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والبحث العلمي
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في : العقائد والعرفان والحضارة والمنهجيات -
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والحدث .

والنشر في المجلة باللغة العربية أو الانجليزية أو
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شروط النشر في مجلة الفلسفة التي تصدر عن كلية الاداب / الجامعة المستنصرية / العراق

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و(١٢) للمهامش ، ومنضدة على (CD) خاص.

٢. يرفق مع البحث المفاتيح الخاصة به .

٣. يرفق مع البحث ملخص باللغتين العربية والانجليزية لا يزيد عدد كلماته عن (١٥٠) كلمة ، ويوضع في بداية البحث بعد العنوان .

٤. يكون توثيق الهامش في داخل متن البحث بعد اخذ النص من المصدر أو المرجع ، وعلى وفق الآتي : (اسم المؤلف ، السنة ، الصفحة) ولا يكون التوثيق في آخر البحث .

٥. يكون التوثيق للمصدر أو المرجع في نهاية البحث وبخط مائل ، وعلى وفق الآتي : المؤلف (سنة النشر (، اسم الكتاب ، مكان النشر : الناشر .

نموذج تطبيقي : الجابري ، محمد عابد(٢٠٠٣) ، نقدالعقل العربي ، بيروت: مركز دراسات الوحدة العربية .

٦. يشترط في البحث ان لا يكون قد نشر من قبل ، أو قبل للنشر في أي مجلة داخل العراق أو خارجه .

٧. يخضع البحث للتقويم السري والاستلال الالكتروني من قبل خبراء مختصين .

٨. البحوث المنشورة في المجلة تعبر عن آراء اصحابها ولا تعبر بالضرورة عن وجهة نظر هيئة تحرير المجلة .

٩. يدفع الباحث العراقي الذي يروم نشر بحثه في المجلة مبلغا قدره (١٠٠٠٠٠) مائة الف دينار عراقي ، ويدفع الباحث العربي او الاجنبي مبلغا قدره (\$١٠٠) مائة دولار امريكي .

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(١٠) آلاف عراقي عن كل نسخة .

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تستقبل مجلة الفلسفة حلول العام الجديد بباقة من البحوث والدراسات الفلسفية والفكرية والعقائدية بين دفتي العدد (٣٠) الذي إرتأى أن يكون بتنوعه وانفتاحه وتأصيله كالأعداد السابقة تدشيناً لهذه المسيرة العلمية التي تهدف الى الاستمرار في إتاحة هذه النافذة النشرة للباحثين الاكاديميين من جهة، والمساهمة في البناء الثقافي الرصين العام من جهة اخرى.

يضم هذا العدد بحوثاً مختلفة في الفكر الاسلامي، التراثي منه والحديث والمعاصر، على المستوى الفلسفي والعقائدي والاجتماعي، وفي الفكر اليوناني، والفكر العربي الحديث والمعاصر الاخلاقي منه والسياسي بخاصة.

ففي الفكر الاسلامي سيطلع القارئ أولاً على بحث من فضاء علم الكلام الاسلامي حول شخصية هامة لم تكن تحت مرمى النظر البحثي (ابو اسحاق النوبختي)، وادلته على وجود الباري عزّ وجلّ، وعلى دراسة حول الطبيعة الإنسانية من منظور التربية الاسلامية، وعلى مقارنة فكرية للنظر في العلاقة بين العقيدة وبناء الفرد والمجتمع من المنظور الاسلامي كذلك.

وفي الفكر اليوناني سيطالعنا العدد ببحثين الاول حول فلسفة الحرب، حيث التركيز على بيان مفاصل الاشكالية الاخلاقية فيها، وسبل تجاوزها بعد رصدها وتحليلها، والثاني حول (المرأة) في الخطاب الفلسفي كما كرسته مذاهب الفلسفة اليونانية.

اما في الفكر العربي المعاصر، فلهذا العدد إطلالة على أحد رواده، المؤرخ والفكر العربي (الفلسطيني الاصل) حيث يشتغل على نقد هذا المفكر للنظام الأبوي في المجتمع العربي، بهدف ترسيم الحدود الواصلة الى تكريس مجتمع حدائي، وهي اطروحة تنبني على نقد مكامن التخلف والضعف والمرض على شتى المستويات، من اجل الارتقاء بالواقع العربي الى مجتمع حديث ومتطور.

وفي الفكر السياسي المعاصر، يضم هذا العدد بحثاً يرصد مفاصل الفكر الليبرالي التقدمي في الفلسفة السياسية الاميركية المعاصرة، وهنا تجري مقارنة بين الاتجاه الليبرالي المحافظ والتقدمي على مستوى الثوابت والأسس، مع بيان الجذور التاريخية للاتجاه الليبرالي التقدمي في المجتمع الاميركي.

اما باللغة الاجنبية، فقد اخترنا لهذا العدد ثلاثة بحوث بالإنجليزية، الأولى منها في الفلسفة الاجتماعية، إنما في مجال الأدب، فيشتغل في ابراز الاتجاه الواقعي في الحياة كما في مسرح إبسن مؤكداً على ان الحياة الفردية والعلاقات الاجتماعية والإنسانية، تمثل ثلاثة ابعاد تتأسس عليها الواقعية الاجتماعية.



وفي هذا المجال من مجالات بحث الفلسفة الاجتماعية، يدور البحث الثاني فيتعرض، من خلال نماذج من الادب المعاصر الى مشكلة العنصرية في المجتمع الاميركي، مبرزاً إشكالية تمثيلات الهوية في المجتمع الغربي.

