuation of the protests of the civil rights struggle as one strategy of promoting black *agency,* fully committed liberals, such as Parnell, could perhaps have served as potential role-models for *other white liberals* of the possibility of racial integration, in contrast with many of them retreating from the struggle altogether (see Steinberg 1997:302). In turn, many former black civil rights activists moved from nonviolence to supporting black radicalism, which promoted the arming of blacks for the purpose of not only self-defence, but a racial revolution.

Also, Baldwin's offering of possible mutual respect and preservation of the manhood of both Richard and Lyle, though refused by Lyle, would perhaps be better appreciated by the "retrospective calmness" (see Pratt 1978) of an educated 21st-century reader/spectator. Nevertheless, in the context of the racial situation of the South in the 1960s, a solution of this kind to their conflict would not have received much consideration. Thus, in Baldwin's depiction of "race" in this period, it is his *historical and realistic perception of racial hegemony* that wins and, having been challenged only temporarily, leaves the reader/spectator *more in a state of pessimism than optimism*.

However, besides offering hope in the case of the relationship of Parnell and Juanita as well as Meridian's disillusioned decision to keep Richard's gun for self-defense, the play also documents the, at least, *four–dimensional polyphony* of the political climate of the 1960s epitomized by the Four hypothetical Readers, particularly with respect both to the conflict between white conservatism and liberalism as well as that of the new black consciousness and the traditional civil rights movement. It also shows various different black and white strategies of dealing with racial conflict. Furthermore, especially in the dialogue between Parnell and Meridian, it raises important issues of *privilege* and *power* concerning the occupation of the individual's *space of choice*, namely *who gets to decide for*

whom (Kuure, 1996; Cooper, 1998) as well as those handling the ideas of friendship and loyalty, not to mention the dilemma between justified and non-justified violence. Also, Fredrickson's (2002:9-10; see p. 50) division of racism into the exploitative *inclusion* of the submissive and the *exclusion* of the non-submissive Other, or, as in Richard's case, his *extermination* (see Taguieff, 1987, in Fredrickson, 2002:9-10) manifests itself in the negotiations between the characters of their physical *spaces of being*, which are connected to their symbolic *spaces of choice.*

Starting from negotiations on objects and characters, nearly all of the conflicts end with those involving one or both of the characters' *space of choice*. In the conflict between Richard and Lyle, the choices Richard makes determine his inclusion in or exclusion from his *space of being*, not just in Plaguetown, but anywhere, when Lyle, in the end, threatens his life. Indeed, as a key finding of this study, one might well regard the necessity for each white and black person to make a clear *choice* about on which sides of the conflict one would stand in the racially political climate of the 1960s USA.

The individual conflicts examined in the present study bring into focus the significance of the *ideological* choices one was, apparently, forced to make during the middle and end of the 1960s, whether these choices supported white conservatism, liberalism, non-violence or black radicalism. As critically noted by Bigsby (1985:390), in the play, possibly and also in the racial conflict of those tumultuous times, there seems to be little "middle ground", namely, any objective stance from which one could summarize the impact of the play as a whole. Instead, it offers room for a four-dimensional interpretation. If there is to be a collective standpoint present in this study, it would most likely to be that of a European educated 21st-century reader already suggested in the course of this research. That reader, possessive of, perhaps, the kind of "retrospective calmness" called for by Pratt (1978), with temporal as well as of both historical and geographical *distance* to the issue, will be made more tangible in the next section (9.4), in which I reflect my thoughts through the writings of two European 21st-century scholars of theatre. This contemplation not only widens the perceptions of, at least, Aristotelian and Revolutionary drama, but also sharpens some of my points by bringing them to a more public level on the discussion over drama and its impact to society.

In terms of black *agency*, which was the main focus of this study, the cathartic resolutions of both of the main storylines remain pessimistic, as it is the impact of the "outside force" of the racial power structure that determines the outcomes of the fate of both Richard and his murderer Lyle. To contemplate further why this was to happen, I want to look at my findings of the play from two fairly contemporary perspectives of dramatic theory, namely those of Frances Babbage (2004) and Terry Eagleton (2003).

9.4 The play's main catharses from two 21st-century perspectives

My final thoughts on the play's ideological significance to a potential *European educated 21st-century reader/spectator* are, perhaps, best expressed by reference to two recent theoretical issues connected to the concept of catharsis, presented by Babbage (2004) and Eagleton (2003) in the next two sections. These issues, I believe, are crucial to the understanding of the two catharses provided by the two main storylines of the play.

In its aspects of racial discourse that can be traced to at least four major dramatic *genres*, as well as four ideological standpoints, the play leaves the analyst with the question as to which one of them it can primarily be seen to represent. My first and foremost concern in this study has been, with the help of CDA, to examine how the play could serve to transform white racial hegemony through criticizing and challenging it and thus promote black cultural *agency*. The 21st-century views that I am now presenting have to do with the modern interpretation of European tragedy, presented by Terry Eagleton (2003), and the appreciation of revolutionary theatre by Frances Babbage (2004), a researcher on Augusto Boal's Theatre Of The Oppressed. The issues surrounding these two approaches can be articulated through two concepts crucial to the understanding of the ideological consequences of the play's final resolutions of its two main parallel storylines, which are the conflict between Lyle and Richard and the chain of events culminating in the trial. I shall call the concepts crucial to the interpretation of these storylines the "death of the deprogrammer" (Babbage, 2004), namely that of Richard, and the "shocking catharsis" (Eagleton, 2003) of the trial.

9.4.1 The Death of Richard The Deprogrammer

Central to the interaction of racial discourse was its use of implicitness as intimidation by the text's white characters. The social distance between white and black characters was usually upheld by the affirmative lines, in the form of tag questions of the white characters, aimed at the subtle maintaining of the subordination of their black addressees, often also addressed by desexualizing and infantilizing epithets. Such lines usually included demands for the black addressee to confirm the white addresser's earlier statement. The Challenging Reader would regard these demands as resembling the "obedience tests" noted by Goffman (1961:27) in total institutions, detecting behind the codes of the Southern racial etiquette the same logic as in imprisonment realized in its practices of control and exclusion. Richard, of course, deliberately fails all of these tests, thus constituting a *modern kind of verbally skillful trickster figure* set against Lyle as *the master figure,* both of them resembling the two adversary positions evident in black folklore (see Lomax, 1993:195,211; p. 46).

Richard's *ideologically deprogramming* character is also used by Baldwin as means of defamiliarizing the racial conventions of the Deep South. Judging from the lame success of Baldwin's play on Broadway, as the play ran only for

four months (Scott, 2009:164), one could argue that, within the realm of commercial theatre, a truly successful performance would need to follow the conventions set by the values of the mainstream of society, regardless of their epistemological credibility to the people in the margin of society it would depict. This was also true of the mainstream of Broadway theatre, which, just as the Hollywood film industry, had a strong tradition of offering its audiences entertaining stereotypes rather than what the performers themselves saw as realistic identities of African-Americans (see King and Milner, 1971:; Bogle, 1992; Williams, 2001). In fact, Campbell (2002:196-97) and Leeming (1994:238) report that, in its level of brutal honesty, Baldwin's play constituted a shock to many of its white spectators. The reason for this was evidently that it epitomized, particularly in the character of Richard, the hidden hatred and fear of "the white man", or "Mister Charlie", named by Grier and Cobbs (1968) as the "black rage". Baldwin actually believed this to be the main reason for the play's commercial failure on Broadway (Campbell, 2002:197).

