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Chromatism in Eugene O'Neill's All God's Chillun Got Wings

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Abstract

General Background: Counter-discourse serves as a vital mechanism for marginalized and oppressed groups to challenge dominant narratives that often marginalize alternative perspectives. **Specific Background:** The concept of counter-discourse has been explored in various contexts, yet its application to classic literature, such as Shakespeare's "Hamlet," remains underrepresented. **Knowledge Gap:** To date, no comprehensive studies have applied the lens of counter-discourse to "Hamlet" within a postcolonial framework. **Aims:** This study aims to bridge this gap by examining how "Hamlet" can be understood through the concept of counter-discourse, particularly within the realm of postcolonial theory. **Results:** The analysis reveals that Hamlet, as a character, engages in counter-discourse to challenge the dominant narrative represented by Claudius. Motivated by the murder of his father, Hamlet seeks to expose Claudius and invert the power dynamics through strategic counter-speech. **Novelty:** This paper is pioneering in its application of counter-discourse to "Hamlet," offering a novel interpretation that situates the play within postcolonial critique. **Implications:** The findings highlight the potential of classical texts to be reinterpreted through contemporary theoretical frameworks, thereby enriching our understanding of both the texts themselves and the theories applied. This study not only underscores the relevance of counter-discourse in literature but also opens avenues for further research in the intersection of literary analysis and postcolonial studies.

Keywords: chromatism, postcolonialism, all god's chillun got wings, eugene o'neill

Introduction

1. Postcolonialism

The concentration that suggests significant concerns, especially about contemporary colonialism, makes the word 'colonialism' seem increasingly nebulous. Postcolonialism denotes literary works that spotlight the subject of the dominance of enduring colonial structures from the West. The primary emphasis of this theory is the effects of Western hegemony on individuals residing in colonial regimes or coloniser nations. (Neumann, and Rippl, 2020). Against certain categorisations and presumptions, these expansive works have been active since the 1970s, when postcolonial theory first emerged in literary studies. Also, numerous studies contend that the

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enduring consequences of imperialism and colonialism continue to manifest in contemporary societies.

Postcolonialism, according to Young (2003), defends universal human equality (p.2). It is difficult for colonised societies to eradicate the economic, political, and cultural legacies of their colonisers. Despite the independence of the colonised nations, cultural colonialism continues to exist; thus, it is critical to investigate this theory. In addition, postcolonialism illuminates the intricate strands of imperialism's persistence and its effects on identity. Postcolonial criticism is more significant because it illuminates contradictions that were not explicit or visible beforehand and were, therefore, not scrutinised with the requisite precision (Dirlik, 2002).

The reactivation of various wants and aspirations leads to imperialism, and colonialism has taken several forms due to the continuity and reactivation of colonial formations. Imperialism engenders indeterminate formations, some of which are unattainable while others are attainable. As an illustration of permanent territorial colonialism, consider the British colonisation of South Africa: the displacement of indigenous people from their homes, their heritage, and their whole sense of who they are. As a consequence of empires giving up their colonies, whether willingly or against their choice, postcolonialism emerged. Tragically, neo-colonial structures impact the lives of groups like indigenous peoples, diasporas, and residents of newly independent nations, who have had their philosophies of practice and action fashioned by imperialism (Jacobs, 2002).

2. Chromatism

This word refers to the essentialist differentiation between humans based on colour, meaning "of or belonging to colour or colours." On occasion, it is employed alongside the term 'genitalism,' which delineates a differentiation between males and females predicated on the conspicuous biological distinction between the sexes. "By implying that the extent of variation within these categories is a product of representation and discursive construction", both terms denote the fallacy of oversimplifying and stereotypically differentiating race and gender (Ashcroft et al., 2013).

3. Chromatism in the Play

"Even before it premiered at the Provincetown Playhouse in New York City on May 15, 1924, All God's Chillun Got Wings—Eugene O'Neill's third and last play—that heavily dealt with the African-American experience—was already raging in controversy" (Ashcroft et al., 2006).. Because of the controversy's racial undertones, O'Neill probably didn't want to create any more plays about Black characters, fearing that doing so would divert attention from his own artistic priorities. The play was about the relationship between Jim and Ella. Indeed, it is now considered a piece of theatrical legend. In response to the hostility that was directed against the play, which was fueled in particular by rumours that the black character was going to kiss the white palm

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actress. The governor of the city of New York attempted to stop the play from opening by barring children from participating in the performance, as was required in the initial act of the play. This is why the stage manager is the one who usually reads the script at the beginning of shows. The inaugural performance of the play was marked by a discordant atmosphere of arguments, which has persisted over time, fueling ongoing debate (Bernstein, 2006). A private audience enjoyed the performance (Mudimbe-Boyi, 2018). Considering all of the aforementioned factors, it is fitting to attach the notion of chromatism to the play. Since the nature of color represents the conflict between the main characters, the study will delve into the dimensions of this dilemma that Eugene O'Neill highlighted in his play.