أما البحث الثالث فينظر على هذا المستوى كذلك، في مشكلات وجودية ذات طابع اجتماعي فلسفي من خلال تحليل شخصي لوجود طفل من الطبقة العاملة كما تجسد في قصة (ضحك جو) للفيلسوف والاديب المعاصر جيمس كيلمان.

ونأمل ان يساهم هذا العدد ببحوثه الفلسفية في الفكر العربي والاسلامي المعاصر، وفي فلسفة الأدب بتعزيز الثقافة الهادفة والوعي الفلسفي بقضايا إنساننا الرهن.

رئيس تحرير



Representation of identity and Racial tensions in Nwandu's Pass Over

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ABSTRACT

Antoinette Nwandu's Pass Over (٢٠١٩) is an African American drama comments on contemporary issues of racism faced by the African Americans set in a minimalistic setting and characters. The play is similar to the places where most Black people live and it revolves around two young Black men, Moses and Kitch, who pass their time in the city street corner amidst the constant waits and doubts. The present paper explores the representation of identity and racial tensions in Nwandu's Pass Over through our study of the relations of systems of oppression and marginalization. The paper covers how racial identity is constructed among large historical forces such as systemic racism that has limited life opportunities. For

example, Moses speaks of "deez red white and blues" to tie identity to the social and political institutions responsible for his oppression over generations. Furthermore, the paper frames Black masculinity against the threatening dehumanizing stereotypes used to justify disproportionate force against communities of color. These stereotypes, though dehumanizing, become empowering through the acts of resistance. In the play the rejection of labels used to belittle Moses reappropriates the stereotypes on their terms. The paper, then, discusses that using minimalistic storytelling and Biblical analogies; Pass Over provides important social commentary on persisting in the face of oppression. The paper will further give nuanced information

about identity as intersected by the larger racial tensions.

Keywords: *identity, Nwandu, racial tensions, representation, Pass Over*

المخلص

تعد مسرحية "العبور" لأنطوانيت نواندو (٢٠١٩) دراما أمريكية أفريقية تعلق على القضايا المعاصرة المتعلقة بالعنصرية التي يواجهها الأمريكيون من أصل أفريقي في بيئة وشخصيات بسيطة. المسرحية تشبه الأماكن التي يعيش فيها معظم السود وتطور حول شابين أسودين، موسى وكيتش، يقضيان وقتهم في زاوية شارع المدينة وسط الانتظار والشكوك المستمرة. يستكشف البحث الحالي تمثيل الهوية والتوترات العرقية في مسرحية نواندو من خلال دراستنا لعلاقات أنظمة القمع والتهميش. وتغطي الورقة البحثية كيف يتم بناء الهوية العرقية بين قوى تاريخية كبيرة مثل العنصرية النظامية التي حدثت من فرص الحياة. على سبيل المثال، يتحدث موسى عن "الأحمر والأبيض والأزرق" لربط الهوية بالمؤسسات الاجتماعية والسياسية المسؤولة عن قمعه على مر الأجيال. علاوة على ذلك، توظف الورقة الذكورة السوداء ضد الصور النمطية المهددة المهينة المستخدمة لتبرير القوة غير المتناسبة ضد مجتمعات الملونين. هذه الصور النمطية، على الرغم من كونها مهينة للإنسانية، تصبح تمكينية من خلال أعمال المقاومة. وتقدم لنا هذه المسرحية تعليقاً اجتماعياً مهماً حول الصمود في مواجهة القمع.

INTRODUCTION

Pass Over is a contemporary play written by the American playwright Antoinette Nwandu that debuted off-Broadway in ٢٠١٩. The play is influenced by Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot and the biblical book of Exodus and it uses clear parallels between the biblical story of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt and the experiences of young black men living in modern America. Pass Over is primarily concerned with a couple of young black men, Moses and Kitch, who spend the time joking around and fantasizing about how to escape from their present situation (referred to as one of deprivation and oppression) into an unknown, promised land; pass over from their present. Biblical references to the story of Exodus become central to Moses and Kitch's hopeful yet uncertain hopes that they may one day be "called" to gain passage to a mythical promised land called "Pass Over." Herren (٢٠٢٣; p. ٢٢٣) points out that in reworking Beckett's absurdist masterpiece with modern black characters, Pass Over critiques contemporary and

ongoing issues of racial injustice, state violence against people of color, and the endless waiting experienced by marginalized groups for freedom and equality in society. The play uses elements of absurdity and dark humor to highlight how systemic racism is Kafkaesque and absurd.

Racism can be defined as an expression of discrimination caused by racial or ethnic identity through generalization of racial supremacy, whereby a broad view of racial superiority allows inequality within society, tension among different groups, discriminatory behaviors, and bias to occur. This institutionalized phenomenon is produced by unequal power relations where the dominant group enjoys undeserved privileges and is expressed in terms of prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping (Harrell ٢٠٠٦; p. ١). One of the important themes that emerge in the play is how racial identity has been framed in relation to broader historical and socio-political forces. Moses declares that “in deez red white blues, dat river don't part for niggas like us,” (Act ٢; p. ١٠٠) connecting institutionalized oppression and lack of opportunity due to racism in America. This

river, which is a metaphor for obstacles that have been put in its path, is one of the most striking examples of how racial identity is inseparably linked to the long history of racial discrimination and the marginalization of Black communities through the social and political institutions of policing, among others. It is one of the most powerful examples of how oppression influences identities by limiting autonomy and life chances. Moses' speech is one example of how oppression influences identities by limiting autonomy and life chances.

Another important dynamic point explored in the play is how racial identities and experiences are imposed on communities of color. One of the largest cases of such experience is when the character Mister introduces himself to Moses and Kitch, here Moses responds uncomfortably: “I'm Master” (Act one; p. ٧٠-٧١). This scene gives a glimpse into the power dynamics and cultural baggage that come with historically-laden names tied to slavery and oppression. Even though Mister doesn't personally identify that way, his whiteness bears the oppressive legacy that makes Black characters skeptical.