David Van Leer (1991) claims that the play was perhaps "too long, political, and bleak" to find the "commercial audience" of Broadway, and that its dramatic texture was "inconsistent", in that the first two acts showed realism, while the third and last one was more surrealistic. Yet, Van Leer's (1991) main point is that, despite its potential dramatic insufficiencies, the play was attacked "less for its form than for the anger it directed at southern white racists". It is likely that one important reason Baldwin's drama was resisted by its white critics and spectators on Broadway was that it not only articulated the "black rage" detected by Grier and Cobbs (1968), but also questioned the racial representations of black men and women, popular in most former productions of Broadway theatre and the Hollywood film industry (King and Milner, 1971; Bogle, 1992; Williams, 2001).

By giving his main characters, such as Richard, Lyle, Jo, Parnell, Juanita and Meridian *depth and substance*, Baldwin challenged the stereotyped view of the black culture in a racially *deprogramming* manner (Van Dijk 1998:261). This manner later became a trademark of the aesthetics of the black revolutionary theatre, which, in turn, stereotyped its white characters (Benston, 1987:61-78). It seems also clear that, even though a fictional deprogrammer, Richard had to come from the North, as Trudier Harris (2009) claims that the characters depicted by black writers from the South, such as those created by Ernest Gaines and studied by Harris, mainly "hold their tongues, restrain their bodies and endure the degradation that befalls them".

The Critical Reader, along with the Challenging Reader, might nevertheless ponder why Richard could not have remained a victorious "street dude" or "trickster" in the end, but had to die, because he left his gun behind. This act of Richard's could perhaps be explained by Baldwin's early involvement with the black church (see Leeming, 1994:24-25), as it would also contribute to the presentation of the character as an Uncle Tom- or Christ-like victim hero, destined to die violently. Richard's death, however, is made known to the readers and spectators from the beginning of the play, which allows them to *critically*

observe how and why Richard is going to die. This gives the play a strong Brechtian orientation. Undoubtedly, there are also seeds of Augusto Boal's findings of the "Aristotelian system" (Babbage, 2004:51) in Richard's fate, which shows that, although sharply critical, the play also strengthens the popular pattern in Western drama, detected by Boal, where it is the *deprogrammer* who must invariably lose the fight against the *system*, or *power structure* of Western society.

Although leaving room for criticism (see Babbage, 2004:46-50), Boal's argument that theatre, as defined by Aristotle, can effectively be used to *reinforce*, thus also *legitimate* state hegemony, is validated by Babbage (2004:50), who asserts that this issue is pivotal because the Aristotelian pattern is so widespread among Western dramatic productions:

> We can see it perpetually in all those plays, films and television dramas which teach that the *dominant values of a given society are ultimately stronger* than the *individual who refuses, or is unable to accept them* [...] that the *aggressively non-conformist anti-hero* who controls a town *will in the end always be defeated* by the forces of approved law and morality; *we may admire him as he has his day*, but understand that this can only be a *temporary departure* from *the order* which will always, *finally, be reasserted*. (Babbage 2004:50., emphasis added)

Nevertheless, there are also tragedies in Western European theatre history, where the protagonist's action has a clearly moral justification, but which is then nullified by other objectives more appealing to the masses. In fact, the stigmatization of Richard's character in the courtroom scene (see *Blues* 1964:109-52) is comparable with the example Babbage (2004:50) gives of Henrik Ibsen's play *An Enemy of the People* (1882).

In Ibsen's play, the protagonist, a doctor, insists that his hometown's spa has to be closed for inspection, because it is contaminated, but meets the opposition of the town's people, who do not want to compromise the spa's value as the generator of their wealth. As a result, the doctor's credibility, family and livelihood are destroyed by the townspeople in a joint effort. Babbage (2004:50-51) notes:

> Boal's analysis, if applied to this [Ibsen's] work, would suggest that, even though the drama[of Ibsen and also of Baldwin] *reveals the society in question to be deeply flawed* and *appears to challenge this*, its *ultimate* message is that *such attempts meet with failure*. The 'indoctrination' might even be more subtly effective given that *it is the people themselves*, not simply authoritative figures, *who refuse to allow change*…His [Boal's] concern, however, is to draw attention to a tendency in drama to follow…the 'Aristotelian system', which has at its heart to *adjust the individual to what pre-exists*. (Babbage, 2004:50-51., emphasis and brackets added)

So, why did Baldwin let Richard die and did not allow him to defend himself? One compelling argument is a historical one. The play was originally written to commemorate the murder of Emmett Till, and later, that of Medgar Evers, so it would thus be natural to assume that, like Till and Evers, also Richard should die in the end.

As keen to avoid the pattern of racial melodrama as Baldwin had been in his writing of the play so far, he perhaps believed he would gain more sympathy from his white spectators for the death of an unarmed Richard than for the survival of a tricksterish Richard, which would have been typical of Hay's (1994:91) "street dude", or even Keil's (1968:20-21) deviant "hustler". Nevertheless, it is evident that, with guns involved, either Richard or Lyle would have had to die anyway, as Lyle would not have relinquished his fatally hegemonic need to restore his status as a white man. Undoubtedly, the white spectators of the 1960s would not have been ready to see a white man being shot down by an aggressive black protagonist.

Why not convict Richard's murderer, then? One answer would be, again, the example set by the original case of Emmett Till, where the murderers were also acquitted. However, in the next section (9.4.2), Eagleton suggests another more modern and European way of interpreting tragedy, also applicable to that in *Blues* (1964).

9.4.2 The Shocking Catharsis of The Verdict

Terry Eagleton (2003:1) extends the scope of tragedy from the portrayal of "sad" events to the kind of "horrific" suffering of the protagonist that "shocks and stuns" its audience, is "traumatic as well as sorrowful". This kind of cathartic impact, he describes, would, instead of a "pathetic" one, be "cleansing, bracing", and "life-affirming". Thus, it differs from the, perhaps, milder Aristotelian catharsis as a result of the pathetic pitying the protagonist and fearing for the consequences *of his/her own doing*, by, instead, making the spectator feel *shocked by his/her unjust fate*.

Eagleton (2003:xii-xiii) criticizes precisely the same Marxist cultural theories, which he himself once promoted, about their reductionist view that fails to recognize how history also has features that change only a little or not at all. In particular, "left-wing" historicism, Eagleton contends, ignores the fact that, along with change, there are "recurrent features of human cultures" that occur transhistorically, *viz.*, repeatedly during different phases of history, although in different forms of representation. One of these "recurrent features" could well be racism, which has a tendency towards periodic resurrection, although perhaps in subtler forms nowadays than before.

Using case studies from the 1990s, Feagin and Vera (1995:19-134) argue that, despite efforts to dismantle it, the system of racial domination and exploitation that started with slavery continued to appear in the latter part of the 20th century as institutionalized positions of privilege and structures of power that lie not only behind acts of racial violence, but in institutions of education and employment. In fact, the two scholars quote a late Supreme Court Justice, who describes "modern racism" as "slavery unwilling to die" (1995:xii).