Methods

Instead of considering the biological distinctions that have developed throughout time as a result of adaptations in ancestral DNA, humans have historically used colour as a justification for treating some groups of people differently. It evolved into a tool for racial oppression, a method of inflicting physical inferiority, and a genetic entitlement to establish a superior social position. The United States practice of racial segregation, which persisted until the end of the 1800s century, is a prominent feature of this approach. A variety of ideas about racial differences that emerged in the United States after slavery ended is the superiority of white colour. This is the view that white people are fundamentally better than Black people.

From elegantly equating Blacks and Whites as symbolic equals to the insulting vulgarisms of "chocolate drop" and "white," his harmonizing use of color spans the gamut. Everything alike and everything different between Blacks and Whites converge and blend. Four young men and four girls make up the eight youngsters playing marbles on the pavement. There are two white and two black individuals. Their color descriptions are rather detailed. The intangible, subjective characteristics that sometimes seem to divide Whites and Blacks arbitrarily are clearly distinguishable from one another.

Results and Discussion

The play shows how individuals who break tribal taboos may end up in calamity. Americans were more worried about the play's potential to incite racial tensions than they were concerning the depth of his subject matter. The criticism of the play made O'Neill feel he needed to clarify his goals in writing it. Racial tensions and stereotypes are the play's primary focus, but O'Neill denies that (Frank, 2000). The reason for this is likely his fear that the authorities would stop the play at that time. Colour and race are immediately apparent in the opening scene of the play, which is a clear indication that the author stated the exact antithesis of what he claims:

> *In the street leading left, the faces are all white; in the street leading right, all black. [...] [F]our boys and four girls. Two of each sex are white, two black. They are playing marbles. One of the black boys is Jim Harris. The little blonde girl, her complexion rose and white, [...] She is eight. […] People pass, black and white, the Negroes frankly*

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> *participants in the spirit of Spring, the whites laughing constrainedly, awkward in natural emotion. Their words are lost. One hears only their laughter. It expresses the difference in race (O'Neill, 1924).*

The framework that characterises persons in the aforementioned quote is colour. Assigning the left side for whites and the right for blacks implies a distinction. This indicates flaws in this society since O'Neill attempts to demonstrate this throughout the play, particularly in this scene. Jim is described as being of African descent, and there is a clear stereotype associated with his character. However, the second character, referred to as the white Ella, is described as resembling a rose. The word "marbles," a ball of glass and several colours, indicates the fragility of relations between white and black people. The use of the word "negroes" suggests the lively nature of speech among blacks, but in contrast, formal words are used for whites. Additionally, it is worth noting the contrasting laughs between the two races, as their differences outweigh the similarities that bring them together (Grosfoguel, 2011). Hence, the factors above serve as a manifestation of the disintegrated state of reality and the detrimental impact of racism on society. The play's central idea is, unsurprisingly, the character schism that develops between the two leads when they realize that the challenge they're confronting is too big to handle in a typical way.

> *Repeatedly, characters' skin colour is referenced rather than their names:*
> *WHITE GIRL (tugging at the elbow of her brother): Come on, Mickey!*
> *[…] BLACK GIRL:(to a black boy) Come on, you Joe. We gwine git frailed too, you don't hurry.*
> *[…] OTHER WHITE BOY: Me, too! (jumps up)*
> *[…] OTHER BLACK GIRL: Lawdy, it's late! (O'Neill,1924)*

O'Neill depicts American society without any polish, reflected in his use of the characters' skin colours. Thus, one of the factors contributing to the widespread use of skin colours rather than names for the characters becomes apparent. It seems that both groups of people, namely whites and blacks, perceive each other based on their skin colour and ideological beliefs (McKnight, 2012). Taking into account that whites see themselves as having a higher status than blacks. As for black people, they are affected by this idea; for example, the protagonist of the play, Jim, always feels that he is inferior, no matter what he does. He struggles throughout the play to get rid of the idea of inferiority he feels, but it is not that easy, as he says:

> *JIM […] I look it over, I know each answer—perfectly. I take up my pen. On all sides are white men starting to write. They're so sure—even the ones that I know know nothing. But I know it all—but I can't remember any more—it fades—it goes—it's gone […] —stupidity—I sit like a fool fighting to remember a little bit here, a little bit there—not enough to pass —not enough for anything—when I know it all! […] I need it more than anyone ever needed anything. I need it to live. (O'Neill, 1924)*

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He believes that passing the bar exam makes him a better person or equal to white people. Jim is the person who studies more than his colleagues, but at the time of the bar exam, he forgets everything (Fedorenko, 2020). His inferiority complex haunts him when he sees his white classmates around him in class. O'Neill shows how influential the idea of colour inferiority is as Jim's life revolves around getting out of this. The last sentence of the aforementioned quotation shows the amount he believes is necessary to complete the bar test, which will make him live. This indicates that Jim does not feel alive in the complete sense of the word because of his inferiority:

> *JIM (looking at her wildly) Pass? Pass? […] Good Lord, child, how come you can ever imagine such a crazy idea? Pass? Me? Jim Crow Harris? Nigger Jim Harris—become a full-fledged Member of the Bar! Why the mere notion of it is enough to kill you with laughing! It'd be against all natural laws, all human right and justice. It'd be miraculous, there'd be earthquakes and catastrophes, the seven […] (O'Neill, 1924).*

The fact that Jim is less than white people is an incorrect idea. He and his sister Hattie are the most successful people in the play. White characters are not successful in their life. Ella was in a failed relationship with a person with an addiction who left her alone while she was pregnant. The one who saved her in this miserable situation was Jim. Despite Jim's kind treatment of Ella, she did not want him to succeed in the exam. Jim's lack of success heavily influences her dominant significance. She would persist in seeing herself as having dominion over him. Also, as a woman, her fear of her husband's success can be understood, as he will be in a higher position, and his feelings toward his wife may not remain the same because of her lack of success in life. She will always be at a disadvantage when compared to her partner. Thus, it would be more secure for her if Jim continued to be trapped in this predicament due to the potential risks mentioned (Brucher, 1994).

It is impossible for Jim to be a contributing member of society and have a positive impact on its growth because of his anger and subsequent self-hatred about the possibility of failing the test. The drama delves deeply into O'Neill's comprehension of the culture's racial factors. For example, the play opens with skin tone rather than a specific name. Intense love and furious anger for her husband alternates in her mood. She loves him but despises him equally because of his race and her Partnership with him dismantles her sense of superiority. In the play, she wants to kill him and even attempts. Because of the tension, she stops thinking about how much she relies on him; she marries him, hoping he will take good treatment of her. In the play, "it's clear that she loves him, but she won't have a child with him because she's afraid of having a black child" (Karim, 2011).

> *ELLA: The only white man in the world! Kind and white. You're all black*
>
> *—black to the heart.*

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> *SHORTY: Nigger-lover! (He throws the money in her face. It falls to the street.) Listen, you! Mickey says he's off of yuh for keeps. Dis is de finish! Dat's what he sent me to tell you. (glances at her searchingly—a pause) Yuh won't make no trouble? (O'Neill, 1924)*

Ella's comment exemplifies the ingrained racial hierarchies that associate whiteness with favourable qualities such as compassion and innocence while attributing negative characteristics like moral corruption and wickedness to blackness. This single-sided conflict serves to strengthen colonial and racist beliefs that are characterised by the dehumanisation of black people and the privilege of whites (Setyani, 2018). Ella's statements reveal her internalised racism and colourism, as she has embraced the colonial narrative that devalues black skin and elevates white colour. Such internalisation contributes to the perpetuation of racial hierarchies and has an impact on individuals' self-perceptions as well as their relationships with other people. The use of the racist insult "nigger-lover" by Shorty, as well as the act of tossing money in Ella's face, are both violent affirmations of racial and social authority. The purpose of these activities is to humiliate and isolate Ella due to her affiliation with black people. These actions are a reflection of the methods that society uses to maintain racial purity and establish segregation (Peterson, 2000). The act of throwing the money in her face shows not only rejection on a personal level but also economic deprivation and degradation, which highlights the power dynamics at play. Mickey's warning to Shorty and the inquiry that followed about causing problems are reflections of the social control and monitoring systems that oversee and manage interracial relationships. This contributes to the consolidation of power systems that prioritise the upholding of racial borders and the punishment of those who violate them.