The play heralds the tension between one's own identity and perceptions imposed from the outside due to deeper issues around race in America.

The play also enacts how racial tensions are generated from the socially framed and stereotypic construction of Black masculinity. Threatening encounters with the police officer Ossifier, such as those experienced by Moses and Kitch, evoke themes of racial profiling, brutality, and a lack of accountability. Ossifer reduces Moses and Kitch to criminal entities in need of policing, rather than citizens with basic dignity and human rights. Obsessive surveillance repeats this act, disempowering them and putting the onus on their innocent nature for proof. These dynamic interactions, the play commenting on how institutional racism found in law enforcement, for example, works to dehumanize and further marginalize people of color.

Moreover, losing enjoyment is represented by the inability of a person to feel self-fulfilled, resulting in a loss of identity. This loss of identity can potentially result in feelings of isolation;

points that are highlighted through themes of "blackness versus whiteness" (Jabboury et al ٢٠١٦: ١٢٦). In addition, there is a great relation between identity and themes of roots; this is clear through the significance of both current local places and ancient historical sites that form a part of the identity of the individual. Place serves as a crucial element in recalling one's past, origin, and sense of self (Khosravi et al ٢٠١٦: ١٠٤). In short, identity is strongly associated with race and ethnicity, through which people understand and are being seen in a society full of other people. Racial identity development is an intricate negotiation between internalization and resistance to dominant perceptions and stereotypes that are put upon marginalized groups.

Identities are also shaped by larger social and historical forces that have marginalized communities of color through systems of oppression such as racism. Antoinette Nwandu's play entitled "Pass Over" explores these aspects dynamically, with an extraordinary use of Biblical imagery within the narrative to describe what ongoing racism is for Black Americans. Most of the play is encapsulated

within the existence of two young Black men- Moses and Kitch -who are waiting on a city street corner for “passing over” to an elusive promised land of freedom and prosperity. The situation is what comments on the perpetual state of uncertainty suffered by Black communities who are never fully accepted in American society. The play is shown in a bare setting and character to subtly proclaim, through Biblical references, such as the story of Moses taking the Israelites out of Egypt, direct parallels to issues of racism, police brutality, and the systemic oppression faced by African Americans. The names of Moses and Kitch invoke their identities as liberator figures that are the hopes and struggles of Black communities.

Stets (٢٠٠٠; p. ٢٢٤) admits that identity refers to the concept of self-categorization, where the self can classify, categorize and name itself in relation to particular social categories or classifications. This process is known as self-categorization in social identity theory and identity identification in identity theory. It encompasses the knowledge that an individual belongs to a social category or

group and derives their sense of self from the social categories to which they belong. In the same context Stets refers to identity theory as a framework that examines the self through the lens of category/group identity and role identity. It focuses on the reflexive nature of the self, which can take itself as an object and classify itself in relation to social categories or classifications. Identity theory also explores the activation of identities, the concept of salience, and the cognitive and motivational processes that emerge from identities theories.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Passover through the theories of Identity and Racial tensions

Pass Over explores themes of police brutality and oppression within the Black communities in America. The play is set on a city street corner and features only two Black male protagonists, Moses and Kitch. They spend time on the street corner, drinking and chatting, waiting to “pass over” into a mythical Promised Land. The language and actions of the characters elicit stereotypical

depictions of young Black men in American society. Fontano (٢٠٢٠) points out that the play finds direct parallels to the biblical book of Exodus. Moses and Kitch stand on the street corner waiting just like the Israelites waited for release from slavery in Egypt and cross the Red Sea to reach the Promised Land. Other biblical references are to Pharaoh, manna, and plagues that are part of the Exodus story. Throughout the play, characters make overt references to the biblical metaphorology the play employs. In the midst of passing the time on the street corner, Moses and Kitch come across a white police officer named Ossifer. His appearance and interactions with the two Black men elicit themes of racial profiling, police brutality, and lack of accountability. Ossifer mistreats Moses and Kitch in hurtful, violent ways without any cause or legal backing. Their experience is illustrative of the oppression. The grim themes of violence, discrimination, and lack of justice in oppressed communities are counterbalanced by the play's themes of hope, freedom, and brotherhood between Moses and Kitch. Their waiting on the street corner marks their hope for justice, equality, and opportunities that still

await the future. Their close bond and conversation reflect the strength and perseverance of Black communities in the face of ongoing challenges and racism.

Pass Over received universal critical acclaim for its bold depiction of racism in America and biblical parallels well-suited to the story. Fontano (٢٠٢٠) also asserts that the play has enjoyed critical praise for dealing with issues of police brutality and oppression head-on in its storytelling. The minimal, yet profound use of writing and themes have made it a landmark in receiving recognition off-Broadway and as a defining work in bringing social issues to the forefront of the American theater world. *Pass Over* powerfully harnesses biblical allegory and lean yet profound storytelling to depict the continuing experience of racism faced by Black Americans in the United States, particularly in police interaction. It has most deservedly gained praise for its bold social commentary and its ability to touch on issues of racial injustice.