For Eagleton (2003), the function of *modern tragedies*, which Baldwin's play could well qualify as, is to offer us a "symbolic coming to terms with our finitude and fragility", although, hopefully, without condoning them. Eagleton contends that "the impulse to freedom from oppression" in what he calls the

"successful confronting of death-dealing or oppressive forces" seems as firmly lodged in us as "the drive to material survival". However, he does admit that this "impulse to freedom" does not always overcome the "drive to survival" (2003:xv). Baldwin's play is a poignant example of this, as, in its events, the "impulse" for black agency is mostly defeated by the power of racial hegemony that, also in the South, served the need for the material *survival* of poor whites,

In *Blues* (1964), the readers and spectators are made by Baldwin to deal with not only Richard's death, but also with the fact that freedom from the racially oppressive forms of the South, as the verdict in the murder trial shows, does not overcome the *self-interest* of Plaguetown whites epitomized in being "better than" (see Webb, 2002:53; p. 150), perhaps also "safe from" any black person. In the trial, Lyle is acquitted, not because he did not murder Richard, but because he *did* so, for reasons that the white jury saw as compelling and necessary for the restoration of the racial order and the "innocence" of Plaguetown. Besides the obviously realistic content of the play, which is faithful both to the situation of the American South and the original fate of Emmett Till, Baldwin's original aim of pleading to the conscience of white liberals is apparently a discarded leftover from his involvement with Martin Luther King Jr. In his famous "I have a dream" speech, King appeals to America to "rise up to the true meaning of its creed…that all men [people] are created equal" (in Washington, 1992:104). For the Challenging Reader, and possibly also for Jones (1963:57), this, however, could have served as an example of the "slave mentality", in the sense that it is pleading for the goodwill of whites to provide the rights blacks were entitled to in the first place.

Richard's violent death alone, if seen as the consequence of his behaviour, would bring the play closer to an Aristotelian, not to mention, a Biblical solution, where Richard could also be seen as a martyr of the black struggle, as Medgar Evers was. From the Habitualized Reader's point of view, however, it also restores the, once disturbed, racial order of Plaguetown and re-instates the town as a *space of innocence* (Williams, 2001:28-29), with the exception of leaving Meridian equipped with Richard's gun and Parnell and Juanita in a potentially miscegenating relationship. Nevertheless, from the viewpoint of the Critical Reader, the truly shocking and stunning tragedy lies in the courtroom scenes, where it is the system that denigrates and discredits Richard and his death, finally acquitting his murderer on the grounds of false testimony. To the Challenging Reader, applying the Revolutionary Reading and having been suspicious from the start, there seems to be nothing new in either Richard's death or the verdict of the trial.

In the end, Richard is condemned and Lyle absolved, also by the representatives of the people of Plaguetown, namely the jury of the trial (*Blues,* 1964:152). While it is plausible that this resolution of the play shocked many white liberal spectators, such as two sisters of the Rockefeller family (Leeming, 1994:239), who donated 10,000 dollars for the continuation of the play on Broadway (Campbell, 2002:198), it also further angered, or disillusioned, black radicals, who undoubtedly sympathized with Richard as the first *trickster hero*

of black Broadway drama. In the courtroom scenes and afterwards, the role of the tragic protagonist, in fact, shifts from Richard to the character of Parnell, bearing the non-racist white man's burden of knowing the truth, but being silenced in the court by Jo's false testimony (*Blues,* 1964:149). Perhaps the "blues" aspect of the play is meant, as suggested by Turner (1977:192), for the Parnells of the USA to listen and learn, as it is only after the trial that the character fully commits himself to the civil rights struggle. Regretfully, in the case of many white liberals, what followed the times of the play was quite the opposite (see Steinberg 1997:302-305). To finish this dissertation, I shall next assess the limitations of my methodology as well as its contribution to the research of both "race" and Baldwin.

9.5 CDA and this study of Baldwin: downsides, limitations and contributions

In my final assessment of my method and its both limitations and contribution to studies of Baldwin, "race" and drama, I shall, further on, follow the thorough discussion of Sari Pietikäinen over the advantages and downsides of CDA in general, and then assess those issues insofar they resonate with the dilemmas of this study.

9.5.1 Addressing the criticism of CDA

Pietikäinen (2000:89-91) lists three main issues that CDA and its implementation has been criticized for. The first of these has to do with the explicitness of theories used in CDA. As, Pietikäinen (2000:89) notes, "the theoretical grounds of CDA stretch over many disciplines and differ considerably among its practitioners". Toolan (1997, in Pietikäinen, 2000:89) has argued that this puts CDA into a risk of theoretical blurring and theoretical and methodological fragmentation. The linguistic and textual analysis of CDA, in particular, has been criticized for lack of rigorousness, systematicness and explicitness.

Widdowson (1998, in Pietikäinen, 2000:89) has criticized both Fairclough and Van Dijk, two main scholarly sources for this study, for biased and ideologically positioned kind of analyses. Schegloff (1999, in Pietikäinen, 2000:90) has taken this claim further, arguing that CDA analysts "impose their own frame of reference on the object of the study practicing thus a kind of intellectual hegemony". According to Billig (1999, in Pietikäinen, 2000:90), Schegloff (1999) would be implying that CDA scholars "only find what they want". CDA has also been criticized by Widdowson (1998, in Pietikäinen, 2000:90) for unnecessary politicising of science, which would label every one of its critics as "siding with the enemy". Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, in Pietikäinen, 2000:90) have answered this criticism by stating that, according to the fundamentals of CDA, there are no non-ideological kinds of linguistic analyses or analysts, as these are

all historically and socially located, and thus carry along their own preoccupations.

As for the issue of unsystematicness, Chouliariki and Fairclough (1999, in Pietikäinen, 2000:90) argue against the stabilizing and thus also institutionalizing of the methods of CDA, as this would compromise its ability to "develop and shed light to the dialectics of the semiotic and the social in a wider variety of social practices". This ability involves "shifting sets of theoretical resources and shifting operationalisations of them". In laymans terms, this could mean that, as social practices and realities are prone to continuous change, the methods of analyzing them must also correspond to their dynamic nature. This requires from CDA an array of potentially valid theories, instead of only one or a few canonized and perhaps also stagnated, theoretical frameworks. However, from the point of view of Stubbs (1997, in Pietikäinen, 2000:90), this diversity of theories may also lead to fragmentation of both method and material. This, CDA has also received negative feedback for (Pietikäinen, 2000: 90), primarily because its materials mainly consist of small fragments of texts, the representativeness of which is often questionable. In my study, this dilemma is solved with the detailed presentation of the historical framework of the racial conflict, culminating to the kind of political turmoil and an ideological turning point of both Baldwin and black as well as white culture in the first half of the 1960s, during which Baldwin wrote and the Actors' Studio produced the play. This particular era, as well as the Southern racial etiquette, is clearly represented in detail in the text analyzed.

9.5.2 The limitations and contributions of my study

The criticisms of subjectivity and lack of self-reflectiveness in CDA, Pietikäinen (2000:91) argues, often stem from the "epistemological and ontological differences between the qualitative, including critical, orientations" (*ibid.*) and the other, "more positivistically oriented" research, the sphere of positivistic science being the one, which these criticisms are mostly presented from. Nevertheless, according to the observations of Pietikäinen (2000:91),

> CD analysts rarely explicate their practice of analysis, the choices made, and the limitation involved, or reflect upon the conditions and limitations of their interpretations to any greater extent […] The overall impression is often that there are no problems at all. In this respect, CDA is uncritical of its own discursive practices. In this way, CDA fails to meet its own criteria for self-reflectiveness. (Pietikäinen, 2000:91.)