> *ELLA: Poor Jim.*
> *JIM: Don't pity me. I'd like to kick myself all over the block. Five years— and I'm still plugging away where I ought to have been at the end of two.*
> *ELLA: Why don't you give it up?*
> *JIM: No!*
> *ELLA: After all, what's being a lawyer?*
> *JIM: A lot—to me—what it means. (intensely) Why, if I was a Member of the Bar right now, Ella, I believe I'd almost have the courage to— (O'Neill, 1924)*

The challenges that Jim is having with his schooling are illustrative of the structural obstacles that black people must contend with. Due to racial bias and structural gaps in the school system, he has "failed again," which shows that this is a problem that keeps happening. Others see Jim's sadness and anger as internalised oppression, where social standards and the idea that black people are less capable hurt his confidence and self-esteem. Ella's sadness could come from a place of concern. Still, it could also be seen as condescending, mirroring a racial dynamic in which black people are seen as always having problems or not being able to do anything. Ignoring sorrow shows that Jim wants respect and equality, not snobbery (Gohar, 2022). Through widespread inequality and a lack of support, Jim's anger at his slow progress

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shows how much more work black people often have to put in to reach the same goals as white people.

It is possible to interpret Ella's emotion of sympathy for Jim as a reflection of the racial dynamics that exist in the community, in which black people are often seen through the prism of victimisation and perseverance (Lynch et.al, 2017). This expression of sympathy, while it seems to be understanding, actually strengthens a disparity in authority and may be condescending, emphasising Jim's perceived lack of control rather than his strengths. Jim's comment highlights the extra exertion he has to put in to attain academic achievement, which is further complicated by racial obstacles. The sleepless nights and hard study sessions he endures are a manifestation of the unequal weight put on black persons to demonstrate their ability within a racially biased system (Le Bastard, 2013). Jim's experience of having white guys in the room represents the cultural expectations and racist stress he encounters. This is a manifestation of internalised racism, which is reflected in the blankness and feelings of stupidity the individual experiences. His failure to function efficiently in high-pressure circumstances is partially attributable to the internal struggle that he is experiencing.

> *JIM: I need it more than anyone ever needed anything. I need it to live. […]*
> *ELLA: You're so much better than they are in every other way. […]*
> *ELLA: Of course. (affectionately) Don't I know how fine you've been to me! You've been the only one in the world who's stood by me—the only understanding person—and all after the rotten way I used to treat you. […]*
> *ELLA: You've been white to me, Jim. (She takes his hand.)*
> *JIM: White—to you! (O'Neill, 1924)*

Jim demonstrates his strong yearning for acceptance and validation in a culture that consistently marginalises him due to his ethnicity with his assertion that he "needs it to live." In addition to seeking professional achievement, he also seeks social and personal validation, which is indicative of the expectations placed on Black people to establish their value in a society dominated by White people (Onunwa, 1988). The fact that Ella responded with sympathy but also with dismissal indicates that she does not have a complete comprehension of the racist struggle that Jim is going through. She feels sorry for him, but she doesn't fully understand how important his goal is to him on a psychological level in the setting of racial oppression. Jim's answer shows the difference between how society sees something and how important it is to them personally (Luzi, 2016). Some people might not think much of his success, but for him, it was a huge win over race hurdles and a return to respect and self-worth. Jim's goal is to rise above the coloured identity that has been put on him and to show that he is equal and capable in a world that doesn't value his blackness. There is a fight for acknowledgement and validation within these racial relations, and Jim's demand for understanding from Ella is a reflection of that struggle. Ella's limited comprehension of Jim's circumstances is apparent in her attempt to comfort him by affirming his superiority in other aspects, so indicating her restricted knowledge of the profound nature of his battle for racial equity and individual satisfaction. Her appreciative

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recognition of Jim's assistance and empathy, despite her previous abuse, suggests a relationship characterised by atonement and thankfulness. This bond is complicated, including both intimate connections and the wider racial backdrop in which these encounters take place. Her assertion that he has shown "white to me" is replete with racial connotations. Within the framework of Chromatism, this suggests that Jim's favourable attributes are linked to whiteness, indicating the internalised racial hierarchies that connect the virtue and goodness of being white.