Several scholars have analyzed the use of Exodus themes in literature to comment on contemporary issues

such as racism and police violence against Black communities. For example, Kling (٢٠٠٤) discusses how the Exodus story has long been an important symbol within the Black religious tradition and the African American culture. Kling also mentioned that Martin Luther King Jr. in his speeches advocating for civil rights and justice, quoted “Go down, Moses” from Exodus (٢:١). Linking to this subject of exodus, Wright (٢٠١٥) analyzes using of the tropes and setting of a waiting room on a city street to place the characters in a state of limbo. They’re forever stuck between captivity in Egypt and hopes of reaching the Promised Land. This comment on the perpetual state of uncertainty faced by Black Americans is paralleled to Dubois’ concept of “double consciousness” (Du Bois ٢٠١٥; p. ٥) where one is never fully accepted in American society. Nelson (٢٠٠٢) also engages Afro-futurist themes by representing the young Black men as alien “others” in their own city. However, Sharpe (٢٠١٦) states that this engages with the “afterlife of slavery” and the ongoing trauma passed down across generations that Black communities must navigate and mourn in present times.

In invoking such a direct parallel to biblical exegesis, Nwandu’s *Pass Over* challenges viewers to see the continuity between ancient oppression and modern struggles against racism in America. In general, academics agree the play offers a powerful interrogation of what it means to be Black in the U.S through the reworking of Exodus themes in creative ways. In summary, *Pass Over* investigates the experience of Black communities in America through the lens of biblical exodus narratives long important within African American cultural history and religious tradition. Scholars have analyzed how the play engages with concepts such as double consciousness, Afro-futurism, and the afterlife of slavery to depict ongoing struggles against racism and police violence faced by young Black men today (patrizi ٢٠٢٢).

Moses says so powerfully of the feeling of marginalized and not having true opportunity because of their racial identity, which had become so ingrained in them in this world. Just like that biblical story of Moses parting the Red Sea to allow the Israelites to crossover to

freedom, however, he notes this river (a metaphor for the barriers they face in life) doesn't behave similarly for them. It will "crash on us"; it will "drown us whole." As such, Moses defines "dat river" as a river which does not part for niggas, just like Egypt. "We Egypt," Moses says, intimating the formation of a long-suffering slavery state that he had been witnessing. He was indicating that his people, like the Hebrew slaves were in Egypt before their exodus, were trapped and oppressed. "We niggas," he says, implying that society regards them as expendable and undeserving of liberation and uses dehumanizing language such as "niggers." Through this statement, Moses vividly articulates the anguish of feeling there is no promised land to guide them to empowerment and prosperity and then they will not be allowed the upper hand by powerful systems keeping them subdued instead of answers for their cries for emancipation. Moses questions whether they would have any "chosen" status or will ever experience deliverance from the obstacles upon them due to unchecked racism and lack of equity in their environment:

*dat river don't part for
niggas like us
dat river crash on us
drown us whole
we ain't chosen nigga
damn we Egypt
feel me Egypt (Act ٢; P.
١٠١).*

The above quotation, actually, examines racial identities and feelings of marginalized people in their own environment. In such cases, Arroyo (١٩٩٥; p. ٩٠٢) advises researchers to use the "racelessness" construct proposed by Fordham and Ogbu. Arroyo asserts that this construct focuses on the behaviors and attitudes adopted by academically successful African American students to distance themselves from their culture of origin, leading to increased feelings of depression, anxiety, and identity confusion. Researchers can also develop scales, such as the Racelessness Scale (RS), to quantitatively assess the psychological consequences of racelessness, including measures of depression, self-efficacy, anxiety, alienation, and collective self-esteem (Arroyo ١٩٩٥; p. ٩٠٤). In Addition, Arroyo also views examining adolescents' evaluations of prejudicial attitudes about their

racial group, beliefs in a meritocratic system, and feelings of alienation from peers can provide insights into their racial identities and experiences of marginalization.

In the following conversation, Kitch directly confronts Mister's hypocrisy on the n-word. The use of the word had been suggested by Mister to be something that was wrong or vulgar, looking down at Kitch and Moses for using the word. He calls out that Mister is acting as though he never said the word before. This highlights the double standard whereby white people can acknowledge and reference the word with no consequences, yet it is policed on the tongues of black people. Kitch's message challenges the notion that certain groups can "own" or hold authority over the meaning and use of racially charged language. It acknowledges the fact that the history of prejudiced language has historically been weaponized by white oppressors, who have used it against black people. In saying that Mister is not immune from having also "said dat shit" before, Kitch is saying that this is a false distinction. He denies the allegation that one is tainted and the other is pure. He is especially

denying that some group gets to decide how the wounds of history should be mentioned and initiate healing:

KITCH: maaaaaan quit actin like yo ass ain't sed dat shit

MISTER: what shit

KITCH: dat n-word nigga nigga nigga nigga

MOSES: iss true nigga, all white niggas, say da n-word

MISTER: what!

MOSES: or if they don't bess believe dey want to

MISTER: first of all, first of all, i'm not sure, what all white ni-people

all white people even means i'm just one person,

and second of

all second of all i don't say that word (Act 1; 70-71)

To address perceptions of racial slurs, it is important to engage in conversations about race and racism openly and constructively. Carter (2017 p. 12-14) emphasizes the need for a race-conscious approach to intervention and encourages discussing racial discipline patterns thoroughly. He also suggests engaging in conversations about race and

interpreting disaggregated data to understand the ways in which the processes and adult interactions with adolescents may contribute to disciplinary outcomes. Furthermore, Carter (٢٠١٧ p. ١٥) asserts the avoiding clumsy race talk and repeated stereotyping of adolescents from particular groups. In short, Carter views these strategies can help in addressing perceptions of racial slurs by fostering understanding, challenging stereotypes, and promoting respectful dialogue.

To address perceptions of racial slurs, it is important to provide opportunities for white adults to interrogate their beliefs about African American adolescents and to incorporate culturally responsive disciplinary strategies. Monroe (٢٠٠٥; p. ٤٧-٤٨) points out that such strategies should involve creating spaces for open dialogue and education about the impact of such language. Additionally, it is essential to familiarize educators with culturally specific behavioral norms and incorporate culturally familiar behavior management strategies into their practice. By doing so, we can develop a deeper understanding of the implications of racial slurs and work towards

creating a more inclusive and respectful learning environment, especially in schools.