To defend the present study against this piece of criticism, I, once again, want to emphasize the significance of the socio-historic background information on the practices and conventions of the Deep South I have presented in the beginning of this research, as a credible justification for my analysis. This means that the linguistic features, such as tag questions and implications in the extracts of the text analyzed carried specific ideological meanings. These meanings were, originally, known only to the inhabitants of Deep South, which is why they could

not be fully comprehended by the researcher without *historical knowledge* about the *social practices and conventions* of the Southern racial hegemony. In this sense, I have been more fortunate than those researchers who apply CDA on more contemporary material. However, the presentation of these features beforehand may have limited the scope of this research. At its extreme, my research could well be accused of lack of novelty, not in its methods, but in its findings, even of finding in the overall racial power structure "what I wanted"(see p. 184), or, on the basis of the background information, at least expected to find. However, as Baldwin in the text not only articulated the frameworks of racial discourse, but also manipulated it for the purpose of its transformation, and, if only briefly, its transcendence, there was still room for some new discoveries. These were the hope of a relationship between Parnell and Juanita, Meridian's competitiveness over Parnell's loyalty, and his keeping of Richard's gun. Also, the deprogramming nature of Richard's behaviour in its many manifestations did surprise this researcher.

Another limitation of my study, in hindsight, could be that I have, in the scope of this research, only dealt with a fragment of Baldwin's artistry by, for instance, only superficially commenting on the author's novels. However, I find that the Baldwin's essays and two main biographies have provided me with a sufficient amount of information on the ideological background behind his choices implied in the text at hand. As I stated in the Introduction Chapter of this dissertation, my aim has, first and foremost, been at racial discourse as it appears in this particular drama of Baldwin's, and I feel that opening the door for the whole vast oeuvre of Baldwin's works of yet another *genre* would have expanded the scope of this research too much. After all, in this whole study, I could not even consider all its important conflicts, but had to limit my focus only on inter-individual conflicts and even on only inter-racial ones, which, nevertheless, have offered enough material for my analysis.

As for the possibility of, perhaps, including another play in my analysis, I must admit that it was only late in the process of writing this work that I learned of a potential counterpart for *Blues* (1964), which could have been Lorraine Hansberry's play *Les Blancs* (1970). However, the source from I learned about this play was the presentation from a comparative study already conducted by Üsekes (2008) that concerned the differences and similarities of these two plays by Baldwin and Hansberry. Other than that, I had kind of considered Baldwin's play a case of its own, with no appropriate counterparts for it that would deal as profoundly as *Blues* (1964) with the racial discourse manifested in the relations between blacks and whites in the USA of the 1960s, the South in particular.

For the accusations of eclecticism, I stand guilty as charged. My aim, starting from the level of my material, has, first and foremost, been to find practical tools of analysis to help this researcher to interpret and explain the phenomenon of racial conflict in this particular play as well as the USA of the 1960s. This, however, does not mean that my study would have constituted an "*ad hoc* bricolage" (see Widdowson 1998:137, in Jeffries 2010: 13) of whatever concepts I

could find, as I believe I have demonstrated how and why these proven tools of analysis work. In this research, at least, they have.

The last area of criticism against CDA which Pietikäinen (2000) deals with lies in the point, where she detects "the most vulnerable features of CDA work" (91), namely "the theorizing of language and interpretation, the practice of analysis, and the justification of interpretation" (*ibid.*). One main aspect of this has to do with the subjectivity of CDA, on the one hand, and the question of self-reflectiveness, on the other. Pietikäinen (2000:91) continues:

> All CD analysts insist that issues like ideology and power cannot be mechanistically read off from a text and no linguistic feature carries a fixed ideological meaning, but, nonetheless, all language is potentially ideologically significant. Thus it is the interpretative, and subjective, work by the analyst, that weighs the detailed linguistic evidence, findings of the production and consumption practices and the knowledge (both theoretical and experience) about the social phenomenon, and on the basis of all this, the analyst offers her or his account of the object of the study. This is a rather standard procedure in qualitative research […] and in the hermeneutic research tradition. (Pietikäinen, 2000:91.)

One example in my analysis of how a linguistic feature does not carry in itself an ideological meaning, but the *use of which* in the South was clearly ideological and racially oppressive, was the addressing of adult black men with the epithets 'boy' or 'uncle'. Because my main target of analysis was, indeed, racial discourse, from the perspectives of linguistics and social science more than from the angle of literature studies, I may have not paid enough homage to Baldwin as an artist, judging from the fact that my focus on the text of this great African-American writer was mainly socio-historical and not literary. With the need to study Baldwin's language in relation to power and society, I found the traditions of new historicism and cultural materialism to be the closest possible approaches to my methodology in the literary field. Hence, it was the differences between these two approaches to literature from which I found the two crucial research questions (3.a and 3.b) for the study of the ideological consequences of the play's catharses.

What I seem to have contributed to the research of Baldwin, has been the expanding of the image of him from that of a novelist and essayist, the two qualities that have already been established by a vast body of research, to that of a historically validated serious dramatist. Furthermore, I have introduced a fairly novel methodological approach, derived from both the fields of linguistics and social sciences, to the traditionally literal analysis of dramatic texts. In terms of "race" studies, I have not yet come across any analysis that would combine racial conflict with both the ideological and dramatic conflicts. I wish that this study could encourage more such pieces of research, as I firmly believe this combination could work in a number of plays that deal with the hegemonic conflict between the mainstream and margin of society.

The consideration of similarities between the racial etiquette of the South and the " Goffmanian "total institution" of prison, in particular, is also novel in studies on Baldwin, although the prison theme was pivotal in his novels since

the 1970s, specifically in *If Beale Street Could Talk* (1974; see Leeming, 1994:323; p. 112). The main feature of this study, however, is the analysis of *dramatic fiction* in light of the idea of the *hegemonic struggle*, which, so far, has been applied in studies of the use of language in factual political texts or speeches (Fairclough, 1992ab; Wetherell and Potter, 1992). To my knowledge, Fairclough's concept of the hegemonic struggle has not been applied to a dramatic text before, as the nearest possible approach to mine would probably be Vimala Herman's (1995) work of studying dramatic discourse and the appreciation of the dramatic conflict as an ideological struggle for ascendancy (209). In this respect, I feel I have established a worthwhile link, hopefully to be developed in further studies of drama.

In contrast to the more literary approach on Baldwin's novels used e.g. by Kilpeläinen (2010), my study suggests that, judging from the nature of the racial discourse of the Deep South of the 1950s and 60s, in the ideological struggle of racial conflict of that era, the "utopian moments" in the play, neither for the conflict between Richard and Lyle (see Frame 7.9; lines 84-94) nor for that of Parnell and Meridian (see Frame 8.1.2; line 19), seem to offer a solid resolution to the racial issues in the South of the 1960s. Nevertheless, seen from a European educated 21st-century viewpoint, the utopian idea of the possibility of a *reciprocal* dialogue between those two main characters *as equals*, offered there only momentarily, does indicate that Baldwin was, in his view of racial relations, a writer substantially ahead of his time.

The parallels I have drawn with Wetherell and Potter's (1992) study of the strategies employed by the Pakehas in seeking to legitimate the subordination of the Maori people in New Zealand during the 1990s also suggest that, with the writing of this play Baldwin reached a profound understanding of not only the blatant, but also the more subtle and, perhaps, also *timeless* and *universal* forms of racism, as well as those of male violence (Archer, 1994). This suggests that there is also food for thought in the play for a large-scale study attempting a more thorough present-day analysis of it, for which this study could serve as a predecessor.