> *JIM: Yes! Yes! We'll go abroad where a man is a man—where it don't make that difference—where people are kind and wise to see the soul under skins. I don't ask you to love me—I don't dare to hope nothing like that! I don't want nothing—only to wait—to know you like me—to be near you— [...] slave!—yes, be your slave—your black slave that adores you as sacred! (O'Neill, 1924)*

Jim says he longs to go out of this nation because of the racial injustice and prejudice that are so common. When he mentions "abroad," he's implying that there are other countries where people are valued more for who they are than for their race. The statements made by him highlight a profoundly ingrained internalisation of racial inferiority. Notwithstanding his desire for equality, he is unable to imagine receiving the same amount of affection or worth as everyone else. In a culture that degrades him because of his ethnicity, this internal conflict sheds insight into the psychological consequences of systematic racism and the fight for self-worth that he may experience. It is clear from the last line in the above quote that Jim's longing for independence and his equal acceptance of subservience are inherently contradictory attitudes. Through his use of the word "slave," he recognises the historical and present reality of coloured slavery as well as the profound psychological scar associated with it. Within the context of a racist framework, his proclamation of eager service shows the complex relationship of love, subjection, and the need for approval. The idealised post-racial future that he envisions is one in which people see past the colour of their skin to perceive the "soul" of others. Part of the postcolonial criticism of colonial racial hierarchies is the hope for a society free of racial distinctions as determinants of social rank and individual worth.

> *JIM: Then we've got to stick together to the end, haven't we, whatever comes—and hope and pray for the best? [...] And me—once I become a Member of the Bar—then I win, too! We're both free—by our own fighting down our own weakness! We're both really, truly free! Then we can be happy with ourselves here or anywhere.*
>
> *HATTIE […]: Yes, I'm sure—but you mustn't study too hard, Jim! You mustn't study too awfully hard! (O'Neill, 1924)*

He believes that self-actualisation and recognition are synonymous with professional achievement. Achieving legal success as a Black guy in an oppressive culture is a monumental feat in and of itself; it is a symbol of breaking down institutionalised racism and finding acceptance in an otherwise white-dominated field. Such an objective is reflective of the larger

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postcolonial battle for equality and the breakdown of racial hierarchies that has been going on for a long time. There is more than one element to Jim's statement of independence. Shared suffering can create a kind of familiarity between people. Being from one family, their shared experience gives them a sense of understanding. Although his sister has better self-confidence than him, she can feel his suffering. He believes that through success, he will be saved from his external and internal suffering, which is a wrong point that will ruin his life. Therefore, no matter how much he seeks to overcome his identity, he remains stuck in this cycle without any realistic solution.

The racial persecution that he faces exacerbates these illnesses. The fact that he can't get any rest exemplifies how his inner anguish and racial tension permeate all aspects of his life, including his most intimate affairs. Jim is going through a very trying time emotionally and mentally, and the metaphor of a searing headache is a perfect fit (Yuliana, 2020). His ideas seem to be consuming him, a feeling mirrored by the constant racial pressures he encounters. This shows how his ideas are wild and unpredictable. In the middle of a raging storm of racial prejudice and personal troubles, the "crazy chickens" indicate his inner chaos and the fruitless pursuit of calm or resolution, which is a state of Frustration and Powerlessness (O'Neill, 1924). One sees the tremendous psychological consequences of systemic racism in Jim's despair and feeling of losing control of his life. His inner turmoil at not being able to calm his thoughts is a symptom of his more giant fight for autonomy in the face of society's persistent devaluation of his values and abilities.

"I've got to prove I'm the whitest of the white!" (O'Neill, 1924) It is clear from his words that Jim has internalised racial hierarchies and has come to associate being white with being worthy and respectable. This demonstrates both the widespread, colonial-era belief in white supremacy and the profound psychological effects of systematic racism. The desire for him to demonstrate his value and make his loved one proud highlights the strain to live up to racial discrimination-imposed social norms. His need for approval is a recurring motif in imperialist literature; people from underrepresented ethnic groups often feel obliged to overcompensate in order to be accepted and acknowledged in a biased society. Reflecting on the more significant issue of representing his race, he feels a tremendous weight of duty to be everything to his beloved. This feeling of responsibility may stem from living in a culture that judges people of colour collectively and views their conduct as representative of their race.