This is discussed with some actors of the narrative in the play that is going to change slowly: "Master" is introduced by Mister, which makes Moses and Kitch uncomfortable to some extent, because his name goes hand-in-hand with the legacy of slavery by white people in America. Mister tries to downplay the importance of the name and says that it is "just" a family name passed down. However, Moses and Kitch understand the power dynamics that come with that name. It shows how race, and its identity, is not only those that one identifies with but also how it is seen and viewed by others with meanings socially and historically assigned to them. Even though "Mister" does not personally identify with the oppressive legacy of slavery, his white identity bears that cultural baggage when he transacts with black people, past and present living traumas. The play lightens this mismatch between one's own self-identity and how he is seen outside, in a tension and discomfort arising from the deeper

complexities around race in America:

KITCH: and your name is

MOSES: I'm Master

KITCH: what

MOSES: well, i would never

KITCH: gosh this is so awkward

MOSES: i have never

KITCH: well

MOSES: well salutations

KITCH: yes good evening

MOSES: yes good evening salutations (Act 1; P. ٧٠-٧١)

The complexity of identity has been discussed widely, especially that related to the racial one which is imposed by the others. In his study about the theme of identity, Tatum (٢٠٠٠; p. ١) asserts that the complexity of racial identities is influenced by individual characteristics, family dynamics, historical factors, and social and political contexts. Tatum also sees that racial identity is experienced in conjunction with other dimensions of oneself, such as gender, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and physical or mental ability. People are commonly defined as "other" based on race or ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation,

socioeconomic status, age, and physical or mental ability, with each category having a form of oppression associated with it. The dominant social group often takes its identity for granted, as it is taken for granted by the dominant culture, leading to a lack of conscious attention to this dimension of identity. The dominant group's inner experience and outer circumstance are in harmony with one another, and the image reflected by others is similar to the image within, leading to a lack of dissonance and conscious attention.

The complexity of racial identities is further influenced by the mythical norm, which is usually defined as white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, Christian, and financially secure, and holds the trappings of power within society (Tatum ٢٠٠٠; p. ٢-٣). Dominant groups generally do not like to be reminded of the existence of inequality and can avoid awareness because their explanation of the relationship becomes well integrated in other terms, leading them to believe that everything is as it should be. The task of resisting one's own oppression does not relieve the responsibility of acknowledging complicity in the oppression of others, and

embracing all identities creates the possibility of building alliances that may ultimately free everyone (Tatum ٢٠٠٠; p. ٤-٥).

This speech, by Moses, forcefully links identity to racial identity, across broader social and historical conditions that cut short Black communities' social life. This enmity against racial identity is underlined by the "red, white, blues" that represent the American flag, on behalf of institutions of power. The ideals of freedom and justice fail in Black people, according to Moses, symbolizing the essence of a national quest. Much in the same way, the Israelites were liberated with the parting of the Red Sea during the Exodus, so Black communities are continuously hindered in ways, the parting of the river comes to the metaphor of the river crashing, which may be interpreted as an allusion to the systemic oppression, violence, and lack of opportunity that stems from racism in American society. Moses insinuates the fact that such perpetual marginalization and inaccessibility of opportunities for empowerment have been in place to the effect that people are now "killin each otha." This vividly depicts how racial identity is

inextricably linked to broader forces of history, politics, and culture imposing hardships and restrictions upon marginalized groups. The monologue challenges a simplistic view of racism as just interpersonal prejudice, instead defining it as a complex socio-political system that should be addressed at the institutional and ideological levels, by empowerment and unity:

MOSES: spent my whole damn life thinkin why niggas so fixated on heaven nigga damn i want dat good life now you feel me now but i'on know man maybe there is something to it why niggas stay killing each otha cuz in deez red white blues dat river don't part for niggas like us dat river crash on us drown us whole (Act ٢; p. ١٠٠)

The above speech connects identity to wider social and historical forces that marginalize communities which involves understanding how communities respond to oppression and maintain their cultural identities. This can be achieved by recognizing the ways in which oppressed groups resist

oppression and experience a sense of community in alternative settings, such as church groups, sporting clubs, and extended family networks (Sonn ١٩٩٨; p. ٤٥٧). Additionally, it is important to consider the mediating structures and settings that protect core values and cultural practices, as well as the impact of oppressive systems on community resilience. Furthermore, acknowledging the significance of activity settings and alternative settings for marginalized groups can provide insight into how identity is connected to broader social and historical forces that marginalize communities (Sonn ١٩٩٨; p. ٤٦٠).

Such understanding of identity is shaped by larger historical contexts that include recognizing the impact of imperialism, global capitalism, and power differentials between nations on diaspora identification. It also involves acknowledging the ways in which race and gender are constructed and how they function as meaningful aspects of personal experience (Caldwell ٢٠٠٧; p. ١٠). Additionally, it requires examining the intersection of race and gender to challenge the boundaries of citizenship and belonging in society (Caldwell ٢٠٠٧; p. ٢٣). Actually, it

involves recognizing the importance of collective mobilization and resistance to contest subordination and disenfranchisement (Caldwell ٢٠٠٧; p. ١٤٩). These insights help to connect individual identity with broader social and historical forces that marginalize communities.