How current could the issues pivotal to Baldwin's play prove to be in the USA of the 21st century? Steinberg (1997:302-317) claims that the retreat of white liberals from the black civil rights struggle after 1965 has continued near into the end of the 20th century, while Aanerud (1999:56-73) makes a convincing appeal for re-instating Baldwin's critique of the paternalism of white liberals in the 2000s. Also noteworthy is Cole's (1999) argument on the "race"- and class–biased nature of the U.S. system of justice. In addition to this, Farley (1997:250, 257-58) contends that, towards the turn of the 21st century, 30 years after the civil rights struggle, black individuals in the USA were still discriminated against in institutions of employment and education; this was due to the stereotyping of them as less intelligent, more prone to drugs and crime, and more dependent on welfare than their white contemporaries. The character of Richard, as an *intelligent* and *wealthy* artist, who is also a recovering drug user and ex–convict disturbs the ideological ethos behind also these stereotypes. Issues such

as these, involved in bringing the text's message up to the 21st century, which I have not been able to include in the framework of this study, would invite further and more thorough studies of the play's message for here and now. There is, however, what I would consider an interesting analogy between the racism of the American South and the present-day socio-political atmosphere of many European countries, such as my own homeland.

Since the 1990s, Finland, as many other countries in the European Union, has experienced the revival of racially motivated political movements that promote xenophobia and the stigmatization of immigrants of African and Middle Eastern origin. These movements utilize the same self-interest and need to assert power and control on people in a less advantageous and needy position, such as immigrants. Their membership consists of mostly working-class people, who themselves have felt marginalized by society. Furthermore, they practice the kind of "cultural racism" realized through the concepts named by Fredrickson (2002:9), namely those of inclusion, which is reserved for the groups of immigrants labelled as more desirable as well as controllable, and exclusion for the more critical and challenging, usually the most unknown to the people of Finland by their customs and origin.

The crudest example of racial stigmatization in the case of individual immigrant men from African countries is, still, their continuous prejudiced and stereotypical portrayal as only potential rapists of Finnish women. This mindset, to an extent, echoes with one of the fundamental myths and fears prevalent in the racism of not only the American Deep South that I have attempted to describe in this thesis, but also, it seems, that of the whole Western world. Therefore, it gives me, I believe, yet another justification for undergoing the process of this research.

YHTEENVETO

Rodullinen diskurssi James Baldwinin näytelmässä *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1964): draama ja hegemoninen taistelu

Tutkimukseni tarkastelee, kuinka rodullinen diskurssi eli merkitysjärjestelmä ilmenee James Baldwinin näytelmässä *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1964). Sen pääajatuksena on soveltaa Norman Faircloughin (1992ab) 'hegemonisen taistelun' (hegemonic struggle) käsitettä yhtäältä rodullisen ja toisaalta draamakonfliktin pohjana olevaan ideologiseen valtataisteluun. Baldwin kirjoitti näytelmänsä 1960-luvun alussa, jolloin USA:n etelävaltioissa vielä vallitsi rotuideologian sanelema apartheid-tyyppinen rotuerottelu sekä sen seurauksena mustien ja valkoisten eriarvoisuus.

Alkuperäisen inspiraationsa näytelmä sai nuoren chicagolaispojan, 14-vuotiaan Emmett Tillin raa'asta murhasta mississippiläisessä pikkukaupungissa, josta johtuneessa oikeudenkäynnissä valamiehistö vapautti murhaajat kuultuaan valheellisen todistajanlausunnon, jonka mukaan Till olisi yrittänyt raiskata valkoisen sekatavarakaupan myyjättären. Näytelmän juonessa toistuu samankaltainen tapahtumien kuvio, joskin Baldwinin käsissä päähenkilö on muuntunut Richard Henryksi, kaksikymppiseksi muusikoksi ja paikallisen pastorin pojaksi, joka aikoinaan vaihtoi elon mississippiläisessä kotikaupungissaan muusikonuraan New Yorkissa, mutta joutui palaamaan kotikonnuilleen sotkeuduttuaan huumeisiin ja kärsittyään vankilatuomion.

Näytelmän keskiö rakentuu Richardin ja paikallisen sekatavarakauppiaan Lyle Brittenin välisen ristiriidan ympärille. Sen juoni noudattaa kahta tapahtumaketjua: ensimmäisessä seurataan menneen ajan takaumien avulla näiden kahden välisen konfliktin kehittymistä verbaalisesta ensin fyysiseksi voimainkoitokseksi ja lopulta sen päättymistä Richardin aseelliseksi murhaksi, josta Lyle on vastuussa. Toisessa juonikuviossa taas katsoja saa preesensissä seurata tulevan murhaoikeudenkäynnin odotusta ja Lylen epäillyksi joutumista. Nämä kaksi tapahtumaketjua on ajoitettu niin, että katsoja näkee takaumien kautta mitä Richardin ja Lylen välillä oikein tapahtui samalla kun hän saa seurata oikeudenkäyntiä, joka lopulta vapauttaa murhaajan syytteistä, tosin katsojalle näytetään jo näytelmän alussa välähdyksenomaisesti kuka Richardin ampui. Juonikuvioiden sisälle rakentuvissa kohtauksissa Baldwin panee eri mustat ja valkoiset roolihenkilöt keskustelemaan keskenään paitsi Richardista ja tämän kuolemasta sekä Lylen mahdollisesta syyllisyydestä myös tarinan miljöönä toimivan Plaguetownin rotutilanteesta.

Vaikka "rodun" käsite on jo jonkin aikaa ollut luonnontieteilijöiden kiistämä, yhteiskuntatieteilijät näkevät perusteltuna tutkia rotuopillisten uskomusten luomaa sosiaalista todellisuutta (Eriksen, 1997). Rotuideologian ja –erottelun sanelemat historialliset tavat ja tottumukset, käytänteet ja konventiot aukeavat näytelmässä implisiittisten vihjausten muodossa, joiden sisältö oli varsin selvä USA:n etelävaltioiden sekä mustille että valkoisille asukkaille, mutta jotka aukeavat tutkijalle vasta sosiohistoriallisen taustatiedon kautta. Siksipä

työni teoreettisen taustaosan ensimmäinen luku (2) käsitteleekin sitä sosiohistoriallista kontekstia, jota LeRoi Jones kutsuu nimellä 'musta kokemus', ja jonka juuret ovat mustien orjuusajoissa. Tämä konteksti koostuu kolmesta rotuideologisesta pääkäytännöstä, joita ovat: 1) mustien luokittelu sekä leimaaminen valkoisia alemmiksi, epäpuhtaiksi, joko naurettaviksi tai vaarallisiksi sekä joko korostetun yli- tai epäseksuaalisiksi olennoiksi; 2) heidän dominointinsa ja hyväksikäyttönsä, ensin orjina ja myöhemmin torppariasemassa olevina vuokraviljelijöinä sekä valkoisille liian raskaiden tai vaarallisten teollisuus- ym. töiden tekijöinä, kuten myös lakkorikkureina sekä seksuaalisen hyväksikäytön uhreina; viimeksi 3) heidän alistamisensa vankeutta muistuttavan jatkuvan kontrollin ja valkoisten elämänpiiristä eristämisen alaiseksi, johon kuuluivat paitsi rotuerottelu myös mustien piirissä vallinnut luokkajako ja sen vaikutukset, sekä kontrollia ylläpitänyt rotuväkivalta piiskaamisten ja lynkkaamisten muodossa. Kontekstiluvussa esitettyä 'mustaa kokemusta' havainnollistavat myös poiminnat afrikkalais-amerikkalaisesta kirjallisuudesta.