Ella harbors jealousy towards Jim's accomplished sister, Hattie, as well. Hattie's success as a black woman causes Ella distress. It isn't easy in this case because Hattie is a woman, and the comparison is direct. The challenge comes in Ella's acceptance of the notion that a black lady surpasses her in terms of accomplishment. This will make her constantly think about her failure and, most of all, the fear of losing racial superiority. This is the one factor that leads her to believe she is superior to Jim or Hattie, which is her race. Mrs.H elucidates the arduousness of Ella's assimilation into her husband's household, considering her racial background as a white individual:

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> *HATTIE: I certainly never give that a thought. It's what she's done to Jim— making him run away and give up his fight—!*
> *[…] MRS. H.: She must, too. Yes, she must, too. Don't you forget dat it was hard for her—mighty, mighty hard—harder for de white dan for de black! (O'Neill, 1924)*

Mrs. H empathises with Ella's challenges due to her previous experiences of letdowns. However, the inquiry persists: why does a white lady encounter more difficulty compared to a black individual? It is evident that individuals belonging to racial and ethnic minorities struggle with a deep-rooted sense of inferiority. O'Neill highlights that people of color are also part of the problem. As happens with Jim, Mrs H thinks that the white person has a bigger problem with black people than the latter has with the white person. O'Neill's vision is unique in its ability to illuminate the situation from several perspectives.

His catastrophic familial, loyal, and hate relationships, as well as his intellectual ideals and values, were incompatible with his manhood. His plays, especially in his early days as a playwright, always deal with the problems mentioned above. The aforementioned information has decided the general course of O'Neil's critique. Thus, they are crucial. Although he was initially recognized as a pioneer in the realm of theater, his later works were frequently rejected on the grounds that these inventions were deemed too current or even frivolous. As a consequence, criticism and evaluations of the performances prior to the late 1950s and early 1960s were frequently subjective and, at best, inconsistent.

Jim has the belief that by committing to marriage with a white woman, he will get the privileges and benefits that individuals of white descent often experience. A gradual and persistent deterioration characterizes O'Neill's portrayal of marriage in his works. Almost all of his plays exhibit his pessimistic worldview and culminate in a recurring cycle of illusion and anguish, ultimately transforming the anticipated joyous conclusion into a tragic one. Ella's decision to marry Jim is not driven by love but rather by her need to find a rescuer after her unsuccessful relationship. Hattie doubts Ella's love for Jim as she says: "I wonder if she loves Jim!" (O'Neill, 1924) Evidently, Jim's family has a better understanding of the reality of his marriage compared to him. The last instance of Jim Harris's awful humiliation is promptly followed by a religious exaltation, which serves to convert his profound despair into a state of faith and contentment.

> *The end of the play ends with Ella's collapse:*
> *ELLA (jumping to her feet—excitedly): Don't cry, Jim! You mustn't cry! I've got only a little time left and I want to play. Don't be old Uncle Jim now. Be my little boy, Jim. Pretend you're Painty Face and I'm Jim Crow. Come and play!*
> *JIM [...] Honey, Honey, I'll play right up to the gates of Heaven with you! (O'Neill, 1924)*

The final scene of the play effectively counters the prevailing notion of white supremacy over black individuals. The white girl is lost throughout the play, while her husband, Jim, is the

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one who takes care of her. Ella's return to her character when she was a child and her asking him to play with her is a message from the writer. The racial aspect in the play leads to behavioral regression, resulting in crises and serious maladjustment in the private lives of Ella and Jim. Additionally, it hinders their ability to form meaningful social ties. The message conveyed is that her happiness was limited to her childhood, and she was unaware of the distinctions between whites and blacks at that time. Children lack the intricate ideological intricacies that adults possess. The two's childhood was not tainted by the ideas they carried as adults. O'Neill seemed to be attributing blame to society and urging people to draw lessons from the innocence of children. It can be said that the play reflects this period in an unprecedented way, which is why it is considered one of O'Neill's icons in fighting the prevailing trend.

Conclusion

The notion of chromatism within the framework of postcolonial theory underscores the significance of colour and its ramifications for the colonized population. Colour, most of the time in the play, determines the superiority of the white characters. Due to their skin colour, Ella and the other white characters possess a distinct advantage. Conversely, black characters such as Jim and Hattie, despite their achievements, have feelings of inferiority. O'Neill creates this conflict by revealing that Jim, the protagonist, is a person who deserves to reach a place far beyond what he imagines despite the latter's being influenced by the outlook of white society of him. This is embodied at the end of the play, where Ella collapses and calls for help from Jim. Nevertheless, Ella is reluctant to allow Jim to pass the bar test due to concerns that he will undergo a transformation in the future and sees her as the most vulnerable aspect of his life. O'Neill strives to challenge the perception of blacks as inferior. Simply put, this conveys the idea that blacks are not subordinate to whites and that one's colour does not determine their identity. Once again, the last scene gives the idea that the black is the one who takes care of the white. In other words, the black race can independently establish its identity, goals, and desires as well as ensure its well-being and that of others.

Originality Statement

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