This powerful statement from Moses reclaims a positive and empowered identity in direct opposition to dehumanizing perceptions that have been imposed upon Black people. According to Moses, the people represented by his declaration are not the people who are erroneously thought they are. Moses rejects the repressive labels and stereotypes often used to justify the marginalization of Black communities. Terms like "stupid, lazy, violent, thug" have historically been weaponized to present Black people as inherently criminal or threatening in order to excuse disproportionate policing and violence against them. Moses claims that view is wrong and that things are now changing. With "we are men," he reclaims the basic humanity and dignity denied to Black people in America. His authoritative tone suggests a change is underway, one where

false masks of deindividualized oppression will fall away, and true, multidimensional identities beneath will emerge in all their strength and complexity. No longer willing to be judged through superficial appearance or prejudiced opinion, Moses repossesses agency over self-definition. This empowering statement reclaims identity as something internally defined rather than externally imposed. It is a defiant statement that rejects the narrow confines of racism and embraces freedom in its purest :

MOSES: dis shit's changin now,
you feel me,
now, cuz we are not the people
that'chu think we are not stupid,
not lazy, not violent, not thug.

We Are Men. Two Black

Men, we standin here (Act ٢; p. ١١٢)

Reclaims identity and humanity in the face of dehumanizing perceptions. To reclaim identity and humanity in the face of dehumanizing perceptions, a process of rehumanization is necessary. This involves recognizing the autonomy of oneself within their context, investigating one's own historical situation, and understanding how

one's identity has been influenced and shaped by their context (Oelofsen ٢٠٠٩. ١٨٥). Additionally, it requires engaging in a dialectical process that involves treating the dehumanized other with respect, even if one does not perceive them as worthy of respect, as well as imagining how others might see one's own actions and beliefs (Oelofsen ٢٠٠٩. ١٨٦). Furthermore, it involves individuating the enemy and recognizing their agency, which can lead to overcoming stereotypes and seeing the other as human. This process allows for a slow change of attitudes over time, culminating in a deeper understanding and respect for the humanity of others (Oelofsen ٢٠٠٩. ١٨٧).

To reclaim identity and humanity in the face of dehumanizing perception, it is essential to address the historical dehumanization and denial of human rights experienced by colonized peoples. This process involved seizing native histories and representing them as backward, depraved, and savage, awaiting the arrival of European civilization. Reclaiming history and humanity involves acknowledging the impact of colonialism on the colonized people's sense of self and

history. This can be achieved by critically re-engaging with suppressed, denigrated, and dismissed African philosophies, sciences, and histories (Boucher ٢٠١٩، ١٢٦١). Additionally, it requires recognizing the importance of regaining the historical personality of a people and the right to possess their own history (Boucher ٢٠١٩، ١٢٥٥، ١٢٥٧). By doing so, individuals and communities can work towards reclaiming their identity and humanity in the face of dehumanizing perceptions.

Also this quote refers to the process of Re-claims identity and humanity amidst what could otherwise be dehumanizing perceptions. reclaiming identity and humanity in the face of dehumanizing perceptions involves recognizing the multidimensionality of identity and understanding the motivations behind dehumanization. It is important to acknowledge that everyone has a unique identity, and that dehumanization is often driven by the desire to stigmatize or deny the humanity of others (Moshman ٢٠٠٧، ١١٨، ١٢١). Reclaiming identity and humanity involves resisting dichotomization and

dehumanization, and acknowledging the potential for genocide within all individuals and groups. Additionally, promoting multidimensional identities rooted in the active coordination of multiple affiliations and commitments can help counteract dehumanizing perceptions (Moshman ٢٠٠٧، ١٣٢). The defiant declaration of Moses to Ossifer, "Dis shit's changin' now," not only reclaims his identity and humanity against the dehumanizing perceptions forced upon him but also asserts his freedom to become a man, not some human construct. Moses, having just demonstrated his control of supernatural power through the act of the plagues, refuses the labels that Ossifer and other oppressors use to diminish him: "stupid, lazy, violent, thug." He thus makes it clear that they are not what their tormentors see or try to reduce them to.

Results and Discussion

In the play, Moses has made the statement "Huntin' niggas ain't fun unless niggas run away" when talking to his friend Kitch about the threats they face from police violence in their community. The remark can be taken as a comment on some police's ways of manhandling black men. Moses is

drawing a parallel between the killing of black men and hunting, in that hunters only find joy in hunting animals when they pose a challenge by running away or resisting capture. It implies that for some police, just capturing or arresting black men is not enough; they find fun in the thrill of the chase, physical exertion, and the ability to overpower. It suggests that for certain police, black men are considered little more than animals to be hunted, rather than human beings with a right to respect and protection. The line underscores that police often have little consequences because they can kill black men with little concern as long as it is framed as being in self-defense or the response to resistance during the course of an arrest. The light it throws is on deeper rooted racist attitudes that enable disproportionate violence against African Americans by those meant to protect them.

*MOSES: you wud too
or maybe you wudn't
maybe huntin niggas ain't fun
unless niggas run away
OSSIFER: start running nigger
let's find out (Act ٢; p. ١٠٩).*

African-American young men face violence by policemen, which contributes to their negative perceptions of the police. The study highlights that young men perceived being routinely detained and searched by the same officers as harassment, and they felt that the police behaved as if their participation in crime was a forgone conclusion (Brunson ٢٠٠٧, ٨٥). The violence faced by young Black males at the hands of police is a significant issue. Statistics show that between ٢٠١٠ and ٢٠١٢, young Black males between ages ١٥ and ١٩ were killed by police at a rate of ٣١.١٧ per million, compared to only ١.٤٧ per million White males in that same age range (Sharon ٢٠١٦, ١). The historical context of police relations with this group, including the Reconstruction Era and the emergence of formal police forces, has contributed to the current state of police relations with young Black males (Sharon ٢٠١٦, ٤, ٥). The systemic culture of oppression and marginalization of young Black males has led to profiling, brutality, and lethal encounters with the police (Sharon ٢٠١٦, ٥). Recommendations for violence reduction include cultural sensitivity training for law

enforcement and community policing strategies (Sharon ٢٠١٦, ٦, ٨). These experiences contribute to a sense of mistrust and resentment toward the police, leading to feelings of violation and the expectation of poor treatment (Brunson ٢٠٠٧, ٨٥, ٩٢).