Taustaosan toisessa luvussa (3) pohdin ”rodun” sekä rasismin merkitystä lähinnä sosiologisista näkökulmasta. Ko. luku jäsentyy kahden George M. Fredricksonin (2002) havaitseman rasismille tyypillisen käsitteen, *erilaisuuden* ja *vallan* ympärille. Pohdinnoissani vertaan ensin rodullisten eroavaisuuksien havainnointia ja luokitteluperusteita yhtäällä kulttuurisiin sekä etnisiin eroavaisuuksiin. Päädyn toteamaan että päinvastoin kuin kulttuurista ja etnisyydestä puhuttaessa, ”rotu” ja rodullisuus määritellään ulkoisten tuntomerkkien, kuten ihonvärin sekä esim. kallonmuodon sekä nenän tai huulien koon mukaan, ja tämän luokittelun päämäärä on rotujen välinen eriarvoisuus. Lisäksi, toisin kuin omissa kulttuureissamme, jotka omaksutaan sisäistämällä, ”rodun” sisältämät määritelmät ja merkitykset näyttävät tulevan aina ulkoapäin ja pakotetun oloisina, myös melkein aina negatiivisina, erottaen ”Meidät Heistä” (Wetherell ja Potter, 1992). Kuvaavaa on, että valkoisen rodun pohjimmaisena määritelmänä oli aikoinaan olla juuri ei-musta (non-black). Näistä lähtökohdista päädyn tarkastelemaan ”rodun” ja vallan välistä suhdetta.

Rotuoppiin perustuvan vallankäytön taustaintressinä on usein ”alempiarvoiseksi” määriteltyyn roturyhmään ”ylempiarvoisten” kohdistama hyväksikäyttö. Kapitalistisessa yhteiskunnassa tämä merkitsee myös tiettyjä etuoikeuksia nauttivan yhteiskuntaluokan syntyä suhteessa etuoikeudettomien luokkaan. Feministinen sosiologinen analyysi 19990-luvlta lähtien taas on Esther Ngan-Ling Chown (1996) mukaan pyrkinyt yhdistämään perinteistä luokka- samoin kuin ”rodun” analyysiä sukupuolen tutkimuksen kanssa tarkastelemalla sukupuolidynamiikkaa yhdistettynä ”rodun” ja luokan kautta rakentuvaan epätasaarvoon. Chow kritisoi myös yleisen makrotason ja yksityisen mikrotason toisistaan erillään tarkastelevaa tutkimusta, koska eritoten värillisinä pidettyjen siirtolais- ym. –taustaisten samoin kuin valkoistenkin yksinhuoltajanaisten elämässä julkisen ja yksityisen elämänpiirit väistämättä sekoittuvat esim. työn ja perheen yhteensovittamisen suhteen. Chow näkee ”rodun”, luokan ja sukupuolen luoman sorron todellisuudet dialektisessa suhteessa toisiinsa neuvottelevana vastavoimana rakenteelliselle hallinnalle ja eriarvoisuudelle. Tämän dialektii-

kan Chow tunnistaa tutkimuksellisena mahdollisuutena paitsi ymmärtää miesten ja naisten erilaisia asemia yhteiskunnassa myös nostaa heidän tietoisuuttaan ja parantaa heidän olojaan. Samanlainen yleisen ja yksityisen piirien erottaminen toimi myös USA:n etelävaltioiden patriarkaalisessa hallinnoinnissa, siten, että julkinen tila oli asetettu ”valkoisten” miesten hallintaan ja ns. yksityinen tila oli pyhitetty ja turvattu kodin ja siihen liittyvien asioiden hoidon langetessa valkoisille naisille sekä heidän mustille palvelijoilleen, sillä erotuksella, että mustilta tämä yksityinen, suojattu ja henkilökohtainen, ns. ”oma tila” oli kielletty, mikä näkyi etenkin tavassa jolla heitä puhuteltiin etunimillä ja joka määräsi heidät kutsumaan valkoisia kuin nämä olisivat aatelisia.

Viimeisenä rodullisen vallan ilmentymänä John Rex (1986) esittelee rotuerotteluun pohjautuneen intialaista kastilaitosta muistuttaneen järjestelmän olemassaolon. Tämä järjestelmä eroaa Rexin mukaan kapitalistisesta luokkayhteiskunnasta siten, että yksilö voi usein parantaa sosiaaliluokkaansa, muttei koskaan kastilaitoksen määräämää asemaansa. USA:n Etelän rotusorto perustui juuri äärimmillään mustien pitämiseen eräänlaisena ”alimpana kastina”, siten että kaikkein korkeimmin koulutettukin musta oli tiukan paikan tullen aina alempiarvoinen kuin kaikkein kouluttamattominkin valkoinen. Etelän hallinto siis rajoitti pakkotoimin paitsi mustien vapautta myös heidän liikkuvuuttaan, toisin kuin kapitalistisen teollistuneen yhteiskunnan työmarkkinoilla. Toinen kastilaitosmainen piirre etelävaltioiden rotuerottelussa oli mustien ja valkoisten välisten ”kastien” edustajien välisten seksuaalisten suhteiden estämiseen pyrkiminen, lukuun ottamatta joidenkin valkoisten harjoittamaa mustien seksuaalista hyväksikäyttöä. Kolmas samanlainen piirre liittyi kaikenlaisten fyysisten kontaktien, kuten kättelemisen, kieltämiseen valkoisten ja mustien välillä, mikä perustui pelkoon rodullista ”puhtautta” loukkaavasta epäjärjestyksestä (Douglas, 1966).

Seuraavaksi tarkastelen ”rotua” diskurssina eli merkitysjärjestelmänä. Faircloughin (1992ab) käsite ’hegemoninen taistelu’ perustuu alun perin Antonio Gramscin (1971) luomalle hegemonian käsitteelle. Gramsci erottaa toisistaan länsimaisen yhteiskunnan ylläpitävät kaksi järjestelmää, yhtäällä yhteiskunnan hallinnon sekä suoran pakkoon perustuvan vallankäytön esim. rangaistuslaitoksen kautta, toisaalla ideologisen sekä kansalaisten manipulaatioon että yhteiseen suostumukseen perustuvan valta-aseman, hegemonian, jonka vastustajat joutuvat vuorostaan jälleen pakkovallan alaisiksi. Fairclough (1992b) määrittää erilaisissa poliittisissa teksteissä käydyn ’hegemonisen taistelun’ olemassa olevien valtasuhteiden uusintamisen ja muuttamisen väliseksi kamppailuksi yhteiskunnallisesta vallasta. Tutkimuksessani näyttäytyy myös *hegemonian* (hegemony) vastavoimaksi tässä taistelussa määrittämäni *toimijuus* (agency) mahdollisuutena sorretuille ja marginalisoiduille kulttuuriryhmille osallistua, saada haltuunsa ja käyttää valtaa (Grossberg, 1996)

Luvussa 4 käsittelen lyhyesti Baldwiniin kirjailijana kohdistuneen kritiikin historiaa. Baldwin-kritiikki voidaan perustellusti jakaa neljään aaltoon (Henderson, 2009). Niistä ensimmäinen kattaa hänen liberalistiset vuotensa aina vuoteen 1963 asti käsittäen palautteen hänen ensimmäisestä kolmesta romaa-

nistaan (*Go Tell It on the Mountain,* 1953; *Giovanni's Room,* 1956; *Another Country,* 1962) ja kolmesta esseekokoelmastaan (*Notes of a Native Son*, 1955; *Nobody Knows My Name*, 1961; *The Fire Next Time*, 1963). Noina aikoina Baldwin nautti menestystä ja arvonantoa, Lynen (2010) sanoin, ”valkoisen liberaalin valtavirran lempilapsena”, joka oli sisäistänyt täysin liberaalin integraatiopolitiikan opinkappaleet.