This quote refers also to the dehumanization, which treats black men as target practice rather than human beings. dehumanization and targeting of Black men by police is a pervasive issue that has led to unnecessary deaths and social inequities (Adedoyin ٢٠١٩, ١١١, ١١٢). The negative stereotypes of Black men have created an environment where some police officers claim to fear for their lives before shooting, perpetuating a cycle of violence and discrimination (Adedoyin ٢٠١٩, ١١١). This phenomenon has sparked protests and calls for criminal justice reform (Adedoyin ٢٠١٩, ١١٤). Studies have shown that the use of force by police against Black individuals is influenced by both individual racial makeup and the characteristics of the location of the Black community (Adedoyin ٢٠١٩, ١١٦). police patrolling in neighborhoods with underrepresented racial groups

and high crime rates use more force, contributing to the perpetuation of historic trends of oppression and marginalization of Black males . These findings underscore the role of racial bias and prejudicial attitudes in shaping police interactions with Black men and highlight the need for addressing systemic racism within law enforcement (Adedoyin ٢٠١٩, ١١٧).

This line is Moses directly challenging the systemic lack of value accorded to black lives, as well as the lack of consequences for those in power who perpetuate that system. By saying he would rather die than endure another day of Ossifer's "shit," Moses calls out the lived experience as that of constant fear, danger, and lack of autonomy under a system that sees them only as subhuman. When he accuses Ossifer of being "scared" for not killing him, Moses points to the imbalance of power—though Ossifer can unleash lethal force without restraint against people of color, there are no consequences if they are the ones who take a life. This challenges the perception that their deaths are meaningless or inevitable. By pushing Ossifer to demonstrate how little Moses' life is

worth, it serves to underscore how the system emboldens violence against black people. In naming these injustices despite the threat to his safety, Moses' words represent the frustration and truth of a community long denied dignity and humanity under the perpetual threat of state-sanctioned violence and lack of legal protection.

MOSES: you, i'm standin here, sayin kill me, sayin i'd rather die, than put up wit'cho shit for one mo day, but'chu won't do it, wuss da matter, you scared? (Act ٢; p. ١٠٨).

The systemic devaluing of black lives and lack of consequences for those in power refers to the routine killing of black persons with impunity by predominantly white police officers across the United States. This is exemplified by the tragic parade of unarmed black dead, where very little has changed since the protests sparked by the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, in August ٢٠١٤ (Hooker ٢٠١٦, ٢). es the racial dynamics present in the judicial system, where pervasive images of black men as threats are

persuasive to predominantly white juries, leading to acquittals of police officers despite evidence of excessive force (Hooker ٢٠١٦, ٢).

The systemic devaluing of black lives is rooted in the historical context of racial oppression and the white racial frame that constructs people of color as the "other" and negatively framed as unvirtuous. This white frame penetrates all social institutions, public consciousness, and political bodies, putting whites constantly at the top of the racial hierarchy and constructing them as good and virtuous. This frame generates, legitimates, and reproduces patterns of racial discrimination and racially stratified institutions in society, including policing and other criminal justice organizations (Nummi ٢٠١٩, ١٠٤٣). The lack of consequences for those in power is evident in the continued militarized and violent articulation of the white racial frame against populations of color by policing institutions and their white violence against African Americans (Nummi ٢٠١٩, ١٠٤٤). Despite widespread protests, substantive legislation addressing extrajudicial police killings and structural reforms in the criminal justice system has not been passed,

indicating a lack of accountability for those in power (Nummi ٢٠١٩، ١٠٥٨).

I'll protect you both for sure but all the same just watch yourselves (Act ١, p. ٧٢). This line from Ossifer takes even less than a minute to proceed through: he tells him he wants to "protect" them, meaning that Moses and Kitch are not free-run individuals who have the right to exist in public places but perpetual threats, hence by turning them into citizens in need of policing and control. He threatens to "watch yourselves," insinuating they have done something questionable just by being there. It shifts the impression from them being individuals to their seeming inherent criminality, characterized by them always being surveilled and watched. Ossifer has depicted black men in such a way that it ends up supporting a policy of complete totalitarianism of coercion, a clampdown of the right to be seen and heard by even the most powerful. They are to be viewed not as individuals in control of their own lives but as inherently criminal entities whose character needs to be checked at all times. This mentality strips black citizens of their humanity and puts the

burden on them of having to prove their innocence rather than the system who harasses them unjustly with aggression and killing. It is the tactic that has long been used to show black communities as inherently threatening, hence to justify extra-large policing and control.

The framing of Black men as perpetual suspects in need of policing rather than human citizens is perpetuated by the racist legacy of citizen slave patrols, which assumes that Blacks are dangerous, sub-human, and inherently criminal. This framing supports White Supremacy and is advanced by widespread perceptions of African American males as potential perpetrators, which legitimize the use of brutality and the disproportionate application of deadly force by law enforcement (Chaney ٢٠١٥، ٤٥، ٤٦). This framing also leads to negative perceptions of African American men by police, which motivates law enforcement to be less responsive to crime in minority communities (Chaney ٢٠١٥، ٤٧). Furthermore, the media's portrayal of violent criminals as Black has resulted in extreme fear of African Americans and has contributed to the de-sensitization

to police use of excessive force against African Americans (Chaney ٢٠١٥.٥٢). This framing ultimately devalues and dehumanizes African American men, leading to a lack of legal accountability for the murders of unarmed Black individuals by police (Chaney ٢٠١٥.٦٣).

The framing of black men as perpetual suspects in need of policing rather than human citizens is discussed in the article "Racialized policing: Aboriginal people's encounters with the police" by Natalie Gately. The author, Elizabeth Comack, details the evidence that shows racialized policing occurs and particularly questions whether police use racial profiling. She describes racial profiling as stereotyping certain ethnicities, singling them out so they have more frequent encounters with police, which inevitably leads to further interactions with other components of the criminal justice system. This framing leads to over-representation of Aboriginal people in the justice system and encourages the development of an 'us' versus 'them' mentality. Comack also explains how stereotypes are absorbed and become woven into the very fabric of society, influencing and

impacting everyday interactions between groups and individuals. This racialized framing is a complex issue that is influenced by wider societal issues such as poverty and social exclusion, and it has led to a situation of severe distrust and animosity between cultures (Gately ٢٠١٣.٥٣٧).

This rebuttal by Moses to the racist stereotypes longtime used to dehumanize black people is even more opposed and represents their reappropriation. When Moses says, "we never liked yo potato salad," he's rewriting stereotyping in a manner where black people are dependent, happy to eat what is given to them by their white superiors. "Hold that mustard" further subverts the assumption that blacks should meekly accept any aspect of their oppression. They define themselves, their preferences, and autonomy with alacrity. They are retaking power in defining themselves instead of being defined by outside characterizations, prejudiced by nature. The rejection of deference for defiance in retaking their humanity is their effort to free themselves from the power imposed on them. The dialogue suggests that these are people who will not again

stand complicitly by in the face of racism. They are recontextualizing stereotypes that demeaned them into empowerment and pride in themselves and in their right to self-determination free of bigotry. It is defiance, a bold rejection of labels meant to stunt the potential of the people in question and a declaration that their worth and identity will now be decided by themselves alone.

MOSES: (also up, out)
also we never liked yo potato
salad

KITCH: Yo mores

MOSES: What my nigga
damn

KITCH: I kinda did

MOSES: Naw, my nigga
damn, no mustard,
feel me, hold dat mustard
(Act ٢; p. ٩٨).

Rejecting and reappropriating racist stereotypes involves challenging and changing the negative connotations associated with these stereotypes. Reappropriation refers to the process by which a stigmatized group revalues an externally imposed negative label by self-consciously referring to itself in terms of that label. This process

aims to change the value of the label and, in turn, the value of the group (Galinsky ٢٠٠٣. ٢٢١, ٢٢٨). An example of this is the "Black is Beautiful" movement, which sought to change the connotative meaning of the group label "Black" and the value of being a member of that social category (Galinsky ٢٠٠٣. ٢٢٨). Reappropriation can be a way for stigmatized groups to take control over the use of the label in the public sphere, thereby increasing feelings of agency and potentially leading to collective action (Galinsky ٢٠٠٣. ٢٣٥).

The rejection and reappropriation of racist stereotypes can be seen as a way for minority groups to combat prejudice and status hierarchies. Reappropriated racial slurs, such as when Black individuals use the term "nigga" toward White individuals, are perceived as less derogatory and more affiliative by both White and Black individuals (O'Dea ٢٠٢٠. ١, ١٤). This reappropriation can be a way for minority groups to bond and create group-based identities around a shared experience of prejudice, fighting against and coping with prejudice (O'Dea ٢٠٢٠. ٣). It's important to note that the reappropriation of

racial slurs is a complex and controversial issue, and people may have ambivalent or hesitant attitudes toward it (O'Dea ٢٠٢٠: ١٦).

CONCLUSION

Antoinette Nwandu's play *Pass Over* poignantly unpacks intricate dimensions of racial identity through a systematic oppression and puts them in a minimalistic yet a very resonating storytelling. The play opens up the ways by which racial identities are defined against history, culture, social institutions, and interpersonal interactions in an inward movement of self-definition reclaimed. Although the characters face the brutal effects of systemic prejudice and dearth of opportunity, they persevere and rearticulate and redefine themselves in spite of stigmatizing stereotypes that are all too tragically legitimated through continual violence today. *Pass Over* is a powerful reflection on the ongoing struggle of African Americans to redefine agency and humanity, despite being dehumanized by views that are too tragically legitimated through continued violence today. In the discussion of critical themes, including intra-person identity negotiations and broader socio-

historical forces that infringe and keep marginal communities captive, the play provides meaningful consideration of equality, empowerment, and solidarity in the future. In this way, Nwandu's lean yet powerfully resonant work makes us confront the ongoing failures of justice and realize that after all, we all have an interest in freeing all people from the demeaning oppression that still, to this day, denies true equality and dignity for all.

Pass Over powerfully portrays the resilience of Black communities in reclaiming their identities and humanity in the face of dehumanizing stereotypes. Moses' climactic speech rejecting the labels used to marginalize him—"stupid, lazy, violent, thug" (Act ٢; p. ١١٢) refuses the externally imposed identities and reclaims freedom and agency in self-definition. Such acts of defiance represent how marginalized groups resist oppression by being in control of the stereotypes and the reinvention of their meaning. The play uses Biblical allegory and minimal storytelling to deliver, in fact, stirring commentary on how racial identity is formed when social forces continually

marginalize and socially construct racial minorities in America.

In short, the play explores the complexity of racial identity development amidst social forces that marginalize and socially construct racial minorities in America. It provokes an understanding of how identity intersects with broader historical and contemporary racial tensions, while portraying the strength and resilience of the Black community at the same time

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