Kritiikin toinen aalto, johon myös tutkimani näytelmä sijoittuu, ei ollut yhtä suosiollinen. Siinä useat amerikkalaiskriitikot näkivät Baldwinin taantuneen kirjoittajana sitten *The Fire Next Time* (1963) – esseekokoelman, jota monet yhä pitävät Baldwinin kirjailijanuran kulminaationa. Nekin kriitikot, jotka eivät yhtyneet edelliseen mielipiteeseen, silti pitivät Baldwinia vain osana laajempaa mustan ”protestikirjallisuuden” kokonaisuutta, jota he lähestyivät lähinnä sosiologisten ja antropologisten luokittelujen kautta kuin yksilöiden taiteellisina aikaansaannoksina, tutkiskellen mieluummin koko mustan kirjallisuuden vertikaalista kehitystä mustien kirjailijoiden välisten yksilöllisten eroavaisuuksien horisontaalisen analyysin sijaan. Tämä vaihe käsitti niin 1960-luvun toisen puoliskon kuin myös suurimman osan 1970-lukua.

1970-luvun loppupuolella kritiikki kuitenkin muuttui sosiaali-antropologisesta ”protestikirjallisuuden” tulkinnasta enemmän yksilöllisten taiteellisten teosten tyylien ja niiden humaanin sisällön arvioinnin suuntaan. Tällöin Baldwininkin teoksia verrattiin suuriin eurooppalaisiin ja amerikkalaisiin esim. Dickensin ja Dostojevskin, samoin kuin Wrightin, Ellisonin, Faulknerin ja Millerin tuotoksiin. Tämän jälkeen Baldwin kuitenkin vaipui unohduksiin, eikä hänen ns. kolmannen aallon eli 1970-luvun lopun ja 1980-luvun teoksiaan noteerattu enää samalla kiinnostuksella kuin aikaisemmin, sillä monet kriitikot sekä myös tieteilijät olivat yhä sitä mieltä, että kirjailijana Baldwinin parhaat päivät olivat jo menneet heti *The Fire Next Time* (1963) – teoksen jälkeen. Lyne (2010) kuitenkin näkee vuoden 1963 merkittävänä siirtymänä Baldwinin poliittisessa ajattelussa liberalismista mustaan työväenliikemäiseen radikalismiin, Martin Luther Kingistä kohti Mustan Vallan (Black Power -) liikettä. 1970-luvun lopun ja 1980-luvun hiljaiselon sekä vuoden 1987 kuolemansa jälkeen Baldwin kuitenkin löydettiin uudelleen 1990- ja 2000-lukulaisten tutkijoiden teoksissa, jotka käsittävät Baldwin-tutkimuksen neljännen aallon.. Tällä kertaa analyysin kohteina olivat kirjailijan kaikki teokset, niin vuoden 1963 jälkeiset kuin edellisetkin, joihin tässä ”Baldwin-renesanssissa” haettiin uusia, tuoreita tulkintoja. Oma tutkimukseni tarkasteleekin kirjailijaa poliittisen kielen ja diskursiivisten merkitysten sekä artikuloijana että manipuloijana.

Luvussa 5 sijoitan tutkimukseni kriittisen diskurssianalyysin (CDA) kentälle. CDA on heterogeeninen kieli- ja yhteiskuntatieteellisten tutkimusten joukko, joiden kaikkien yhteisenä ydinajatuksena on tutkia kielen ja vallankäytön suhdetta yhteiskunnassa. CDA näkee yksilön ennen kaikkea sosiaalisena olentona ja kielenkäytön sekä ehdollistettuna että seurauksellisena sosiaalisena, kuten myös historiallisena ja konstruktiivisena toimintana. Pietikäinen (2000) pitää CDA:ta hyödyllisenä välineenä ”rasismin ja seksismin sekä poliittisten olojen ja historiallisten tapahtumien” tutkimuksessa.

CDA:n emansipoivimpien sovellusten (VanDijk 1998) tehtävänä on tutkia kielen ja vallan suhdetta vallasta osattomien näkökulmasta päämääränään osattomien emansipointi sekä heitä leimaavan ja alistavan ideologisen koodinsa purkaminen (deprogramming). Oma tutkimukseni sijoittuu tähän joukkoon. Sen päämääränä on löytää näytelmän tekstistä aineksia, jotka nostavat mustan yleisön itsetuntoa sekä tietoisuutta itsestään.

Tutkimukselleni on myös keskeistä ideologian käsittäminen ei pelkästään negatiivisena 'väärää tietoisuutta' ruokkivana valtaideologiana vaan myös sen emansipoivina vasta-aatteina. Gramscilainen hegemonia käsittää juuri kaikenlaisen mieleen kohdistuvan suostuttelun ja manipuloinnin yhteiskunnan väkivaltakoneiston harjoittaman pakkovallan sijaan. Tämänkaltainen hegemoninen neuvottelukonflikti syntyy näytelmässä Richardin isän, Meridianin ja tämän ystävän, liberaalin sanomalehtimies Parnellin välille.

CDA:n keskeistä tutkimuskäsitteistöä hyväkseni käyttäen tutkin draamadialogin repliikkejä puheakteina (speech acts) ja kartoitan sekä niiden vuorottelevuutta (turn-taking) että niihin sisältyviä implisiittisiä ennakko-olettamuksia (presuppositions), jotka sisältävät ideologisia arvotuksia (evaluations). Näiden käsitteiden avulla pyrin määrittelemään kumpi konfliktin osapuolista kulloinkin kontrolloi puhetta sekä kuinka joko vilpittömät tai manipuloivat ennakkoodotukset näyttäytyvät roolihahmojen välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa. Seuraavaksi siirryn rodullisen diskurssin taustaehdoista sen tuloksina roolihahmojen välisissä neuvotteluissa tuotettuihin identiteetteihin pohtien niiden yhteyksiä konstruoimaani neljään eri lukijatyyppiin. Lopulta vertaan toisiinsa neljän eri teatterikäsityksen näytelmän konflikteille tarjoamia mahdollisia katarttisia ratkaisuja Baldwinin ratkaisuvalintoihin ja niiden mahdollisiin ideologisiin motiiveihin.

Luku 6 esittelee tutkimuskysymykseni, metodologiset valintani ja analyysivälineeni. Jaan eri roolihenkilöiden väliset konfliktit goffmanilaisen kehysanalyysin mukaisesti osioihin, joissa roolihahmot neuvottelevat identiteettejään suhteessa esineisiin ja asioihin (objects), roolihahmoihin (characters) sekä fyysiseen olemisen (of being) tai ideologiseen (Cooper, 1998) valinnan (of choice) tilaan (Sweet, 1993). Lukuprosessissa syntyneet identiteetit määritän suhteessa neljään konstruoimaani lukijatyyppiin, jotka ovat: rotuhegemoniaan tottunut (Habitualized), sitä oikeuttamaan pyrkivä (Legitimating), sitä kritisoiva (Critical) ja sen haastava (Challenging). Näytelmän konfliktien mahdolliset ideologiset seuraamukset kartoitan vertaamalla näytelmän katarttisia ratkaisuja aristoteleläisen, brechtiläisen, amerikkalaisen melodraaman sekä ns. vallankumouksellisen mustan teatterin (Black Theatre) ja boalilaisen alistettujen teatterin (Theatre of the Oppressed) teatterikäsityksiin sekä niiden sisältämien maailmankuvien suhdetta rodulliseen status quohon, samoin kuin siihen onko näytelmän konteksti lopussa henkilöiden toimintaa ratkaisevampi. Viimeiseksi kysyn antaako näytelmä näiden ratkaisujen pohjalta aihetta pessimismiin vai optimismiin.

Luku 7 aloittaa varsinaisen analyysin. Siinä tarkasteltavana on ensin näytelmän pääkonflikti Richardin ja Lylen välillä. Richard näyttäytyy konfliktissa

mustaa tietoisuutta nostavana nykyaikaisena trickster-hahmona, työväenluokkaista talousvaikeuksissa olevaa Lyleä varakkaampana muusikkona, paremman koulutuksen saaneena paikallisen papin poikana ja myös verbaalisesti lahjakkaampana sekä myös fyysisesti vahvempana. Näiden kahden välisessä dialogissa Richardin puheaktit vaihtelevat ironiasta viisasteluihin ja Lylen naurettavaksi tekemiseen. Lyle yrittää useaan otteeseen saada Richardia tietämään rotuerottelun mukaisen ”paikkansa” tämän vastustaessa jokaista Lylen asettamaa goffmanilaista ”tottelevaisuustestiä”, joiden tarkoitus on palauttaa Lylen rodullinen ”ylemmyys” Richardiin nähden, Näistä viimeinen ja ratkaiseva tulee Lylen ase kädessä vaatiman anteeksipyynnön muodossa, josta Richard, henkensä kaupalla, kieltäytyy.

Luvun 8 alussa näytelmän toiseksi pääkonfliktiksi mustan ja valkoisen roolihahmon välillä nousee Parnellin ja Meridianin ystävyytenä alkanut ristiriita. Tässä ristiriidassa on myös kyse kummankin ideologisista valinnoista. Meridianin dilemma näyttäytyy valintana Martin Luther Kingin johtaman väkivallattomuuden ja Black Powerin ajaman mustien aseellisen itsepuolustuksen kannattamisen välillä, kun taas Parnellin tulisi tehdä valinta kahden ystävänsä välillä, joista on tullut toistensa vastustajia Lylen murhattua Meridianin pojan Richardin. Oikeudenkäynnissä Parnell epäonnistuu kiistämään Lylen vaimon Jo’n valheellisen todistajanlausunnon, jonka pohjalta Lyle vapautetaan, ja Meridian päättää säilyttää pojaltaan aiemmin saaman aseen saarnastuolissaan itsepuolustuksena mahdollisia rasistisia hyökkäyksiä kohtaan. Lylen tunnustettua Parnellin ja Meridianin ärsyttämänä Richardin murhan Parnell sanoo irti ystävyytensä Lylen kanssa ja liittyy mustista opiskelijoista koostuvaan mielenosoittajien joukkoon protestoimaan tämän vapauttamista vastaan.

Luvussa 8 tutkimani kaksi viimeistä konfliktia käsittelevät yhdessä rodullista ja sukupuolten välistä ristiriitaa. Niistä ensimmäisessä Richard kohtaa Jo’n Lylen sekatavarakaupassa. Konflikti näyttää ensin mitä todella tapahtui noiden kahden välillä, ja tämän jälkeen, kuinka Jo valehtelee oikeudessa Richardin yrittäneen raiskata hänet herättäen näin henkiin Etelän rotuopin suurimman myyttisen uhkakuvan. Toinen ja myös viimeinen tutkimani ristiriiita, joka, tällä kertaa, päättyy yhteisymmärrykseen ja –toimintaan mielenosoituksen muodossa, rakentuu Parnellin ja Juanitan, mustan opiskelijan sekä Richardin aiemman tyttöystävän välille. Juanita on Meridianin ohella näytelmässä käydyn mielensoitustaistelun johtohahmo, jolla Baldwin tekee kunniaa myös varsinaisen kansalaisoikeustaistelun unohdetuille naisjohtajille (Waldschmidt-Nelson, 2001).

Päätännöissä, eli sekä jokaisen konfliktin yhteenvedossa että lopun disussiossa vastaan ensisijaisesti tutkimuskysymyksiin sekä pohdin vielä näytelmän sanomaa kahdesta 2000-lukulaisesta draaman tutkimuksen näkökulmasta. Lingvistisistä elementeistä tutkimukseni keskiöön nousivat rotujärjestelmää eli olevia oloja vahvistamaan tarkoitetut ns. tag-kysymykset (tag questions) sekä deiktiset aikaa ja paikkaa, tässä tapauksessa nimenomaan tilaa määrittäneet ilmaukset. Sekä fyysisen että ideologisen tilan lisäksi merkittäviä olivat ns. ”viattomuuden tilaa” (*space of innocence*, Williams, 2001) neuvotteluissa rakentamaan pyrkineet repliikit. Lukuprosessissa rakentuneet identiteetit, paitsi

kyseenalaistivat monia mustista luotuja stereotyyppisiä representaatioita, myös vastasivat tutkimusta varten rakennettuja lukijatyyppejä, siten että kukin lukija antoi kullekin roolihahmolle jokaisessa kehyksessä oman yksilöllisen identiteettinsä, jonka tutkija saattoi nähdä joko ylläpitävän rotuhegemoniaa tai vastustavan sitä. Lisäksi kehitin jokaisen konfliktin yhteenvedoissa niille identiteettien pohjalta ominaiset sekä neljään lukijatyyppiin että käyttämääni neljään teatterikäsitykseen nojaavat roolihahmottelut.

Sekä Richardin murhaa että sitä seuranneen oikeudenkäynnin Lylen vapauttanutta päätöstä voidaan pitää hegemonian, eli tässä tapauksessa rodullisen valtarakenteen näytelmälle muodostaman *kontekstin*, jonkinasteisena voittona roolihenkilöiden spontaanista *toiminnasta*, Kuitenkin sekä Meridianin aseistautuminen itsepuolustukseksi että Parnellin liittyminen mielensoittajien joukkoon ovat luettavissa rotuhegemonian muuttumiseen tähtääväksi toiminnaksi. Samoja esimerkkejä voisi käyttää myös vastauksena kysymykseen herättikö näytelmä katsojissaan pessimismin vai optimismin tunteita USA:n rotutilanteen suhteen. Samassa yhteydessä pohdin myös, olisiko Richardin kuolemalla kuitenkin marttyyrista arvoa koskien nimenomaan valkoisia katsojia. Länsimaisille draamakonventioille ominaiselle ”aristotelelaiselle systeemille” (Babbage, 2004) tyypillisen ”koodinpurkajan kuoleman” sekä murhaoikeudenkäynnin ”shokeeravan katharsiksen” (Eagleton, 2003) tarjoaman ”puhdistavan” pessimismin vastapainoksi Baldwin myös tuo mukaan optimismia sekä Meridianin itsesuojeluvaiston heräämisen että Parnellin ja Juanitan orastavan, tasaarvoisuuteen perustuvan, ihmissuhteen muodossa. Näin siitäkin huolimatta, että todellisuudessa, samoihin aikoihin kun Baldwin vielä kirjoitti näytelmää, useat valkoiset liberaalit alkoivat vetäytyä juuri mustien kansalaisoikeustaistelun piiristä kannattamaan löyhästi ”kaikkien” kansalaisryhmien oikeuksia.

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